

The Silhouette Owner

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*The Journal of
The Silhouette Owners International Association
The Association for Silhouettes and Cruisers*

The Silhouette Owners International Association

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Cover picture. Racing at Rutland 2003

A *minute* with the secretary



MEMBERSHIP

One of the most discussed topics at the National Committee Meetings is membership of the S.O.I.A. Since the heyday of Silhouettes in the 60's and 70's when George Hurley was churning boats off the production line, there has been an on-going battle to sustain our membership at an economic level. The Association has always encouraged other yacht owners to join us, to the extent of running races at the National Rally specifically for a "Handicap" class.

It is easier for a Club with premises where members can meet personally and have social events to maintain interest.

We do not have that advantage.

Our common denominator is the Silhouette Journal. This is the only means of communication with the majority of our members. We do have a nucleus of 50 or so who are dedicated trailer- sailors and in this way many friendships have been built up over the years. We do, through the Journal, endeavor to attract your attention and interest by reporting on the 'good times' at Windermere, Rutland and most of all at the National Rally at Plymouth. This is in the hope that you will join us!

The Anglia Group and the Solent Group have a comprehensive list of sailing activities and socially the South West Group cannot be surpassed.. It could be that many of our members do not wish to trail and sail, or are too far from any of the Groups. In that case our contact is through the Journal. It would be helpful if the Editor was aware of what you would like to see in the said Journal and any ideas on maintaining membership. We, the Committee, realise that in quite a number of cases time has unfortunately played a part. 'time and tide wait for no man'. However it would be great if all our members could persuade someone else to join - not

necessarily a Silhouette owner. There are not many clubs today, if any, with costs so low - it is great value for money!

We desperately need to widen our scope - should we become a Small Yacht Association?

Letters to John Clawson please.

We shall miss Mr. Frank Bartlett who died recently. He was our oldest member and an Honorary Vice-President of the Association. Although it is several years since he attended a Committee Meeting he maintained his interest in the S.O.I.A. I always received a letter with comments on the various items on the Agenda and frequently he included words of advice and encouragement. I looked forward to his letters in his own inimitable style. He was a gentleman in every sense of the word and the Association is poorer for his passing.

Barbara. M. Heald.

The 41st National Rally Plymouth 16th -22nd August

You will recall last years Rally, a wonderful week filled with sunshine and absolutely no wind at all. Not the ideal situation for a week of Racing and no joke for either the boats' crews or the beleaguered Battery Crew and Race Officer who are desperately trying to sort some sort of course out that doesn't involve sending the boats too far away in case we have to sail a shortened course. The situation got so desperate that on the Thursday night we had to introduce another course in the hope that we could complete the series and find a winner, and we struggled to complete that as well.

For many years now I have wondered why we, unlike virtually every other club in Plymouth and on the South Coast for that matter, have rigidly stuck to the prescribed courses for racing, and have not adopted a more flexible approach to course setting, I mean of course, the Board system. Although I have been a member of the Battery Crew for years I have never been in the position of Race Officer before and although we all had great tans at the end of the week, the selection of a prescribed course took more effort than anything else. Therefore, at the wash-up meeting I proposed that John Gordon approach the National and suggest that we at least try the board system.

As I understand it the preference is still to sail the prescribed courses, but the decision can be taken by the Race Officer so for the 2003 Rally we intend to introduce the Board System of Racing.

I actually think that it levels the playing field for all the competitors as the local crews cannot possibly practice the courses and if you are not local and don't know where the buoys are anyway, it doesn't matter what type of racing system you are using!

By the very nature of our Boats some of the marks will probably never be used, primarily those to the West and East immediately in front of the Foreshore. However we have left them on the charts together with their Plymouth Racing designations, should we ever feel the need to include them.

Some of the Sailing Instructions have changed as well so it will be prudent to study the new system and hopefully by the time you get to the Races the new system will be so easy that you will wonder why we didn't change years ago!

All I would ask is that you give it a go and do not dismiss it out of hand. Many Clubs successfully use this system and it might prove better for us all in the long run.

Good sailing.
Neil Coventry

John Gordon, Commodore of SW Group, has asked me to let all coming to the Rally with boats know that up to the time of publication of this journal QAB are still saying we cannot use their slip until Sunday. However John is negotiating with Mountbatten Marina and any information he passes on to me will be posted on to our website.

Ouch

I was at a Notts Forest game last season and my seat wasn't the greatest, so when I noticed a vacant seat 10 rows up, I headed towards it. I asked the man sitting next to it if the seat was taken. He replied, "No". I started talking to the man and I learned he owned the seat I was in. He said, "My wife use to love to come to these games until she died." "Why didn't you give this seat away to a friend?" I asked. He replied, "Because they are all at her funeral."

Copy dates

Copy date is the 13th of the month preceding the issue. Please send your logs or Silhouette photographs and any other anecdotes or newsworthy items in time for publication. Please also remember that the journal is on the website as a PDF file in the members area. Passwords for member's area are User Name soiaMEMBER Password Fby72c - Both are case sensitive. JC

Letters to the Editor.....

Dear Editor,

Following the great success of the Caledonian Canal "sail in company" earlier this year, thoughts have turned to 2004 and a suitable venue for another adventure. One of the suggestions has been the Fal Estuary in Cornwall and I have put together some notes for a possible cruise May I please use the Journal to seek support from interested members and ask you to publish the following notes. . (see p7) Anyone interested at this stage is invited to contact me either by e-mail - cc.larkrise@rya-online.net or phone 01395 568343 or use snail mail - address in membership list.

