

The Silhouette Owner

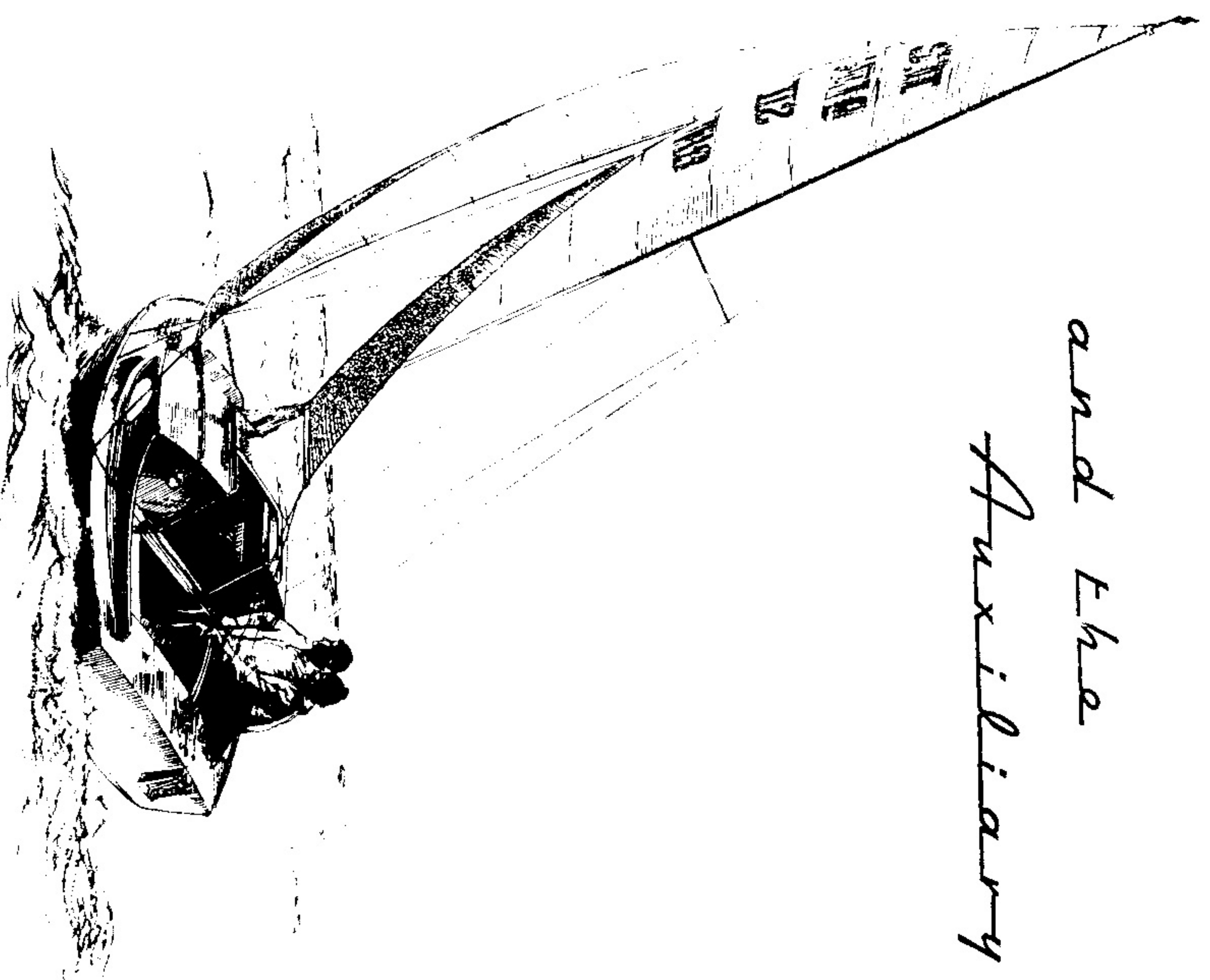
*The Journal of the
Silhouette Owners' International Association*

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

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We are grateful for excellent news reports from the North-West, Tees Bay, and Coniston Groups. Owing to lack of space, these will appear next month.

