

PLYMOUTH WEEK — AUGUST 7th - 14th

The Silhouette Owner

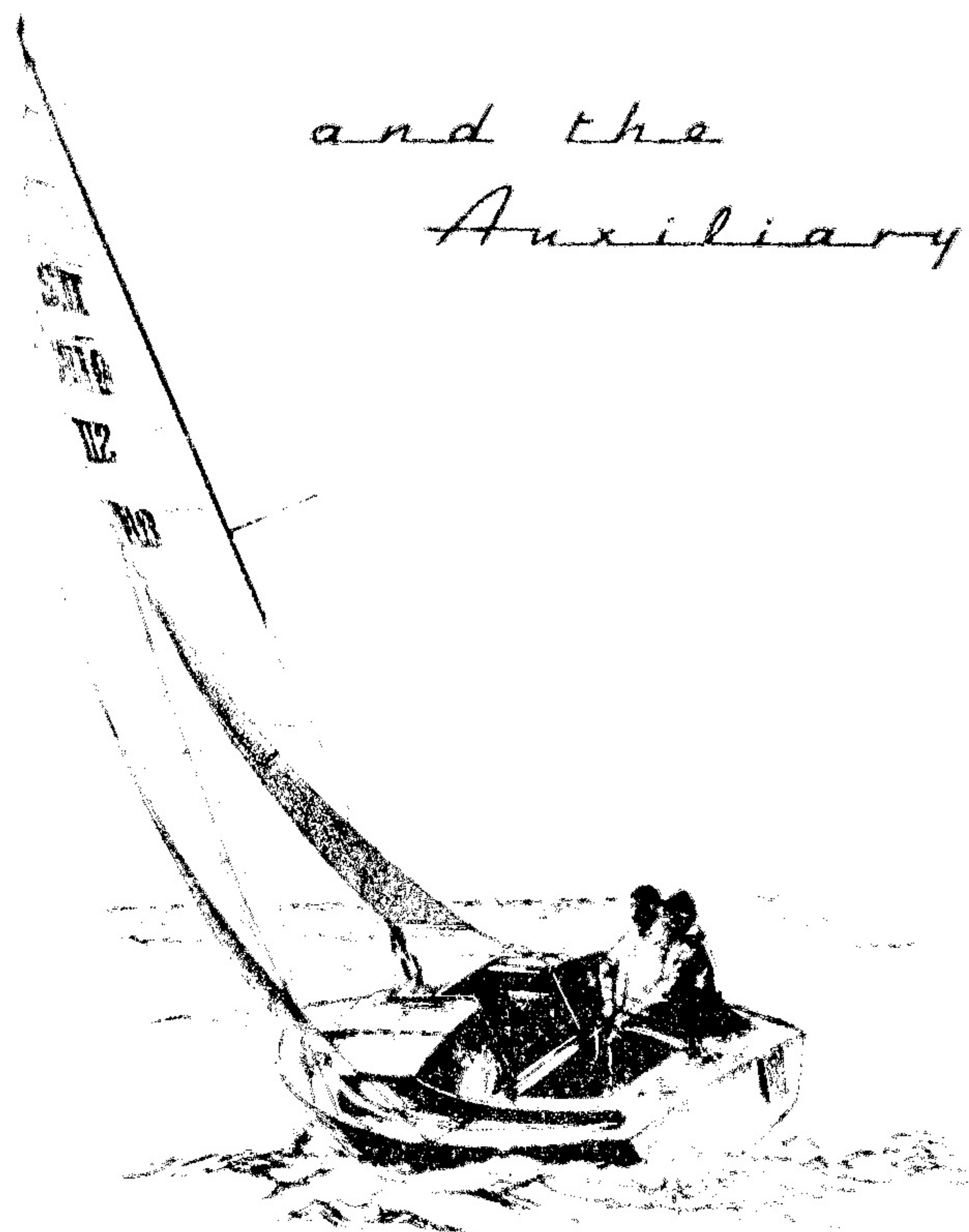
*The journal of the
Silhouette Owners' International Association*

NUMBER 64

MAY, 1966

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THE SILHOUETTE OWNER. The *Journal* of the SOIA is published monthly, and is sent to all members by post.

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Secretary's notes

IT is hoped that by the time you are reading these pages, *Griffin* will be on her way from Dover Northwards, and it was in the interests of this trip, that Easter saw me, swathed in oil-skins, boarding a fishing boat in the early hours of a stormy rain-soaked morning, half awake, but spurred on with the idea of having the opportunity of operating the radio equipment of that vessel, which is powered by a thumping great diesel engine. With the thoughts of such a morning in mind the designers had led the exhaust pipe of the engine through the tiny wheel house, with the object of radiating a little warmth in the otherwise arctic atmosphere; unfortunately, this pipe had long since developed a bad leak, which the usual occupants had never bothered to plug up, and the advantages of the extra warmth were grossly overawed by the poisonous diesel fumes that had to be inhaled. And how those beamy craft roll! Not at all unbearable when steaming to and from the fishing grounds, but when wallowing while nets are cast and hau'ed, they are the test of a cast iron stomach, and many trips had to be made between transmissions, while mal de mer made a visit to the gunn'ls necessary. Thank the Lord, *Griffin* will not smell of diesel fumes. During the same weekend, while in the North East, I visited the Tees Group, an experience I can recommend to any visiting member. They make you very welcome in their well laid out club-houses.

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The WPM, Paint Division is producing an instructional film of "How to paint your boat" which is to be available on loan during the later part of the year, and I am told by Ian Stancliffe that the two boats that will be stars of the show are a dinghy and a Silhouette. Ian sent some stills of the film, which should prove interesting and informative to all of us, as he explains that special attention will be drawn to non-slip deck paint, and anti-fouling for the hull and anti-pest, and fire-resistant paints for the interior. Perhaps most of all we envy him having a first class finish to *Midnight* all for free.

