The Silhouette Owner

The journal of the Silhouette Owners' Association

Number 11. October 1961 Price 6d.



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Fog in the Channel

AFTER all the work put into organising the SOA's cross-Channel cruise to Calais for September 2, it was heartbreaking that when the day came dense fog shrouded the Channel. And the fog persisted. It would have been asking for disaster to attempt to put to sea, and the only seamanlike thing to do was to cancel the cruise. This was a bitter disappointment to the small band of gallant owners, eight in all, who assembled in Dover in spite of the weather in the hope of being able to make the crossing. But this is not the first time in history that a fleet has been fogbound in port. Nor will it be the last. And the essence of good seamanship is to know what you can, and what you can't, do in the weather as it comes. If you are caught out at sea by fog, or by a gale, you take such precautions as you can, and you do your best to win through in spite of the weather. If fog comes down when you are waiting to start a passage, you weigh the risks, get all the information you can about the probable duration of the fog, and consider whether you can stick to your plans, or whether you will have to change them. In the fog at Dover that weekend, there was no question about what ought to be done; hard as the decision was, the fleet could not sail. That was that. But fog in the Channel must not detract from the value of the work that Bernard Collins, George Oliver and ohers did to make the Calais cruise possible. The SOA owes them a big debt. We should also like to express our appreciation of those members who loyally went to Dover in spite of the weather—among them George Hurley, who trailed 210 miles from Plymouth in the hope of sailing with the fleet. This is the spirit that makes all the work put into the SOA worth while. It is the spirit that makes small-boat sailing more than a sport – that makes it a way of approaching life with the highest standards of self-discipline. We must thank, too, our fellow-yachtsmen of the Royal Cinque Ports YC at Dover, who did what they could to help in an unhappy situation, and the Yacht Club du Nord at Calais, whose



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hospitality was not the less generous in that we could not enjoy it.

There will be other years—and the wind will stand fair for France. It is some consolation that two members who were able to spare the time to stay on, made the crossing on Monday, September 4, coming back to Dover on September 8. We congratulate F. G. Powell and P. A. Leach on their pertinacity in the face of miserable weather.

Crossing for Two

F. G. POWELL writes: I am pleased to report that the cruise to Calais was a success, at least as far as I am concerned. We left Dover at 07.55 on Monday, September 4, in company with the Silhouette II *Kathleen Charlotte* owned by Mr Leach. Also crossing the Channel was Mr Large, of the Royal Cinque Ports YC, in his 8-ton sloop. About 11.00 we lost sight of the other Silhouette and Mr Large, so we pressed on for Calais, and made the harbour about 13.30. The other Silhouette came into Calais harbour about an hour later. We were weatherbound in Calais until September 8, when we made a successful crossing back to Dover. The wind was about Force 4, which later backed to the SW about Force 2-3. The tide for the first four hours was foul. The crossing to Dover took us about 7½ hrs, the other Silhouette again arriving about an hour later. I should point out that my boat is the bigger Mark III (sail number 1). A most pleasant week was enjoyed by myself and my crew, consisting of my wife and two sons, aged 10 and 7. The crossing was a grand effort on the part of Mr Leach, for he had to rely on sail as his motor was not man enough for his boat. His crew was his mother. I should like to express our thanks to Mr Large and the RCPYC for their timely help and advice.

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.

Singlehanded Voyage

By D. C. W. Sutherland

ALTHOUGH *Sid* had managed a second place in one leg, in rather rough weather, of the club's *Niobe* Trophy, there was still in the club scepticism as to whether a Silhouette could be called a cruiser. So with this in mind I decided to try to sail to Holyhead, and return from Lytham within a limited time, and single-handed. This is the brief story of the voyage:-

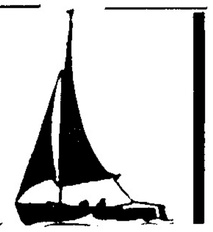
Thursday August 31. Sail was set at 06.00 hours in a fair wind, and with a Force 3 to 4 forecast but likelihood of sea mist. Cleared the channel at 07.00, and set course at Wallend Buoy for the Bar Light Vessel. Visibility was not good, and the shore had long since disappeared, but with a steady wind on the beam everything went nicely. Luckily, dead on track at 10.15 the mark came up out of the mist, and course was set for the Great Orme on schedule. The reason for steering for the Great Orme and not Point Lynas was to dodge following along the main shipping route in the bad visibility; the shipping lane, however, had to be crossed. For the first time I proudly hauled up my new radar reflector, but seconds later it was sorrowfully lowered; the reflector, banging about with the rolling of *Sid,* seemed to threaten the whole mast and rigging—and a strong downhaul was fitted too. After several experiments it finished up lashed to the mast end of the boom, but it still worried me, and the big question was "Could it be seen?" On into the mist, until at 14.35 the North Constable Buoy was sighted to starboard, and I thankfully realised I was still on course, or as near as mattered. At 16.30 the Great Orme was sighted, and *Sid* sailed into Llandudno Bay and anchored at 17.15 for a cooked meal and some sleep, as I was tired, mainly from eyestrain.

