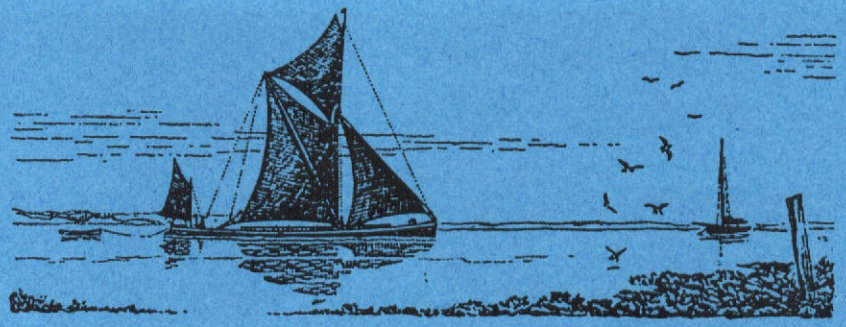
THE HARRISON BUTLER ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER NO: 47 SUMMER 1998



THE HARRISON BUTLER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

No. 47 JULY 1998

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH - *'PERADVENTURE'* (Englyn design)
With reefed Mainsail and a bone in her teeth on the Beaulieu River circa 1938

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

May 1998 (and later additions)

2 The Chestnuts
Theale

Dear Members

First, an SOS, urgently. At the AGM, Simon Wagner declared his intention of resigning from the office of Honorary Treasurer. We cannot function without a Treasurer and, even if I were not in the business of devolving as many of my functions as possible (looking to the future and my demise!), Treasurer is something I should never take on myself. I know my limitations and finance is high up the list. However, others are gifted in that sphere so please volunteer. I am given to understand that it is not desperately onerous as jobs go and Simon will give you the low-down. You need to be able to attend the AGM's and present a financial report, although we have had to make do with a written report from time to time but that means that questions cannot be answered.

The Treasurer is also responsible for storing, marketing and re-ordering our merchandise (ties, burgees and Members' flags). There is close collaboration with the Membership Secretary who supplies information about new members, resignations, etc, and a list of "bilge-rats" (defaulters) needs to go to the President so that reference (anonymous) can be made in her letter and reminders inserted with their newsletters.

Incidentally, at the time of writing I have no such list but, if you haven't done so already, please take out your cheque book now and make Simon happy. [Later: I now know that some subscriptions have not yet been received.]

I personally am extremely grateful to Simon. It seems but a short time since he was about to sit his CA finals and I earmarked him as a future Honorary Treasurer, an office which he has filled most efficiently so that our funds are in a more healthy state than I ever remember. Perhaps our sub.-chasing has reached a higher level. Simon says it's five years - and he thinks that's long enough!

It doesn't have to be a Full Member: Associate Members can make 2+2=4 just as ably and would be welcomed just as warmly.

I say it every year: read the Minutes. Some bits of news are reported therein and it's silly to repeat them - waste of space.

I was very concerned when I heard about the tornado in Florida because Geoff and *'Watermaiden'* were tucked up there so I wrote and was very relieved to get a reassuring reply. We also had a long telephone conversation when he was back in the UK for a while during the winter. Maybe we shall see you at the Laying-up Supper, Geoff, with or without *'Watermaiden'*.

The List of Members shews a good collection of new names and I'm adding names of correspondents who are potential members - I have to complete the newsletter items before I can reply to their letters. What is particularly good news is that building is contemplated in some instances. Nathan Wilson is a new member who will, I think, build *'Khamseen A'* in Ullapool. Another is in the USA.

There is scope for giving *'Englyn I'* (needless to say, an Englyn) an extensive refit. The snag is that she is in Ireland and has been gutted so would have to be shipped - not even towed - across to Britain for reinstatement. I used to know her well in the Hamble River, pre-war, with her first owner, Cosby Smallpeice. She was an HB member, with Patrick Cashin's brother, Ray, but faded out until now. She has been ashore for 10 years or so and is now for sale (see 'For Sale' section).

On the subject of boatbuilding, in April Caroline (Holton) drove me to the office of Nigel Irens Design where Edward Burnett (and Nigel) greeted us and we saw how far the model of *'Prima'* had progressed. The hull had been formed and the rudder and the cabin-top but this needed to be

narrowed to cockpit width. I decided I had designed a shapely boat. Last week I sent some colour samples for topsides and deck, the toe-rail being scheduled to be white and the anti-fouling red - no contrasting boot-top. More than that I shall not divulge! Watch this space - perhaps. She should be completed fairly soon which is exciting news for me. Edward, who has been deeply involved in the project, may bring her to me at The Crag but she will live here and perhaps will make her debut at the Laying-up Supper. I am so very, very grateful. It's such a lovely present.

Life was very fraught from two and a half weeks before the AGM after being told that the function room at The Bull had been turned into a games room. Although there are eight pubs in Theale, very few have facilities for such a gathering as our lunch but luckily the Red Lion had recently changed hands and the management were very friendly and cooperative. They hadn't put on such a function before and there were one or two teething troubles which should not recur next year. The service was slow because, owing to the narrow skittle-alley, seating was as in a train dining car with a very narrow aisle and food had to be collected from the serving table, pew by pew. Also, the puddings seemed to be running out so I went to ask and they said "We've had a terrible accident, two puddings were dropped on the kitchen floor"! Ice-cream was substituted.

President and Members at the 1998 AGM

'Thuella' was the choice of design for this newsletter and it was fortuitous for correspondence on the design/boats has come both from Spain and from Australia.

Nick and Julie Perrott's boat, named *'Reform'* originally (I wonder if her name should be Re-form for her authenticity is suspect and I am investigating the matter. I need some clearer photographs), was built in London by an amateur to whom I sent the design in 1949 and she was in our membership when owned by Chris Cooper who currently is helping in the restoration of *'Yonne'* (nearing completion). Roger and Susan Dahlberg of Queensland are hoping to buy *'Primavera'* and I sent the *'Thuella'* plans to Lieut. B. M. Close R.A.N. in Tasmania in December 1945 and in 1949 he decided to build. Years later, someone sent me an excerpt about *'Primavera'*, owned by a Peter Townsend and since then I have asked around but had no luck in finding her until now when the articles have again been received and I can link her to B. M. Close. I had wondered whether they were indeed the same boat.

I hope we aren't breaching copyright by reproducing these articles but they have surfaced at such an opportune moment and they go back about 40 years and are not being used for commercial purposes. During the first 5 years after my father died I sent out 12 copies and since then at least 7 more. They went to many countries including to S. Konik, 2nd Secretary in the Communist Polish government, which I took to the Polish Embassy in 1965. I wonder whether she was built? Another went to M. J. Perrett in Sheldon, Devon in 1949 (not Perrott though. I wonder if our new member is a relation?). Not everyone intended to build but - who knows? Minds might have changed. Certainly, several were built. The design was made specifically for DIY (a term not then invented) building and is described fully in THB's book, 'Cruising Yachts: Design and Performance'.

Neither *'Primavera'* nor *'Tamaroa'*, which belongs to Tony Mount in Jabiru in Queensland, has been built with the cabin-top extended to the topsides but I personally prefer them thus. Although the built-up topsides, as in some of the Z4 Tonners, adds to the space down below, it detracts from the aesthetic appearance. Also, there have been extensions upwards of the cabin-tops in some of the smaller HB boats - and indeed also in *'Englyn I'* - which I deplore, as would THB himself. He was a large man but would be quite content as long as he had adequate sitting headroom in the little boats. I think there's a broody-hen element in the Butler genes: good sitters! Usually, these additions are unsympathetic to the design.

One of the *'Thuella'* designs which I sent to South Africa turned into *'Vagabond'* and she was last seen in the Virgin Islands. I believe there is a good story concerning her voyage from S.A. but unfortunately I have not heard it.

'Tamaroa' also has a colourful past as recounted by Tony Mount:

'Since writing to you last, an elderly chap approached me while the boat was still in the yard, telling me he had owned her in the 70's and giving me some of her history. The story did not correspond to the one I had previously been given - and was in fact much more romantic. It transpires that she was built on the Bloomfield River in North Queensland in 1966 and bought by a young Welshman who intended sailing her back to Wales. He got as far as Gove where he fell for the wife of one of the men working for the bauxite mine. The aggrieved husband swam out to the boat one night and drilled two neat holes - he was a carpenter - in her hull and sank her. At this point my informant bought her and headed towards Perth. He stopped in Darwin and never left. She broke her moorings and sank again in 1975 after which he sold her and lost track of her. I made some inquiries in Bloomfield River and eventually tracked down an old friend of the builder - a Dane called Hans Blid who has since passed away.'

Boats seem both to engender marriages and to break them up. Which wins, I wonder?

Our next official event will be the Laying-up Supper on 12th September. We are returning to the Beaulieu River and the Royal Southampton Yacht Club's premises at Gin's Farm. I hope we shall have plenty of boats there even if you don't want to attend the Supper itself - although I hope you will. David and Elizabeth Stamp are planning to come to the UK from Australia and it will give them a chance to compare boats and to meet the members. *'Amiri'* is a Sinah but if there is one in this country she in unknown to me although I certainly sent one set of plans to a Brit in the far-off days when my mother was still alive (until 1958).

We are photo-copying a sample business card concerning a B&B establishment near Lymington - just opposite Walhampton School where John Elphinstone is a housemaster. The main brochure makes it look very inviting and it is run by friends of Bryony and David Hebson from whom you can get details.

I recommend that you keep a note of the food you have ordered because you will probably have forgotten by 12th September. Also, the river is likely to be pleasantly full because our weekend coincides with the Beaulieu River Meet of the Royal Cruising Club. *'Jolie Brise'* will be there. It will be a bit schizophrenic for *'Askadil'* if she comes for she belongs to both clubs, as do some others of us HBA devotees.

How many of you are heading for Falmouth for the Tall Ships Race on 19th July? Try to take in The Crag as well.

Among the many letters from members were Christmas greetings from Jane and Kenny Coombs saying that *'Cora A'* was in good heart and still loved dearly. She keeps herself in the public eye from time to time, photographically. Also, a letter from Ann Brodziak brings news of *'Mouette'*, ex-'Cyclone', one of the "oldies" which was built in Albany, Western Australia. It's always interesting to hear about far-off places. Maybe we should describe some of our British localities which are just as far-off to our overseas members. Paul will publish excerpts if he has room: the editorial coffers are apparently quite well filled at the moment but keep up the contributions.

BEAULIEU CLASSIC BOAT FESTIVAL

Paul drove me to the Festival on Sunday 14th June where Patrick Gibson joined us and we had a wet and wonderful day. Paul and I took part in the rowing "race" from Buckler's Hard to Gins and back and I rowed most of the way back. As a result, we were the last boat in to complete the course. Every participant received a medal. Our boat was no.43.

Then we took Patrick - and the outboard - on board and stemmed the spring ebb to visit James and Elizabeth Lang-Brown aboard *'Nephalia'* (1965 North Sea 24). The transfer from dinghy to a rigid inflatable and then on board was quite exciting owing to my mechanical defects. Disembarking was easier as I slithered under the guard rail on my back into the inflatable and thence to Paul's dinghy (10' mahogany stem dinghy). Elegance would not describe the manoeuvres! We had hoped to visit Denis and June aboard *'Minion'* but they had to leave before we could make contact.

Safely back on shore, we visited Bill Grindey in his office and gave him a card and a cheque for £50 from the HBA as a 'thank you' for the almost 25 years in which he has helped members and to wish him well in his retirement from being Harbour Master of the Beaulieu River. After consulting Patrick and Paul I exercised my privilege and offered him Honorary Membership of the HBA which he accepted.

In addition we met Peter Ward (ex *'Peradventure'*) and have reinstated him and Hazel as members and I recruited Barry Church as an associate member. He and Colin Frake were packing up their stand: a fascinating assortment of metalwork, wooden blocks etc, and a diminutive solid fuel-burning stove. They specialise in bits and pieces for boats which one can no longer find from the usual sources and will make to specification single items. I hope that Colin also will join.

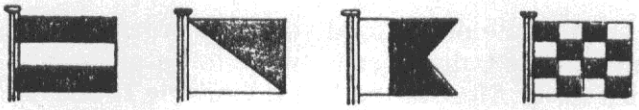
Today, 15th June *'Free Spirit'* has rejoined us. Years ago John Paton was restoring her in Trowbridge and then went abroard. She has been bought by Robin Williams who will continue where John left off. We have to establish whether she is a *'Philesia'* or a *'Thuella'* (yet another?).

My life is seething with Gremlins and I shall write no more but send you all my warmest greetings and best wishes for your well-being in every way - and my thanks for all your letters and Christmas cards but please do date your letters, <u>including</u> the year. It helps with the filing system.

Yours aye,

Joan.

Joan



EDITORIAL

From an almost cloudless, clear blue sky a gentle zephyr swept across the river meadows, ruffling the reeds and surface of the water in its path, the fleet of Laser racing dinghies heeled to the breeze and once more forged ahead jostling for position as they rounded the starboard mark.

Lazily watching the afternoon racing from the cockpit aboard *'Dawn II'*, my 1932 10 tons T.M. Osborne motor-yacht, anchored opposite the Tewkesbury Sailing & Cruising Club, I found it difficult to imagine the scenes those few short months earlier when, during the Easter holidays, such devastation and chaos occurred.

A mild Winter and early Spring provided ideal fitting-out weather, which began in earnest during late February and early March, resulting in the vast majority of boat owners on the River Avon being ready for launching during Easter week, spurred on no doubt by the promise of fine weather and the satisfaction of a long boating season ahead - but how those hopes were suddenly to be dashed. Prolonged rainfall during Wednesday 8th April and continuous rain in Warwickshire and Worcestershire all day Thursday 9th resulted in the worst flooding along the Warwickshire/Gloucestershire River Avon in living memory. Complete towns were cut off, vast areas of farmland underwater with large numbers of cattle and sheep as well as people having to be rescued. With the water still rising rapidly many caravaners on the riverside sites were being rescued by dinghy, some woken in the early hours as the water levels reached their bunks.