* * *

A suggestion from a member that modifications as described at various times in this *Journal*, should be made available in the form of duplicated sheets, with working drawings—these could easily be run off on a copying machine, if some enthusiastic draughtsman could get down to producing them. Our correspondent is particularly interested in installing a cooker and lights; cutting cockpit lockers and waterproofing same; cleating for main-sheet; raising the boom for tent cover; and the recently mentioned removable mast support.

* * *

Mr. Heine of 8 München 25, Otschmannweg 4, is planning to sail from Livorno to Corsica or Sardinia in June, and would be pleased to meet any other owner with similar ambitions. While on the subject of cruising in company, George Oliver is still waiting to hear of anyone sailing to Plymouth this year, from the Solent.

J. Hoskin of Greenford, proposes to motor down the Thames from Twickenham, and spend a fortnight pottering up the East Coast, sometime between June 5 to July 24. Anyone wishing to crew with him would be welcomed, age or experience immaterial, pottering being the operative word.

* * *

Very pleasing to be able to report that the SW. Group is getting down seriously to teaching newcomer to sail. A circular has been sent to every member by Ernie Sweet, the Group Secretary, pointing out how members can help.

The City Sea Scout Commissioner is helping youngsters to take advantage of the scheme.

* * *

David Barnes is home on leave from his usual job of navigating an oil tanker round the world, and being one who extols the wonders of sailing in Danish waters, has brought home several charts of the area round Copenhagen, which have been handed over to our rally organising sub-committee for use next year. While it is not for me to report on that subject, I do understand that the number of enquiries that have been made to various shipping companies, for cheap transport of Silhouettes, would surprise us all. The number taking part in the organised cruise across the Channel, has exceeded expectations, and it should be a grand sight to see all those Silhouettes in company sailing into a French port. It makes me quite sad to think I shall have to miss it.

* * *

Entry forms for Plymouth Week were enclosed with last month's *Journal*. I hope you have already sent yours off, it makes life so much easier for the Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club if entries roll in early, but if by chance you have mislaid yours, we still have a few left. This is going to be the best Plymouth Week ever, a bigger entry, more awards, and more social activities, so whatever else you plan for the season, DON'T MISS PLYMOUTH 1966.

* * *

During the time that I am out of touch with things, Harry Maloney has agreed to act as secretary in my stead, so during the month of May and part of June, he can be written to direct, but any letter that arrives at this address will be sent on for his attention. Happy Sailing.—R.A.G.

South West News

A FITTING-OUT Dinner and Dance was held at the Hotel Chateau Bellvue, Totnes, on March 3, and was attended by fifty six members and friends from the S.W. area. Mr. Spurrell

our group Commodore, welcomed all, and especially our guests, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Harvey. Mr. Harvey is the Sailing Secretary of the Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club, and our Commodore spoke of the terrific help Mr. Harvey and his wife give to all who visit Plymouth during August week. Mr. Spurrell proposed the toast "To our guests and the RPCYC".

Mr. Harvey, in reply, said how happy he and his wife were to have accepted the invitation to the dinner and dance. He was pleased to be associated with the SOIA, and this was not just because he received a free copy of the journal every month, or indeed, because he was partaking of a free dinner. He always found the people associated with the SOIA as being a "jolly good lot". Mr. Harvey proposed the toast of the SOIA coupled with the name of Reg Garrod, the Hon. Secretary.

During the evening, "nautical games" were arranged by Terry Bickford during the breaks in the dancing. These caused great amusement, especially when some forgot which was port and which was starboard.

All too quickly the hours flew by, and the strains of Auld Lang Syne ascended to the starry sky. A night of good food, good beer to wash it down, and good company is now all behind us, but we in the SW Group look forward to the coming season, when we hope cruises and racing, and perhaps a barbecue, will find us again "all good friends and jolly good company."—"Paddy".

In the North-West

By George Smith

Whose name we are delighted to see in these pages again after his serious illness.

THE autumn of 1965 slipped by and no work done; my apologies to all who were expecting news of the North West.

However 1966 brings a New Year, new man, and new effort to catch up and "get with it", a mood which seems to be infectious—have you noticed the "with it" boys? Ever since Bill Nash sailed into Plymouth sporting his cutter rig the idea was hauled into the top ten; we have had one or two items in the *Journal* and John Tod, who sailed single handed to Ireland, has converted *Splash* to cutter rig. Jack Smith is also converting *Martini*. I wish them all good sailing. Perhaps one year we will have a go-as-you-please race at Plymouth, when the various rigs could be put to test.

The North West Group sends its good wishes to Harry Maloney and all who sail with him to France. Herbert Firth is our only representative, and he is to crew with Harry, an experience I enjoyed when we visited the Up River Yacht Club. No doubt they will all have their deep sea caps on when they turn up at Plymouth.

The entries from the North West for Plymouth this year so far are: Dickie Roper with *Felicity Nercus*, Jim Berry with his *Alacrity*, Herbert Firth with *Dolphin*, Jack Smith with *Martini*. Ken Lingard will not be with us this year, but his daughter Gerry will be crewing for Jack Smith. Brian and Margaret Wiggins will also be missing, as they are looking forward to another daughter in August. We all send our best wishes. Jim and Audrey Berry are hoping for a little girl in May, and we send them our best wishes. Also we send good wishes to Ian and Joyce Roberts whose son was born last September. He is now growing fast, and we all look forward to having them back with us.

All change 1966: Ted Leah, Westerley 22; Roy Beaumont, Hurley 22; Chris Hind, Four Twenty-one; Jim Berry, *Alacrity*; Geoff Walsh, *Alacrity*; Ron Bradbury, *Snapdragon*. All are still sailing with us, and we wish them every happiness in their new craft.

