

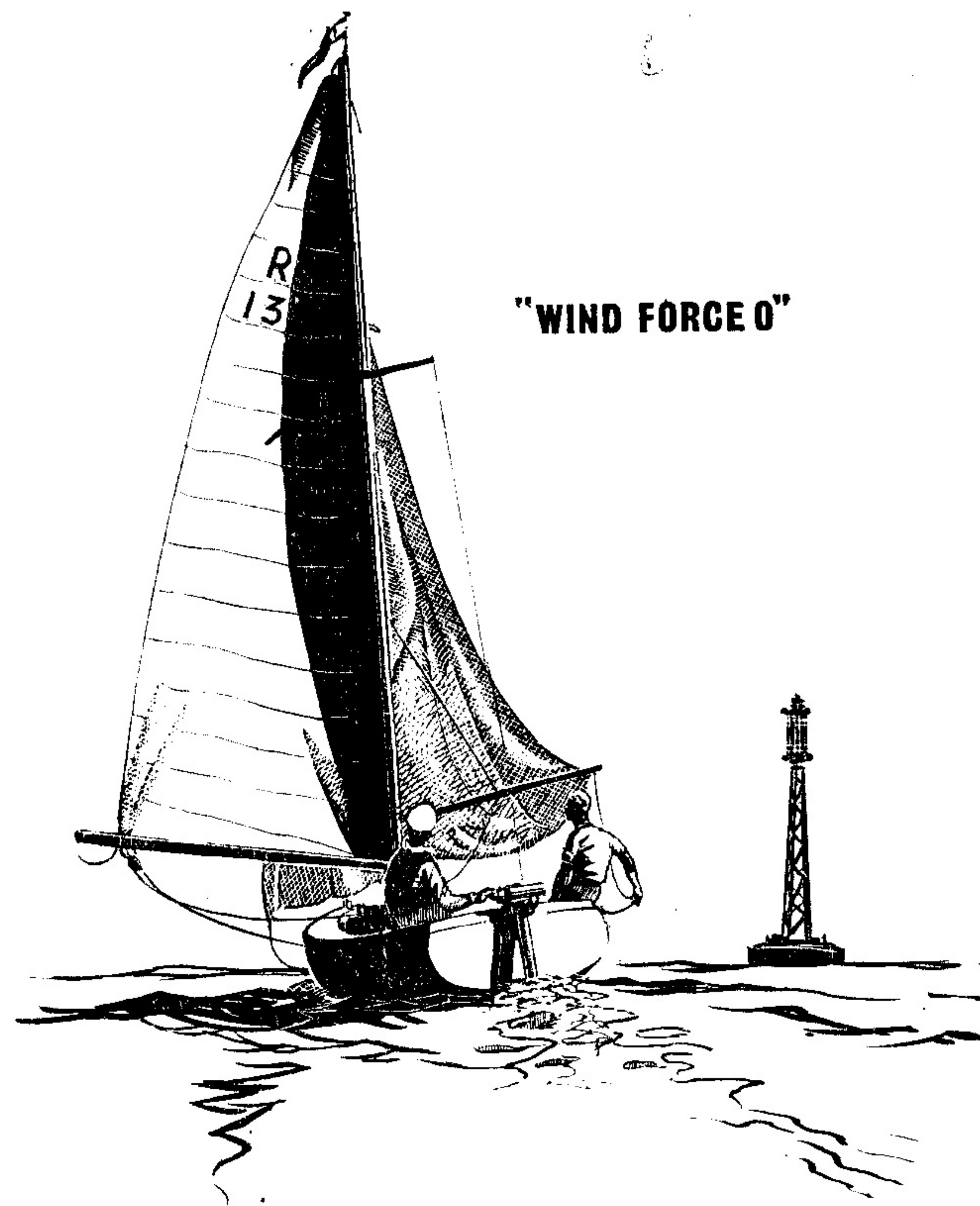
The Silhouette Owner

The journal of the Silhouette Owner's Association

Number 9.

August 1961

Price 6d.