Dear Editor

I thought members might be interested in Tom and Chris Eaves' intended passage. These are notes as sent to us by him.

Tom Eaves Intended route / passage plan Summer 2003

Weather permitting, the intended departure date from Plymouth is Friday 23rd May and leaving either Salcombe or Dartmouth in the early hours of Saturday 24th May.

Then to Alderney Braye Harbour, Cherbourg, St. Vaast, Le. Havre. Dieppe, St. Valerie, Boulogne, Calais, Dunkirk, Ostend, Zeebrugge and Vlissingen.

Then either via the inland Standemastroute through Holland to Delfzijl.

Then the outside passage north of Nordeney, Langeoog, Spiekeroog, and Wangerooge and across the mouths of the rivers Jade and Weser. Into the entrance of the Elbe to Cuxhaven, thence to Brunsbuttel and the Kiel Canal.

I would not consider that we will be in the region of the Kiel Canal before the end of June at the earliest. The weather may cause us to hole up at any stage of the passage. Beside, if we find ourselves in a port in which we wish to stay for a few days, then we will do so. It is 720 miles from Plymouth to the Kiel Canal as the crow flies. 39 days between 23rd May and 30th June inclusive indicate 18.5 miles per day, but obviously some passages will entail much more than that. Also the entering and leaving of harbours will entail a number of hours and miles in addition to the direct distance.

If the voyage proceeds as far as the Kieler Bucht, the intention is to go south from the Kiel towards the coast of East Germany and Poland, via Lubeck, Wismar Warnemunde and Rostock and Stralsund, Rugen and possibly Szczecin. If time permits a trip north to the island of Ronne and the south coast of Sweden before returning to Denmark and possibly Alborg for the winter lay up.

An over winter alternative is to sail back to Holland and lay up there, this may depend on what we discover in way of facilities in Holland on our way out, and more importantly the time needed for this passage, bearing in mind the at most of it must be against the prevailing SW winds in the southern North Sea, passing north of the Islands mentioned above, in the sea area known as the German Bight. The sailing season in the Baltic

draws to an early close at the end of August to mid September and locals know why.

In any event, it looks as if the engine will be called upon to perform for protracted periods, based on the experience of others engaged on similar trips in this area. It seems that either there is no wind, or too much, or if it is going in your direction it is very light, and if it is very strong it is always blowing from the opposite direction in which you wish to proceed.

Nothing changes. **Tom Eaves.**

There is a letter from Tom and Chris in St. Vaast de Houge dated 30th May 2003

Dear Ed.

We sailed from Cargreen on Sunday and had a very lumpy run to Salcombe. From Salcombe on Monday we crossed to Alderney – refuelled (last opportunity tax free) to Cherbourg on Tuesday, leaving Braye at about 1600 hours. We anchored over Tuesday night inside the Petit Rade de Cherbourg in thick fog (- 50 yards?) and went into Port Chantereyue on Wednesday morning.

We sailed from Cherbourg for St. Vaast on Thursday 29th at about 1415 local time and anchored off Tatihou at 1925. We looked into St. Vaast at about 2000 and found a berth despite the scrum.

We had visibility less than 2 miles all the way from Cherbourg. It's a lovely day here today – warm and sunny – little wind. Intend leaving for Le Havre at about 8.30a.m. Saturday tomorrow, but may call in at one of the Normandy ports in the Bay of the Seine if we feel lit it.

Best wishes to all hands. Tom and Chris.

P.S. We've got through 6 bottles of wine this far!

Rutland –International Paints Trophy

Absolutely wonderful weather, glorious sunshine, excellent company –12 boats 43 people. What more could we ask for on this annual get together of racing Silhouettes. We had a great BBQ on the Friday night followed by some keen racing on the Saturday. There were three races and the trophy was won, yet again, by the Anglia group (no wonder they went fast - I noticed one of their fleet with the reefing points taped over) We celebrated with a tasty buffet in the evening and our Commodore presented the prizes. A great day out at Barnsdale Creek on Sunday in glorious sunshine with an exhibition by someone showing off in a RIB!! A great weekend – as usual very relaxed and long may it continue. (ps Thanks to Sue and Colin for their help in the rib – Other pictures are on the website and a group picture is on p10)



Falmouth

Falmouth is 80 miles south west of Plymouth on the west side of the Fal estuary. The estuary has a Spring Mean Tidal Range of 4.6m and a Neap range of 2.2m but there are no significant tidal streams (barely 1 knot)

The lower part of the estuary has commercial shipping (the docks) and a number of ferries rushing about and there is one chain ferry – King Harry Ferry – up river, otherwise the whole area is virtually traffic free and therefore provides a large area of water for carefree sailing. Some navigation is necessary as there are huge areas of mud at low water, though the main channels are buoyed.

Although there are many slipways in the area, only 2 are really suitable for Silhouettes – both in Falmouth. Falmouth Harbour Authority control pontoons for visitors with showers toilets etc. etc. and also an area for anchoring.

There is no logical “to and return” cruise but rather any number of one or two day trips to be made either from a central point or connected together but we would need to “work the tides” for maximum advantage. Places to visit are Mylor Yacht Club, Restronguet – a super pub with it's own pier (dries at

LW), some swinging moorings and lots of anchorage. A remote pub half a mile north of King Harry Ferry with it's own pontoon and anchorage and a public pontoon a further half mile up river. Truro but overnight at Malpas. Ruan Creek, an extension of the River Fal. St Mawes and Percuil River. Helford River, only with favourable sea conditions and no Easterly element in the wind direction. Helford Sailing Club, anchorage (maybe swinging moorings) in “The Pool “ and for the more adventurous – Gweek, an historic boatyard and an Otter sanctuary, way up Helford River.

