

The Silhouette Owner

*The journal of the
Silhouette Owners' International Association*

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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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Far Horizons

NO man has done more to foster small-boat cruising than Alasdair Garrett, editor of the *Journal* of the Royal Cruising Club. Six years ago he had the splendid idea of collecting a number of logs of his club's members, and publishing them for a wider audience in *Roving Commissions*. Goodness knows how many people he has encouraged to make passages instead of racing round buoys or pottering about a bay—much more important, he has encouraged cruising men and women to approach passage-making only in the most seamanlike way. What a wealth of shared experience he, and the yachtsmen whose logs he has published, have given to us! With the publication (in nice time for Christmas) of *Roving Commissions—6* (R.C.C. Press, 3 Gracechurch Street, London, E.C.3, 35s.) Mr. Garrett has greatly extended the horizons of his notable collection. He takes us to the remote Alentians (Brigadier and Mrs. Smeaton, in *Tzu Hang*, to the even remoter Heard Island, on the rim of the Antarctic (H. W. Tilman and the Warwick Deacock expedition, in *Patanela*) through the North Atlantic by way of the Azores to the Chesapeake (R. M. Jackson, in *Isbjorn*), as well as to a host of nearer places. "To enter Copenhagen in one's own boat is for many of us a secret ambition," writes J. D. Power, recounting *Pennyroyal's* cruise to Denmark. It is a good ambition, and one which many Silhouette owners share—we hope that our Danish Rally, postponed by the economic crisis, may yet prove practicable. Mr. Garrett's latest cruising anthology is enchanting reading (and re-reading), and while few of us can hope to sail to the far quarters of the world explored by Royal Cruising Club

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members, at least we can be stimulated to explore where we can. A new landfall on the Cornish coast can be as exciting an achievement as penetrating the Antarctic—that is the joy of cruising. And a little Silhouette can be as proud a possession as the most luxurious yacht that ever sailed. Size is no measure of seaworthiness. Over four centuries ago, in 1539, a 16ft. boat—fifteen inches smaller than a Silhouette—was sailed from Goa in India to Lisbon by the Portuguese navigator Diego Botelho.

The Lifeboats

THE appeal for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution made to Silhouette owners earlier this year has raised so far £25 3s., with about another £16 that will benefit the institution when it recovers income tax from those who have subscribed on covenants. This is not a result that we can be proud of. We should aim at raising at least £500, which could be achieved by an average donation of roughly 10s. per member—that is about 2½d. a week per year. How many of us can say honestly that we can't afford 2½d. a week in such a cause? Let us make up our minds to do something about this *now*. Donations can be sent to Alasdair Garrett, 46 Chesil Court, Chelsea Manor Street, London, S.W.3.

Secretary's Notes

IN a recent edition of the *Journal*, I appealed to draughtsmen members to provide a decent working set of plans from which one could fabricate a road trailer. Since then I have had a nice letter from George Hurley, informing me that these measurements are applied to a brochure which Messrs. Hurley Marine keeps specially for people wishing to build their own trailer, and can be had for the cost of a stamped addressed envelope. Thank you for that information George. I hope that members will write direct to you for these brochures.

* * *

All the various bits and pieces of 8 mm. film that were taken at Plymouth this year have now been collected together, and a number of titles have been photographed, so in company with Harry Maloney, and a film enthusiast friend, I spent a happy few hours one evening playing with pots of glue, cutting machines, and an illuminated viewer, making the complete film. This one incorporates a series of impressive shots of Silhouettes in a heavy sea in the Channel, taken during the Whitsun Cruise. Altogether this film comprises two full reels, so it should prove a popular item at the cocktail party which will be held immediately after the AGM as is our usual custom. Again, the films will be available on loan to interested parties after that date. But can I make an appeal? Owing to my long absence during this year, I sent out the film of the 1965 Rally to a member with instructions to pass it on to a further address, wrote to the second person, asking him in turn to pass it on to another address, and so on. But somewhere along the line, the system broke down. Someone has this film. Would that member please return it as soon as possible?

