

The Silhouette Owner

The journal of the Silhouette Owner's Association

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April 1961

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The Calais Cruise

THE Yacht Club du Nord de la France at Calais has put a very friendly note about our cruise to Calais on September 2 in the bulletin it circulates to all its members. It describes our Silhouettes as rather like the French Corsaire, which is undoubtedly one of the most interesting light cruisers afloat. The Yacht Club du Nord and the Chamber of Commerce at Calais have generously offered us all the help they can give. We are immensely grateful for this heartening response, in the best traditions of international friendship at sea, and we look forward to making many French friends at Calais. It will be a great help to the Committee if any members who are hoping to join the Calais cruise, but have not yet replied to George Oliver's questionnaire, will do so as soon as possible. One of the most important things is for the committee to have a clear idea of when members who go to Calais want to come back. Some people may have to return pretty well straight away, but others may want to spend a short holiday on the French side. Obviously these are matters for individual decision, but many people might feel happier about coming back in convoy with two or three other boats if it can be arranged. To make up such convoys means having full information about dates in good time, and planning needs to be done well in advance. Alternative ways of coming back other than sailing would be to return boats as freight either by air or by cross-Channel steamer—if anyone wants to do this, arrangements ought also to be made well in advance. September is fairly late in the season, and it is possible that some members might even want to consider laying up boats at Calais in readiness for a French holiday next Spring. If anyone does think this worth considering, please let the committee know, and we'll try to find out what can be done, and the approximate cost.

Opening the Season

THE North-West fleet is opening its sailing season at Easter with a race of approximately six miles in the Menai Straits on the afternoon of Saturday, April 1. On Easter Sunday, April 2, the group has arranged a cruise to Puffin Island, departing from the Gazelle Moorings at Glyn Garth at 11.00 hrs. Reports of these events will appear in the next issue of the journal. Will all Group Secretaries please send reports of Easter activities and forthcoming events in their areas *to reach the editor of the journal not later than April 17?* This is really important to enable the journal to report all that goes on in different parts of the country.



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On Keeping Logs

FOR those of us who try to get afloat by Easter, fitting out is over: at least, the really important things have been got through somehow, and for the rest we make promises to ourselves about what we will do when we have a spare morning at moorings. Does the "ship's business" shelf in one of the cabin lockers hold an exercise book and a pen? One forgets these things until the last moment, and when the last moment comes there is water to be taken on board, another jerrican of petrol to be fetched, and the exercise book goes on being forgotten. But it ought not to be forgotten, for keeping a good log is as much a part of efficient seamanship as carrying the right set of charts. Even on a one-day cruise it is good practice to note down the ship's estimated or known position when a fresh helmsman takes over, and for any passage that takes more than a day a record of positions, courses, and times of all changes is an essential part of navigation. The log should also include notes of the weather, and any comments or observations that the man or woman coming off watch thinks interesting or important.

Apart from anything else, the log is the ship's own family album. At the start of a cruising season one doesn't want to waste time thinking of next winter, but winter will come, and there are few things pleasanter on a winter evening than reading through old logs, re-living in them the adventures of the sea. It is a mistake to try to keep a log in copperplate perfection while at sea: you can't do it, anyway, and to try, and then get a dollop of spray over the page, is frustrating and depressing. The working log at sea is the rough log—it should contain all essential information, and it should be as neat as possible, but it is best regarded as notes for a fair copy log to be written up at leisure later. Don't leave it too late, because new experiences cloud old ones.

and all sorts of interesting little things will be forgotten if you wait weeks before filling in the notes in the rough log; but also, there's no need to rush things—wait until you are comfortably at anchor, and then spend half-an-hour making a fair copy log, putting in bits and pieces that make the rough log come alive in a continuous narrative. It's a good idea to leave blank pages between the entries in the rough log for writing up later, or if the rough log is liable to get a bit dog-eared, to have a second exercise book for the fair copy. At the end of the season, if you have a typewriter (or a good mate who can type) you can get your logs typed out, bind the typed sheets in folders, and gradually build up a personal library of first-hand experiences at sea. This journal has a special interest in the logs of Silhouette owners, for in time we hope that many interesting logs will find their way into its pages. Through these logs Silhouette masters can generously share their experiences, and help others to enjoy the voyages they make.

The Solent

A SOLENT Group of the SOA was formed at a meeting held at Southampton on March 11. The following Officers and Committee were elected:

Chairman: R. S. Brookes.