Friday, September 1. Set sail at 03.50 to catch the tide round Anglesey, and set course to clear Point Lynas. As the wind died away after an hour I started up the "mixer"—my trusty Seagull 40 Plus. The mist was not too bad now, and the Point Lynas light came up at 05.55. To avoid any possible trouble with the race I intended to give the Point a good offing, and to stay outside East Mouse. Around Point Lynas as dawn broke, and then set course to pass inside Middle Mouse, which came abeam at 08.20. New course to pass between the beacon on Harry Furlong's Reef and Victoria Beacon, then a new course to pass inside West Mouse, which came abeam at 09.14, now steering by sight as Carmel Head itself was in view. The tide was helping considerably, and the rate of passing the marks was almost bewildering. As *Sid* motored close inshore at Carmel Head, I had a heart-stopping moment as a horrible din appeared to come from the Seagull and the boat seemed to vibrate; then came a sigh of relief as I laughed and realised that it was the echo off Carmel Head of the Skerries fog diaphone. Around Carmel Head, and course set for the Holyhead Breakwater, by the time Bolivar Buoy came up the mist was clearing, and the whole coast showed dark

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in the sunny light, and now, so gently, *Sid* was on sail again. Then came a difficult bit, as I intended to anchor in a small rocky bay which bears 093 deg. from the Wreck Buoy, 075 deg. from the Breakwater Beacon and 155 deg. from Bolivar Buoy. I thought I'd got it right, but I checked and rechecked, and sounded by lead all the way in. There must be no mistake, as there are several outlying rocks just around. Anyway, rather apprehensively, the hook was finally let go at 11.15. After half an hour, to my intense relief, a hand waved from a rock on shore, and out came a little dinghy, rowed by the daughter of the friends I had come to see. To shore to stretch my legs, and a lovely lunch of chops and things at my friends' caravan. The outward journey was complete, 78 miles in mostly mist and not much wind, and in a sailing time of 19 hours 10 minutes. Now there was the return to think of.

Saturday, September 2. The weather forecast gave virtually no wind, and moderate to poor visibility, so I decided to return the same route. The tide would start its flood at 10.00, so that was to be my latest ETD. Set off at 09.30 on the motor, as there was not even a breath of wind; my course was outside Bolivar Buoy and then to Carmel Head, which I could see, and I could hear the Skerries foghorn, a deafening racket from so near. Round Carmel Head at 10.30, and I could just see enough to pick up the marks ahead, provided that I took bearings and strained my eyes dead in the right direction. At Victoria Beacon a quite large yacht hove in sight out of the mist astern. no sails, but motoring like me, and in fact only drew level by the time Point Lynas was reached. Perhaps she wasn't trying, or was just steering on *Sid*. West, Middle and East Mouse all came up in time, and then Point Lynas at 12.45—a wide berth—and then on a course to bring me a little north of the Great Orme. Some very careful tide calculations had to be incorporated in this leg, as it was blind, but there would be no back bearings for leeway, as it was looking most definitely motor and then motor. Calm and mistly weather prevailed, and the only break was to see the RAF rescue launch at about 14.00; I heard her, and then she passed dimly in the mist on my port side. I don't think she saw me at all, as an hour later she passed again on the return journey, and when abeam suddenly shut down and came near to have a look. I wonder what they thought? Then I saw a seal, with a look of disdain on his face; I could see plainly what he thought! Everything easy, too easy, mostly means harder things ahead. A slight breeze stirred at 15.45, so off with the "mixer" and up full working sail. *Sid* was sailing again, even if only ghosting, then—a loudish swishing noise, to windward, and some flashes of lightning. While in those few moments I pondered, a

real storm broke out, lightning, thunder, hail, and to me a phenomenal squall; one moment we were almost becalmed, and the next all sheets flying, the boom and mainsail in the water, the cockpit full up to my knees and *Sid,* bless her, striving and succeeding in forcing her head up to the wind. For a few moments I just hung on, then dropped all sail and control was nearly regained. Under no sail *Sid* heeled to 40 deg. by inclinometer, and was doing around four knots as she swished along. I did my best to pump when I could; the water from the cockpit was running out of my motor well. Less than ten minutes later the wind moderated, so the jib was raised. The lightning and rain were frightening—what, I thought, are the chances of a very small boat's being struck? By 16.50 *Sid* made the shelter of Llandudno Bay once again and anchored, but a nasty swell was running, and cooking was out of the question. The storms came and went, and I damply slept, and took bearings to see if I was dragging. During the lull a boatman had taken me ashore to get a reserve can of fuel, which I felt I might need.

Sunday, September 3. The midnight weather forecast seemed to me to be for a different planet, but I guess the storms were only local. Set sail at 05.50 in a gentle wind, but very thick mist again. The Orme was only just visible from my anchorage near the steamer pier, and it had completely disappeared by 06.10. Out of the harbour and on course for the Bar Light Vessel, the only check mark could be the North Constable Buoy, which I didn't really expect to see. However, at 08.00 I nearly ran it down, so with this encouragement I kept on for the Bar LV which I should reach around 13.30. Then gentle wind held, and the mist remained, but at 12.45 it cleared to about one mile, calculated by the time taken to reach an anchored big ship. I was certainly in the vicinity, and if I missed the Bar LV I intended to work on my DR, and change course to 035 deg. mag. at 13.30, which was just after slack low water, the right time, I knew, to cross the Mersey shipping lane. At 13.00 the light from the Bar LV was seen fine on the starboard bow, at 13.20 it had disappeared astern. Its wailing, of course, was there for a long time. Now on the new course for Gut Gas, I had Jordan's Spit Buoy as a check, and Gut Gas should appear at 15.30. Jordan's Spit didn't show, but a dredger did, which could be near J2 as they often lie in that direction. Perhaps I wasn't allowing enough for the Mersey indraught, but I stayed on course, as it is a local tidal stream. I pressed on into the mist, and at 15.30 nothing appeared. Towards 16.00 I was furiously recalculating the last leg every few minutes. Charts, Reeds, Tidal Map were all consulted again and again. I couldn't find any error, except perhaps my leeway, which wasn't easy to read as the sea was very short, and the wake hardly showed. I worked out alternatives, and decided to carry on. If too much to the West, I was safe, and would close the shore towards Blackpool; if to the East, I must go canny, as I'd close the Ribble Training Walls anywhere six miles out to sea from Lytham. Relief, at 16.10 I saw the dark shape of an anchored ship. I must be near, and then, as if by magic, Gut Gas appeared on the starboard quarter, almost missed! Round the buoy and into the channel—here, I thought, I was home, but through the short breaking seas, and

the dead head wind, it took two hours of frantic hard work to get to my mooring. This bit was made all the more trying by the fact that five steamers in line astern decided to cross the bar just astern of *Sid.* They, of course, were unaffected by the choppy seas or the head wind, and just passed one after the other, leaving me in my tired state floundering at the sides of the channel, much too near the sand and the walls—covered of course—for my peace of mind. At 18.20 *Sid* was safely moored, after covering 155 nautical miles in four days in a total sailing time of 39 hours, just around four knots average, and she had kept going each day, which was the real test. *Sid* has given me greater confidence, and a lot has been learnt. I might add that my extension tiller was a "must".

