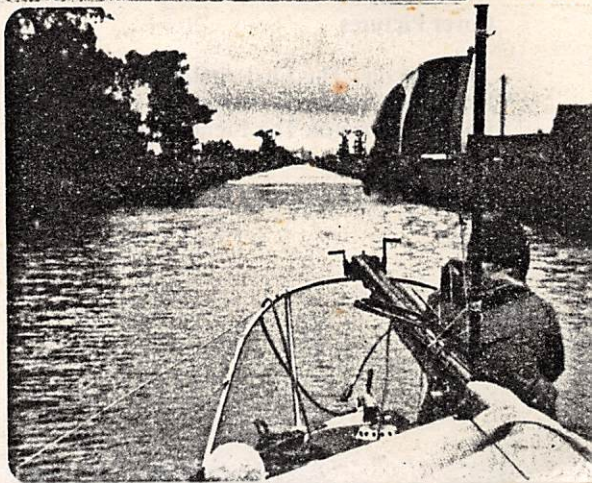
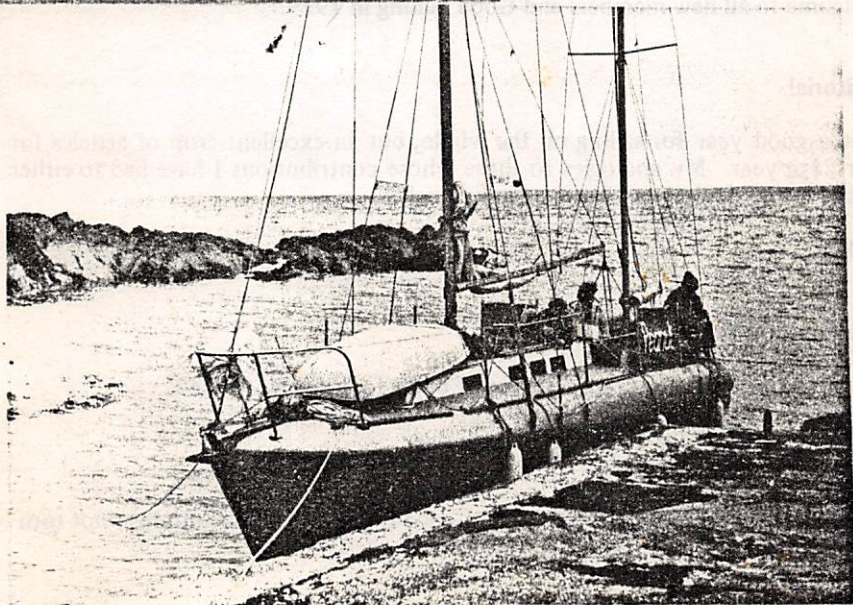
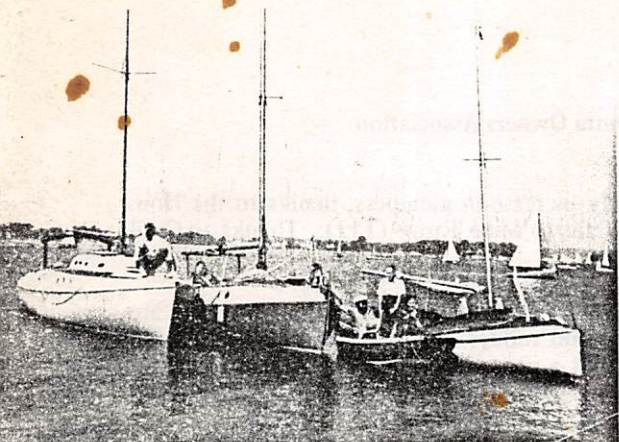


Atalanta

OWNERS' ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

1978/1979



From Alan Vines; President of Atalanta Owners Association.

During 1978 there has been a steady increase in members, thanks to the Hon. Sec. Cyril Staal has handed the Bulletin to Mike Rowe (T11). Thanks to Cyril and good wishes to his successor.

There are two items of equipment which cause more trouble than most and are difficult to repair at sea - the engine and rudder. For years, I sailed in a small cruiser with no engine or outboard but a pair of sweeps. The Atalanta cockpit is ideal for using sweeps.

Welcome to all new members and Good Sailing in 1979.

Editorial.

Not a good year for sailing on the whole, but an excellent crop of articles for our 25th year. My apologies to those whose contributions I have had to either cut or omit. Truly an embarrassment of riches!

M.D.R.

For Sale and Wanted

Refer to Hon. Sec. for up to date list of boats for sale and wanted.

- A9 - Coventry Victor Engine for sale.
- A160 - Engine wanted.
- A139 - Trailer wanted.
- A166 - Used Main Sail and $\frac{3}{4}$ Rig Genoa for sale. Fair Conditions - not torn
- T11 - Trailer, Storm Jib and Try Sail wanted.

Cover Pictures

- 25 Years on - The First Atalantas.
- Peanut At Auskerry.
- Happy Return on The French Canals.

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ATALANTA OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Hon. Sec. Maj. Gen. W. Odling C.B., O.B.E., M.C., D.C.

Hon. Editor M.D. Rowe,

PEANUT TO THE NORTHERN ISLES

Brian & Wendy Burnett

After we bought our A31 hull nine years ago, we nursed ourselves through the following years of blood, sweat and tears (see 66/67 Bulletin) with the thought that "one day" the sacrifices would be justified when "Peanut" was at last afloat. However, what with the necessity of earning a living, and domestic problems such as dry rot and weeds, by the end of the 1977 season, all we'd managed was a few short holidays and the odd weekend afloat. Drastic action was obviously necessary so we put the house up for sale, handed in our notice at work, and laid plans for a trip to Shetland.

On 26th April, 1978, the 1355 Shipping forecast for the Irish Sea was NE 4-5, showers, good; which seemed reasonable for our first leg to Port St. Mary, Isle of Man. It proved to be the most miserable passage of the whole trip - crew Peter was sick, Brian and I tired after the preparations and farewells, and we were all dreadfully cold. The next long run, up to Campbeltown, was little better, with calm and fog laid on to vary the misery. Not a propitious beginning!

The magic started on 6th May when we saw a great northern diver in breeding plumage as we set off early from West Loch Tarbert bound for the Crinan Canal. This gateway to the islands was a new and exhausting experience. Brian operated the locks while I reluctantly took over the motor. We didn't have much time to appreciate the scenery, but revelled in the sun that shone on us when we stopped for lunch and washed our hair in the cockpit. When we reached Crinan we had a fair wind, so decided to get as far North as possible before nightfall. We sailed, drifted and eventually motored to Puilladobhrain (pronounced Puldorran), which must be one of the loveliest anchorages in the world. Here we lingered for a few days, painting the coachroof, attending to varnish-work and studying the wildlife.

It was difficult to sail up the West coast without exploring it more thoroughly. But Shetland was the goal this year, so we resolved to press on, by way of compensation seeking another beauty-spot for our next work-stop.

A series of cold, but pleasantly sunny, runs took us via the Sound of Mull, Ardnamurchan, Sound of Sleat, Kyle of Lochalsh, Inner Sound and the North Minch to the Summer Isles, where we ran up on the beach at Tanera Mor to scrub and antifoul.

The landscape was now becoming inexpressibly impressive - majestic and awesome. Bleak rock, bare hills, snow-capped mountains - I can't better the Clyde Cruising Club guide, which describes it as "lunar". We landed on Handa to inspect the sea-bird cliffs, explored the lochs and hillsides around Loch Laxford, then faced our first big hurdle - Cape Wrath. We had been assured so far by various locals that "Peanut" was the first yacht North this season so were a bit put out when "Hornpipe", a large ketch with charter crew aboard, overtook us about a mile South of the Cape! With Gordonstoun School's "Sea Spirit" only a mile or two astern, the remote North-west coast seemed excessively crowded that day. Paradoxically, the peaceful remoteness seemed

emphasised when "Sea Spirit" graciously apologised for sharing our anchorage that night! A far cry from the South coast marinas.

The dreaded Cape ("Wrath" may be disappointingly translated from the Norse as "place where the land changes direction") was in benevolent mood - huge swell, but otherwise calm with the Duslic Rock breaking spectacularly, so easily avoided. The even more feared Pentland Firth was friendly too. We feel strongly that careful attention to forecasts and tide-tables pays dividends, as worst conditions are obviously going to occur when one strong tide meets another or is opposed to a fresh wind. We found the Admiralty tidal atlas invaluable, as it makes the overall pattern so clear.