The situation for boat owners seemed initially more hopeful - boats, unlike caravans, being designed to float. However the frailty of mooring posts and stagings became all too evident as many vessels up and down the River began to come adrift. Those with stouter moorings and warps heeled at perilous angles as the levels continued to rise.

Early Good Friday morning (not good for many) a group of fellow yachts men and women began a rescue mission at Bredon, Gloucestershire. By now the approach road to the boatyard had been cut off and was already under 4' of flood water with several bilge keel yachts and motor cruisers bobbing happily in the gardens of flooded waterside properties.

A hectic day ensued ferrying anxious owners out to their boats in my trusty flat bottomed 10' punt - very stable and ideal for the purpose. The strong South-Westerly wind and occasional snow storm made progress difficult with quite a chop in the main stream, although many minds were temporarily put to rest. As daylight faded into evening we wearily rowed back along the submerged road and tied the punt to a cherry tree in someone's garden.

Early the following day we assembled once more near the boatyard and rowed along the road. The sun was shining, reflecting on the vast expanse of water making the scene less threatening and hostile. The level had fallen several feet overnight and we felt more optimistic. However, no-one was prepared for the sight we came upon at the yard.

About a dozen large motor yachts had been lifted off their Winter cradles and lay in a tangled pile in the centre of the yard, some jammed against the workshop walls, some over on their sides, others wedged against the gates and one balancing dangerously on the perimeter fence. Floating amongst them was a thick oily sludge - hundreds of gallons of diesel fuel had been deposited when the tank came adrift. On the moorings, boats were everywhere, a few stubby mast tops above the water were all that remained visible of some. Many boats had disappeared, probably sunk overnight, no doubt impaled on their mooring posts, one small cruiser was upside down on top of an iron post! Several were in immediate danger of sinking so we set to work with warps on the nearest casualty, a 1908 26' steam yacht *'Puffin'* listing badly as she was firmly held by the port bilges on two mooring posts. After about thirty minutes' struggle, with combined effort, we managed an inch at a time to move her and, with a final heave, she fell back into deeper water. There appeared to be no significant damage except for scuffed topside paint. We then managed to free several grounded vessels off one of the islands and tow them back into the creek. As the water level continued to fall some were marooned high and dry and we worked quickly to rescue others from their inevitable fate. Unfortunately we were too late to save one small yacht which floundered on her mooring, much to the anxiety of her venerable 89 year old owner. We watched as three boaters tried to rescue their 1960's GRP Freeman motor cruiser from her position wedged on the edge of the staging posts. They considered their combined weight on the port side-deck would list her over and permit her to slide back into deeper water. However the flood stream pushed her even further onto the posts. The hull, not designed for such stresses, punctured with a resounding crunch. As she began to go down by the head, the would-be salvagers quickly scrambled into their dinghy; within minutes she was awash. Another owner decided the engine in his 26' GRP cruiser might pull his vessel off her mooring posts and after much effort and splintering of fibreglass she worked free. Badly holed he made a dash for the slipway and succeeded in running her up the slip before she sank.

The scenes at Bredon were reminiscent of many along the river as owners tried to find the only possible solution to their boating nightmare. Weeks and even months later 'beached' vessels could be seen in the strangest of places, tied to trees, hedges and gates, quite some distance from the river. Although a vast number of vessels were insurance write-offs, prompt payment by insurers resulted in the River yards being over-run with repair work, so only now is the River finally getting back to normal.

Thankfully *'Dawn II'* was safely laid-up ashore, above flood level, while I replaced a 10' section of carlin and a foreward bulkhead. Without those repairs to do I would have been back on my Summer mooring on the island at Bredon by Easter and who knows what might have happened to her then!

Paul Cowman

Worcester. June 1998.

Members' Letters

'Watermaiden'

I received the newsletter with all the details of your celebrations. I was sorry to have missed it but was glad you had an enjoyable time. You should be justly proud of your flock. I hope to meet up with you when I next pass through Burghfield Common.

As you see by the address we have completed another trip. Uneventful with respect to dramas but very eventful otherwise.

I was joined in Vilamoura by a lady friend (rival owner) with whom I had often sailed in the past. We set off from Vilamoura and after a bumpy, grey miserable first night finally settled down to an easy sail except for one savage squall line which passed over in the night with 7+ winds for a couple of hours and had us down to a staysail with the rail under and seas sweeping the decks. It soon eased and the rest of the trip to the island of La Palma (western-most of the Canaries) passed off pleasantly. We sailed close South of the Selvagem Islands and on to Sta Cruz, where we anchored (on three anchors) in a small corner of the harbour. Few yachts come here as there are no facilities.

We hired a car and spent four days seeing as much as possible. The views are stunning and the interior of the island is a complete surprise after seeing how sterile the coast appears.

We left Sta Cruz on 3rd December and headed off S.W. from the island's south end. After a slowish start *'Watermaiden'* settled down and for most of the crossing we carried the three sail rig on the starboard tack, having N.E. winds mostly. (3 sails are main, genoa to port and a small jib poled to starboard). Very little rolling is experienced this way. It was a classic Trade Wind sail, with warm days and starry nights. Listening to France Inter (15.30mhz at 1140GMT) Meteo report daily we heard of storms and gales up north which appeared endless. Two highlights of the latter part of the trip concerned whales. We were visited by a pair of killer whales (black and white markings - about 15' - 20'). They played around the boat pursuing the log line and swimming under from side to side. We have some good pictures of them. Later in the trip one evening, just at dusk, my crew noticed a pair of whales close on the starboard bow crossing at right angles starboard to port. As we took avoiding action they passed close to the stern and almost under the log line. As they spouted I saw that they were a pair of small sperm whale. The spout is feathery and angled forward. They were swimming close together and completely unaware of our presence. We may have hit them had we not seen them just in time. I was surprised that they had not sensed our approach.

The usual dolphins and sea birds made their appearance throughout the trip and we arrived in English Harbour, Antigua after 26 days and 17 hours. My best time so far in *'Watermaiden'*. An average of 100 miles a day exactly. I was more than pleased.

After a bit of sight-seeing and socialising we sailed S.W. to Montserrat and cruised up the west coast and saw the devastation wrought by the volcano. Views were reminiscent of war scenes. All in a grey yellow monochrome. Houses with no doors and windows. Some buried in ash. Trees, stark skeletons, branches and limbs with no foliage, sombre silence and devoid of life, overhung by a gloomy pall of smoke still issuing gently from sourcepoint above in the murk. Even out at sea the occasional smell of sulphur fumes was evident. My crew had known this town in previous years and could not believe that the present scene was real.

Further North, unaffected by the volcano, the island is green and life goes on. As we sailed away after sunset, lights came on showing that many people have stayed on in this area, unwilling to leave.

We headed for Sant Bart's where we spent a day. This island is rapidly becoming a St. Tropez with boutiques, restaurants and 100' motor yachts tied up on the quay. However the local people are still friendly but the anchorage is unbelievably crowded. From there we had a fast sail to Road Town, Tortala, passing in through Salt Island passage in the dark just before dawn, followed by a cruise liner (they usually move between ports at night).

After six days here we set off on the last leg and headed N.W. from Jost Van Dyke (BVI).

A couple of days out found us in the middle of some naval exercise with frigates and an aircraft carrier. The latter passed us 200 yards off while we were becalmed. We got good pictures of the event. I was unable to determine the nationality of the vessels as the markings were not obvious. I can't believe they were American.

We carried a fair wind for most of this leg as we sailed up East of the Bahama Islands. Heading West around the North end of Little Bahama bank we got a change in the weather and strongish N.Easter began to veer East. Worries about the Gulf Stream and its notorious turbulence in N. winds (and possibly N.E.) were not justified, although it was not exactly smooth.

The forecast gave a wind shift to S.W. and strong N.W. later. We got into Port Canaveral (an easy, well marked, deep water entrance) just as it began

to veer more and increase. It had been touch and go all night.

On arrival it was miserably cold, more noticeable after the pre-breakfast swims in the BVI. After clearing-in and resting up we locked into the barge canal and motored West to join the Intra-Coastal Waterway. By now the N.W. wind was a decided advantage and with a staysail and jib flying we made good time South. In 20 miles we saw only one other vessel. Arriving at the marina we succeeded in getting aground on the mud 50 yards from the reception quay. We put two anchors out but could not get off and as the sun was setting we philosophically closed the hatch and cooked a meal and put off the problem till a later time. Next morning, with a bit of weight on the side deck and some help from friends, she slid off. *'Watermaiden'* is now well tied up and deserves a rest.

Watermaiden
Indian Harbour Marina
Florida

Geoff Taylor

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'Mouette'

Your letter written in September last year was so greatly appreciated - please forgive the tardy reply! It was marvellous to hear news of your life, your father, the Association and *'Mouette'*; and we particularly enjoyed the photocopies of our beloved boat on the occasion of her launching in Albany some sixty-nine years ago! What wonderful photos, not only giving us a peek at *'Mouette'* then, but images of a serious but proud Mr. Hartman, the charm of the yacht going down Albany's main street, the amazing sight of a cockpit full of fish! Her gaff rig was most attractive. Thank you so much for thinking of us and sending precious pieces of the boat's history for us to savour.

We have been enjoying a wonderful summer of sailing on the Swan River, and often spend the night on board in some pleasant anchorage. I will enclose a few photographs of the last time we slipped her, so you can put them on file as requested.

Our regular summer afternoon breezes are quite strong in Perth, being somewhere between 18 and 30 knots, so we often furl the genny up to medium handkerchief size! The boat handles well, and doesn't mind the chop one bit. She's as comfortable a yacht as I've ever sailed on. We have recently had a new cover made for her, which offers some protection for the brightwork from our fierce sunlight. When out sailing, we always fly the HBA burgee, as well as the flag of Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club in Peppermint Grove - our club.

Best wishes from both John and me - we hope 1998 is a wonderful year for you.

Palmerston Street
Mosman Park, 6012
Western Australia

Ann Brodziak

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Sincere Thanks.

I was deeply moved when I received the splendid greetings card, signed by all attending the latest AGM of the Association. I was confined to bed in the RN Hospital at Haslar, Gosport, with severe leg problems causing much discomfort. The heartening wishes of Association members was so good for my morale, and it was satisfying to know that I was not forgotten. My sincere thanks go out to all you good souls who signed the card, and whilst I may be somewhat in the background these days, I am still a devotee of the Association - long may it continue!

Swanwick
Southampton

Ron Goodhand

Eric Tabarly

In the small hours of June 13th 1998 French Yachtsman Eric Tabarly drowned after falling from his yacht off the Welsh Coast. He was born in Nantes on July 24th 1931. Over a lifetime of competitive sailing that began in the 1964 Observer Single-handed Trans-Atlantic Race (OSTAR), Eric Tabarly developed a reputation as one of the toughest deep sea yachtsmen of his era.

He sailed a succession of famous yachts named *'Pen Duick'* and did much to generate enormous interest in yachting that made it the number two sport to cycling in France.

In 1969 he won the single-handed Trans-Pacific Race in his 35' *Pen Duick V* - one of the first yachts to be fitted with water ballast. He won two Sydney-Hobart races and set a record for the Cowes week opening Channel Race. He finished first again in the 1976 OSTAR and entered many Whitbread Round the World races. In 1988 he smashed the Atlantic record for the New York-Lizard crossing set by the Schooner *'Atlantic'* back in 1906.

It is ironic, perhaps, that the man who appeared immortal on a boat, should fall overboard without a safety harness or life jacket, while the one piece of equipment that he abhorred most - the radio - might have led to his rescue, had one been fitted on his yacht. Instead, Tabarly's inexperienced crew were unable to raise help for seven fateful hours until their flares were seen by a passing yacht.

Peradventure Goes West

By PETER HEMINGWAY

The article by Michael Corley in the Winter newsletter reminds us how much cruising has changed over the last forty years or so. The Corinthian spirit of that time is far removed from the comfort and safety features expected by the modern generation of yachtsmen and women.

Electronic aids such as radar, GPS and self-steering have taken much of the uncertainty out of sailing, but they have also taken away much of the sense of achievement and adventure. One can only speculate as to what the next step will be and one is reminded of the "yachtsmen" from the New York Yacht clubs of the Twenties, whose professional crews raced their yachts while they watched the action from the comfort of the clubroom bar. Those of us fortunate enough to own and sail classic yachts can get closer to the spirit of the past but we have lost our innocence and I for one would not now be without a reliable engine and my Decca Navigator. It is also sadly the case that for many of us, engines and radio have become legal requirements without which we cannot sail. *'Peradventure'* normally sails out of Grimsby, where both are required, but even if this was not the case I would not now care to be without them.

Last year I took a year off to go "back to school" and lived on her while I studied in Bristol. Grimsby is about as far from Bristol as it is possible to get on mainland Britain and it was a toss up as to which way round to go. The Northern route is about 100 miles further but would usually benefit from more favourable winds, so this was the direction in which I would have preferred to go. However, with the wind set firmly in the Northeast it was decided to go South. Since I was single-handed, the 100 odd miles across the Wash were viewed with some trepidation but this turned out to be one of the easier legs taking just 21 hours. Indeed, there was no cause for complaint until the passage from Pin Mill to Ramsgate. With a forecast of Westerly 3 to 4 becoming South Westerly 4 to 5, I opted to go outside the sands, but by the Kentish Knock the wind had swung well into the South and was blowing considerably more than force 5. I tend to underestimate wind strength but on this occasion I had Ramsgate radio telling incoming shipping that there was 35 Knots of wind across the entrance and very unpleasant it was. Nature was putting on a spectacular pyrotechnic display with lightning illuminating the most awesome cloud formations I have ever seen. Fortunately, the occasional heavy cloudburst prevented the seas from becoming too large, for which I was duly thankful as the North Foreland is a lumpy spot at the best of times. With the wind right on the nose, I resorted to motor tacking under staysail and deep reefed main and in

this manner made reasonable progress. It was a tactic that was to be used for much of the passage along the South coast.

