

The Silhouette Owner

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Association***

The Association for Silhouettes and Cruisers

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The Silhouette Owners International Association

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Cover picture – Racing at Plymouth rally

A (few) *minutes* with the
secretary

THE £ 200 MILLIONAIRE

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR *MEMBERS* - OLD AND NEW!

It is always a milestone when we pass the winter solstice and we know then. that we are on our way back to lighter nights, sunshine and a new sailing season. However to pass the time until then I hope I shall entertain you with a little story about boats which seems to apply to many of us Silhouetters. I particularly thank one of our members, Philip Bird, for passing this in my direction.

So are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin!

My wife and I were sailing a hireling yacht through the waterways of Zeeland last summer, when one day a westerly gale drove us into the harbour of Dintelas for shelter. A little green sloop, flying the Red Ensign, followed us into port. She was manned solely by one elderly gentleman, but we noted that he handled the boat with ease and skill. It was blowing hard and the little yacht ran down the harbour at speed, but when abreast of us she luffed head to wind, her violently flapping sails were lowered with a run, and she brought up alongside us so gently that she would not have crushed an egg. We took her lines and made them fast, while her owner hung cork fenders over the side and proceeded to stow his sails. Urged by a look from my wife, which said, "he is old and alone, help him". I offered to lend the lone mariner a hand but he refused to be helped. Said he, "Thank you, but please don't trouble. I like to do everything myself, it's part of the fun. But do come aboard if you will and look around. You'll see that there's nothing here that one man. can't tackle easily."

We went aboard and found the green sloop to be one of the cleverest little ships imaginable. It is difficult to describe her gear on deck and aloft without being too technical: suffice it to say therefore that everything was very efficient and simple, and so designed that all sail could be set or lowered by the man at the helm without leaving the cockpit. The boat was 30 feet long by 9 feet wide, and my short wife at any rate, could stand upright in her cabin. Her fore end was a storeroom, full of convenient lockers, shelves and a small but adequate water-closet. Aft this came the cabin, an apartment 1.2 feet long, with a broad bunk along one side of it and a comfortable settee along the other. A table with hinged flaps stood in the middle,

while in the four corners were a wardrobe, a desk, a pantry and a galley. Aft all this was a motor, hidden beneath the cockpit floor. A clock ticked on one bulkhead, a rack full of books ran along the other, a tray of pipes lay on the table, and a copper kettle sang softly to itself on the little stove.

"What do you think of her?" said our host, descending the companionway. "Before you tell me though, I must warn you I'm very house proud. I've owned this boat for ten years, and I've been doing little things to her all the time. Improving her, I call it. It's great fun. For instance, I made this matchbox holder for the galley last week. It sounds a trivial thing but I wish I had thought of it ten years ago because during all that time I've had to use both hands whenever I struck a match. Now I only have to use one hand, and you will know all that implies in a small boat especially if she's dancing about and you are trying to hold on and cook and light the Primus at one and the same moment. Then there was the fun of carving the holder out of a piece of wood I picked up to say nothing of the pleasure it gives me to look at a useful thing I've made with my own hands. The carving brought out the grain of the wood nicely, don't you think? Now I'm going to make tea, and you must stay and have some with me".

We did stay to tea and we are glad we did. For one thing it was a remarkably fine tea, and for another we listened to the most entertaining and thought provoking discourse we have ever heard in our lives. That discourse, in fact, was so provocative of thought that it looks as if it were going to change the whole course of our lives for my wife and me. Said our host, "I hope you will like this tea. it's brick tea. caravan tea. I got hold of it in Odessa where it was absurdly cheap. That's one of the advantages of this kind of life, I find. Cruising about all over Europe in my own boat I can buy luxuries at the source, so to speak, at practically cost prices. There are four bottles of Burgundy, for example, stowed in the bilges under your feet, the remains of a dozen I bought at Cadaujar while cruising along the Garonne canal. I bought the lot for less than twenty shillings, and it's the sort of wine you pay a lot of money for in London. When I come across bargains like that it makes me wish this boat was a bit bigger. It's surprising what a lot of stuff I can stow away in her, but I really need more storage space. If I had room I would buy enough cigars in this country where they are good and cheap to last me through the winter. You see, I like the sun, and in two months I shall be going down the Rhone to spend the winter in the south of France, and the tobacco there is expensive and horrible!"

"Do you live aboard here all alone always?" exclaimed my wife, making her eyes very round.