On our first morning in Orkney, we awoke to thick fog. It cleared two days later to allow us to slip across to Scapa Bay, where strong winds made us decide to stay put for a few days. Here we were well entertained by John, skipper of the Pilot boat which meets the tankers coming into the oil base at Flotta. As a native of Orkney, John was able to advise us on local conditions, recommend places to visit and to keep us amused with tales of the islands.

Highly recommended was Auskerry, a tiny island with nothing on it but an un-manned lighthouse, a semi-derelict house and a few rusty tractors. We viewed the 20-foot wide "harbour" with some apprehension, but when "Peanut" was safely moored to the rocks we spent four happy hours ashore there, watching and filming three hundred grey seals and various sea birds. When we arrived at Stronsay that evening, John was on the pier to welcome us and invited us to his house.

This kind of hospitality is typical of that which we received throughout Orkney and Shetland. As naturalists we were a little disappointed in the Northern Isles - (the shocking summer didn't help!) but the wonderful, friendly people have made us determined to go there again some day.

Perhaps we shouldn't admit that another highlight of our visit to Orkney was a day out in a car. This really is the best way to "do" the archaeological sites, which definitely merit a visit. The 4,500 year old village of Skara Brae made us appreciate the comparative luxury of life afloat, and we were intrigued by the Maeshowe tomb. The Vikings raided this, and, being true vandals, left graffiti all over the walls to tell posterity what they had done. This is the largest piece of runic writing anywhere in Europe, and the decorations and drawings which illustrate it give a base for the designs of the attractive silver jewellery which is produced in Orkney.

Fair Isle lived up to its name, for here we enjoyed almost the only sunshine in two months in the Northern Isles. The haven is not very comfortable, though perfectly safe in summer, and it allows two short runs from Orkney to Shetland instead of one long one. It was well worth the visit. Life in an island community of eighty people is hard to visualise, but their relaxed warmth and friendliness, their trust and generosity suggest that they have something which most of modern society lacks. We found the same delightful atmosphere in

Fetlar, Northern Shetland, population 100, where we were gale-bound for nearly a week. It was interesting here to contrast the rural life ashore with the evidence of big business in the tugs and floating docks of the oil industry which were sheltering in "our" anchorage, in Tresta Wick. The famous snowy owls proved elusive, as did the red-necked phalarope which we had hoped to see. However, we did see my first wild otter, which justified the whole trip!

The day we left Fetlar proved eventful. It started with a very pleasant sail from Tresta round to Mid Yell Sound, and back to the North end of Fetlar to drop off Nick, a hospitable inhabitant who'd enjoyed the opportunity for a sail. We waved goodbye and set off into a sparkling blue sea, with the sun shining down on us and the many beautiful rocky islets along our way. At 1832, 9th July, we logged Mu Ness abeam, the islands safely astern, and set a course, although we had good visibility and could almost see our destination, Baltasound.

However -- and I now quote from the log --

time		mileage
1910	Set course 320 C in thick fog which suddenly enveloped us.	
?	Rocks close ahead! Reversed and turned out. Tried going South, as we believed ourselves to be North of Baltasound, (this later proved correct). However, more rocks, so proceeded North at two knots, with rocks close on Port beam.	c.795.4
2045	Altered course to East, Wendy on bow to look out and listen.	797.8
2100	Land ahead - depth 30ft. Weedy bottom just visible.	798.3
	We were in a very small bay, which gave us a clue as to our position. We headed out, then North along the coast, until it turned West, when we followed it in - mostly by listening to the breakers, as we could see very little.	
2145	After creeping along the rocks in fairly shallow water - (clear bottom, sand and weed) we saw houses (!) and were hailed from a rock and directed to anchorage - in Haroldswick.	799.4

Never has the anchor gone down with such relief. It was fortunate that the weather was calm enough and the water sufficiently clear for us to risk this little crawl along the rocks. We certainly didn't relish the idea of getting offshore among the tankers - the radar reflector is some comfort, but offers no guarantee against being run down.

I quote our log of the next run, too, because in a way this, the rounding of Muckle Flugga, was the climax of the trip.

11th July, 1978.

H.W. Dover 1530

1112	Weighed anchor, Haroldswick	800.6
1124	Off motor, set big jib and main. N 3-4	801.5
1145	Motor on - motor-sailing, to make good a reasonable course	802.4
1355	Motor off. Sailing WNW. Due East of the Noup.	812.5
	Shipping forecast; Viking: N4-5 2 fair - good	
	Fair Isle: NE 2/3 "	
1447	Out Stack and all Britain due South Photographs	815.0
	Out Stack about ½ mile off.	
1600	Motor on, jib off.	c819.0
1755	All fast, Culli Voe pier.	827.5

By now, we were getting rather fed up with the cold and so decided to make a fairly fast passage South, before the obliging Northerlies realised what we were up to. You may appreciate how cold it was when we tell you that the skipper of a Norwegian yacht was obliged to buy a warm coat in Fair Isle - the first time that such an item had been sold to a visitor - and that another Norwegian was seen struggling aboard with a brand new paraffin heater under his arm.

After another sunny day on Fair Isle we hurried South. Near Auskerry again, we saw a dead baby whale - about 15' long. We don't know what had happened to him, but have been told that Russian boats are still whaling around our shores, so maybe he had lost his mother.

1245, 20th July, Drambuie!

With 1,000 miles and 6-7 knots on the log, we felt justified in having a small celebration. We could see the pinewoods on the South side of the Moray Firth, the temperature allowed us to sail in one jumper and no long-johns and, as we entered Inverness Firth, we were treated to a magnificent display from a school of dolphins. We spent the next ten days exploring the Moray Firth, enjoying more close encounters with the dolphins and appreciating the hospitality of the local sailing fraternity. Among these were Jeannie and "Crash" Amos, of A100, "Jaunty".

After the peaceful remoteness of the Northern Isles we expected to find the Caledonian Canal in August quite horrific. Far from it. The locks were busy, but the traffic was spread out through the lochs, leaving us free to enjoy the beautiful scenery in peace. Lochs Oich and Lochy were particularly lovely, and we thoroughly enjoyed the peaceful passage through the canal, but it was good to smell the seaweed again when we reached Corpach. However, with a slightly nervous crew aboard we decided to stay well inland, and went up Loch Eil, where we again witnessed an exciting display, this time from porpoises, which were rolling and leaping just as the dolphins had done. We potted down Loch Linnhe, under the bridge at Ballachulish and up Loch Leven, then picked up a

crew who were anxious to visit Iona so a circumnavigation of Mull was next on the agenda. We fitted in a few rowing sessions for their children, high life in Tobermory, energetic walks, peaceful evenings at Gometra and Loch Lathaig, a look at Fingal's Cave, a visit to Iona, painting and bread-making sessions, an exciting anchorage among the rocks in Tinker's Hole, and a return visit to Puilladobhrain and "Tigh an Truish" - the pub where the Highlanders used to exchange their kilts for trousers before venturing South.

We changed crews again at Oban and set off for the Small Isles - Muck, Eigg, Rhum and Canna. We left Muck out this time, but visited the others and loved them all, especially Eigg, where we spent a full day walking, bird-watching, botanising, sunbathing - and one brave soul even had a swim. After a night at Arinagour, Coll, we sailed through the Treshnish Islands, past Staffa and through the Sound of Iona again, then returned a crew member to Oban before setting out for home.

Jura was veiled in fog, which lifted as we reached the Sound of Islay. We were carried through here at great speed, with following wind and tide. Then we had quite a fight up to another group of "Small Isles" at the South end of Jura. 'Holding' here was reported as poor, so we lay alongside a pier for two nights, in some discomfort, but had a good time ashore, exploring the island on the school bus, whose driver is also postman, coastguard, delivery boy, milkman, and conducted tour guide. He even stopped the bus to take us on a mushroom-gathering walk!