Cruising under Sail

WE hope that many thousands of sailing people read Herbert Firth's excellent letter in *The Sunday Times* about Silhouette cruising. Herbert was concerned primarily to kill those ancient myths about Silhouettes—that they can't sail to windward, can't make progress in a chop, can't get anywhere, etc., etc., etc. For ten years Silhouettes have taken their crews safely on long voyages in the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Baltic, the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, the Tasman Sea, and practically everywhere else where there is enough water to meet a draught of 1ft. 9 ins. Year by year Silhouettes make dozens of passages across the Irish Sea, the Channel and other tricky waters; but ancient prejudices remain. Most are based on sheer ignorance, but an element of snobbery is also involved: a small boat cannot be much good because she is small. Maybe those who built enormous valve radio sets in the early 1930s would feel the same about transistors—but (technologically, at any rate) the world does progress a little. A decade of sea experience has proved Robert Tucker's Silhouette beyond question, and it is sad that it is still necessary sometimes to meet prejudice. Herbert Firth's letter is worth quoting: "My own Silhouette I have had for over eight years (he wrote) and during this time have cruised extensively under sail. The important thing to remember is to use the elements and not fight them. If you do this you will certainly have fun and go places. I agree that the modern small sailing cruiser is not over-cannvassed, but surely this is a point in its favour. The majority of mishaps at sea are undoubtedly caused by

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carrying too much sail." These sentences embody a whole creed of good seamanship. Use wind and tide—don't fight them. That is how the great sailors of the past used the sailing vessel to open up the world—and it is worth reflecting that the sailing vessel did more to open up the world than all other forms of transport combined. If you have a gale on the nose and a six-knot tide against you it is plain lunacy to attempt to sail: have patience, stay in port and enjoy the nearest pub. Long thrashes to windward in vile weather are good to talk about in bars, but make no sense in cruising if they can possibly be avoided. A beat in a well-bred dinghy round buoys may be fun, but the race is over in a couple of hours and you can be back in the comfort of the club. Cruising is another matter; make to windward if you have to, but unless you really *do* have to, choose a gentler course and wait for the wind to change, or change your destination for a port that the wind is fair for. Tomorrow is also a day: the time-scale of sailing is not that of catching the 8.15. And how right Herbert Firth is about the folly of wanting to carry too much canvas! It is not heroic to drive your boat under the water—it is just damned bad seamanship. Reef in time—before time, rather than too late. Your boat will be vastly safer—and go better. What does "under-cannvassed" mean? The Silhouette's working rig is ample for going places, and it carries a high margin of safety for the not-very-experienced. Add sail area and you multiply risks and strain gear. To what point? The Silhouette is a family cruiser, and thousands of families can testify to her sea-kindliness and fine passage-making qualities. Well done, Herbert. You have done a good job for all sailing folk.

Solent Group

IT is sad news that John Caulder has decided that he is unable to carry on as Hon. Secretary of the Solent Group. The South Coast and the SOLA generally owe a very great debt to John Caulder, and we should like to say Thank You for all that he has done for Silhouette sailors (and all who go down to the sea in boats). Now the Group has to find a new secretary. A meeting has been called for the purpose at the Public Hall, Emsworth, at 19.00 hours on Friday, July 5.

Secretary's notes

THESE is a very true axiom that, with a small boat, if you haven't either the wind or the tide in your favour, you get nowhere. This was brought home to us the weekend before the Spring Bank Holiday, when two Silhouettes—there should have been three, but one failed to turn up—left the upper reaches of the Crouch a little after midnight early on Saturday morning on the turn of the tide, en route for Dover and the Cross-Channel Cruise. With a steady East wind blowing, we groped through the numerous moored craft, peering through the mist and gloom, trying to define the ever-decreasing fairway, under motor. All went well for the first hour, until it was discovered that the inlet to the water cooling system on the faithful Seagull had choked up, causing the engine to run hot and lumpy. So we anchored hastily and set to work clearing the offending pipes—not the easiest of jobs to be carried out in the dark in a small cockpit! However, it was successfully accomplished, but at the cost of nearly an hour of precious tide. The wind freshened with first light, and the retarding effect could be felt with the motor doing its utmost to thrust us westward. Everyone knows that the prevailing winds come from the West, but this particular weekend, it blew steadily from the East, veering slightly South as we cleared the North East Point of Foulness Sands, by the Whitaker beacon. Some ten hours after leaving, with nearly fifty per cent of our fuel stock used, we decided that the only sensible thing to do was to turn back; which we did, and had the unusual experience of sailing to our mooring goose-winged all the way in a quarter of the time we had spent on the outward leg. So ended our attempt to join the members who did assemble at Dover the following Bank Holiday, and, as we now understand, had a wonderful weekend in Boulogne.