"Most certainly," replied our host. "Now do try some of this Macassar redfish paste on your toast. I got it in Rotterdam from the purser of the Java Mail that arrived last week, so it's as fresh as it's possible to get it. It's really a shame to toast this bread though. It's just the ordinary bread the bargees buy, but I find Dutch bread is the

best in all Europe. Some French bread is good, but it won't keep as long as this stuff will. Sailing down the Danube a year or so ago I got some really excellent bread in Vienna, but it was a little sweet and not so good for a steady diet as this Dutch stuff. The worst bread I ever got was in Poland. I was cruising through the East German canals and I thought I would sail up the Vistula via Cracow, with the intention of putting the boat on the railway when I got to the head of the Vistula navigation at Myslowitz, shipping her across the few miles to the Klodnitz canal and then cruising through Silesia and Brandenburg via Breslau down the Oder. It was a perfectly feasible plan, and I fancy it would have been interesting, but that Polish bread defeated me completely. It was about all I could get to eat, and it seemed to consist entirely of straw and potatoes. So I turned back after passing Warsaw and fled down the Vistula and the Bromberg canal, and on by the Netze to Frankfurt. Do have some more tea."

We had some more tea, it was a marvelous brew, as stimulating as good wine, and while we drank it our curiosity concerning our host and his extraordinary mode of life welled up within us, to drown at last our manners and overflow in a stream of questions.

(to be continued)

Barbara.M. Heald.

Hon. Sec.

...and a moment with the editor

Dear shipmates

He's behind you! Oh no he's not! Oh yes he is! You can guess where I've been. I've just come home from the annual SOIA East Midlands group visit to the pantomime. It was Cinderella this year at the Palace theatre in Newark. There were 12 of us and not one child amongst us (or was it 12 children and not one adult amongst us?). We had a great time. We ended up in the pub talking boats and boating (as usual). We all agreed that this should be a good year for anyone who wants to sail in company as there are lots of events being planned.

I notice that the Anglia Group are considering why it is that more Silhouettes came to the weekend rally on the Broads than were at the Plymouth rally and that suggestions at their meeting were that it is because it is a long way to go, the sailing is biased too much towards racing and those who are used to sailing on the East Coast get nervous in more than 2 metres of water. Well I say this to you all. Don't be nervous, Plymouth is not the other side of the world and really, when you analyse it, the only reason that any meeting recently has been a success, and that includes Rutland The Broads and Plymouth is because there is a hardcore of the same FEW who take the trouble to trail. Please give it a try.

Talking about trailing we were discussing the International paints trophy which we have raced for at Rutland over the past 10 or so years. Some members feel it is time we had a change of venue. I think I am right in saying that the original idea of this trophy was that the winning teams were to host the next race so how do members feel if we ask last years winners to organise this years race?

Eddy Hamley sent a letter and a Grace before meals and unfortunately I received them separately and only noticed the letter after I had printed the Grace so, sorry to Eddy, and I have printed it all this issue.

Do you know any misers? I do (a few) anyway a friend of mine who had worked all of his life, had saved all of his money, and was a real miser when it came to his money. He told his wife, "When I die, I want you to take all my money and put it in the coffin with me. I want to take my money to the afterlife with me." And so he got his wife to promise him with all her heart that when he died, she would put all of the money in the casket with him. Well, he died. He was laid out in the coffin, his wife was sitting there dressed in black, and her friend was sitting next to her. When they finished the ceremony, just before the undertakers got ready to close the coffin, the wife said, "Wait just a minute!" She had a box with her, She came over with the box and put it in the coffin. Then the undertakers the nailed it down, and they rolled it away.. Her friend said, "Girl, I know you weren't fool enough to put all that money in there with your husband." The loyal wife replied, "Listen, I'm a Christian, I can't go back on my word. I promised him that I was going to put that money in that casket with him." "You mean to tell me you put that money in the coffin with him!!!!?" "I sure did," said the wife. "I got it all together, put it into my account and wrote him a cheque. If he can cash it, he can spend it."

Keep smiling shipmates

John Clawson Editorquintus1

Letters to the Editor- Letters to the Editor -Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed

A few days ago I came across a photo of the one/eighth scale model of a Silhouette 11, based on S11 1209. This is the model which is in the National Maritime Museum at Falmouth, and the photo was taken on the eve of the presentation by the SOIA to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

The yacht herself was made by me, using 1mm three ply aviation quality Finnish birch plywood, and the sails were made by Christine. I used Tuckers plans as full

size. The ballast keel is cast lead, and the bilge keels are in brass plate, painted to resemble galvanising. She floats to the correct waterline.

As those who have visited the museum know, she is in a glass case with a lot of other models up the steps on the right as you go in. We must have many members who haven't and possibly cannot, visit the museum, so I thought you might be interested in publishing the enclosed copy, which was done on my computer from a smaller original.