Summary of times and distances. Thursday August 31. Lytham to Llandudno: 06.00-17.15: 43 *Naut. miles. Friday, September 1. Llandudno to Holyhead*: 03.50-11.15: 34½ *Naut. miles. Saturday, September 2. Holyhead to Llandudno*: 09.30-16.50: 34½ *Naut. miles. Sunday, September 3. Llandudno to Lytham*: 05.50-18.20: 43 *Naut. miles.*

South-East Points' Racing

THE final race of the SE Group's points series was sailed at the Up River Club on September 17. Tom Jones, in *Sapphire,* is the overall winner of the series, and he will receive the trophy to be given and presented by the Commodore of the Up River Club on October 4.

There were five starters for the race on September 17, and the North-Easterly wind was very light indeed. At the gun all boats were swept up river away from the line, and only two managed to get across about half an hour after the start. Only one managed to complete the course. *Wee Three* and *Myth,* with Harry Malone and Ken Barrett at the helms, persisted in their attempt to cross the starting line, and were eventually rewarded by getting into a well known and favourable eddy in these conditions. This eddy helped them over the line, and took them into more open water, where the wind was freer. The winner was *Wee Three* (masthead), *Myth* and all the other boats retiring.

The May race in the SE points series has already been reported in the *Journal.* There were seven starters for the July race, but the wind fell off entirely. It was thought that all boats had retired, but the race was claimed by Tom Jones in *Sapphire,* who had kedged, and came in across the line some time on the following morning. He deserved every point he got. There were seven starters again in August, and all got away to a good start in a fresh Westerly. *Sapphire* came out of the turn first, followed closely by *Catriona* and *Midnight.* Making use of back eddies in the river, *Midnight* gradually overhauled the two leading boats, *Sapphire* finding her big jib a bit of a handful in the freshening wind, and changing sail a little too late. The winner was *Midnight* (original rig), with *Sapphire* 2, and *Catriona* 3. *Midnight,* however, did not have her owner on board during any part of the race, and it was later decided by the Race Committee that she would have to be dis-

qualified. This changed the position, making *Sapphire* first, *Catriona* second, and bringing up *Secundus* (Jack O'Brien, masthead) to third place.

A Collision

MR C. J. Roberts writes from his boat *Eskimo Nell* at Helford: Silhouette owners may be interested to know the result of an 8,000 ton merchant vessel's running down my Silhouette, *Eskimo Nell*. The merchant ship's bows caught my port quarter about three feet from the stern. She bounced off, and the port spreader scraped along the merchant vessel's side, finally getting another blow as she dropped astern. The only damage was a V-shaped gash about 18 ins long and a foot deep in the plywood panel, about a foot of the decking damaged, and a few inches of the bulkhead of the after locker. I sailed her for about a week before getting her repaired, and my insurance company tells me that the bill including collection, was under £40. The way she took the knock is, I think, due to three things: (i) First class workmanship by Hurley's, the builders (ii) the design, with its light displacement; the boat behaved rather like a ping-pong ball might, just bouncing off (iii) plywood; orthodox planking would almost certainly have splintered. Since the accident, *Nell* has sailed from Plymouth to Helford, and seems as good as ever.

NW—The Commodore's Trophy

MEMBERS of the NW Group turned up at Glyn Garth for the weekend September 16-17 to find the tail end of a Force 10 gale howling down the Straits. As for sailing, there was no chance even of going on board the boats on the Saturday, and prospects for the important race for the Commodore's Trophy, presented by R. N. Pegg, Commodore of the Group, on Sunday seemed dismal. But Saturday night brought one of those miraculous changes in weather that do occur sometimes, and conditions on Sunday morning were ideal—sun sparkling on a blue sea, and a fair wind from the SW, around Force 3. The gale cut down the number of starters: A. Goodwin's boat, *Lady Irene,* had her rudder damaged slightly, and when *Mary Lane* prepared to make sail she found that her main halliard had frayed and broken at the masthead, so at the last moment she was a non-starter. Philip Austin's *Sherry,* back in the Straits from voyaging off Salcombe, also just failed to make the start because Philip had not been able to get on board on Saturday to make ready. In the event, there were six starters, *Dolphin,* (448, Herbert Firth), *Kotka* (765, Ian Holyman), *Alouette* (842, Cyril and Hazel Folkes), *Blue Jay* (619, Derek Birse), *Sampan* (Caprice, Don McKnight) and *Eileen* (Leeward, Storm Bate). The race was started on handicap, with *Dolphin* (Silhouette, original rig) setting

off first, the masthead Silhouettes four minutes later, and the larger Caprice and Leeward three minutes after them. It was a pretty close race, and after a grand sail Ian Holyman's *Kotka,* with A. Goodwin crewing, came home first. She was followed closely by Don McKnight's *Sampan,* with Derek Birse's *Blue Jay* next. By a piece of cruel luck *Sampan* had hit the last buoy slightly in rounding it, so she was disqualified, and *Blue Jay* became second. Storm Bate's *Eileen* was third, and H. Firth's *Dolphin* fourth. *Alouette* retired during the race. Mr and Mrs Pegg were there to welcome the crews, and a weekend that started with an exceptionally fierce gale turned out to be one of the best that the NW Group has had.