After four days, the wind moderated enough to allow me to reach Dover where I spent an uncomfortable night rolling around in the outer harbour, which was not a good preparation for one of the most unpleasant passages of recent memory. From Dungeness the wind went on the nose again and started to pick up, settling to between force 6 and 7. Newhaven, that fundament of the South coast, was finally reached at two o'clock in the morning where I tied up at what must be one of the least inviting marinas in the country. Things could only get better after this and I spent a pleasant couple of weeks in Devon and Cornwall. I had intended to visit the Scilly Isles but the German bladder that passes for my inflatable dinghy ruptured itself in Penzance, so I had to forego that pleasure.

The passage around the Land's End was spectacular but uneventful, being blessed with favourable winds and I took advantage of two sets of fair tide. These were not enough to reach Padstow, however, so I put into Newquay where one dries out against the wall. The harbourmaster was a mine of information after he had got over the shock of receiving his second visitor of the season and waived harbour dues in deference to *'Peradventure'*. Nevertheless, Newquay is not the surfing capital of Britain for nothing and on leaving *'Peradventure'* rolled so violently in the heavy swell that she gibed involuntarily, breaking her gooseneck fitting and carrying her ensign and staff overboard. It was a thoroughly chastened little mariner who motored over the Doom Bar into Padstow. This is a delightful spot but as the weather again took a turn for the worse, boats kept arriving while those already there showed a distinct reluctance to leave. Eventually, one could walk right across the harbour on the decks of yachts but many new friends were made.

Eventually there was a window in the weather and a mad scramble as everybody left for their various destinations; significantly, nobody seemed to be going my way. I left with only a vague idea of where I was going to go; anchoring off Lundy seemed a possible stopover before making for Swansea but as it happened, a series of mishaps which were to strip *'Peradventure'* of her modern trappings led to a change of plan. The wind was light and from the North West, but there was still a big swell on the Doom Bar which disabled my electronic self steering. This was not a problem as it is only used occasionally and I continued to motor sail over a weak ebb towards Hartland Point. Shortly afterwards however, there was a violent knocking from beneath the cockpit sole and I realised that I had succumbed to that curse of the North Devon coast, abandoned fishing line. The black polypropylene had firmly wrapped itself around the propeller and while trying to free it with a boat hook I snapped off the aerial for the Decca navigator. Fortunately the wind had picked up a little and I decided to make for Illfracombe, which I calculated I could probably make on the tide that had just turned in my favour. Nevertheless, I decided to call the Coastguard station at Hartland Point to appraise them of my situation only to discover that my radio was also defunct.

'Peradventure' is the sixth boat I have owned and is the first to have either radio or Decca and some of the others didn't have engines (or had Stuart Turners, which is the same thing), so I was not totally unprepared for the mishaps. Nevertheless, I was surprised at the reliance that I had come to place in these modern trappings and more so that I had been prepared to shift some of the responsibility for my situation onto someone else. At about midnight I eventually anchored in the tiny bay outside Illfracombe and sorted out my problems, proceeding on to Swansea some three hours later, relieved thay my radio had not worked. As a passing observation, it is a peculiarity of cruising yachtsmen that they often seem to regard their own particular stretch of water as the most demanding and dangerous in the country. I can only say that in the case of those sailing out of the Bristol Channel, they are right.

The rest of the passage to Bristol was uneventful. The tides of the Severn estuary are fierce to be sure, but they are very similar to those of the Humber and they make for amazingly swift passages. *'Peradventure'* became my home for a year while I studied Maritime Archaelogy and some members visited her as she lay amongst the garbage in the Floating Harbour. I will hopefully complete my circumnavigation of Britain later this year with a course that will take me well away from the North Devon coast. All my gadgets are now working again, but they will not be accorded the respect that they once enjoyed. I have rediscovered the satisfaction to be had from doing things in the old way.

Postscript:
'Peradventure' was built in 1936 to the 'Englyn' design for Cmdr. Ewan Montagu of the "man who never was" fame, by Anderson, Rigden and Perkins of Whitstable, and was featured in Charles Winter's book *'The Run of the Tide'*.

January 1998

The Sea is still Master

Under the baneful influence of racing, modern sailing yachts exchange stability for speed. But the seas are as violent as ever, the waves as high. People will be killed.

Every age has its own view of the ocean. For Elizabethan adventurers, the seas were imagined to hold untold treasures, as the Duke of Clarence dreamt in "Richard the Third": "Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,/ Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,/ All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea."

Elizabethan literature's acid-head view of the deep, as Jonathan Raban notes in his wonderful introduction to the "Oxford Book of the Sea", came to be replaced with an equally mannered but quite different view during the 18th century, when the ocean became a symbol of "sublime majesty", of billowing, elemental nature, of "agreeable horror". The stuff, in other words, of every 18th century marine painting, the storms mostly imagined.

It was from there only a step further to the Byronesque sea of the romantic 19th century, when any would-be Childe Harolde might go down to the rows of Scarborough bathing-machines and dream of the outcast hero: "There is society where none intrudes,/ By the deep Sea, and music in its roar..."

Those days, however, were already the beginning of the age of mass travel, and the romance of the sea was tempered for the masses by the tedium, sea-sickness and grey terror of crossings by ferry-boat or packet.

Industrialisation, too, took to the sea, in the form of burgeoning trade propelled by steam power. By century's end, Joseph Conrad was glorifying the age of sail in the certain knowledge that it had nearly run its course.

And what of the ocean-view today? It is fully a century since Joshua Slocum, still the greatest of single-handed sailors, circumnavigated the world by himself, and 30 years since Sir Robin Knox-Johnston did the same, non-stop ("Where from?" cried the Falmouth customers; "Falmouth!" he replied). Both feats now seem stale to some. Moreover, the knowledge of working sail has all but vanished. Few people need the oceans for travel. Even that sea-tied people, the British, need no longer go "overseas" to reach foreign lands; instead they can travel "underseas", to France.

The ocean, in short, has become redundant as a travelling necessity, and less than awesome as an adversary. Instead it is a place of "recreation", of "sport". Beardies tending their little wooden ships up mud creeks have given way to ranks of floating luxury caravans in plush-appointed marinas. And with the modern view of the seas comes, alas, a modern kind of sailboat.

Speed Demons

If people in the West think of the ocean as anything at all these days, it may be as the stage for a new and growing set of Elizabethan adventurers, whose spoils are media glory and corporate sponsorship. They put to sea in ever faster, more extreme and more expensive yachts. The ocean was once something to be in awe of, or, as in Slocum's case, something to be charmed by. Today it is merely the medium for televised spectacle. This has, as a by-product, littered the sea with yachts whose designs are evolutionary blunders. One such was pictured, floating upside down in the Southern Ocean south-west of Australia in January, its skipper, Tony Bullimore, having just been hauled aboard the Australian navy's inflatable. He returned to England tagged a hero rather than a fool.

Mr Bullimore survived four days trapped inside the cabin of his capsized craft, and swam to the surface when he heard his rescuers. Not all are so lucky. In similar racing accidents other single-handers have drowned. A media orgy accompanied the send-off late last summer of the Whitbread race, a round-the-world affair of 60-foot, overgrown dinghies which, with their gung-ho crews, were so ill-suited to crossing oceans that one prominent yacht designer called the combination a "disaster waiting to happen".

None of this would have wider relevance if the madness were confined to a few. It is not. People are taking to sail in greater numbers, lured by new generations of boats which, because they are lighter and faster, supply quantities of pleasant terror. These boats are terrific fun as dinghies and as bigger craft raced inshore, but they are no joke if taken offshore. Yet that is where many of the new generation are being taken, in such races as the Fastnet, held every two years, and the annual Sydney-Hobart race.

Today's racing boats are fundamentally unstable; they are indeed even less seaworthy than those that raced into the Fastnet storm in 1979, when 15 people drowned and 25 boats were abandoned. The lessons of the 1979 Fastnet, as they apply to yacht design, have not been learned, says one young British designer, Edward Burnett. Another disaster of the Fastnet sort is not only likely, it is probable.

The madness resembles an earlier racing era, a century ago, when a desire to "cheat" yacht-racing rules in America similarly produced boats that were light, wide and shallow. "Skimming dishes", they were called then, the most spectacular being *'Mohawk'*, a 140-foot schooner that capsized under squall at anchor, drowning the owner and his guests. Today, alas, advances in construction technology have encouraged racing boats that are lighter and even more extreme.

The risks do not stop there, for racing-boat design has infected the design of cruising boats. It so happens that many of the qualities thought desirable in the modern racing boat - a light weight in proportion to length, wide beam (ie width) to provide stability - match the perceived requirements of the modern cruising boat. A lighter boat is a cheaper boat than a heavier one. Greater beam provides more space below to house family and friends, and more space above for sun-worshippers. The hint of a racing pedigree can only help in the marketing. Winnebago crossed with Maserati: an unbeatable combination, it seems.

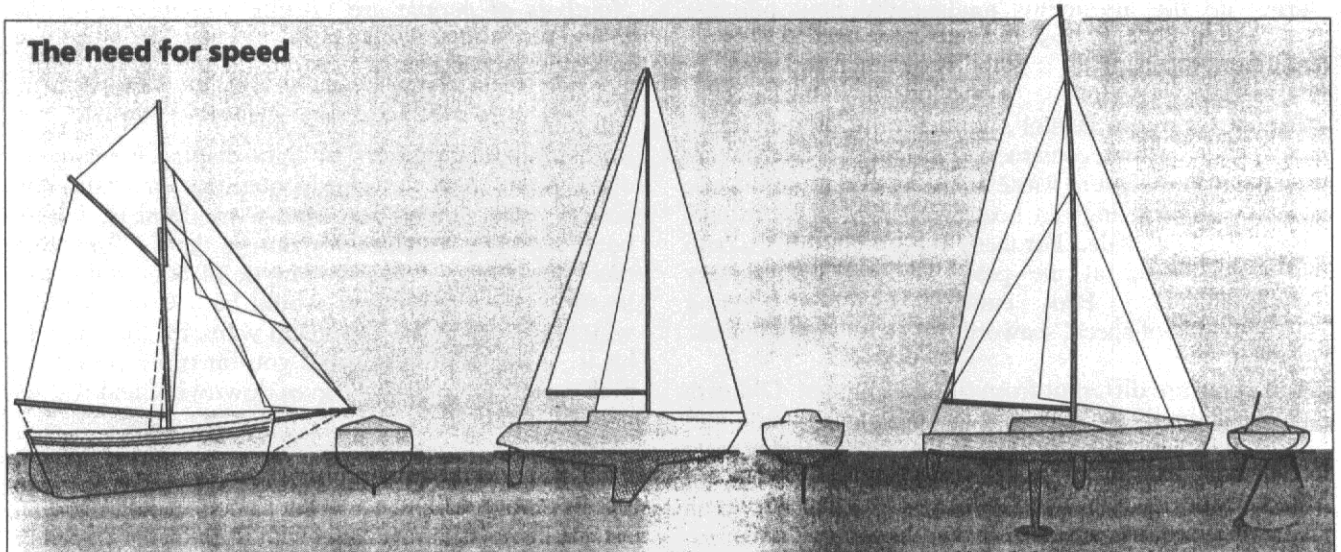
Except that such boats, while comfortable enough in harbour, are wholly unsuited to the sea. First, many lack the stability with which any seagoing boat should be generously endowed. Second, their hull design and their light weight contribute to accelerations at sea (pitching, heaving, yawing and rolling) that, as will be explained later, place physical stress on a crew, resulting in swift incapacitation.

Many is the crew that has pleaded to be airlifted off such craft; many more the family that has been put off sailing for life by putting out for sea. There have been several fatal accidents recently in Britain's Solent, a protected body of water, involving cruising boats (not racing ones) that appear to have been thoroughly unseaworthy.

The fanatical quest for speed has undermined the "seaworthiness" of modern yachts: that is, their ability to cope in rough conditions. Yachts' "seakindliness", that is, their ability to look after their crews as conditions worsen, has also gone by the board. Sailing need not be so unpleasant, nor so dangerous. That, at least, is the lesson of history.

First, though, in the phrase of pious journalists, to declare an "interest", though perhaps an enlightening one. This reporter sails the antithesis of the modern yacht. She was built, to no yacht-racing rule, in 1889 - three years before the invention of the diesel engine, five years before Parson's marine steam-turbine. She was made in rough fashion, of pitch-pine planks nailed to hand-sawn oak frames. There is neither carbon fibre nor even glue in her build. Her mast is of a single fir tree, rather than of extruded aerospace alloy. Her rigging parts are of galvanised iron instead of high-tensile steel. And, though she is 50 feet long less her bowsprit, and though she weighs about 30 tons, she has not a single, costly winch on board. All the hoisting and hauling of sails is done with simple rope purchases.

The need for speed



Pilot cutter, 1889
Dyarchy
Pilot boats were expected to be fast and able in all weathers. They had a full-length straight keel, an essential feature for seaworthiness and ease of handling.

Fastnet race competitor, 1979
Grimalkin
In the quest for speed, designers reduced the amount of hull in the water. This produces less drag and more efficiency, but at the cost of rough-sea stability.

Vendée Globe competitor, 1996/97
Aqua Quorum
Modern materials allow extreme designs with very deep, narrow keels. This results in still faster boats that are even less stable and harder to handle.

'Marianne' is a surviving example of what once were the aristocracy of working sail, the Bristol Channel pilot cutters. At the height of the British empire, the industrial ports of the Bristol Channel - Bristol, Cardiff (*'Marianne's'* home port) and Newport - were among the world's busiest. The Bristol Channel is also one of the most difficult bodies of water to navigate, with astoundingly rough seas, the world's second most powerful tides, and innumerable mud banks and rocky shores. The 150 or so pilots of the Bristol Channel, as a body, were no doubt the world's finest - to get qualified took half a lifetime - and so too were their vessels.

The work of a Bristol pilot was handsome when you got it, but the competition was fierce. Cutters out "seeking" - looking for an incoming steamer on which to land a pilot - would race far out into the Atlantic to be the most "western" boat, and therefore the first to place a pilot on board. Each time any self-respecting pilot was rowed across to the waiting steamer, he donned, no matter the weather or distance from land, his shoregoing rig of suit, fob-watch and bow-tie.

