

The Silhouette Owner

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Silhouette Owner's 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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Fleet Signals

GOOD signalling makes all the difference between safe sailing in convoy and getting into worrying difficulties. When the Calais fleet sets out from Dover at Whitsun we hope that everyone will bear in mind just how important signalling is. Brian Heaney and the Calais sub-committee are working out a set of simple signals: there will not be many, and every skipper should learn them by heart; to be on the safeside, though, they should be written out on a piece of cardboard, covered with plastic sheet, and put up in the cockpit where they can be readily seen. The problem of signalling among small boats needs much thought. Inevitably on leaving port, boats spread out quickly, and at even a couple of cables apart boats may be almost invisible to one another in swell. Complicated flag signals are useless—they must be read almost from water level, they can be read only through glasses, and in a kicking Silhouette it is jolly difficult to keep glasses trained on a signal hoist long enough to read even two or three letters. Every yacht should carry a set of signal flags and know the main signals in the International Code—I require assistance (V), I am disabled. Communicate with me (F), You are standing into danger (U), I need a doctor (W), and the rest. Private fleet signals should never infringe the International Code, and for the Calais fleet it will be better to use plain-coloured flags with simple meanings depending on where they are flown—a white flag on the backstay, for instance, might mean "Close on the Fleet Captain," and at the masthead "We are turning back." Since it is not easy to see signals unless you are looking out

for them, there should be a rule that every skipper should train glasses on the Fleet Captain at the half-hour and at the hour. It goes without saying that signal discipline should be obeyed implicitly, and that no one should go off on his own without letting the Fleet Captain and the rest of the fleet know just what he is doing. Much anxiety can be caused—and perhaps other boats endangered—if some member of a convoy decides to go home, or to go off somewhere else, without letting other people know. An important signal, therefore, must be "I have a message to communicate." This might be, say, a blue flag on the backstay. It would mean that any other boat seeing it should close on the boat flying it, find out what the skipper wants to say, and help to pass on the message to the Fleet Captain and, if necessary, to other boats. The Calais Fleet is not intending to sail at night, but you can always be caught out at night, and therefore there must be a code of emergency torch signals in case it is necessary to signal after dark. Like flag signals, these must be few and simple. Brian Heaney and the sub-committee will welcome suggestions.

Secretary's notes

OUR new commodore, was duly elected at the committee meeting held last month, and we are all sure that no one will fill the post more admirably than he will, so let us all look forward to a very successful season under the leadership of our new Flag Officers. Cyril Guscott, Commodore, will be ably supported by George Smith as Vice Commodore, and can be sure of all the assistance that will be required from Harry Maloney, as Rear Commodore. Terry Bickford has taken over Cyril's job as Press Secretary. Terry, who has demonstrated on more than one occasion that he can sail a Silhouette faster than most, has a profound respect for the sea, and is horrified at the risks that some small boat owners are apt to take; so it will not surprise anyone who knows him well, if future press notices are tinged with exhortations to take precautions when afloat, a theme to which we all subscribe, though too often there is never a second chance.

* * *

The officers' list for 1967, is almost complete. George Oliver has returned to the fold of willing horses by volunteering to compile the Members' List, but we are still without that very necessary person, an advertising agent for the *Journal*. This is not an easy job, but someone well versed in the ways of the world of publicity, should not find it difficult to sell a few inches of space in our much read and well distributed *Journal*. Any offers?

* * *

I read with much amusement the writings of a columnist in one of our more popular yachting periodicals, who was inviting his readers to seek his advice at the Boat Show before they decided to make a purchase. He pointed out that a little expert advice would be useful

to anyone, who was not one hundred per cent sure of the craft he wanted. This is all quite true and reasonable, but when he went on to tell the story of how he had dissuaded a prospective buyer from purchasing a £30,000 boat for his first venture, and also how he had pointed out the virtues of a £12,000 ketch to another buyer, I began to wonder. Who would have had the temerity to seek assistance from such a man if the choice was between a Silhouette or a Felicity?

* * *

In the course of correspondence with a fellow member, he made the remark, that "there is no such thing as a fast or slow Silhouette—some have better sails than others." I wonder if this is true, that given the same hull conditions, all that can be different is the set of the sails (skill of the helmsman apart, of course). If so, what a wonderful consolation for those of us who fetch up in the rear at Plymouth, a feeling that if only my sails were as well cut as his, I would be in the lead. I don't really think that I can agree with such a statement, I am sure that it is the man at the helm who matters most. How else account for Norman Delahay's doing so well in a hired boat at Plymouth in 1965, or for the fact that the first winner of the championship had three quarter rig? It can't just all be luck.

* * *

John Caulder of the Solent Group, tells me that they had a little contest which necessitated the setting off of a few flares, and these had to be ignited by the lady members, which while proving quite amusing to watch, gave serious food for thought. One day you may be in difficulties and want your crew to let off a flare—are you quite sure that he or she knows what and how to do it?

* * *

The spell of fine weather in January and February brought out many enthusiasts with their various pots of paint and varnish, and much activity could be witnessed (not that I can claim to have been one of them). But it does seem that even if Easter is early this year most owners will be ready for it, so the season should get off to a flying start.