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The Dinghy Problem

FOR Silhouettes, the dinghy problem is a real one. Towing is, of course, possible, but in many circumstances a towed dinghy is a nuisance, and in some it can be a danger. As with most problems in life, there seems no completely satisfactory answer, and one must accept some compromise between what is desirable in a dinghy and what is practicable with a Silhouette. A variety of compromises is possible. First, what do we want from a dinghy? Ideally, a safe, sturdy boat, preferably stem-built rather than of pram construction, and with plenty of weight to carry her way when rowing against wind. To achieve all this in a boat than can travel with a Silhouette is clearly impossible. There are some good little prams on the market, Hurley's own pram among them, and if one accepts the disadvantages of towing, these can be towed quite readily. But in anything of a chop a little pram is not a very safe boat for one person, let alone for two, and perhaps a load of stores. Moreover, a little pram tends to be so light that the wind has a big effect on it, which makes it hard to make much progress against the wind. There are blow-up rubber dinghies, and because they can be deflated and packed into relatively small space, a rubber dinghy capable of carrying three or four people can be carried on a Silhouette. Such a dinghy can also be towed while inflated. Blow-up dinghies are relatively safe, and can be of real value as lifeboats. But they have their disadvantages. Except in calm water they are hard work to row, and even harder to row against anything of a wind. Equipped with an outboard motor they are much more easily handled, but this adds a good deal to cost. Most Silhouettes that use outboards have longshaft models, and these are too big and heavy to be used satisfactorily on a rubber dinghy. This means buying a separate outboard for the dinghy, which is expensive, and means another bulky thing to store on board, where space is already at a premium. Prout folding dinghies, particularly the 6 ft. *Scoprel*, can be carried on board easily, and for their size give excellent service. But they have the disadvantage of all little dinghies in that they are scarcely usable in anything of a sea, and hard to row against wind. One owner, after giving much thought to the dinghy



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problem, has equipped himself with a fairly sturdy 8 ft. 6 ins. clinker pram for use at moorings and to live on shore, a Prout *Scoprel* to live on board and go with the boat, and an RAF inflatable K Type rubber dinghy (bought at a surplus stores) to be kept on board for emergency use. The RAF K Type is a one-man survival dinghy, and it has helped many pilots to survive. In an emergency it would be of some use as a liferaft to cling to, and if it could be blown up in time it could be thrown as a lifebelt to help a man overboard—it can be climbed into from the water. To be effective in this way, though, it ought to have a CO2 bottle for inflation. The total cost of clinker pram (£40) Prout *Scoprel* (with carriage and oars, £20) and RAF K Type (£7 10s.) comes to £67 10s., which is rather a lot to find for dinghies, even though it produces three dinghies, each suitable for different sorts of job. How have other owners dealt with the dinghy problem? The editor will be glad to hear of other people's solutions.

Holidays

THE editorial staff of *The Silhouette Owner* will be away until the middle of August. If letters are unanswered, please be tolerant—it will be because they have not been received, since Silhouettes at sea are uncertain forwarding addresses, and correspondence is not going to be forwarded. But this makes the sending of articles or letters for the journal during the next two weeks all the more important, for there will be less time than usual to produce the September issue. If the editor can come home to a good batch of copy, he will bless those who have sent it.

INSURANCE. Edward Lumley (Yacht Insurance) Limited, Lumley House, 43/51, St Mary Axe, London EC 3, offer special facilities to members of the SOA for all forms of marine insurance. Details from Hon. Treasurer.

Building at Home

MR W. J. Reynolds writes from 182, Corbets Tey Road, Upminster, Essex:

The following notes are offered in the hope that they may prompt other home builders to give their views.

Fastenings. All informed advice is against the use of brass screws (and anyone who has taken brass screws out of an old boat knows why), and yet these are freely used. Are gunmetal screws worth the extra cost? Anchorfast nails in Monel metal would be ideal, but does anyone know where to get them in small quantities?

Glue. If it is suggested that the screws only serve to clamp up the glue, is Aerolite 300 adequate? The makers do not claim so for boats left permanently afloat, and from my own experience the separate application method can easily leave gaps unglued unless a perfect fit is always achieved. How many alleged watertight compartments really are watertight against seepage? Aerodux 500 by the same makers would seem a better glue for the purposes of amateur construction.

Ply. Many ply's are sold as BSS 1088, but differ in (a) hardness of timber (b) arrangement of plies in relative thickness down and across the grain and (c) weight. I have my own idea as to which is better—hard, tense timber, with plies of even thickness, as compared with more open timber with central core of relatively greater thickness.