The Pegg Trophy and the Firth Trophy, won at the NW Group's Easter Race at the beginning of the season, will be presented at the group's Laying Up Party and Dinner-Dance on November 18. The party will be at the Manor Hey Hotel, Urmston, Manchester, starting at 18.30 with dinner at 20.00. Before dinner there will be a film and coloured slide show of some of the group's activities during the season. Tickets, 27s 6d each. Will members who would like to come please let Herbert Firth know as soon as possible? His address is 5, Mossgrove Road, Timperley, Cheshire. Guests of members will be welcome, but accommodation is limited, and that is why Herbert Firth needs to know as soon as possible just who is coming. If people would send the money with applications for tickets it would be a great help.

Robert Tucker in the North West

ROBERT Tucker, the designer of the Silhouette, was the guest of the NW Group for the weekend August 26-27. The group thought that it was very nice of him to make the long journey from London to Anglesey, and around fifty members and friends of the group came along to a party at the Gazelle Hotel on the Saturday evening. Bob Tucker gallantly stood up for more than an hour, answering questions, and giving technical advice on this and that, until the time for a film show depicting the adventures of the Silhouette fleet that sailed to the Isle of Man and back. Jim Berry took the pictures, and showed the film. It was very much enjoyed. On Sunday there ought to have been some sailing, but a Force 7 that had blown all Saturday stayed around Force 7, occasionally going down to Force 5 or 6, but generally remaining pretty fierce. Ian Holyman, Storm Bate and Don McKnight went out in Ian's boat to experiment with seven rolls in the main and a storm jib, and reported that the boat behaved beautifully. The rest of us took the easier way out and went fishing, or to have a look at Snowdonia. Bob Tucker would probably have enjoyed experimenting with storm rig, but since there were children in the party who couldn't really be taken out to sea in such conditions, he generously gave up sailing and went for a tour of the mountains with some of his hosts instead. The NW Group would like it to be put on record that it does not *always* blow a gale or a near gale in the Menai Straits.

THE SILHOUETTE OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

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

Log Competitions: Important Notice

THE closing date for the receipt of logs sent in to compete for the two trophies offered in the Log Competitions is November 1, and this date will have to be adhered to strictly. Will all owners who intend submitting logs of this year's cruises for the competition please send them in as soon as possible to J. R. L. Anderson, Hon. Editor, *The Silhouette Owner,* The Old Hall, Marple, Cheshire, as soon as possible —and typewritten (double spaced), please, if you can possibly manage it? Two trophies are offered: one, presented by Robert Tucker, is for the best log of a voyage in a Silhouette anywhere in the world, and the other, presented by the Editor, is for the best log of a Silhouette voyage by a crew including a woman—she can be master, mate, purser, deck-hand, cook or able seaman. The competitions are open to all Silhouette owners who are members of the Silhouette Owners' Association. Mr Alasdair Garrett, Editor of the Royal Cruising Club's *Journal,* has kindly consented to judge the entries, and he has particularly asked that they should be in his hands in good time in November. So please let us have entries quickly. Apart from the requirement for the Editor's trophy that there should be a woman in the crew, there are no other restrictions for either competition—cruises may be in any waters, for weekends or weeks. The logs will be judged solely on their merits for seamanship in relation to the conditions, and for interest of presentation. The results will be announced in January.

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SILHOUETTES CAN BE SURE OF SHELL

Living on Board

By Anne Fowler

THE important thing is to take the plunge. Daydreams have a habit of materialising. Since we first read *The £200 Millionaire* thirty years ago, Shep has longed passionately to sail. I timidly feared seasickness, as many long voyages on large liners had failed to give me any confidence in myself. We reached retirement age before it was ever possible for us to own a boat, or even sail. It was a case of now or never.

We now live overlooking the sea—the Irish Sea, which can be so boisterous, and at other times placidly calm, when its Mediterranean blue invites one to explore. Shep longed for a boat with a lid on it; I frankly wanted something safe to learn in, comfortable to live on, inexpensive to buy and towable by an Austin A35 so that we could tour England, visiting our son and daughter-in-law, staying cheaply at caravan sites *en route* to coastal waters. It seemed at first an impossible dream, until we read the advertisement and received the pamphlet on the Silhouette. A visit to Mr Hurley's boatyard confirmed our most optimistic hopes, and no one could have entered more enthusiastically into our plans than Mr Hurley himself. He was, I think, a little shaken when I said that I wanted the galley and food locker covered with pale blue Formica, but was so interested when he heard that we were taking our dog with us for two months that he generously presented us with a most attractive red plastic mattress for Peter, a smaller version of our own red mattresses.

Many people spend a weekend on a Silhouette, but wives may consider that a room ashore at night may be a necessity if going away for a fortnight or three weeks. We, however, lived on our 3-berth Silhouette for two and a half months last year and two months this year. I have made many mistakes, and only gradually learned from my

errors, but have preened myself proudly on my few successful modifications. A slide-in table covered with Formica under the galley has proved our most useful asset. To allow sufficient room the mast support has been made detachable and, unless we are sailing, this makes an enormous difference to the space in the cabin. Above the galley a sheet of aluminium gives added protection against fire. Two ventilators on the cabin roof provide for a through current of air which we have found considerably reduces condensation. The empty space beneath the bridge deck under the entrance to the cabin was divided into three lockers, invaluable for keeping vital small tools for the boat and my washing and make-up things.

It took us a little time to fit into so small a space, and only the links forged through thirty years of marriage enabled us to surmount this obstacle. My clothes were naturally the central point of contention. As we were living on board all the time and yet also wanted to visit various places it meant that we had to take with us more than the usual slacks. Shep ordained that I must try to be a little nautical, and take only kit bags. I quickly realised that I was neither tidy enough nor had a sufficiently good memory to find any garment immediately, and, when I did, it was too creased to wear. Considerable nervous strain was experienced by both of us.