On to Port Ellen, Islay, then goodbye to Scotland, as we sailed on to Northern Ireland. We intended to stop for a few hours walk ashore at Rathlin Island, but on entering the "refuge", we fouled a pot buoy, so spent a couple of hours with the boathook sorting out that problem. Our crew, meanwhile, went off in search of a skin-diver and brought half the population of the island to our aid. They arrived just after we'd freed the propellor, but chatted with us for an hour or so, and gave us a parting gift of giant mushrooms, which lasted two meals. Larne, our destination that night, was confusing to say the least, as the navigation lights were completely overshadowed by the lights on the power station and the ferry jetties. We had a good welcome here, but when we went on to Portavogie the Harbourmaster there told us that yachts were not welcome as the harbour was so busy with fishing boats. The local coastguard was glad to see us, though, and was very friendly and helpful.

After a pleasant day with friends in Port St. Mary we left the Isle of Man in the early Hours, to catch the tide up the Conwy - quite an exciting homecoming, with our longest trip ever behind us, so much learned, so many new friends, and so many promises to return --- we will, "one day".

KEEL WHOLE?

A60 *Achates* (Boothman)

Quite a lot has been written now on keel maintenance, removal and repair, but when "in situ"; what do *Atalanta* owners do with their keels when sailing?

When we first got *Achates* we were transferring our sailing experience directly from dinghies, hence in our first year we actually tried to use the keel and its mechanism in the way we had been accustomed when dinghy sailing; viz. when close hauled the keels were fully down, reaching, about half-way down, and running, fully retracted. We were even keen enough to try a one keel only operation depending on which tack we happened to be on.

Needless to say by the end of our first season we were thoroughly sick of this constant keel winding and from this constant keel winding. Volunteers to undo the clamp bolts and lower the keels as we turned onto a close haul became fewer and fewer as each "operative" emerged silent and green-faced from down below. Indeed, since the main keel winder was invariably my wife then keel experimentation became quickly equated with the rest of the crew going hungry. In the end, we compromised with the keels fixed in 3'9" position for general sailing conditions. Only if the weather appeared "dodgy" did we lower them fully.

This year, we've been able to examine closely the magnificent scale model "Etchells Trophy" (Do we really have to bring it back in January) particularly its keel configuration, and we are of the opinion that our keel compromise was not far off the right compromise.

The notion behind keel variation is that one can vary wetted area to the boats sailing advantage. When close-hauled the boat requires the maximum bite on the water. When reaching this need is considerably lessened, and when running, not required at all. However when examining the *Atalanta* hull/keel configuration, the so called gain in reducing wetted area by withdrawing the keel from a fully extended to a half-way position is so small as to be irrelevant, something less than 3% of total wetted area. Yet the decrease in stability is quite considerable. The *Atalanta* is only self-righting with the keels fully extended (as we can testify). In short, playing around with the keels is not really worthwhile. Have them fully down and gain maximum close windedness and only wind them up when shoal waters decree it prudent. (There can, however, be gains to be had in the balance of the vessel; see later comments)

In light airs we've sometimes experimented with a single keel, totally retracting the other into the hull and gaining, we hope, an improvement in wetted area. But, we confess, have done this largely for fun or to pass the time. We've noticed no measureable improvement in the boat's speed and frankly we have never been really sure which keel to have down.

If the boat is heeled to starboard say close-hauled, then in theory we should put the starboard keel down to its fullest extent and secure maximum draft at the point of maximum need or should we put the port keel down to counter-balance the heeling motion? We are not sure on this point and what in practice we do is to have the starboard keel in use in light airs but if the heeling should exceed 15 then down smartly comes the port keel and to hell with the experiment.

One final point here, the "Etchells Trophy" has its keels in the half-way position and it would appear that they present a fine raking edge to the water. This may not be the gain that it seems since the keels in this position are not presenting their best aerodynamic form to the direction of the flow as is only achieved when fully down.

It is when running before the wind that the real dilemma of keel positioning becomes apparent. The Atalanta running free with the keels well up or retracted can really show its paces in relation to many other yachts. Only this year when leaving Holyhead a much faster modern yacht creamed past us in no uncertain manner as we cleared the breakwater. But when we turned to a run for South Stack we promptly got the undercarriage up and began to make on him. By the end of the run we were near enough to see his surprised look though as we both turned by the lighthouse and the wind came on the beam he was away. It is times like these that makes you wonder whether it is possible to get an Atalanta to plane. Certainly some of our fastest passages have been when running, one year on passage from Douglas in the Isle of Man to Glasson Dock we averaged $5\frac{1}{2}$ knots over the 70 distance in the most comfortable of circumstances, with a steady wind and a big following sea.

But therein lies the danger, what would have happened had we broached? Returning to dinghy practice, should a dinghy broach when running it will certainly heel over, but since the dagger board is withdrawn much of the broaching effort is taken up in a sheering off of the boat down wind, hence it should not capsize. But dare that assumption be practised with an Atalantawe think not, the keels have a dual role and thus different to dinghy practice. If a miscalculation regarding sailing conditions is made when running with the keels retracted and a broach of sufficient magnitude suffered the vessel may capsize and with the keels up the Atalanta is not self-righting.

The conclusion seems to be to ignore the advantages of keel retraction when running, play safe and get the keels fully down. But this presents another problem. In our experience, an Atalanta, particularly if $3/4$ rigged is very unbalanced when off the wind. To put it mildly, they can be a real handful. In our first year of ownership of Achates we had set off on passage from Raven-glass on the Cumberland coast to Ramsey in the Isle of Man. It was to be a night run with a forecast of a fine night with a S.W. 3-4 wind, we had visions of a romantic cruise under the stars. Two hours out we were battling into heavy rain with a wind more westerly than forecast and at least a force 5 on the nose. Naturally we were getting knocked about and thoroughly drenched and when we discovered we were only making 2 knots we decided against a slow and miserable night passage and to run instead N.W. to Whitehaven on the mainland. Within

minutes of changing course my wife, on the tiller, protested loudly that she could not hold the boat, and she was right. We were yawing from one near broach across to another. I took over and managed to hold the boat a little better but the helm was dreadfully heavy and an enormous roll was set up in the boat. We all realized to our dismay that we couldn't continue on this course and our only alternative was Ramsay and we subsequently spent one of our most depressing passages ever, arriving in Ramsay in torrential rain: 13 hours to cover 35 miles.

The reasons for the boat's handling can be appreciated when it is realized the keels in the down position (as they were in the circumstances above) are short on length, and impart little, if any, directional stability to the hull. This is the main reason why an Atalanta at anchor chooses to be wind rather than tide rode, unless the latter is very strong and the former weak.

In addition, the mast is placed virtually above this fulcrum point. If we were to remove the "Ettchells Trophy" from its case (God forbid) extend its keels fully, stand it on a glass plate and place one finger at the mast head, the whole model would revolve around this central point with very little effort and trace a pattern as neat as any pirouetting ice-skater. (but we won't). Given that the greater driving force on a 3/4 rigged Atalanta is located with the mainsail, then when running there is a constant tendency for the sail to drive itself around this pivotal point, and since one end of the mainsail is fastened via the mainsheet, to take the stern with it. The outcome is a very heavy rudder effect and a real struggle for the helmsman to prevent broaching. This will be further aggravated if there is a strong following sea which seeks to pick up the bouyant transom area and force the boat around into a sea induced broach. Get the two going together and you need a physique like Garth to keep the vessel on course.

A partial solution can be derived by getting as much of the sailing force forward of the keels. This can be done we think, by a variety of means:-

- (a) Use a suitable spinnaker if you have one we don't.
- (b) Use the largest headsail and reef down the main. This is what we should have done in our abortive run to Whitehaven.
- (c) Wind the keels up a little. This would bring the pivotal point back towards the stern of the vessel and since the mast would remain where it was, effectively transfer sailing effort forward of the keel.

This latter suggestion explains why we had such a comfortable and fast passage from Douglas to Glasson Dock. We were goose-winged with no reefs, the wind was Westerly Force 4-5 and the keels were down to a depth of 2'6". In this position, the mean keel configuration is some 3-4 feet abaft the mast and the improvement in handling was quite noticeable.

But that brings us to the original dilemma. When running there is more comfort more speed and less likelihood of broaching if the keels are lifted well up, but if a broach is suffered with the keels retracted, the hull has no self-righting ability. Alternatively, play safe with the keels right down, but appreciate that in other than light airs, broaching or near broaching in strong following seas will tend to feel like a knife edge possibility and will have to be constantly worked against by the helmsman. Reefing the main will help but it will slow the boat down and increase the possibility of a broach induced by a following sea.

