

The Silhouette Owner

The journal of the Silhouette Owners' Association

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December 1961

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AGM and Party

THE Annual General Meeting of the Silhouette Owners' Association will be held on Saturday, January 6, 1962, at The White Hart, The Terrace, Barnes, London, SW13, at 18.00 hrs. Please be on time, because at 19.30 the AGM will be followed by the SOA's annual London party, and if last year's party is anything to go by, there won't be nearly enough time for all the good talk about boats and meeting up with old friends that members enjoy on these occasions. This year, too, there are the trophies to be presented to the winners of the Log Competitions, and we don't want to have to hurry any part of the evening.

Resolutions for discussion at the AGM, and nominations for the National Committee, should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, George Oliver, 52, Middle Road, Higher Denham, Bucks, by December 15.

The date of the AGM—January 6—has been chosen because it is the Saturday of the first week of the Boat Show. The committee knows how difficult it is for members who live a long way from London to come to a meeting in London, and it is hoped that the date chosen will enable people to combine attending the AGM and coming to the Silhouette party with a trip to London to visit the Boat Show. We are trying to do rather a lot in one evening, and everything depends on keeping to time. So do, please, enable the AGM to start promptly at 18.00 hrs.

Treasurer's note

Bill Akers writes: To facilitate the compilation of accounts for the period ending December 31, 1961, I shall be glad if all officers on the committee, and all Group Secretaries, who have any expenses which they wish defraying, would let me have a note of these expenses by Saturday, December 16, accompanied by vouchers where available.

lively
minds
(like yours)
like



North West's Laying Up Dinner

SOME seventy-four members and friends of the NW Group attended the group's first laying up dinner and dance at the Manor Hey Hotel, Urmston, Lancashire, on November 18. The magistrates, with a nice respect for the sobriety of yachtsmen, permitted an extension of licensing hours to 23.45 and dancing, to an excellent band, went on until 01.00 hrs.

The Group Commodore, R. N. Pegg, presided at the dinner, and Ron Bradbury was a splendid master of ceremonies. After the Loyal Toast (suitably drunk to "The Queen, the Duke of Lancaster"), a bouquet of flowers was presented to Mrs Pegg by Mrs Hilary McKnight, who was charmingly described by Ron Bradbury as "the bride of the year—almost a Silhouette bride." Don McKnight and Hilary (then) Jones were among the first members of the NW Group, and throughout the sailing season were among the most constant sailors in the Menai Straits in their Caprice. Their marriage during the summer delighted all their friends.

The Firth Cup, given by Herbert Firth for the first race of the season each year, and the Pegg Trophy, given by R. N. Pegg for an annual September race, were presented by Mrs Pegg. The Firth Cup was won this year by Derek Birse in *Blue Jay*, and the Pegg Trophy by Ian Holyman in *Kotka*.

Seafaring tradition was followed in the speechmaking, which was kept pretty brief. There were well-earned tributes to Herbert Firth, for his marvellous work as hon secretary of the group, to the officers and members who all helped to make the season such a happy one in spite of pretty awful weather, and to Emlyn Oliver, Commodore of the Menai Bridge Boat Club, for his invaluable help in arranging group

moorings off The Gazelle at Glyn Garth and for his constant readiness to help yachtsmen. Judge Meurig Evans, who sailed in his big sloop *Maid of Skye* with the group's fleet that went to the Isle of Man in July, was a welcome guest, and he replied very gracefully to a toast to The Guests.

Herbert Firth put into words what most of us were feeling when he said how remarkable it was to see people whom one normally met wearing ancient pullovers and sea-trousers all dressed in immaculate dinner jackets! It was indeed a transformation, and the group has every right to be rather proud of itself for putting on a jolly good show. The room was beautifully decorated with a fine collection of burgees, and with Herbert Firth's now-famous Belgian hunting horn, whose tally ho is known from one end of the Straits to the other, as the centrepiece of the decorations along one wall.

Peace of Mind Account

By W. O. Meek

AT this time of year one licks one's wounds and considers how to avoid getting in the same jam next time. Here are two results of learning the hard way.

Outboards. Nearly always it's the plug, so one dives in the tool box, but can find only a rusty clogged up plug, which, it gradually dawns, is the nearly new one put there only a couple of months ago. No use putting that one in. Then you are merrily going at speed, and get a wad of seaweed round the prop . . . PING . . . and the spring on the propeller drive has snapped. If you have no spare, do your best with the oars. So I bought one of those flexible polythene wide-necked jars, and put therein:

1. A brand new plug.
2. A plug spanner.
3. A propeller spring.
4. A box of matches.
5. Magneto spanner set.
6. Spare flashlamp bulbs.

7. Primus pricker. (If you have bottled gas you still want it, because the gas comes through a very fine hole, sea air sometimes chokes this with corrosion, and then—cold water to drink.)

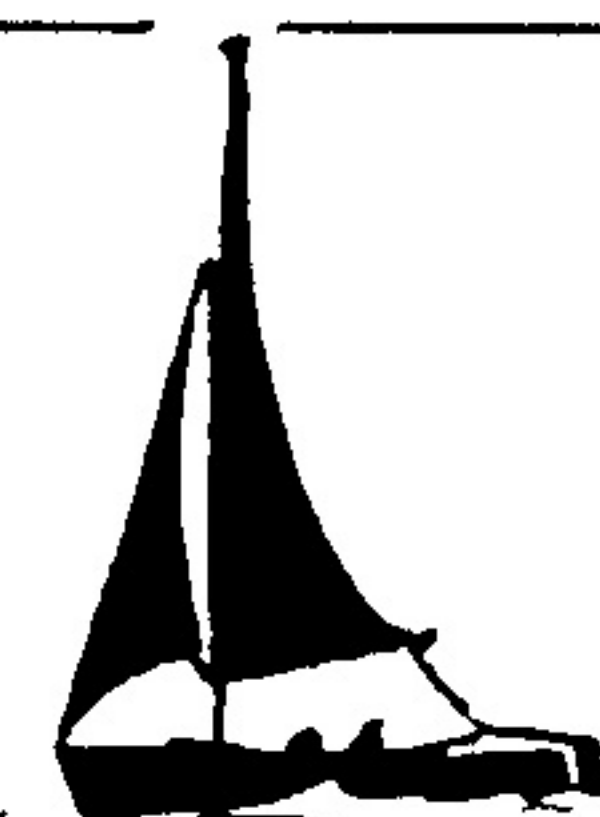
When you have packed them all in securely, put the cap on tightly, and then seal with a couple of turns of Sellotape. Once on board, the spares' jar seems to act in a curious way: the plug doesn't oil up, you don't forget the matches, and at the end of the season you haven't opened it. Put it to the Peace of Mind Account.

