

The Silhouette Owner

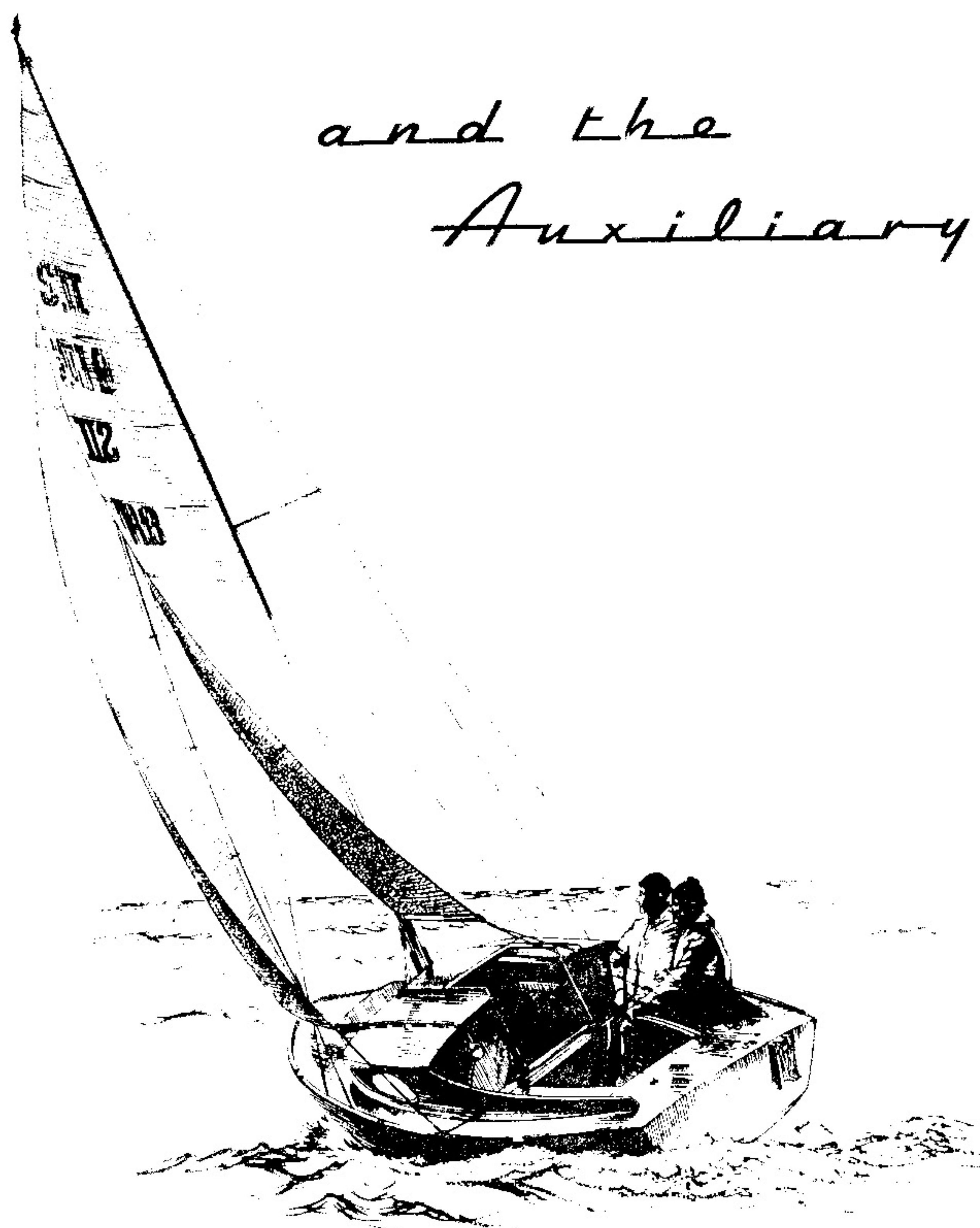
*The journal of the
Silhouette Owners' International Association*

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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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The full results of the Plymouth Week Rally will be published next month.

On to 1969

ANOTHER Plymouth Week has passed into Silhouette history, again with the happiest of memories. It is a remarkable tribute to the SOIA that its Rallies have become national events in the yachting calendar, and that our particular blend of family holiday and sailing meeting seems to widen its appeal year by year. But Plymouth Week, great occasion as it is, is but one of the leading marks in Silhouette navigation. Others are reflected in the activities of the Association's Regional Groups, in our cruises in company to Calais, to Denmark, in our annual London Party, and in a host of other events. The fabric of all this vigorous collective life is the enterprise and keenness of the Association's members. Two brothers take a six-year-old Silhouette across the Bay of Biscay to Spain, a man in New Zealand plans a voyage to Australia, up and down the coasts of Europe (and most of the other continents), on rivers, creeks and estuaries, men, women and children go out weekend by weekend to learn how to live with the elements, and to keep alive the age-old traditions of seafaring under sail. This is the SOIA. And the Association came into being to share experience, for mutual help, and mutual instruction. One of the ways by which experience can be shared is by printing the logs of voyages in this *Journal*. All logs and accounts of voyages sent to the *Journal*

are eligible for the SOIA's annual Log Competitions, and for the cups and trophies offered. Don't feel that your cruise is too modest to be entered: logs are judged in relation to the circumstances of each voyage, and a well-planned family cruise on inland waterways stands as good a chance of a trophy as an ambitious sea-crossing by experienced sailors. So please send in your logs. The closing date for the 1968 competitions is November 30, 1968. Let us have a really big entry this year, so that we can sail on into 1969 encouraged by the richness of the experience shared this year.