This year we have had a large locker made on the starboard side reaching from the forward bulkhead to the end of the cabin shelf. In this we keep massive books like the *Channel Pilot* and also my clothes, while Shep uses the large locker under the bridgehead. A wardrobe suitcase tucked down the quarter berth may not be nautical, but preserves the family peace.

We have longed, however, for a hanging locker, and we are going to have one built next year. This will fit compactly where the food locker is now. (Tins, I find, can be stored in the bilges under the quarter berth.)

A tent awning is invaluable as it provides a dressing room for Shep, and gives us both a little welcome privacy. We have a Garbina fixed to the shelf in the foc'sle. This is a useful garbage container which costs 19s 11d. Especially strong paper bags (2s 6d for 14) can be fitted each day, and are easily thrown into litter bins. Brightly coloured Melaware crockery is stacked in a white plastic drainer on the galley, where it is put after it has been dried and presents a gay and tidy appearance.

My life has been transformed by anti-seasickness pills. We experienced our first storm in the Solent, and I found that I could appreciate fully the Silhouette's robust battling with the waves, and Shep's skilful handling of her. I had read so many depressing accounts of gales in the innumerable books I had been given to read in the peculiar hope that they would excite in me a similar passion, so no one was more surprised than I was that, without seasickness, I could really enjoy the exhilarating force of the sea. We are making plans to visit the Clyde and, perhaps, later to sail to France and travel down the canals and rivers to the Mediterranean. We feel confident now of the Silhouette's jaunty ability to tackle difficulties.

We have proved that it can be a thrilling yet comfortable adventure. But, above all, it is essential to preserve a sense of humour. Remember, when you tip a basin of water mistakenly in the cabin, are bumped on the head by the boom, suffer from lumbago which only a second mattress will cure, search in one kitbag for something which is always in the third one, and are general dog's body, that it is all supposed to be *FUN*. Ponder deeply on the fact that, if once a man is bitten by the sailing bug, he will sail with or without you, and it is more exciting to go with him.

Passage to Holyhead

By Don McKnight

OUR plan, Hilary's and mine, was to sail round the Isle of Anglesey in my Caprice, *Sampan*, during a week's holiday. We slipped our moorings off the Gazelle at 12.05, BBC forecast Force 3, SW, and sailed off towards Puffin Sound. We were through the sound at 13.05, with a pleasant wind and occasional sunny periods. Once in the open sea the wind increased to Force 4, and there was quite a chop. We sailed close-hauled across Red Wharf Bay, in weather that was now dull, with slight rain. We made Traeth Bychan at 18.05, and found it to be a delightful anchorage in a SW wind. We anchored in the middle of the bay, about eighty yards offshore. We found the conditons at Traeth Bychan the very opposite of those three NW Group members had experienced a few weeks before our visit: they had had a night of very rough seas, with little or no sleep.

The next day we set sail again at 12.20, precise destination unknown, but our course anti-clockwise round Anglesey. We had very pleasant sailing in a calm sea, wind about Force 2, SE. We rounded Lynas Point at 13.30. We sailed close by the *Liverpool Pilot*, which seemed at first like a big cruising vessel, and was much larger than the launch I had expected to see.

Our course from Lynas was almost due West, aiming between the small islet of Middle Mouse and the mainland. Up to this point I had thought of spending the night at anchor in Cemaes Bay, but we were sailing much faster than I had expected, and we pressed on round the coast. We were off Cemlyn Bay at 15.05, and saw before us the famous Skerries, which are a group of numerous rocks, most of them with beacons, and the largest having a light visible 17 miles. At this stage we started the motor, and headed towards Carmel Head, our course inside Victoria Beacon and West Mouse. A fleet of fishing vessels from Holyhead was taking the same course in the opposite direction. We were round Carmel Head by 15.50, but progress then became painfully slow, as we were fighting an incoming tide and the wind had shifted to the South. We eventually made Holyhead harbour at 19.30, and tied up alongside the wall of the Inner Harbour. We asked some local people if we should be all right for the night. "Yes," they said, "you'll be fine, provided that you are up at midnight and again at 3 a.m. to guard

against being smashed on the wall by the wash of the Irish mailboats."

This news made me feel a little uneasy, so I took a walk to the Holyhead Sailing Club, which is in the Outer Harbour. The people there were most helpful, and directed us to pick up a mooring outside their clubhouse, which we did just before dark. The next four days we spent in Holyhead Outer Harbour, as every forecast for the Irish Sea was Force 7 or 8. We were given full use of the club's facilities, and met Mr and Mrs Hugh Jones, who have a Silhouette and are members of the NW Group. Unfortunately, our holiday came to an end, so the next weekend I took a trailer to Holyhead and towed *Sampan* back to her moorings at the Gazelle, ready for our trip in the following week to the Isle of Man.

A Barbecue

A SOLENT Correspondent writes: The Solent Group held a barbecue at Newtown Harbour on August 19. Only two boats turned up—Commander R. S. Brookes and his wife in *Seal* from Lymington, and Dick Sheen, his two sons, and Miss Ann Charles, in *Marigold,* from Keyhaven. Why this poor attendance? Weather, tides, crew problems, private business, children, wives who may not take kindly to sailing, all play their part, but whatever the excuse it is a great pity that owners allow such things to keep them away from our efforts. They rob themselves of much interest and pleasure. Was our Newtown barbecue a failure? Dear me, No. Silhouettes are made for barbecues, and so are these carefree spots like Newtown beach. There is a peaceful creek you could anchor a dozen Silhouettes in, a steep sandy beach to land on, a strip of headland, with a sleeping Solent on the other side. We had everything—loads of wood for our fire, and a peaceful moon over the Island. Drinks, and then hot dogs done to a turn, and then we had some home made cakes and wine, and potatoes baked in their skins which really glowed. No wonder we were dancing round our fire at midnight. It was an evening to remember, and reflects rather sadly that so many Silhouette owners do not take advantage of such glorious opportunities. We are going to make Newtown barbecue an annual event, for such evenings are too rare to be allowed to fade away through apathy.

