

The Silhouette Owner

The journal of the Silhouette Owner's Association

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Boat Show and Party

A. G. HURLEY'S stand at the Boat Show became a kind of impromptu club for the Association on the afternoon of Saturday, January 7, when many Silhouette owners and their friends visited the show before going on to the Silhouette Party in the evening. The Silhouette II on the stand, and the boat moored in the harbour which was the centrepiece of the show, made a grand sight, and it is not merely the natural feeling of a Silhouette owner which considers them among the best looking and most seamanlike boats that appeared at Earl's Court.

The Silhouette Party, arranged by the SOA at the Sols Arms on that Saturday evening, was a most enjoyable affair. At least a hundred people came, some from as far afield as Cornwall, Bristol, Chepstow, Cheshire and North Wales. A particularly welcome owner was Mr William Spurrell, of Bodmin, who, at 84 years of age, can justly claim to be the senior Silhouette skipper afloat. Mr Spurrell has had his boat *Waskasoo* (sail number 49) for four years, and he sails her regularly. He spent his boyhood on the River Yealm, near Plymouth, and he has always loved boats. After 30 years ranching in Canada (*Waskasoo* is Red Indian for "Red Deer") he came home to the South-West and the sea. Mr Spurrell is a member of the SOA, and all his fellow members join in wishing him many years of happy voyaging.

Bernard Collins was an excellent master of such ceremonies as needed mastering. Not much ice needed breaking because Silhouette owners seem to be the friendliest of people, but in a cheerfully informal way Bernard Collins and other members of the committee saw to it that people who did not know each other soon did—and people who had just learned each other's names were soon in animated discussion about whether or not to adopt the new masthead rig, or how to sleep young children and still leave some room for the owners. We were delighted that Mr Robert Tucker, the designer, and some of the builders of Silhouettes from Plymouth were able to come to the party, and we greatly enjoyed having them among us.

It was agreed by general vote during the evening that we ought to arrange another such party during the Summer. The committee will do this, and give as much notice as possible.

Calais and Southend

THE cruise to *Calais* has been fixed for Saturday, September 2, from a start to be arranged at Dover. High water will be soon after 5 a.m., and the provisional time of departure will be 6 a.m. This should enable the crossing to be made comfortably in daylight. Most skippers and crews will probably want to get to Dover on Friday, September 1, and we hope to arrange a social gathering at Dover on the Friday evening. Details will be announced as they are arranged, and certainly in plenty of time. The Committee is considering safety precautions, and the safety kit to be carried on each boat. These will also be announced in good time.

The SOA has accepted an invitation to take part in various events during Southend Yachting Week, June 10-17. Entries are invited for a passage race of around 50 miles to be sailed on June 10, and for shorter races on June 17. In the long-distance race Silhouettes will compete on handicap against other boats, but there will be a Silhouette trophy for the best performance by a Silhouette. Will all owners interested in taking part in the Southend Week please send their names and sail numbers of their boats to Bernard Collins, Hilltop, Lincoln Road, Rochford, Essex?

About a dozen owners so far have indicated their intention to join the cruise to *Calais*. It will be a help if all owners who may be able to take part would let the Hon. Secretary, George Oliver, know as soon as possible. We want to be able to estimate the approximate size of the fleet as soon as we can. An entry can always be cancelled if unavoidable personal or business reasons make this necessary later.

In the North-West

A NORTH WEST Regional Group of the Association has now been formed, and it promises to have a very active and vigorous life. Some thirty people came to the inaugural meeting at Chester on January 22—one brave party (Morton Nash and Wallis) from as far afield as Penrith, in Cumberland.

Having formally resolved to constitute a North West Group of the SOA, the meeting elected the following to serve as Officers and Committee:

Commodore: R. N. Pegg, Plas Wynne, Glynceiriog.

Vice-Commodore: J. R. L. Anderson.

Hon. Secretary: H. H. Firth, 5, Moss Grove Road, Timperley, Cheshire.

Hon. Treasurer: L. Camden Nield, Gatesgarth, Ackers Road, Grappenhall, Warrington.

Committee: Messrs. Nash, Wallis, A. Storm Bate, R. Bradbury, and G. J. Walton.