From the Commodore

HOW nice it was to see all one's old friends again at Plymouth, and to make some new ones as usual. In fact, what was so particularly pleasant this year was that it was impossible to tell the old hands from the first-timers after a very little while. If you haven't been to a Rally, promise yourself *now* to come to the next one, because every Rally is as successful as the last. A good few miles have slid under the keels during the last few months, and before long most of the Silhouettes will be going into hibernation. We have at least one important national winter event to look forward to though, the Boat Show and the AGM and Party. So bear Saturday, January 4, 1969 in mind.—Cyril Guscott.

Secretary's notes

MANY letters have been received about the 1968 Members' List, which, to our regret, has quite a few mistakes. We can but plead with members to bear with us and to accept our pledge that it will be much more accurate next year. The person who was to prepare the list for the printers was taken ill a week or so before press day, and it was not possible to get to his files; so a hurried list had to be compiled from scraps of information obtained from our various officers, who live in rather scattered parts of the country, and put together by a very hard-working young lady from Liverpool. If you will think for a moment of the task of collating nearly a thousand members, boats and sailing areas, you will agree that it was a truly magnificent effort to get out a list at all—and one that is, after all, over *ninety per cent* accurate.

* * *

This will be the first *Journal* received by the new two-tier postal system. While not wishing to cause any controversy in these columns about the Post Office, I do feel that the main issue has been overlooked, which is that the old "open envelope" post, which must constitute something like seventy per cent of all business mail, has gone up by thirty-three and a third per cent. So, in common with bills, invoices, statements, and circulars, it now costs an extra third to send

your *Journal*, which is a heck of an increase, whichever way you look at it.

* * *

A well-attended committee meeting was held at Plymouth on the Saturday before the Rally. The principal item on the agenda was the 1969 Rally, and it was felt by all present that it would be better to keep to Plymouth if at all possible. While it has not yet been officially confirmed, we are all of the opinion that the last week in August of next year will be the date of the Rally, and the venue will be Plymouth for the seventh time.

* * *

The only other decision of general importance was that if our President can again prevail on the National Liberal Club to accommodate us, we will be holding the Annual General Meeting and Cocktail Party there again on the first Saturday of the Boat Show, which will be Saturday, January 4, 1969. Plymouth Week could scarcely have been better; certainly the weather was kind, and all the events went off without a single hitch. So everyone decided that it was the best "Week" ever. What is the magic of Plymouth that allows over seventy boats and crews from all walks of life, to sail, eat, drink, argue, talk, and mingle together for a whole week, in the highest of spirits? Is it the more balmy atmosphere of Devon? The Cream? The Local Brew? Or the welcome from the inhabitants? I don't know, but it is real, it is there, and sympathy exists to all who have never yet had the opportunity of joining in the fun. We had two really first class compliments paid us this year. Wing Commander Beamish, who came to our dinner two years ago as a representative of the R.A.F. at Mount Batten, this year, having been moved by the Service to the Eastern Counties, hired a Silhouette, brought his charming wife and young family, and took part in everything that went on. The Deputy Lord Mayor of Plymouth, who welcomed us officially on the Monday evening, was seen in much more informal rig with his good lady, carefully toasting sausages and hamburgers round the barbeque fire at the Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club on Wednesday evening; they were also among the last guests to depart from the Dinner Dance on Friday. The one sad note of the week was that our Vice Commodore, George Smith, had to return home earlier than arranged owing to ill health. He and Paddy were sadly missed, and we all hope and pray that George is well on the road to a complete recovery by now.

* * *

We are all thrilled to read of the adventures of Roy and Alan Smith, who have so far managed to reach Corunna in Spain on the first leg of their cruise to the Mediterranean in a Silhouette *Reine Pedauque*. Many of us will remember these two young enthusiasts trailing down to Dover, sleeping aboard on a lay-by, to arrive in time to cross the Channel during the stormy period of the 1966 Whitsun

Holiday, and we look forward to reading about their further adventures, as and when they find time to put them on paper.

* * *

News from Gibraltar. Terry Bickford, reports the arrival of new "Crew-man" Richard, on July 8, complete with red hair and blue eyes, and has already received his first present from his Dad, a book on "Teach Yourself to Sail." Terry also reports that he is still getting in plenty of sailing in the blue waters round the Rock, and has recently been tuning a Hurley 18, but still yearns for a Silhouette.

* * *

Making no claims to originating the idea, I can well recommend a dead eye fitted to the tiller as near to the pivot as possible, with a "Clam cleat" screwed up nearer to the handle, for complete ease of mainsheet handling. A flick in or out secures or releases the sheet in an instant, and saves any messing about with spring loaded swivels, or herculean grips over a couple of bights round the tiller.

* * *

From the number of reports received this season of trailer troubles, perhaps a little reminder on this often neglected piece of equipment wouldn't come amiss. Why not spend an hour or two stripping down the hubs and packing with new grease—much easier and cheaper than new bearings? And a spot of paint where the rust is showing through is well worth the effort. Wires, bulbs, flashers and indicators, all need looking at, so don't forget them.

* * *

Finally, may I make another appeal? With rising costs and higher postage, we desperately need a couple more advertisements in these pages. So if you know of, or own, a firm, company or organisation, can someone be persuaded to take a little space? This is not charity, but real solid value for money, as our little magazine is read by a large number of people in all parts of the world.—R.A.G.