A Note from the Treasurer

BILL Akers writes: Subscriptions would normally become due at the beginning of October, but, as the committee has decided to defer the Annual General Meeting until early in 1962, to coincide with the Boat Show, the financial year will now end on December 31. Subscriptions will thus become due, strictly speaking, on January 1, but as the AGM may decide to vary the amount, not to mention varying the Treaurer, the demand for subscriptions will appear in the February issue of the *Journal.* Members who have joined since September 1, 1961, will not become liable for further subscriptions until January 1, 1963.

Isle of Man Cruise

By Geoff Walton

THIS is the log kept by Geoff Walton (G. J. Walton) of his passage in the Silhouette II *Two Gees* from Glyn Garth in the Menai Straits to Port St Mary, Isle of Man, and back, in company with three other Silhouettes (*Dolphin,* Herbert Firth, *Buttercup II,* R. Bradbury, and *Kotka,* Ian Holyman) two Caprices (*Sampan,* Don McKnight and *Sainfoin,* James Berry) a Leeward (*Eileen,* Storm Bate) and a Mystic (*Karena,* Wilfred Jacques). The seven ton sloop *Maid of Skye,* (Judge Meurig Evans) sailed with the fleet. Geoff Walton sailed with his son, G. G. Walton, as crew.

July 29. 10.00. Fitted lifelines, made inventory of safety gear checked flares, etc. General check of boat and gear, fitted new locking wire on rigging screws and shackles. 21.00. Crews' meeting at the Gazelle. All members briefed, course checked, call signs (Morse flashes) and information plans distributed, safety precautions checked. All crews satisfied with arrangements.

July 30. 09.00. Obtained met. forecast from RAF, Valley. Wind WNW, Force 4. Informed all members that departure would be 16.15. Coastguards at Penmon, Point Lynas and Post St Mary informed. 11.30. Provisioned craft and made ready to drop moorings at Beaumaris. 15.00. Cast off, sailed to Glyn Garth and tied up to jetty. 16.15. Departed Glyn Garth and set course for Puffin Sound. Fleet looked very impressive. GG at helm. 17.20. Entered Puffin Sound. 17.25. Sound now clear. Set course 345°. Wind WSW, Force 3-4. Moderate beam sea. Speedometer reading 4.5 knots. 17.35. Passed Ten Foot Bank buoy on starboard. On course 345°. 18.30. GJ at helm, dined on roast chicken and coffee. On course 345°. Plenty of visibility. 20.30. GG at helm, on course, but according to back bearings on Great Orme and Point Lynas appear to be making more leeway than estimated. Fortunate that it is an easterly drift. Will probably put us off Douglas. Wind WSW, Force 4. 4.5 knots. 22.30. GJ at helm. On course 345°. Wind now W, Force 4. 23.30. Glow from Douglas on horizon, confirms leeway. Unable to get satisfactory back bearings as Orme Light not working. Managed rough check on Lynas Light.

July 31. 00.30. GG at helm, on course 345°. Beautiful night, all fleet visible. 02.20. H. Firth fired white Verey light, large steamer seems rather close. But deceptive at night, probably well clear. GJ at helm. On course 345°. Wind W, Force 4. Five knots. Should beat ETA if wind holds. 02.25. Heavy sea mist forming, with rain. Fleet now out of sight. Changed course to 305° This should keep us clear of coast. Wind W, Force 4-5, fairly heavy seas. Boat very dry. 03.05. Seemed to hear heavy engines. Shone torch on sails and had Verey pistol to hand. Not needed, probably imagination. Coffee and sandwiches. 04.00. GG at helm. On course 305° 04.18. Light on port quarter observed, timed flashes and identified Langness Rock. 04.25. Light to starboard, identi-

fied as Douglas Head. Held course 305°. Wind WNW, Force 5. Heavy seas. 04.30. Changed course to 260° to keep clear of Langness Race. 05.00. *Maid of Skye* observed to port, approx. three miles, on course for Port St Mary. Nasty sea running. Visibility now good. 06.00. Able to identify rest of fleet, approx. six miles astern in direction of Douglas. 06.05. GJ at helm. Decided to sail into Garrick Bay to take advantage of lee from high ground and wait for rest of fleet. 07.35. Arrived Port St Mary and tied up to wall astern of herring fleet. Very tired, but extremely pleased that voyage had turned out so well. Met by Secretary of IOM Yacht Club, who gave us the freedom of the club. Hot showers available, also food. Very nice gesture. Cleaned selves and boat and had large breakfast. 13.00. Moved to Inner Harbour, much better berth on sandy bottom. Wind NNW, Force 1-2, with sunshine.

The party spent the next two days in the Isle of Man, enjoying the generous hospitality of the IOM Yacht Club and of other friends in the Island. The fleet set off to return on August 3. *Geoff Walton's log continues*:

August 3. 04.45. Cast off, and formed up in bay. Nasty red sky, with wind clouds forming. GG at helm. 05.00. On course 160°, wind light from West. Dull. 06.15. GJ took over. On course 160°. Wind W, Force 2. Barometer 29.75, falling. 07.00. *Maid of Skye* sailed over to inform us that the shipping forecast was giving SW, Force 6. Made immediate decision to turn back. Put about, and headed on visual course to Port St Mary. 08.00. GG at helm. Wind W, Force 3-4. Heavy rain and nasty swell. 08.10. Started engine to enable us to make harbour on one leg. 09.15. GJ at helm. Heavy rain, Wind WSW, Force 3-4. 09.50. Tied up to wall in Outer Harbour. Changed clothes, breakfast and sleep. 15.00. Moved under power to Inner Harbour. Heavy seas running, wind about Force 6, SW. 15.30. All boats tied up and snug, decision to return very wise. Wind now Force 8 from SW, with heavy rain.