It was decided to have a Group subscription to 10s. a year, and Treasurer Nield collected a fine group of paid-up members on the



spot. With the friendly help of the Menai Bridge Boat Club, the NW Group hopes to arrange for moorings and a sailing HQ at Menai Bridge, and a particular effort will be made to provide moorings for visiting Silhouettes from other waters. The Group is arranging a Fitting Out Cruise at Easter in Menai waters. Will any Silhouette owners who would like to join in please write to the Group's Hon. Secretary, Herbert Firth?

Shrouds and Tabernacle

HAVING read Dr. Wilkie's account of his first season with a Silhouette I think that there are two points from my own two years of Silhouette sailing that are of relevant interest. With regard to the tabernacle and shrouds parting . . . I once made the mistake of lashing up the starboard bottle screw (it was not the locknut type) with some new whipping twine instead of copper wire. On a long beat this chafed through, the bottle screw undid itself—and we were suddenly rather upright! All the bolts holding the tabernacle sheared, and the mast lay horizontally, its tip just out of the water. I don't see how there can be any danger to the cabin top in similar circumstances, provided that the metal post that supports the mast is securely bolted to the floor. We got in unassisted in the end, by roving a lashing for the shroud and holding the mast foot in place with more lashings. Incidentally, I think you need at least two (men) to get a mast up in this fashion in a seaway. About reefing . . . Under certain conditions it is bound to be essential. The year before last my wife and I took our boat up to Scotland, and on the final homeward leg from Arran to the mainland a sudden and strong breeze got up, with a steep breaking sea on the port quarter. Even reefed down to the sail number we were attaining maximum speed, with plenty of weather helm, and on two occasions broached to (quite successfully!) With any more sail she would have been im-

possible to handle. As a result of this trip I feel that a very small jib (perhaps a Cadet) is a well worth while accessory if you are cruising. While in Salcombe last summer we met two chaps who had built their own *cutter rigged* Silhouette with long-distance cruising in mind. They were just off to Brittany when we met them. After this encounter I re-rigged as a cutter and found a great increase in performance (and in energy expended when short tacking!)—*R. Boyd, The Willows, Low Road, Mettingham, Suffolk.*

I WAS very interested in Dr Wilkie's article in the January journal, particularly his question whether the cabin top will be carried away if a shroud parts in a boat with an iron tabernacle. I can give him a little firsthand information here. Last Summer, in the Needles Channel, wind Force 4-5, I lost both shrouds simultaneously, due to the shearing of the bolt which holds the masthead vang. Between the moment of shearing and the time when I had got the sails down and had rigged out the halliards as temporary shrouds, the cabin top worked up and down like the end of a concertina, but it was *not* carried away, nor did it subsequently seem any the worse for its experience.

But I do not consider the dependence of the shrouds upon a single bolt at the masthead to be a seamanlike fitting for work in coastal waters, although beyond fitting a stouter one I have done nothing about it myself.—*John Waldron, 176, Woodcock Hill, Harrow.*

Masthead Rig

I THINK that there is no doubt that some alteration in the rig is necessary, and I am in full agreement with the remarks about weather helm and lack of sail area expressed by Mr Tucker. There are, however, some points about the new rig about which I am not clear, and some which I do not like. My chief objection to the rig as shown at the Boat Show is that the very large aft angling of the spreaders is bound to chafe the mainsail to an unacceptable extent when running, not only by the rigging but by the spreaders themselves. I have never seen spreaders angled so far aft, and I wonder if it is really necessary, particularly in a masthead rig. Could not the same effect be achieved by having the spreaders in the normal 90 deg. position, and if really necessary bringing the stay aft? It is of interest that the new rig as shown on the cover of Hurley's handout is different from that shown at the Show, the spreaders being in a much more normal position with both stays on each side coming to a common chainplate. I intend to change to the new rig, but using my old mast and the new fittings as provided by Hurley. I would be most grateful for any information or ideas about the staying I should adopt, and, in particular, the positions of the new spreaders and stays on the old mast—*Colonel E. H. Cox, 11, Strangways, Larkhill, Wiltshire.*

Robert Tucker writes: As a result of comments received during and after the Boat Show, where most owners saw the masthead rig for the first time, it is clear that there remain several unanswered questions.

THE SILHOUETTE OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Officers and Committee

Chairman : Bernard Collins, Hilltop, Lincoln Road, Rochford, Essex. Rochford 56876

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Ken Barrett, 23, Roach Avenue, Rayleigh, Essex.