Insurance. A friend had the misfortune to lose his boat during the recent gales. He was insured, like most of us, value of boat at

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purchase price, plus value of dinghy and outboard. What he had overlooked was the extra value that had accumulated over the years—compass, charts and navigation equipment, stove and galley equipment, extra sails and warps, and (a big item for some of us) tools on board. Add bedding, lamps, oilskins, and you have a value of anything from £15 to £75. I made a list of my equipment, pinned it to the policy, and obtained the extra cover for quite a small sum. Another item to write off against the Peace of Mind Account.

News of the Boat Show

A. G. HURLEY'S stand at the Boat Show (January 3-13) will no doubt again be a meeting place for many Silhouette owners (and future owners). Hurley is showing both the wood and glassfibre versions of the Silhouette Mark II, and if past Boat Shows are any guide, the Silhouettes will draw some of the most eager and interested crowds at Earl's Court.

The 1962 Boat Show will again be bigger than ever, and the organisers describe it (certainly with justice) as "the most comprehensive marine exhibition ever to be staged". This year's centrepiece will be a reconstruction of Dartmouth, with its boat float and Elizabethan Butterwalk. One particularly interesting exhibit will be a 10-seater hovercraft, powered by a Rolls-Royce V 8 engine and said to be capable of a lift of two feet and of forward speeds up to 50 mph. This machine is the CC 2 Cushioncraft, designed and built by Britten-Norman of Bembridge Airport, Isle of Wight. It is 27 ft long with a beam of 17 ft 1 in, and it weighs just over a ton. It is a remarkable example of the stage of development reached by British hovercraft.

Shell Mex and BP are showing a full-size floating filling station, designed to be moored so that craft can refuel at any state of the tide. Shell Mex and BP will also be showing a model of a Marina, where boats can put in to find secure moorings and all conveniences laid on. Marinas are common in the States, but are only just beginning to appear here. Two pioneers of this very useful facility for small boats, Dart Marina and Thames Ditton Marina will have stands at the Show with people to explain just what they can offer.

The Show promises a vast range of all those things that a Silhouette owner would like to buy if a Premium Bond ever turned up lucky, or

if the house could do without repainting so that the boat could have a larger share of the family finances. But if there are many marvellous fittings that must remain dreams for most of us, there will be plenty of useful things on view to give ideas for next season and to make for more practical comfort on board. The Boat Show will be open daily from 10.00 hrs to 21.00 hrs (excluding Sunday), and admission costs adults 3s, children under 16, 1s 6d. Admission on the opening day is 10s. Parties of 12 and over can get special rates of 2s 6d for adults and 1s for children (except on the opening day).

Crewing

IN preparation for next season, *The Silhouette Owner* is going to try to maintain a register of owners who would like crews for regular or occasional sailing, and of crews who would like to know of boats which would welcome them. Such a register can only work if people use it, and at present it will have to be experimental—experience over the coming year will show whether it is useful or not. The system we propose is this:

We invite owners who think that they may have any need of crews, and people without boats (or without cruising boats) who would like the chance of crewing in a Silhouette, to write to the editor of *The Silhouette Owner* making known their wants. Will owners please give:

1. Name, address, telephone number, and name of boat.
2. Place of mooring and cruising area.
3. How often (and as soon as they know, when) they are likely to need a crew.
4. Whether they would like to have as crew a man or a woman.
5. Whether they want a crew as "third hand", or to sail alone with them.
6. Whether they can offer any transport for getting to and from their boats.
7. Whether they want experienced crews, or would be prepared to teach beginners.
8. What sort of sailing they intend to do.

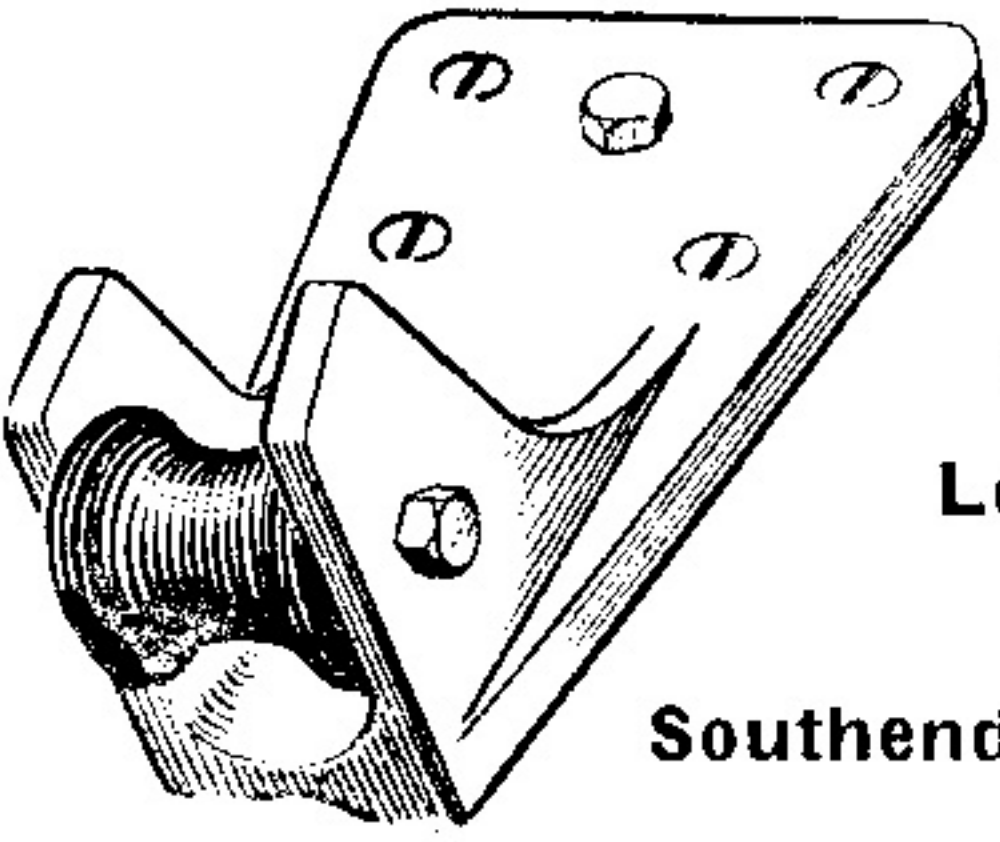
Will crews please state:

1. Name, address and telephone number.
2. How much notice is required to be available.
3. Whether they only want weekend sailing, or would be interested in longer passages.
4. What sort of experience they have had.
5. Whether they have sailing clothes, lifejackets, etc.
6. Whether they have any transport.