* * *

How fortunate are those who can wrest a living in this world and still reside at the water's edge! From what I hear, all the local yachtsmen at Plymouth, plan to form a floating guard of honour for Sir Francis Chichester when he does finally finish his lone voyage from Australia. This should prove a fitting tribute to a very fine seaman, and a wonderful sight to greet him—one in which I should be proud to take part, given the time and the opportunity.

* * *

On an invitation from the local Women's Guild Study Group, I gave an account of our experiences in *Griffin* to Vinland, and found that the ladies were very interested in what we ate. They were most amused at my description of Peter Haward's favourite dish, which he christened "gunj"—it consists of any and everything that can be

grated; potatoes, carrots, onions, swedes, turnips, etc., cooked in a pressure cooker. Perhaps it has no great gastronomic attraction, but we all landed in America very fit indeed.

* * *

If you are going on the Whitsun Calais cruise, don't forget to get a proof of ownership document, for the Customs, Ron Hunt now has these.—R.A.G.

News from Sweden By Folke Freund

THE first one-of-kind test ever to be held in Sweden took place on August 27-28, 1966, on the *Ekoln*, which is the northernmost part of the lake *Mälaren*, about four miles from Uppsala. Being the only Silhouette owner in this area, so far (though there are some 32 Silhouette owners all told in Sweden), my *Pamina* (SII 2000) had the honour of taking part in this historic event.

Twenty-two different boats were entered for the start; three did not come (*Delta*, *Rock 20* and *Dragonfly*) but three other boats (*Indra*, *Stanley 19* and *Pop 16*) turned up instead. The boats were "seeded" according to *Yachting's* handicap rule, and they were divided into two heats. With two exceptions—*Black Soo* and *Vega*—no boat measured more than twenty feet (waterline length). Furthermore, every boat had to have a cabin and at least two berths. The final starting list included the following boats, arranged according to their handicap:

Heat B: *Black Soo* (Holl.), *Fingal* (Swed.), *Vega* (Swed.), *Thunderbird* (USA), *Indra* (Swed.), *Westerley 25* (U.K.), *Neptunkryssare* (Swed.), *Folkboat* (Swed.), *Karskronaviggen* (Swed.), *Magnifik Midget* (Swed.), *F18* (Swed.).

Heat C: *Magyar 7* (Hung.), *Golif* (Fr.), *Splinter* (Holl.), *Sea Cat* (Swed.), *Martini 43* (U.K.), *Shark Cruiser* (Denm.), *Amphora* (U.K.), *Silhouette MII* (U.K.), *Stor Triss* (Swed.), *Pop 16* (Swed.).

On the whole, the final results were in accordance with the seeding, except for (i) *Westerly 25* (heat B), seeded as No. 5 out of eleven boats, which, however, in the three sailings got the booby-prize and (ii) *Sea Cat* and *Stor Triss* (heat C), two new Swedish boats, which sailed considerably faster than their handicap, particularly *Stor Triss*.

Most boats were made of glass-fibre, with a few exceptions, notable van den Stadt's *Black Soo* and also the *Folkboat* and the *Neptunkryssare*, two types extremely popular in Sweden, which served by way of comparison, as their merits are well known.

The tests took place on a triangular course, three nautical miles long, start and goal at *Skarholmen*, the home of Uppsala yachtsmen. Most firms or agents came with professional or semi-professional crews, but there were also greenhorns among these illustrious sailors, for instance the author of these lines. I was, however, wise enough to leave the helm to a friend of mine, Mr. Per Zaine, an experienced sailor who has taught me the elements of sailing. (As the reader will

understand, no doubt, this was most necessary, for when, on June 3, 1966, beaming with joy, but nevertheless with some awe, I received my *Silhouette*, I could not even moor her properly. I can now, though).

The first start was followed by TV and some 1,000 spectators. It blew about Force 4, too much for *Pamina* to use her genoa. Unfortunately, our bigger competitors were able to use theirs. Right up to the very last second before the start we held an excellent position, but we were a bit too early, and had to fall off. Hence we got off as the last boat. The bad start, our not being able to use the genoa, and the lack of spinnaker, all this account for our poor place in the first test.

On Sunday, the wind had dropped to about Force 2, which favoured *Pamina*, as she could now make use of her genoa. We had a splendid start and—according to our handicap—a decent place at the finish. We had the pleasure of beating *Amphora* and *Martini 43*, which ought to have beaten us, and *Pop 16*.

During the break before the third test *Pamina's* crew strengthened themselves with chicken and a bottle of white Burgundy of a good vintage (*Meursault Goutte d'Or* 1961), while the public went on board to study the interior of the boats.

During the first two tests the course had been sailed two rounds, but in the last test the wind had dropped so much that the course was sailed only once. Apparently, *Pamina* enjoyed the light breeze, for we had the great pleasure of seeing the following boats after us at the finish: *Magyar 7*, *Amphora*, *Pop 16* and in heat B—the bigger boats, which had started ten minutes before us—*F 18* and—ten minutes after us at the goal—*Westerly 25*. As the reader will see from the above, *Pamina* improved her place in every successive test.

The regatta was reviewed in all major Swedish newspapers and, of course, in our boat journals. In one of them, *Batnytt* ('Boat-News'), *Pamina* had the great, but maybe somewhat undeserved honour of being the only boat that was given a whole page, where she is seen at full speed. Hence, the burgee of the SOIA proudly flies over the Ekoln.