* * *

ICI Fibres, have produced an attractive little booklet entitled "Terylene Sails to Victory" which contains a number of famous and successful yachts that have used sails fabricated in this material for the past years, together with a series of hints and tips on cleaning and maintaining sails, as well as describing the tests and production technique for their manufacture. This is a publication that is well worth a glance through if you can get hold of a copy.

* * *

Social secretaries organising quiz competitions could include in their questions, "Which is the oldest newspaper, still published daily?" Few would know the answer; I certainly didn't until a day or so ago, when I was invited to Lloyds, to see how underwriters transact their business, for it is Lloyds who hold the newspaper record, having produced a daily newspaper for over two hundred years. Lloyds is a fascinating place to visit, to watch where four hundred million pounds worth of premiums are collected yearly, amid a wonderful collection of antiques, and relics of early seaborne commerce.

At a recent committee meeting the question of Group Finances was brought up, the suggestion being that Groups should be able to call on the National Treasurer for funds if they run short, or that the Group Treasurers should be able to claim a specified amount per head of membership. This matter was fully discussed, and it was finally agreed that while the National Treasurer was empowered to make a grant to help any newly organised Group to get on an even keel, and he would also reimburse any out of pocket expenses incurred on a national scale, such as Plymouth Week, or the AGM, it was felt that, once organised, each group should be responsible for raising the finance necessary to run any local functions. It is considered by many, that our monthly distribution of this *Journal*, the regular annual members' list, Plymouth Week, and the AGM and Party, are pretty good value for our extremely modest subscription of £1.

* * *

Why were there so many failures of gear in the early stages of the Singlehanded Transatlantic Race? Did the urge to lighten everything go beyond the bounds of safety? Or did some of the specially designed boats exceed the designers' hopes and go so fast they overstrained the fittings? All in all, it was not an impressive show by any means. Nevertheless, it was satisfying to note how many carried ship to shore RIT systems this year.

* * *

Austin Pybus who, you will no doubt remember, won the Plymouth Trophy last year, writes to tell of the experiences on the Lakes with Mark IIs, against a Mark III, which is a fin keel version. This, he says, slips through the water, points better, and generally leaves all the older Mark IIs, well behind. It is considered that if she was to be given eight points less on a Portsmouth yardstick, she would still win. Let us hope that we see more of this type at Plymouth this year, it should make interesting comparisons.—R.A.G.

From the Commodore

HAVE you ever thought what it must be like to sit, not at the helm of that lovely little Silhouette, but wondering what on earth you are going to fill the *Journal* up with this month. This is what John does every month, month after month, and all for the love of it. Talk about bricks without straw! Now come on lads, and lassies too, send in your contributions great and small and help to make the Editor's life a little easier.

The high brows among us who read the *Sunday Times* will have seen the supplement feature on sailing cruisers which featured, among others, the Silhouette, and the following week a letter which in effect said that they couldn't sail for toffee, and were no good for cruising. I was moved by all this to write a reply as, I dare say, were several others. The one that got printed was from Herbert Firth with photo-

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.

graph too (of a Silhouette not Herbert!). And a splendid letter it was—much better than mine! Well done, Herbert! If you haven't sent in that entry form for Plymouth yet it's going to cost you a bit more, but it's still well worth it for the jolliest holiday possible.

Finally, don't forget all those Logs you are going to enter for the competitions this year. They are being made NOW.—Cyril Guscott.

Calais Cruise, 1968

By BETTY DAUBREY and JAMES EDMONDS

THE Calais cruise really began back in January, when we first heard that Brian Heaney was hoping to organise another trip to foreign parts for the Silhouette Association. Plans made then culminated on Dover quayside when, after towing our Vivacity *Nik-Too* from Lincoln via London, we arrived at 10.00 hours on Friday, May 31, shortly to be

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

South-East.