Rig. Granted that the masthead rig has come into its own, is the present mast and rigging adequate? Incidentally, the plans show the mast as 3 in. $\times$ 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ in., but some I have measured are 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. $\times$ 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.—presumably the old difference between nominal and true sizes of timber. Which is correct? One disadvantage of the masthead rig has always seemed to me to be the long unsupported length of halliard when a small jib is set—at the very time when a tight luff is needed. Why not, therefore, have a lower position for setting a small jib and small spinnaker? To retain the old rig with a masthead genoa is not quite the same thing, as the masthead working jib cannot be used, because of the forestay. The answer to my mind is to raise the spreaders of the masthead rig a little, and then a small jib or spinnaker may be set flying from there. (An example is given in "According to Uffa.") This gives a rig with a wide range of sail combinations. Some thought would have to be given to the lower shrouds, which would have to lead aft (or backstays fitted for those who like complications).

Outboard attachment. In my opinion, to build a boat knowing that you are going to use an outboard engine, and to add an ugly great bracket on the transom, is an absurd makeshift. The transom bracket is for boats never intended for an outboard. Some owners seem to have solved the problem of a well quite satisfactorily. It cannot be said to be in the way, because the crew are better away from the after end of the cockpit, anyway. It is not a source of weakness, if well done. Like a centreboard case, it can be weak, or so strong as to be stronger than before fitting. Incidentally, is it not feasible to make an

outboard well through the after locker, just behind the rudder? This is similar to the Y W Bass Boat. The after deck would need a hatch, but this would ensure adequate ventilation of the enclosed space, and enable painting the interior to be carried out. I saw in an American magazine an outboard fitting which had only two strips of sail track on the transom, and the engine had a bracket which slipped into these. But I have not seen this arrangement advertised here.

The forehatch. Most seagoing cruisers go to some trouble to make the forehatch watertight, yet the Silhouette has a simple sliding affair. I'm sure these must leak badly in a head sea.

* * *

Editor's note. There may be advantages in outboard wells, but fitting an engine in a well may also interfere with the discharge of the exhaust gases. They may seep back into the cockpit, and the efficiency of the engine may be affected. Anyone contemplating a well should ask technical advice first from the makers of the engine he proposes to fit. A sliding hatch may not be as thoroughly waterproof as some, but it has the virtue of simplicity. It must be remembered that one important function of the forehatch is to provide an escape route from the cabin in case of fire at the after end. A hatch that can be clamped shut may be clamped just when it is vitally necessary for it to be opened quickly from below.

North West Visitors

GEORGE and Ethel Oliver, the hon. secretary of the SOA and his wife, were welcome guests at an informal party held by the North West Group at the Bulkeley Arms, Beaumaris, on Saturday, July 1. Many members and friends of the group came along, and shared in a most enjoyable social evening. On Sunday, July 2, there was to have been a race for a RNLI pennant, but the race was cancelled for lack of wind. During the morning a number of boats decided to motor out from the Gazelle moorings at least to enjoy the sea for a bit, and those who did found that once clear of Gallows Point there was quite a fair breeze. *Dolphin* (Herbert Firth), *Blue Jay* (Derek Birse), *Balarina* (W. Nash) and *Number 765* (Ian Molyman) had a good cruise round beyond Puffin Island. *Mary Lane* (John and Helen Anderson), with George and Ethel Oliver on board (George at the tiller) made for Penmon, and anchored for lunch off Flagstaff Quarry. *Christina* (David and Mrs Swinton), *Dubonnet* (D. A. and Mrs Cooke) and *Lutina* (L. C. and Mrs Nield) also had some good sailing, and the NW fleet was glad to welcome the new Silhouettes, *Coral Reef II* and *Alouette*, launched by Ron Beaumont and C. W. and Hazel Folkes. The group is also glad to welcome W. Jacques's Mystic, *Karena*.

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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.