Poole Group

THE 1966 season was, in spite of the mediocre weather, enjoyed to the full by the Poole Group. Three main events were organised, and were very well supported. These were a day trip to Studland, with fun and games on the beach, including a hilarious dinghy race to a marker buoy and back; a weekend trip to Wareham where the fish and chips grow; and the second annual dinner on January 28 again at The Stagecoach Restaurant, Blandford. Thirty-two people attended the dinner, which was followed by a programme of colour slides and a film of the season's activities — shots of the trials of spinnaker handling were much appreciated. The Group membership now stands at 35. Anyone with a suggestion for a particular event during 1967 please let the Hon. Sec. know.—E. R. W. MAY.

A Summer on the Medway

By John Pickup

THE river Medway from the mouth of its estuary at Garrison Point, Sheerness, to the head of navigation some two miles above Tonbridge, offers a good sailing and cruising ground for a *Silhouette*. For the beginners there are sheltered creeks in the lower reaches, and for family excursions the non-tidal upper reaches are a picturesque mixture of river and canal.

We launched *Mermaid* on the eve of Whitsun, from a concrete slip at East Peckham. The creek there makes a convenient mooring, about half-way along the Upper Medway Navigation. It is approached by a narrow track across fields; there is a small charge for using the slip and arrangements should be made beforehand, and a key collected at the works of East Peckham Motors nearby.

The Upper Medway has nine locks in all: the upper six, above Yalding, are not manned continually. One has the choice of purchasing or hiring a lock handle, or of waiting for some other boat which has one to come along. Alternatively, the lockkeeper at Sluice Weir lock will accompany your boat upstream, starting at 10.00 or at 14.00. A similar system operates from the Town lock Tonbridge, in the down-stream direction, at the same times. Outside the season, individual arrangements would have to be made.

The three lower locks are manned from 08.00 to one hour before sunset, except during the lunch break from 13.00 - 14.00.

Allington lock, two miles below Maidstone, is the upper limit of tidal flow, and is opened from about 2 hours before to 3 hours after High Water (50 minutes after Sheerness), but less on neap tides. A Lock Pass from the Kent River Authority at Maidstone or Tonbridge covers all the locks, except Allington Lock, for a 7 or 14 day period, or for a season.

The seven mile journey to Tonbridge takes nearly three hours, including the time taken at locks. The Medway is not used for commercial traffic above Maidstone, although the locks are big enough to take a Thames Barge.

The official head of navigation is the road bridge in Tonbridge, which has a headroom of 6 ft. 6 inches; but after passing through the central arch, it is possible to penetrate another two miles upstream, though headroom (5ft. 3in.) is further restricted. There are two channels, both narrow but navigable, which meet again later at a railway bridge. Here you may encounter rowing boats and canoes.

There is then a long straight section of river, a relic of an attempt to extend the navigation to Penshurst in the early nineteenth century. A further railway bridge should be approached with care; the right-hand arch is navigable, but there are large stones and bricks below water level, debris remaining from repairs to the bridge, and a fairly strong stream.

The river shallows rapidly a few hundred yards above here, but we were able to moor to a steep bank and pitch our tent ashore, with permission. There is a pleasant pub nearby, and a bus service into Tonbridge.

On Whit Saturday, we pursued a leisurely course down river in the afternoon, and spent the night at East Peckham. If passing down through Sluice Weir lock, as we were next day, it is as well to be there half-an-hour before the convoy leaves upstream. Without a lock handle, one could wait the best part of a morning or afternoon until the downstream convoy arrives at about 12.30 or 16.30.

The river downstream carries on through a disused lock to Yalding, where there is a pleasant pub, with moorings and meals available. Just below here the river is blocked by a drawbridge, operated by the lock-keeper at Hampstead lock. If there is no sign of him, try the hut across the road or walk the $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile down the road to the lock. Below Hampstead Lock there is a public slip suitable for launching a Silhouette.

The river branches right and curls round, and is navigable as far as Yalding Bridge. This also would be a good mooring. The river Beult leads off this backwater, and is itself navigable some distance by dinghy. The fishing hereabouts is very good.

Continuing down-river, there is a village (Watlingtonbury) with a café and shops, and the river meanders through pleasant meadows to Teston lock, just above which there is one of the most pleasant moorings on the river. There is a shop and off-licence in the village, half a mile up the hill.

The railway and road follow the river from here to Maidstone. At East Farleigh another railway station and a picturesque bridge give access to the river.

The stream becomes narrow thereafter, and passes through the suburbs of Maidstone. Downstream from here one can expect to meet commercial traffic, mainly tugs with strings of barges for the paper mills. There is a public landing place just below Maidstone bridge, and moorings above the bridge, with all the facilities of a large town nearby. The church and remains of the Archbishop's Palace are surrounded by pleasant gardens, and worth a visit.

There are snags on the opposite bank, near the market.

Below Maidstone Bridge, the river is unpleasant for a mile or so—"Gasworks Reach"—until the last factory, which smells pleasantly of toffee, is passed. Mooring is possible among willows or to the towpath side.

Half-a-mile above Allington lock there is a Marina, with good facilities for hauling out by crane or for launching from a slip. It is apt to be crowded at weekends. We found the toilet facilities a particular boon. Allington Castle is a retreat run by the Carmelite Friars, and is private. It is rather a long walk on either side of the river to the nearest public transport into Maidstone. It is usually possible to moor at the Marina or to the opposite bank, above the Malta Inn.