Letter from Corrunna

By Roy Smith

MY brother Alan and I arrived in Corunna on August 27 in our Silhouette *Reine Pedauque*. We set off from our moorings at Mudeford, in Christchurch Harbour, on August 7, bound for Brest. With a Force 4-5 North wind to drive us on, we made a very good run of 109 miles in our first 24 hours. But both of us were seasick, which made navigation rather difficult! After about 32 hours we felt a bit more seasick, so we turned South to the North coast of Brittany. At dusk we picked up the lights on the Sept Isles, downed sails and went below. Next morning we found our way into Morlaix. Because of seasickness we had had nothing to eat or drink for the two days.

From Morlaix we made a series of hops via L'Aberwrach and Lanildut to Cameret. From Cameret we set off across the Bay of Biscay to Corunna. After our experience on the Channel crossing we were a

little concerned at the prospect of about five days of such treatment, but we decided to have a go. The wind was between N. and E. all the way. The first two days were reasonably calm and sunny, and we managed to get a little food to stay down. The wind then became much stronger. A close check on our log revealed on our third day out a 24-hour run of 110-15 miles. On our final day a Force 7 was forecast, and looked every bit of it. Again this miserable seasickness took its toll, and the last night was spent lying a-hull, with sails down. Although it was rough, it was surprising how well *Reine Pedauque* took it, without too much discomfort to her crew.

The trip across Biscay took four days and ten minutes exactly. The mileage logged was 340, which wasn't bad considering that we spent nine hours lying a-hull.

From here we hope to continue, and eventually to get to Gibraltar. Perhaps we can leave *Reine Pedauque* there for the winter, and next autumn carry on into the Mediterranean, making our way back through the French canals.

Our Silhouette (*Renei Pedauque* means "Web-footed Queen") is a ply construction six years old, Sail Number 1152. We bought her in 1966, and our first time at sea was on the SOIA's cruise to Calais of that year. Next time out was a trip across to Cherbourg, up to Alderney and back to Mudeford. Apart from a few day trips up the coast that was our total practical experience. At the end of 1966 we took our Silhouette home and spent over eighteen months making extensive modifications for this trip. We are carrying a lot of weight in equipment, including 5 h.p. Seagull and fuel, a Honda generator to charge our car-battery lighting, a 15 gallon watertank under the cockpit floor, an Avon dinghy, and (to help out our £50 travel allowance) some 2 cwt. of canned food. So you can imagine that she is about 4ins. down on her waterline.

Our regards to all SOIA members.

From the South West

ERNIE SWEET writes: As you know, I have had to give up the position of Group Secretary to devote more time to the Scout Movement, but I was persuaded to stay until after the Rally. I am pleased to say that Mr. A. Kennedy, 59 The Knoll, Marsh Mills, Plymouth, has agreed to take on the Secretary's job from the end of September. I am sure that S.W. members will give Mr. Kennedy all support. The best way for everybody to keep up to date with all that goes on in the Group is to attend meetings.

Our Social and Sailing Secretary, J. Sprunt, of 68 Wakefield Road, Peverall, Plymouth, would like to hear from all members interested in a trip to London for the 1969 Boat Show. A postcard to him saying if you would like to go will help a lot.

I would like to thank all members of the SOIA for the support they have given to me as S.W. Group Secretary. I don't intend fading

away completely from the Group, and will still assist when I can. Once again, thank you all.

Coniston Group's Isle of Man Cruise By D. Thornton

WE were gathered around the fire in the Ship Inn at Coniston late last season, discussing possible events for next Spring, when the suggestion of a sea cruise was first mentioned. As can be imagined this led to much discussion, and we finally arrived at the idea of a genuine "across the sea" cruise to the Isle of Man. The final decision was that the cruise should be based at Ravenglass, and that the objective should be Ramsey Harbour, some 34 nautical miles away. A timetable was carefully worked out, and this was posted on the board in the converted lakeside boat-house, which we use as a club house at Coniston. The following four boats and crews were entered on the form as interested, and details of these are included, as they may be of interest to readers.

Rebecca—Hurley 20 having a Mercury 6 h.p. as auxiliary. She was a new boat, and the crew was Bob Milnes, Nick Hartley and Richard Kenyon.

Midnight—Silhouette II, with Seagull Century Plus. Crewed by Ian Stancliffe and Peter Asquew.

Sarah—Silhouette II, with Stuart Turner 1½ h.p. inboard. Crew, Bill and Ivy Locke, and Len, with Mandy our Yorkshire Terrier Mascot.

Tarka II—Silhouette II, with Seagull Century auxiliary. Crewed by Ian and Shelagh Pratt, David and Pam Thornton.

Everyone took part in a discussion to determine equipment carried, alternative destinations, safety equipment etc., and each boat received a written copy of the conclusions we arrived at. Also, I mentioned the cruise in the *Journal*, and this resulted in a very useful letter from Mr. J. Hampson, of Port St. Mary, who wrote that most interesting account of a cruise in the Irish Sea published in the May/July 1967 *Journal*.