* * *

On the whole a secretary's job for an organisation such as ours, is a pleasant task, but there are one or two things that must be done that can be outside the category of the pleasant. Among these is the annual reminder that subscriptions are due on January 1 every year. Our yearly levy of £1 per member, can be claimed to be quite modest, but it is necessary, and so unless you became a member after October 1, 1966, or unless you have signed a banker's order (and our treasurer will bless you if you have) there is no earthly reason why you should not send your cheque or postal order for £1 to the treasurer now. We claim that all the money collected from members is spent for the benefit of members, but we have to be ruthless in as much as we don't continue to distribute the *Journal* to non-payers. While on the subject of money, one or two extra tickets for the dinner at Plymouth have not yet been paid for, please do not wait for a reminder to be sent. Let Ron Fairman have an easy time and remit to him direct.

* * *

Apart from those hardy souls who sail all the year round, this is the time when most boats are covered with various forms of water-

proof sheets and are left forlorn to await the return of the longer days. A little winter work can make quite a difference to the spring fit-out, small parts can be varnished indoors (we still have a mark on the kitchen ceiling made by a blade of a newly varnished oar) sails can be rinsed and overhauled. My wife's Singer has a permanent knock in the big-end, since I sewed four thicknesses of Terylene on it. Sheets, halliards and warps can be rinsed and re-whipped (so far we have no scars to show for this activity) but, above all, perhaps the best past time for the long winter evenings is to write up your log for our annual log competition. There are many many tales of voyages and trips in Silhouettes and other craft that have not been recorded, which is a very great pity.

* * *

Has anyone found the complete answer to anti-fouling the hull of a glass-fibre boat. Many owners would like the tip if they have.

* * *

Don't forget to explode all your rockets and flares on November 5. They add considerably to the usual firework display and ensure that you get fresh stocks, aboard, which we always sincerely hope you never have to use, but could lead to disaster if they failed to go off when required.—R.A.G.

Blackwater Group

ANY factual report of the Blackwater Group's activities in 1966, must, in many respects, be a repetition of what was said about 1965. Six events were planned, and on only two was the weather such that an honest man would say that he had spent a day sailing for pleasure, rather than as a challenge.

When the opening meet, in Steeple Bay, was chosen for April 17 the committee knew that they were being optimistic. However, there was just the chance that this might turn out to be one of those years when we get Summer in April. It was not. Bill and Ruth Langsdale nobly went out to confirm that no one was there, and returned to their moorings.

Although eight vessels made West Mersea on May 15, and quite a few more *nearly* did, for one reason or another only two or three met. Those who did, had a pleasant run ashore. All who were out, however, had a good sail, even if those still in the river found it somewhat frustrating.

Three vessels had a pleasant sail to Bradwell on Whit Sunday. They arrived in time to give all hands an hour's shore leave, before returning to the main river.

On July 31, 16 vessels sailed in company round Osea Island in brilliant sunshine and light airs. Before lunch a balloon race, for prizes given by the Commodore, was held. In the conditions of light

airs and fast running tide then prevailing, this proved to be an interesting test of seamanship under sail, which would be well worth repeating. On the way back to our several moorings in the afternoon, members were treated to one of this season's more spectacular cloudbursts.

Two members sailed to, or near Tollesbury on August 13 and a third, returning from a cruise, took refuge there from the Force 7 to 8, accurately forecast.

The AGM was held at Mill Beach on September 3 when W. Langsdale, E. Whitehead and A. V. Hudson were re-elected Commodore, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary respectively. Ken Andrews and L. Driscoll were elected to the committee. This was followed by a barbecue on the foreshore. A whip-round among the score of members and friends present resulted in a cheque for £2 10s. being sent to the RNLI.

If this report on the planned programme sounds like a list of events, many of which did not quite come off, this is not to say that the group has failed in its main purpose. Far from it. It does not need the intervention of a committee for a handful of owners to decide to sail to an objective in company . . . many weekends will have seen them doing just that. Moreover, nearly a quarter of the Group is made up of members who are new to the Blackwater, perhaps even to Silhouettes. It is surely by welcoming newcomers, with encouragement and advice on local conditions, that the Group strengthens itself and justifies its existence.—A. V. Hudson.