If passing downstream through Allington lock, it is best to arrive there well before high water (which is approximately two hours after H.W. Dover). It is ten miles from here to Rochester, and the first place one could safely moor or leave a yacht is just above the M.2 bridge (Cuxton) or just below it (Medway Yacht Basin, Borstal) with access near high water only. Landing is possible at all states of the tide at Wouldham, seven miles from Allington, but the river between Halling and Allington dries out completely at low water.

There is 10ft. headroom under Aylesford Bridge, which is ancient. A pipe over the river at Reed's paper mill near Snodland is 27ft. above water—room enough for a Silhouette. It would be possible to sail all the way from Aylesford to Rochester, but there are barges to avoid and motoring is probably safer.

We covered this section of river early one morning, leaving Allington Marina at 07.15 and we were on moorings near Rochester by 10.00. The headroom under Rochester bridge is stated to be 22 - 40ft., depending on the state of the tide, but the ebb is swift, and it would be better to go through within an hour or two of High Water with the mast down. We were lucky (?) in that the seamen's strike was on at the time, and there was little commercial traffic above or below Rochester.

Below Rochester Bridge *East Coast Rivers* (Yachting Monthly) or *The Pilot's Guide to the Thames Estuary* is a help. Stanford's chart of the Medway and Swale covers this area well, and has recently been revised.

We had made previous arrangements to pick up a mooring off Upnor, where we were made very welcome. The club has excellent facilities—clean landing, telephone, hot showers and shops nearby. It is feasible to land at Gillingham and Strood piers higher up, but I hesitate to recommend leaving a yacht there unattended.

We spent one night in Sharfleet creek, an excellent sheltered anchorage, and another on a public mooring off Queenborough, before making our way up river into the non-tidal reaches again.

Hartlepool to Sunderland and Back

By R. T. Swarbrick

IN 1965 several cruisers, including Silhouettes, sailed from Hartlepool to Sunderland during Bank Holiday weekend (August) to take part in Roker Regatta, which is run by Sunderland Yacht Club and the Wear Boating Assn. Four Silhouettes raced back to Hartlepool, distance about $17\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and this was won by Allen Norris in *Renette*. The Silhouette owners concerned ultimately became founder members of the Tees Bay Group. (As previously reported, Allen has transferred his affections to a larger boat, and his Silhouette is no longer with us). The sail to Sunderland and back was voted a success, and as Roker Regatta is a well established event, it was decided to

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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.

include the trip again in the Tees Bay Group's programme for 1966.

Various people were canvassed, but because of Hartlepool Yacht Club's regatta, arranged for the same time, annual holidays and family commitments, it looked as though the fleet for this trip was not going to be as large as in 1965. However, the usual preparations were made by those interested but, on the Saturday afternoon, the starting time being set to get the best of the tide, only the Silhouettes *Smarty* (Barry Snaith) and *Blue Goose* (Dick Swarbrick) assembled to weigh up the position. Ken Mark's *Atalanta Hansa* had just arrived back from the Solent (this time by road) and was still on its trailer. As we consider *Hansa* to be something of a *Mother Protector* when we are on a passage, and as the wind was force 4/5 south-east, and had been for some days, kicking up a short, choppy sea, we decided against starting, and to wait until Sunday, when *Hansa* would be ready. Also, there was a chance that we should be joined by other boats: the weather might improve too! Barry had his wife and two children with him, and it

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>Hon. Sec. 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. Brian Heaney, Lower Lee School, Beaconsfield Road, Liverpool 25.</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>

was considered prudent not to start with such a crew in the prevailing conditions.

Sunday came with no change in the weather or sea, but as the *Atalanta* was now back in commission (it is surprising what can be done with even a large boat specifically designed for trailing, quick launching and rigging) it was decided to "have a go," the weather reports promising some decrease in the wind force. So *Hansa* and *Blue Goose*, joined by the *Silhouette Dandy Boy* (Maurice Archer) left Middleton Harbour (Hartlepool) at 15.30 hrs, high water being at 14.29. We were thus assured of getting a good push from the north-going stream which starts about 2/2½ hrs. after high water. The crews in addition to the owners were: *Hansa*, Jim Whybrew; *Blue Goose*, Michael Cooper; *Dandy Boy*, Clem Holley and his son. *Hansa* also had Maurice's and Clem's wives as passengers.

As the wind was still Force 4 plus, and easterly, the Silhouettes had 3 rolls in the main and a small jib hoisted. At sea, we consider it easier to shake out reefs than to put them in! The sea was lumpy, and it was a wet beat out to the Heugh (promontary at Hartlepool), but as we squared away northwards with a free wind, making the passage a broad reach, life became easier and a roll was shaken out.

This part of the coast is particularly well endowed with conspicuous landmarks, albeit of an industrial nature, but from a navigational point of view, easily picked out and identified. They are

chiefly pithead gear on the series of coastal collieries, coal washery towers and high chimneys. These make good substitutes for the lighthouse, windmill and church tower of the navigational textbooks—perhaps better! At 17.30 hrs. when Blackhall Colliery was abeam, we were able to shake out the remaining rolls in the main. Even then, we had sailed 4 miles in the preceding hour, and Easington Colliery, Seaham Harbour Entrance, with lighthouse (!), were duly passed. As we approached Sunderland, the sea became more choppy, and it was quite bumpy going over the bar into the harbour, no doubt because we were getting wind over tide, which was now ebbing.