Before putting the name of a potential crew on the register, we shall ask him or her to sign a simple statement that he (or she) agrees to sail entirely at his (or her) risk. We are sorry for this bit of formality, and we don't for a moment suggest that there is any likely danger in

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crewing in a Silhouette. But the sea is the sea, and we think it important that both owners and crews should know in advance just how they stand.

When we start getting names on the register, we shall let owners know of potential crews in their sailing area, or who would be interested in joining a boat for a passage; and we shall let crews know of owners who would be ready to welcome them. It will then be up to owners and crews to make their own arrangements with one another. In the sailing season arrangements may sometimes have to be made at short notice, and in such cases we shall do our best to help by telephone—Marple 1458.

To protect people from possibly irritating or frivolous inquiries, we shall not publish the crewing register. We shall simply maintain it, and put people in touch with one another by writing (or telephoning) to them individually.

FOR WOMEN

Learning the Language

By Anne Fowler

"IF you would only try to be a little more nautical," suggested Shep, "and learn some of the words, it would be much easier."

I was uncomfortably aware that I had concentrated too much on *Soubrette II's* cruising and caravanning abilities, and her sturdy determination to overcome difficulties. I felt safe in our Silhouette, but a lack of all knowledge of seafaring language made me an unskilled crew. "That rope"—vague and yet definite—was one of the many phrases which irritated Shep.

The winter was obviously the time in which to study. I collected Peter Heaton's books on *Sailing* and *Cruising*, Maurice Griffith's *Sailing on a Small Income*, Joshua Slocum's *Sailing Round the World* and a pile of more lighthearted books on sailing. In fairness to Shep, I ought to try to make myself understand a few of the odd words which might belong to some foreign tongue, and yet meant so much to him. I studied several of the books, and was stunned to discover that very rarely did the word describe the article or action.

"All I can do is to link the word with something that will remind me of it," I decided.

Port was easy so long as I remembered that port is passed to the left, (an easier mnemonic, "Is there any red port left?"—Ed.) but what possible connection was there between raising—no weighing—anchor and cat? I could think of no clue between clew and the leech and foot of a sail, and why "earrings" for the ropes which secured the clew to the spar, and what had pea got to do with the anchor?

Even when there was an obvious bond between sails and sheets, it was firmly disregarded, and sheets were ropes, while the link between horses and hounds was unavailing, as they had nothing to do with each other. I was thrilled when I discovered that "in irons" was obviously a bad mistake to make, and a crime might be punished by putting someone in fetters. I could remember that luff and leading both began with "l", but why should that make me think of the leading edge of a sail? Even a "lazy guy" did not refer to the crew, but was merely an extra rope. Baggy wrinkles should surely describe a wilful sail, or perhaps the skipper's dissipated face? "Flake" was pleasantly descriptive of coiling a rope down in layers, but unfortunately it only suggested tobacco to me.

I studied the formula for the Thames Measurement of boats—

$$\frac{(\text{Length} - \text{Beam}) \times \text{Beam} \times \frac{1}{2} \text{Beam}}{94}$$

94

A woman, I felt, would certainly have thought of revising it since 1854, and would have chosen some other divisor than 94. To make matters more difficult this tonnage had no connection with the boat's Gross and Net Registered Tonnage. Were they just trying to make it as complicated as possible?

Even the ordinary common or garden bit of rope cannot be called just a rope, but is a vane, vang, warp, sheet, hawser, halyard, brail, grommet, outhaul, downhaul, fall, spring, strop, tricing line, hambro-line, jackstay, braces, lizard, messenger, painter and goodness knows what else! To me, I was afraid, a rope would remain "that rope" wherever it might be.

Then there were those puzzling conditions of wind against tide, wind and tide, following wind, and wind on the beam. I had been impressed with the fact that we left our moorings unostentatiously; now I had a growing admiration for Shep's skill. But I was left with the sad conclusion that I should have to maintain what I could only hope Shep would consider a knowledgeable silence.

Prevailing Wind South West

By Felicity Redmond-Lyon

THIS was our third season in the Bristol Channel, and *Swift's* fourth.

Apart from odd weekend's sailing, the summer cruise in August is the major event of her year. She is a *Silhouette*, one of the few which is gunter rigged, but otherwise standard, and was built in Great Yarmouth in the spring of 1957. We came to the Bristol Channel raw from dinghies and Her Majesty's fleet respectively, both used to blue seas where the tides run sedately, and merely affect the presence or absence of water. One of our first experiences in "the Channel" brought home its characteristics to us. We found ourselves at anchor with muddy water tearing past at six knots towards some sinister rocks astern. There was no wind, and it being half ebb, the tide had another twenty feet to fall. By a never to be repeated error in anchoring technique, we had dragged from a recognised Admiralty anchorage.

However, that was early days, and this was our 1961 cruise. Our plans are always over ambitious. In our first season we felt Ireland was well within reach. This year Milford Haven was the goal.

Tuesday, August 1. At 12.15, shortly after high water, we set sail, and crept out of Clevedon Pill (a muddy tidal creek, but in our opinion the best moorings from the point of view of safety, on the whole Channel). The wind was light from the North East, and died away almost immediately, and the tide carried us over our own local hazard, the Blackstone rocks. Visibility was only about four miles, but the sea was flat calm for once, and we abandoned ideas of going to Barry in favour of the River Axe at Weston. A ridge of rock sticks out several miles from Swallow Point, and the white crests of the waves breaking over it form an impressive horizon from Clevedon in rough weather. We had always before left this well to port, but in view of the calm conditions, it seemed an ideal day to go down the English coast.