The Approaches to Calais

By John Mannering

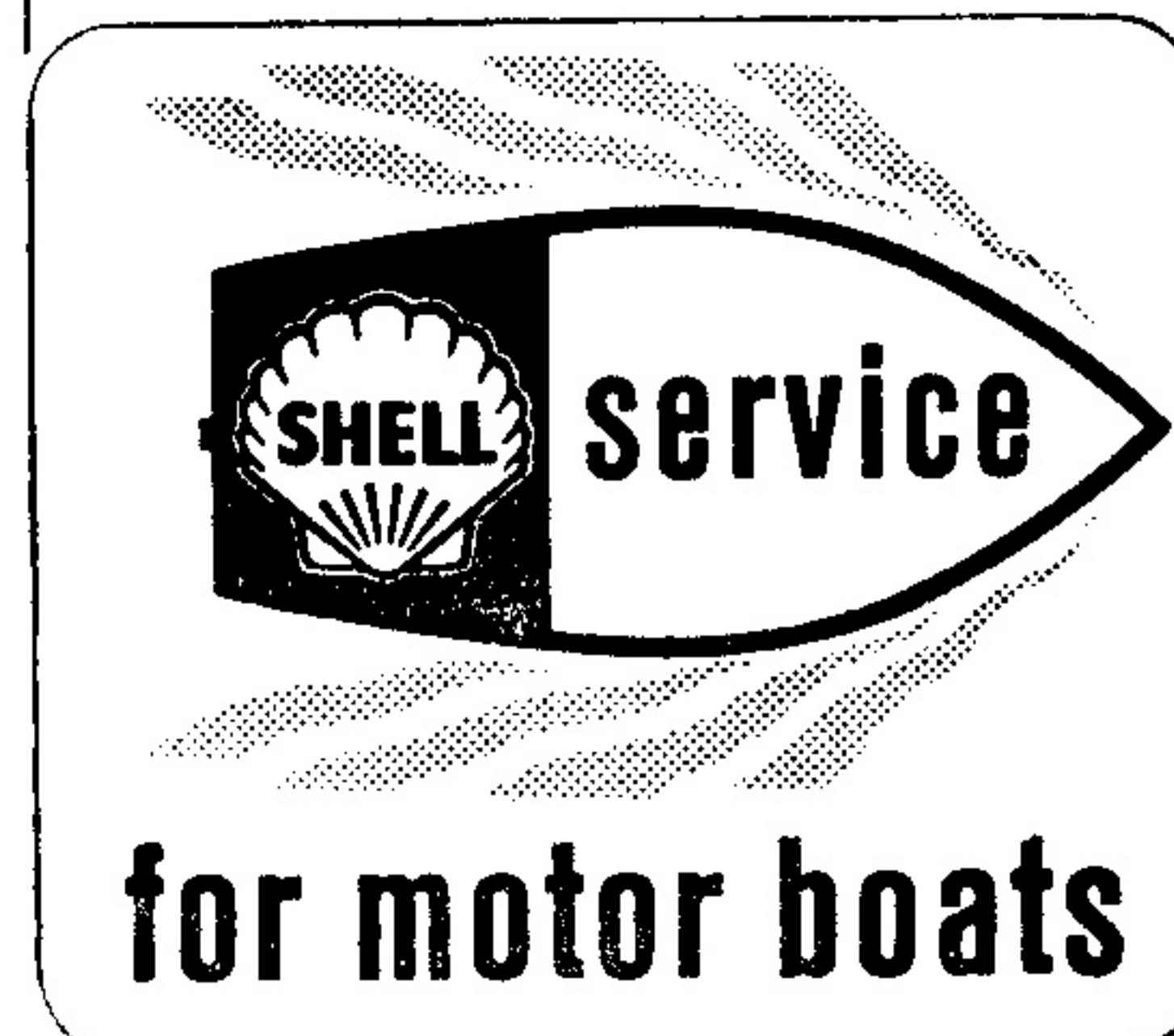
We are greatly indebted to Mr Maurice Griffiths, editor of Yachting Monthly, for kindly allowing us to reproduce John Mannering's notes on the approaches to Calais, which appeared in the July issue of Yachting Monthly. We are also most grateful to Mr Mannering.

TWELVE miles east-north-east along the coast from Cap Gris Nez, on the first stretch of the low sandy coastline that runs unbroken all the way to the Scheldt Estuary, lies the harbour of Calais. It must be, by English yachts, the most frequented of all continental ports, for not only is it the closest to our own shores (21 miles) and much used by yachts bound to and from the Belgian and Dutch ports, but it is also a port of entry into the whole French canal system.

If proceeding coastwise from Boulogne to Calais one must beware of shallow water extending a mile off shore just to the eastward of Cap Gris Nez, and also rocky patches north-east of Wissant, and the two banks, Les Quenocs and Le Rouge Riden, of Cap Blanc Nez. All these will be avoided by passing outside the black and white can buoy, and the black conical buoy a mile and a half off Blanc Nez.