The *Atalanta* and *Dandy Boy* had gradually pulled away from *Blue Goose*, and were at moorings when the latter arrived. They had however done a bit of motoring on the way, whereas *B.G.* had sailed the whole distance, from mooring to mooring, her time being $4\frac{3}{4}$ hrs. for the $17\frac{1}{2}$ miles, giving an average speed of 3.7 knots. It is interesting to see the effect of the tidal stream. Approximately hourly checks from land transits showed the following speeds in knots:- 3.10, 4.0, 4.65, and 4.1.

Although we on *Blue Goose* had had flasks of tea and soup, plus sandwiches and cake, we were ravenously hungry and after snuggling down, a quick "frying pan" act with eggs and bacon, followed by cake and washed down with tea was much enjoyed. We then had our usual carousel with our friends in the Sunderland Yacht Clubhouse and ultimately retired to our bunks, where we had no difficulty in enjoying a good night's sleep.

Monday dawned much overcast, with, if anything, an increase in the wind force, the sea was still rough and indeed the long course for the larger cruisers in the regatta was abandoned. We sat about waiting to see if there was to be an improvement in the weather, but there was no sign of this. We ultimately decided to go outside and see what it was like. We all motored out of Sunderland's North Dock at 14.30 hrs. (too late to get much help from the tide) with the intention of motor/sailing. Unfortunately, *Blue Goose's* engine cut out when she arrived at the estuary of the Wear which forms the entrance to Sunderland, and it could not be started. *Hansa* threw her a line as she went past, and this was gratefully made fast. It was a hectic tow over the bar, and *Blue Goose* was glad to be clear of it and free from the tow line. It was decided to attempt to sail a course in the direction of Hartlepool and to see how we got on. Meanwhile, *Hansa* and *Dandy Boy* continued motor sailing and were soon well ahead. With her engine on, *Dandy Boy* seemed to be doing a speedboat stunt—at times we could see much of her bottom as she leapt from wave to wave. Meanwhile *Blue Goose* plugged on, making very slow progress. After a couple of hours, we had only made good about 4 miles, and the wind had veered and was heading us. We made a couple of boards off Ryhope Dene, the while we tried to get the engine started—without success—but we made little or no headway on our course. (The trouble with the out-board was found later to be because of too much oil in the petrol).

However the wind continued to veer, and we were able to make a little progress towards Seaham Harbour. By this time our companions were out of sight. At the rate of progress we were making, we were most unlikely to make Hartlepool in daylight, and a decision had to be made. The time was now 5.58, when the B.B.C.'s shipping forecast for the Tyne said wind southerly Force 6/7 increasing. It was a case of "Can we get into Seaham Harbour safely or should we run back to Sunderland?" As it was rather less than half ebb, we judged that we could go into Seaham. In the event, we had a broad reach into the outer harbour, through a big swell on the entrance, but once inside we sailed easily into the inner harbour. We got a line onto a ladder, and the harbour master on duty (who was quickly on the scene) said it was too late to go through the lock into the south dock, and that we should go into the north, tidal dock—if we could get our mast down. (There is a water pipe across the entrance for feeding a crane which operates on the enclosing wall!). We managed to get the mast down easily enough, and then paddled—yes, paddled—her through into calm and well sheltered water where we tied up alongside a fishing coble and snugged down. The owner of the coble was very helpful, and by good fortune was going by car to Hartlepool! He took Michael there to report to Ken and Maurice our whereabouts, while I telephoned the Hartlepool Coastguard to let him know also, so that he could, if necessary tell inquirers that we were safely in port. By the time I had done this and finally tidied up *Blue Goose*, Michael was back with his car to take the loose gear—and the owner—back home.

We heard later that *Hansa* and *Dandy Boy* had had a very rough and wet trip home, and were glad to be inside. They were, of course, very relieved to hear that we were also inside.

It is well known that Silhouettes are difficult to sail to windward in a blow, and we found that this was aggravated by a short steep sea, which seems to stop them dead. However, in spite of this, *Blue Goose* rode the seas splendidly, and although we got some spray over the foredeck, it was only once that solid water slopped over the side and into the cockpit.

Blue Goose completed the journey from Seaham Harbour to Hartlepool on the following Saturday, when another member of the Cooper family, Peter, took over the crew's job. The seas had gone down, and the wind was round to westerly, that was off the land, but was still Force 4 plus. This at least gave us a flat sea inshore. Before leaving, I 'phoned the Hartlepool Coastguard, and gave him our sail number, course and time of leaving.

Blue Goose was on the mud when we arrived, but she soon floated. We paddled her out of the north dock and tied up under the lee of a high wall, where we re-stepped the mast. We got away some four hours before high water, so that we should again get the benefit of the tide. Two rolls were in *Blue Goose's* main for the run out of harbour, and we found that after half an hour, another was needed, as the wind was increasing and blowing the tops off the waves.