We always find the effect of a tide running over a rough bottom rather eerie in calm weather. We were driven along by our *Seagull 40* across oily water, full of powerful eddies which made one imagine a great "swirly" that would drag all and sundry to the bottom. But thanks to the tide, we found ourselves off Birnbeck Island in an hour, and it seemed early to be making for port. As well as being skipper, Jon is navigation-boss. (We once heard a play on the wireless about a Canadian community run by the goose-boss, the horse-boss, etc., and immediately constituted the posts of lines-boss, motor-boss, food-boss, weather-boss, and anchor-boss. I hold the last three). After consultation with the charts, Jon decided that if the conditions held we could reach Minehead by low water, and if not, there were several other possibilities.

We set a course of 240 deg. into the unknown (and unseen) and passed almost mid-way between Brean Down and Steephelm. These disappeared into the mist, and we were on our own, even the line between sea and sky having disappeared. We picked up two buoys, and

THE SILHOUETTE OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

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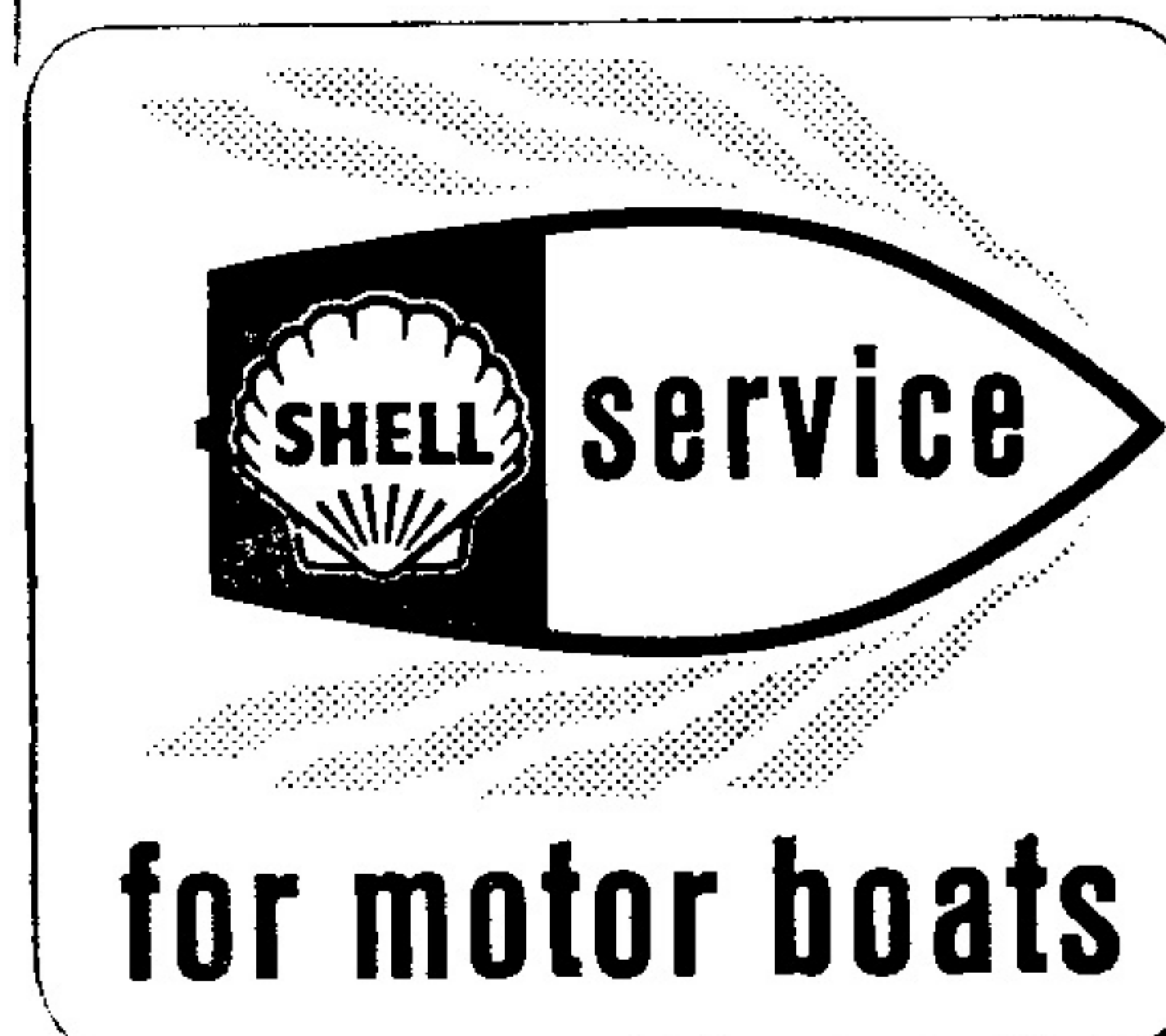
The Association exists to promote the interests of Silhouette Owners throughout the world. The annual subscription is 15s.

then the spectres of two huge buildings appeared. We looked on the chart, but nothing "conspic" was marked on, and they appeared to be in the direction of "Inkley Point." It is not the first time our chart has found names of landmarks difficult to get right. We later discovered it to be Hinckley Point Nuclear Power Station.

High land then came into view on the port bow. Two buoys mis-identified made us slightly worried about the non-appearance of a third, but as more land appeared we could see two towns, which we presumed to be Watchet and Minehead. We stopped the motor at this stage to refuel. We normally do this under way, but we had forgotten to bring the funnel, and found the process more economical while stationary. There was not a breath of wind, and the sea was dead calm, but almost as soon as we started again the wind appeared from the West, dead ahead. We had a peep through the entrance to Watchet harbour from about two miles off. It is protected by strong walls on both sides, but apparently care must be taken when entering as the bottom is rocky outside, and like all harbours in this area, it dries out at half tide. The wind by now had kicked the sea up into little wavelets. Suspecting that this was the "variable" part of the morning's forecast, we set the jib and hoisted the main, bringing in the outboard. Within a few minutes we were churning along in Force 4 to 5 wind, the seas by now being large enough to knock all our way off if they caught us at the wrong angle. We are used to this, and feel it is one of the penalties of having a short boat in this area. Our tack took us to the shore a mile short of Minehead. We were sheltered from the sea here by a spit of shingle, and we dropped anchor about half a cable from the beach. Some people who saw us from the shore thought we had run straight on to the beach.