Hon. Sec. Stan Morgan, 19 Philbrick Crescent East, Rayleigh, Essex.

Blackwater.

Hon. Sec. A. V. Hudson, 1a Head Street, Gold-hangar, Maldon, Essex.

Solent.

Hon. Sec. J. R. Caulder, Sellafield, Orchard Lane, Hermitage, Emsworth

South-West.

Hon. Sec. E. K. R. Sweet, 126 Ham Drive, Ham, Plymouth.

Exe Group

Hon. Sec. L. Pithers, 16 Belvedere Road, Exmouth.

Poole.

Hon. Sec. E. R. W. May, 2 The Circle, Moor-down, Bournemouth, Havys.

Bristol Channel.

Hon. Sec. J. T. Daniel, Badgers, Backwell Common, Backwell, Bristol.

North-West.

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

Wyre and Morecambe Bay. Lake District.

Hon. Sec. Miss J. Wright, 22 Arlington Avenue, Blackpool.

Coniston.

Hon. Sec. T. K. Jones, Foxton House, Lowther Street, Penrith

Midlands

Hon. Sec. David Thornton, 47 Brackenley Lane, Embay, Skipton, Yorks.

Tees Bay.

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

Scarborough.

Hon. Sec. R. T. Swarbrick, 21 Raby Road, Stockton-on-Tees.

Hon. Sec. Stephen Lushington, 3 Hetton Road, Leeds 8, Yorkshire.

joined by Brian Heaney with *Circe*, Brian Featherstone with *Tidgyppus*, Michael Weeden with *Blue Haze*, Don Smith with *Twicher*, John Clemence with *Marianne*, and K. Reader with *Pocahontas*. These were all boats complete with crews; also came K. A. Joy, E. P. Lewis, D. Barnes and A. W. Jones.

Unfortunately, some boats expected on the cruise did not turn up probably because of the unrest in France. We feel that it would have been better to have notified Brian of their hesitation to join in, rather than just to have left him in mid-air, as it were. However all boats present were quickly lifted into the water, gear stowed and crews congregated at the Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club, where they were made to feel really welcome by Ernie Large, who extended to all the generous hospitality of the Club, and threw in a few tips on the tides for good measure! How appreciative we were of both! Briefing followed, and as wind directions were unfavourable for Calais it was decided to make for Boulogne.

Saturday, June 1, at 01.30, saw us locking-out into the outer harbour, where we moored up to snatch a few hours sleep before going off at 06.15. As shepherd boat it was our duty to round up the

wayward, who were still breakfasting, shaving, starting engines or emptying buckets. Meanwhile *Circe* was already half-way over to France, and was forced to return for the prodigals! However, eventually all were under way, and we proceeded, in bright sunshine through the Western Harbour Entrance, and out to sea. Conditions were fair, winds Force 2-3, motors stopped, and we sailed leisurely for a couple of hours. Then the winds died, and from the Commodore came the order to start engines, which we did, motoring until we came into sight of Cap Gris Nez, where a fresh off-shore wind arose, giving us two long tacks into Boulogne Harbour.

For those who remember the fishy, greasy climb to set foot on French soil last year, conditions this year were a yachtsman's dream. New pontoons have been placed, enabling each boat to be berthed alongside cat-walks leading to a wide gang-plank to the quayside, and the whole panorama was one of brilliant sunshine and continental colour, with the picturesque fishing boats gaily painted, and yachts of many nationalities, the scene being made complete by the welcome cry of "Ships stores!" from the quayside. Naturally we soon availed ourselves of the opportunity to "grog up." At about this time we were joined by the Buccaneer *Spailpin Fanac* with Brian and Pauline and friends aboard.

Sunday, June 2, dawned bright and clear, and we spent it sun-bathing, sightseeing, eating and drinking with a prow round in quest of a couple of gallons of "juice." Lack of "open" petrol stations seemed the only indication that anything was wrong in the country. Families with children went down to the beach and here, we feel, is a good place to mention the children of the party who enjoyed themselves thoroughly, while adhering to the strict discipline so necessary in budding yachtsmen. It was a pleasure to have them around, plus, also the girls, who emerged each evening glamorous and immaculate and a real eye-opener for the female bit of *Nik-Too's* crew, whose first experience of full-scale cruising it was. They were indeed a fitting complement to the French scene.