Round Sheppey *by John W. Mantle*

WE moored *Samantha* (SII 1624), at the Medway Yacht Club, Upnor, Kent. From here, the circumnavigation of the Isle of Sheppey is a satisfying little cruise; but to carry fair tides all the way, and to spend a night at that delectable (when the wind is light) anchorage at Harty, usually involves a long week-end, such as Whitsun. On this September week-end we make the trip in two days.

You really need the whole of the ebb to carry you far enough east of the island to clear the shoals, for you will surely be there at low water. So we drop the mooring at 0400 on Saturday in a calm black darkness, thread our way through our neighbours' yachts out into the river, and steam down on the young ebb, raising a brilliant phosphorescent bow wave. We amuse ourselves for a while making phosphorescent whirlpools with the sounding cane.

There is only one lit navigation buoy between Upnor and Gillingham, but there are many unlit obstructions—moored lighters, and great mooring buoys weighing as much as several Silhouettes. I know the river well and it is amazing how far off you can see these black shapes on the darkest of nights. Below Gillingham the channel is

buoyed and lit, so we follow the line of white lights, keeping just outside the channel, and keeping, too, a good look out astern for steamers, for there is a lot of traffic to Rochester.

Due east down Gillingham Reach, then north-east into Pinup Reach; between Darnett Fort and Folly Fort, memorials of the Palmerston era of a century ago; east again into Long Reach, now reduced to half its former width by the jetty reaching out into deep water to serve the colliers which will feed the new Kingsnorth power station.

North-east again into Kethole Reach (wonderful names, these). We have been steaming over an hour now, and have seen no other vessel under way. Crew hands up a mug of tea. A blaze of light ahead of us is the oil refinery on the Isle of Grain, with a line of great tankers along its waterfront. Yes, the first hint of light is appearing in the eastern sky. Orion is ahead, and I find I can steer a good course keeping Sirius in line with the forestay. We have bent on sails, but there is no wind, and we have a long way to go yet.

East again into Saltpan Reach, and here is the first vessel we have seen under way. A tanker is drawing away from the refinery jetties, assisted by tugs. In the dark she looks enormous, outlined against the lights of the refinery. Bearing away to give her a wide berth, we remember we are heading for the tug mooring off Stangate Creek. Yes! There is a black shape in the darkness. The tanker is now overtaking us at a rate of knots. What about the tug steaming beside the tanker? She will probably break away and make for the mooring. Torch handy. Oh No! Green light, white light—she is going over to Sheerness.

We follow the tanker out past Garrison Point into the Thames Estuary. Ten miles, Upnor to Sheerness, in one hour and fifty minutes. Quite light now and miles of sea room. Finished with engines! Oh dear! No wind? Well, hardly any. With a little wind and a lot of tide we run (?) our easting down along the north shore of Sheppey, breakfasting as we go. Visibility poor; can just see Sheppey, but Essex quite out of sight. The 0655 forecast predicts a fine day with a light westerly wind.

Low water, and we have only reached the Spile Buoy. We don't want the flood to carry us back up the Thames, so we had better call for steam. We set a compass course for the Columbine Buoy. Warden Point, on the north-east corner of the island, fades into the haze, and then suddenly comes much clearer. And there is the "Coastguard Stn. (conspic.)" at Shell Ness. And then, through the glasses, we can see the Ham Gat Buoy, our real turning point. The flood has been making for an hour, so we should be able to take the short cut. We prod with the cane. Five feet, four and a half, four, three, three, three and a half. Hooray! We are through into deep water. Engine off! The flood will now take us through the Swale, the strait that makes Sheppey an island.

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.

The light wind is dead on the nose for most of the ten miles to Elmley. At low water the channel is very narrow, but there is enough water now to allow quite long tacks, encouraged by occasional prods with the cane. At Elmley we drop the hook, have lunch and a kip. We have been sailing ten hours.