The approaches to Calais from the north and east are complicated by the Ridens de la Rade and the Ridens de Calais, sandbanks lying parallel to the coast about 1 mile, and 3 miles respectively from the

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shore. With the exception of one patch on the Ridens de la Rade, about 2 miles east-north-east from the pier heads, where the chart gives a depth of 2 ft. at L W springs, there is sufficient water elsewhere on these banks at all states of tide for yachts drawing up to 5 ft. But a fresh wind driving against a weather-going tide will knock up a hollow dangerous sea over the banks, which yachts should certainly avoid.

Except in very fine weather, the proper approach should be made by passing inside the western extremities of both these banks and proceeding through Calais Roads to the pier heads. The banks are well marked by the tall pillar buoys of the French system, which are easily picked out from seaward against the low coastline.

In fresh weather those not familiar with these waters are advised, when making their early Channel crossings, to lay a course for Sangatte, the small coastal village lying just to the eastward of the great bluff of Blanc Nez, and then when well in with the land to turn to port and run up the coast for Calais. This will keep one well clear of the off-lying banks, and for the latter part of the crossing the cliffs of Blanc Nez make an excellent mark to hold on one's starboard bow. As one usually makes the crossing from Dover on an east-running time, this course is also a safeguard against getting down-tide of one's destination.

Calais being very low lying, the first features one can identify from seaward are the tower of the Hotel de Ville and the white, pencil-slim lighthouse (grp. fl. (4) every 15 sec) standing at the head of the harbour. Also easily identified is a large white block of flats. Later, cranes and chimneys can be picked out; but the actual pier heads are not easily made out until one is within a couple of miles. They are wooden open-work piers, the west one having a small white lighthouse with green lantern top, and the east one a stumpy brown lighthouse with a red lantern (these being the colours shown by night.)

Like Boulogne, Calais is a busy commercial and cross-Channel packet port, and entry to the harbour is possible at all states of tide. Off the pier heads the tidal streams run very strongly, and on the final approach marks in transit on the shore must be carefully observed to ensure that one is holding a proper course for the entrance.

The entrance between the jetties is quite wide (400 ft.), while inside there is ample room for a small yacht to turn to windward. At low water there is a shallow patch where the root of the eastern pier joins the stone apron of the long surge basin. Beyond this point the channel narrows between stone walls, and the better water is on the east side. Opening up the Avant Port proper, one has the Channel boat berths and the entrance to the Bassin Carnot to port, and the yacht anchorage off the entrance to the Bassin de l'Ouest to starboard.

The Yacht Club du Nord de la France has moorings here, and a small yacht may find a vacant one. It is more usual to bring up on one's own anchor as close to the south-eastward of these moorings as possible; but certainly not between them and the shore by the old fortifications, for here it dries out at low water. One should try to keep clear of the entrance to the Bassin de l'Ouest, which now has rather more commercial traffic than formerly, and if a large vessel is leaving or entering the dock, yachts at anchor may be required to move out of the fairway during this manoeuvre. This is the only place where one may anchor in Calais, but it is not a comfortable berth for small craft round about high water.

Yachts may find a temporary berth alongside the tugs which lies on the corner of the quay by the lifeboat station, but they are usually on the move at tide time and one will be disturbed. If you are prepared to take the ground a quiet berth can be found in the Bassin du Petit Paradis, originally a finishing boat basin, but now little used. There are several ladders at which one may lie, and getting ashore at all states of tide is easy. The entrance, which is narrow and frequently encumbered by gargantuan fishing nets, lies south-east from the Yacht Club. (Entry possible for yachts of 5 ft draught 2½ hours either side of H W.)

If remaining more than a tide or two, it is best to enter the Bassin de l'Ouest. It is a clean, quiet dock with ample space for yachts to spread themselves. If one is weather bound and obliged to leave one's ship in Calais, here is the place to moor her up. Water from a tap is obtainable at the dock gate house.

Entry to the canal system is through the Bassin Carnot, the entrance to which lies to the eastward of the Channel packet berths. This basin is not so convenient for the cruising man on passage, as it is farther from the shopping centre of rebuilt Calais Nord; and it has much more commercial traffic.

Calais is a pleasant place for a family yachting party to spend a few days, with numerous good restaurants. The sands to the westward are magnificent and so vast that overcrowding is impossible.

Admiralty Charts covering the area:

No. 1895: Dover Strait (French coast from Boulogne to Dunkirk.)

No. 323: Calais to Dunkirk.

No. 1352: Calais and Dunkirk Roads.

No. 438: Cape d'Alprech to Ambleteuse, including Boulogne Harbour and approaches.