Solent group

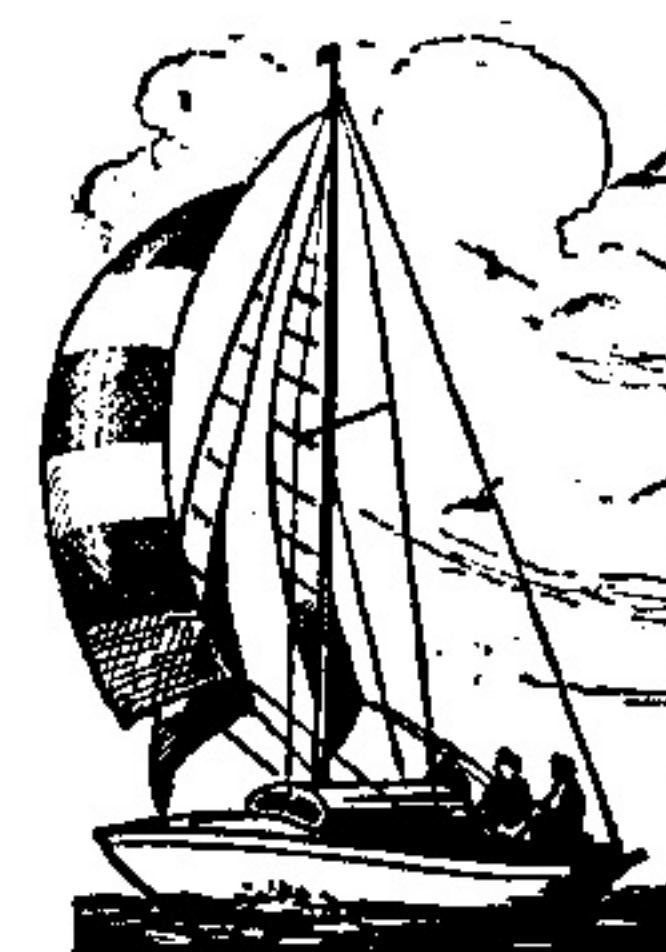
THE Solent Group held its A.G.M. at the White Hart Hotel, Holybourne, Alton, on Sunday, March 20. Only about 20 members and friends were present. The problems of the organisation of the Group were discussed at length. George Oliver and John Caulder were re-elected as Chairman and Secretary. The programme for the year was drawn up, and is similar to last, but there may be a cruise round the Island at Whitsun, and the race for the Oliver Trophy will be round the Nab Tower on June 12. Three members said they would be going to Plymouth, and the idea of a Continental Rally in 1967 was popular, but members feared that Copenhagen would be too expensive.

A copy of the programme for 1966 which includes an outline of the August Solent Cruise, has been sent to all members who returned the postcard to the Group Secretary. If you have not received the programme you are not on the Solent Secretary's mailing list. Any member will be very welcome at Solent activities and if you would like a copy of the programme for the coming season, please let John Caulder know.—John Caulder, Sellafeld, Orchard Lane, Hermitage, Emsworth, Hants.

The Exe Fleet

A MOST interesting subject was discussed at the last meeting of Exe Group. The guest of the evening was one of Her Majesty's Customs Officers, Mr. S. Bryant, who gave a talk on the day to day activities of his job, and the different departments covered by the Customs and Excise Service.

Of particular interest to members "going foreign" this season



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were the various formalities required of a ship on entering or leaving the country. Also covered were the various aspects on the question of loss at sea—salvage and wrecks, and many unusual sections that are dealt with by the Customs and Excise Branch, all of which were described and explained.

Needless to say, after all this, Mr. Bryant was bombarded with questions by members seeking advice on different "points of law". So many and varied were the questions that a halt had to be called, with the promise that another meeting would be devoted to this subject, perhaps in the autumn.

Evenings are starting to get longer, and "sea legs" are beginning to "itch", judging by our members who are all in the throes of fitting out, laying moorings, etc., it won't be long now!

May we say to any person contemplating coming to this area, please get in touch with us at the Exe Sailing Club, or, better still, come along and meet us at one of our meetings on the third Tuesday of the month, at the Club.—L. B. Pithers.

New Members

WE are happy to welcome the following new members: T. P. Snape, Anthony, Jubilee Road, Totnes, Devon; R. D. Ford, A. A. Mayne, 41 The Wynd, High Street, Marske-by-Sea, Yorks; Old Fleece Inn, Rooksmoor, Stroud, Glos. 666 *Jenny Ann*, Avon; D. R. Unsted, Jessamine Cottage, Talbot Road, Lingfield, Surrey; R. W. Honeyman, Schoolhouse, Dalavich, Taynuilt, Argyll. 341 *Noreenna*, Oban; R. Smith, 19 Oak Street, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill, Staffs. 1152 *Reine Pedauque*, Major R. D L. Caley, 7 Aldercombe Road, Bristol. 9. *Felicity Kukri II*, Dartmouth; R. P. Coomber, 45 Mudeford Lane, Christchurch, Hants. 637 *Winsome*, Christchurch; Dr. G. Meyer, 3 Hannover, Altenbekener Damm 58, W. Germany; 1641 *Axelotl II*, Steinhude; G. Shaw, 25 Grange Cross Lane, West Kirby, Ches. 1028 *Lulu, Mersey*; Lt. Col. E. R. Nanney-Wynn, Llanfendigaid, Towyn, Merioneth. 702 *Puffin*, Aberdovey; R. F. Culverhouse, 8' Haling Park Road, South Croydon, Surrey. 60 *Gwelo*, Dell Quay; R. E. Game, 18 Goldstone Way, Hove 4, Sussex. 1897 *Seaspray*, Shoreham.

Cygnets in the Channel

By M. Macdonald Spenser
(Concluded)

Under way again, we motored up the lovely but crowded river, passing many beautiful and some famous yachts swinging at their moorings—*Compass Rose*, for example. Off the Coastguard Cottages we moored alongside a Fowey fishing boat, to consume our lunch in hot sunshine. By 12.30 we had cleared away, and getting restive we decided to push on upstream with a vague idea of finding a berth for the night. No sooner had we passed Madge Point than we realised that by piping down so early we were wasting half a day of splendid wind and sun. So round we came, shooting down stream with a sluicing ebb and out into the open sea through the wall of well-behaved dinghies. Outside we found a steady Force 3 breeze, which had now backed to West.