In the end, the ascendancy of steam and the economic dislocations of the first world war together dealt a death blow to the sailing cutters. Overnight, dozens of cutters were thrown out of commission and onto the mud to rot, or into the arms of canny yachtsmen. Steam-driven pilot boats were introduced, and open competition was replaced by a pilot's roster, a cheaper proposition for the shipping companies that paid the pilots' dues. Years later a sheet of paper was found among the belongings of one Welsh pilot, Simon Bartlett. He had begun to draw up the arguments against the new pilotage service. "I shall lose my freedom," was all he managed to write.

The story of the Bristol Channel pilot cutters might indeed stir an unreconstructed sailor from the Slocum school of nostalgia to waste his money maintaining one of the 17 surviving old boats; yet there is more than nostalgia to the tale. For these boats were thrown onto the scrap heap at the peak of their evolutionary development. Pilot cutters boast a winning combination of speed, seaworthiness and seakindliness.

Old boats are different from old motor cars. Old cars may stir the blood, but they are beasts to handle and hideously expensive to maintain; nobody suggests using a 1926 Bentley as a runabout. Old boats, on the other hand, are gentler to sail, by far, than modern boats, cheaper, by far, and still make extraordinary voyages. Bristol pilot cutters, in the past couple of decades, have roamed up to Greenland and down around Cape Horn, often with owners of equal vintage. The pilots' living depended upon these boats being fast. They had to be seaworthy, for they stayed out in the worst of seas, all year round and for days on end. And they had to be seakindly, for these big boats were handled by just a man and boy, whether racing out into the Atlantic or remaining "hove-to" on station.

Many other styles of working sail evolved, through need, to show similar qualities of seaworthiness. Most notable were the turn-of-the-century pilot boats and rescue craft designed by Colin Archer, a Scottish-Norwegian. Perhaps the best description of a working-boat's seaworthiness is Captain Nicolai Anthonisen's report, dated May 1894, of the first rescue by Colin Archer's first sailing rescue craft, in the far north of Norway:

Wind N.E. Snowstorm and thick weather with extraordinary heavy sea... A telegram from Havningberg, stating that one ship and several boats had suffered total wreck... We set out as quickly as possible under a press of sail, and stood down towards the breakers, going as near as possible. At the entrance to the inlet the whole sea was practically one great breaker... The conditions were peculiarly difficult, as there was very little sea-room, and the waves were breaking at depths of 10 to 12 fathoms (60 - 72 feet). We sailed around the vessels, poured oil on the sea and manoeuvred in such a way as to get the boats into the stream of oil, which moderated the sea considerably.

We carried on in this way, backing, filling, tacking, gybing, as seemed best; and with good results, as in the course of three-quarters of an hour we took on board 22 souls, one of them a lady... At midnight we reached Vardo again, and landed all our passengers safely...

There is much enthusiasm here over our work. Numbers of people are visiting and inspecting the vessel...

A Delicate Balance

Still, modern designers of light-displacement boats often pooh-pooh the sturdy qualities of traditional boats. One of the best-known modernists, whose boats suffered considerably during the 1979 Fastnet race, put it thus: "The worst type of boat you could be in in those conditions would be a Colin Archer, which just sits in the water and waits for the wave to hit it. A modern boat gives you far more control to pick a path through the waves downwind and it goes upwind as well".

It is worth recalling, however, that Colin Archer's sailing boat was the one doing the rescuing; and, eight decades later, the modern designer's sailing boats were among those being rescued. Why?

First, **static stability.** The force of the wind on the sails causes a sailing boat to heel, and stability is needed to prevent it from capsizing. Static stability comes in two ways. First, as ballast hung low in the boat (usually in the keel), acting like the weight of a pendulum. Second, as form stability: a wide boat, in

proportion to its length, is likely to be more stable than a narrow one, just as a raft is more stable to stand on than a log.

Modern boats rely much more on form stability than did the old, heavily ballasted ones. That makes them stiffer (ie more stable) at small angles of heel. The trouble is that their "angle of vanishing stability" - the point at which they capsize - is also much lower: often 120 degrees from the vertical or less, compared with 150 degrees or more for yachts derived from more traditional lines. Further, modern boats are almost as stable upside down as they are the right way up. One boat that was lost in this year's Vendée Globe race drifted upside down for 1,500 miles, its Canadian skipper having drowned, presumably, six months earlier. Traditional boats will more readily right themselves after a knockdown, provided they do not suffer damage that lets in water.

Next, **dynamic stability.** The play of forces is complex in a rough seaway, where all boats roll, but the less the safer. In essence, a wide-beamed boat that relies on form stability rolls faster from side to side than a narrower, ballasted boat will do. Beamy modern boats place accelerations on the crew that lead to seasickness faster, even if the forces do not actually cause the boat to capsize. Accelerations also place a greater strain on the yacht: modern round-the-world racers, despite high-tech construction, suffer inordinately from gear failure, such as broken masts and rudders, and even snapped keels.

In addition, everything else being equal, heavier boats, in relation to their length, are more stable in a seaway than light ones, being less vulnerable to high accelerations. Traditional boats have a displacement-to-length ratio up to four times greater than extreme-light-displacement yachts, and maybe three times that of a typical modern family cruiser.

As Tony Marchaj, a naval architect and a brilliant analyst of boat design, has pointed out, heavy boats that have their ballast low down rather than close to the centre of gravity, go still further in resisting rolling, thanks to their greater "roll moment of intertia". Imagine trying to twirl a drum majorette's baton with a weight attached to either side of the centre line. The job is harder if the weights are at each end of the baton than if they are close to centre. Again, from the point of view of comfort and seaworthiness, heavy, low-ballasted boats win the day.

Finally, **damping action.** Designers of modern boats criticise the long keels of traditional boats for generating friction and for being less hydrodynamically efficient than modern fins. That is true. But as Mr Marchaj has demonstrated, long keels more effectively dissipate the rolling motion imparted by wave-force. Long keels contribute, to an under-appreciated degree, to seakindliness, as well as to seaworthiness.

A Return to Fairer Seas

Today there are signs that yachtsmen are beginning, once again, to value craft built to the lines of the Bristol pilot cutters and the Falmouth quay punts and their kin, albeit with modern improvements in construction and rig. The clock need not be turned back a century: up through the 1950's boats were built whose design evolved from, and indeed improved upon, the old hulls. Over the centuries, many poor, ignorant men learned essential lessons about seaworthiness through slow trial and error, and often they paid for their mistakes by drowning. Those lessons need not be tossed aside.

Mr Burnett, the designer, has been inundated just lately with commissions for traditional boats. "If you had told me a year ago that this would happen," he says, "I would have laughed in disbelief". In the end, it is the seakindly qualities of traditional boats that win the day, and that modern designers would do well to study. A stoppered barrel will be perfectly seaworthy, but it will not be seakindly, since its motion will no doubt kill its occupants. By contrast, the Bristol Channel cutter with its pilot, the Boston hooker with its fish, and the Galway *pucan* ferrying donkeys and seaweed among Ireland's western isles all provided comfortable platforms for those working them, even in the worst of weather. Next time you find yourself clinging to the weather rail, cold, nervous and sick, remind yourself it does not have to be that way.

Courtesy - The Economist. December 1997

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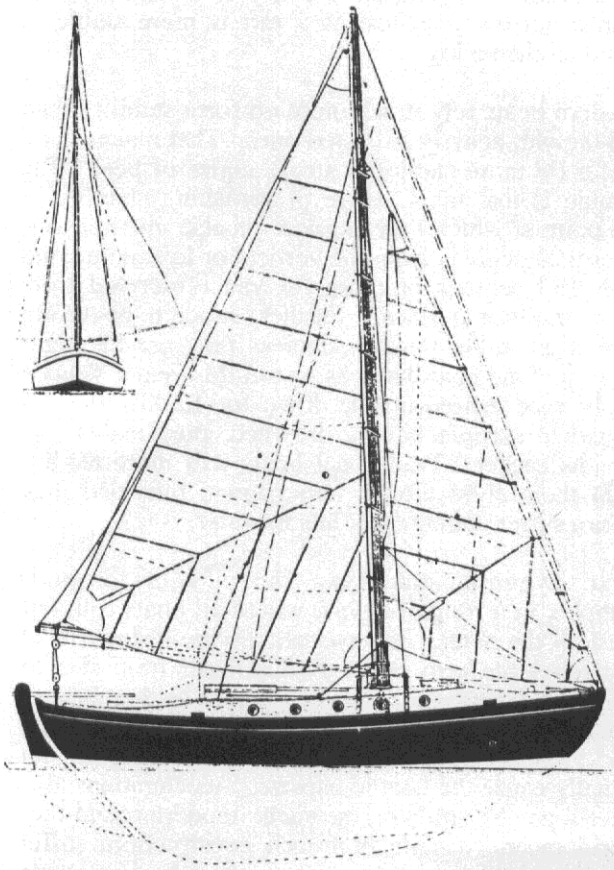
Some Remarks upon Amateur Yachtbuilding

BY

T. HARRISON BUTLER, A.I.N.A.

AFTER the war yachtbuilding will be expensive, and upkeep will be higher than it was in the late thirties. I think that more men will build their own yachts, and will now be beginning to consider what type will suit them best. Amateur boatbuilding is as old as the ages. Probably the Ark cannot be considered as boatbuilding, for she had the dimensions of the Great Eastern, but Homer, who knew all about the sea and ships, and loved them both, gives us the first account of the building of a boat by a single-handed amateur. He tells us in the Odyssey how Odysseus (Latinized as Ulysses) built a raft-like vessel to enable him to escape from his captivity by Calypso, the nymph who fell in love with him and tried to keep him from returning to his wife Penelope. Eventually Zeus ordered her to let him go, and she provided him with the tools and material for shipbuilding.

Here is the poem: "At early dawn the rosy-fingered Odysseus put on his coat and tunic, and the nymph donned a long robe, finely woven and magnificent. She encircled her waist with a golden girdle and veiled her head. She then planned the journey of great-hearted Odysseus. She gave him a great bronze axe, double edged and handy, fitted with a haft of olive wood securely fastened. Then she gave him a polished adze, and led him to the coast of the island, where grew tall trees, alder, poplar and fir, reaching skywards, dry for a long time and well seasoned. Such as would float lightly. When she had shown him where the tall trees grew, Calypso, the beautiful goddess, returned home. But Odysseus settled down to the job of felling timber, and the work continued rapidly. Twenty trees did he fell and trimmed with the bronze tool, smoothing them with skill and trueing them up with a carpenter's line. Meanwhile Calypso, the beautiful goddess, returned with augurs, and he dovetailed all the members, boring them and fastening with tree-nails. As a master loftsman lays out the flowing lines of a freight-ship broad of beam, even so did Odysseus plan his boat on beamy lines. Then he fitted the deck-beams, bolting them to the closely-spaced ribs, and, working hard, finished the craft with long bulwarks. Then he stepped the mast, complete with yard, and devised a steering paddle to guide the ship. Finally he rigged dodgers of willow withies to keep out spray, and strewed much brush (probably to make a comfortable bunk). Then Calypso, the beautiful goddess, brought him canvas to make a sail, and this too he fashioned in a workmanlike manner.



The sail plan is somewhat unusual.

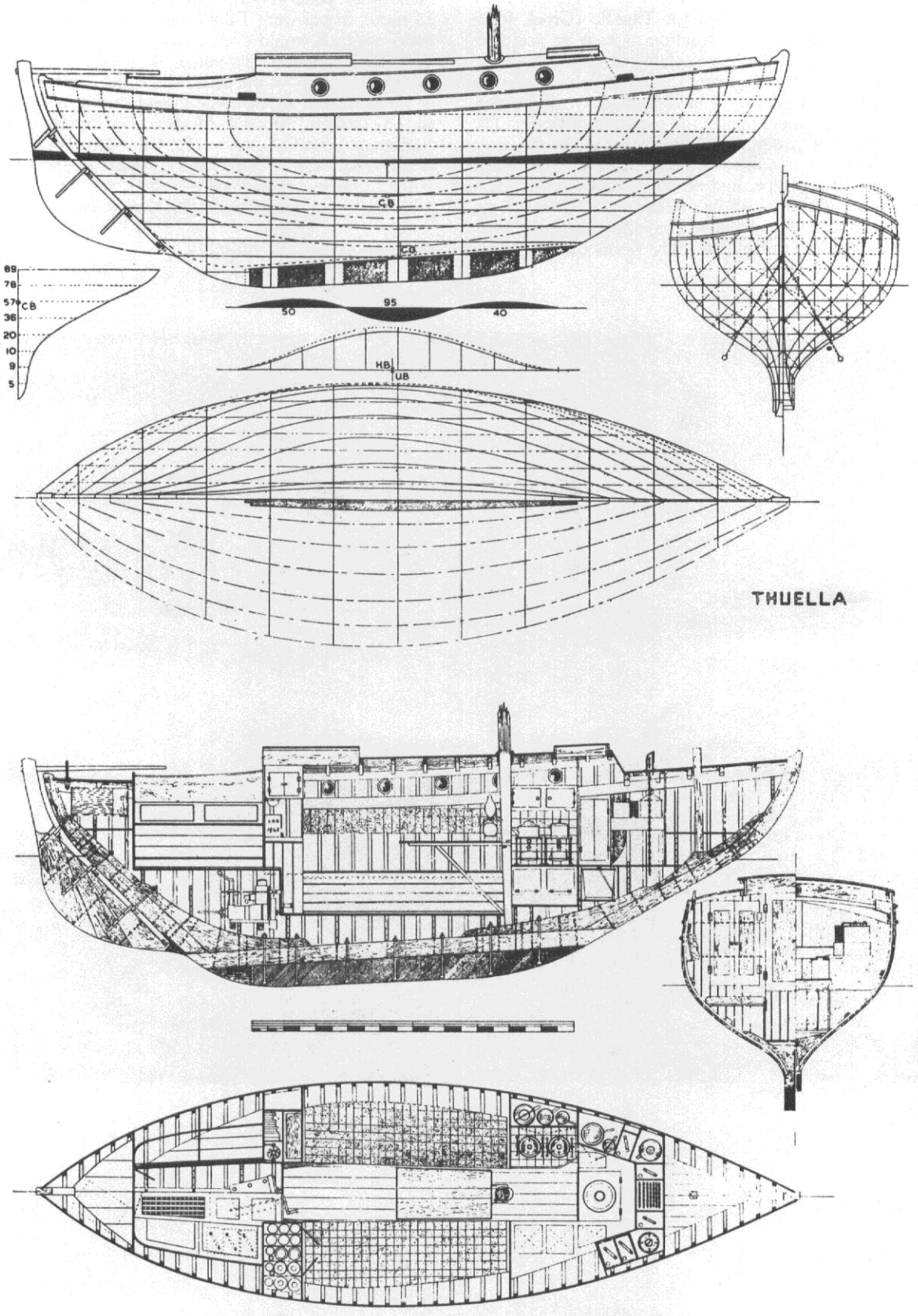
Then he rove off the braces, halyard and sheets, and with levers launched the vessel into the heavenly sea."