It was dead low water, and we had three hours to wait until we

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could get into Minehead harbour. This, anyway, was up wind and up tide, but Watchet would be easy to reach if necessary. It was nice to see the coast at low water, as we had a reasonably accurate idea of what the bottom was like when we finally motored up. We made about one knot against the tide, and were not sorry to cross the last bit of broken water and anchor outside the harbour wall for supper. We had come thirty miles in six hours, mainly under motor. Minehead harbour is protected by one curved wall, and is a nice place to be when the prevailing SW wind is blowing. Anything from the East, however, blows straight in. We lay very comfortably outside two yachts from Penarth, and came down gently on to mud.

Thursday, August 3. Wednesday was a day of strong SW winds, so we spent it in Minehead, but Thursday was more promising. The forecast was light winds from the NE becoming strong from the SW later. Our destination was Ilfracombe, and we left in company with the two Penarth boats as soon as we floated about 11.00. We motored round the point, and it was soon clear that the little wind there was cam from the SW. The hills come steeply down into the sea along most of the coastline between Minehead and Ilfracombe, and it is safe to sail within fifteen yards of the beach in most places. We kept close in, and could only rarely get the foresail to fill as we punched the last two hours of the flood tide. Once in Porlock Bay, with the wind strengthening, it became clear that we would not make Ilfracombe before the harbour dried out, and we headed into Porlock Weir.

I like Porlock. It is a tiny village built round the harbour which is crammed with all sorts of small craft. The only sizeable building is a large hotel, but there always seem to be a lot of holidaymakers who line the harbour walls, looking down on the boats all day, and most of the night. It was after our first visit here that I made our curtains. The skipper has different views. The pool where we lie is cut off from the sea at half tide, and is not quite shallow enough for us to take the ground, and not deep enough for us to float clear of all the stones. The result is that the keel is perpetually striking things which promptly disappear as soon as we fish for them. The problem when we float is

how to prevent our collision with other boats at points other than those protected by our fenders. Our visits here inspired us to visit the fire brigade last winter and buy an old fire hose. This, cut in lengths and stuffed with foam rubber, has given us an excellent supply of fenders.

We had not been the only ones to turn for Porlock. The two Penarth boats, and a converted lifeboat from Weston, proved good company for the next few days as we waited for the strong South-Westerlies to abate. This delay gave us an opportunity to experiment with our new "storm sails". Our normal sails are cotton, and we always have a feeling that they might not stand up to a gale, so we had acquired some very strong, unused lifeboat sails. They cost us only ten shillings each, as apparently they had been dyed red just before an order had been issued saying they must be fluorescent orange, but they were both jibs. We set the jib the normal way and tried the second sail as a trysail with the lower edge of the sail up the mast. It certainly made reaching in a blow easy sailing. We had been out the previous day fully reefed, and lying right over. With the storm sails progress was much more genteel, but we found we could make no way to windward.

Monday, August 6. On Sunday our friends got sick of waiting for the weather, and returned to Minehead. Ironically, on Monday a light wind blew from the NE. We left as soon as the water filled the narrow gut through the shingle leading to the harbour, and (as is its wont) the wind died away. The motor, with occasional help from the jib, took us down the coast over the flood tide. We kept close inshore, rounded Foreland Point, and took the inshore route across Lynmouth Bay. This is an impressive coast, flanked by hillsides dropping down from Exmoor on to deserted strips of shingle for mile upon mile. The absence of a fair wind is always irksome though, and we were glad to reach 'Combe and find plenty of water still in the harbour four hours after HW.

Whatever one thinks about some of the harbours round here, everyone seems agreed that "'Combe is all right." The harbour itself is large and well protected, and the bottom is clean sand; not only that, the water is clear and blue. There is water on the quay, and rubbish bins, and fish shops selling locally caught fish, to say nothing of first-class restaurants to relieve the monotony of the diet. We like to stock up with food for a month before we leave, and this necessitates living out of tins in the main. These stow away very conveniently under the starboard bunk, leaving the food locker for dried goods and perishables such as bread. Fruit also lives under the bunk. The port bunk, being a quarter berth, is less useful in this way, but houses all the bedding during the day. Forward we have a locker for clothes, and on the port side a methylated spirit stove which gave us plenty of opportunity to practice our fire-fighting technique before we got used to it.

The strong wind which had been forecast earlier arrived about 02.00 the following morning. The barometer had dropped half an inch in a few hours, and we heard later that the wind was gusting to Force 7. When I looked out I saw Jon disappearing over the bow waist deep into the water in his pyjamas. He had gone to retrieve our 10lb anchor, which was out ahead, and take it astern to aid the four pounder. Both

are Danforth anchors and hold well, but the ten pounder has a $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch warp on it. We later lashed a $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch line out forward on to a mooring chain. Before this, however, we noticed trouble across the harbour. A small yacht, which we had been admiring earlier, had evidently broken adrift, and appeared to be trying to climb aboard a motor cruiser. Off went Jon in our Prout coracle and, together with some men from another boat, managed to re-moor her. Her owner was asleep aboard a neighbouring craft, oblivious of the excitement. After an hour or so the wind dropped for a little while, and then up it came as hard as ever, but from a diametrically opposite direction. We were glad of our bow line.

Thursday, August 10. Mumbles was our destination. We had waited in 'Combe for a suitable day, and this seemed to be it. The forecast predicted light variable winds with a moderate North Westerly later. It was exciting to see the Gower coast as a thin line on the horizon, with over twenty miles of sea between us and it. We motored through smooth seas with the sails up, but doing very little work. There was a long gentle swell, presumably left behind by the gales, and 'Combe dropped slowly astern. The navigation-boss is always very thorough when we are sailing to a new port. There were three hours of ebb still to run, and we let the tide set us down in view of the promised North Westerly. The only hazard appeared from the Admiralty pilot to be overfalls off Oxwich Point, so we were to pass well to seaward of this. Since the North Westerly failed to materialise, we altered course up Channel, keeping what turned out to be Swansea power station just open of Mumbles lighthouse. It was drizzling by now, but the poor visibility could not hide the beauty of the coast, with its grey rocks alternating with little coves, on which, even in this weather, we could see the hardy Welsh.