Mr Robert Tucker

MR Robert Tucker, the designer of the Silhouette, has accepted an invitation to be the guest of the NW Group in Anglesey over the weekend August 26-27. All members and friends of the group will be welcome at an informal party to meet Mr Tucker on the evening of Saturday, August 26. It is hoped that as many members as possible will be able to be in Anglesey that weekend. Details later, from Herbert Firth, hon. secretary of the group, 5, Moss Grove Road, Timperley, Cheshire.

Registered British Ship

AS far as boats are concerned, the Merchant Shipping Act is splendidly classless. As long as she is owned by a British subject, a Silhouette is as much entitled to a place on the Register of British Ships as the *Queen Mary*, and entitled, too, to all the privileges that registration brings.

There are certain real advantages in registration. If you never intend to sail outside British territorial waters, perhaps there is not much point in it—although it may still be valuable to protect a vessel's name. But once you decide to cross the Channel, registration is exceedingly useful. A ship's Certificate of British Registry is, as it were, her birth certificate, or rather, a combination of birth certificate, passport and marriage lines. It gives her status and nationality, and it gives her master and crew immediate access to all the Consular services available to British shipping. When you arrive in a small yacht at a foreign port, the chances are that you will be well received and kindly treated. But officialdom is officialdom the world over, and it is always possible to come across an official in a bad temper, who says, "*How do I know that you are the owner of this vessel? How do I know that you are not a smuggler? How do I know that you haven't stolen this yacht from somewhere?*" A Certificate of Registry is the complete answer to all this sort of questioning. It declares at once who and what the ship is, and in a form that is recognised all over the world.

It can also help the crew. If you get into trouble as a tourist abroad, or run out of money, you may have a deal of bother in getting official help to bring you home. But if you are on the crew list of a registered British ship and find yourself stranded abroad, you are entitled to be sent home as a Distressed British Seaman. Every British ship of over 40 tons register has, at the request of a consular official, to carry back to England one distressed British seaman for every 40 tons of her burthen. (A registered Silhouette comes out of this rather well—her crew has the privileges, without her master having the corresponding obligations.)

When I ordered my Silhouette from Hurley's last year I decided to get her registered, and I wrote to the Registrar of British Ships at Plymouth for advice. Through a long struggle with rules and statutory declarations he proved a staunch friend. An extract from his first letter set the tone of all his later dealings with me. I had written, rather apologetically, asking if a vessel as small as a Silhouette could be registered. He replied, "*As you are a British subject you have the legal right to register your vessel (no matter how small) in accordance with the Merchant Shipping Act, and you will receive all the advice and guidance for which you may ask at any time.*" He was as good as his word.

Registration is quite a formidable process. It comes under H.M. Customs, and anyone who thinks that the Inland Revenue holds the world championship for utter incomprehensibility has clearly never been involved with H.M. Customs. The Customs has a start of several centuries, and it seems simply to have grafted new regulations on to medieval traditions. On the other hand, it has an old-world courtesy in its dealings with people (at least, if you are not suspected of smuggling) which is refreshing in modern bureaucracy.

You have to start with the ship's name, and before you can make any progress the name has to be approved by the Chief Registrar of British Ships. He is concerned to see that the name you have chosen is not already in use by any other vessel on the British Register or so similar to a name already in use that it may be "calculated to deceive." I sent in my choice, *Mary Lane* (a family name—an ancestress, Jane Lane, helped to save King Charles II after the Battle of Worcester by riding with him to Bristol, he disguised as her servant and riding pillion behind her.) My friend the Plymouth Registrar could not tell me whether this name would be approved, and suggested that it would save time if I submitted a second and third choice. However, *Mary Lane* duly was approved, and became the official name of my Silhouette. Having been approved, no other ship on the British Register may have the same name.

The next thing was to have *Mary Lane* officially surveyed. This is done by the Ministry of Transport, and it gives the ship her gross tonnage and her registered net tonnage after various deductions have been made. It was the most expensive item in registration, cost around £6.

After this it was necessary to declare my interest in the ship. It does not appear to be possible to "own" a British ship—that is, a registered British ship. Every ship on the register is divided into sixty-four "shares," and you have to state how many of these sixty-fourths you own. In my case, I owned sixty-four, so I had formally to declare that I owned sixty-four sixty-fourths shares in my vessel. But it was not enough just to say this: the declaration had to be made before a Magistrate, and his signature affixed to a special form obtained from H.M. Stationery Office. All this achieved, the next problem seemed to be insuperable—I had to state the name, and the number of his certificate of competency, of the Master who was to command my ship.