Nevertheless, we were having a slashing and enjoyable sail on a broad reach, and, as the tidal flow increased, so did our speed. It took 2 hours 20 minutes to sail from Seaham to Heugh, a distance of 11 miles on our course, giving a speed of about $4\frac{1}{4}$ knots. At one time, having the full benefit of the tide (about 1 knot) it was estimated that we were sailing at nearly 6 knots. By the time we approached the Heugh, the wind had increased to Force 5, and was backing south west. After the lookout at the Coastguard station there had indicated by lamp that he had checked off our arrival, *Blue Goose* shaped her course into Tees Bay and had a hard beat into Middleton Harbour and her mooring. During this time, we took aboard much spray and this was by far the wettest part of the whole trip. Incidentally, it took us 25 minutes to do this last mile. The total distance sailed on this part of the trip was $12\frac{1}{4}$ miles from mooring to mooring, and this gave an average speed of $4\frac{1}{2}$ knots.

The trip as a whole had been a hard one; in retrospect however it had its enjoyable moments. Safe arrival at the various ports, after the uncomfortable sailing, the fine sail from Seaham, the talk of sailing and boats with members of another club were points of much satisfaction. Above all, there was the increase in experience and the growth of confidence in the performance of the Silhouette.

North West Group

By Brian Heaney

THE Annual General Meeting of the N.W. Group was held in Chester on Sunday morning, January 29, and was well attended by members from all over the area.

The chair was taken by the retiring Commodore Ken Lingard, and the minutes of the previous meeting were read by George Smith, the Hon. Secretary. George pointed out to the members present that the activities of the past two years had been seriously affected by his illness, and expressed the wish that the Group should now re-form itself into the active unit that it had formerly been. He also wished to retire from the secretarial post, and at the election of officers immediately afterwards Ken Williams, of Port Dinorwic, was elected Commodore, with Brian Heaney as Secretary. A vote of thanks was carried to both the retiring officers for their services.

A large number of matters relevant to forthcoming activities of the Group were discussed, and one of the most interesting points was the obvious wish of those present to revive the fleet based on the Gazelle near Beaumaris, as a group operating primarily for those members who were not attached to any sailing club, but who wished to take part in cruises etc. with others of similar interests. Alun Pritchard was elected Fleet Captain, and undertook to form a programme for the forthcoming season, to be circulated later to members of the N.W. group as a whole.

Any new owners interested in the Group, or indeed old ones

reviving their interest, should get in touch with the Secretary, Brian Heaney, Lower Lee School, Beaconsfield Road, Liverpool 25 who will be only too glad to give any help possible.

South West Group

THE SW Group held a birthday party on February 7 for its Commodore, Bill Spurrell, who celebrated his 90th (repeat 90th) birthday the next day, February 8. On behalf of the Group, the chairman, Mr. R. Thorne, presented him with a framed photograph of his boat, and Cyril Guscott, newly elected Commodore of the SOIA, presented him with a pair of silver cuff-links from the Association. Mrs. Spurrell was presented with a bouquet.

Responding, Bill Spurrell recalled that when he was a boy he had seen the Royal Navy *under sail* in Plymouth Sound.

A very large number of members and friends attended this party, and the food provided by the ladies was magnificent.

A wonderfully happy spirit prevails in the SW Group, and I'd like to thank everyone who helped with this party of ours. It was particularly nice to see Vic England in circulation again. Our visitors to Plymouth this year can be sure of a warm welcome. The SOIA may have a secretary who thinks he can foretell the weather, but we have a committee and members who can arrange a first-class welcome! —ERNIE SWEET.

Gossip column

By Ron Hunt

AS this is the first time this column has appeared in the *Journal* it must of necessity be brief. The sort of news I should like to bring to you is that of general goings on in the Association in the hope of keeping everyone in touch with everyone else. My sources of information are strictly limited at present, and so I appeal to all members to send me any snippets that may come to mind as often as possible for a gossip column cannot run without them. What I want is news of members buying new boats, or selling their boats and giving up sailing for whatever reason, marriages, births holiday plans and so on. In fact, all the usual stuff of a gossip column. So, please, everybody send me whatever you can. The first pinch of gossip this month is my election to Associate Members Representative for which I say once more thank you. I only hope I can equal Ernie Large's work in the past.

* * *

I hear that one or two members are having a change of boat this year. Mervyn Beecham of the SE Group has sold his Silhouette and bought a Vivacity, and although they have a thriving owners' association of their own I hope we shan't lose his support. I also heard that Harry Turner from Portishead has sold his Felicity *Santa Clara* and has a new Kingfisher 20 on order. I know that all our members will join me in saying to Eddie Coxell our Librarian a hearty "Good luck

mate" on his return to work after a long illness. Tom Chalcraft is now the owner of a Vivacity, having sold his *Mistress M* and if my information is correct he is also local secretary of the Vivacity Owners' Association in the SE. Mervyn Beecham has one of the new Silver Century for his Vivacity, and he has promised to let me try it on *Spray Dancer* this season, for my Century Plus just doesn't push a boat like mine at a decent speed. Perhaps the extra couple of horses will make all the difference.

* * *

Les Luck of the Pin Mill Club has sold his Silhouette *Jenny Wren* and has a new glass fibre Kestrel on order from the East Coast Yacht Agency. I had hoped to see Les at the AGM to hear his news for he is a bit off the beaten track for meeting other Association members. A few members may remember Les Luck's crew Peter from the 1965 Rally. He is now training as an RAF pilot. He and Mike, who sailed with me throughout last season, have kept in touch by letter when they think of it.