Just short of Mumbles we noticed the Mixon shoal marked on the chart. It was high water and I was all for going straight over it. The skipper, however, prevailed and we passed outside it. We later learned that the seas on the shoal are the only real hazard to yachts in the locality. Oxwich, which we had avoided so carefully, is the place they sail to for picnics at weekends!

As we sailed into the bay in the now pouring rain, and with the only respectable wind of the day blowing, we saw a forest of masts. There must be close on a hundred at anchor, and as many dinghies beached on shore. There is no harbour, just an anchorage protected by Mumbles Head from Westerly winds. This is no place to make mistakes over moorings—a fact which was forcibly driven home to us by the presence of two wrecked boats on the shore which had broken loose the previous weekend.

Friday to Monday. Our trip to Mumbles had been largely experimental, and the hospitality of the sailing club made it a most enjoyable one. We still wanted to "go West," a feat which the wind seemed determined to make impossible, and we discussed the possibility of a trip to Tenby or Saundersfoot. We took a bus over to Rhossile one day to inspect Wern's Head and Carmarthen Bay. It certainly made a

change to be viewing the Channel from the top of a grey limestone cliff. We decided the trip would be quite feasible, given good weather. Carmarthen Bay itself gave us most food for thought. A shallow bay, which can get rough very easily, with no reasonable harbour to run for on the leeward side, was not inspiring, even without the fact that Werm's Head to Tenby was a good twenty miles. We waited to see if fair weather would come. Any confidence we had in BBC forecasts was by now completely shattered. A cheerful man had just informed us that the weather would be "just right for yachtsmen" when a wind appeared from nowhere, and howled at Force 7 across the anchorage. After that we had daily conversations on the telephone with Rhoose Point. A National Eighteen went down to Tenby, and after returning was overheard saying to the coastguard: "Never let a small boat cross Carmarthen Bay in Force 5 again!"

Tuesday, August 15. We consulted our various oracles, Rhoose, Mumbles coastguard, and the shipping forecast. We were promised winds of Force 4 to 6, and given news of a Trinity House vessel delayed by heavy seas as she rounded Bull Point. "I don't want to put you off" said the coastguard. It was also raining. Quite clearly we were not going to get the sort of weather we wanted for our first trip to Tenby, so we decided to reach across Swansea Bay to see what conditions really were like. Once off, we were both loath not to put to sea, so we steered outside the breaking sea on the Mixon, and headed for 'Combe. Once clear of the buoy, the seas steadied down and became more regular. They were high, but being so long they had very little effect on *Swift*.

The wind was little more than Force 4, and we churned along on a broad reach, delighted at last to have a wind which would sail us in the right direction. A vessel from Swansea passed close enough for us to be able to wave to the man on the bridge, and shortly afterwards the Trinity House vessel we had been told about passed us bound for Swansea. Once abreast of the Scarweather light vessel, the seas became even more regular, although a small cross sea broke on the transom, and a few specks of foam plopped into the cockpit. A bird flew across our bow, looking remarkably like a penguin, but we afterwards decided it must have been a Manx Shearwater.

It was quite hard work on the helm steering a straight course, and Jon took a turn at this stage. I usually steer when there is navigation to be done. This was an easy landfall, as a result of the characteristic shapes of the hills. It was easy to pick out Little Hangman when his head was not in the clouds, and we were steering for him in bright sunshine. Approaching the coast the wind dropped slightly, and the last few miles seemed to take a long time. We finally arrived almost exactly six hours after we had set out, having averaged four knots, with no help at all from the tide. Considering that our theoretical maximum speed is five knots, and that the sea, unlike the chart, is not flat, we were very pleased with *Swift*.

Wednesday, August 16. This was the day we were going to Porlock, but we made the really elementary mistake of going aground as we were casting off. However, "it's an ill wind . . ." and we had no

regrets that evening as we watched enormous breakers thundering through the structure of the steamer pier, and crashing themselves to pieces on the rocks.

Thursday, August 17. The sun was shining, and the forecast from Rhoose was winds Force 4 NW, backing W later, visibility good, later moderate—a perfect day to go. We went, and anchored outside to await low water. The sun was shining out of a blue sky, and there can be few more picturesque anchorages than the outer harbour at 'Combe on a fine day. The sheer face of Capstone Hill rises above it on one side, and the lantern tower is perched on a knoll on the other. The sea was blue, edged with white where it lapped up against the rocks. There was a time when we used to find the swell here unbearable, but after a week at Mumbles we hardly noticed it. I volunteered to row off in the coracle, and recover our mooring lines, and to my astonishment fell in in an attempt not to get my feet wet! In future I shall refrain from standing up and punting her across a shallow bottom.

At low water we hoisted sail, reefed main and genoa and went. The wind was very nearly Westerly, and we were really on a dead run. Jon made us a "jib stick" out of the outboard crutch and extension tiller, and we sped along with the genoa goose-winged. We could not decide why we had reefed, but were too lazy to shake it out. There was no hurry since if we arrived too early we would just have to anchor off for longer, so we left it.

Navigation was easy and we noted the buoys mechanically. Copras Rock, Sand Ridge, both left to starboard, and we were in Lynmouth Bay. For some inexplicable reason the onus of navigating across this bay rests with me. I think the professional navigator rebels at applying my crude methods himself! Of course, none of the hazards is particularly dangerous, unless the wind is strong and blowing against the tide, but the inshore passage is safe in all weathers, and it is good practice trying to find it. My method is this: the boat must be kept on a line joining Foreland Point with the point at the Western end of the bay. This takes us straight through between the land and Sand Ridge. If in doubt, we sail to within a cable of the land, and then go parallel to it. The cable can be judged partly by eye, and partly by waiting until the skipper complains that we are in the surf and will shortly be broken up on the beach. So far, we have always succeeded in being exactly in the centre of the Channel.