The account goes on to describe how Calypso victualled the ship with a skin of dark wine, another of water, and a wallet of provisions and dainties. She then gave him a good send-off with a gentle warm wind, and gave him sailing directions which were concise: "Keep the pole-star on your right hand."

Odysseus completed his work in four days, and made sail on the fifth—not bad going.

Yachtbuilding is a more serious business than this god-aided work, and needs much thought and consideration before the work commences. On the other hand, there is nothing that should frighten any man who can use carpenter's tools and has the necessary pertinacity and determination to complete the work.

If the prospective builder has not had any previous experience, I think that now would be a good time to make a scale model, say, 1½ in. to a foot. This will be a very good training and enable the constructor to see how the planks have to be spiled, the way the rabbets and bearding lines have to lie, and the directions of the mitres. He will be able to make an exact model of the whole of the planking, and when the real ship begins to take shape much of the work will have been done, and only a large-scale copy of each plank will have to be made. Much will have been learned of the frame, the deck beams and of the kneeing. Finally, the



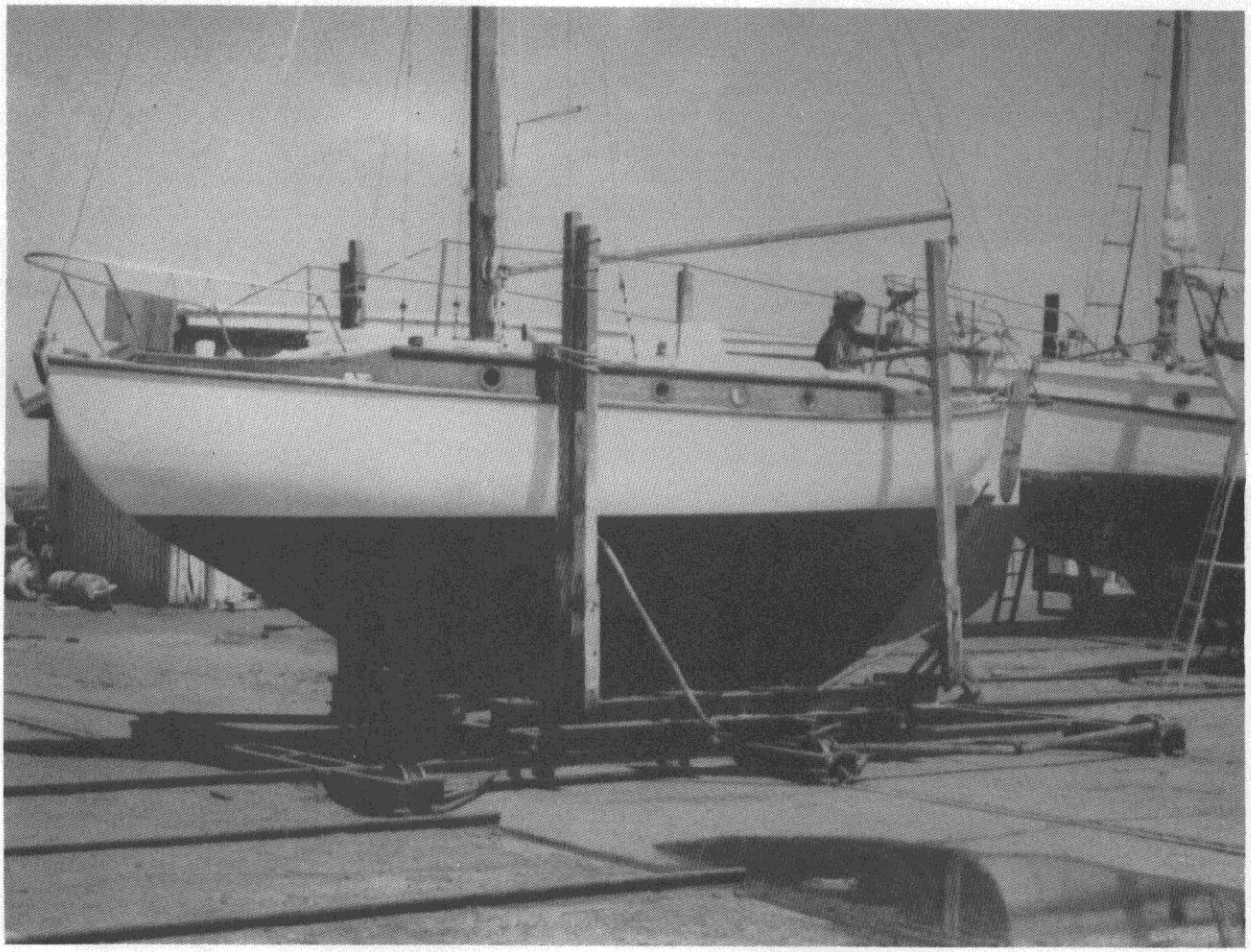
Dr. Harrison Butler thinks a little more sheer might have improved her, but this would add to the difficulty of planking.

model will enable the owner to plan out his accommodation exactly as he thinks best.

I have got out the design for Thuella (Greek for a whirlwind) to make the construction as easy as possible. The general type with the Norwegian stern is the simplest, and is also, for a small yacht, the most seaworthy, the strongest and the lightest. I have kept down the sheer, because excessive sheer makes the planking difficult. The frame is made of straight members, except for the stem and stern-post, which call for a single scarph. The keel is of the so-called log type, and no adze work is called for. In fact the whole frame can be marked out and sent to the sawmill to be finished. Finally, I have avoided long bolts with difficult boring operations. The floors can be of oak or of metal. I would not use iron bolts. Malleable bronze, "Dixtrudo," costs very little more in such a small craft. Say £5 more, in pre-war. I think that a lead keel is the best in every way. It would even today cost very little more than £20 and it maintains its value. It is easier to handle and brings the weight of the ballast very much lower than iron.

I recommend anyone who intends to begin boatbuilding to buy Edwin Monk's *Modern Boatbuilding* (Charles Scribners' Sons Ltd., price 10s. 6d.). He should also read *Small Yacht Construction and Rigging*, by the late Linton Hope. These articles were written by Linton Hope in 1901 and were published in the *Yachtsman.*

Courtesy - Yachting Monthly April 1944



'Thuella' ashore at Melbourne, Australia showing clearly her underwater lines

Vile Vire

By TERRY ABEL

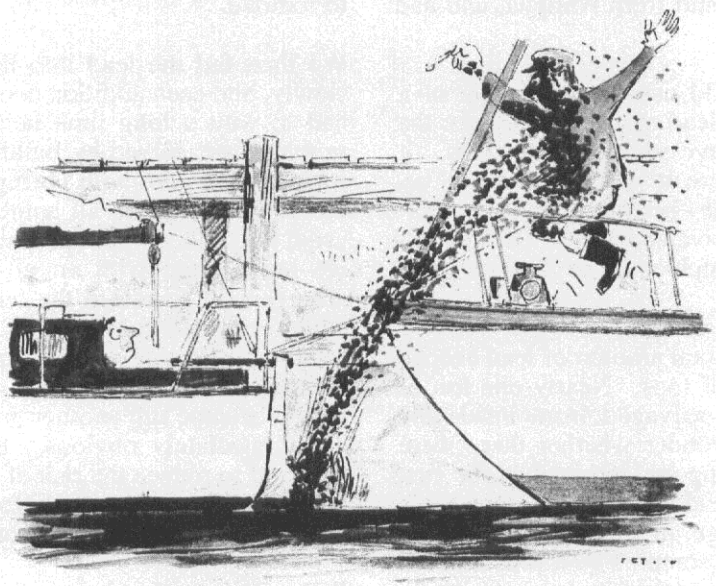
It sat there throbbing and gurgling in the engine bay, like a contented baby, doing what comes naturally, slurping water up the intake pipe and spewing it out in satisfying smokey gushes through the transom. Could this be the same rusty old lump that I had exhumed from the bowels of my Z4-tonner? Had it really burst back to life at the first turn of the key after my ham-fisted attention? I couldn't believe my eyes, my ears or my luck.

I strutted around the pontoons, grinning with idiotic pleasure and accosted fellow berth-holders with a cheery wave and a grin, anxious to share my good news. They mumbled encouraging things like 'Oh, it works then!' before remembering something urgent to attend to below, or at home, or anywhere...

The tide ebbed away out of the Blackwater and it was time to let the oystercatcher's plaintive call replace the steady throb of my trusty Vire 12. Silence reigned and life on the stagings returned to normal. In the next berth, Tim whistled softly as he painted the giant winch on his foredeck bright yellow. I put the kettle on. It was then I remembered that I hadn't tried the gearbox. But in that crystal moment I knew that the prop would only be half-submerged in the soft ooze. If I kept the water intake shut, I could run the engine for a few moments just to check the propeller actually turned.

My trembling hand turned the ignition key again and the engine burst instantly to life. I eased the gearshift forward and (oooh, deep joy) the shaft began to revolve. Then, above the roar of the engine, another sound rose, like the bellowing of a wounded beast.

A furtive glance from the companionway revealed a skyline familiar to everyone who has watched muck-spreaders at work. My eye followed the trajectory of the mud and on Tim's once pristine foredeck an animated oozy mass was jumping up and down, waving a paintbrush dementedly. I just caught the last strains of the bellowing, 'IT STILL !@#+ING WORKS THEN!'



Yonne's New Keel

By TIMOTHY JARDINE-BROWN

In 1933 when *'Yonne'* was built England was in recession, and the price of lead if not through and onto the roof, was such that iron was a cheaper and more accessible alternative. T.H.B. had anticipated the problem by drawing the ballast keel to be cast in either lead or iron. Mr. A. W. Clemens of Portsmouth cast the iron keel to the lead keel pattern which was narrower in section below, but the same length. This accounts for the fact that for all her sailing life, *'Yonne's'* entire bilge space from the wooden keel to the cabin sole has been filled with carefully shaped flat pigs of lead. *'Yonne's'* owners in the 1950's, Mr. and Mrs. John Booth of Burnham-on-Crouch, did admit to me that any water shipped had to be pumped out very promptly if the cabin was to remain dry.

When in 1992 Wendy and I bought *'Yonne'* she had been lying derelict for about six years, with her after deadwood askew - the lower end of the rudder had worked away on rusting bolts securing the deadwood to the wooden keel and stern-post, fracturing the bolts, and splitting the deadwood.

The survey required removal of the deck, the replacement of several deck beams, the doubling of some fifty frames - she had been squeezed in Flushing (Netherlands) forty years ago - and splining and epoxying the otherwise sound pitch-pine planking. Her interior had been modified to allow transatlantic crossings to and from Antigua, and had to be stripped out.

We decided that we would use the advantage of a relatively lower price for lead today, and replace the iron keel. This would have several advantages. It would put the metal where it was designed to be, make a slightly stiffer boat - her mast is not far short of 50 feet tall when you have added her VHF aerial - and leave a bilge space which could be used for more interesting storage.

It was calculated that the total amount of lead needed was about three and a half tons. Nearly one ton of this came from the pigs salvaged from inside the hull, which makes one wonder whether there were any savings at all in having an iron keel in the first place. Sources of scrap lead were explored, and it is curious to see the change in value when one is buying rather than selling scrap. I then remembered that one of my surgery receptionists is married to a demolition contractor, and lead came in multifarious forms for a sum that left both parties satisfied.

The problem of casting exercised many minds for long hours. The last foundry in Rye had closed several years ago. The difficulty of transporting the iron keel and lead to a yard where there were both the facilities and the expertise was one of logistics and cost. It was decided to cast on site. This raised two questions. How was the mould to be constructed and how was the lead to be melted and poured. There was a certain urgency in this, because the pile of lead, although disguised under tarpaulins, was an open target for thieves, and a three and a half ton ingot is more difficult to take away.

The final solution was to construct a mould in steel and melt the lead in it. Paper patterns were taken off the iron keel, and from them 2mm sheet steel plates were cut on a guillotine by hand. These were welded, and cross-braced with one inch angle pieces. Two and a half miles of welding wire went into the construction. To close off the stern end a separate plate was bolted to it, and angle iron was bolted across the top of the mould at one foot intervals to prevent lateral sag as the mould was filled.

The mould was supported on steel bars one inch thick on concrete blocks, and levelled. Coalite was laid in a hearth under the whole length of the mould and lit. When the mould was hot, a heat-resisting clay paint was applied to the inside, and followed by a layer of graphite paint. This was to prevent the lead from sticking, and to make the keel easier to remove.

We then fed the lead into the mould but it melted slowly, and each addition cooled the mass so that we had to wait a long time before adding more. The problem was solved by building a fire of Coalite all round the mould, with corrugated iron and concrete block shielding. In all some 300kg of Coalite was used, but 250kg would probably have been enough if we had started with an all-round fire. The new arrangement so raised the temperature that the lead could be added continuously. This was not without hazard. Moisture in old pipes could send molten lead to splatter 30 feet away on a brick wall. As the mould became full another problem arose which was not immediately obvious. In order to contain the heat and to reduce the risk of splashing, the lead was introduced into a small aperture between corrugated iron sheets covering the top of the mould.