The tides, flooding round both sides of the island, meet about here, and there is a period of high water when the whole body of water is moving east at quite a rate. We get the anchor, make sail (and tea as well) and, as there is little wind, steam for the bridge. Kingsferry Bridge is the sole connection between Sheppey and the mainland. It carries a line of railway with a frequent service of electric trains, and two lanes of road. As a signal to the bridge-keeper that we want a lift, we have hoisted a red plastic bucket to the cross-trees. Often you have to wait for trains, but we are in luck to-day. We see the traffic stop, the gates closing across the road. The deck of the bridge is still lifting as we steam under, indulging a certain

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. P. F. C. Whiteman, 308 Chester Road, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield, Warwicks.</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>
Scarborough.	<i>Hon. Sec. Stephen Lushington, 3 Hetton Road, Leeds 8, Yorkshire.</i>

malicious satisfaction at the sight of a hundred cars held up for us. A wave of thanks to the bridge-keeper as we get the sheets in and stop the engine.

We have now found the west-going ebb and carry this round the tight S-bend to Queenborough. It is always a marvel to me how ocean going ships, bringing pulp wood to the paper mill at Kemsley, negotiate this bend, where, for good measure, there is a middle ground. At Queenborough we put the anchor down for the night just off the drying mud, inflate the Avon, and row ashore to stretch our legs in this ancient, shabby, stinking little borough, whose staple industry is a glue factory. Happily, our anchorage is to windward of it.

A lazy day follows. We drop down the Swale on the last of the ebb, round into the Medway and have an easy ten miles back to our mooring with fair wind and tide.

Fifty miles, not allowing for tacking.

The North Pointers by Michael Ellis

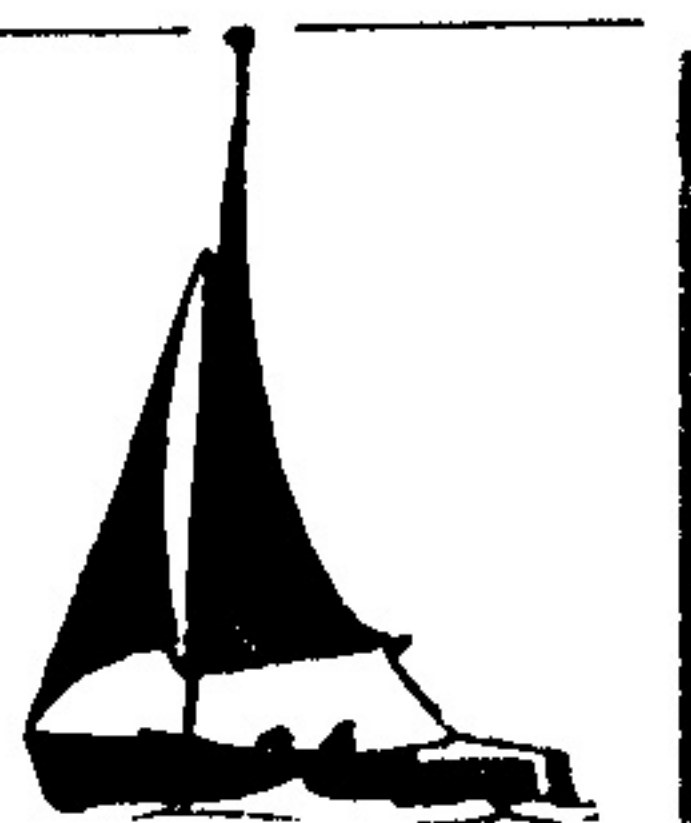
I WAS fascinated by the Secretary's little anecdote that if you drop two lice into a cup of water, they act as a makeshift compass.

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I can answer one of his questions however, "Where have all the body-lice gone?" The answer is, quite simply, "They have all swum North!" And if any adventurous Silhouette owner cares to take his ship up to the Arctic, he will find that all the local Eskimos are, well, concerned with them. This could be a point in favour of the theory that "All lice lead to Latvia" like "All roads lead to Rome," being based on the assumption that once a louse makes it up there and gets himself smuggled under an Eskimo's furs, he is not likely to be disturbed for the rest of the night, which in the Arctic is six months long (or two generations fleawise).