I can visualise eating out at least once a day but we would need to be self sufficient at other times.

Subject to just about everything, cruises could be :-

1 day to Mylor Yacht Club and overnight at Restronguet. 2 days to Truro – overnight at Malpas. 1 day to St Mawes and maybe overnight.

At least 2 days to Helford River and return, and all that would be over 30 Nms as the seagull flies.

Colin Campbell

News from South West Group

The Commodore, John Gordon, welcomed everyone to the June meeting and a special welcome to prospective members Ron and Lynne Goggle who have recently purchased the Silhouette 'Tessa' – previously owned by Cyril Longson.

SAILING SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Phil told the meeting about a recent event in Fowey. The Lifeboat was called out as a yacht had lost its rudder. There were 4 people on board, all competent sailors and in Phil's opinion they should not have issued a "May Day" – it should have been a "Pan Pan". There followed a general discussion on this matter. Phil said that at the end of June there will be an ex Lifeboat Rally in Fowey which members might be interested in.

Nigel gave an account of his recent trip to Calstock where he found everyone very friendly and the Landlord of the pub is very keen to encourage other sailors to moor at Calstock. Later on Nigel went to Dandy Hole on the River Lynher and was amazed to see a seal there – he managed to take a photograph. Nigel has received two letters from Tom and Chris Eaves (which are included with this Newsletter) and Tom is hoping to keep in touch and report back to everyone with details of his extended trip. The Sabre Association are holding a Rally in Fowey 14th and 15th June and apparently the Harbourmaster is arranging for them to have a pontoon just for their use.

John Makin said that further to Nigel sighting of a seal in the River Lynher, he had recently seen a basking shark in the River Yealm.

RALLY:

John ran through the social events for this year's Rally

Saturday: Commodore's Reception and Buffet

Sunday: National AGM followed by a Quiz prepared by Eddy Hamley

Monday: Barn Dance and Buffet

Tuesday: Out of School Theme – school uniform fancy dress and 'school type' food

Wednesday: DIY Barbecue (weather permitting of course) at Mount Batten. The SOIA provide the charcoal and everyone brings along their own food and drink

Thursday: Entertainments Evening

Friday: Prize Giving Dinner at the RPCYC with Disco

The total cost of these social events is £50.00 for adults and £25.00 for children. The boat entry for the Rally is £10.00

(This is the ninth of a series of articles by Denis Heald).

S111 REBUILD

PART 9- BOOM AND SLAB REEFING

The standard arrangement for mainsail reefing is different on S 11's and S 111's.

S11's have a dinghy type square shaft on the gooseneck and a square socket on the boom end, whereas the S111's have a worm arrangement. To reef the S II you have to pull the boom off the shaft, rotate it to roll the sail around the boom, then replace the boom on the square shaft. The S III is less clumsy and involves winding the handle to rotate the boom.

In neither case does the reefed sail have a reasonable shape.

If you are stuck with rolling the sail on the boom you can get a much better shape by inserting a length of foam, the length of the boom, and of about 2"x 2" section. The firmer the foam, the better it works.

By far the best way is to have a row of reefing points put on the sail and fit slab reefing.

This is very simple and applies to both S11's and S111's.

Fasten securely a s.s.hook about 1/4" diameter onto the forward end of the boom, using a through bolt, through the casting on the S II, and using the hole for the worm drive handle on the S 111. This hook must be shaped so that the forward reefing eye can be hooked on to it. If you wish a snap shackle of the right size may be used.

Measure the distance between the forward and aft reefing eyes, add 3 or 4 inches to this measurement and put a mark on the boom this total distance from your hook. At this point on the boom, on the same side as your hook, fasten a side block and on the other side an eye and halfway along the hook side, a cleat.

All you have to do now is to attach one end of line to the eye on the boom, up through the reefing eye, down through the side block and forward to the cleat - you have a reefing system!

I find that in any wind force above force 4 the boat will perform better with the mainsail reefed. If you are racing you will get to the windward mark faster and more comfortably than the boats carrying full sail. This is particularly noticeable with the S111 which is over canvassed anyway. You can always shake out the reef downwind to maintain your lead!

Rutland Rally 2003



The Gang

How I became a Silhouette owner

Back in September 2002 while I was staying with friends in Northumberland their brother-in-law rang from Carlisle to ask if they'd like to buy his sailing boat. He'd bought it and stored it for 3 years and now wanted the space. So we followed Hadrian's Wall across the country to have a look at this boat. Called ISIS, it was stored in a printing workshop and was rather dusty and grubby but looked more or less intact with no obvious damage. The trailer looked very sturdy albeit with badly perished tyres.

On our way back to Morpeth we stopped at a pub for lunch and my friend proceeded to talk himself out of buying the boat. With all his spare time taken up with other outdoor pursuits, he had neither time nor cash to take up sailing as well.

Now, I'd had a few years of crewing – mainly in the early '70s and more recently in the late '90s but apart from a Mirror had never owned a boat. I'd

had a holiday in southern Turkey a year before and wanted to be able to try a bareboat charter there – but didn't have the skippering experience or confidence to do it. But if I had my own boat for a couple of years to get some practice..... So, with a small legacy burning a proverbial hole, I jumped in and said I'd have her.

I had no idea what ISIS was but had taken some snaps of her in the workshop and emailed one to a yacht broker in Devon. "You've got a Silhouette" came the reply "and they've got a website". So I found out quite a bit – including the fact that the first one was launched on the Medway – my nearest water.