Hon. Secretary: J. H. Taylor, 15, Balley Avenue, Bordon, Hants.

Hon. Treasurer: G. Armstrong.

Committee: Messrs. T. F. Elliot, C. O. Liddell, H. Sheen, and G. Oliver.

It was decided that members taking part in Group events should pay a subscription of 10s. a year. Wootton Creek, Isle of Wight, is to be the Group's centre, and the Committee hopes to arrange both racing and cruising events later in the season.

In the North-West

MEMBERS of the North-West Group came along in force for a very happy meeting at the Westminster Hotel, Chester, on Sunday, February 26. The occasion was particularly happy in that Bernard Collins, National Chairman of the SOA, was able to come along too, and meet the Group.

The Group Commodore, R. N. Pegg, presided, and after welcoming Bernard Collins he steered the meeting to business. There were a good many things to be discussed, and the pattern of the meeting

THE SILHOUETTE OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Officers and Committee

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

Vice-Chairman and Hon. Editor: J. R. L. Anderson, The Old Hall, Marple, Cheshire. Marple 1458

Hon. Secretary: G. R. Oliver, 52, Middle Road, Higher Denham, Bucks. Denham 2602

Hon. Treasurer: O. W. D. Akers, 11, Daleham Drive, Hillingdon, Middlesex. West Drayton 2712

Sail Number Registrar: W. H. Chambers, 79a, Adelaide Grove, London, W.12. Shepherds Bush 3856

S. Morgan, 44, Station Crescent, Rayleigh, Essex.

Herbert Firth (co-opted member) 5, Moss Grove Road, Timperley, Cheshire. Altrincham 0765.

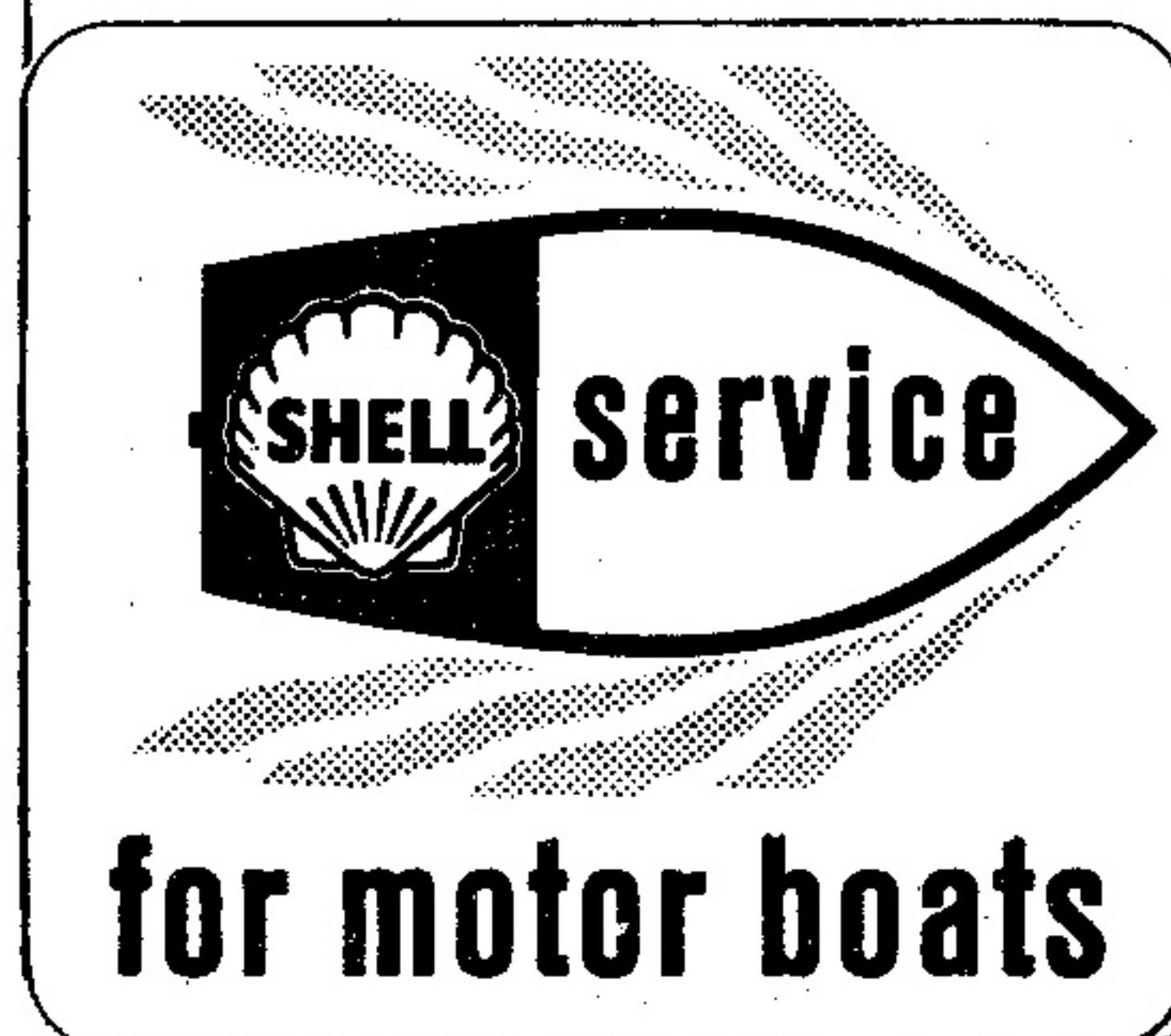
Hon. Technical Adviser: Robert Tucker, 58, Southbury Road, Enfield, Middlesex.