The other point that intrigued me was, Why *two* lice and not just *one*? And do they have to be male or female, or doesn't sex matter when you are scratching for a living? The problem is an absorbing one, especially when one has been bitten by the bug of insatiable learning. It's interesting to know that there is a difference between the Body Louse and the Scalp Louse or Head Nit. Now take my uncle. He always claimed that he could never get a good night's rest unless he slept with his head pointing North. The part that irritates, of course, is that we will never really know the answer, as the louse family has no known written language. We do know that a certain Leif Eksson back in the Dark Ages, did flee from his native land of Scandinavia but this, I believe, was only because of an itch to know what was on the other side of the ocean.

I did once strike up a conversation with a most charming woman who ran a flea circus. She told me that she was having the same trouble getting fresh fleas. She said that in her opinion the flea circus was played out, and there was no money in it now. She confided in me that she was forced to scratch for their every meal.

The question of where to find a flea in this day and age is quite a poser. Now my uncle (the Head to North one) would always advocate either sleeping on a problem, or going for a tramp in the woods to work out an answer. This may sound easier than it seems, or seem easier than it sounds, depending on where you are inclined to doss your head for the night, or what sort of tramps are running around in your neighbourhood.

The Vikings must have had a method of finding their way across the trackless wastes of water without the use of an expensive alcohol filled compass, which of course, would have been rendered completely useless at the first cry of "Splice the mainbrace!" or the Norse equivalent. Personally, I don't believe the louse theory for one good

reason. If you have ever studied a crab you will observe that it has one major characteristic. It moves sideways! Now if you were a Viking at the helm, watching a louse on the loose, would you steer the boat in the direction it was moving, or the way it was facing? Bearing in mind that if you were wrong you would be 90 degrees adrift, which, on retrospect, is probably the reason how they found Gt. Britain in the first place when they should have been heading for Iceland.

I think that it is more likely that our forbears took their course from the stars, not forgetting that Cancer the Crab is very visible in the northern hemisphere. Or the great Danes could have followed Sirius the Dog Star.

I agree with Reg Garrod that it constitutes an itchy poser—certainly one to tickle your fancy.

Spray Dancer's Season

by R. Hunt

THIS story is an account of *Spray Dancer's* wanderings through the season of 1966. Perhaps I should explain that *Spray Dancer* is a fin keel Hurley 22, sail No. 21.

The tale begins on a blustery day just after Easter, when she floated out of her cradle, and was towed onto her mooring at North Fambridge on the river Crouch, some 4 miles downstream of Hull-bridge, the home of the South East Group of the SOIA. The rest of that day was spent in stowing gear, and getting acclimatised to the strange motion of a one legged boat after the dancing motion of *Tutu*, my Silhouette.

Sunday, and a lighter wind, so with Mike Pynn who was to be my crew throughout the season, *Spray Dancer* picked up her skirts, and went for a sail. The wind was SSW and around Force 4, a real yachtsman's breeze. The first sound that came from either of us was a howl of delight, cow-boy style; neither Mike nor I tends to be demonstrative, but this was really something to shout about. With the sails trimmed to a broad reach it felt as though we had a racing car under us, and that feeling persists even now after a full season.

The following weekend was spent in preparing for the trip to Dover and the SOIA Rally there at Whitsun, and a demonstration sail for some friends.

Then we were off to Dover with Stan Morgan and Harry Maloney. On the way Mike and I held a number of "council meetings" to determine why the two Silhouettes were losing us hand over fist, only after we got into Dover did Harry admit with a grin that they had motor sailed nearly all the way.

I think enough has been written about the rally at Whitsun not to require any comment from me, except that I was most impressed by those boats that went to Calais, and I am convinced that the crews of the Silhouettes were drier on arrival than we in *Spray Dancer*.

Since I began to write this tale I have heard that this Rally may well become an annual event; if this is so I hope that we shall see a lot more associate members boats next year.