So much for the preliminaries, which may seem a little long winded, but we were determined that the cruise should have the basis of much careful thought, and anyhow sitting in a good pub planning a cruise is all part of the fun. We had been informed by Mr. Hampson and others that due to the "Round the Island Race," Ramsey would be full over the weekend, and thus we planned to leave Ravenglass on Tuesday, June 4, if conditions were suitable. We spent this weekend at Coniston, Saturday being taken up by a club treasure hunt in the afternoon and barbeque in the evening. On Sunday, *Tarka* and *Rebecca* were hauled out of the lake and trailed to Ravenglass, a journey of approx. 1½ hours. Ravenglass is a small village based on the estuary formed by the confluence of the rivers Esk, Irt and Mite, and in ancient times was a Roman fort, connected by a track to Ambleside

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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.

via Hard Knot Fort. The anchorage is sheltered from the sea by large sand dunes and the beach itself is mainly sand, with some gravel giving a good firm approach to the water. The main problem is the bar across the entrance, and this will be mentioned later.

We did not launch on Sunday, and Ian and I slept soundly aboard *Tarka* on her trailer, while the others stayed at the Pennington Arms. Monday was a bright warm morning, we rigged the two boats and trailed them to the water, *Sarah* and *Midnight* arrived at midday, and with all the boats down on the beach facing the incoming tide we waited for them to float, which they did at approximately 15.30, high tide being 17.00. The day was hot and completely calm so we motored out down the estuary following Bob, whose previous boat, a *Lysander*, had been moored at Ravenglass last season. We anchored over the bar in shallow water on an absolutely flat blue sea, and rechecked our compasses for deviation, then returned up the estuary to anchor for the night.

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, 1a Head Street, Gold-hangar, Maldon, Essex.</i>
Solent.	<i>Hon. Sec. J. R. Caulder, Sellafield, Orchard Lane, Hermitage, Emsworth</i>
South-West.	<i>Hon. Sec. A. Kennedy, 59 The Knoll, Marsh Mills, Plymouth.</i>
Exe Group	<i>Hon. Sec. L. Pithers, 16 Belvedere Road, Exmouth.</i>
Poole.	<i>Hon. Sec. E. R. W. May, 2 The Circle, Moor-down, Bournemouth, Hants.</i>
Bristol Channel.	<i>Hon. Sec. J. T. Daniel, Badgers, Backwell Common, Backwell, Bristol.</i>
North-West.	<i>Hon. Sec. Brian Heaney, Lower Lee School, Beaconsfield Road, Liverpool 25.</i>
Wyre and Morecambe Bay.	<i>Hon. Sec. Miss J. Wright, 22 Arlington Avenue, Blackpool.</i>
Lake District.	<i>Hon. Sec. T. K. Jones, Foxton House, Lowther Street, Penrith</i>
Coniston.	<i>Hon. Sec. David Thornton, 47 Brackenley Lane, Embsay, Skipton, Yorks.</i>
Midlands	<i>Hon. Sec. E. G. Oldham 206 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.</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>

Everybody gathered at the Pennington Arms for dinner, after which we rang Ronaldsway for a weather forecast. This was rather discouraging as they gave Force 4-5 SW, possibly rising to Force 6 in the afternoon. We decided to ring later at 23.30. A Force 3-4 S-SSW was forecast for early morning, rising to 4-5 SW later with rain showers, but good visibility. While we all felt that this was not exactly what we had hoped for, it was more satisfactory than the earlier forecast, and we decided to go at 04.00 next morning (HTO 5.20). With the decision made, we rang the coastguard at Workington, and then walked across the sands to the boats and settled down for a few hour's sleep. We woke to the sounds of water lapping round the keels and the slight grating of the chain as the *Silhouette* swung off down tide. Everybody was up for 03.30 as Bob, Nick and Richard rowed out to the *Hurley*, which they had not slept on the previous night, since she had settled bow down. We weighed anchors at 04.00, and motored up the estuary with sails set, the weather being dull and breezy, and the water in the estuary quite smooth. Once clear of the bar we shut off motors and set sail on 270 deg magnetic (to allow for some 10 deg set to the North). However, the waves were quite large, with the wind about

Force 2-3 S, and it was obvious that the only progress we were making was Northward along the Cumberland coast, towards Calder Hall atomic power station. We started motors, and progress then commenced in a Westerly direction, although by this time the Silhouettes were leaping over the top of the larger waves with all three keels showing partly clear. The wind was freshening and the Hurley 20 was showing her port keel, but cutting through the water smoothly. Aboard *Tarka* we took two rolls in the main, not because of the wind strength, but because she was better balanced, and steering over the waves was easier. A similar effect can be brought about by better weight distribution, but we all wanted to be in the cockpit, since on the occasions we went below, the feeling was unpleasant. We were making steady progress, and after about three hours the Isle of Man appeared dead ahead, and we were all feeling O.K. again after the initial bout of sea-sickness. The other boats were all fairly close, and looked spectacular as they rose over the seas and then slid down the other side, occasionally cutting the top off the next wave, with water running over the foredeck. Afterwards everybody spoke about this, but of how safe their boats felt, and certainly aboard *Tarka* we were at no time concerned about her ability to take much more than this.

Ramsey came into view at approx. 11.00, and by this time the wind was almost due West and any progress we made was a result of the motors, which were still going strong. The seas were now much smaller, due to the effect of the Island, but progress was slow, and it was 13.15 when *Sarah* sailed up to Ramsey Pier followed shortly afterwards by *Midnight* and *Tarka*. Meanwhile the Hurley was enjoying a brisk sail back and forth across the bay.

We motored into Ramsey Harbour in company at 13.45, and were hailed by the coastguard, inquiring if we were the boats out of Ravensglass. The harbour master directed us to a snug berth against the quay just below the swing bridge, and the boats were tied up, the Hurley joining us a few moments later with only just enough water under her keels.