Monday, June 3. Two boats sailed for home, and two for Calais, leaving *Circe*, *Twicher*, *Blue Haze*, *Spailpin Fanac* and us. We decided on a trip to Le Touquet point, about twelve miles down coast. We found a bar into the river, so moored off-beach. Two crews ventured ashore, and got a soaking. The rest of us, benefiting from their downfall, remained on board, and drank. On the return journey Brian cast his line and provided everyone with mackerel for supper.

Tuesday, June 4. We sailed up to Calais and moored in the outer basin of the harbour. Most crews were delighted to row ashore as soon as possible, and renew their acquaintance with Monique, a sentiment which, judging by their reception, was mutual. We ate and drank with no thought of the morrow, and even became involved in complex gymnastics. Somehow someone said, "Ye'll to come aboard the yawl," so, having been thrown out by Monique at about 01.30, we made our unsteady passage to the yawl. For the peace of mind of wives and

loved ones who might worry, we will gloss over the events of the next few hours—suffice it to say that Calais harbour resounded to the swing of the old sea shanties, and nobody fell in (so far as we know).

Wednesday, June 5. We spent the morning in bunks, and finally emerged to commiserate, consume black coffee and nibble a croissant (which was all most of us could face; not for us the hearty British breakfasts consumed on previous mornings!) and generally try to throw off that dehydrated left-over feeling. Even the weather changed for the worse. However, we rallied in time to visit Monique's once more, and plot the homeward course. We readily agreed to enfold in our flock and a Caprice 24 foot Sea King, whose owner turned out to be one of the original S.A. members.

Thursday, June 6. The 06.40 shipping forecast offered South Westerly winds Force 3-5, and with storm jib, and mains down to first batten, we set sail at 11.00 hours for Dover. Although storm rig was justified *Circe* and *Twicher* could have taken out two or three rolls. No doubt these pirates of the high seas had their holds stuffed with loot, or was it just Barry's weight (it certainly wasn't Roy's!). After two hours hard sailing (during which the female bit of *Nik-Too's* crew, being suitably padded, inflated, and lashed felt *rather* sick) the winds dropped, and we changed to normal rig, but had to start engines due to four foot rollers. One hour and a heavy rain storm later a beautiful wind came up, and gave us a splendid reach into Dover Harbour, Eastern entrance. We were quickly cleared by Customs, sailed into Wellington dock, and found Reg Wood smilingly supervising lifting out operations, which were carried out quickly and efficiently. We are indeed indebted to Reg, without him we would most certainly have been up the creek; so "thank-you Reg." We would also like to thank Brian Heaney for all his hard work and cheerful organisation. It was a pleasure to meet old friends and make new ones. We still have enough Dry Martini left to drink to the next time. We shall be there—will you.

South-West Group

THE race for the Weymouth Cup on June 2 had to be cancelled because of unsuitable weather. It will now take place on Sunday, July 14. The meet is at Barn Pool at 10.00 hours and racing instructions will be issued when the boats are mustered.

The SW Group is keenly looking forward to Plymouth Week, and to meeting many old and new friends. The Group Committee promises a good time to all SOLA visitors to Plymouth.

Scarborough Group

THERE have been a few changes in the Silhouette Fleet at Scarborough this year. *Tammy Norie* has departed for Southern waters, and *Moonshine's* owner has emigrated and sold her to Mr. White, who intends sailing down on the Humber. *Jennifer* has changed owners, and is now named *Interceptor*, but is still at Scarborough.

In spite of all these changes and the increasing number of larger boats appearing at Scarborough, there are 8 Silhouettes afloat this season, and several new owners have made inquiries about possible moorings. Unfortunately, there is a waiting list for yacht club moorings.

Sailing started at Easter, when there were four very good sailing days, although the wind was rather cool; the Spring Holiday weekend was brilliantly warm and sunny, although, unfortunately windless. For a variety of reasons it was not possible for any of the Scarborough Silhouettes to sail up to Whitby, as had been hoped, to meet the Tees Group. We seem to be fated never to meet—last year weather conditions were not suitable. Perhaps we will make it next year!