Our return from Calais was one of those days that every small boat sailor dreams about; a warm sun, a steady breeze, and a sea that sparkled like diamonds. Mike lay on the foredeck and photographed everything in sight (and a lot that wasn't, judging by the results). It was certainly compensation for the somewhat damp trip over. We cleared Customs after paying £5 duty for over enthusiasm, and left the boat in Wellington Dock.

The next time I saw *Spray Dancer*, a fortnight later, she looked an absolute mess. The Dover Harbour Board had been playing with a bulldozer on the quayside, and the filth on the deck was indescribable; added to this, one of the coachroof ventilators had been smashed by an ill placed boot. In deep depression I started to clean up. It took all day, and goodness knows how many buckets of water, but I won. So much for lying alongside in a commercial port. I had just made up my mind to cook on board rather than go up into the town, when Ernie and Moira Large arrived to check their boat which I was alongside. After a chat and a drink or two (or was it four?) with those admirable people, my depression filled, and I turned in quite happy again.

I had arranged to wait in Dover for a friend, Dennis Parsons who has a "Gallant," *Circe*, to join me there, and we were to cruise in company for the rest of the season. But he was having crewing problems. (It is an interesting thought that even with most Englishmen's inborn interest and things nautical, just how hard it is to find a genuine crew), and he asked me to help him sail *Circe* to Dover.

This in itself was an adventure, as least for me, for we left Ramsgate in quite thick fog, and, steering a compass course, made for Dover. After sailing for an hour and a half, and having no way of telling how far we had come, we closed the shore, navigating on the echo sounder. We were less than 50 yards offshore when we sighted people walking, and minutes later the beacon on Deal Beach. We went back into the mist reassured. What wind there was, was beginning to fade, but we kept sailing, for the motor would have drowned any noises around us and we'd found several fishing dinghies by the people in them talking. We went offshore for 20 minutes and then turned on course again. It was not long after this that Dennis made his "remark of the season." We were closing the shore again, I was below making coffee, when I heard, "God! there's a bl - - - great cliff just ahead!" There was, 200 yards away, it was the South Foreland. We turned offshore again, and as we did so the mist rolled away like a giant curtain. An hour later we were in Dover.

On June 18 we sailed in company with *Circe* with the intention of making Littlehampton or Chichester in one hop. The log says that we turned to at 03.30 so I suppose that must be right (as Marjorie Moyse says in the September issue, "You live by the tide tables not convention"). However, we sailed at 05.00 in a S.W. Force 1 wind,

close hauled, with the tide under us. The 06.45 weather forecast said S.W. 3-4. Good oh! We sat back and waited for it to materialise. It didn't, not yet.

At 08.05 I started the motor. Dennis did the same, and we motored on for 4½ hours, past Dungeness, and on towards Fairlight Head. The wind began to return, so I stopped the motor, and the silence was almost painful. After a couple more hours Mike and I began to do 2 hour watches to see how this system would work through the night. By this time Dennis had disappeared astern, and we concluded that he had gone back to Dover on account of the wind, or rather the lack of it.

I came off watch at 17.15, and turned in for a couple of hours. I was awakened abruptly at 18.20 by the scream of sheet winches, once, twice, three times. By this time I was fully awake, Mike was in trouble with the genoa. I was on deck quicker than I've ever been before or since. What a change! The wind was a good Force 4 and Mike said it was piping. The genoa sheet had jammed under the forehatch, and that 165 sq. ft. of Terylene had gone mad. Mike volunteered to go and get it off, for it was obvious that it had got to come off. He replaced it with the working jib, and things were back to normal for a while. But Mike had said the wind was piping, and he was right, for 30 minutes later I put 3 rolls in the mainsail. At this point entries in the log become terse with one real comment only. Strong sea, short, steep, horrible. We anchored off Bexhill on Sea at 23.30, in 25ft. of water, cold, wet, hungry, and very tired. The motion was terrible, a rolling that would start gently, and increase until it was a full 35 degrees either way; then, suddenly, it would stop, and the cycle would start again. Somehow we got a meal and turned in.