August 4. Shipping forecast for 24 hours—wind W, backing SW, Force 5-6. Will listen to midnight forecast for further decision.

August 5. 00.02. Forecast SSW, Force 5-6. Back to bed. 10.00. Moved to Outer Harbour which does not dry out; wise precaution if we have to get away smartly. Provisioned. 14.00. Forecast, wind WSW, Force 4-6. Further decision later. Had short sail round bay to check conditions. Found that with this wind it would be just possible to hold our homeward course of 162°, but would certainly make a great deal of leeway. Conditions extremely uncomfortable. 17.58. Forecast, wind WSW, Force 4-5, gusting 6. Voyage postponed. 18.15. Phoned Ronaldsway, who gave a 12 hour forecast, wind W, Force 3-4. Seems like a good chance. Barometer rising steadily. 18.30. Skipper's .meeting Decision made to leave at 01.00 tomorrow if 00.02 forecast is favourable.

August 6. 00.02. Forecast, wind WSW, Force 4-5, gusting 6. Back to bed. 13.40. Forecast, wind veering later NW, Force 4-6. Decided to meet again at 17.58. Looks as if it may be possible to leave this evening, or early morning. Made boat ready for passage, and had a couple of

hours sleep. 17.58. Forecast, wind WSW, Force 3-4. Decided to sail at 19.00. Course to be 200° until nightfall, and then 160° for second leg. 19.00. Cast off and formed up in bay. Large crowd of friends and well-wishers on quay. Beautiful evening, with clear sky, sea slight. Wind WSW, Force 2. Barometer 30.26. GJ at helm. 19.25. Set course 200° started Seagull, as only two knots on speedometer. About one third throttle brought speed up to four knots. 20.30. GG at helm. Course 200°. Topped up fuel tank, rather awkward in swell. Wind WSW, Force 2. Making four knots. Visibility unlimited. 21.25. GJ at helm. Good back bearing on Chicken Rock and Langness. Dead on course. 22.30. Engine topped up. Lights on port bow, probably North Stack and Skerries, but too early yet for positive identification. Fantastic amount of phosphorescence in water, prop. leaving long wake of flame. 23.20. GG at helm. Back bearing good, changed course to 160°. Wind SW, Force 2, engine great help, making four knots. 23.59. On course 160° Hot soup and sandwiches.

August 7. 00.30. GJ at helm. Passed *Maid of Skye* to port. 01.00. On course 160°. Topped up engine. 02.20. Skerries and North Stack now positively identified. Altered course to 150° for Lynas. Would appear to be leading the fleet now, as we are getting replies to our lamp signals from astern. 03.00. Two large steamers crossed our bows, going E to W, approx. two miles ahead. Topped up engine. 03.45. GG at helm. On course 150°. Wind SW, Force 2. Easy sea. Coffee and chocolate. Further lights now identified as Point Lynas, Penmon, Orme and Moelfre. Also useful check on Amlwch ICI works lights. Sky now lightening in East. 04.30. Dawn, landfall made W of Point Lynas. Changed course to 140°, for Puffin Sound. 05.30. Trawler passed to starboard, steaming in N direction. On visual course for Puffin Sound, all fleet now visible, approx. five miles astern. Topped up engine, increased power, as wind now variable, Force 1. 05.45 GJ at helm. 06.30. On course for Puffin, beautiful morning, calm sea. 07.00. Topped up engine. GG at helm. Took off oilskins. 01.15. Entered Puffin Sound and signalled to Coastguard. Wind now Force 0. Sea like millpond. 08.20. Left Sound, dropped sails and stowed gear. Tide just right, approx. HW slack. Topped up engine. 08.45. Picked up mooring at Beaumaris. Loaded gear in dinghy and tidied ship. Ashore in time to see fleet pass up the Straits for Glyn Garth.

At the beginning of the season, the NW Group of the SOA asked Storm Bate and Geoff Walton, who both live in North Wales, if they would act as a Racing and Cruising Sub-Committee for the Group. Although this meant a lot of hard work, both loyally accepted. They did much of the detailed planning for the Isle of Man cruise. In the following notes, they sum up the operation, and some of the lessons learned from it.

WE spent a great deal of time in preparing detailed plans covering such items as safety gear to be carried, methods of communication by day and night, and in devising code signals and code names for

boats, the position each boat in the fleet, and the course to be followed, calculated upon an average speed of three knots. It was decided to lay a course going out for Langness Point, and that if there was to be any error it should be to the North West.

Before sailing, all skippers were briefed on the plans, and the latest met. reports. Anti-seasickness pills were available for those who wished. It had been decided originally that each boat should be checked for seaworthiness and safety gear, but in the rush of loading stores and preparing for sea there just was not time.

It had also been decided that a minimum crew of three should be on each boat as a precaution against seasickness and other contingencies which might leave a boat undermanned. In the end this rule had to be waived, for otherwise some could not officially have started, but would probably have come just the same.

By compass the course was as reasonably correct as one can maintain in a small boat, though initially the ebbing tide seemed to be setting the fleet slightly East. At 19.00 on the evening of the passage the wind was still Force 4 on the Ventimeter, and the fleet's speed was averaging five knots.Owing to the varying speeds of the various boats, it was found that it was too difficult for boats to keep station. Although a different line-up was used for the return journey, again it was found that (apart from three boats) the prescribed positions were not kept. Those in front found it inconvenient to heave to for the whole fleet to foregather properly before darkness fell, though an effort was made to slow down by letting the jibs fly.