Letters to the Editor

IDEAS AND IMPROVEMENTS.—I was most interested to read in the May issue of the bilge pumping arrangements of the Silhouette on the Crouch. It sounds both ingenious and efficient; but is it so really necessary? My own Silhouette, *Leprechaun*, No. 984, has the standard bilge pump fitted by Hurley and which, if needed, pumps out the cabin. We have never needed to use it, although we are noted for sailing in all sorts of weather, for the boat is 100% watertight. As for the cockpit bilge, what little water in the form of spray that finds its way in is quickly removed by a sponge.

It is most interesting, however, through your columns, to read of owners' individual ideas and improvements, and I hope that we shall hear more of them. I wonder if some of the changes we have effected on *Leprechaun* would be of any general interest? Here are a few:

The first thing I did in 1962, when the boat was new, was to remove the simply abominable boom crutch. I have never liked the folding type, for they tend to fold up and slip out of their very insecure housing just when they shouldn't. In addition, access to the cabin is barred by them, since one cannot remove the splashboard at the entrance to the cabin when the crutch is in position. What I did was to fit a single support in specially made slots at the port side of the cockpit bulkhead. A saddle at the upper end prevents the boom from jumping out, and one has far more room and accessibility in the cockpit.

The next of the original fittings to go was the strop-slide, made of flexible wire for the main sheet. This inevitably caught up in the end of the tillar when going about. Instead, I bought a proper hawse-tail, which removed this problem. The next thing to go was the original position of the fore-stay. A new fore-stay fitting, right on the stem head caused much less weather-helm, and the boat seems to have gone better in consequence.

I have found, for some years, that the often agitated seas around these waters inevitably found their way through the sliding forehatch. I have built up the combing of this, and have re-built the hatch, so that it now hinges forward. No water has penetrated inside so far this year, in the wildest weather. Twin fore-stays were easy to fit, and a great boon when changing headsails.

Inside the boat, which was a three-berth version, I felt that too much space was being occupied by the very generous galley which occupied what would normally be most of the port berth; so I removed it, continuing the port berth to its full extent, and building the galley into what had once been a two-shelf cupboard on the starboard side of the main bulkhead. A two-burner Camping Gaz stove fits beautifully into the space, and a shelf with a fitted plate rack above it makes cooking easy from a much more convenient position.

The purchase of a mast-jack, fitted under the mast stanchion (in which larger holes have been cut to fit *round* the bolts at the top) now enables me to remove the stanchion when in harbour, in a few seconds.

When the boat was new, I was not entirely happy with the arrangement of the jib sheets. The purchase of a sliding adjusting sheet-leads, holes bored in the cockpit combing, and two small sheet winches leading to brass jambing cleets has given us excellent service with far less effort.

These are the main additions, although I could go on, with innumerable small changes I have made. The result is certainly a faster and more efficient boat. One last suggestion to all new Silhouette owners: I believe a genoa is a *necessity* in light airs. Nothing is more depressing than the under-canvassed Silhouette wallowing in a swell on an almost windless day!

My best wishes to you all. I shall be delighted to meet any Silhouette owners who may find their way to Jersey either by sea or on holiday.—N. C. Blomfield, 23 Seafeld Avenue, Millbrook, Jersey, Channel Islands.

HUMBER MOORING.—I am the owner of *Lady X* (SH 978) and sail as a member of the Midland Section on the Avon at Tewkesbury. For my sins, I have taken a post in the City of Leeds. Could any member or club who sail a Silhouette from a mooring on the Humber Estuary or the East Coast, inform me of an available mooring or sailing retreat that could be used for week-ends and holidays to prevent "SAIL" becoming "SALE."—J. W. Edwards, 135 Oaktree Lane, Bournville, Birmingham 30.

PLYMOUTH WEEK.—Under the list of things that should be done but never are is a letter to all members of the Committee thanking them for the wonderful time that Dave and I had at the Plymouth Rally last year. We did not compete in any of the racing, but we did join in the rest of the activities, and would like to say how magnificent the whole week was. The organisation was superb, and we do wish you all the best for the next Rally.—Evelyn Searle, 56 Manor Crescent, Stanford-in-the-Vale, Faringdon, Berkshire.