I think that on reflection this anchoring inshore is not a good thing to do, for although the wind was along the shore rather than on or off it, had the wind backed and put us on a lee shore we should have needed our distress signals for sure. But we were lucky, although the wind freshened during the night it remained constant in direction.

I woke suddenly at 04.15 with the premonition (for that is surely what it was) that something was wrong. We were dragging, I thought. But no. The wind still whistled in the rigging, the motion was just the same. I almost went back to sleep. Suddenly I realised that we weren't rolling so wildly. Water! I switched on the echo sounder and it read under 6ft. Four-and-a-half hours of tide gone, 19ft. in 4½ hours=4ft. 3in. an hour. In less than an hour we'd be high and dry. I have always believed that no matter how tired you may be your ship must come first. I had eaten before I was certain we had enough water, and forgotten it afterwards; a lesson learned the hard way.

I called Mike and between us we made to move offshore. I started the engine while Mike hauled the anchor, then, horrors, the engine refused to go into gear! We were being blown along the shore, but the sea was setting us in toward the shore. Drop anchor again, con-

sider, then make sail, but to sail off we had to get it right first time. We got it right, we sailed out into 30 ft. of water and anchored again. Phew! Sweat over. Some cornflakes and coffee, I think, was our breakfast. By this time *Spray Dancer* had dragged out her chain, and was snubbing horribly; her nose would dip, then rise to the next wave ending with a tremendous crash, and jerk. I rove a nylon warp to the chain, and this eased the snubbing a bit, but it still felt as though *Spray Dancer* were in her death throes. This thought decided me for if this became reality it wasn't just for the boat.

I had a quick look at the tidal atlas, talked it over with Mike, and put to sea. With 5 rolls in the mainsail, and the storm jib, we beat along the shore, keeping out of the foul tide as much as possible. At 06.45 the weather report from the Royal Sovereign lightship less than 3 miles away, gave a genuine Force 6.

I must refer again to the log, for memory is dim, battered into a trance-like state. But all it says is, "09.30. Wind S.W. 6-7 barometer 1013," then "15.00. Wind S. 2-4 no barometer reading." Comments are, "Round Beachy Head at last, working rig." Then, "18.30 wind - - -" and the legend, "in at last." Dennis is already here, he must have passed during the night.

The condition of his boat and crew told its own story. His crew were tired and hungry, and not very talkative. His boat was much the same, the outboard motor had been taken off the transom by a wave. His dinghy, which he had been towing, had sunk, and caused all sorts of damage before they had got it aboard, and stowed on deck. The stitching on his sails had flogged itself loose during this period, and three out of four battens had gone. Dennis told me the full story later that week, and having heard it I wasn't so sure that I'd done the wrong thing. Here, I must make comment on Mike Pynn, my trusty crew and mate. Although only 17, he has more sailing experience than I, and accepts passages like the one I have just described with complete equanimity, and is always ready for more the next weekend. The compartment in the train going home from Newhaven looked more like a doss house, than anything I can think of at the moment. The actual mileage sailed we estimate at 110, and it took 39 hours.

For those who don't know Newhaven as a port I would like to make a few remarks. The harbour dues are 9d. per foot per week for the first week; not too bad, you may think, but the boats must not be left unattended, and this costs another unofficial £1 per week. Should you be unfortunate enough to have to leave your boat to the not so tender mercies of the harbour authorities for more than one week, then the dues go up 400% to 3/6 per foot per week; and if you complain (as we did), you are told that this is a commercial port, we don't want yachts here.

There followed a period of repair and repaint, particularly for Dennis, who was having crew troubles again. It was July 2 before *Spray Dancer* went to sea again, and this time it was Calais to Dover

on a bigger scale. Leaving Dennis in Newhaven (no crew) we motored out of the harbour with the wind SW 1-2 and barometer 1018 steady, hoisted main and genoa and set course for the Owers Lightship. I got the boat sailing herself, and lay back to enjoy the sun. Mike went below to do some navigation, and make coffee. I looked up at one time to see a steamer heading in towards Newhaven, and decided that he would be far away by the time we crossed his track, so back to the sun. Mike had just come up with the coffee when I heard a hissing noise from up ahead. There was the steamer, too close for piece of mind, and on a collision course. A quick tack took us out of harms way, not really dangerous, but exciting and another lesson learned.