What we do in practice is to have a keel configuration commensurate with the sea and wind conditions. We err on the side of safety and exercise care. On a run the keel mechanism is on permanent standby. If conditions deteriorate then down they come — fast. It is the safest action, the *Atalanta* has a proven record of seaworthiness. Any boat running before the wind can broach if the helmsman is not vigilant, so we trim the sails as best we can and come to terms with a struggling boat; we are discomforted, but safe.

Our conclusions: With any sailing position other than running there are few gains to be had from varying the draft of the vessel from the maximum, except in shoal waters. If however when on the wind the boat feels unbalanced and suffering from excessive weather helm, then providing the maximum headsail is being carried and there is no justification in reducing the main, some noticeable improvement can be had by lifting the keels. In our experience, though, there is no measureable increase in speed, and if close hauled a penalty to be paid in close windedness.

It is when running that keel experimentation is most fruitful, influencing both handling and speed, and when fiddling down below is most practical. There is also no danger of inciting mutiny by asking the crew to go below into an unstressed hull to 'wind up the clock.' But don't get caught short. On the wind miscalculations about the necessary depth of keel are more forgiving and if caught, say close-hauled with too little then the matter is remedied, by spilling wind or luffing up and if need be, with the sails flogging, lowering the keels before bearing off. No such opportunity exists for a miscalculation when running.

These then are our personal conclusions, but we would be interested to hear what other owners do with their keels. That is, apart from berating them with 15lb sledge hammers. Or, pardon the pun, have we allowed ourselves to get too wound up with this keel business?

IDEA FOR KEEL CASE SEAL

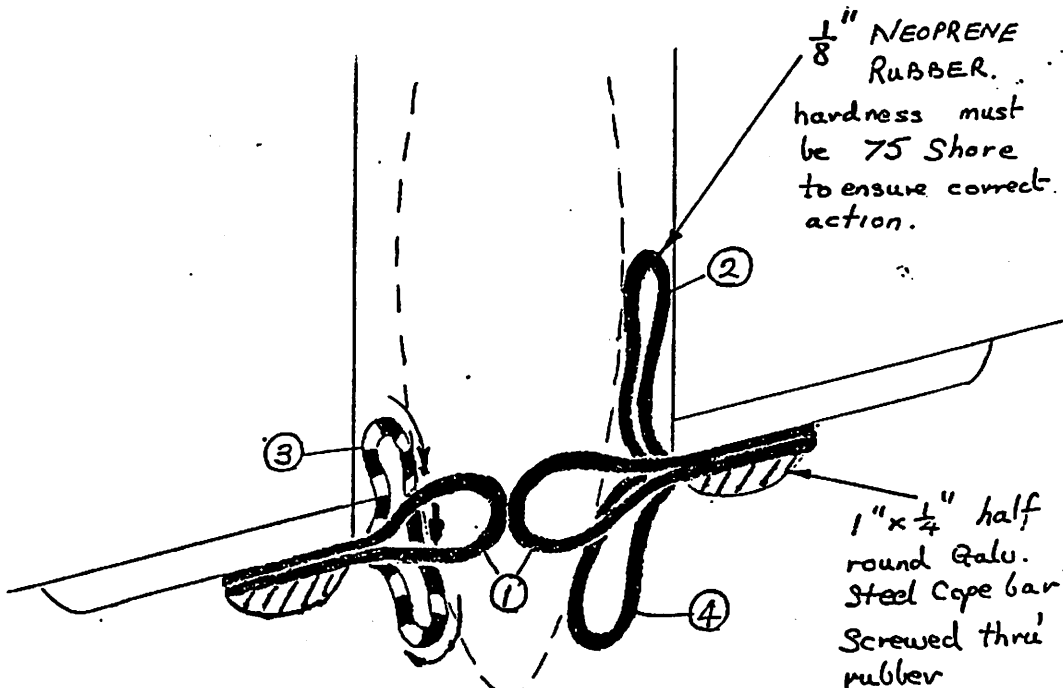
M. DONOVAN A184

The system shown is suggested as a replacement for the single 1/4in thick neoprene seal introduced for latest production boats. The single thickness seal soon develops a permanent upward set with the keels stowed which prevents the edges of the rubber coming together again when the keels are down. This increases drag and allows much water to surge up into the plate cases in a sea way.

The proposed seal, shown in the attached sketch, helps overcome this effect as it can be rolled out by a slight lowering and raising action after lifting the keels according to the following sequence:

With keel down	Seal is closed	Position 1
Raising keels right up	Seal goes to	Position 2
Lower keel slightly	Seal rolls out through	Position 3 to Position 4
Raise keel back up	Seal remains in Position 4 by keel sliding back past seal.	

This system has been tried dry with the boat out of the water so it should work well in the water. It is important to have rubber of the correct hardness (Shore 75). If it is too soft i.e. less than 75 it will flap and if too hard, it will not roll easily.



I LOST MY SKEG TOO!

John Saywood MOYRA A.160

This happened after running through a patch of steep and confused sea opposite the Needles. I berth at Fairey's boat-park but they were too busy to repair it in the fortnight I had before needing it for a summer cruise. It had to be a D.I.Y. job aided by the advice of Fairey's repair staff.

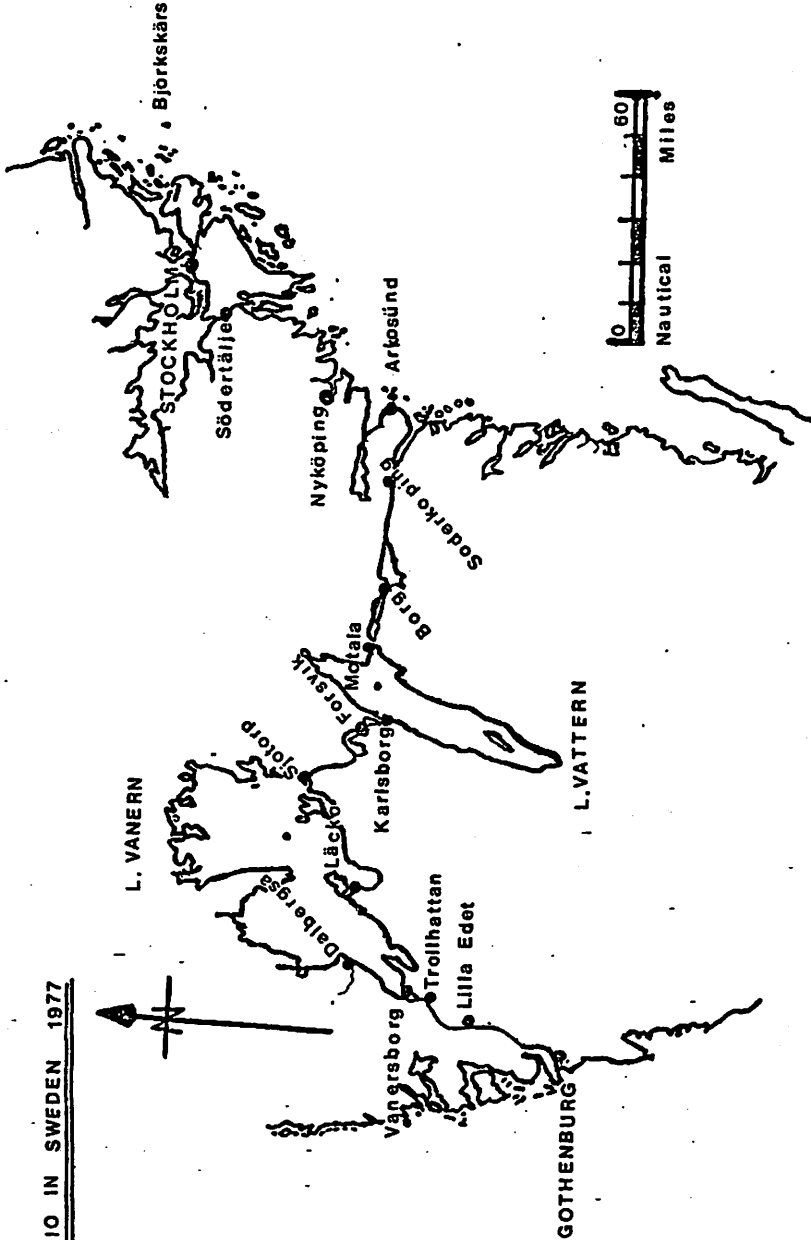
The skeg and rudder stock support the bracket which holds the pintle carrying the rudder assembly. The aluminium strap had corroded; water had penetrated the bolt holes; the wood had weakened and finally collapsed under the severe bouncing.