After we had eaten some food and were having a cup of tea we were hailed from the quayside, and to our surprise and pleasure found that Mr. Hampson had arranged his business to enable him to meet us and have a chat. He is a mine of information on the Island and its waters, and I would strongly advise any member of the SOIA considering a trip to the Isle of Man to contact him. I am sure he would be of great assistance in the planning of such a cruise.

Shortly afterwards we were invited to use the facilities of the Ramsey Sailing and Cruising Club, an offer we took up on two evenings during our stay and were made to feel most welcome by Mrs. Watt, the Club Treasurer, and other members.

Wednesday was a bright windy day and we went by way of the Manx Electric Railway to Douglas, which we thought not as suitable for sailing boats as Ramsey, due to the commercial traffic which is constantly on the move. On the way back we dropped off at Laxey,

which has a pleasant little harbour. Alongside, among the local small fishing craft, was a Magyar and a large cruising catamaran.

Back at Ramsey for the evening, the forecast obtained from the coastguard for Thursday was Force 4-5, freshening to Force 6 SW, so we decided not to go, as this would make the entry into Ravensglass difficult. Instead we spent the day at Peel, where we saw our first Silhouette on the Island.

Friday morning the weather forecast on the radio (confirmed by Mr. Hampson who had rung Ronaldsway) was Force 4 SW, steady, and on the basis of this we decided to make the return crossing. We left at 09.15, after informing the coastguard of our ETA Ravensglass of 19.30. Our course was 100 deg, and for the first hour we had a dead run in fairly smooth seas, during which time we covered two miles. Once clear of the Island the wind became fresh SW and by 11.15 we had Bahama Bank Buoy abeam, having covered the last $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles in one hour. During this period the crew of *Sarah*, who were close to us, were having great sport with their mackerel spinner—no sooner was the line out than another fish was hooked, and in a short time 8 fish were in the bucket. At this they threw the line over to us; we had exactly the same luck, and the first fish flopped overboard from my hand while I was proudly displaying it to Bill. The next one proved so elusive in the cockpit that I was in imminent danger of knocking someone overboard in my attempts to catch it, and at this the others aboard called a halt to my fishing career. Ivy later caught many more fish, which were all neatly dispatched with Bill's Stuart Turner starting handle.

Our next fix was obtained at 13.15, and this indicated our position to be 15 miles east of Ramsey and dead on course, giving us a $4\frac{1}{4}$ knot average for the last two hours, and a $3\frac{3}{4}$ knot average overall. The wind and sea were both on the starboard quarter, and the Silhouette was bounding over the water which was, by now, quite lumpy giving the boat an odd rolling, twisting motion. The sky was overcast with occasional brief showers, and visibility forward was poor, although astern the Isle of Man was still very clear. At the Bahama Bank Buoy we had passed several fishing vessels, but the sea around us was now quite empty except for the three Silhouettes, which were fairly close, and the Hurley 20 which was well ahead, and averaging about 5 knots. At this stage we had coffee and some cake, but on passing close to *Midnight* noticed Ian and Peter were obviously not in the least troubled by the rolling, as both were tucking into hot chicken dinners, and drinking canned beer. The sailing was marvellous, with a fair wind and good company all around us.

By 14.15 careful bearings on St. Bees Head to the North, Maughold Head to the West and Black Combe to the South East gave us an accurate position, 19 miles east of Ramsey and 1 mile south of our intended course, giving us an average speed of 3.8 knots. About this time the wind fell light, and the Cumberland coast disappeared in

thick cloud, but a rough fix when St. Bees appeared for a moment put us 1 mile further on. 15.30. The Isle of Man was still very clear astern. A little later the wind freshened from the SW and we started to move along quite well again, but the sea was getting bigger. We were able at 16.30 to fix our position, with bearings on Calder Hall atomic power station and Black Combe, at 23 miles out from Ramsey and about 1 mile north of our course. The sand dunes near Ravenglass became visible at about 18.00. *Midnight* was some half a mile ahead of us, *Tarka* was in signalling distance of *Sarah* and we decided to motor-sail the last few miles. As we approached the coast the waves became bigger, and at times only the mast above the cross trees on *Sarah* was visible as she sank into the troughs. Even so, the Silhouettes were lifting to each wave like corks, and we felt quite happy with things though rather concerned about crossing the bar. Well we might have been, as on getting nearer the sea was breaking over it, and the position of the opening was very difficult to detect. Remembering Bob's instructions to make for the pill box on the dunes, and then head for the village when fairly near the shore, we tore along. Unfortunately the final approach to the bar had to be made with the seas dead astern and we were a little concerned about broaching as the Silhouettes were rushing down the waves as they caught us. We watched *Sarah* surfing along with spray flying from both sides (almost like a dinghy on the plane) as she crossed the bar. Bill said he was touching ten knots, and from where we were watching he certainly appeared to be. The short time in this sea was quite tense, but it was over quite suddenly as *Tarka* shot into the calmer water of the estuary. On considering this afterwards we would probably have been wise to have trailed warps over the stern, but the Silhouettes behaved so well that we never felt this was necessary.

We sailed up the estuary and dropped the hook at 19.30 with a sense of great satisfaction. The sailing had been marvellous, and we had averaged 3.3 knots—almost the same as the East-West crossing. The Hurley 20 had arrived at the bar two hours earlier, and had to wait, during which time the crew reported some most interesting sailing.