Herbert Firth (co-opted member) 5, Moss Grove Road, Timperley, Cheshire. Ringway 5559

The Association exists to promote the interests of Silhouette Owners throughout the world. The annual subscription is 15s.

First, the mast length. The pre-1961 Silhouette had a mast length of 19 ft. 1 in. overall, including cap. The new 1961 mast is 19 ft. 6 ins. overall so that the increase is not great. The whole idea here was to swing the boom a few inches higher, to increase the clearance above the head—nobody likes to duck when going about—and to permit a more effective kicking strap to be fitted, a useful device in any boat, since it controls the boom beautifully. It will thus be clear that because the new mast is only a few inches higher than the old, and because the luff of the masthead jib is over a foot shorter than the new forestay, the new rig can be fitted on existing masts: a new mast is not necessary.

Then what is required? A new masthead fitting, or the old one modified, having a forward tongue to take the forestay and jib halliard block—a combination of the old masthead and hounds fittings. Next, a pair of spreaders, 9 ft. 8 ins. below the truck, angled aft to meet the shrouds. New shrouds, running from the masthead to the existing chainplates—the position has not changed—and a second pair of shrouds running down from the spreader roots to a new set of chain plates 9 ins. forward of the existing ones. And, of course, a new forestay. Owners whose rigging is heading for renewal will probably convert immediately rather than wait; those whose rigging is still new may decide to hang on either to their present foresails or to their old rigging. Provided that caution is exercised in hard weather, the new rig can be carried on the old rigging—but watch the backstay!

A number of people have asked about the layout of the new rigging, especially about the throw-back of the spreaders. The idea is not new, and has been used successfully on Merlins and Flying Fifteens, to name but two well-known examples. Briefly, this rig holds the mast-head firmly in place but encourages the mast to bend forward in the

middle, in a smooth continuous curve. This flattens the sail, so improving its windward efficiency. It must be stressed that the amount is slight. If the shrouds are reversed, the mast tends to bow aft, thus throwing more belly into the sail and decreasing its windward efficiency. It is, in fact, a simple but strong way of achieving what the racing dinghies are doing with wierd and wonderful devices.

Cruising Areas: The Upper Thames

We shall try to publish brief accounts of various cruising areas from time to time. It will be a help if members with local knowledge of particular waters would send short descriptive articles to the Editor, thus enabling knowledge and experience to be shared.

THE Upper Thames is not ideal sailing water for Silhouettes, but it is one of the loveliest rivers in Europe, and well worth considering for a holiday cruise. It is particularly worth considering if you have to cruise with young children, because it is so easy to get ashore to let them have a run around.

The Thames is navigable for Silhouettes from its mouth to Lechlade, which is about 123 miles above Teddington. Above Teddington it is non-tidal, and the whole river from Teddington upwards comes under the jurisdiction of the Thames Conservancy. There is a navigable channel, buoyed where necessary, as far as Lechdale, and in normal summers vessels drawing up to 3ft. can get as far as Lechlade. But in the upper reaches of the river it is wise to be cautious, and to take frequent soundings if the water seems muddy or shows other suspicious signs of shallowing.

You can sail into the Upper Thames from the estuary by simply going through the lock at Teddington, but those who haven't the time or inclination to sail round the coast to the estuary will find a good starting place at Marlow. There is an excellent slip a little way below Marlow Church, on the North or Buckinghamshire bank of the river. A road runs directly down to it, and a boat can be launched there from a trailer very easily. Marlow is a sizeable town with good facilities for buying stores, and a useful chandlery at Meakes's yard and marine store by the bridge.

All vessels navigating the Upper Thames must have a licence issued by the Thames Conservancy. The cost of this depends on length, and whether or not a boat has an engine. A licence for a whole year for a Silhouette with an engine (outboard or inboard) costs £5, but there are cheaper licences for boats that merely want to visit the river. All information can be had from the Secretary, Thames Conservancy, 2/3 Norfolk Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2. You also have to pay tolls for going through locks—the lock fee for a Silhouette is 2s. for each lock; this also entitles you to go back through the same lock within a month. You can get lock passes which are, as it were, season tickets, and if you

live on the river and are using locks constantly it may be worth doing this. But it is certainly not worth it for a cruise. The best thing is to buy what is known as a "journey pass" at the first lock you go through for your planned destination. This doesn't save you any money (it is 2s. a lock just the same) but it does save you from having to produce the right money, or wait for change, at every lock.