The appointed day came for collection from Carlisle. We only had to bring the boat back to Kendal initially, where we were staying overnight with relatives. Somehow, those tyres hung together for this 60 mile trip but there was no way they'd get us another 300 miles back to Surrey. The next morning a local breakers yard supplied three nearly new tyres and a spare caravan wheel for £20 all fitted. And off we went. Frequent stops at motorway service areas showed tyres and hubs running rather hot but otherwise the trip was uneventful. So ISIS was parked in our back garden for the winter while I looked into the availability of moorings.

The previous Spring, while hunting for a chandlery – I was going on a Day Skipper course in Turkey and sailing gloves were prescribed – I chanced upon Strood Yacht Club on the Medway where a friendly character told me all the chandlers would be closed "but you don't need million-pound sailing gloves – B&Q round the corner sell gloves with rubber bobbles for £1.99". So back I went to Strood to enquire about membership. Social membership was available more or less straight away, but full membership with a pontoon mooring was subject to availability and committee approval. To my surprise, this came up within a couple of months – and I was accepted. "Need more sailing boats in the Club – the cruisers are taking over" was the universal comment.

Needless to say, I joined SOIA and bought the Handbook and just about every other publication going. Invaluable stuff – as well as the articles in the monthly mag.

The interior of ISIS didn't look anything like those in the pictures I'd seen – mine was completely bare inside except for a berth on each side and a small chain locker at the pointy end. Management said she had to have a loo on the boat – so that became Priority 1. The big locker cover beneath the main hatch was removed, a board placed on the engine bearers (I think she may have had an inboard originally) and a shiny new Thetford slid into the gap – but it stuck out a bit and the lid wouldn't open. So two steps were devised, the whole arrangement being hinged at the top so that, when open, the loo

could slide out for use and the steps and riser blocked the companionway for a little privacy.

Forward of the berths, about halfway up, I epoxied a batten to each side to support a slatted shelf which would still give access to the chain locker. This would provide storage for clothes bags. Directly below it I built another shelf to take the battery. Before I could install these shelves, I had to remove two bags of pea shingle – 50kg apiece. This was presumably to counterbalance the 20HP Mercury that came with the boat!

Other ‘interior’ jobs were a couple of coats of Screwfix anti-condensation paint, modifying the floor boards to suit the new companionway steps, adapting the wiring for the new battery position (the loo now occupies the original battery space), renewing the cockpit drain hoses and replacing the old Seamaster with a new NASA Target depth sounder and it’s transceiver.

The main job outside was to devise mast-lifting gear – none came with the boat. Thanks here to Alf for explaining the essential geometry and tensioning in the SOIA literature. My own gear is now on version 2.5 and seems to work OK – the mast has been up and down several times now without incident. On version 1 I wrecked a lower shroud with a cable clamp – but hell, they were frayed anyway so I measured up and got replacements from Jimmy Green. (I’d have used Kemps but their spec. didn’t match what I had and they didn’t offer Talurit eyes.).

The trailer had been on blocks over winter, the wheels stored in the shed. I’d already found out that my scrapyard tyres weren’t up to the job and had purchased new reinforced tyres capable of taking the weight. When I came to put the wheels back on, I noticed one of the drums was floating around on the stub axle. Having removed it, I found out why – the inner wheel bearing had disappeared. Just a few scraps of metal in funny places were the only evidence that one was ever fitted. My local Indespension branch supplied replacements so now I’ve got all-new tyres and bearings.

It was approaching the date for the Anglia region rally at Levington and while I wasn’t ready to put my boat in the water yet I decided to go and meet some other Silhouetters for the first time. Tony, Alf and Dave were already tied up on the pontoon when I got there and I had a very enjoyable couple of hours with them, seeing how their boats were rigged, getting photos so I wouldn’t forget, and generally getting the lowdown on Silhouettes. With great regret at being unable to stay long enough for a sail and to meet Levington Lil, I returned home newly fired with enthusiasm.

When I came to rig ISIS for the first time, a certain amount of head-scratching ensued. I couldn’t figure out how the cap shrouds would ever

have reached the aft rigging points. All the rigging screws were the same size – even though no two were the same pattern. Then it dawned – this boat had its shrouds the wrong way round. Cap shrouds to the forward mounts and lowers to the rear mounts. I solved this by having a couple of stainless plates made up which effectively raised the rear attachments a couple of inches. With a couple of new, short, rigging screws for the lowers everything worked OK.

A couple of lovely days early in May enabled me to anti-foul the bottom and recoat the hull in the same bright red. The first attempt gave such a poor finish that I sanded it down and had another go. This time Management applied paint with a small roller and I followed on with a sponge on a lollipop stick that the chandlers sold me – much better.

With just a few minor bits left to do, I phoned the club and booked the crane for lifting in. Having seen the Medway mud on the slipway, I wasn’t going to put my trailer into that lot thank you very much. I tested my trusty old Seagull (a relic of my Mirror days) in a tank at home – fired second pull after 15years storage – and off we went to Strood.

It was strange seeing the trailer empty and the boat 30 feet in the air. Round she swung, and gently down into the water. A quick check for leaks around the cockpit drains and transceiver – then the strops were released and I was truly afloat. I fired up the Seagull and motored round to the allotted pontoon space. Once moored up, I got ready to raise the mast – but in the excitement I’d managed to leave the new lower shrouds behind. So it was home for lunch and back to the boat in the afternoon to finish the job.

Later that afternoon I found a small leak – somewhere at the back of the keel or front of the skeg I think – but it was only about a pint in the first 24hrs and within a day so it had reduced to trivial proportions. I’ll probably live with it now while I work out what’s got to be done and then wait until the end of the season.