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

may be of interest to other groups. We met at noon and did business for an hour, when we adjourned for lunch. After lunch we went back to business, and the meeting ended with tea. The combination of a business meeting and a social gathering for lunch and tea seems to work out very well.

The Royal Anglesey Yacht Club has informed the Group that it will gladly organise Saturday racing for Silhouettes in the Menai Straits provided that the Group can put forward a minimum of six boats. The general feeling was that this condition can almost certainly be met, so it is hoped that there will be pretty regular Saturday racing from the first week in May. Cruising, however, is the main interest of a good many members, so the Group is going to try to combine racing with cruising as much as possible. The meeting appointed Geoff. Walton and A. Storm Bate to be a two-man "events committee." They will keep in touch with each other, and with clubs, to arrange a summer programme of both racing and cruising. *Navigation:* on Storm Bate's suggestion, the secretary is going to write to Burton Manor, the adult education centre in the Wirral, to see if members could attend courses in navigation there next winter. *Flags:* after some discussion it was agreed that without trying to dictate to anybody, or to insist on any particular flags, the Group should recommend members to wear the SOA burgee at the masthead, and the Menai Bridge Boat Club's burgee at the starboard crosstrees. *Shore accommodation:* Geoff. Walton, who lives at Beaumaris, has very kindly offered to give members any help he can in finding shore accommodation on Anglesey. His telephone number is Beaumaris 98.—*Hon. Secretary, NW Group:* Herbert Firth, 5, Moss Grove Road, Timperley, Cheshire. Altrincham 0765.

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**SILHOUETTES
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The South-East Fleet

By Stan Morgan

I THINK it was about 1955 when the first Silhouette attracted attention on the upper part of the Crouch. At that time the local clubs were all dinghy-mad, and a long race was to a mark about two miles below Burnham, the out and back journey being about 23 miles.

I had by then acquired a converted Leigh Peter boat, which I was sure would be suitable for day sailing, giving shelter to my wife Eileen and our young baby Jacqueline. I was soon to realise how wrong one could be; but no one could convince me that a ply constructed craft was worth its salt. Come to think of it, no one in the club tried to; and as for bilge keels—well!!

That one solitary Silhouette languished alone, occasionally being sailed by its "not-too-keen-a-sailor" owner, and eventually it disappeared from the scene as quietly and almost as unnoticed as it came. I was always far too busy stopping up the leaks on my old tub in readiness for the next race to notice anything, and also performing what I thought to be an essential ritual of sailing in getting smothered in mud and soaked to the skin while boarding. Then it happened. My wife and I were invited by a new member of the club to cruise for a weekend with him on his brand new ply-constructed twin bilge keeled boat. I think as an act of courtesy to the owner I did get my feet wet while loading the dinghy, but Eileen didn't get a splash, and that's how it was for the rest of the weekend. It was after that cruise that Eileen gave way and said that she really *did* like sailing—in a boat of that sort. I immediately arranged to sell my own boat, and started thinking about what I would have to do to get "something like a Silhouette"—I simply could not afford to buy one outright. Could I build one? Could I find a suitable hull to complete as and when finances allowed?