It was then noticed that molted lead was pouring over the stern of the mould. The fierce heat, which was increased by the use of an electric blower, had caused the supporting steel bars under the mould to melt and bend. The main mass of lead being at the stern, this had sagged.

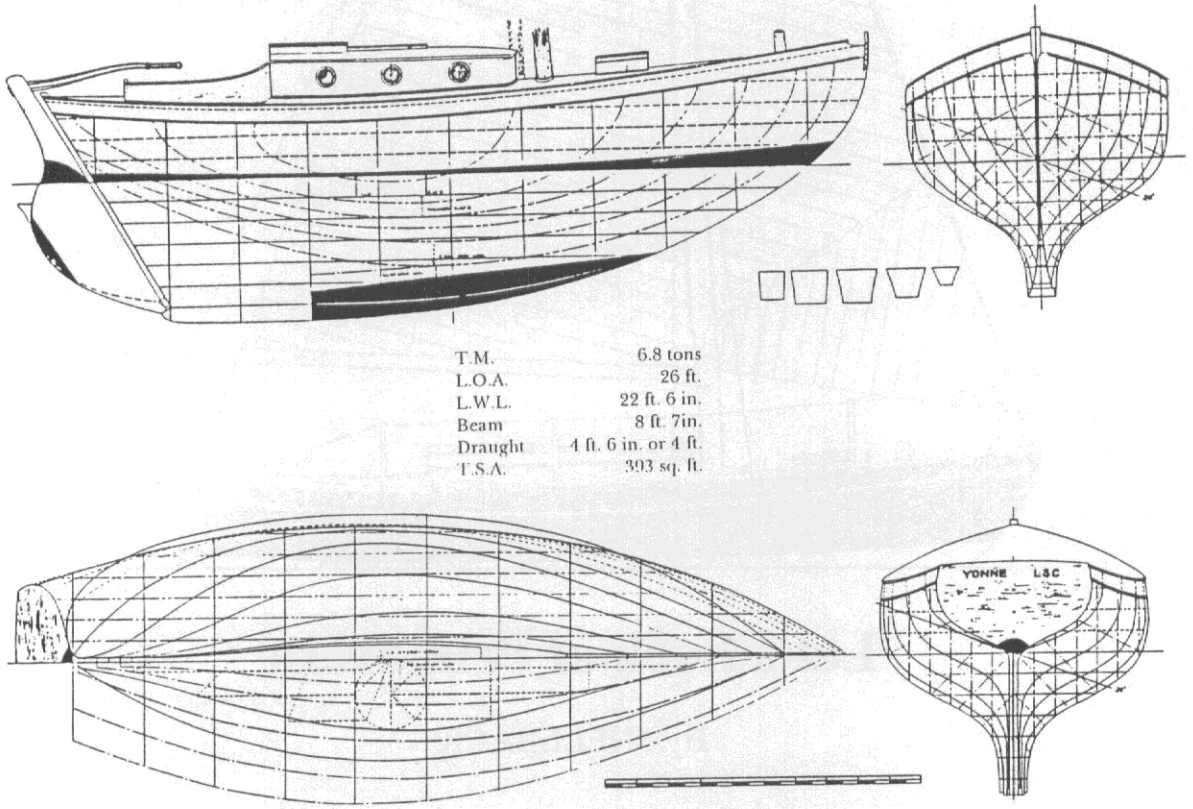
With levers and wedges the stern was propped up to nearly its proper level and more lead added. Once full, the fire was raked away, and what was revealed left us feeling there was a guardian angel looking after us. All the supporting bars were seriously bent by the heat, and the concrete supports had crumbled to coarse powder. The mould was left to cool for the next four days. In cooling the centre part of the lead contracted leaving a void and depression in the top. This was explored with an air-chisel, and filled with some of the surplus lead, heated in a large ladle.

The bolts holding the cross bars were knocked off, and the keel tipped out - a JCB in use for another job on the site was pressed into service for this. It was then found that the undersurface of the keel was not flat as planned, but convex owing to the temperature

a layer of neoprene was introduced as a gasket between the wooden keel and the new lead ballast keel. After bolting the keels together they were aired up with an adze. There is enough lead left over to cast into trimming pigs should these be needed.

It remains to finish *'Yonne'*, and restore her to her original cutter rig, with a longer bowsprit than she has had for the last 20 years, and a boomed staysail. When at last she sails again we shall know whether the labours and ideas of the last six years have brought her back more closely to the vision of her designer.

The debate about the treatment of the hull will linger on for many years. Does one caulk planking with cotton and compound, or does one rout, spline and epoxy? Time will tell us some of the answers,



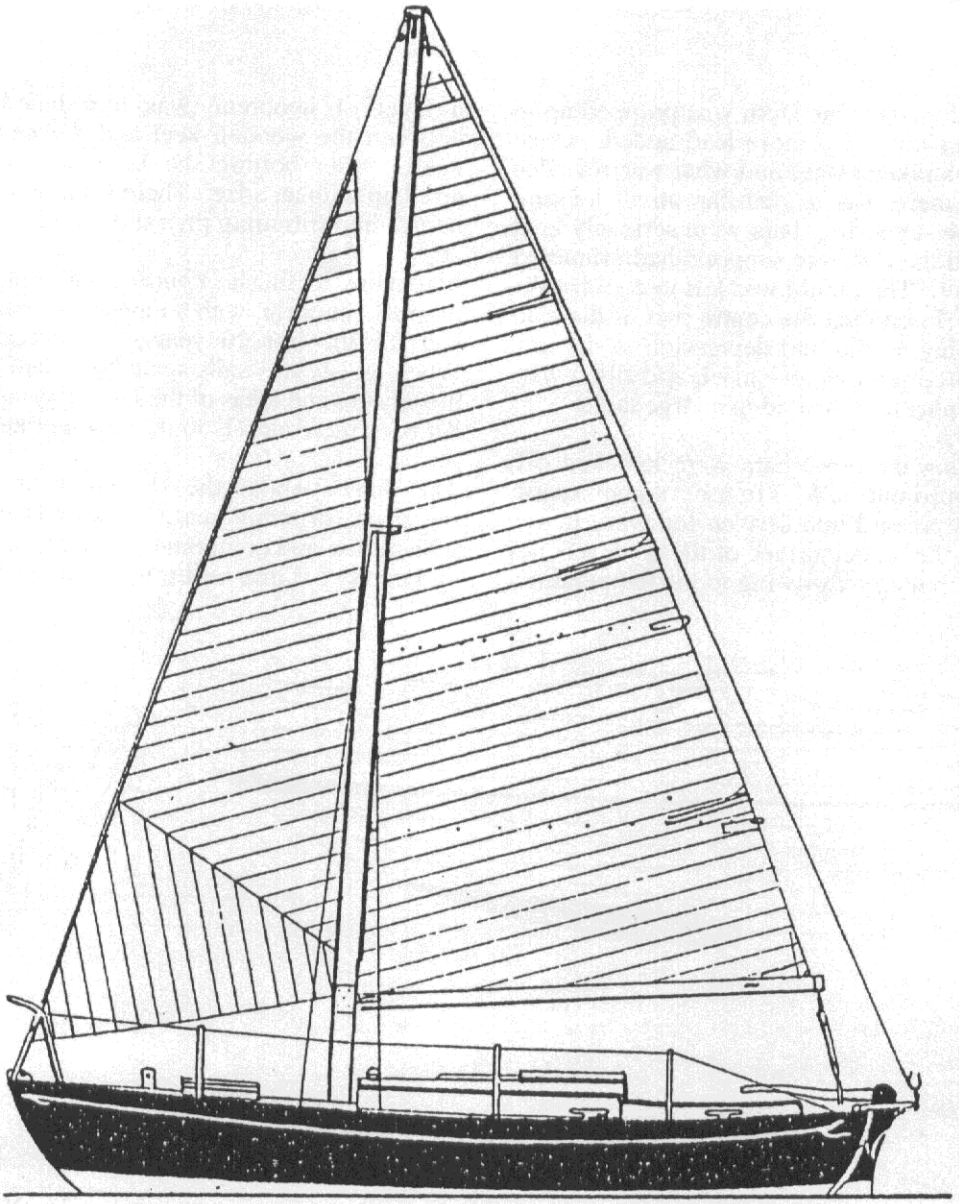
T.M.	6.8 tons
L.O.A.	26 ft.
L.W.L.	22 ft. 6 in.
Beam	8 ft. 7in.
Draught	4 ft. 6 in. or 4 ft.
T.S.A.	393 sq. ft.

YONNE

and mass of lead bulging the bottom of the mould. The top and bottom surfaces of the keel were planed smooth, as was the undersurface of the wooden keel. The new keel was manoeuvred into place on two well-greased steel runners.

The original holes through the wooden keel were filled, and new holes bored through the new oak floors, the wooden keel and the lead ballast keel using a 1 1/8" auger which had belonged originally to the South Eastern Railway. This auger, contemporary with *'Yonne'*, was so well forged that it needed sharpening only about four times in the whole operation. Before fixing new iron keel bolts,

but the surveyor is sympathetic to old wooden boats, and Lloyds are happy. The strict purist I would answer with questions. Is he prepared to forgo terylene sails for cotton canvas and go back to natural fibre for all his running rigging? Will he eschew stainless steel and Tufnol and use only galvanised iron and naval bronze? Will he refuse to sail with a radio, a GPS or a depthsounder? T.H.B. was always exploring new ideas and materials and did not live in a time-warp himself. The design was the important immutable element, to which one must add workmanship of high quality. *'Yonne'* should now be able to sail for many more decades, probably stronger than when she was first built.



Let's Look at Primavera

By SHELLBACK

Owner:	John Petersen
Designer:	Harrison Butler
Builder:	B. T. Close and John Petersen, Hobart
L.O.A:	24′
L.W.L:	19′
Beam:	7′
Draught:	4′
Sail Area:	275 square feet

'Primavera' is the name chosen for this attractive little cruising sloop, built in Hobart to a design by the English Naval architect, Harrison Butler. The name has rather special significance, as literally translated it means Spring - and *'Primavera'* was launched on the first day of spring, 1955.

Harrison Butler is perhaps best known in Australia for his metacentric shelf theory, which he has used in most of his yacht designs. Briefly, this theory supposes that the steering of a yacht is relatively affected by the distribution of displacement, when the yacht is heeled. Whilst this is not accepted generally by all Naval architects - perhaps because it is not based on scientific fact - Harrison Butler has designed most of his boats around it, and they have taken on a certain characteristic, which can be found in all his work. *'Primavera'* is no exception as she has the typical full sections and nicely balanced ends of all his cruising boats and is delightful to sail at any angle of heel. She has almost no helm on any point of sailing and could truthfully be described as a well-balanced yacht.

The hull was built by B. T. Close in Hobart and John Petersen, the owner, completed the building and fitting out. It is double diagonal planked of Huon pine with a total thickness of 3/4". There are no timbers in the construction, but five stringers of blue gum, each side, have been used. Blue gum has been used for all the main structural scantlings, including the stem and stern posts, which have been built up. Eight heavy ti-tree floors, which extend right up to bunk level, add to the great strength of the hull. In all, twenty-seven grown knees have been used, which indicates the sound and heavy construction of *'Primavera'*.

The deck is of half-inch marine plywood, canvas covered, and the low coach-house, which has no ports to leak, is of Huon pine. The cockpit is self-draining, with seats at deck level. Copper fastenings have been used throughout, including the keel bolts which distribute the weight of the one-and-a-quarter tons of lead ballast through the floor timbers to the entire hull.

The interior layout of this yacht is one of the most perfect to be found in such a small vessel. A chain locker is situated right in the bow, with spurling pipe on deck. Then comes a locker for sails, which is bulkheaded off from the cabin. A tunnel entrance through the bulkhead allows access to the sails. A marine toilet, of under water action, is placed beneath the fore hatch. Aft of this is a partial bulkhead to port and opposite is an adequately proportioned clothes locker, quite capable of housing the going ashore rig for the crew. The after side of the clothes locker houses a small library, with access from the main cabin.

The main saloon has as its outstanding feature a built-in dinette to starboard, with seating accommodation for four, and which can be converted into a bunk at short notice. Opposite is a bunk, which is seven feet in length, with shelf behind. The galley, on the port side just inside the hatch-way, has a two-burner kerosene stove on gimbals, a sink and a good layout of lockers for all cooking and eating utensils, plus food storage.

On the starboard side is a quarter berth which, unlike most of this type, is very easy to climb into and out of.

Forty gallons of water are carried in two tanks under the cockpit floor. A most novel feature here is the filler pipes, which are in the cockpit floor, and enable rain water to be used to top off the tanks when on a prolonged cruise. This is done by closing off the self-draining cocks and opening the water tank inlets. Whilst this may not be an entirely new feature, I have never seen it used on any other Sydney yacht, though it is a cleverly thought out arrangement.

On deck *'Primavera'* is very business-like. The mast, which measures 34' overall, is of hollow oregon with a maximum dimension of 5" x 6". Walls are one inch thick and an internal luffrope track is used both on the mast and boom. Only one crosstree is used in staying the mast, and no runners are used. A permanent backstay has proved sufficient so far to keep the mast in an upright position. The sail plan shows a mast head sloop rig, with a total area of 275 square feet.

Deck fittings include a pulpit at the bow, of very functional shape and life rails at a satisfactory height. At the stern a fabricated metal fitting of hoop shape extends beyond the rudder head, to take the backstay, and also serves to take a rollock for a sweep. The steering compass is safely housed in the lid of a hatch in the stern deck - where ropes are stored - and is protected by a strong glass cover.

Auxiliary power is supplied by a very large sweep oar, and a strong right arm, and can move the boat at two knots in a dead calm, after a little practice.