It’s a grand feeling sitting on your own boat, afloat for the first time. Still a few jobs to do (aren’t there always?) – but hopefully I’ll be sailing her in the next few days. The whole task of fitting out and preparation has been made so much easier with help and advice from SOIA members – my thanks to all of you. Hope to meet more of you at some of the rallies later in the year.

Howard Orrom - ISIS, MkII sail no. 1484

Compatible Cruise on the Caledonian Canal

By A Piggford

Five Silhouettes and a Teiliga 21, a Polish design, gathered in the Lochaber Yacht Club compound on Saturday, 17th May 2003, for a cruise on the Caledonian Canal in Scotland. Present were Allegro, Colin Robinson; Blessim, Tony Eden; Misty, Alf Baldwin and Adrian Piggford; Sea Urchin, Colin and Rosemary Campbell; Polly, Dave Milner and Kipling, Colin Davison. The rigging of the vessels proceeded in the usual rainy conditions beloved of the East Midlanders. The night was spent there, in caravan mode, with some members cooking onboard. Alf and I looked for a meal in Fort William, and found a place called the “Grog and Gruel,” purveyors of all things alcoholic and eatable. The remainder of the crew enjoyed the evening at Lochaber Yacht Club in front of a roaring log fire, many thanks to Lochaber YC for looking after us so well.

Tony, our guide and mentor (tormentor!) was firm in his desire that we should all be up at six the next morning, to get launched and be first at the canal sea lock at Corpach. Launching went well into the tidal sea loch, Loch Linnhe, but a pontoon would have been useful to tie up to, as it was, only a rope thrown ashore and tied to a rock prevented us from losing the boats.

It was an interesting sail, with spectacular snow-topped mountains, there were lowering and threatening clouds with the occasional burst of sunshine, which illuminated a stand of oak trees in fresh green foliage. A considerable amount of time was taken to perform all the documentation for each boat, which enabled us to use the canal. It seemed a bit steep, but we all paid the £75!! Glad we were not sailing anything larger! As we waited our turn to proceed, kettles were put on, accompanied by delicious smells of frying.

In the meantime a Scandinavian ship had been working her way down the locks with a party of tourists on board, it was good to see other nationals enjoying our country. Now it was our turn, first a ketch and a motor cruiser entered, followed by the Silhouettes snapping at their heels. We motored a reach of one mile then two bridges and then the flight of eight locks, known as Neptune’s Staircase, there were plenty of sightseers watching our antics. All the Silhouettes were warped from lock to lock secured with a round turn on the various hooks and bollards available. One particular lock had a very fast inward flow, this caused the two leading boats under the gates, to be pressed against the far vessel. Alf, in trying to rescue the situation, found his fingers trapped in a bight of warp against a handrail to a ladder, even with my assistance in holding the rope I was not able to relieve him, however, Dave ran to the rescue and succeeded in easing the load.

Most of the time we had been in glorious sunshine, but as we neared the top lock, the clouds were gathering and the rains came. It was 1315 when we all cleared the last lock and then we faced a six mile reach of canal, passing Moy Bridge, already open, we tied up at a jetty amidst torrential rain, before the swing bridge at Gairloch. Beyond that was another single lock, which was negotiated without difficulty, we were getting used to the routine!

In the meantime, Ken Hoosan and his wife Linda were researching the facilities ahead. They found a hotel at Letterfinlay that had a mooring that was sunk, but there was a sound mooring a mile beyond, sadly no facilities. With this information to hand, we thus penned out into a short canal reach bringing us to the first expanse of water on the canal, Loch Lochy, just then, the heavens opened with torrential rain beating the water. Everyone elected to motor, and thankfully, the prevailing wind was astern, providing one didn’t turn round, the hood and collars of our wet weather gear kept the rain out. It was a pity that the weather prevented us from seeing the scenery, as it was described as one of the most beautiful parts of the canal. Tony was in the lead, and after an hour or so, the hotel came into sight. The pontoon was sunk; only a metal ladder indicated where it was. This proved useful and the abutment was intact so the intrepid party made do. It was a quiet sheltered bay from the south-westerlies, and a decent night was spent there. A grand meal was had at the hotel along with copious amounts of ale (East Midlanders again). An impromptu game of Pool then ensued between Tony, Colin D, Alf and I. It was also very warm in there, and those who were damp dried off nicely, the radiators proved useful for socks!

In the morning, showers were taken at the hotel. Around 1030 hours, sails were hoisted, ropes cast off and bows were put out into the loch, perhaps we should have known better as a sudden squall came up with driving rain and soon the fleet was scattered. What had been anticipated as a leisurely sail, to explore the loch and its views, became a battle to reef and furl or down the jibs, all the boats then turned northeast and headed up the loch towards Laggan Locks.

We all had a great sail, running before the wind, with the rain easing off as we went. We were able to round up in Loch Cean to drop the mains and furl the jibs before entering the lock. Closer inshore, Polly had gone aground and Dave was doing his usual, walking-on-water bit!! Alf elected to go into the lock starboard to. A blue-clad blonde female lock keeper, demanding, immediately berated us: ‘Why were we over that side and why hadn’t we tied up to the jetty to await orders?’ It transpired that if we had been good boys she would have made us all a cup of tea!

Tea took a back seat anyway, when the prospect of a few beers was in sight, by form of a Dutch barge called the “Eagle,” moored at the canal-side beyond the lock.