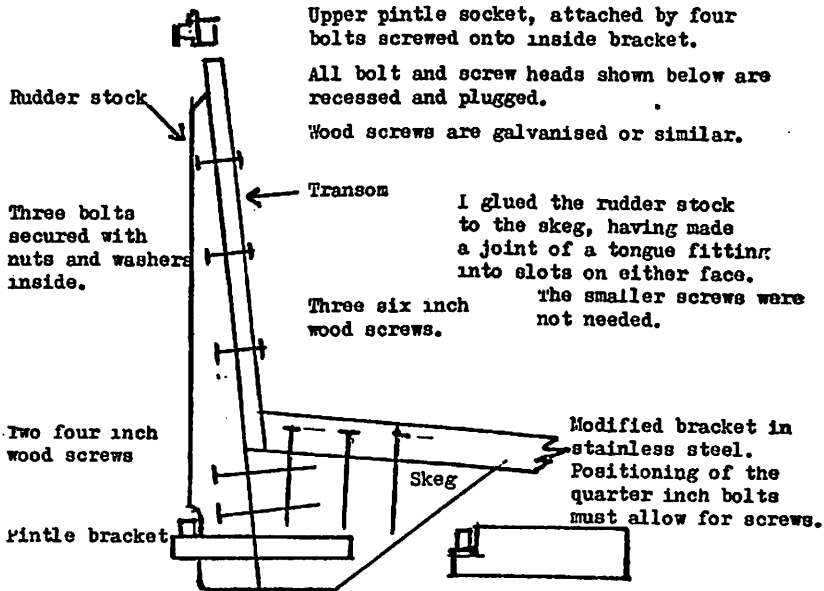
The weight had been taken by the tiller arm falling onto the transom in its slot. This gave only 10 degrees of helm either way but full movement was ultimately obtained by passing a strop round the tiller arm and raising this slightly by the winch and main halliard.

The repair took the following course:-

1. Remove the bracket comprising the socket for the upper pintle. This aluminium casting is held to the transom by four bolts which screw into a bracket on the other side. Hammer the bolt heads hard to loosen the inevitable corrosion. A box spanner with plenty of leverage should then do the trick.
2. Uncouple steering and haulage wires; withdraw tiller arm and remove complete rudder assembly.
3. Chisel off the remainder of the skeg. There will then be visible three large screws coming down through the keel. These should be hammered up and out. Also two lesser screws protruding from the lower part of the rudder stock.
4. Acquire two pieces of prepared mahogany, 2½" thick; the skeg 10" by 16" and the rudder stock 5" by 30" with the grain lengthways. Cut and shape but leave a surplus on the after end of the skeg.
5. Remove nuts from the three bolts holding rudder stock to transom.
6. Provide sketch for local engineers to make a new bracket in stainless, comprising a strap in ¼" plate 20" by 3" with a section 1½" deep 4½" long out from one edge of the plate centrally, and a rod 2¾" long of diameter 1¾" turned down to 1" for 1¼" to make the pin. The strap to be wrapped round the larger diameter and welded on, and to include holes for six ¼" bolts.
7. Wedge skeg firmly in position forward and centrally. Get engineering friends to weld 3/16th inch drill onto a 5/16th inch rod. Drill through the keel holes the full depth the screws will need. Remove skeg to vice; enlarge pilot holes as necessary to accommodate the bore. Work screws in with grease until they go right home. Replace skeg to keel and screw up tightly. Mark off the rear end with a continuation of the transom line.
8. Having cut and replaced skeg, position rudder stock; clamp the bottom to the skeg and screw the top onto the transom. Drill the three bolt holes through those in the transom.
9. Fix the bottom of the rudder stock to the skeg by wood screws or glued joint; recess the bracket; drill holes for bolts, working from both sides.

10. The final assembly requires a liberal application of sealastic between skeg and keel, stock and transom and under the bracket. The total cost was just under £40 and the most difficult part of the job was to find out how to sharpen the gouge I had to buy for making the groove! For the complete work the quotation was £300.





Trio to Stockholm, 1977

K. W. Rowe — *Trio* — A30

The 1976 A.O.A. dinner was directly to blame for *Trio's* second expedition to Scandinavia. Margaret had visited Stockholm in 1956 and heard of the Gota canal. The memory lingered and the sight of an *Atalanta* actually in the canal made it essential that *Trio* should go too. Our son, John, who sailed *Trio* to Denmark and back in 1975, and would have liked to have gone on to Finland, was in tactful support but I thought it all too ambitious and expensive. However, after some five months of dragging my feet to save my face, being a good-natured chap at heart, I concurred.

During the foot-dragging, however, the logistics of getting *Trio* to Gothenburg were investigated. The basic plan was for Margaret and me to get *Trio* to Stockholm via the Gota canal, then to return by 'public transport' while John with his wife and two small children took over, sailing *Trio* in the Baltic and back to as near home as practicable in the time available.

Four main ways of getting *Trio* to Gothenburg were considered:

(1) Sailing the 800 miles—would take too long. (2) Shipping her as cargo from Shoreham, our nearest port—expensive, need a purpose-made cradle: the days of chatting-up the Skipper and loading direct onto a bed of straw seem to have no place with revised Harbour Regulations and Union Rules. (3) Put *Trio* on a trailer and tow onto a car ferry—cheapest, but no suitable towing vehicle reasonably available and car ferry people insist on towing vehicle accompanying tow. (4) Sail to Felixstowe and have *Trio* taken onto the car ferry as cargo—more expensive than (3), but simpler as the shippers would provide crane, chocks and a flat trolley, which they would tow on and off at each port. After a visit to Felixstowe,

where Mr. Dennis Wood of Tor Line was most helpful; (4) was decided on, crew invited and financiers alerted.

John's brother-in-law, George Walmsley, accepted an invitation to come all the way and do the hard parts. Eric Dixon, one of the original three *Trio* owners agreed to come as far as Felixstowe, where Margaret would join the party. *Trio* was to be at the Tor-Line berth at 15.30 hr. on the 30th June for loading.

Trio left Newhaven on the 23rd June at 09.00 hr. with a NE. 3—4 wind and a fair tide to Rye. We left Rye at 03.40 the next day in flat calm, motored to Dover and moored in the outer harbour at 10.30 to await the tide. This enabled us to go ashore for petrol, consumables and a new pair of trousers for George who had split his in landing from the dinghy. I had to walk close behind him all the way to the nearest Burtons. While ashore, Eric stood us a slap-up lunch.

We picked up our tide at 17.30. Wind SW. 4, and we were in Ramsgate at 20.15. Here, the Met. Officer, R.A.F. Manston, told us that Saturday would have 'Wind SW. Force 4 veering NW.', but 'Sunday would be a nasty day'. So, though tired, we set sail at 05.00 on Saturday bound for Fishermans Gat. Hence, Eric's local knowledge took us on a northerly course over the less shallow parts of the Sunk and Gunfleet Sands to the Medusa Channel which we reached at about 14.00 hr. Being now in sight of Felixstowe and with three days in hand *Trio* was able to revisit old haunts in the Walton backwaters. The accurately forecast 'nasty Sunday' was spent as a rest day under the cockpit tent anchored in the Dardanelles.

Monday gave us a pleasant sail to the Suffolk Yacht Harbour, whence Eric departed to Ipswich and the rest of the crew went shopping. On Tuesday, after a recreative sail in the Orwell, the mast was lowered and stowed and on Wednesday Margaret joined us to motor to the Tor Line berth. This was found to be occupied, and were directed to Felixstowe Dock. Here, after a slight argument with an enormous fender which damaged two stanchions, we moored alongside a tug. From here *Trio* was lifted out onto chocks and trolley and towed away to await shipment while her crew humped their baggage to the Routemaster Hotel. Quite a long way!