As darkness came on the way over the fleet was scattered over an estimated two to three mile line. Every skipper had been advisd that he must be prepared to act on his own, and each man was very much on his own. It was soon apparent that our speed was such that we were going to arrive some two or three hours before the ETA, and since it had been calculated that there would have been a full beam tide in both directions to cancel each other out, there would have been a corrected course advised to the fleet at about 01.00. The fleet, however, was too scattered for this to be done, and in the main it carried on, each skipper on his own, but following the set course. The result was that the full flood set the fleet some eight miles East, and there was no tide for the ebb correction. Consequently the landfall was Douglas Head and not Langness.

Most of the fleet picked up the Douglas Head Light at about 03.00, but within a few minutes it had disappeared in the rain. Individually, the boats made for the only light they had seen, and at 04.00 most were standing around off Douglas waiting for daylight to show up the coast.

Geoff Walton, however, in *Two Gees,* had altered course at 02.25, headed straight for Langness Point, and sailed into Garrick Bay. The main body of the fleet was identified by him about six miles to the East. The wind having fallen light, all boats put on their motor, and motor-sailed into bay, except for Hebert Firth, whose motor, unknown to others, had broken down. The fleet was tied up by 8 am at Port St Mary, except Herbert Firth's *Dolphin,* who was trying to get in under

sail alone against a foul tide, and did not berth until near 11.00. There was no danger to *Dolphin*, and had the skipper been anyone less than Herbert someone would have gone out and towed them in; since it was Herbert, the rest of the fleet were at a loss to understand what was holding him back. At the same time, to have gone out and towed in *Dolphin* would have been a kindness after such a trip.

Night Watch

THERE are four human souls in this little wooden box, kept alive—and comfortable—by 9 mm of plywood. Only 9 mm of plywood? Rather, by six thousand years of accumulated human skill, by the knowledge and science of the designer, by the craftsmanship of the builder, aided by technological achievements in the properties of wood, resins and glues. There is a lot of mankind's history in a little sailing boat. Still, it is a very little boat in the vastness of the sea.

A little boat, but a sturdy boat, and a boat that knows her job. Who taught her to put her bows up like that, breast the wave, and throw aside two cascades of water, without a drop coming on board? Who taught her to curtsey with her counter, so that the swell which looks at night as if it must engulf her, glides gently away beneath her keels? Certainly, she knows her job.

I'm lucky with this night. Dark, yes, but only landsmen, and town dwellers, at that, can think of night as a cloak of nothing but darkness. There is no moon tonight, but the stars are like diamonds in a girl's hair—more valuable, though, for the stars point man's way across the trackless sea; they lead you to the harbour where you would be, whereas diamonds in a girl's hair may lead to happiness; or they may not. The sea is not invisible. It is not light, but it has a visible quality of its own. Perhaps I couldn't see a dinghy two cables off, but I can see the night sky and the stars in the sea, and the flecks of spray pick up glints of light from somewhere. Phosporescence, perhaps.

A woman and two children are asleep in the cabin. We have a tiny light in there, but the sliding hatch is in place, so that my eyes see nothing of the light, and are not distracted by it. But the hatch on the cabin top is half open, to let in air from this lovely night, and I can just see a sort of glow from the opening. I know that everybody is asleep. We had a long day. The children were asleep soon after 18.00. I had a good rest after supper, and relieved the mate—yes, she is my mate—just before midnight. Poor darling, she was pretty tired, and dropped off almost as soon as she went below. A man mustn't boast about his good fortune, but there's no harm in counting one's blessings occasionally. And I count high among my own that my wife loves the sea and my boat, so that we share her in every way. What do the children feel about it? They are very young. Is it fair to coop them up in a small boat on a passage? I think they get much from it; much, perhaps, that they don't understand now, but that grows into their being, becomes part of them, and helps to fit them for life. I don't think we've made

much of a show of life in this twentieth century. Most of us have to earn our livings in ugly places, and we spend our lives cooped up in cliffs of offices, or warrens of factories, scarcely noticing whether it rains or the sun shines. Here, at sea, every minute of the day or night is real. It matters enormously which quarter the wind blows from, and just how it blows. We are no longer part of a machine. True, we have a man-made boat, and depend on the inherited skill of man's use of sails, but given these things, we depend on ourselves. And the immensity of the sea makes one realise in humility that in all things we depend on God's mercy. I doubt if there was ever a sailor who did not believe in God. We may call God by different names, but no one who launches himself on the sea in a boat can have any doubt of the ever-present reality of God's protection. Sometimes boats are wrecked—yes, and in time all men must die. In God's time. Mostly he brings us safely home, but it is His will to be done, and we do not understand His will. It is enough to understand that it is His will, and that He is God.

The night is changing slightly—like the sea, it is always changing, never the same from minute to minute. It is not dawn yet, but dawn is not far away. And is there anything in the world so beautiful as dawn at sea? Dawn, and perhaps our landfall; well, perhaps. What a splendid invention was the vacuum flask. I've never tasted better coffee. A.

Letters to the Editor

Jib Furling Gear

OUR Silhouette was originally fitted with a Wykeham Martin furling gear for the jib. This afforded me immense satisfaction, particularly when leaving and returning to moorings singlehanded. This year, however, I reluctantly discarded it, and have hanked the jib in the normal method to the forestay. This I had to do because I could never achieve a really taut luff with the furling gear. Perhaps other members of the SOA could furnish me with a solution to this problem—if so I should be extremely grateful.—*H. O. W. Fowler, Castletown, Isle of Man.*

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Published by the SILHOUETTE OWNERS' ASSOCIATION *and Printed by the* TRAJAN PRESS LTD., 432, *Ashton Old Road, Openshaw, Manchester,* 11.