Here was a chance to see how well a Silhouette could go to windward, and after another brief séance with the Gospel according to St. Reed a course was laid off for Looe. I also listened to the other apostle of coastal sailors, the weather prophet, and came to the conclusion that if we returned to the Yealm or went into Plymouth, we were in for a long plug back to Fowey the following day in what looked like being deteriorating weather. I was sure *Cygnets* could have made it in the weather I foresaw for the morrow, but I felt there was no point in making soggy sacrifices of my wife and myself just to prove once again that the Silhouette is a weatherly little boat. So up went both genoa and staysail, sheeted pretty hard in—you will recall that our genoa sets with a very taut luff, so pulls well to windward. To set both headsails, which in this case means a big overlap between them, seems to produce what the Air Branch calls a "slot effect" or something, and provided one is not too greedy in trying to point too close to windward, results in a most satisfactory turn of speed. In spite of not sailing so close to the wind as one can without the genoa, the net time-and-distance gained is appreciably greater in open water, where one can make long boards before going about.

We made a mile offing on the starboard tack, fixed our position and went about at 13.50 exactly. On this leg we made a course direct for Penlee Point, and noticed that leeway was almost cancelled by the West-going stream. Another fix at 14.55 showed that we had been making three knots through the water, which pleased me greatly and was what I had expected, for there was quite a popple on the water. Just for fun as we went along, I obtained a Consol fix, using the Bushmills station in Northern Ireland and the Stavanger transmitter in Norway. There is a third station one can use conveniently, but not in the Plymouth area, which is in what is carefully described as the "ambiguous sector" of the station. In fact a fix by Consol is pretty ambiguous in any circumstances, especially in a small boat, and should never be used in coastal waters because the "fix" is really within

quite a large circle of position. Offshore it is very useful, however, but to drive the point home my "fix" on this occasion put me just inside Sutton Harbour. Come to think of it, that was not too bad for Consol in a small boat.

By this time the wind had piped up somewhat, about Force 4, and I had an idea that it might harden in for the night. If I had remembered to put the barometer on board before leaving Fowey, I might have spared myself this thought, and therefore a good deal of indecision in the next hour. But the fact was that we were undecided as to whether to bash on—and bash was rapidly becoming the right word—or to run in to the Sound, perhaps to anchor in Cawsand for the night with a view to getting away to an early start in the morning. We decided to give it another hour, and if by then things looked like getting out of hand we should duck into shelter. In fact the barometer was falling very slowly, and the increase in wind was largely due to Rame Head and its micro-met. conditions, which I should have had the wit to realise.

Two and a half tacks further on put us in the position I swear to avoid every season, but fall into once or twice a year thorough congenital laziness. This time I blame it on the hot sun and grand sailing, but we soon found ourselves, genoa furled by now, trying to weather Rame Head by a midge's whisker. Eventually, of course, this put us in the middle of the confused lop which exists to a greater or lesser extent off most significant headlands in the world. Some of these are dangerous and notorious races, as off Portland Bill; others rate a passing reference in the Pilot Books, like the Dodman; still others, such as Rame Head, are unsung but, like the Scots' skipper's cabfare to the docks, are in the account when it is presented. Just off the headland we fell in and out of holes in the water without seeming to advance a foot for minutes at a time. In a desperate attempt to weather the point and get out of the lop we re-set the genoa. But it was clear that we could not get by, and so we went about in high dudgeon and cleared off to seawards with the mast bending like a fishing rod. This proved exciting, for with the genoa set we had our work cut out to keep *Cygnets* the right way up, and when we eased the sheets she shot along in clouds of spray until we were a good mile and a half offshore, out of the clutches of the short seas and swooping over water of quite different colour. Again we brought her on the wind, but pressed on the same tack to make sure of weathering the point on the next tack. As we went about we discovered that we were no longer alone, for a large cruising catamaran was approaching from seawards on the same course.

Our course now put us well to the West of Rame Head, heading for the beach at Portwrinkle in the bight of Whitesand Bay. As we sailed into the Bay the wind began to moderate, and we had time to notice that the beach was crawling with people, which made us thankful we were enjoying the comparative solitude of the sea. But we had not forgotten our friend with the split personality—the catamaran—who had slowly been overtaking us as we beat in to the land. We

The Silhouette Owners' International Association

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All recognised groups appoint an ex-officio representative to the Committee.

The Silhouette Owners' International Association exists to promote the interests of Silhouette Owners throughout the world. The annual subscription is 20s. (USA 5\$). Bankers: Westminster Bank Limited, Hornchurch, Essex.

were delighted to note that for all his size and sail he could not make as good a course to windward as we could. The which having observed, we did forget him for ten minutes or so, and when we next noticed him we were surprised and pained to see that apparently he had gone about before us, and found a better wind farther out, or a new ability to sail into it, for by now he was well to windward of us. It was not until we met the delightful crew of two Scots families sailing her home to the Clyde that we discovered that they had got fed up of not being able to weather on a Silhouette and had switched on their huge outboard.

If the wind had held up, two or three more tacks would have put us nicely into Looe entrance, but it did not, and an hour later we too turned on the power, admitting once again that the Wizard of Looe had swallowed the wind. By 1930 we were steaming into the harbour in a flock of "round the bay" boats and a powerful smell of dead fish.

Regional Groups

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

South-East.	<i>Hon. Sec. Stan Morgan, 19 Philbrick Crescent East, Rayleigh, Essex.</i>
Blackwater.	<i>Hon. Sec. A. V. Hudson, 70 Greenway, Southgate, London, N.14.</i>
Solent.	<i>Hon. Sec. J. R. Caulder, Sellafield, Orchard Lane, Hermitage, Emsworth</i>
South-West.	<i>E. K. R. Sweet, 12 Battery Street, Stonehouse, Plymouth.</i>
Poole.	<i>Hon. Sec. E. R. W. May, 2 The Circle, Moor-down, Bournemouth, Hants.</i>
Bristol Channel.	<i>Hon. Sec. Cyril Watts, 5 Vassall Road, Fishponds, Bristol.</i>
Midlands.	<i>Hon. Sec. E. G. Oldham, 206 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.</i>
North-West.	<i>Hon. Sec. George Smith, Woodcroft, Park Road, Hale, Cheshire.</i>
Wyre and Morecambe Bay.	<i>Hon. Sec. Bertram Lloyd, The Tythe, Glebe Lane, Dowbridge, Kirkham, Lancs.</i>
Lake District.	<i>Hon. Sec. T. K. Jones, Foxton House, Lowther Street, Penrith</i>
Tees Bay.	<i>Hon. Sec. R. T. Swarbrick, 21 Raby Road, Stockton-on-Tees.</i>