We gave Foreland Point about a hundred yards' clearance. At this stage the wind appeared to back, and for some time oscillated between being a reaching wind off the land, and a running wind. It was little more than Force 3, and Jon finally shook out the reef. As soon as we rounded Gore Point we were back in the familiar Porlock swell. Jon says it is the shallow water that causes it. We dropped anchor close to the harbour entrance, and *Swift* bucked and pranced and was slapped underneath "doing the Porlock roll". Two years ago we spent a night

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at anchor here, lying now with the wind, now with the tide, but never into the waves. Jon kept watch all night, and never trusts the place even now. This time, however, we only spent half an hour tidying up before motoring towards the gut. By luck (those watching interpreted it as skill) we had timed it perfectly. A very gentle brush on the bottom at the shallowest part, and we came up to the quay. A hospitable Debutante greeted us, and we moved across and secured alongside them. We had been impressed with one we had been on board at Mumbles. The sheer space inside amazed us after life aboard *Swift*. We always felt, however, that they should have a forehatch. Our own proves invaluable for working up forward in choppy weather.

Friday, August 18. As a general rule we must be two of the most cautious people afloat, but on this Friday we broke practically every rule in the book, with inevitable consequences. The weather forecast spoke vaguely of strong winds, and we should have rung through to Rhooose for their opinion. The wind forces, we find, are normally forecast correctly, but nine times out of ten it blows from the SW whatever they say about direction. We also find it wise to ignore comments from people with larger boats than us, but our doubts about the weather were set at rest by one of the men in the Deb. "Oh, I'd go to Barry today, you'll have a lovely reach across!" We thought about him later.

In anything of a blow with the wind against the tide in this shallow water, the sea really can get rough. (We know more about this subject now). We also very rarely punch the tide. This day, however, we set sail to go East with three hours of the West-going ebb still to run, and the wind in the SW. We had gone out of the harbour about two hours after LW, and anchored off to await the tide. We were rolling around as usual, but the sea was not abnormally rough and there seemed to be about Force 5 wind blowing. This, we thought, would take us over the tide, and as a rule sailing is much more pleasant than lying at anchor, however little progress one is making. We decided to go. At first all seemed well. Jon hauled up the anchor, and I sailed her off under reefed main alone across a suspiciously calm Porlock Bay. The wind was strong, but after all we were running, and *Swift* seemed manageable without a jib. We expected big seas off Hurlstone. The Deb. people, who had crossed on Wednesday, had mentioned them: "We'd never seen seas like them". The odd thing was, the seas further out looked worse, and the incidence of breaking crests increased as we progressed. At this stage a small coaster struggled past inshore of us. "We can always go to Minehead", we had said gaily as we left. We were not so sure now. It was blowing Force 7 (we rang up the weather station out of curiosity when we got to Barry to check this) and it seemed a bit risky to gybe in those seas. Jon by now was on the helm, and I was feeling decidedly seasick! Since we could not beat back to Porlock, and could not run to Minehead, the decision was made for us. Barry was more or less on course, even though sixteen miles away.

Crests of huge waves were exploding all round us, and one felt it was only a matter of time before we were underneath one. Somehow, however, *Swift* either avoided them, or sat on them, and they frothed

SOA REGIONAL GROUPS

Regional groups of the Silhouette Owners' Association have been established in the following areas:

South-East. *Hon. Sec. Stan Morgan, 44, Station Crescent, Rayleigh, Essex.*

North-West. *Hon. Sec. Herbert Firth, 5, Mossgrove Road, Timperley, Cheshire. Tel. Altrincham 0765.*

Solent. *Hon. Sec. J. H. Taylor, 15, Bolley Avenue, Bordon, Hants.*

Bristol Channel. *Hon. Sec. Cyril Watts, 5, Vassall Road, Fishponds, Bristol.*

Avon. *Hon. Sec. E. G. Oldham, 206, Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.*

All new Silhouette owners are invited to get in touch with the group secretary nearest to their own part of the world, who will gladly arrange membership both of the national association and the group and do all he can to help with problems of finding moorings, and the like. In time it is hoped that there will be active groups in all parts of the country. Members of the association willing to help in the formation of groups in areas not yet covered are invited to get in touch with the national secretary, George Oliver. Their help will be greatly welcomed.

harmlessly underneath. Her stern is so buoyant that it looks after itself, and just rides everything. It was just as well, as the towering crests astern were a sight to be avoided!

Quite a lot of small shipping was in the area—a fact we both found reassuring. At least someone would see us if we sank. We both had lifelines on—no point in being washed out of the boat—and, of course, lifejackets. We also carry red flares, but for some reason it had never occurred to us to have daylight distress signals. Still, we did not intend to be in distress anyway. The only events which seemed possible were (a) the mainsail might blow out, in which case we could set the jib, and if need be, a trysail and (b) a wave or series of waves might fill her up and she would sink.

For a long time, in spite of our speed, we made little progress up Channel, but Hurlstone Point got further away, and Nash Point light-house closer. It is difficult sailing a course when the land is only spasmodically visible, and the landmark which is most conspicuous is Breaksea Power Station (not marked on the chart). We usually sail for this until we pick up the light vessel and go from there to Barry Harbour.

We eventually came to within half a mile of the Welsh coast, just abreast of Breaksea Point, and it was obvious that we would have to gybe, whether we liked it or not. We did so without incident, but waiting broadside on in a trough for her to gather speed was a bit nerve-racking. With no foresail she answers the helm very slowly.

On this leg we met enormous seas. It was like being pursued by row upon row of watery bungalows. The noise of them breaking was terrific, and there was hardly a patch of sea that was not fizzing with the aftermath. The wind was howling through the rigging, and *Swift* would plane for a hundred yards at a time, sitting on the froth of a

wave she had sliced open. Twice we were spun round into a trough as she tried to come up into the wind, but with full helm we could just get the wind astern again. The sight of Breaksea Light Vessel, illuminated by a lucky patch of sunshine, was reassuring, although we knew exactly how she got her name now. Picking out marks was restricted to the rare moments when both they and we were on the crest of a wave, and the thought of trying to recognise a mark at night by the way it flashed was just laughable.