Changing the subject : We will probably return to Denmark and Venture at the end of April 2005, and hopefully will be back in commission by mid May. Whilst we acknowledge that the weather will be the dominating factor in our wanderings in '05, our intention is to go east around the bottom of Sweden, and then up the east coast into the Swedish skagen, and towards Stockholm. If time and weather permit, east from Stockholm to the Finnish Aaland Islands, and Mariehamn before returning once more to Svendborg, which is now to all intents and purposes, our home port. When we arrived back in Svendborg port at the end of August last year, the harbour master greeted us with "Ah hello! Venture ! Welcome home ! No harbour dues..... " We spent three weeks in the harbour at Thuro Bund, where we lay up, with an alongside berth, water and electricity, and car parking, with no charges what so ever. Chris and I are looking forward very much to rejoining the boat, and renewing all the friendships which have developed since we first arrived there in '02. To conclude may I extend all good wishes to the SOIA , the Officers and Members for the coming season. Fair winds Tom Eaves

Dear Ed

Well, the Rally was nearly upon us when the Commodore asked me if I would say grace at the dinner. Yes, I said and then thought, what do you say for grace having had no experience in this matter. A longstanding member of our group Anne Brookes came to my rescue. "I think I will be able to help you, if you wish", she said and later provided me with the following:

Thank you Lord for a bit of sun

A bit of work and a bit of fun

Thanks for our health, our keep to make

And a bit to spare for others sake.

Thank you too for a bit of song

And a tale , and a book to help us along.

For our daily bread and a bit of butter

And tonight , our lovely supper

I read it and thought it was just right for the occasion. Many people commented to me on the rendition. But it was not until afterwards I asked Anne where did she copy it from. "I composed it myself" she replied. There is so much talent laying hidden.

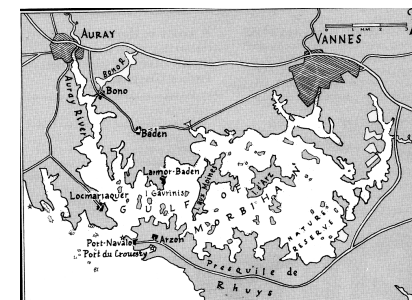
Eddy Hamley

To the Morbihan?

There is talk of a possible SOIA expedition to the Morbihan in 2005. I can thoroughly recommend this as a trail-sail venue, as three of us – John Clawson, Dave Milner and myself – took our boats down there straight after attending the Plymouth Rally in about 1980.

It is a splendid area to explore for a couple of weeks. Admiralty chart 2358 covers the whole of the gulf and will be indispensable. A search of available reprints from sailing magazines will also provide useful local knowledge.

Despite the bewildering network of islands and rocky islets, navigating is relatively easy (much easier than amongst the Scilly Isles for instance). The larger ones – Isle d'Artz and Isle aux Moines are well worth a visit. Many



of the smaller ones are privately owned and you can't land, but large notices will warn you of this. A frustrating feature of the area is the number of oyster beds unmistakable groups of withies (often iron poles, not saplings, so beware) mostly in the shallows, but often occurring just in the spot you fancy anchoring in. Don't chance it, keep well away from them. A typical case is in the approach to Locmariaquer near the south west entrance to the Morbihan. At first sight they completely block off the small harbour, but in fact there is a twisty channel which gets you safely in. This little town is worth looking at, with its interesting prehistoric monuments nearby at Carnac, all easily walkable.



Organising the trip was very simple. An early booking was necessary, to ensure that we could cross to Brittany the day after the Rally finished. Documentation was minimal, we just made sure we had our boats SSR registered and met the usual

requirements for continental motoring. There is no need for International certificates of competence, or the C.E.F.N.I. certificate, which you need if you are going to sail up rivers beyond any sea locks.

Vannes can be reached in a comfortable day's motoring from St Malo or Roscoff and it isn't necessary to use motorways, so you will find it a relatively easy drive. The small marina is right in the middle of this delightful mediaeval town. Just keep on driving downhill and you will arrive there.

We made no advance arrangements for launching or car parking during our intended 10 day stay, other than to determine that we would make for Vannes at the northern and central part of the Morbihan. We did know that launching was possible though, and, having arrived very early in the morning, a visit to the helpful Capitainerie on the quayside found us a local café owner who would put our cars in his yard for a couple of weeks at no cost. The marina at Vannes is locked off from the main waterway, and the best launching spot is half a mile south of the locks, where there is ample space to prepare for launching and a very easy slipway.

We chose to base the cruise on Vannes simply because it was the nearest access point to the road system, approaching from the north. The main sailing centres for the Morbihan though, are at its entrance to the Atlantic, where there are huge marinas at Port du Crousty and Port Navalo. A direct route from Vannes to Navalo is about 11 miles, but unless you intend to go outside the gulf, perhaps to Belle Isle, some 10 miles distant, it will pay you to explore the many little anchorages such as Lamor-Barden, Ile de Boedic, and Gavrinis.