There were numerous hikers plus we Silhouetters, and with the weather as it was, it was a welcome stop. All the wet gear was dumped in a heap up for’ard. There was a wonderful choice of ales at the bar, which went down a treat. There was a glowing stove to starboard by the bar, but this was monopolized by the hikers who, perhaps, had more need of it than we. As the sun was streaming in from the skylight, we realised it was time to press on. Once outside, Dave was somewhat troubled by the over-trousers in his hand and said that they were not his, the heap of wet gear in the for’ard cabin on the barge showed up the difficulties of such an arrangement, thankfully, he returned carrying his own.



Pushing on, under main or jib, the intrepid six sailed on towards Loch Oich in a pleasant reach of the canal, with mountains and fresh green trees either side. Another swing bridge came into view and before long we had entered Loch Oich, and the Great Glen Water Park was on our starboard hand. A seventh Silhouette, called “Dolphin” was seen; this belonged to Frank Watt who had recently purchased it from Dennis Heald, yes, “Domino” the fin-keeler. When all the boats were settled against the harbour wall, in a very pleasant spot, introductions were then made. There were all sorts of outdoor pursuits available such as white-water rafting, canoeing, cycling, etc. Thankfully, our advance party of Ken and Linda had arranged a meal at the Lodge restaurant, and soon we were all comfortably sat in the upstairs bar with the inevitable pints or halves. Eleven of us sat

down to a splendid variety of meals, well presented, with red and white wine flowing accordingly. Afterwards, upstairs in the bar, a sing a long followed, led by a guitarist and his family who could all sing or play, with the three witches from Glasgow adding their own accompaniment!!

A leisurely morning in bright sunlight, started with Colin R losing his leg overboard, that is, his table leg that fits in the cockpit! Colin C loaned him a magnet which Colin R cast astern, hauling on the rope the magnet picked up something immediately, which, on lifting gingerly, revealed a rusty hammer-head and delicately poised on the ballpeen, was the leg, the grip was so tenuous that it fell off and the leg was seen to glissade back into the depths, again, casting the magnet well out, Colin caught the leg for the second time and carefully retrieved the errant object. Well done that man! Other members of the party enjoyed the facilities of the Lodge such was the swimming pool and Jacuzzi. Dave, sporting a walking staff, a la Prince Charles, had by now returned from a hike, he had walked back to the “Eagle” pub visited the previous day.

Casting off at about 1100 hours the augmented flotilla set sail, exploring the rest of Loch Oich, before long the clouds were rolling up astern and it began to blow hard and rain again, at least the wind remained astern and we were all able to take in the scenery surrounding this beautiful part of the canal. The channel was well buoyed, mainly to assist the large ships passing through. Not so at the north eastern end of Loch Oich, here was a weir before another swing bridge at Culloch and as the fleet had gathered together, it was seen that Colin R had run aground whilst in the process of starting his outboard. First Kipling went to his aid and managed to get a rope to Allegro, but it was obvious that the pull was in the wrong direction. Polly now appeared taking a broader course. Dave rounded up just beyond Allegro, and then did his walking-on-water bit, pushing Allegro back the way she went aground and before long Allegro was free of the shallows. It only remained for Dave to push his own boat out of danger, and then we were all able to approach the swing bridge.

Another half mile brought us to Culloch Lock which was now going downhill, such was our expertise, we were soon motoring out of the bottom gates, where we all tied up at some convenient pontoons for lunch in the sunshine. Sailing on, under jibs, brought us to Kytra Lock, which was taken with aplomb and then followed a pleasant sail in the reach before Fort Augustus. Approaching the top lock were a number of pontoons, but Tony had spied a quiet berth on the shore side of a pontoon that just took all our Silhouettes comfortably. British Waterways had built new showers, adjacent, and these were made full use of. Some of our party had an evening meal in The Bothy, a pub facing the bottom lock with a fine conservatory style dining area. More beer was consumed afterwards at

another watering hole, in what had been the Post Office of Fort Augustus, so we learnt a little history.

Wednesday morning dawned sunny and bright but the wind was still cool. At 1000 hours, some dressed in full oilies, we presented ourselves at the top of the flight of five locks, and before long we warped our vessels into the first lock. There was tremendous interest from the onlookers ashore and there were tourists of every kind. In the second lock of the staircase, the sun was now beating down and we were sheltered from the wind. A stripping off was needed of outer garments, which were tossed down into the cockpit, before long, these were retrieved as clouds had gathered again and rain was felt, such were the conditions that we had endured during the whole trip.

Penning out of the bottom lock under a swing bridge, there was a pontoon on our portside where we tied up for lunch, and a little shopping boosted our rations. It was decided to depart at 1200 hours, so Misty slipped her moorings under jib then, at the same time, and unbeknown to Misty's crew, the Loch Ness Tourist Boat cast off and proceeded to back and fill to turn around. Misty, under sail, was naturally in the way and was perceived as an errant yachty. A voice boomed in a very strong Scots accent over a Tannoy: "Yachts should be under motor in the canal reaches." Alf duly obliged and pulled the starter cord, but in truth, we were still under sail and no threat at all to the Tourist Boat!

The wind was quite strong on leaving the shelter of the reach. We were now on Loch Ness. Misty was well ahead of the other boats and looking astern they were all bathed in wonderful sunshine, for ourselves we were under a black cloud, which kept pace with our progress up the loch, it was quite frustrating, as ahead there was sunshine on the water, but it was always out of the reach of Misty.

Some of the other boats were now catching up and a long grey building appeared to starboard. During the journey the radios were kept busy on Channel 77 with varying degrees of success in reception and transmission. Frank using the radio, informed the fleet that the grey building was a hydroelectric generating station, and indeed, after passing it there was a distinct hum of machinery coming across the water.