Every sailor has his Jonah port. I fear Looe is in the latter category for me. I mean no disrespect to the Looe men, and I have no doubt they would anathemise my original home port, if I revealed it—not Fowey, which is my present base, although I have heard libelous things said about it by Looe men. For me, Looe is a place to enter around high water and leave at the next high tide, with the intervening period spent at night, turned in and suitably drugged. There are several reasons for this, but the chief is because the Looe river cannot help being to some extent the town drain, and never fails to reveal the fact by drying out twice on most days. Previously I mentioned wondering what lies rotting at the bottom of Sutton Harbour—in Looe there is no need to speculate, for one can see only too plainly what it is—dead sharks and, for all I know a tourist or two at the height of the season.

Having said that about the port, you may wonder why I went in there. The fact is that my wife had never been in from seaward and wanted to see, and smell, for herself. Also, we were short of provisions, and quite frankly it is a jolly, lively place ashore, whatever rudenesses I aim at it. We had, as it happened, entered in ideal tidal conditions, in the late evening and on top of the flood. Swept by a sluicing tide, we shot up the harbour and found a convenient berth just below the bridge which joins the two halves of the town and alongside the East Quay. We sallied off ashore to replenish the galley stores and hoist in the appropriate dose of drugs to ensure a good night's sleep, while *Cygnets*

sat on the mud during the night. But I fear force of habit in a drying berth made me roll out at 03.00 to check that we were safely resting on our keels, and not held up in the web of lines securing the myriad of hire boats which closed in around us as darkness descended. I reeled back to my bunk and slept fitfully until 07.00.

We had intended leaving at 07.30, but before then I had been unable to find any way of paying my harbour dues. I think it only right that those who go to sea for pleasure should pay dues at least equal to those whose bread is won on the waters. In this instance it was difficult to honour this view for the Harbour Office was tight shut every time I called there up to 09.00, there was no scale of dues posted, and inquiry failed to find the Harbour Master or anyone else in authority. Charges vary, and it was a long time since I had been into Looe, I had no record of what I last paid, so not being able to find any guidance in books or elsewhere I finally had to pocket my convictions and leave. That found the Harbour Master within moments. He popped up from a fishing boat down the wall, flat hat, brass buttons and all, and hailed us alongside. Another ten minutes were wasted whilst we went along to the office to ante up, then at last we could leave with a clear conscience. This incident was in some contrast to a similar one in Mevagissey a year or so ago. On that occasion I sought out the Harbour Master and was directed to a pleasant chap sunning himself against the wall, from time to time collecting a small fee from people parking their cars on the quays. He asked me the Thames tonnage of my vessel and when I told him he suggested a sum so small that I nearly fell in the drink with surprise. I counter-suggested something more reasonable, but he insisted on the correct sum and punctiliously made me out a receipt—I salved my feelings by shoving a coin or two in the Lifeboat box, and that has been the arrangement between us at Mevagissey from then on.

Leaving Looe under power we found the wind was West South West, a very good Force 4, a dead muzzler for home, and with promise of more wind to come. The morning was grey and overcast, with a nasty short sea running once we got clear of the entrance. This faced us with the gloomy prospect of having to reach away to sea to clear Looe Island and Rennies Rock before we could set a course for Fowey, when we should be faced with a beat all the way home. The alternative was to pass inside Looe Island, through a litter of rocks too numerous to be all marked on the chart, but where there is a passage used by the locals. Just as we came abreast of the beacon marking the end of a particularly nasty reef running out from the shore, I happened to look astern and there coming out of the harbour was the first of the day's shark-fishers. Guessing that he might take the inside passage and be followed by a string of others, we hove-to off the beacon. Sure enough, he turned into the channel and we fell in astern of him. He was steaming two knots to our one, and there seemed to be several turns in the passage, but all I had to do was watch carefully where he turned and when he out-distanced us, wait for the next chap to come along to lead us further. Perhaps a Looe man reading this will

laugh his head off at my caution, but I would rather be safe than stranded, and even if I do pull the legs of Looe men sometimes, I should be the first to admit that they are among the best rock-dodgers in the West Country.

Once through into Portnadler Bay, we were about to make sail when I detected a note of doubt in the outboard's lusty voice. Plainly, the weather showed every sign of getting worse before it got better, indeed, the Met. report at 06.45 had said so, loud and clear, but I had not heard it. I had intended to listen to the 08.55 broadcast, but at that time I had been in pursuit of the Looe Harbour Master, so those who do not practice what they preach, in this case that one should always get a weather report before leaving on any passage. I could well see that if my wife and I were to get back in time to avoid domestic friction we might find ourselves dependant on the engine, for much as I love the Silhouette I know her limitations. One of the most serious is inability to make to windward in a strong breeze and a short sea. So I judged it wise to put the Seagull to rights as soon as possible, and as I did not relish the notion of disembowelling it on the cockpit floor in the sea that was then running, I decided to slip into Polperro to do the job. Lest the poor thing died on us, I made sail nevertheless and we crept into the extraordinary crevice in the coast which constitutes Polperro Harbour. With caution we nosed into the inner harbour, the tide being high, and made fast to the East Quay. Caution is required because the entrance is only thirty or so feet wide, the walls are high, so you cannot see round them, and in summer there is a constant stream of "round the bay" boats shooting in and out.