Tides can run fast in the Morbihan, you can easily find yourself doing 12 knots over the ground at Springs, so it is wise to anticipate any hazards (rocks!) well ahead. For this reason, timing a departure from any of the locations at the heads of either the river Vannes or Auray is important, as the Morbihan can empty very swiftly. We spent an agonising morning waiting for high water alongside the quay at Vannes before we felt confident about venturing south west into the Morbihan proper.

Locmariaquer is a good departure point for a trip north up the river Auray, to the town of the same name, some five miles north. On the way you will pass a sheltered and pretty anchorage at Rocher, but there are no facilities, and for these you need to go another couple of miles to the tiny harbour at Port de Bono. The same distance beyond this is Auray, a mediaeval walled town where you can either tie up against the wall (though it dries out) or use visitors' moorings out in the river.

The south eastern corner of the Morbihan is a lovely one to explore, but be aware that a large part of it is a nature reserve, and landing may be restricted.

The Morbihan is generally shallow, so a Silhouette may easily get into places denied to larger boats. However, there are many more boats of a similar size to ours in the Morbihan, and you will find entire families crammed aboard an eighteen foot yacht, setting off for a Friday afternoon picnic, so don't expect to have the place to yourself. If a group of boats are going, it would be useful if at least one of them carried or towed a small inflatable - very useful for ferrying crews ashore where you have had to anchor just off the beach or quay. However, it is also possible to dry out for the day in many places and walk ashore.

Organising the same trip today should be even easier with the benefit of the internet. Although we crossed from Plymouth to Roscoff, there may be cheaper options (try Condor Ferries) from Poole to St Malo.

Gentleman's Weekend / Lay-up Supper. 4-5th December 2004

After several failed attempts to get sufficient members together at the same time for a lay-up supper at our usual venue, Sale Waterpark on the outskirts of Manchester, we decided to combine it with a sailing event on Windermere.

The plan was to race to the south of the lake, have a lay-up supper at The Boathouse Restaurant, race back to Bowness, then a farewell drink at the YHA at Ambleside. Two Silhouettes were

on trailers parked in driveways and only two on the lake but fortunately standby vessels were available in the shape of a 32.2 Jenneau, owned by Mark, Ken Hoosen's LM27 and an LM24 (sort of, may as well be) owned by the Clothier brothers Phil and Terry.

Ken Hoosen and two friends Ben and Pete, Ken Clarke and myself boarded the LM 27 to meet with the remaining boats and crews waiting at Ferry Nab. Ken Clarke was allowed to take the helm with Ken Hoosen constantly hailing instructions until he gave up skippering and retired to his bunk whereupon the boat then sailed marvellously.

Nine sailors with various levels of experience gathered at the Spinnaker Bar at Bowness Marina to be allocated places on the three boats in an effort to fairly balance the skills.

LM27	-	Ken Hoosen Ken Clarke Ben (guest)
LM24	-	Terry Clothier Phil Clothier Graham Platts
Jeanneau 32	-	Mark (guest) Alan (guest) Pete (guest)

The 5 min gun was fired at 13:55 and the race started from just south of Ferry Nab at 14:00.

Ken Hoosen led the field initially and seemed the early winner but then the Jeanneau came in to its own as expected and disappeared from sight. The race was then between the two LM's and we were failing miserably so Terry ordered tea. No sooner had Phil put the kettle on the wind picked up and he was to hold it in place for almost the whole race.

With still a third of the race to go Marks' team phoned back saying they had crossed the finish line and preparing to berth alongside the jetty at the Lakeside Hotel. The race continued between the two LM's and it appeared that we were slowly gaining on



Ken's team then they seemed to lose wind and pace altogether and we overtook drinking our belated cups of tea. It was a close neck and neck thing but we managed to pip them at the post with what I regarded as final stage, clever, tactical tacking. The race over we made our way to the jetty and rafted alongside the winning boat to a splendid mulled wine reception accompanied with hot mince pies and brandy sauce compliments to Mark le chef who in true competitive spirit rubbed in and reminded us of who came first.

Unfortunately Tanya my dear wife had recently put us on a Carol Vordaman's 'detox' diet so could not, did not and dared not participate, oh well!

The lay-up supper was booked for 19:30 and all hands dressed for the occasion, the majority sporting rather smart dinner suits and a few including myself in jeans and sport shirts, I guess somebody was misinformed. Armed with rather fancy party hats and table crackers we called in for a quick aperitif at the Lakeside Hotel on our way to the Boat House Restaurant and soon showed our table. Entertainment throughout the evening was mainly provided by Mark's endless store of jokes and Alan's heckling who both reminded us all again who came first and who came last.

The meal proved excellent, everyone commented on the quality and the wine flowed freely. The freshly squeezed orange and water was okay too I suppose but I did find it quite amusing to observe through sober eyes the antics of the alcoholics including Alan's short speech after which he missed his chair on re-seating and rolled onto the floor. (Was it an accident?)