Shortly afterwards, with Urquhart Castle becoming visible, the wind which, until now, had been very constant, began to fall light, and the Silhouettes were pointing in all directions trying to maintain some progress, after twenty minutes of this, it began to rain strongly again and the wind came round on the nose. Iron topsails were started and the flotilla motored past the castle, then across a bay towards the evening's anchorage. In fact, it was a newly built harbour run by Caley Marine who had obtained

grants and funds from various sources. The overnight mooring fees were a healthy £8 per night for visitors and £4 for Caley Marine cruisers, as it was, the machine didn't work (but who carries masses of £1 coins about!!). No facilities were to be seen for toilets or showers, but water was available at the quayside.

Ken and Linda Hoosan kindly picked up Alf and I and took us back to their hotel for an evening meal and brought us back again, "Thank you." Dave, Tony, Colin and Rosemary, and some others set off to walk to the village of Drumnadrochit.

As Colin R was returning to his boat, Allegro, after dining aboard Kipling, he heard a splash and looking, saw his oval plate sinking and coming to rest in the mud. He borrowed Colin D's spinnaker pole, and opened the jaw with the lanyard, and managed to grasp the plate's edge by releasing the piston, and very gingerly, pulled the pole and plate to the surface but lost it when he tried to grasp the plate with his hand, and watched in dismay as the plate sank again. On the second attempt, he was more cautious than ever, and successfully retrieved the plate, much to his satisfaction!

It was another sunny morning on Thursday, and it was decided to visit Urquhart Castle by boat. We boarded Kipling and Misty and motored over to the pontoon below the castle. We tied



up to a cruiser that had just moored up in front of us where we all disembarked and walked up to the castle, taking numerous photos as we went. It was well worth the effort, as fine views were to be had of Loch Ness from the ramparts and it was appreciated that quite a strong wind was blowing. I decided to walk up to the visitor centre and use the facilities and when I came out saw that only one yacht was left. As I walked back, an official was running down to the pontoon and by the time I had turned the last corner of the path, the official was racing back again. Climbing aboard Kipling, I was ushered unceremoniously down below and told to be quiet. Dave was also there. I remarked that I had never known a quiet Dave before. Apparently, the official had been rushing back to obtain change for the twenty-pound note given for the entrance fees to the castle, and had

already calculated the sum. Dave and I were stowaways! Misty and her party had escaped scot-free. Is this the origin of the saying?



Arriving back at the harbour at Drumnadrochit, we all cast off for the final leg of sailing Loch Ness. Misty followed Blessim out into the bay, Alf unrolling the main as we went. Out into the loch, the full force of the southwesterly was become apparent. Thankfully, Alf already had two reefs in the main and with a smidgen of jib we rollicked along in the gale. We tacked downwind and followed Sea Urchin, who had only one reef in the main and full jib, and crossed over to the southern shore, thinking that the water would be quieter there. It was not so. The waves were beginning to build up and we saw Sea Urchin struggling offshore, and then going about through the wind to gybe onto the other tack. On Misty, now under main only, Alf hauled in the mainsheet whilst I steered, but even so there was a bit of a hiatus as the mainsheet tangled around me with the boat heeling alarmingly, but it was soon under control and Misty settled down to a run before the increasing wind. It was a wonderful wild ride, surfing the increasing waves, but at no time did we feel apprehensive. It was learnt afterwards that Colin C on Sea Urchin had had difficulties with having to go forward on his beautiful slippery foredeck to tame his jib, and Tony on Blessim, who had seemed to be going into the bay on a lee shore for a long time had, apparently, been preparing himself to gybe.

I think all the people were anticipating breakers at the end of the loch, but it just seemed as if the wind had either moderated or lifted above us, as the

waves on shore seemed quite moderate and the entrance to the canal reach still allowed us to sail in with no difficulty. There was a useful pool where we could all round-up and drop sails in comparative tranquillity. Magic. It had been a wonderful, exhilarating ride down the last third of Loch Ness, one in which I think will stay in the memory of all those who took part. At the inquest later, someone said it had been F8 out there and a GPS log was shown where the maximum speed achieved was 10 knots!

The canal reach to Dochgarroch Locks was very tame by comparison, and somewhat spoilt by the lock-keeper saying that there was nowhere for us to stay the night. However, he relented and had us raft up in pairs immediately below the lock out of the way of other large vessels using the canal. One plastic monster came through with only inches to spare and very close to Misty, Alf preparing to fend off! There were bow thrusters and stern thrusters all controlled from a pod just abaft the bow by the officer in charge, pulling small levers to and fro in abandon and looking down and aft from his perch above, quite entertaining. In the meantime, Rosemary had gone off exploring and had come across a café called Oakland. There the proprietor had made a list of all the meals she had available and Rosemary reported back, ticking off those who fancied which meals. We were able to take our own drinks with us, so for Silhouetters this was heaven. We duly reported at 1830 hours to find a curious shop, part Post Office, for six hours a week, part restaurant, filled with bygones and everything you had ever owned in the past. It seemed to be that everything we ate at, or sat on, was for sale! The variety of meals was astounding, from beef or ham salads to pasta dishes. Madame, for she was part French, performed a miracle in such short notice and did also rather well in selling some items of bygones. She was offered a glass or two of wine during our meal, but she thanked us very much for the gesture and made her own gin and tonic, she no doubt needed it! It was a wonderful climax to a magical cruise of the Caledonian Canal.