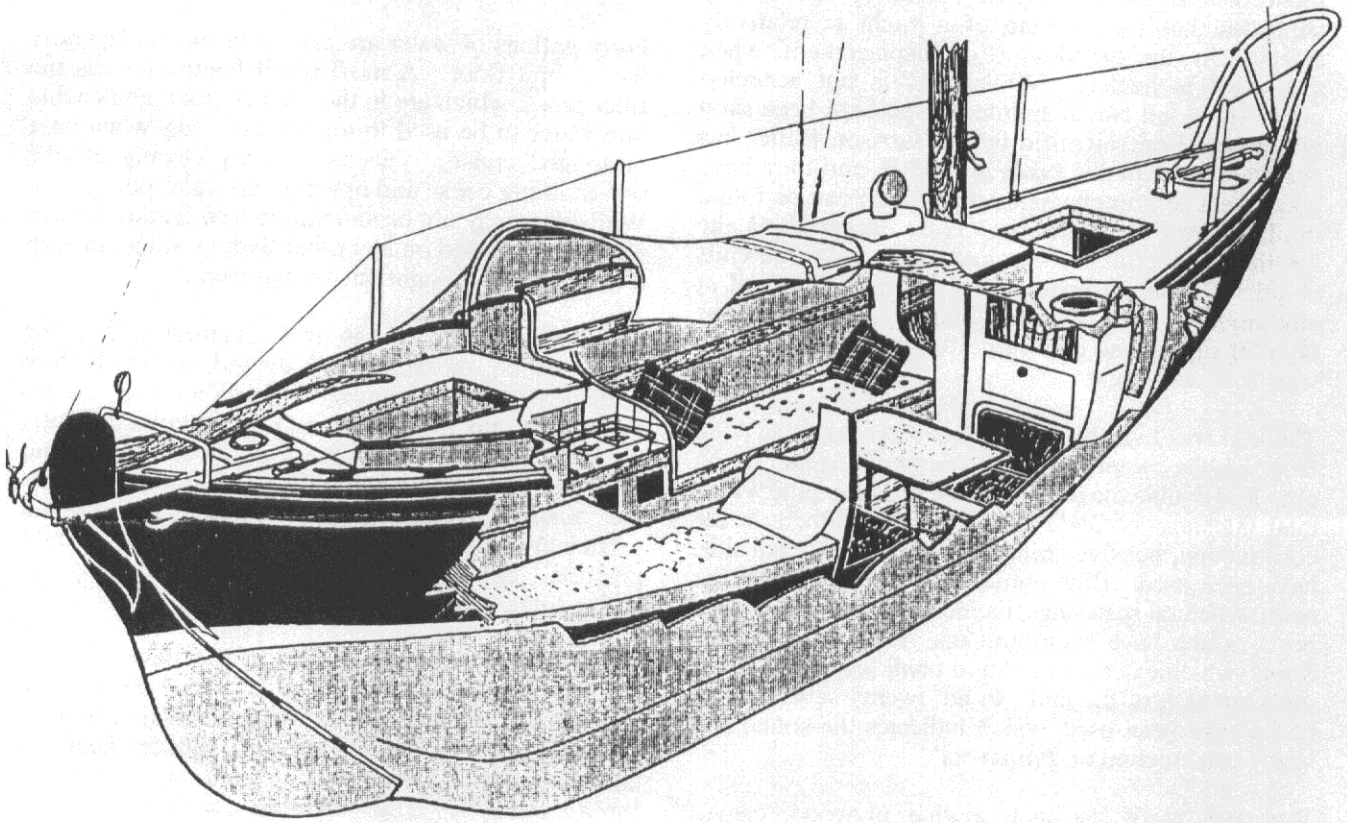
'Primavera', although only launched in 1955, has put many hundreds of miles of ocean under her keel. She cruised the East and South coasts of Tasmania extensively, before being sailed to Sydney. This trip was completed in five and a half days' sailing time, although heavy conditions prevailed for the greater part of the voyage. The crew of two, John Petersen and Max Graham, found her very easy to handle and capable of looking after herself in rough seas. Since then, *'Primavera'* has been racing with the Junior Offshore Group, and was placed in each of the first three races.

'Primavera' can be described as an ideal small ocean cruiser, and almost perfect for single handed sailing, or lengthy ocean passages with a small compliment.

The colourful interior decor, roomy and intelligent accommodation, and distinctive royal blue topsides with gold leaf trim, make her one of the outstanding yachts of her length in Australian waters.

Courtesy - Power Boat & Yachting

November 1957



Small - But Efficient

By STEVE G. SIMPSON

Three years ago a trim 24′ double-ender, rail down in a welter of tumbling foam, appeared like a ghost out of the driving rain off Newcastle harbour; squared away and ran hell-bent for the bar.

John Petersen had arrived - from Hobart!

He had picked a real scorcher of a day on which to arrive. The port had been closed for 12 hours to all vessels, and only the previous afternoon a lone, intrepid would-be round-the-worlder had been plucked out of the harbour entrance only a second before his waterlogged 36-footer had plunged abruptly to the bottom. (The same intrepid gentleman was waiting for John at the wharf when he tied up, and made him a spontaneous present of his sole surviving possession - a 15-foot sculling oar which John still treasures and which is known to members of Sydney's Junior Offshore Group today as Young Pete's Armstrong Engine!).

That 52-day Hobart-Newcastle passage three years ago was *'Primavera's'* first real taste of blue water - but she's more than had her share of it since with the J.O.G., of which John is a foundation member. She's a grand little ship, and John Petersen loves her. He should; having assisted building her himself over 18 months spent in Hobart after he had paid off as crew on the Fisheries vessel *'Derwent Hunter'*.

During the intervening years she's sailed regularly, both with the J.O.G. and in various club events; and John, a commercial artist, has made full use of her remarkably comprehensive accommodation by living aboard where she lies at her North-side Sydney mooring.

'Primavera' is 24ft l.o.a., 19ft l.w.l., 7ft beam and 4ft draught. She is double-diagonal planked of Huon

pine; giving a total skin thickness, including japara interlining, of 3/4". No ribs or frames are used in her construction; her planking being laid on stringers, five a side. All nails, placed from inside the hull, are set out in careful geometric pattern; and her thoroughness of construction is shown by the manner in which, after three years and several thousand miles of hard sailing, she still carries dust (and a few shavings) in her bilge!

A constant performer in competition, she wears a masthead sloop rig and has adequate pulpits around both forestay and permanent backstay. Both of these are linked by high life-rails, for safety at sea. Her sail plan is excellently balanced in practice, and her 145 sq. ft. jib takes her to windward easily in both light and heavy winds. Total sail area is 325 sq. ft. - although, under J.O.G. rules, John has added a 200 sq. ft. masthead genoa and plans soon to cut and make a spinnaker in his spare time.

All gear has been planned for easy working - there being no necessity for runners - and a winch is affixed to the mast as a time-saver. *'Primavera'* sails like a dream singlehanded, although for most of his racing Petersen has carried two, sometimes three, for a crew.

Two shrouds, plus a topmast shroud, support the hollow mast, which John carved laboriously from selected oregon and which has an internal track. No roller reefing is fitted. The reason for this, according to John, is that the simplest method of reefing *'Primavera'* is simply to drop the main, and sail on under fores'l alone. Her normal storm rig, however, is jib and trysail, and under this she stands up well and performs creditably.

As John puts it: "She's an easy ship to drive, and reaches her designed speed remarkably quickly - after which there's no sense in my trying to push her".

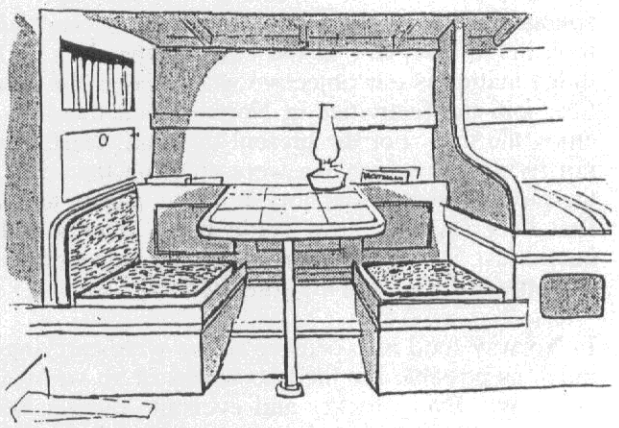
The most interesting feature of *'Primavera'*, however, is the manner in which full three-berth accommodation, plus galley and underwater head, have been obtained in a vessel of only 19ft waterline!

Going below, one sees a miniature dinette to port, opposite a full-length settee bunk to starboard. Above the dinette, which doubles both as a bunk and as a chart table, is a full-length bookshelf on which Petersen also carries his transistor radio receiver.

For'ard, at mast-level, is a bulkhead to 'midships, behind which is a wardrobe with ample space to hang an overcoat. Right for'ard again is stowage, with the head mounted beneath the hatch.

Aft, beneath the main hatch and to starboard, is a full sized tiled galley with two-burner primus stove (gimballed when at sea), and full cupboard space for provisions. Further aft again is a stainless steel sink with gravity drainage and a pump mounted directly above the water tankage - which in *'Primavera'* comprises two galvanised tanks (total 40 gallons) and reposes where the engine "ought" to be, beneath the cockpit sole.

The third berth is a quarter-berth lying to port, and this has large locker space beneath it.



Headroom beneath the coachhouse (7' 6" x 4', leaving side decks of 18") is about 5' 2" and there is ample sitting headroom beneath the side decks when dining or when sitting on the settee berth. *'Primavera'* is deceptive in that, going below, one can easily believe one is entering the saloon of a 28 - 30ft vessel.

The cockpit is roomy enough for four persons, the seating of whom do not appear to affect *'Primavera's'* balance in the least, and is self-bailing. The compass is set aft of the cockpit in the hatch-cover of the after paint locker. Decks are of canvas-covered ply, and are fully watertight. In fact, the only water John has had aboard is the occasional drenching which has splashed down through the open hatch - and he is taking steps to rectify this contingency by building a watertight overall hatch cover which will also embody a canvas dodger extending aft to the cockpit.

In Norwegian style, the mainsheet horse is carried right aft, and beyond it, on the after pulpit, are two row-locks for light-air sculling - a job at which John is extremely proficient, being able to make *'Primavera'* move at well over a knot with seemingly little effort.

Essential measurements of *'Primavera's'* above-deck gear are: Mast height 30ft above deck; hoist 26ft; mainsail area 180 sq ft. A single crosstree is fitted to the mast, as well as a crosstree-height sheave.

Courtesy - Seacraft December 1958

Norway 97

By NEAL HILL

At noon on Friday 1st August *'Naiad'* joined the fleet of yachts at The Royal Northumberland YC at Blyth for the start of the North Sea Race to Norway.

A moderate North Westerly breeze saw the spinnakers set on the racing boats and soon *'Naiad'* took her usual place at the back of the fleet. This didn't matter as our objective was to cross the North Sea, join the festivities in Norway, and most of all enjoy the trip. For the present by hand steering and not flying the ensign we were entering the spirit of the race. The sun was hot, shorts *de rigeur*, and the first beer saw the crew settle down after a rather hectic last few days of preparation. Onboard were myself as skipper and my sons Ben and Nat.

In Norway food is expensive so we were carrying as much as possible for the two weeks or so we would be away. Every locker and even the quarter berth was packed such that the boot topping had all but disappeared. Thursday we had sailed to Blyth. There was a pre-race briefing which included a met briefing which turned out to be mainly accurate but did under-forecast the winds for the later part of the crossing; maybe this was just as well! Friday morning saw the last preparations carried out in rain, but this cleared along with the arrival of the next problem. How do you get a quart into a pint pot when they are cases of spirits, packs of canned beer, and heaps of tobacco, cigars, or cigarettes depending on preference. The bond had arrived and made an impressive pile on the quay; some boats were more impressive than others.

During Friday afternoon and night we carried the North Westerly and by Saturday morning we were over a hundred miles out and not doing so badly as there were other yachts not so far away. Over the morning the wind eased and finally died completely. The shipping forecast talked of the high pressure system that we were in the middle of remaining stationary and intensifying with light and variable winds. This is OK for the racing yachts but not *'Naiad'*. We hoisted the ensign, started the engine and retired from the race. Busby the autopilot was put in charge and we motored in hot sunshine over a calm sea.

That night as we motored through the gas and oil fields, the sky was full of stars, there were many shooting stars, we were joined by dolphins, and the oil rigs were impressive with their lights and gas flares. Suddenly the engine stopped with a thump; we had a rope around the propeller. Fortunately it was cleared without going over the side and we brought onboard a length of large diameter red rope smelling of fishing boat. What we wished on the unfortunate who had put it in the sea. It appeared there was no damage, although later we found the gearbox leaking oil and eventually a bent propeller and other problems. For the time being we continued under engine.

By afternoon a breeze filled from the North and we were sailing. The Northerly continued to increase in strength and the sea to build. By night we were storming along with a first reef in and water breaking on deck and phosphorescence everywhere. A second reef was taken in the main and this, with the staysail, was as much sail as we would wish to carry. Eventually the jib decided it too should come in as the wire halyard parted and since it is set flying on *'Naiad'*, ended up in the sea streaming alongside. It was recovered onboard and without we continued to storm along. Porridge cooked with jellyfish - dried apricots - for breakfast was very welcome and by mid-morning the wind was moderating and the sea taking off although many were still taking the short route across the deck. In the cockpit there was shelter and away from the spray it was again hot in the sunshine.

By noon we could see cumulus type cloud ahead and guessed this was Norway about fifty miles away. By mid-afternoon the wind had eased but a second swell coming from the East out of the Skagerrak on top of the Northerly was making for a confused sea. Eventually the wind died and we motored across a calming sea the last few miles to Mandal, crossing the finish line off Hatholmen Lighthouse at 21.46 hours Norwegian time. We joined the rest of the fleet in Mandal harbour where the inevitable party was in full swing onboard one of the larger yachts. An hour later the last yacht arrived, behind us only because they had sat out the calm for longer than we had.