* * *

Going through my list of members I find that the Associate members have at least 80 boats in 35 classes and I know there are others that I have no record of. In view of this and to assist in compiling an up-to-date list would all the Associate members please drop me a card with the details of name and address, sail No., class, name of boat and home port.

Abersoch Fleet

JEFF WALSH, of 33 Broad Lane, Hale, Cheshire, is forming an Abersoch Fleet within the North-West Group. Abersoch is perhaps best known as a centre of Dragon sailing. It is a good place, with fine beaches, and deep water moorings, and it would be a fine centre for Silhouettes. Will anyone interested in sailing from Abersoch please get in touch with Jeff Walsh as soon as possible?

Squalls in the Solent

By Michael J. G. Cooper

THERE are always squalls in the Solent in August. At least, there have been in the years that *Morella* (SII 859) has been moored in Hamble River. They come down out of the west on an otherwise fine day and for a few minutes the wind howls, the waves rise, and you can only distinguish between sea and sky because in the latter the water is travelling horizontally.

Two years ago we tried to run before the storm under full sail in the hope that it would soon pass. It did, but not before we had breached and been knocked flat—the only time the burgee has ever been in the sea while still at the top of the mast. Luckily we did not fall out, and *Morella* righted herself so quickly that there was not even time to feel frightened.

Last year I knew what to expect, and when the storm approached

sent the oilskinned crew below, hove to, and waited for it. As before it struck with great fury; visibility dropped abruptly, and the rain bouncing up off the waves mingled with the blown spray to give a strange mistiness to the sea's surface so that the only other boat in sight appeared to be sailing on an ocean of steam.

One Sunday in August this year there was a good SW breeze of about Force 3, and the morning tide set eastwards towards Spithead. Frank, whose sailing was limited to a few trips in *Morella* and John, his neighbour, who had never sailed before, arrived early and we decided to abandon the favourite western Solent and head east instead. Twenty miles away was the Nab Tower, and this was our objective.

For three and a half hours we sped eastward in the sunshine, past Lec-on-Solent, Portsmouth, the Spithead fort and so out into open water with nothing but the Nab ahead of us, a pencil standing on the horizon. The sea was becoming choppy, but we managed to lunch off sandwiches and goulash without too much difficulty. The Isle of Wight lay astern, the Nab only about three miles ahead, when someone noticed an ominous black cloud over Portsmouth. Discretion being the better part of valour (anyway, it was getting rather late, and we were a long way from home) we agreed to leave the Nab for another day and started to beat back to the Solent.

That storm missed us, but it did not come alone. The second hit as we tacked a couple of miles off Langstone Harbour. We reefed quickly to the first batten, and *Morella* ploughed ahead magnificently. To port we glimpsed a larger boat under power wallowing uncomfortably, to starboard a yacht with her jib streaming horizontally from the masthead. John, who had retired to the cabin, was invisible but for a white hand clenched on the hatch coaming—afterwards he denied that he had been praying for deliverance, but we were not convinced! On deck, once Frank and I saw how well *Morella* was behaving, we found it wet, windy and exciting.

We went about and stood across towards Bembridge as the wind eased, and by the mournfully whistling Warner buoy shook the rolls out of the main. The next treck brought us through the Spithead forts and almost to Portsmouth before we had to reef again as the third squall struck—by now we were really enjoying ourselves and sat laughing like a trio of demons at our ludicrous appearance, the guests wrapped in old macintosh coats, the skipper in his yellows, and all dripping with rain from every appendage.

Storm followed storm. We had plenty of warning and soon got into the routine of reefing moments before each one arrived and shaking out the rolls as soon as it was past. Finally, in Southampton Water the last one hit us. This time the wind was not quite so strong, and the rain no more than a light drizzle. We did not reef, but sat out dinghy fashion, racing along at a most unexpected speed for a Silhouette. Then as the sun came out we saw a double rainbow, not far away as rainbows usually are, but striking into the water a few yards astern. It set the seal on a wonderful day's sailing in the sort of weather which suits a Silhouette best.

New members

WE have pleasure in welcoming the following new members: J. Carby-Hall, 25 Westfield Oval, Yeadon, Yorks. 1894 *Tonker*, Lakes; W. Rains, Lansur, Welcomes Road, Kenley, Surrey. 2022 *Vee*, Newhaven; J. A. R. Jackson, 13 Home Farm Gardens, Walton on Thames, Surrey. 1811 *Amica*, Solent; R. A. Russell, Mulberry Cottage, St. Mary, Jersey, C.I. *Milgi II*; A. G. Taylor, 10 Huntingdon Gardens, Plymouth; F. Chinery, 33 Knights Way, Hainault, Ilford, Essex. 985 *Oliver Twist*, Blackwater; R. A. Gibson, West Newham Farm, Belsay, Northumberland. 1825 *Droque*, Lakes; A. R. Ashton, The Knoll, Caernarvon, N. Wales. 1341 Calyso II, Port Dinorwic; I. J. Llewellyn, 114 Rowner Road, Gosport, Hants. 1807, Gosport; V. M. Howell, Cumberland, 90 Ringwood Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset. *Capella*; P. R. Ewer, Tudordene, 122 Mill Lane, Hurst Green, Oxted, Surrey; J. R. Telform, 19 Greenbank Terrace, Plymouth. 1058 *Dingle*, Plymouth; W. P. Parry, The Pharmacy, Llanfairpwll, Anglesey. 655 *Chota*, Menai; A. A. Slater, 15 The Crescent, Irby, Wirral, Cheshire. 171 *Ondine*, Hoylake.