The Conservancy—rightly—strictly forbids sewage or refuse to be discharged from boats into the river. There are special facilities for emptying toilet boxes and getting rid of rubbish at various locks, and at some other places along the river; you can get a list of them from the Conservancy. Another important regulation, which is enforced, is that all boats with engines (outboard or inboard) must carry fire extinguishers. You ought to have an extinguisher on board in any case, but if you haven't you must get one before you sail on the Thames.

Most of the riverside towns have some facilities for mooring, though they vary, and it is not safe to assume that because one boat seems lying safely there is good water for another next to her. Marlow has fair moorings on the starboard bank going upstream just above the bridge. Henley offers much better ones, also on the starboard bank, a little distance beyond the boathouses. The *St George and Dragon*, a delightful old inn on the port bank at Wargrave, has a beautifully equipped little quay, with deep water right up to it. The *Beetle and Wedge* at Moulsoford also has a good quay.

There is good mooring at Pangbourne, on the port bank just before you come to the bridge, with a pleasant walk across the fields into the town. Just beyond Cleeve Lock, above Goring, there is good mooring by the meadows on the port bank. Don't be put off by rushes there: the water is generally fairly deep, and there are clear patches among the rushes where one can lie comfortably. At Wallingford one can moor to a quay just above the bridge on the port bank. But be careful during the daytime, for river steamers moor there, and you must leave room for them. There are nasty shallows just beyond the quay, so watch your soundings. I paid 2s. 6d. for mooring for the night here: it is very convenient for the town.

Abingdon offers good mooring on the starboard bank, where the river makes a big pool just below the bridge, but be careful about underwater retaining piles here. Above Oxford, there are delightful moorings on the starboard bank to the gardens of *The Rose Revived*, a most beautiful old inn at Newbridge, where the Windrush joins the Thames. This is just a brief selection of convenient moorings, and there are many other good places. In general, if one bank of the river is steep-to, there is likely to be better water on that side. It is wise to approach all banks with care, sounding constantly, and keeping a sharp look out for snags, underwater roots, and the like. It is also wise to secure the boat to the bank with bow and stern lines, so that she does not swing out with the current. A CQR carried ashore makes a good, quick, temporary mooring, but is useful to carry a couple of stakes and a mallet. Often there are convenient trees, but not always.

There are too many bridges and locks to attempt to make up river under sail. You can, of course, leave your mast behind and use a Silhouette under power as a river cruiser, but I think this would be a pity, for there is good sailing to be had on some of the reaches—from *Marlow* downstream to *Bourne End* is one fine sailing reach, and from *Abingdon* to *Sutton Courtenay* is another. We have voyaged much on the Thames with the mast down and secured in its crutch, using our Seagull 102, which gets us along splendidly and doesn't seem to notice the current—we have towed a Heron with a family party on board upstream without difficulty. We try to select a mooring for the night not much later than 4 p.m., and we get the mast stepped as soon as we have decided to moor. This leaves time for some sailing, and also for giving the children a good run ashore before settling down for the night.

Stanford's chart of the Thames from Richmond to Lechlade (5s.) covers the whole cruising range of the upper river, and you should get from the Thames Conservancy its "Launch Digest," which has much useful information and an explanation, with diagrams, of its uniform system of buoyage. The navigable channel is on the whole well marked, but it is important to pay attention to buoys.

Thames cruising is not ambitious, but it can be very pleasant particularly for a family holiday. If anybody contemplating a Thames cruise would like more detailed information about anything, I'll gladly do my best to supply it.—*J. R. L. Anderson.*

Notices and Opportunities

SILHOUETTE for hire Lake Windermere. Tuition if required. Terms on application. Ladro, "Northwood," Windermere. Tel. 795.

DIXON-BATE TOWING BRACKET. Suit Popular, Anglia, Prefect. £3 10s. Phone Secretary, Denham 2602.

INSURANCE. Special facilities for insurance can be arranged for members of the Association. Proposal forms can be obtained from the Hon. Treasurer, O. W. D. Akers, 11, Daleham Drive, Hillingdon, Middlesex.

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