From shore-side Polperro may seem over-run with tourists, and I have heard the opinion that the Polperrans are a crowd of brigands preying on them. From seawards there is a different picture. Few tourists seem to penetrate to the Eastern Quay, although in good weather, fast motorboats tie up there and disgorge loads of sometimes very green tourists who seem all to dash up into the village to buy Birmingham brass Piskies and bung bobs into a bogus Wishing Well. The folk on the Quay are mostly seafaring chaps, who could not be more helpful — and the least conspicuous and most helpful is the Harbour Master. It was a pleasure to pay the tiny entry fee, and in return he helped me heave the engine onto the quay where I could fix its ailments in more comfort. While I did this my resourceful mate raided a local shop for more provender. Then we lunched in the sunshine which had broken through by noon, giving the impression that the weather had been pulling our legs earlier in the day.

After lunch we left harbour under power, but making sail as we left, no genoa this time and one reef in the main. This may have seemed undue caution inside, but it was amply justified when we got outside, for in spite of the sunshine and seeming calm in Polperro we found that the wind had risen to a good Force 5. There was also quite a lop on, but what can't be cured must be endured, so off we set to down to Fowey. Two tacks fetched us inside the Udder Rock, now tolling its doleful bell with great vigour, and the third brought us

under the forbidding cliffs of Pencarro Head, and we had a real shake-up. The wind buffeted off the rock wall, and the sea, coming into shallow water, was particularly steep. To escape this unpleasant situation we took advantage of a short drop in wind strength, tacked, shook out the reef, set the jib and then began a wild ride as we reached off on the starboard tack to seawards. When we had made an offing sufficient to fetch Fowey entrance on the next tack, we went about. To our delight and surprise the wind chose that moment to back a couple of points or a little more, and trusting the lull would keep up long enough to let us get inside, we hoisted and unfurled the genoa. Then things really began to hum, or rather snore, for the familiar note came up from below and we knew that *Cygnnet* was once more travelling at her very best speed.

In what seemed no time at all we were inside Fowey entrance, and turning in we goose-winged the genoa and main to run up the harbour. That simple and satisfying evolution led to a fine how-do-you-do, as you shall presently see.

The narrow harbours of the South West, indeed any harbour bounded by high land, play odd tricks with the wind, and it is as well to be prepared for it. We were indeed, prepared for that, but not for the pantomime that followed. In this instance the wind was chopped into gusts, in which *Cygnnet* flew through the water one moment, and the next barely had steerage way. The gusts were exciting, because by now we were running dead down wind, and the place was littered with racing dinghies, "drive yourself" boats and the usual ferries between Fowey and Polruan, to say nothing of the boats and ships on moorings to port and starboard of the fairway. Life was further complicated by *Flipa*, our dinghy, which has not up to this point come into the yarn, but will now do so with a bang. Why the odd name *Flipa*? Because a French boy with no skill at all with tools helped me to build her a year or two back, which may explain some of her oddities, and his name was *Phillipe*. Another reason for the name is because it only needs one incautious move and she will flip you in the 'oggin. However, she is almost indestructable, as you will learn.

You will appreciate that this stop-go progress up the harbour meant that we had to lengthen *Flipa's* painter to prevent her ramming *Cygnnet* in the tail periodically, or we had to tow her alongside. Even with a light dinghy, towing alongside makes steering a bit difficult, and it was vital to steer very small to avoid a gybe. To tow on a long painter in harbour is usually unseamanlike, and discourteous, but we chose it as the lesser of two evils. Hardly had we lengthened the tow than we noticed a couple of young chaps in a hired motor-boat who had decided to see how close across our bows they could go, just when we were in a lull and *Cygnnet* hardly making way. As they arrived a couple of lengths off our starboard bow came a gust and in what seemed like seconds we went from one to what must have looked like twenty knots to the terrified youths. The sight of a sailing boat bearing down on them with sails wing-and-wing, straight for their

midship section absolutely paralysed them, and they held on their course. To gybe the main would have made certain of hitting them—to gybe the genoa without first furling it on the Wykeham-Martin gear was to risk fetching it flat aback on the forestay, and very likely bringing the gear down round our ears. I risked the latter and flung off the genoa sheet. But, as I turned away, the sail did come aback as I had feared, pushing *Cygnnet* over on her ear and shooting us past them by an inch, with the mast towering over the terrified clowns like a seagoing Tower of Pisa. My wife had the presence of mind to haul in the mainsheet, or the boom would either have knocked in their topsides or decapitated one of them.

I was just reading to the errant youths the lesson from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 27, the one about throwing four anchors over the stern and praying for the dawn, when there was an almighty thump from astern. Believe it or not, another maritime moron had run down our dinghy! He had been so absorbed by the previous episode and my mastery of the Bible, that he had failed to notice poor *Flipa* dutifully following *Cygnnet* into battle. Luckily, this latest arrived son of a bachelor was not going too fast, but his progress was inexorable and because *Flipa* is very light he ran completely over the poor little beast and we could hear her bumping under his barnacled bottom. Eventually, amid the din of strife and recrimination *Flipa* bobbed up from under her attacker's stern, completely waterlogged, of course. By then I had run out of breath and expletives.

There we were, the genoa once again drawing to port, the main to starboard, running up a crowded harbour with the waterlogged dinghy acting as a most efficient drogue, and heading straight for a very soiled dredger. If you find yourself in this predicament, there is one thing you will discover at once—the helm is useless! Moreover, it is very difficult to heave in the waterlogged dinghy as you travel down wind as a fair pace. But you *must* gybe and bear away before you hit something really solid, like our dredger or the anchored flagship. "You have five seconds to solve the problem—we pause for your reply", says the Chief Examiner while one half of your mind is repeating the orders for lowering the sea-boat and the other half is madly turning over the Anchors and Cables bit of the Seamanship Manual!

Five minutes later we had beaten back to the dinghy—yes, one answer is to cut the painter double quick. "Show me your knife, boy. Now tell us another solution, seeing you have not troubled to bring it", comes the ominous order. Happily, *Flipa* was not stove in, as I had feared, but her rubbing strake was started for a couple of feet. We bailed her out, and to sooth our shattered nerves, we moored alongside a friend's boat, and pulled ashore to the club for a nourishing pot of tea. One tactless member was foolish enough to ask what all the Swan Lake ballet capers had been in aid of as *Cygnnet* came up the harbour. By then I had got my breath back and had thought of a few choice comments about hired motor boats and visitors which had eluded me earlier, so I tried them on him with such vehemence that he mumbled something about sending him the bill for damage to

Flipa and my tattered nerves. Had I gone on, I do believe he would have reached sobbing for his cheque book.