On our way back to the boats we tried to gatecrash a private party at the Lakeside hotel but failed, an attempt to entice a couple of attractive blondes back with us failed also. Back on board, the carol singing / disco started keeping us and all the local guests awake until the early hours of the morning. Marks jokes continued between comments of who came first and last in the race and the champagne flowed along with sterilised water. Anybody that tried to sleep during the festivities had the Captain's hat donned and photographic evidence taken until eventually sore throats and sore heads got the better of us and we retired to our respective boats.

The Jeaneau kitchen came alive and the smell of bacon, sausage and eggs hit the fresh morning air and soon the traffic of extra provisions and crockery made their way along the raft toward the kitchen and full plates returned. Breakfast was alfresco as we followed the December sunrise and I tucked into my meusli, fruit and nuts with envy but I had no pots to wash Ah!

I took a small dinghy ride to Fell Foot Park while the rest finished their breakfast taking a few photos of the flotilla, the weather conditions were excellent with a nice breeze building up from the South in an obliging preparation for the morning race. I wasn't sure about the conditions of the crew though when a bucket appeared on one stern deck filled with something that wasn't soup.

The race was on, first one gun shot and then I'm sure it was seven minutes later not five that the start gun fired, I guess Ken Hoosen was not quite ready. As yesterday, as expected the Jeaneau soon left the LM's behind as their crew waved goodbye shouting, 'see you at the finish' or was it the bar? Again the two LM's battled it out and Ken Hoosen's team found calm water again and we thought they'd blown their chance again but slowly and surely they retrieved the situation and crept slowly by us. Our team tried every trick in the book, using a boat hook for an absent whisker pole and hand gibing the main to take advantage of every fickle characteristic change of the following wind with total concentration but inevitably resigned ourselves to crossing the finishing line last. They had got their revenge.

We met the rest of the crews in the Marina where their boats were already moored and welcomed with reminders again from Mark and Alan as to whom came first and whom came last. A few of us then boarded Ken's LM for a slow casual sail back to Waterhead at the North end of the Lake where we drank a farewell tippie of Black Sheep Ale in the Youth Hostel bar and Mark announced the winners and losers once more or was it several times more while we discussed events for the following year. One more session between Xmas and New Year was on the cards plus an ambitious trip to the IOM, a sail across to the Channel Isles (not the Silhouettes) and of course the Windermere rally in May for starters. Here's to a good sailing year 2005 – Cheers!

A DECEMBER JOURNEY

This is a tale of two attempts to take my Silhouette IV *Coromandel* from her summer quarters at Martlesham Creek, near Woolbridge, to Levington Marina, on the River Orwell, for her winter lay-up. Perhaps there is a moral in there about predicting tides, there certainly is one about the joys of winter sailing.

I had moved *Coroniandel* from her berth in the Creek to a mooring at Kyson Point so that I could be ready, at a moments notice, to start her annual migration to Levington. A Tuesday in early December found me on board and all set to go. It was blowing more than a capful of wind from the northwest, about a heavy "five" I should think, but glorious sunlit days are not so numerous in December that you can afford to squander them with faintheartedness, and besides, the forecast did say it was diminishing. Low water at Deben Bar was around midday so my departure at about ten o'clock should give me ample time, with this wind, to be down the Deben and all ready to take the flood to Harwich and up the Orwell. So it was up with the normal jib and one reef in the main in deference to the north-wester, mooring slipped, and I was away. Or was I? I had hardly gone more than a few lengths, almost alongside a moored thirty-footer and yards on the "right" of Deben No.9 buoy when I ground to a halt, hard on the putty.

Luckily someone was working on board the thirty-footer and he kindly threw a warp over to pluck me off, at the same time offering the advice "you should take this bend very wide" as there was "not much water". I proceeded, a little more circumspectly this time, echo sounder and motor but jib down until I had a little more room to play with. Of course Troublesome Reach is a dead run in a north-wester, so my circumspect potter suddenly became a six knot dash and I watched in horror as the echo-sounder became a blur at around two to three feet. I was right in the middle of what goes for a channel in this be-nighted place so I just hung on and prayed. At this speed the first time she touched bottom she just put her bow down and ploughed on. But after three or four of these "excavations" gravity became too much for her, she slew gently to starboard with that quiet conviction which said that she definitely declined to proceed further, at least not for another three to four hours.

Nothing to do now but to get the main off her, no easy job as it was still fairly full of boisterous north-wester, then to get anchors and warps over the side. The gent. from the thirty footer sculled over to lend a hand and we did try to winch her to one of the mooring buoys but really all were doing was moving the buoy so I just settled down to do a few jobs around the boat, cook and early lunch and generally contemplate the lonely splendours of a Suffolk mud bank.