Half a mile short of the light vessel we gybed again. (She went round at the third attempt). Almost at once the seas seemed smaller. "Much easier now", I thought, and a little steep cross-sea sped towards us and deposited its top on the cockpit floor, and then it drained down into the bilges. (We have the deep type, non-self-draining cockpit). One wave inboard was not serious, but we got a bit of a shock. It was the first green sea we had ever taken in.

The periodic glimpses we had of the shore were becoming more familiar, and then best of all, the white pillar which was the lighthouse on Barry pier came into sight. It had seemed impossible that in such a vast area of stormy sea, we could ever steer *Swift* through such a narrow entrance, but half an hour later there we were. We unfurled the jib, and in the comparative shelter of the harbour beat up, to come alongside a large cruiser. We had arrived.

The wind had been gusting up to thirty knots. "These Silhouettes can take more than we can," one owner had complained. We were inclined to agree with him, but it had been an experience worth having, and we now knew what *Swift* could take.

Sunday, August 20. On Saturday we recovered and tidied up, and prowled over Barry Island. The harbour is a real harbour at the entrance to the docks, and is frequented by ocean-sized cruisers, as well as the smaller yachts. It can be entered at any state of the tide. On Sunday morning we were up early. The forecast gave Force 4 to 5 winds from the NW, and we slipped out at 8.0 a.m. in company with two West-bound yachts. We sped before a gentle Force 3 across smooth seas.

When we were off Sully Island the wind veered, we gybed and were off on a reach. Monkstone, Hope Buoy, NW, Elbow all went by and Wains Hill was in sight. The wind was now freshening, and *Swift* was yawing and rolling in short seas on a dead run. Quickly the leading marks for our home port came into line, and there was the perch on the bar. There beside it, however, was the post that should be out of sight with four feet of water on the bar, and what was that grey stretch of mud? Tide tables were checked. It was two and a half hours short of HW, but like it or not, the bar was dry. Local knowledge was a bit shaky on our own front doorstep! There was nothing for it but to go down to the entrance and beat up the entire length of the Pill. We rounded the corner and came up into the wind. "We'll easily beat up," advised the crew. (We are rather proud that *Swift* can come up under sail, as the Channel is never more than 20 yards wide). My advice was wrong. We were much too over-canvassed, and had to run back, pick

up a buoy, and put on the motor. We motored the last quarter-mile up to our own mooring, and were delighted to see our sturdy little hard-board dinghy riding to it after three abandoned weeks. The trip from Barry had taken 2½ hours. It was nice to be home.

Some Cornish Harbours

By Surgeon Commander C. J. Robarts

(Continued from the November journal.)

Mevagissey (31)

Really genuine fishing village. Interesting, but not difficult entrance. Harbourmaster most helpful, but mad keen to put one alongside. This should be resisted, as fishermen want to land or take off their nets, and one gets shunted around. Also in places there are ledges where even Silhouettes cannot settle on an even keel. Harbour dries out, and mud is thick and smelly. Keep a bucket of salt water to wash one's feet when one comes off. Good pubs, especially the King's Arms. Locals very friendly. Good shops. Water available.

Penzance (2345)

Easy entrance. I prefer outer harbour, which dries. Inner tidal basin means lying alongside. NE corner of outer harbour is out of everyone's way, not a long pull to the slip, and at low water one can walk ashore in a couple of minutes. Scilly Isles mail boat lies alongside Albert Pier at weekends, so keep well clear. Some very pleasant pubs, especially the Dock Inn, close by the slip. Water available by the slip. Good shops. Newlyn harbour also easy to enter, but it is a busy fishing port and I think one is less in the way at Penzance.

Mousehole (2345)

Easier to enter than it looks on the chart. Anchor in NW part of harbour. Slip is close by. Dries out, but there is little mud. Only one pub, the Ship. Good, but crowded after dinner. Lobster Pot Hotel is licensed, but has no bar. Water from tap on North Quay. Friendly locals. Good shops.

Looe (31)

Not recommended. Tricky entrance, which is rather fun, but can only be entered on flood, or at high water, as stream is fierce. Harbour very crowded. Going ashore difficult, as dinghy is swept up or down by stream. One's anchor may be foul of moorings. Wise to have a kedge out, but mine dragged, and had me across the tide. Innumerable motor boats, some driven by mariners who look one way and go the other. Pubs fair, especially in E. Looe. Place full of trippers. Shops good, and stay open late.

St Mawes (32)

An ideal base. A Silhouette owner trailing could have a lot of fun, but car parking should be organised early as there is not much space. St

Mawes Harbour (tidal) has a launching slip. Harbourmaster a grand chap. Good anchorage in St Anthony Creek (dries at low water) just south of Amsterdam Point. Water available at boatyard on north bank, two cables upstream of Polvarth Point. St Anthony's Place at head of creek is now a hotel (no license). Attractive country house in delightful setting. Behind it is a charming little church, with memorials to two Admiral Sprys, one at one time C. in C. Med., and to a Lieutenant RN, "for many years at St Anthony's Signal Station". Pleasant walk if one lands at steps on East side of cove, walks through the wood upstream, then inland, skirting the landward side of the wood before dropping down to the cove. Bohortha is only a hamlet. No pubs so don't get too thirsty. If it is blowing too hard in Falmouth Bay, cruise up to the Porthcuel, Penryn and Fal Rivers, and explore Restranguet, Pill, Channals and St Just Creeks. King Harry Reach is tricky without an engine, as it is sheltered from all directions and laid up merchant vessels make the little wind there is very fluky. Seagoing cruises to Fowey, Mevagissey and the Helford River would give a full fortnight's programme. St Mawes has excellent pubs and good shops. Laundry available in Falmouth, reached by ferry from St Mawes. The men's lavatory opposite the GPO at Falmouth has a shower bath. Falmouth itself a delightful town. Good shopping, and I found Falmouth Chandlers a most obliging firm. In St Mawes, the owner of "Jack and Margaret's" a shop on the waterfront is a keen and most helpful Silhouette owner.

Letters to the Editor

Passage to Oslo

I AM contemplating the following trip: (a) coastwise, Langstone to Dover (b) Dover—Calais (c) via canals to Kiel (d) Kiel to Oslo. I should be very interested to hear from any Silhouette owner who has made a similar journey. —(Lieutenant Commander) W. B. Willett, Signal Division, Admiralty, London, SW1.

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