Over a few beers the stories came from the other yachts. One had lost his rudder forty miles out and when the jury steering failed to work had to request a tow from a Norwegian lifeboat. One yacht with wind instruments confirmed the wind had blown at over 30 knots for twenty hours with a spell at over 37 knots. Many had been wet, but everyone agreed it had been a terrific sail, even two of the crew on one boat who were dinghy sailors until the start of the race. As usual the bigger boats had sailed faster and missed all the fun by sailing ahead of the calm and getting in before the gale.

The reception in Norway was tremendous. We were welcomed by the Mayor, Harbour Master, Mandal

Sailing Club, Mandal Kystlag, the Tourist Information Office and our organiser in Mandal, the original Viking, Reidar Eeg. *'Naiad'* had a fourth crew member when Judi my wife joined us. Mandal held its Shellfish Festival which was fun with stalls and amusements along the sea front. Particular attractions were the Shrimp Peeling World Championships, and the largest shellfish table in the world. We had a grandstand view from the quay, we ate shellfish and crabs, and out hosts ensured we were not charged harbour dues.

Our own party and prize giving was held on a small island, Hatholmen. What a place; twenty yachts alongside wooden jetties in a narrow passage between two small rocky islands. The tidal range of half a metre at springs made it easy. The water was clear and warm encouraging many to swim, with the more adventurous jumping from a rock about ten metres above the sea. The party went on late with a barbecue and two dustbins of crabs boiled over a fire.

We visited the island of Skernoy for another barbecue and more crabs, this time hosted by Terje (pron. Tire) Petterson. This was near to heaven with a memorable morning row, or swim, across the inlet to the toilet with a view. We enjoyed a conducted walk around the island and a visit to Ryvingen lighthouse. Several boats left to cruise further, but *'Naiad'* stayed so the crew could spend a day with Vesla and her family. She spent a year with us as au pair when Ben and Nat were little boys and they hadn't seen her for twenty years. We visited Risøbank, an estate outside Mandal which used to belong to the Christian Salvesen family and where Judi worked during a college holiday.

The passage home was idyllic with a southerly blowing force three to four for two days. The sun shone and the sky was crowded with stars at night. The sea was alight with phosphorescence and there were no incidents. Busby the autopilot steered and the crew read or slept, depending on preference. An incident, amusing now, occurred when we were about eighty miles from Norway. A Norwegian naval vessel crossed our stern about half a mile off heading South. I was below when I heard from the cockpit "What...is he doing?" There it was, quarter of a mile ahead, stopped, and pointing across our bow. "He's flying a signal flag" which through the binoculars was 'L'. Into the almanac to see the meaning... 'You should stop your vessel instantly'. We continued sailing slowly and after observing us for a few minutes it sailed off across our bow. We were thinking what if we had been sailing faster and not stopped. Would he have fired across our bow? From what we were told in Norway there is a lot of anti-drugs surveillance off the coast.

The wind fell light by the third day and we had haze and fog so we had to be more careful with the lookout. We motored the last eighty miles across a calm sea, arriving off Amble at low water. While waiting for water to enter we telephoned customs. "I don't think we will bother coming out" they said, and put in a radio call to the Coastguard to advise them we were home.

Yet More Thoughts From An Ex-Editor

Looking at boats for sale can be a pleasant pastime provided you have no intention of buying. It's a different matter if you are seriously searching for your next dreamship. First impressions are most important. If the boat is in a marina the state of the fenders can often give a good indication as to the overall standard of maintenance. If they are stained from past encounters with tar encrusted piles or quays with a tide line of crude oil; if the lanyards are tatty with unwhipped ends and knotted instead of neatly spliced then there is a good chance the rest of the boat is similar.

There are proprietary fender cleaners to be found in the classy chandlers. These work but are expensive. The better alternative is paint brush cleaner and reviver from your local hardware store or DIY emporium. Wear rubber gloves and apply the cleaner with a 'Scotchbrite' pad or similar. Wash off with warm soapy water. For really stubborn stains a couple of applications may be needed.

Although the stuff really works male enthusiasts are warned not to be caught with the bath full of dirty fenders. This can lead to marital discord.

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One of the great pleasures in life is meeting someone who is a real expert in his subject. I once met two in the same year, 1975. This is how it happened.

We used to fit out our previous boat in a yard on Chichester Harbour. The proprietors of the yard were always somewhat disappointed that we did all our own work. One year we ran out of time so I asked them to do a top overhaul on our Petter Diesel. When we launched the flow of cooling water seemed less than it had been previously. The yard engineer could offer no explanation but thinking that maybe the impellor was worn I fitted a replacement. At the time we were running instructional cruises covering the coast from Holyhead to Lowestoft, Ijmuiden to Cameret, and were often away from base for six or eight weeks.

The first cruise was only around the Solent so I contacted Petters, who in those days had a depot at Hamble, and arranged for them to send an engineer down to a convenient marina. Two characters arrived in smart overalls with the Petter logo across the back. After running the engine and looking at the cooling water discharge they announced that a new thermostat was needed. This was fitted and we sailed to Plymouth with an easterly wind. No need for the engine.

We were lucky with the winds over the next few weeks and the engine was only used for short periods negotiating crowded harbours where 'doing it under sail', while possible, was also risky and arguably un-seamanlike.

I was still not happy with the engine when we set off on our next series of courses which included a fortnight on the Dutch canals. The wind which had served so well earlier in the season now became light and variable so we motored to keep up to schedule. The engine seemed to be running much hotter than usual and by the time we reached the East Coast it was obvious something was very wrong. The engineer at Bradwell Marina recommended removing the thermostat. This made no difference. Then our luck changed.

There were some current yachting magazines on board and in one I noticed that Fairways Marine at Maldon, further up the Blackwater, were Petter stockists. They promised to send a Petter service engineer next day.

By now we had a pretty poor opinion of alleged marine engineers. Hence next day we waited for the next one without much hope. His initial appearance did not inspire confidence. He was wearing a pair of agricultural wellies and carrying a plastic bucket. It was only as he stepped aboard that I noticed the bucket was full of spanners.

"What's the problem?" he asked. I explained about the limited flow of cooling water and the hot engine. He withdrew the oil dipstick and rubbed the oil between his fingers. It was yellow and watery. "Uh" he said "looks like the cylinder head gaskets have gone. You've got water in the sump. Let's get to work".

We spread newspaper on the cockpit seats and he started to strip the engine down. He worked quickly and neatly keeping all the bits belonging to each cylinder separate from one another. The cause of the problem was soon revealed. The 'engineer' who had done the original top overhaul had failed to torque up the cylinder head nuts correctly. Cooling water had seeped into the cylinders and then down into the sump.

The damage was extensive. Securicor were recruited to collect new pistons, connecting rods and cylinder liners from the Petter stores at Staines. Meanwhile the cylinder heads were cleaned up and new valves ground-in. It was now Friday afternoon and a new crew would be joining at 2.00 p.m. next day for the passage to Holland.

The replacement parts arrived early Saturday morning and the engine was re-assembled. It started first press of the button and the cooling water was back to normal. We expected the engineer to tidy up and depart. But he was much more thorough. "Cast off" he ordered "let's go and belt this engine for an hour to be absolutely sure".

We motored up and down while he checked the engine revs and made delicate adjustments to the fuel rack connections. "Right, that's it then - nothing wrong with this engine now - look after it and it will run for years". He strode off up the pontoon with his bucket of spanners and a bottle of duty-free brandy from our last trip to France. Expert number one.

Our new crew arrived a few minutes later and we duly explored the Dutch canals. We kept the same boat until 1993 and the engine never once let us down.

That expensive episode made me realise how little we knew about diesel engines. Previous boats, if they had engines, were fitted with Stuart Turner two-strokes. If they failed to start the trick was to pencil the points of the spark plug and swing the handle a bit faster. When that failed you just relied on sail.

The following winter the local College of Further Education advertised an evening class for yachtsmen on the maintenance of auxiliary engines and other mechanical equipment. Now, as many readers will have experienced for themselves, evening classes can be somewhat of a gamble. Some have a large social content with a few minutes light-heartedly devoted to the subject matter. Others are run by lecturers who have already spent a full day in the class-room but need the extra money so go through the motions again with a class of adults, proving the old definition that a lecture is a process by which the notes of the lecturer become the notes of the student without passing through the minds of either.

We duly enrolled and met our instructor. He was a big man, 6' 3" tall, and broad with it. After gaining a degree in engineering he joined the Fleet Air Arm as a trainee pilot. Too bulky to fit the cockpit of a fixed wing plane he flew helicopters. After the Navy he started teaching and lived aboard his boat, a Contessa 26, in the local marina.

We met one evening a week for a total of twenty weeks. He started and finished on time. Each lesson was carefully prepared and presented. If he was talking about injectors then there would be stripped down injectors for us to examine. There would be a demonstration of how the spray pattern of an injector was tested. Appropriate use was made of films, overhead projector transparencies and the humble blackboard.

At the end of one evening towards the end of the course he apologised that the next lesson would be rather theoretical because the college did not have a Baby Blake he could strip down and demonstrate. It just happened that I had brought ours ashore for attention so we gave it a good clean up and took it along to the following class!

He was the second expert we met that year. Recently we have been having problems with our present engine and I have wished we could meet up once more with either of those experts. The Petter service engineer was near retirement when we met him more than 25 years ago and may no longer be around. The college lecturer gave up teaching and when I last met him was captain of a large motor yacht taking parties of wealthy Americans round the Caribbean.

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One of the many improvements I have made to *'Cinnamon Lady'* is to sort out the 12 volt battery system. Initially she had just two 12 volt batteries in parallel wired up to a diode that was supposed to ensure that whichever battery was at the higher state of charge did not discharge into the other. All this diode seemed to do was to prevent the alternator ever charging either battery beyond half capacity.

The diode was removed, the wiring of the alternator and starter motor renewed with wire of a heavier than recommended gauge and a third battery fitted. Now there are two 105 A.Hr. in parallel for the domestic side and one dedicated to engine starting. A heavy duty switch allows the batteries to be charged separately or together. In practice we charge the engine battery for a few minutes after starting up and then switch the alternator over to charge the domestic bank. No diodes, no relays and no expensive micro-processors.

So far the system has worked well though I am thinking about some method of bypassing the voltage regulator so as to be able to increase the current in the alternator field coil, thus raising the charging current. According to some books and magazine articles this is a good idea and brings batteries up to a higher state of charge. Others condemn the suggestion, predicting that batteries will be "boiled" - over charged. I would be interested in members' comments.

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Still on the subject of batteries, I recently bought a new charger for use when the boat batteries are at home for the winter. It was mentioned in an interesting supplement to the June 1997 Practical Boat Owner. Known as the Gunson 12 volt automatic battery charger, it is apparently only available through branches of Argos, price £20.

Purchasing this was my first venture into an Argos store and it took a few minutes to sort out the procedure. I had mistakenly thought that you put your order in and then collected the goods some days later and was surprised to find that the whole transaction was completed there and then.

The Gunson charger has been a great success. It is small, lightweight and most effective. The batteries have never been so well charged. In fact I think we may carry it onboard during the season and use it to boost the batteries whenever we are in a marina with shore-power.

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It is always important to get ones priorities right. Many years ago a fine gaff cutter was beating down the River Mersey against a rapidly freshening wind. It was time to strike the topsail but somehow the sheet had become fouled round the peak of the gaff and the sail could not be lowered.

A young, keen crew member volunteered to climb up the mast hoops and out along the gaff to clear the snag. He was successful but slipped on the way down and landed with a crash on the cabin top where he lay immobile. The owner dashed below. The rest of the crew thought he had gone for the first aid kit and were surprised when he reappeared on deck and announced that there was no damage to the cabin top beams.

Mark Miller

LOOSE ENDS

ASSOCIATION BURGEES
LARGE £8.00 SMALL £5.00
HOUSE FLAGS
ASSOCIATION TIES £6.00
Available from the Hon. Treasurer

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BOATS FOR SALE

'OMEGA OF BROOM'
26' 10" x 22' 6" W.L. x 8' 9" x 4' 9" 7.5 T.M.
Southampton Launch & Boat Co. 1939
Pitch-pine on oak, mahogany and teak brightwork, three/four berths
1994 18 h.p. Yanmar auxiliary, Bermudian Sloop rig
Completely restored as featured Boatman Magazine September 1995
Lying: Cornwall
Apply owner 01579 350137 or agent 01905 356482

'ZENOCRATE' Z4 Tonner
21' 6" x 19' 6" W.L. x 7' 1" x 4' 5" 4 T.M.
Alfred Lockhart (Marine) Ltd. 1938
Pitch-pine on oak, teak brightwork, two berths, 3/4 Bermudian Sloop rig
10 h.p. Yanmar auxiliary, fastenings replaced 1994. In full commission
Lying: Cornwall
Apply owner 01392 435105 or agents 01548 513217 or 01905 356482

'COBBER' Z4 Tonner
21' 9" x 19' W.L. x 7' 2" x 4' 4" 4 T.M.
Alfred Lockhart Ltd. 1939
Pitch-pine on oak, teak sheerplanks and brightwork, two berths and two pipecots
Bermudian Sloop rig. Reconditioned 8 h.p. Stuart-Turner auxiliary. In full commission
Lying: Hampshire
Apply owner 01273 401076 or agent 01905 356482

'ENGLYN I'
26' 5" x 22' 5" W.L. x 8' 6" x 4' 5" 7 T.M.
Southampton Launch & Boat Co. 1934
Pitch-pine on oak, teak brightwork. Ashore awaiting restoration
Lying: Eire
Apply owner Dublin 8385289

CALENDAR EVENTS

18 - 19 July	THAMES TRADITIONAL BOAT RALLY
16 - 19 July	CUTTY SARK TALL SHIPS, FALMOUTH
25 July	HARWICH SEA FESTIVAL
1 - 8 August	COWES WEEK
5 - 7 August	FOWEY CLASSIC BOAT RALLY
8 - 9 August	FALMOUTH CLASSICS
14 - 16 August	UFFA FOX CENTENARY REGATTA
28 - 31 August	INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THE SEA, PORTSMOUTH
29 Aug. - 5 Sept.	BURNHAM WEEK
12 September	HBA LAYING-UP SUPPER, BEAULIEU (separate notice enclosed)

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