By the time I floated again the wind, as predicted, had disappeared tides were now all wrong for the trip to Levington, so it was back to Kyson and the problems of getting home to Felixtowe whilst my car was awaiting me at Levington. (There's a good argument for nautical almanacs including a section on local bus and train times!). Anyhow, the point of this story was when I returned to Kyson at lunchtime next day to collect some gear from the dinghy, the thirty footer, which at the equivalent tide-time on the previous day had been hard aground and leaning over to an angle of thirty degrees. Was now floating proudly at her mooring. There must have been a good metre increase in water level, if not more, than when I attempted my "agricultural" sailing the day before. So all I can say is "Tidal predictions — they're rubbish"! The only explanation I can offer is that the very strong north-westerly had "held" the previous high tide resulting in the following abnormally low "low" So, once again, I live and learn. Still I suppose you can hardly call yourself an East Coast Sailor if you haven't spent the odd tide sitting on a mud

All the foregoing meant that the Levington trip was postponed to approximately the same tide a fortnight later. Two days before Christmas and I was setting off on a sixteen mile coastal and river trip. Well that's a turn up for the books in itself, and just goes to bear out what I have always said that autumn, even very late autumn, is a great time for sailing our east coast waters. And what a sail it was. The sun, again, shining brilliantly, the wind, again, out of the north-west, but not much more than a high "four" this time. In deference to my previous Troublesome Reach troubles I motored gently down to Waldringfield with one eye firmly on the sounder. Not a bad scheme either as at least one buoy, Deben No.5, had gone off on its winter hibernation and I had to find my own channel around that particular bend. Then a quick hitch to one on Waldringfield's buoys allowed me to set my sails, once again the Jib and one reef, to my satisfaction. Then I was off down the Deben with a soldiers wind and was crossing the bar at almost exactly low water. Then what a glorious reach along the Felixstowe front to Landguard. The log never dropping below five knots, and before all you racing sailors start looking down your noses, five knots in a seventeen footer is not much off her maximum displacement speed. The autopilot held her bravely to her course whilst I busied myself tweaking a sheet here, spotting a buoy there, and generally enjoying myself "skinny" to be out there in the sunshine while the rest of the world were tearing around in small circles worrying about last minute Christmas presents.

That reach, plus a small deviation to avoid a freighter that would insist on using the Harwich channel just as I wanted to cross it, took me to Pye End buoy. Funny to think of the times I've searched the horizon for that little blighter and there I was sailing up to it without even trying. Then the long beat up to Levington. But even that was a pleasure on this day. The growing flood helped me on my way and, even to windward, *Coromandel* bustled along to such good effect that the speed through the water seldom dropped below four and a half knots.

The bone was really between her teeth now and I could not but laugh out loud with pleasure as twin plumes of spray burst and glisten in the sunlight as she busily shouldered her way through the waves that rushed eagerly to meet us outside the Harwich Breakwater. That first board took us right in to the Gristle Buoy. A short hitch, on starb'd, across to Harwich Town Quay then it was off up the Orwell with a quick glance across to Shotley Spit to see that my old friend the beacon was still missing, replaced by a mere buoy. Of course Soddes Law ensured that the next freighter, inbound for Parkstone, arrived at the Guard Buoy just in time for me to have to duck under her stern, and indeed, a bit later, my beating up the Orwell had to be fitted around the daily departure of "Norsky" from Ipswich. But on such a day as this little inconveniences of that sort just add to the fun.

The trip up Sea Reach to Levington revealed that the old Trimley No.1 buoy had been replaced by two new starboard buoys, and this confirmed the "buzz" I had heard that there was to be a general revision of the Orwell buoyage. But there was no need to worry about navigation buoys on this sparkling December day. All too soon Levington was abeam and it was back to "Seagull" power at the Fairway Buoy and in to the Marina. It had been one of those trips when I didn't know whether to be happy at the pace *Coromandel* had maintained or sorry that the trip was over all too quickly. But over it was, and there in her marina berth *Coromandel* sat, looking quite perky and pleased with herself, as well she might, as the freshly gathered salt spray gradually dried from her top-sides in the pale wintery sunshine. While all around her, her bigger and grander sisters had long since retired to drier, on-shore, quarters. Well done little ship! Only three months before we can cast-off again. But even that is going to seem a long, long time after a trip as good as this one had been. *Peter Boucherat (from journal no. 288)*

EMBARRASSING MOMENTS

We all have them don't we? And there is little doubt that they influence subsequent sailing. Selecting three items out of my wealth of inexperience I offer these for consideration.

Our first full weeks sailing holiday in the Dart from a Visitors Mooring.