About three months afterwards, I was talking in the City to a member of one of the local Crouch clubs, and telling him about this "something like a Silhouette" boat, that I was going to have next, when he suggested that I should go down to his club and inspect a Silhouette which the owner had lost interest in, and which was gradually wilting on the marshes. This was in September 1959 and by June 1950 I proudly launched the completed ship *Midnight*. The club was impressed with what I had produced, but was completely unimpressed by having a Silhouette back on the club moorings.

I was completely immune from this disinterest, and enjoyed not a fast and not a high-performance season, but a satisfying one, with all the family and our boxer dog, who made his home in the aft locker. I raced *Midnight* once more during the season on handicap against two very workmanlike deep-keel boats and, as expected, did not give much trouble to them. However, the three members of the club who crewed with me assured me that they thoroughly enjoyed the trip, and were amazed that in the conditions we did not, like our competitors, have to reef—there is no doubt that we should have done better if we had.

It is strange, but if you own something of a type, you suddenly realise how many others of that type there are around. I then began to notice how many Silhouettes there were on the Crouch—two at Brandy Hole, four at Althorne, two at Wallasea Bay, and about six at Burnham. I felt sure that there must be an Association which allocated sail numbers, so the next time I visited Brandy Hole I hailed "that Green Silhouette", No. 98, and asked its owner the address of the organisers of the SOA. I was eventually advised to get in touch with Mr Bernard Collins. An appointment to meet him was arranged, and after sailing *Midnight* under the mildly interested eyes of the Commodore and members of my club, I was both astonished and delighted to find someone so keen on the boat. During our first meeting B.C. made me realise that, properly trimmed, the Silhouette could give a performance which was far from mediocre. After my first sail with him I was convinced, but by that time it was too late in the season for me to start experimenting.

Being the end of the season, many of my fellow club members were about this time thinking of changing their boats, and I had become so enthusiastic about Silhouettes that I felt I would be doing them a favour by encouraging them to think seriously of the Silhouette. I did manage to get half a dozen interested enough to promise to attend the meeting of what was to be the winding up of the SOA (but which turned out very differently, giving the association a vigorous new life). On that very night when we met in the City before the meeting, it was John Beales who said that he had taken the plunge and had ordered his during the week. It wasn't long after when Ken Barratt did the same, so with the boat that had just finished being built by Ken Heale and Gilbert Broomfield there was a nucleus of four in the Up River Yacht Club, and it was decided to try to get the club to adopt the class at the AGM. The request for this was met with approval by the club as a whole, and it wasn't long before inquiries were being made by Silhou-

ette owners for membership, resulting in a fleet so far of eight boats. The club is doing all it can to help with moorings, and has laid on a very full programme for this year.

In the meantime, B.C. and I are trying to keep in touch with owners on the Crouch, Blackwater and Colne who haven't joined the association, and perhaps are not aware of all the activities which are now taking place. We are going to print a small sheet of general information about the SOA and whenever we see a boat which we don't recognise, we shall leave one of these leaflets in the cockpit. We realise that a lot of new owners are new to sailing, and we hope that it will be of some comfort to them to know that with a large number of boats in the South-East area there will nearly always be others to accompany them on their first cruises, and so help them to become competent East Coast navigators. This, in turn, will help to give people confidence for an occasional voyage into strange waters.

For information regarding facilities on the Blackwater, Colne and Crouch, please get in touch with the following, who will do all they can to help:

Blackwater	Colne	Crouch
P. H. Trigg	Dr. J. C. Newman	S. J. Morgan
Hillcrest	4 Nicholas Place	44 Station Crescent
Stanstead	Rectory Lane	Rayleigh
Essex	Stevenage	Essex

To France with Marigold—II

By Dick Sheen

WE woke bright and early on Sunday morning, and we were ashore by 8 a.m. It really was delightful as we strolled through the sunlit streets, finding everything new and interesting. The cafés selling wine were already open, and patronised. Every other person seemed to be scudding along with arms full of the long French loaves. We were wandering round the car park when we found a map of the coastline on a wall. This was the moment of truth. We discovered that we were about 40 miles or so off Ouistreham and about eight miles from Fécamp our nearest port. This pleasant little town was Etretat. In defence of our navigation, had we stuck to our compass bearing when we sighted the coast we should not have been many miles out, and should have made Le Havre. After a morning of strolling around and a light lunch we caught the tide down to Fécamp. We had a lovely, gentle sail, with a Westerly breeze and, again, our Genoa set. The sunshine was soothing after yesterday's tough struggles.