When all the boats were safely at anchor Richard informed the coastguard of our safe arrival, and our cruise was over. We had a wonderful week, and a tired but very happy group gathered that night at the Pennington Arms.

Eastern Rivers

By Y. S. Snell

"CAMBRIDGE to King's Lynn in a Silhouette," or so we thought; but at Cambridge, to our disgust, there was no slipway, not even at a well known boatbuilder's yard, where we were offered cranage facilities at a price which did not suit our holiday pockets. So off we went again in search of a slipway, and eventually found one at a

village in Huntingdonshire, which will always remain close to our hearts: Earith. Never have we met such kind and delightful people. "Yes, certainly leave your vehicle and trailer in our pub car-park for a fortnight—no charge; just come and have a drink with us when you are in Earith," sort of thing. And "Yes, there's a public slipway just round the corner."

Heavy rains had been falling, the river was high, the current in the Great Ouse at Earith was about 5 knots, so with our Seagull giving us another 5, we soon motored to Hermitage Lock, less than a mile from Earith, and went through into the Old West River.

Then came more rain for two days, continuous, cold, soaking and miserable. But the rotten start to our holiday was only the fore-runner of what turned out to be an enjoyable, sometimes exciting and always interesting sailing holiday on the waterways of Norfolk, Cambridge and Huntingdonshire. Always there was wild life about us in one form or another; moorhens, ducks, divers, swans, all with their young; water voles and other small river animals; hares in the fields by the river and even weasels. The most mysterious of all were the "ploppers" which we failed entirely to identify. One of the joys of sailing down rivers is the silence of it all. One ghosts along without a sound, seeing the river as it really is, without the din or smell of an engine. Sailing along silently close to the bank, we continually surprised these creatures which made a "plop" of varying volume, sometimes really as though a large animal had plunged into the water. Never once did we see what caused these "plops" and finally we came to the conclusion that they may have been large basking fish.

The most memorable day of our holiday was when we sailed from Ely to Cambridge in something like a Force 6 wind (or more) with 4 rolls in the mainsail and a storm jib, really creaming through the water. Comparatively smooth water and a strong wind can really only be achieved on the river, and the Silhouette is just about at its best in these conditions: no spray over the front, no momentary pause for another wave crest, just fairly quiet, fast sailing, especially reaching or running as we were on that occasion. There are only two bridges, once properly out of Ely. For these, in view of the conditions, we had to stop before lowering sails and mast; then we were just blown through by the wind on the hull. But when we were sailing on less windy days we became quite adept at dropping mast, with mainsail rigged, just before bridges, shooting the bridges and raising mast and sail with the help of the wind. I would drop the foresail completely and undo the two side throuds forward of the tabernacle, leaving the two after one's in position. This would only leave me the forestay to deal with. I would undo the rigging screw on the forestay, hold the mast up with my hand until we got about 20 yards from the bridge, then "*Down mast*" and I would lower it as gently as possible into the crutches held in position by helmswoman (wife, first mate, bos'n, chief provisioner, cook, etc., etc.) who at the same time was steering the boat, hauling on the mainsheet, gathering in the backstay, and so on. This

performance sometimes attracted a great crowd of people to the bridges who seemed to appear from nowhere, all waiting to see what would happen when our mast hit the bridge. On one occasion a well-meaning, motherly woman could stand the strain no longer and shouted in anguish, thinking we had left it too late, "Quick, *now*," or words to that effect. A less sympathetic little girl (doubtless one of Searle's) voiced a long "Oh - - - -" of disappointment at a successful lowering of the standing rigging. "Never mind," I said, "perhaps I'll fall in," at which she perked up a bit. Happily, all was well, and we never lost our stick, sometimes more by good luck than judgment.

The only disappointing part of it all was our visit to King's Lynn, where we could find no facilities for private boats such as ours and spent a somewhat disturbed night anchored in the tideway between the channel buoys and the shore, shifting our anchorage a couple of times in the night according to the change and set of the tide. We did not plan any watches, but, surprisingly, in the morning we found that when one of us was awake the other automatically went to sleep, and so it worked out quite well, sleeping half the night each, and both of us all the morning up to half past ten, when the tide was shortly due to change in our favour for the "off." This experience proved to us that a 15 lbs. anchor of the plough type and 6 fathoms of chain are reliable tackle for a Silhouette in a tideway of some 4 knots or more.

The final problem was caused by the drop in the river level during the two weeks we had been sailing. Putting the boat in had been simple because the river had been so high that a gentle run-in over hard ground was available, but on our return the old public slipway was back in evidence, softer than it should be and shelving too much for a boat the size of a Silhouette. After trying to pull the boat out for 15 minutes or so, we detached the trailer and found that the vehicle (four wheel drive and low gears, too) had dug itself such a big hole that we could not even get *that* out on its own! The whole thing was my fault for gaily running it down an incline much too steep for a normal car. It would have been all right if the ground had not been so soft, but in those conditions it seemed to me to be gradually digging its own grave, as it were. Then helmswoman, first mate, cook, brains of the expedition, had a suggestion: "Why not drive it back still further into the river," she said, "and perhaps it will come out of the hole." On the face of it, this idea seemed like lunacy, because the angle was so steep that to drive it even further downwards into the river seemed like the first step to full immersion and "Goodbye." Anyway, we took a chance and sure enough up came the back wheels to the crest of the hole it had dug, where we stopped. We filled in the hole with bricks, reinforced the ground round the other wheels with gravel, and hey presto, out she came.