In the cool of a quiet evening we drifted up to our moorings, and so ended this micro-cruise. But not quite, for we feel that no cruise from Fowey is ended until the shellbacks in the Fisherman's Arms hail us with, "So you're back then, eh?" Where you been this time? Set them up for the Captin and 'is Missus!" Then we are home.

Meeting the Queen

By Peter E. Robinson

AFTER weeks of planning and preparation, and final hours of frenzied activity into the small hours of February 27, Nassau and the Bahamas were ready to greet Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and Prince Phillip, on the occasion of their two day visit.

The capital of the Bahamas—New Providence, or Nassau, as it is better known—fluttered and danced with flags and streamers, coronets, and regal insignia for the first visit of a reigning English monarch. Like scores of other small craft, we planned on sailing out to meet the Royal Yacht *Britannia* with her escort frigate *H.M.S. Ursa* aboard our Silhouette *Matador* (formerly *La Cigale II*).

We arrived at our berth at 05.30 hours, just before sunrise, armed with the inevitable quantities of iced beer and food, and proceeded to make ready for sea. We planned to be well off-shore as early as possible, to avoid the multitudes of power and sailing craft which would undoubtedly plan to be the first to greet *Britannia*. As the Royal Yacht was due to pick up the local pilot at 08.30, cross the bar at 09.00 and tie up at 09.30, our plan to be under-way by 06.00 was deemed to be prudent.

We cleared our berth on schedule, and swung downstream on the last hour of the ebb with a fresh 12 knot breeze, which had sprung up overnight, from the ENE, and fine on our starboard quarter. The sun rose dead astern, bathing our crimson Terylenes in a vivid splash of colour against the deepening blue of a cloudless sky. While Gerry played a cat and mouse game with the working jib, which alternated from port to starboard, Trixie, our shapely first mate, served up the first round of hot foil-wrapped sausages, and cold foaming beer. Sheila and I conned *Matador* down the harbour. Although we were running two or three hundred yards off-shore, it seemed, as always, that we were running down a broad river, as Paradise Island, a three and a half mile strip of land, runs parallel to the city of Nassau some one thousand to two thousand yards off-shore.

Already signs of active life were visible along the waterfront of the city on our port beam, and a sense of expectancy could almost be felt.

With all conditions favourable, we soon reached the lighthouse at the Western tip of Paradise Island and mended our course to NNW and a starboard beam reach to take us across the bar. The wind, now unchecked by the tall casuarina trees on Paradise Island, gave evidence of a "15 gusting 20 knot" strength. We decided against a reef, due to our four "heavyweights" on board, and the fact that our northerly course would never bring us closer than 65 degrees off the wind, and began to buck the seas, which were picking up from two to four feet, bearing up to North as we did so.

With hatches battened, and all crew in weatherproof suits, *Matador* punched her way directly out to sea, boiling her way through foam-flecked tops and glassy troughs, with little concern. Occasionally, she would dig off the top of a wave and hurl a cascade of glittering water over her shoulder and on to our sometimes unwary heads, causing roars of laughing "agony" which would have led a casual observer to believe that we were flogging our way through the Bering Straits rather than the sub-tropical waters of the Bahama banks!

We were assuming that the Royal Yacht would appear from due North, and we were heading in this general direction so that we could bear away to port and pass her on our starboard side at the regulation minimum distance of 200 yards. Astern, the land was sliding away at a good rate, and, apart from two or three huge, heavily canvassed, yachts, which were now following us a mile or so astern, we were alone on the water. (The seas were obviously keeping the myriads of small power craft within the bar). At 07.45, we were hove-to, finalising the rigging of our Red Ensign three-quarters of the way up our after stay, in order to signal our intention that we intended to salute. Two large schooners, apparently flying everything they could muster, overtook and passed us about a mile to windward. They made a glorious sight as they reared and plunged majestically sending billowing cascades of foam up from their knifing bows. All conditions being constant, it became apparent that we would be the third craft to meet *Britannia*, and as *Matador* resumed way, the faces aboard her were, perhaps forgiveably smug.

At 08.00, and about four or five miles from land, we sighted the soaring triple masts of *Britannia* bearing due North. Immediately we were at "action stations", straining to note her course, and to correct our own position. As she and her escort came into full view, we noticed that she was swinging to her starboard, which meant that if both our courses were maintained, we would pass her to windward.

Quickly, we altered course to as close to due West as the ENE wind would allow us, and anxiously watched the relative bearing of the three tall masts, now less than two miles distant.

Would we—could we cross her soon enough so as not to commit a breach of etiquette by crossing too close?

YES!—we'd make it! At a distance of a little over one mile, the triple masts converged as one and slowly opened again, as the starboard side of *Britannia* came into view. Slowly we began bearing up to North again as we started in fascination at the huge navy blue hull, and the snow-white upper-works. Her tall, tan masts, bearing the flag of England, Her Majesty's personal standard, and an unknown flag depicting a white anchor on a light blue field on the mizzen mast.

The two schooners had passed the Royal Yacht and were now abreast of *H.M.S. Ursa* steaming in her wake. Now it was our turn to greet the Queen. As our bows crossed—starboard to starboard—some 400 yards apart, Gerry quickly hoisted our ensign to the masthead from where I immediately drew it down to the halfway mark. As it reached this point, both main and jib sails were freed completely and to a man we all stood in attention facing the Royal Yacht. (I with a surreptitious hand on the helm to hold *Matador* as she wallowed).