Since I intended to sail *Mary Lane* myself, and am, alas, not a Master mariner (not even a Yachting Master's ticket), this seemed the end of my attempt to achieve registration. But H.M. Customs has great experience of the world, and apparently there are dispensations for little ships. I asked what I ought to do, and was told, "The space for Master, etc., should be ruled through in this case." So I put a line through it, and that was that.

The next problem was the rather grandly sounding one of the Ship's Carving. The Act of Registration, as it were, is the carving of the ship's registered number and net registered tonnage on the Main Beam of the vessel, in the presence of an officer of H.M. Customs. Where, and what, is the Main Beam of a Silhouette? I left this to H.M. Customs and to Hurley, and in due course *Mary Lane's* "carving" was done inside the cabin, on the fore panel of the cabin top.

All was not over yet, by any means. I thought that I had just about made it, when a letter suddenly arrived from the Marine Surveyor's Office of the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, demanding "written confirmation to the following points." These were:

- (a) *that the vessel will be used only as a pleasure yacht.*
- (b) *that under no circumstances will any fare-paying passengers or cargo be carried in the vessel.*
- (c) *whether the owner is a member of a yacht club, and if so, its designation and address, and whether the vessel is to be entered upon the books of the club.*

It seemed that if I did not give favourable replies to (a) and (b), I should have to have a Plimsoll line, and be subject to the most fearsome penalties if by any chance it went under water. However, I found no difficulty in declaring that I had no intention of carrying fare-paying passengers, or cargo for hire or reward, and in return I was granted "*certain privileges in reference to the markings required, and exemption from the loadline requirements.*" But (c) had me completely fogged—I could not see what bearing membership of a club could possibly have on *Mary Lane's* registration as a British ship. Still, I did belong to two clubs—the Silhouette Owners' Association, and the North Cheshire Cruising Club—and I had no objection to telling the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation that I belonged to them. It did me no good. I got back a rather stern letter, saying, "*It is regretted that neither the North Cheshire Cruising Club nor the Silhouette Owners' Association are approved clubs for the purpose of exemption from marking the name and port of registry on the stern.*" I can't say that this worried me. I am, indeed, rather proud of carrying "Plymouth" as my port of registry on *Mary Lane's* transom, so I have not applied for exemption from this particular requirement of the Merchant Shipping Act. But I still can't see why one club should be any better than another for this purpose.

This was really the end of the paperchase, and on payment of a further 21s (fee, 20s, Certificate of Registry, 1s) I received a beautiful document in a most impressive case. This gives me an official number, an official gross tonnage of 1.46 tons, and a net registered tonnage of

1.42 tons. I am allowed 0.1 of a ton (2 cwts) for bosun's stores, and another 2 cwts for the navigational requirements of the "steering cockpit." (I am not at all sure if this means that I am supposed to weigh 2 cwts—I don't—or if it means that I am allowed 2 cwts of tiller and compasses—which seems rather a lot. Anyway, the 2 cwts are knocked off my gross tonnage, thus reducing the tonnage on which I pay harbour and light dues, etc.) The "*tonnage of the engine room spaces below the upper deck*" is rather formally given as nil, and it is also stated that *Mary Lane* has no accommodation "certified" for Seamen or Apprentices. (We have to muck in, officers and crew alike.) The formal location of "*the boatswain's storerooms*" (plural, just like that) is given as in the "Fore Peak." I may say that I am immensely proud of this document, and even prouder of the final letter from the Registrar at Plymouth (whom I know only by official correspondence) which ended, "*Wishing you years of happy cruising.*" If H.M. Customs would allow me bonded stores, I'd gladly drink their health.

There is one further advantage of registration, which I point out sternly to my crew from time to time. Disobedience of my lawful commands as Master of a registered British ship is an offence, punishable (if proved) by the nearest available British Magistrate. I can't say that the Mate or the cabin boys take much notice.—*JRLA*.

Round Puffin Race

RON Bradbury, in *Buttercup II*, won the Round Puffin Island race sailed in good though rather blustery conditions on July 8. Once through Puffin Sound into the Irish Sea there was a considerable swell running. Although pretty close together, only the tips of mastheads of boats could be seen in the troughs. Coming back there was a long beat home, but the boats all arrived within minutes of one another.

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