The crossing to Gothenburg on *Tor Scandinavia* was simple and luxurious. While *Trio* was on the car deck some minor underwater matters were attended to, including of course, a check that the rudder was still firmly attached. The Skipper of *Trio* having presented his compliments to the Master of *Tor Scandinavia*, he was duly invited to the bridge to see a chart of Gothenburg and check the positions of yacht harbours.

The afternoon of 1st July saw *Trio* in pouring rain lifted back into the rest of her proper element. The cheerful young boat-owning crane driver generously stayed on to lift the mast for us, while we all got wetter and wetter. By 18.00 however we were in the Lilla Bommens Gasthamn, in the shadow of the four-masted barque *Viking*, and forming a third tier of boats in this crowded harbour. Being July, with all the bigger factories closed for holiday, most of Sweden was afloat. Crowded harbours were to be our normal lot. Our Swedish neighbour, however, was most helpful and this we were to find was invariably the case throughout the trip.

Next morning, after a quick shop for charts and essentials, we were under way up the Gota river; wind NW., force 4—5. As we cleared the city and the river widened, we were able to sail *Trio* dinghy fashion close hauled, against the current,

but when it became necessary to beat, it was motor-sailing then plain motoring.

★ ★ ★

We reached our first lock at the paper mills at Lilla Edat that evening, mooring to a stern buoy in the tiny Gasthamn immediately above the lock. Navigation is permissible at all hours in the Gota River, its canals and in Lake Vanern. Just after midnight a German yacht came alongside, crew wrapped in oilskins, reporting a stormy passage of the lake. So much for tranquil inland waters.

Sunday came calm and sunny. Underway by 08.20 and awaiting entry to Trollhatten Locks at 11.10. we were careful not to be the first boat into the lock, the walls of which we about 10 m. high and provided with a series of bollards recessed in them. We soon got the technique of using a pair of warps, slipping the lower one as it disappeared beneath the water after having lassoed the higher one as it came into reach. The clever people got alongside a ladder, but, alas, there were but three ladders. Passage of the three locks, the passing bay and the fourth lock was straightforward and comfortable. The locks are electrically controlled; the water flows in or out through apertures in the base of the lock, so minimising turbulence.

Throughout the day there was a sunny Bank Holiday atmosphere with holidaymakers and Sunday citizens sunning themselves and watching the comings and goings of the boats, visiting the old locks and, had we but known, visiting the Trollhatten Falls. On Sundays in July, of which this was the first, the sluices at the top of the falls are opened and the water is allowed to by-pass the two power stations and to resume its natural course down the steep rocky channel of pink granite which it used for centuries before the days of turbines.

By the time we had gleaned the details and walked to the Falls, the last of the spectators were leaving. We were mocked by the wet rocks glistening in the sunlight.

We got under way again at 16.00 hr. continuing up the canal and canalised river to the top of the Trollhatten Locks at Brinkebergskulles, some 8 miles away. Here, the canal is so narrow that one-way working under traffic signal control is necessary for the larger boats. The river is available, but low bridges make the canal essential for all but the smallest craft. The railway bridge at Jarnvagsbron closed in our faces so while waiting for the next train to pass and the bridge to open we enjoyed our supper. Once past and under the 15.5 metre high Dalbobron we were into Lake Vanern. By 20.00 we were moored, stern to a buoy, bows to a ring in the jetty, in the crowded Gasthamn of Vanersborg.

Vanern was said to be the size of Devon and we had hoped to get some sailing. But though we spent three days in Vanern, nearly all the time there was no wind, or too much in the wrong direction.

Our first port of call was Dalbergsa, a secluded river mouth some 13 miles north of Vanersborg. The entry is invisible in the densely forested coastline but can be found by leading marks and a large silo which stands above the trees. The silo once provided cargo for shipping but is now served by road while the wharf is used by the more knowledgeable local yachtsmen. These were very hospitable, waving us into suitable berths. We chose one near the entrance and had our first experience of dropping a stern anchor and motoring up to a ring in the rocky shore to which we made fast the bow. This is a very usual method of mooring in Sweden. The smooth

glaciated granite rocks, absence of tides and steep-to shores make it suitable and these rings abound. In this case, the anchor was dropped too short and we were awakened by *Trio* gently bumping against a rock. Subsequently, a heavier anchor with 4 metres of chain attached was used. It was nice to be able to scramble over the bow and go for a walk in the pines. A delightful place for a picnic had it not been 10 p.m.

We left Dalbergsa at 08.45; wind N by E, force 2. Course 062 deg. for Naven, distance about 18 miles. A check on the leading marks showed a compass deviation of 2 deg. E, but as we were about to enter an area of magnetic abnormality this was not significant. The wind dropped to less than force 1 and the motor had to be brought in again. Naven was reached at 16.00 hr. From Naven the beacons led us among the rocky islets to the Gasthamn at Horviken.

The Gasthamn here is more like an English marina. It was quite full, but, thanks to the shallow draught of *Trio* with plates and rudder raised, we were able to tie up a few feet from the shore in about a half-metre of water. No tide!

Horviken contains an elementary chandlery and boatyard, toilet facilities, a shop, telephone and one or two houses. All are set among the rounded granite outcrops and pine trees which are the basic scenery of this part of Sweden.

The weather continued stormy and adverse on Wednesday, 6th July. I worked on repairing the stanchions, while Margaret and George walked to Lacko Castle. This castle, which guarded the southern area of Vanern for many years, now adjoins the Gasthamn at Lacko making the latter an impressive harbour in which to lie. The white castle provides a sea mark visible from the horizon.

As the weather improved towards evening, we motored round to Lacko for the night. The channel is quite torturous and though deep is steep-sided and narrow. Any deviation and *Trio's* fully lowered keels would bang out a warning. At one point the channel turns abruptly between large concrete blocks, presumably relics of a wartime boom. At Lacko, *Trio* was obliged to push herself in a somewhat unladylike manner into a theoretical space between two other moored craft but we were surprised to have her bowline taken by a Briton resident in Stockholm. We spent a couple of pleasant hours on board his vessel being informed of the nicer moorings around Stockholm and the various flavours of *acquavit*.

We left Lacko at 08.45 next day bound for Sjotorp, the start of the Gota Canal proper. Two courses were available, one northward to the small island of Djuro, where we were told deer could be seen, then eastwards, north of the large islands of Brommo and Torso.

The other was via the sheltered water to the south of these larger islands. The wind being northerly, force 3, later increasing to 5 with heavy rain, made the southerly course preferable. Main and No. 1 jib were set, course 078 deg. for Dagskarsgr Beacon, but insufficient allowance for leeway caused us to take two tacks before the Beacon was abeam at 12.20. The wind then freshening and heading made motor sailing necessary and, eventually motoring, as we turned northward towards Sjotorp. We entered the first lock at 18.00 hr., mooring for the night at the basin above lock no. 3. It was not crowded and we were able to moor alongside the wharf. There had been a fairly large shipyard here once; it is still active, as though an attempt is being made to start up again. We bought delicious strawberries for supper.

Friday was a fine day! The Gota Canal is manned only from 08.00 to 20.00 with a lunchbreak from 12.00 to 12.45, so from now to the Baltic our hours of passage were limited. The locks and bridges are smaller than those on the Trollhatten and Lilla Edat Canals while the canal, where it passes through the meadows and farmland of this fertile area of Gotland, is like the rural reaches of the Thames.

We were under way again at 08.30, climbing lock after lock, until, twenty-one locks from Sjotorp, we entered Lake Viken at 17.30. Weather was bright and sunny, the wind force 5—6 NE., but we managed just to lay a course up the NE. arm of the lake. The SE. arm gave a free wind, but soon some very narrow channels between retaining walls of rock made motoring advisable. The shores and islands are densely wooded and one has occasionally to rely wholly on the chart and steer straight for the bank to discover the opening. So we arrived at the quiet uncluttered Gasthamn at Forsvik. New, spotless, toilets and hot showers were made full use of. All that was missing was a pub, a rarity in Sweden.