We had no trouble in making Fécamp Harbour; it was getting on for full tide, and they had the lock gate open to the inner basin. We had a chat, if you could call it so, with the Harbour Master, but he

could speak only poor English, and my French is non-existent, so we did not get very far, except that we agreed that I would tie up against the quay at a certain spot. At Etretat our small yacht had been a source of interest to the locals, and we were surrounded often by canoes. As we tied up at Fécamp about 50 people lined the quay-side. We had hoisted our yellow flag before entering, but we did not see anybody from the Customs and we took it down after an hour or so. We had no intention of moving from Fécamp and the next few days we spent at ease, roaming around the district. This part of the coast must be unpopular with the English, for we did not see any tourists.

We had a trip by coach to Dieppe, going about 50 miles through a very pretty countryside. I had not been on the Continent before and I suppose there are many parts vastly more striking than Normandy, but this area around Fécamp is well worth touring. The people are cheerful and friendly. It seemed to me that they were more content than we are, but why shouldn't they be, for there are obviously fewer restrictions over there. Our petty restrictions here seem stupid when you drop in the midst of a community as well behaved, happy and hard-working as they were. Maybe I had my rose-tinted specs on, but there was certainly a lot that was good.

As the newness of our surroundings in Fécamp wore off we realised, particularly at night, that there was a prevailing odour of fish products around our basin. It was mostly cod liver oil, varying at times to decomposed fish. The major industry of the port was from its fishing fleet. Its other industry was the making of the famous Bénédictine wine. We were only a hundred yards or so from the centre of the works; it seems that they had made a museum out of the original building, a really beautiful ornamental old place.

During Sunday night our radio, which we had left in the cockpit by mistake, got damp, and refused to work. This worried us, for we were relying on a decent weather forecast to see us back across the Channel. However, by Tuesday it had dried out somewhat, and we could just hear the English stations. On the evening forecast it gave a fair day for Wednesday, with the wind turning East. The journey back was on our mind a good deal, and on hearing this news we decided to go back on the next evening (Wednesday). We planned to sail out on the tide about 6.30 in the evening, and we spent a pleasant day stocking up food, petrol, souvenirs, wines etc. It was sure enough an East wind by evening, but it brought clouds, too, and it was beginning to rain by the time we cast off. We had heard the 5.55 p.m. weather report, and it appeared that a depression was moving up the Channel. How nice! Obviously, we were going to meet it. No high winds were forecast, and we were well equipped with waterproofs.

A gendarme rode up on a bicycle to the lock gates as we moved across the inner basin, and I had moments of doubt whether we should have informed them that we were going, but he only watched us go out. Since we had such trouble in making the coast against an ebb tide we figured that we would get away fast, but this did not seem

to work, and the French coast seemed loath to fade away. It was a repeat of our experience off the Isle of Wight, for a few miles out the seas roughened. However, the wind picked up too, and we were soon making good speed, though it was obvious that there was a dirty night ahead.

Just as it grew dusk we had a scare. We must have hit a piece of driftwood, and it rumbled along the bottom of the boat. Our hair stood on end, for we thought that something had come adrift. Our keels? Hanging on by a couple of screws? I stuck my head in the cabin, and all seemed well. I could hear the water gurgling and bubbling under us. Out of the cabin again I looked around. It was not a cheering sight; the French coast was about 10 miles back, and the sea was rough enough to make it almost impossible to turn back. There were low clouds over a darkening sea. However, while these depressing thoughts crept through my mind it became clear that all was well with *Marigold*; she was surging on unperturbed. We settled down to sitting out this ghastly night.

It was as dark as pitch, and all you could see when you looked up from our compass was the fluorescence of the waves on either side. In the first part of the night there were odd ships around, but none came close, and later we saw nothing at all for hours. Rain poured down steadily, and in spite of our oilskins we were damp in patches. I had paid about £10 for a complete set of waterproofs from a well-known shop, and I was assured that they were the Rolls Royce of waterproofs. My seat was waterlogged before the night was half over. (I only hope my life jacket is more reliable; best not fall overboard.)

It was not easy to keep *Marigold* on course in those waves, and we were also very drowsy. If we moved far off course to the West we would jibe, and this would wake us up with a start and a bit of cursing. Given too much East, our Genoa would flap. Hours crept by, but the wind was remarkably constant, and you could steer by that alone, if you could keep awake. We found ourselves longing for dawn. I shall never forget it; the black turned to grey slowly, and the scene was one of desolation—a wild sea all around, and above a huge black cloud, which seemed to be touching the top of *Marigold's* mast. The utter misery of it made us smile—typical holiday weather for us. We were not in bad spirits, for we knew that we had covered a good many miles during the night, and reckoned that the worst was over. From dawn onwards the weather did improve, and by 9 a.m. we began to liven up, and to look round for signs of dear old England. A ship or two appeared, and on the skyline we saw a white speck which turned out to be another yacht. It was moving slightly across our course at first, but later we found that he was crack on our course, and we could steer by him, which made a pleasant change from having our eyes glued to the compass.