Liz and myself sharing our S11 *Pisces* with Little Sam, our Yorkshire Terrier and honorary bosun. Nosing into the jetty at Dittisham for lunch at the “Ferryboat”, we tied up among several other boats with a Bow line. After a nice lunch, Liz “powdered her nose” whilst I returned to the boat with Sam. Stepping over the pulpit rail, I slipped with Liz’s favourite seadog in my arms, a gentle sideslip and a slow immersion between *Pisces*’ bow and that of an adjacent *Lysander*!!! The trouble was that I daren’t get Sam wet, Liz would be furious. Always practical, I held him above my head while I settled into the spring tide. Well; those fellows who rushed up to help me out from between the boats couldn’t understand me shouting “Save Sam I’m all right” they must have thought I was barmy. Liz came back, I’m towelling off in the Silhouette — no mean job that for a chunky 50 year old — Sam happily dry. But the sting came the following day.

Repeating the mooring up to the Dinisham Jetty for a liquid lunch, a sober young lady — all of 8 years old — watched me step over the pulpit gently with Sam in my arms — oh so neatly — “Good morning” says I, “Good morning” says she, “Are you the funny man who fell in yesterday?” What a blow, when I’m trying to favourably impress my new wife, who wasn’t keen on sailing. Actually the holiday started erratically, a trailer tyre blew out en route making us late for the tide to launch from the public slipway in Dartmouth. As you know, stories of launches and recovery alongside the ferry are commonplace. Silhouettes swing wonderfully in the Ferry’s backwash. However, on this occasion, we rapidly backed the trailer down the ramp, after more or less rigging the mast and setting a few lines, trying to beat the diminishing tide. At this stage a rather portly “naval” gentleman who had been a kindly extra hand with lines and things — incidentally commenting on some of these Gin Palace Sailors who never go anywhere “Why I brought that 50ft Yacht over from Brittany with the owner as crew just last month”, pointing to a very seamanlike ketch in the river, took a steadying line as I had to unhitch the trailer and lengthen the trailer nose line just to reach the water. Well — nobody told me that there was a 2ft drop at the end of the slipway plop. *Pisces* was floating but there was no sign of the trailer — John, Liz and Naval chap thirty feet away on the end of lots of lines. The next half hour with me and a boathook hanging from *Pisces*’ bow, and the Naval chap calling advice and pulling strings, thoughts of Naval Chap’s obvious experience and sailing skills — oh well! Eventually we were ready to set off for our Dittisham mooring, when our Naval Chap expounded on the advantages of sailing in Plymouth Sound — bags of room— fewer tidal problems than on the Dart, possibility of moorings etc. etc. Whew — what a day.

The following day Liz and I visited Dartmouth Castle, so impressive, lovely views of the river and mouth, delightful. We even meet the Official Custodian of the Castle — Good Lord — our Naval Chap, full of helpful advice the previous day.

Years go by and we buy a Westerley Pageant, renamed *Tamar Star*, we must have learnt something — we sail in Plymouth now. But have we had seven years experience or one year’s experience seven times over I sometimes ask myself.

Buying from Hayling Island we decide to trail her back, so we buy a trailer and spend a fortune on new tyres, bearings, extra struts just to provide a good safety margin. The literature says designed scale weight 1950kg the trailer had been used for a 2 tonne powerboat, so new bits and pieces plus extra welded struts and a hired Range Rover we couldn’t go wrong. That is until the two inside trailer wheels overtook us on the Motorway near Easfleigh. Pageants have a 3 tonne towing weight! Well this Policeman wanted, indeed insisted, that I pay £500 for a crane to come from Swans in Southampton to lift the boat off the *M27*. The AX Recovery wouldn’t help because the trailer width proved to be 3 inches wider than the 8 foot maximum. A “Recovery” Company called in by the AX and Police turned up but without any jacks — I won’t elaborate on Liz’s attitude of mind but it’s still reflected in our sailing rapport!

Eventually the Police really became helpful — I suspect a grown man crying helped — they ran a recovery convoy, police cars, recovery truck, *Tamar Star* on jury rigged wheels, and us, all into the Magistrates Court Car Park in Eastleigh. The last 200 yards without any near side wheels on the trailer, just dragging. The Recovery Company got summonsed for parking in a Police Car Park and for driving without adequate lighting, but these were revoked with the help of the original “coppers”, God bless ‘em.

Well, rebuilds on site, tow to Weston-super-Mare losing one trailer wheel out of four en route by the recovery company, completes that part of the long story. Professional transport to Plymouth, with the trailer sold at a loss-another!. However the embarrassing bit is that I was a design engineer for many years, yet the trailer/boat weight combination was such that while theoretically the trailer strength was adequate, the harmonic frequency of the suspension affected the inside wheel nuts which simply loosened and fell off, while the off-side nuts tightened so much that I broke a wheel nut brace removing them. Lock nuts or split pins would have saved the day.

Liz and I still sail *Tamar Star* from Oreston, we don’t shout at each other too often, but Liz insists I shouldn’t have changed the name from *Audi 11*—what do you think!