At Forsvik, from an altitude of 91.5 metres, and thirty-two locks above the North Sea, we took our first downward step, to the level of Lake Vattern. After a short sail in an arm of the lake we tied up at Rodesund and went shopping. We were surprised to find it was Saturday and all the Banks were shut. Luckily the railway booking office came to our rescue and we were able to get fuel and other essentials. After lunch the bridge was opened and we entered Vattern proper, in sunshine, wind 3—4 NE., course 090 deg. for the islet of Fjuk, which we reached at 15.00. For a couple of hours we enjoyed sailing around Fjuk watching the picnickers and bathers from yachts moored in the lee of the islands. We were tempted to up-keels and startle everyone by sailing between the two islets where people were wading from one to the other, but wisdom prevailed, and we set course for Motala which we reached at 19.45.

Motala is a fine town, developed by von Platen as he built the canal. We spent an hour or so admiring its circular and radial layout of streets before turning in for the night. Margaret was up early next morning to make full use of the clothes-washing facilities before we got under way again on a fine sunny Sunday. A short stretch of canal and six locks took us down to Lake Boren where we could have had a good sail had there been any wind, so we motored to Borensberg Lock and the next stretch of canal. This is at a uniform level above the adjacent river, and passage is interrupted only by bridges, until flights of locks at Heda, Brunnby and Berg terminating in the Carl Johans slussar of 6 locks, take us down to Lake Roxen. While on this stretch of canal we were held at one bridge to allow the passage of a tug and its tow of concrete pontoons, which cleared the abutments by only about 10 cm.; the tug was named *Trio*. We exchanged pleasantries as she passed, but the crew were too busy tending the outboard motors controlling the pontoons to do much else.

In the evening we arrived at Borg, at the top of the Carl Johan's slussar, to find an hour's wait for the next lock; an hour in which to negotiate the flight and to realise that there was no recognised harbour before the other end of the lake. We decided with reluctance to tie up in the Gasthamn at the top of the locks. The evening gave us time to visit the tenth-century Vreta Kloster Abbey and to see the grave of Count Gustav Otto Douglas, an enterprising Scot, who came over at the time of Bonnie Prince Charlie and whose descendant is today the Lord of the Manor.

Trio was head of the queue for the locks at 08.00 next day. She did not enter until 09.15 and it was 10.40 when she entered Lake Roxen. We wished we had pushed on the night before. We sailed, drifted and motored the 15 miles of the lake to the next section of canal, through Lake Asplangen and again to the canal down another eight locks en route to Soderkoping, our last stop before the Baltic. Alas, it was 20.15 when we reached the bridge at Klefbrinken. It was closed for the night. We eventually tied up in a lay-by near a small boatyard. From here the crew walked the half mile to Soderkoping. Next morning saw us shopping for charts and stores in the lovely little town with the help and advice of Swedish friends from Vreta Kloster. After lock-keepers' lunch we entered the last bit of canal to the last lock at Mem. At 14.15 on Tuesday, 12th July, *Trio* entered the Baltic and the mainbrace was duly spliced.

There was actually a breeze. For a while we sailed, then motored to the relatively open water near Arkosund where we had a very pleasant evening sail around the islets before seeking the Gasthamn at Arkosund. It was very crowded, but with keels and rudder raised we stern-anchored in a vacant space near the shore. There was a short notice in Swedish on the jetty which we decided to ignore. Next morning there was a thumping on the fore deck and we learned that *Trio* had spent the night in a two-hour parking limit. However, we were not the only ones, and not all of these were foreign.

We were now hoping for some sea conditions and with an E by S wind, force 3—4, we sailed north up the sound intending to spend the night at one or other of the nice anchorages indicated by our British acquaintance at Lacko. The sky was grey and wet, the wind steadily increasing and by 14.00 we had reefed the main and had had all we wanted.

A look at one of the nice anchorages was not very reassuring in these weather conditions, so we bore away for the best available Gasthamn at Nykoping, which gave us an exhilarating run down to the marina at Brandholmen. That night we were glad to be in shelter as the wind piped up and boats and pontoons surged in the waves.

Next day, after what the locals said had been the coldest night on record, we moved into the town harbour. It was still cold and wet so we spent the day in town, window-shopping and lunching. Moored opposite *Trio* was *Cutty Sark*, a sloop whose 71-year-old owner was an ex-square rigger from the Swedish barque *C. B. Petersen*. He had some interesting stories, remarking sadly that 'you rarely see an English yacht in these waters'.

Being now some miles off our course, an early start was made on Friday 15th for Sodertalje, our last stop before Stockholm. Weather was still cold and wet with a NW. wind force 5, but by 10.00 we were at Sanasundet, a narrow passage between a private wharf and a petrol point and back on our original course. Wind was now 5—6 northerly. We motor-sailed with reefed main and no jib to windward in heavy rain. Margaret was kept busy providing hot drinks all round. There were a few other boats about, including two tugs with a tow of chained logs about a mile long. We were on the wrong side of it all, but they slowed to let us draw ahead and turn across their bows, otherwise we would have finished up in some paper mill.

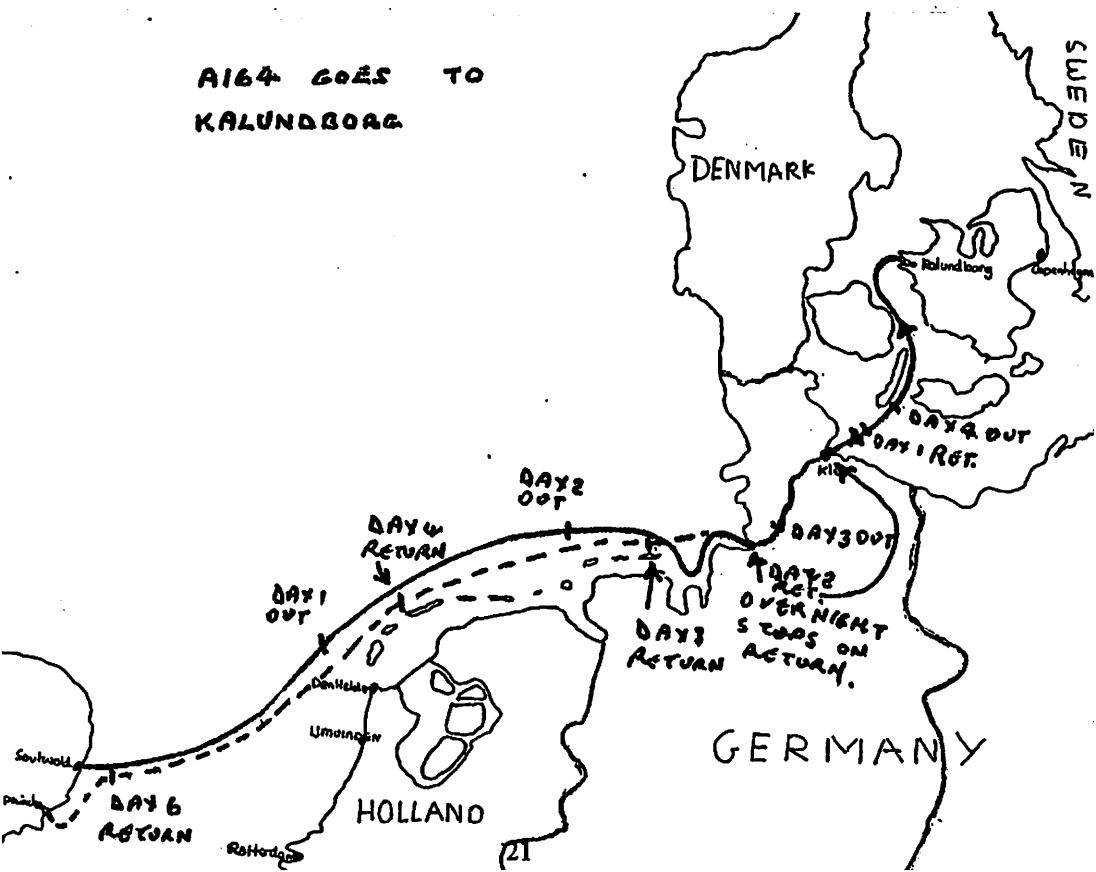
As we approached Sodertalje there was a sharp turn in the channel and a small red

light flashing above the trees. We proceeded with caution. Round the corner was a beautiful 26.5 m. high bridge with a narrow waterway soon to be filled by a big cargo boat bound from Stockholm. We proceeded with increased caution and by 16.30 were drying out with cockpit tent and Primus in the Gasthamn.