Friday morning was an anticlimax, a leisurely sail (verboden) on the penultimate reach to Caley Marine and Inverness. Chaos reined for a while as the fleet turned up, and at one stage we were rafted five deep. This was so the boat yard could lift out one of its cruisers, and we watched this operation. We were not sure what the problem was, but one of the yard people gave the rudder and support a hefty kick and the cruiser was put back in! With more warping of yachts and cruisers we were all finally settled to the yard owner's satisfaction.

In the late afternoon some of our party walked into town to sample the delights of Inverness and those following later used a mobile phone to locate their whereabouts. They were in The Waterfront pub and Alf and I had a meal there, with the rest of the party determined to have fish and chips in the "News of the World." So they left in search of said sustenance

and were fortunate enough to be taken back by a local councillor in his people carrier to the marina, where they enjoyed their fish and chips al fresco.



In the morning two taxis arrived to take us all to the bus station from where we would catch the 0930 bus to Fort William. The first taxi arrived at 0910. Of the second taxi there was no sign. In the meantime, Tony, Dave, Alf and I, sitting outside the station espied a gangling individual with shaven head, earrings, etc., carrying a grey female dummy, dressed in black bra and pants and long boots, through the street. He was given a rousing cheer from said observers, much to the chagrin of the individual. If he could have escaped notice he would have been very pleased. Wrong time, wrong place! The second taxi finally arrived; it had had to return because Colin D had forgotten his car keys!

The bus journey of roughly two hours retraced our cruise and it was good to see where we had been and what we had done. It enabled us to recall the good moments and forget the rainsqualls that plagued our progress, though the rain didn't dampen our spirits, as all good Silhouetters will know. The cars and trailers were quickly hitched up and the return journey to Inverness was made in good time. The boats were hauled out in brilliant sunshine, but the derigging was done in the rain! This ought to be the Silhouetters' song: "We're rigging in the rain, just rigging in the rain . . ." shades of Gene Kelly, or is it Morecambe and Wise? So ended a memorable and successful cruise, ably organised by Tony Eden, to whom we offer our grateful thanks.

For Sale

Please remember to inform us if you have sold the item advertised)

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Silhouette MK3, sail no 216, rare fin keel boat in excellent condition, 17ft 3ins LOA, 6ft 7ins beam and 2ft 8 ins draft (approx), 3 birth, GRP original gel coat in excellent condition, nearly new main, roller reefing genoa, log, depth, compass, VHF, anchor, whisker pole, etc. all controls lead back to cockpit. 4 hp Yamaha long shaft, new upholstery, portapotty, new antifoul . On excellent SBS galvanised trailer. Yard and launch fees at Coniston paid till October 03. Price £3,500 ONO. Ring Tony on :07950952177 or 01282 (1st)

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For Sale 9 foot wooden topsail as in March Journal article. Silhouette-proven, not needed on it's replacement. Buyer collects from near Oxford. 01865 820282 £35.00 (3rd)

For Sale Eventide 24 Bilge keels Alluminium mast and spares SS rigging (new 2002)Cutter rigged VG sails Watermota Mk2 7HP diesel (only 350 hrs from new) Seafarer sounder and speed log. Compass anchor etc Pneumatic tried launching trolley on SBS 4 wheel hydraulic tilting road trailer £4500 Ashore Emsworth Tel 01753 663371 (2nd)

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THE PLYMOUTH BATTERY - THE MID EIGHTIES

In the mid eighties the battery crew comprised John Gale, Mary Jones, Gillian Povey, Chris, my wife, and myself. We had a thoroughly enjoyable time and worked well together. There was nobody who could be called the battery boss, we just got on with the job and had fun while doing it. Even the weather was pleasant most of the time.

However I do recall that during one afternoon race a storm broke and as the race finished we were one Silhouette short of the starting number. Fortunately, sometime later she appeared out of the gloom with a distinctly disheveled looking Bill Bass at the helm as she crossed the finish line. Although out of race time we were all relieved to see her return to Sutton harbour.

Talking to Bill later, it transpired that the boat had been laid flat by a gust of wind when rounding Duke Rock. As if that wasn't bad enough, his crew, known as the other Bill, had been down below answering the call of nature when the gust of wind hit them. Of course his was another and totally different story!!

Those were the good old days when no one could spell protest, never mind knowing how to make one. Except that is for one exception, Denis Heald I think his name was, but he was only trying to test the resolve of the green and untried first year battery crew. We were slightly taken aback when during the lunch break he and his crew, Wilf, marched up to us in the clubhouse and placed a written protest with the appropriate £2.00 fee on our table and stormed off.

John and I read the protest and I said “What do we do now?” Picking up the protest fee, John turned to me and replied “Mild or bitter? I'll get two pints in”. Ah, the good old days, two pints of best for less than £2.00. Having got our drinks we walked across the lounge to Denis and Will, raised our glasses, said “Cheers” together, turned smartly and walked back to our seats to rejoin our fellow battery members. During the rest of our time as battery crew we did not receive any other protests. As for the protest by Denis and Wilf~, thinking that they would wind us up, they had protested that the ten minute gun had been fired two seconds TOO SOON!!

Pete Derry



Come and join us!

Come and join us!

A very warm welcome to the following new members who signed articles recently,

539 Alan Dunn of Glasgow

540 Kenneth Skeldon of Ellesmere Port

541 Peter Cavaciuti of Chippenham

542 Robin Woodason of Newton Abbot

544 Robert Brown Purvis of Dovercourt

545 William Burns Fyvie of Falkirk

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Type of Boat S1 S11.....S111.....S1V.....SV.....

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