John Greengrass

The above was published in a past edition of The Silhouette Owner. John no longer has “Tamar Star” but still sails out of Plymouth in “Erini”

THE STORY OF A SILHOUETTE

by Deadwood

It all began, as these things often do, with two friends wishing their lives away over a couple of pints. A week or two later in the same lounge bar, Clive told me that he had met an acquaintance of a mutual friend who owned a Silhouette, and that she could be for sale. A lengthy discussion was obviously called for, helped along by a few more pints of course. It's thirsty work this discussing!

We eventually decided to at least have a look at this boat, as it seemed an opportunity not to be missed, and even at this stage we thought it best to seek the opinion of Clive's wife, Jean. After more discussion a meeting the owner was arranged. In due course we set off one very cold winter's morning to meet Bruce and his family who were going to Anglesey, and we followed them to the site near Red Wharf Bay, where the boat was standing on her trailer. We had a good look around her, and retired to a local hostelry to chat about what we had found, over lunch, our experience of surveying limited to raiding the public library for all the books we could find on the subject. We decided that we could do such repairs as were needed, and returned to settle the deal. Bruce and I were looking into the cockpit portside when Clive's finger came through the bulkhead, just under our noses. "That bit's not too good" said a voice from inside the cabin, and the price was adjusted accordingly. A fortnight or so later, Clive and I hired a towing vehicle, and returned to Anglesey to bring the boat home, we visited the same hostelry as before, I was beginning to enjoy this sailing lark

LITTLE DID I KNOW!!

We started with the last survey report and decided that we had let ourselves in for a little more than we had bargained when I fell through the foredeck.

Lesson One:- When you survey a wooden boat make sure that it's glue that's holding her together and not ICE!

So, we took the decks off, followed by bits of the topsides, bits of framing, the bridgedeck and water-tight bulkhead. I recall looking at the coach roof and saying to Clive that if that was as bad as the rest, we might as well scrap the whole idea.

We had a period then when other things got in the way of boat repairs, earning the money to pay for them being the most tedious of these, but used the time to find useful things like suppliers of marine-ply, hardwoods and such-like commodities. When we eventually got restarted, we found that we were far from happy with much of what had already been done, so we took out some more bits of boat. We decided that it would probably be easier to replace complete sections of the frames and reskin the whole thing from the chines upwards than fiddle about with bits and pieces.

Lesson Two:- IT IS.

So, with new bulkheads made up in half-inch thick marine-ply a new section of gun'l stringer from midships to transom portside and new deck beams ready sawn, we had another look at the coachroof, yes you're right, that came off too, sides front canines the lot. At around this time we were reminded by Jean that it was four months to our holiday, not all that long to horror of horrors *Bonfire Night!*

Lesson Three:- Make sure that your good lady is totally committed and that you have a good surplus of Brownie points.

We rebuilt the garage roof and re-carpeted the hall stairs and landing to boost our score.

March gave way to April, we cut out the new side skin panels and started putting things back together, at this time all that was left on the trailer was the bottom with some framing and the cabin bulkhead sticking up in the middle, with just enough of the starboard side still attached to give some shape and strength. Clive was terrific at making up "kits of bits" during the week, so that we could fit them at weekends or when there was some, any spare time, increasingly that meant any time not spent sleeping or working (for money). He also made a new mast and an Oak tiller of which anybody could be proud.

July followed May and June as it surely must, when it was "summer" we worked in the garage glad of the new roof, when the sun came out to play we worked outside on the boat. The portside skin went on, new foredeck beams went in, followed by new afterdeck beams. The starboard side was replaced, a new transom joined the growing structure then it was holiday time, and launch day was just one week away.

WHAT A WEEK! We rebuilt the coachroof completely, Clive reminded me of that earlier statement about scrapping the boat, we'd learnt a lot since then. We replaced some dodgy looking patches in the bottom, and primed the whole lot ready for new paint, when the summer fell upon us once again, we finally bought the cover we had promised ourselves way back at the beginning, and painted the decks and coachroof under it at one-o'clock in the morning. On Friday we made and fitted the new cabin windows and refitted the cockpit lockers and floorboards etc. Saturday morning saw the rig being tried on and then the whole lot packed up ready to go to Scotland later in the day.

We made our way to Kippford without fuss, and parked the boat at the caravan which my friends have there, and spent Sunday recovering from the previous week's exertions.

At high tide on Monday 4th August S11 577 was renamed *Windsong* by Mrs. J. Hardisty as she was relaunched with full and proper ceremony. Some of the champers actually went on the boat, it does have its attraction this sailing lark!

P.S. Windsong floated and we logged some hours sailing before we took real notice of the water leaking in round the keel, not enough to spoil the holiday, but definitely needing attention, and that's another story.

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A very warm welcome to **Merrik Macdonald Burrell** from Argyll who signed articles this month. (Member No. 600)

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