No doubt the officious bystander would say: "What a lot of problems and difficulties you set yourself by going on a holiday like that." To this our answer is: Ah, but no boredom, and, furthermore,

when you are always out in the weather what seems like a windy, cold, typically "British Summer" day to other people may often seem like a dry, bright, cheerful sailing day for the Silhouette sailor.

Letters to the Editor

CONFIDENCE.—I was very interested to read in the *Journal's* comments on Herbert Firth's letter to *The Sunday Times*. I was put off from buying a Silhouette for three years because of ill-informed comments by someone I thought to be well-informed. I was given the usual guff: "painfully slow," "won't go to windward in a sea," etc., and furthermore, I was told that after being used to racing dinghies I would soon be bored stiff.

I finally decided to take the plunge towards the end of the 1966 season, and I must say I have been more than satisfied with my little ship. The incident which confirmed my confidence in the boat happened during the Spring Bank Holiday last year, when I was overtaken by a vicious thunder squall about two miles off Clacton. It lasted for about half an hour, and I let everything fly and let the boat look after herself while I took in the genoa and reefed the mains—I estimated the wind strength at least Force 7. Although a short, steep sea built up very quickly, she behaved perfectly, and gave me no cause for anxiety. Moreover, although she had been shipping it green over the foredeck at times, I found very little water in the bilge.

I have had some experience sailing chartered cruisers, 7 and 10 tonners, and while the Silhouette has not the speed or power of her bigger sisters, provided that one is prepared to accept her for what she is, one can only judge her to be a good little craft.

Before closing I would like to congratulate you on the excellent *Journal*, which I look forward to receiving each month.—H. S. Gillingham (proud owner of *Pago*), 10 Sweyne Road, Swanscombe, Kent.

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. Large Silhouette genoa in Terylene, good condition. £12. Iles, 13 Holland Way, Broadstone, Dorset. Broadstone 4651.

FOR SALE. Silhouette II, excellent condition, registered. Stuart Turner, trailer, etc. £360. Marlow 4286.

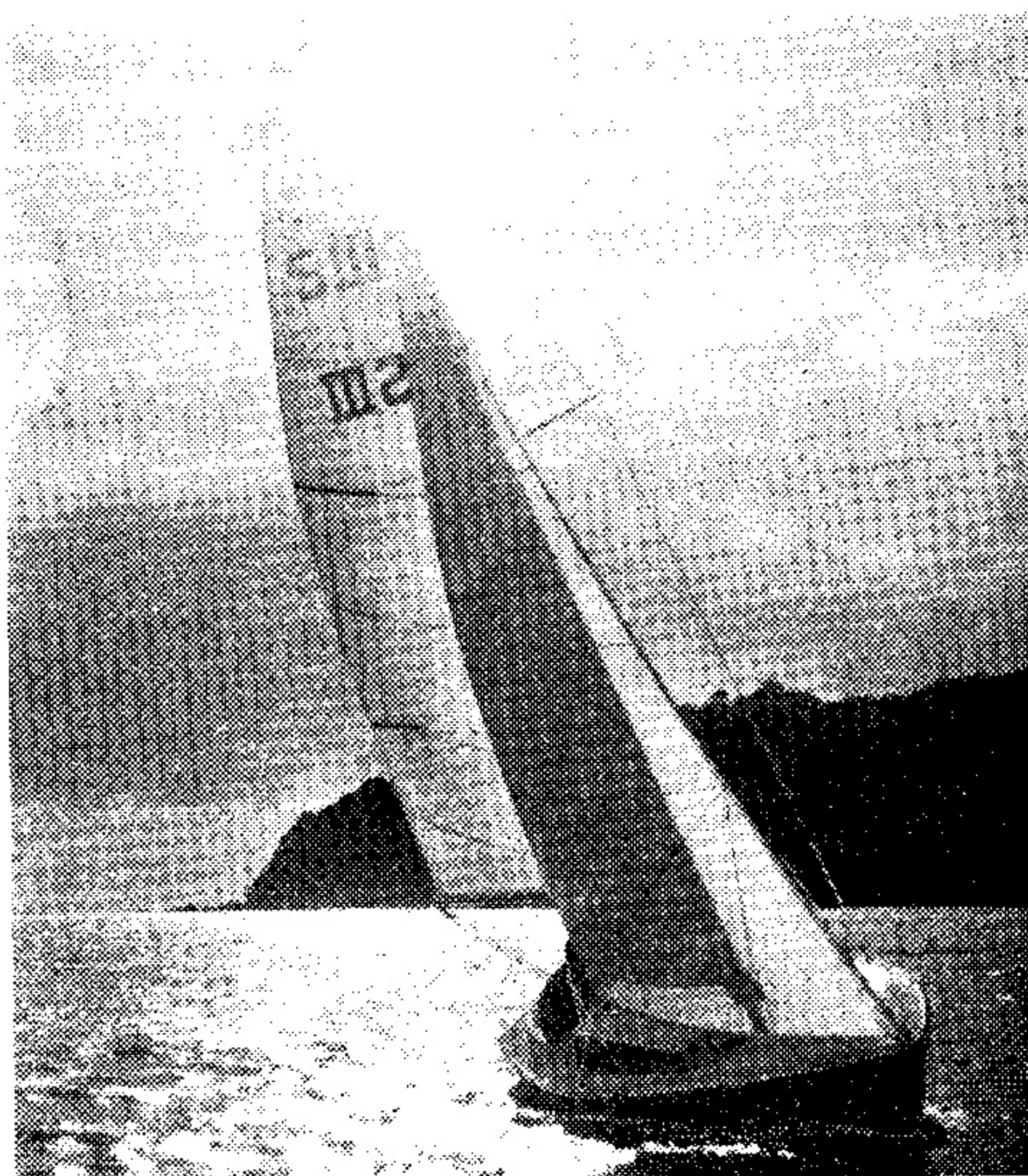
FOR SALE. SII 818, 3-berth. Roller reefing, storm jib, genoa, working jib, s/s rigging, Seagull with clutch, trailer with winch, cushions, anchor, etc. £365 o.n.o. Dignan, 1 Dale Ave., Hest Bank, Lancaster. Hest Bank 2639.