This went on for hours. We crossed the shipping lanes again, but they were no trouble in daylight. We longed to see the Isle of

Wight peep up. A warship hove into sight, and a row of cottages on this we picked out the Island in a haze. By this time the sea was as calm as we had known it, and the sun was shining. We discovered that we were warmer when we took our wet clothes off! the horizon! No—it turned out to be one of the liners. Shortly after

Our navigation this time was crack on, and we were heading straight for Bembridge. The wind fell off, and we had come up against a foul tide. We motored, and then the wind sprang up again and *Marigold* made short work of the last mile or two. It was 3.30 p.m. by the time we dropped anchor in Bembridge Harbour, and it had taken us 21 hours to cover the 75 to 80 miles from Fécamp. On our first crossing from Keyhaven we must have come about 95 to 100 miles in just over 24 hours.

Over a good meal in Bembridge we summed it all up. Never again, we all agreed—too far in our small boat. We reckoned we had been lucky this time. There are many hazards, chiefly from the weather. And I'd hate to be out in those shipping lanes in a heavy sea mist, or to be chased home by a gale. Having had time for reflection I would do it again, for it was intensely interesting from start to finish, and there was never a moment of real danger. It will stand out as the best holiday I have had to date, and we have had several good cruises in *Marigold* and look forward to many more.

Our cruise did not finish at Bembridge. We had eight days to go, and after a pleasant day or so around Bembridge and St. Helens we were in Wootton Creek for Saturday evening. We had Sunday lunch at The Sloop Inn, a pleasant sail across to Beaulieu River in the afternoon, anchoring for the night, and we sailed up to the Abbey. Monday, lunch with Lord Montague—well, in his cafeteria. Then an extremely wet and windy sail across the Solent to Newtown. Over to Keyhaven next day in another blow. We were getting mighty tough weather-beaten old salts by this time, but although we wanted to make Poole, our home town, by Wednesday we dared not attempt it in that weather. However, we were in by Thursday on quite a decent day. It was a fine cruise and a stout performance for our tiny boat in weather far from perfect. As my son remarked, we must have gone as far up and down as we did along. I suppose we covered a good many square miles.

Insurance

EDWARD Lumley (Yacht Insurance) Limited, of Lumley House, 43/51, St Mary Axe, London, EC 3, offer special facilities to members of the Silhouette Owners' Association for all forms of insurance connected with their boats. A particularly attractive provision of the policies is that they permit sailing at any time while the policy is in force, with no restriction to "in commission" periods. Details and proposal forms can be obtained from the Hon. Treasurer.

Southend Yachting Week

MR. K. A. Griffin, secretary of the Southern Yachting Week Committee, has sent the following details about races for Silhouettes in the Southend Yachting Week programme:

Racing will be provided on all four days, and the approximate time of starts are:

Saturday, June 10. High water 11.26 a.m. Start 10.00 a.m. (Westcliff Jetty).

Sunday, June 11. High water 12.13 p.m. Start 11.00 a.m. (Pier Head).

Saturday, June 17. High water 3.49 p.m. Start 2.30 p.m. (Westcliff Jetty).

Sunday, June 18. High water 4.26 a.m. Start 9.30 a.m. (Pier Head).

Subject to weather conditions being favourable, it is proposed to set in-shore courses on the first Saturday and the second Saturday, with longer off-shore courses on the other two days. A perpetual *Points Trophy* will be awarded for the best overall performance, together with suitable trophies and prizes for all races. Entry fees will be 6/- per race. Facilities will be provided for launching, mooring, dinghy service, and for the stowage of trailers. Boats remaining here for the whole week, and entering for racing on both weekends, will be accommodated on suitable moorings. Social events will include open-air dancing, entertainment and barbecue at the Pier Head on Saturday, June 10; Yachting Week Dance at the Queen's Hotel Ballroom on Friday, June 16; and "At Homes" in the Clubs.

The Westcliff Jetty start is expected to be about a four hour race, and the Pier Head about eight to ten hours. Will members who can take part please let Bernard Collins know as soon as possible?

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