(to be continued)

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

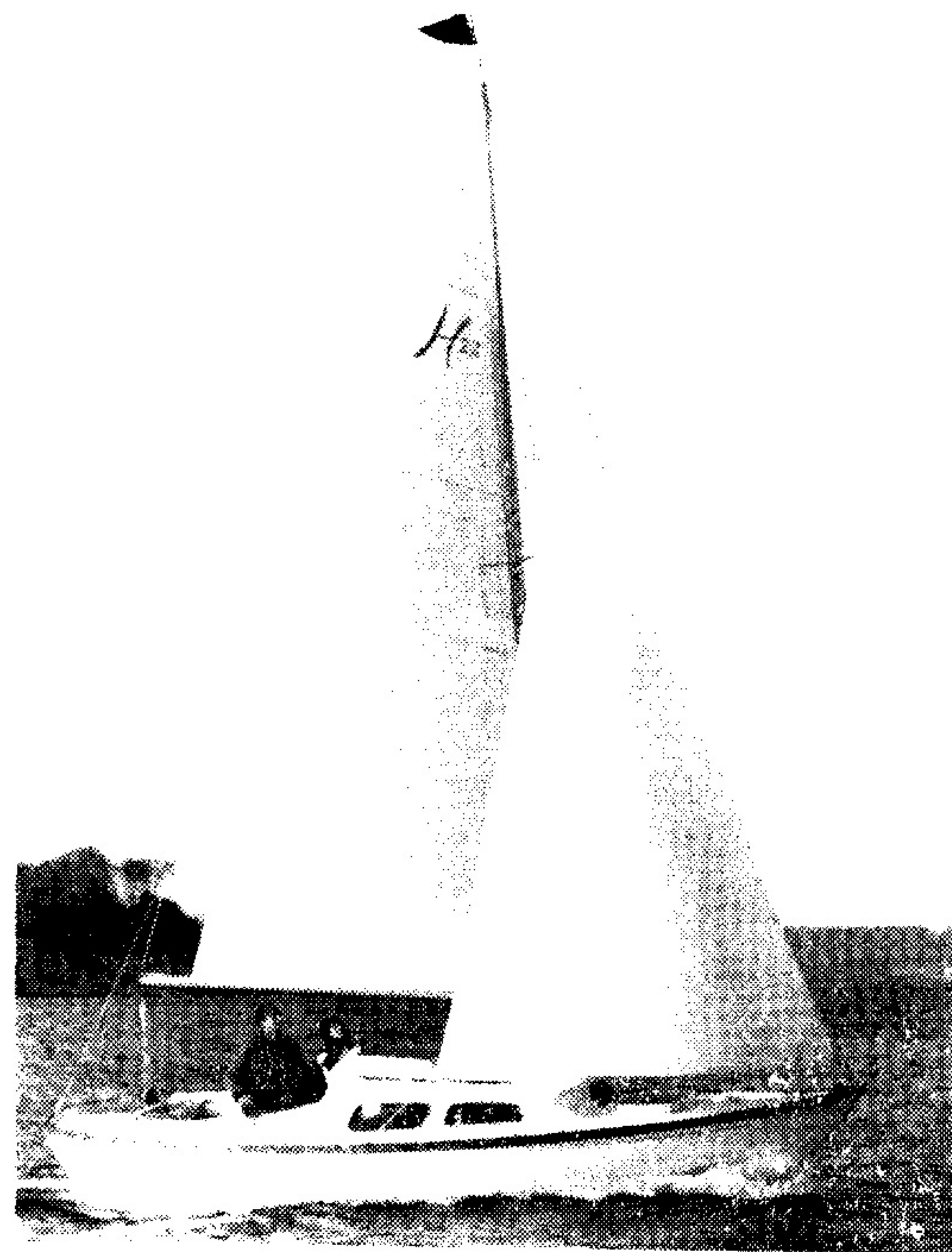
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