Letters to the Editor

NAMES.—In case it may be helpful to those members who want to “do the right thing” by the repeated exhortations we have had to *show our names clearly*, I would mention how *Spray* dealt with the problem. We appealed to a maker of car number plates and found that a firm called Car Plates Ltd., Manchester 15, are prepared to emboss names on alloy, of the shape of car front plates, with the letters black, and the background white enamel. These plates are easily fixed to the cabin sides just aft of the windows with four brass screws which are taken out for the annual varnishing of the woodwork. The appearance is neat, clear and yet not ostentatious and the cost about 12/- per plate. Ask for a pro-forma invoice and the plates should arrive by return. Of course if you’ve got a name like that grand old boat *The Friend of All Nations* or *The Marquis of Anglesey* the idea is a non-starter but I notice that most *Silhouettes* have names to suit their size.—John R. Tod, Cherry Cottage, Over Peover, Knutsford, Cheshire.

SILHOUETTE MARK III.—At the Annual General Meeting of the N.W. Group, a feeling of indignation was strongly expressed that the *Silhouette Mark III* was to be built under the name *Silhouette*, as it was, in fact, a completely different boat, and did not conform to class measurements which were based and accepted on the *Silhouette Mark II*. The meeting felt that utilising the same name would only cause confusion, in that a new owner might find that his boat was not acceptable in *Silhouette* racing, and that it would have been far better for the boat to have been re-named, as indeed the *Felicity* seems to have been in its reincarnation as the *Hurley 20*. The *Mark II Silhouette* is a well tried and tested boat, and has formed its reputation largely on these qualities for family cruising. This may also apply to the *Mark III*, while as yet we do not know. The view was also expressed that in putting forward the *Mark III Silhouette* under the same name it was an attempt to cash in on the past success of the *Mark II* and this was considerably resented. The members in this Group still hope that it is not too late to reconsider the renaming of this boat to, say, *The Hurley 17*, or such other name as would clearly distinguish it from the *Mark II Silhouette*.—Brian Heaney, Hon. Sec. N.W. Group.

SMALL ADVERTISEMENTS

RATES: SOIA members announcements, 3d. a word (minimum 2s. 6d.) Trade notices 1s. a word (minimum 10s.). Please send payment with advertisement.

FOR SALE. *Silhouette* 1960 2 berth, foam cushions, Calor cooker, lights, compass, 5 sails, trailer, pulpit, toilet, jib and main jam cleats. Twin back stays, cover, CQR anchor and chain, double sized rubbing strake. Superb condition. N. F. Field, 52 Cumwhinton Rd., Carlisle. Tel. 27732.

FOR SALE. *Debutante* 1963, 21ft. bilge keel, 4 berth, full suit Terylenes (tan), roller reefing, pulpit, life-lines, Blake toilet, sink, cooker, Carefully maintained. £600. Savage, 8 Hamilton Gardens, Felixstowe. Tel.: 3948.

FOR SALE. Full set stainless steel rigging with bottle screw *Silhouette II* (Wood Mast). As new—£5. Prout folding dinghy. Excellent condition—£10. Hopkins, 24 Ffriddoedd Road, Bangor, N. Wales.

FOR SALE. *Silhouette II* Glassfibre 3 berth, anchor, roller reefing, toilet box, boom tent cover, alloy mast and boom, Seagull century with clutch, Terylene sails, Prout dinghy, trailer with lighting. Hardly used last two seasons, stored under cover. £475. Knaresborough 2484.

FOR HIRE. *Vivacity* 20 foot 4 berth yacht for hire near Palma, Majorca. Beach side luxury apartment available nearby. £25 each weekly. 32 Flemming Avenue, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

WANTED. *Silhouette II* genoa. Preferably tan but not essential. Simpson, 159 Clapham High Street, S.W.4. Tel.: Mac 5661.

FOR SALE. *Silhouette* No. 1082, 2-3 berth, Terylene sails, pulpit, jamming cleats, bunk cushions, cockpit cover, roller furling, other extras. Excellent condition. £250. Telephone BURCH HEATH 56353. Seen Bosham.

WANTED. *S.H* storm jib, genoa, Campari dinghy. Brown, 5 Bridge Frome, Somerset.

FOR SALE. *Silhouette II*, 92, 2-3 berth, Calor cooker, Dunlopillo cushions, extra lockers, new mast and sails, winches, compass, pulpit, navigation and interior lights, boom tent with windows, cockpit cover, wintered in garage, trailer with rollers and winch. £300. Bailey, Elmhurst Cottage, Welby Lane, Melton Mowbray, Leics. Melton Mowbray 3023 after 7 p.m.

Cruise to Calais

ARRANGEMENTS for this admirable adventure continue almost to the point of completion and all that is now required is a good assembly of owners and crews at Dover on May 27. Launching is to be by crane into the Wellington Dock on Friday afternoon, May 26, and Reg Wood is handling this as the “on the spot representative” at Dover. Further details of the cruise are available from Brian Heaney, Lower Lee School, Beaconsfield Road, Liverpool 25.

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