PLYMOUTH WEEK.—My wife and I will be in Plymouth the week before the Rally this year, and we should be interested in joining other club members in a cruise westward along the coast, returning in time for the start of the Rally. Would anyone interested please contact us?—F. M. Bailey, Elmhurst Cottage, Welby Lane, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

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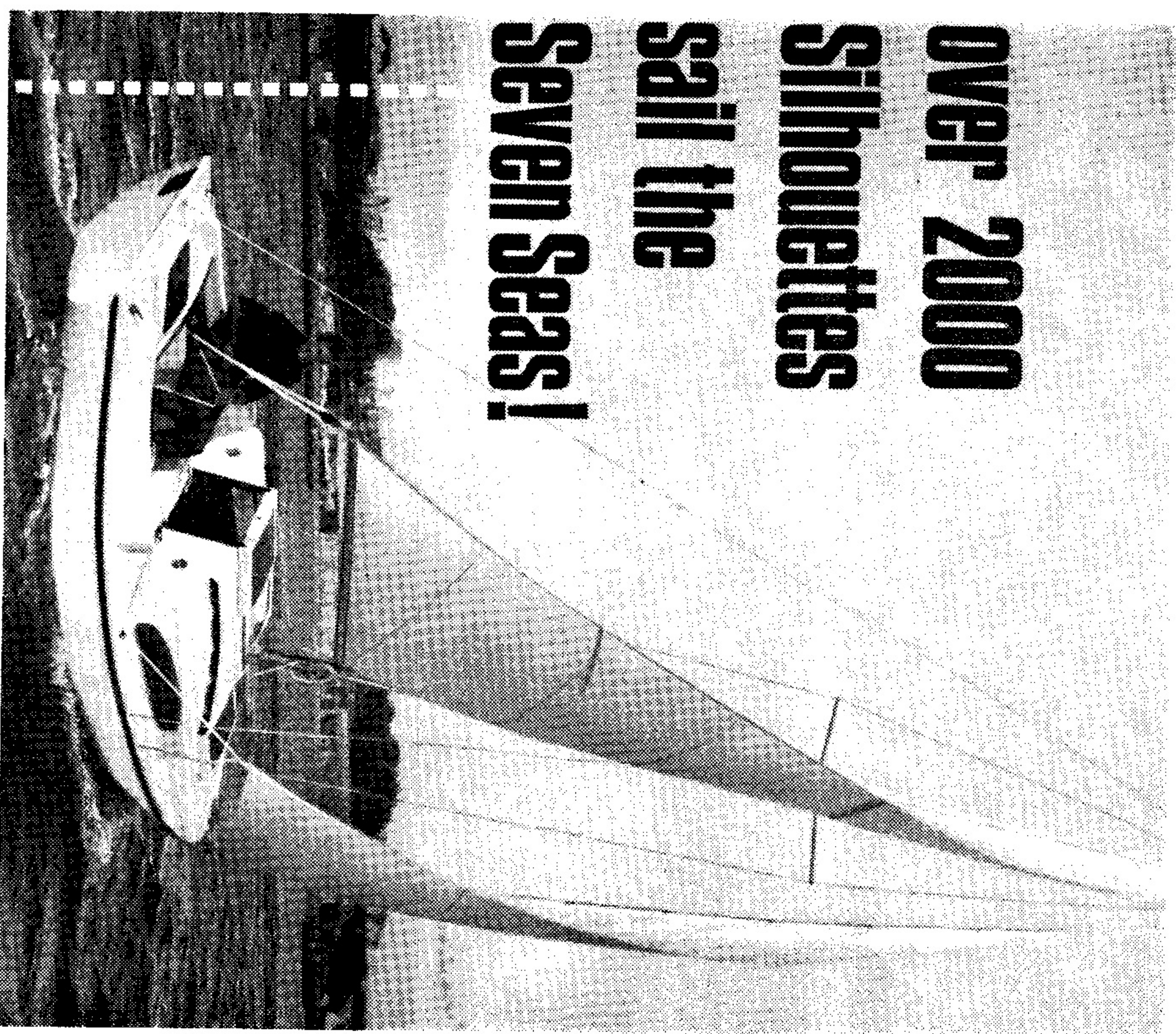
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