FOR SALE. Silhouette II, 3-berth, interior solid aformosa. Electric lighting, anchors, chains, compass, cockpit cover, storm jib, stores. Campari, trailer, £350. Symonds, 122 Chatham Avenue, Hayes, Kent. 01-462 1190.

BOSUN'S STORES. Terylene ties (17/6), bow ties (10/6), burgees (12/6), car badge transfers, brooches (7/6), silk head scarves (30/-), from Hon. Sec., 4 Crawley Road, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, Middx. or Mrs. E. Morgan, Swatchways, 19 Philbrick Crescent East, Rayleigh, Essex. Back numbers of the *Journal* (on loan) from Eddie Coxell, 40 Louis Drive East, Rayleigh, Essex.

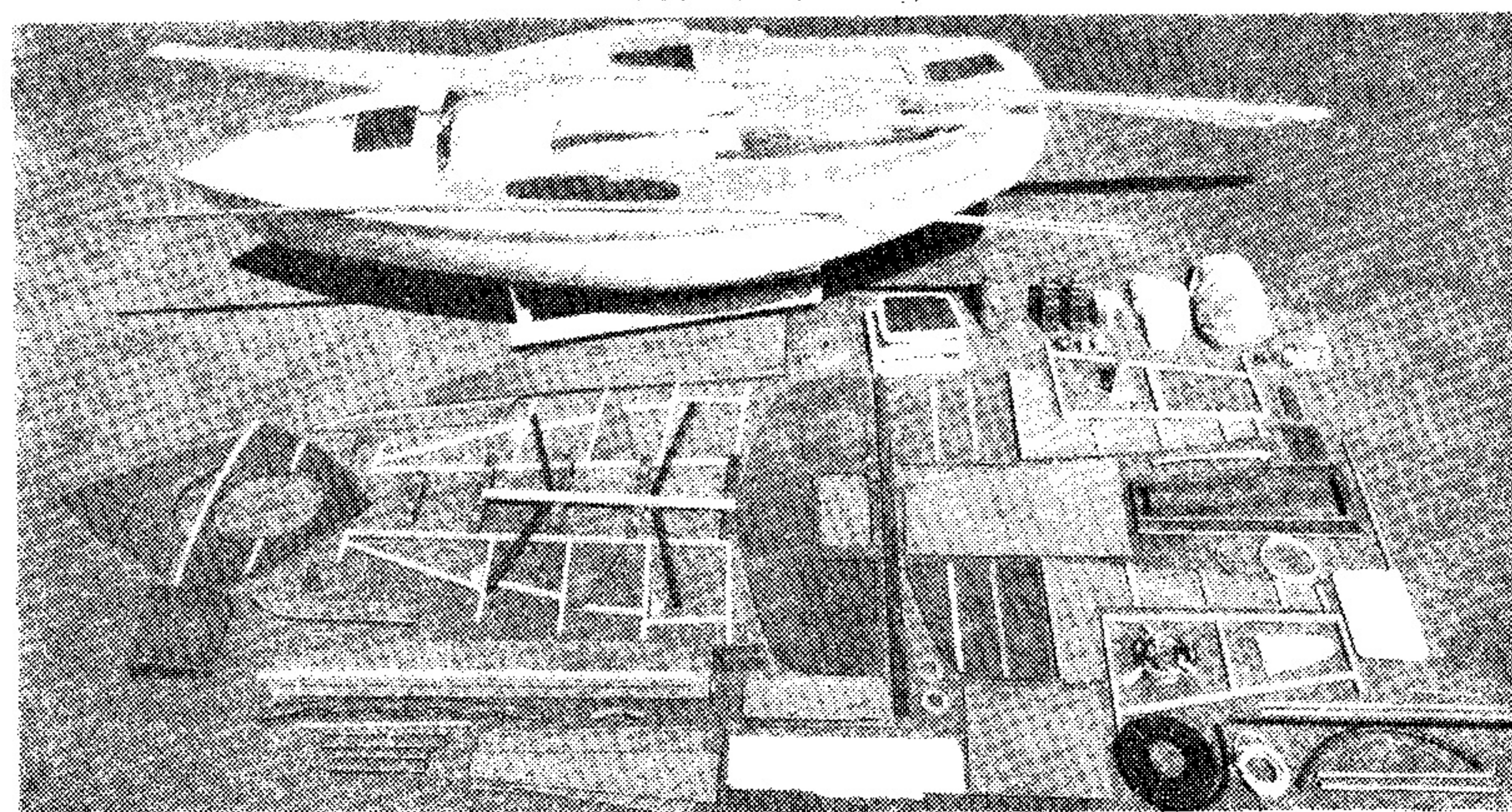
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