Trixie said that the White Ensign to the stern of the *Britannia* was definitely dipped and raised again, but this was unconfirmed by the rest of us, due to squinting against the sun, and I suspect to the patriotic lumps in our throats which played all sorts of tricks to our vision! As we reached a point opposite to the bridge of the *Britannia*, we re-hoisted our ensign to the masthead and hauled our flogging sheets. There was little time for excited comment as we were now approaching the escorting warship. Again we trimmed our ensign to point three-quarters of the way up the after stay, and again we performed the solemn ritual of formally dipping our colours. This time roars of delight from four throats—"She answered!"

"Trim, Trim, Tri-im . . . Lee Ho!" and then we were around, following in the wake of both vessels. Our manoeuvre had been carried out precisely, and according to plan, in conditions somewhat better than boisterous.

On our way back into Nassau, both schooners overtook us a few hundred yards to windward, decks steeply angled, making a breathtaking sight as they rose and plunged like two great dolphins.

By the time we crossed into the calm, translucent, turquoise waters of the harbour, *Britannia* was secured at her berth. We anchored among the scores of small craft lying in the shelter of Paradise Island, abeam of *Britannia* and listened to the broadcast commentary as the Queen and Prince Phillip stepped ashore.

In spite of our being out of sight of the ceremonies being enacted just a few hundred yards away, we contented ourselves with the thought that perhaps Prince Phillip just might have been on the bridge of *Britannia* when we passed, and noticed and recognised our Silhouette as she payed her respects to Her Majesty and himself.

"Check" - Mate!

When the Captain's at home
Well, *she* thinks *he's* a drone,
Just *her* lazy or ignorant mate:
It's "John, answer the phone,"
"Leave the tele alone,"
Or it's "Darling, please clean out the grate."
It's "Get on with those shelves,"
And, "Plates won't wash themselves,"
Or "The dinner has spoiled 'cause you're late."
He's expected to think
As he's mending her sink
That his next job is fixing the gate.
At home in the house
He's as quiet as a mouse
And hers is the voice in full spate!
But just once in a while
The mouse-tiger may smile
At the lady who's ruling his fate.
His poor whimpering fret
When they both "Silhouette"
Get's thrown in relief as "Check" Mate!

—S.H. 1064

"CHECK"-MATE.—My Concise Oxford Dictionary says, "Silhouette—Portrait of a person showing outline only, usually in black or white." Herewith a riposte (but probably NOT a coup de grace to Rhona Pinkney's "Lament."—Geoff Lee.

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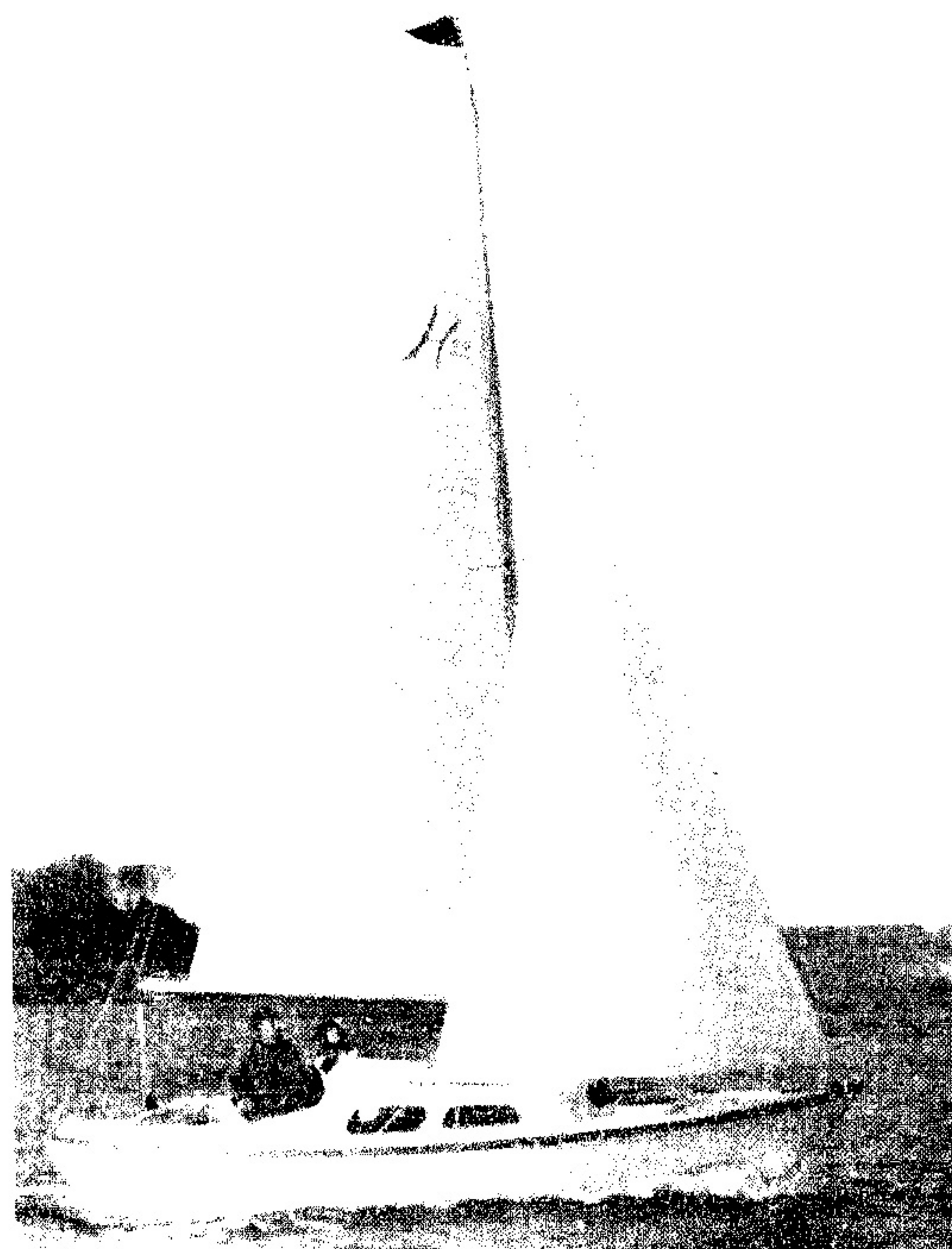
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