Our last day showed some improvement. With Margaret at the helm we locked into Lake Malaren. As we turned eastward we were able to sail, until, after a force 6 squall, the wind dropped just as Stockholm came into sight in the sunlight. By 16.45 *Trio* was doing a tour of the Riddarfjarden, down to the Ridderholmen, past the Stadshuset and back to the yacht harbour at the Stockholm Sailing Club. Next morning the Union Flag had been added to those flying from the Club flagstuffs.

So ended the outward stage of the voyage. Our subsequent dash to Helsinki by ferry to join our daughter on the USSR's *Baltika* for the trip home and John's voyage with his family out to Bjorkskärs and then back to Gothenburg are other stories. Suffice it to say that in a wide range conditions *Trio* never let us down (though I occasionally let *her* down) and the seventeen-year-old Fisherboy engine gave no trouble. On the round trip, Newhaven to Newhaven, she travelled some 950 miles on her own bottom and the engine ran for about 150 hours.

A164 GOES TO KALUNDBORG



A 164 Goes to Kalundborg (Denmark)

Our cruise was governed by several things, Don, the skipper, wanted to meet a friend in Kalundborg, which meant going through the Kiel canal into the Baltic, a round trip of about 1,000 miles. The time available was 14 days. Two of the three crew members were Paul and Neil, aged 14 and 9, it would be their first visit to Denmark so they naturally wished to look at Copenhagen, the Little Mermaid et al; say three days ashore, 1,000 miles, 11 days and a very firm deadline. To be or not to be?

During the winter Scarweather had been fitted with a new Petter twin diesel, it had performed well in a quick, windless, foggy dash to Nieuwport and back one weekend consuming about 2½ pints of fuel per hour to produce 5 knots in a calm sea. We decided to have a go, at the same time deciding that if, at any time, we could not make more than 3 knots we should have to motor/sail, a noisy nuisance but necessary. The two boys would have to be kept occupied for fairly long periods of time so Paul would act as cook and take a period at the helm when conditions permitted. Neil would make the coffee and act as controller of sweets and smokes! He was also to be allowed to hoist the courtesy flags as, and when, needed. Paul was also to keep a log of his own and, in the event, Paul's good eyesight and careful lookout proved invaluable in the foggy days we met.

Scarweather was positioned at Southwold prior to departure in the hope of leaving at about 20.00hrs and making the Texel Light Vessel before dawn some 30 hours later. There was insufficient water over the harbour bar until 23.00, the wind started off at about N.W. force 3 but soon veered to N.E. and dropped, so, straight away, we had to put on power. Some hours later the Seafix clearly showed that the Texel lay between the legs of a drilling platform, however, we decided that we should spare the time to divert round that. By nightfall the loom of the Dutch coastline was visible and eventually the Texel.

Our passage outside the Fresian Island was peaceful, too peaceful for good progress. However, some 24 hours after passing the Texel, the wind perked up to force 5, with much stronger gusts in squalls and we decided we could make up for some lost time, this resulted in our ripping the Genoa! Thus a hectic sail change, in the dark, became necessary, accompanied with a certain amount of reefing, to keep things reasonably balanced for the night watches. These were solo watches by one of the two adults, Paul could only manage the boat in reasonably calm conditions as she is very heavy on the helm indeed (any suggestions for improving this gratefully received). The squalls came thick, fast and wet, fortunately in the right direction, throughout the night and made up for a great deal of the slothful progress to date. We entered German waters during the night.

Having passed the Fresians and the Weser estuary we could see Cuxhaven, at the end of the river that would lead us to Brunsbuttel, the westerly entrance to the Kiel canal. The tide was running very strongly, it seemed that if we cut across the sands we could make the river mouth just as the tide turned and hence get the best of it in both directions. Our calculations were correct with regard to the timing, there was sufficient water, but we had badly underestimated the effect of the shallows on the seas, we got wet, very wet, even our magnetic chessmen detached themselves and ended up in a heap on the bunk. But we did cover 34 miles in a shade over 4 hours, and in a direct route rather than the tortuous curves of the channel.

There were so many light signals at the entrance to the canal that we gave up any attempt to work out what they all meant and followed a small coaster into the smaller of the two locks. No one seemed surprised so we made fast and went off to pay our dues, 15 Dm (about £4.50). We decided that we could not read the notices declaring that pleasure yachts were only allowed to pass along the canal in daylight and pressed on. Having covered about 15 of the canal's 63 miles, one of the observers in a canal-side observation post made it clear to us that we should, in fact, moor for the night. The language may have been foreign, but the message was well and truly received!

Next day we were motoring along the canal quite peacefully, forehatch open, and enjoying the sunshine, when the bows buried themselves in some particularly vicious wash and Scarweather had a good wash down both inside and out. No one had waterproofs on but it was such a sunny day I felt like a swim anyway.

Our charts finished at Kiel so we went in search of a marina where we thought we could get some. Half way across Kiel bay, the water cooling pump pulley came off. We had no Allen key to fit the grub screw so it was tightened as much as possible with a screwdriver, insulating tape wrapped round the end of the shaft to stop it moving and it worked. The marina did not sell charts, they were back with the lock-keeper. Back at the locks, having run aground in the meanwhile, we found plenty of charts, not enough Dm! We had a good look at them and decided to leave the one covering Kiel bay and the canal approaches. Our first landfall was a lighthouse on the end of Langeland some 30 miles away. We noted its characteristics and gave the chart back, feeling that all would be well as it was now getting dark. It was, on the outward journey, but what a disastrous decision this proved to be when we came to return.

We passed into Danish waters and followed a well buoyed channel the length of Langeland. In the bright moonlight the coast seemed far too near, the echo sounder read 55 ft but, at distances varying from ½ to 1 mile away it seemed frighteningly close. The flat calm that existed for the next day refused even to fill the spinnaker, let alone make it draw. It was good sunbathing weather, there were dozens of inter-island ferries and little to do except eat, drink numerous cups of coffee and dream up ways of trying to silence the diesel

engine. The wind did buck up enough to allow us to enter Kalundborg in fine style. There was free mooring with all facilities only ten yards away, we felt we were going to enjoy our stay.

We met Don's friend and spent the day on his farm, hired a car and sampled the delights of Copenhagen (or some of them anyway) ate Danish pastries and open sandwiches and eventually left on time feeling pleased with ourselves.

The return to Kiel was uneventful - apart from the fact that the engine stopped. The wind was south, the tide flowing north, we were trying to get south when it happened. Fuel starvation was diagnosed and, after much blowing down, (or is it up?) pipes, the blockage was discovered in the tap where the fuel pipe left the tank. This rectified, the engine performed once more. It sounds easy but, in fact, the Morse controls had to be moved to allow a panel to be taken off so as to be able to unscrew the tap. The hole left by the tap had to be quickly plugged to stop six gallons of fuel emptying themselves into the cockpit, and then the whole lot reassembled. We never did get the adjustment of the morse controls correct and there was difficulty in getting into gear thereafter.

We went off the edge of our charts and entered the void between it and Kiel. By now the wind was blowing hard. It was good brisk sailing, energetic stuff, but we had time to make up. We were able to follow vessels entering Kiel Bay but, by the time we got there, it was dark and we could recognise nothing. This was not due to lack of lights, there were lights everywhere! We started to feel our way cautiously round the bay and promptly ran aground, not having reacted to the echo sounder quickly enough. What follows should be written on the page of the log that somehow gets lost and remains, thereafter, a blank. We decided the best thing to do was to drop the hook. We were obviously out of the fairway and could then either wait for dawn, or follow a suitable vessel if one appeared. The first six feet of the chain ran out - then it jammed in the hawse pipe. We went below and tried to pull it back, but could not. It would not move in either direction. There was a ferry pier quite close so we motored over to it intending to make fast. As we got alongside, and before we could make fast, a tug went past, its wash rolled and lifted us at the same time, the guard rail stanchion caught under the overhanging quay heading and, as the boat rose, forced its way through the deck, leaving a hole 9 inches in diameter, as well as a cracked rib alongside the chainplates. The pressure released, the boat shot up, the pulpit caught over a projection and we were momentarily suspended until the screws securing it pulled out. At least, we think this is what happened. It all went so quickly it is impossible to be sure. We said 'Oh dear', motored clear, gave a pull on the anchor cable which came away with no trouble, and there we were at anchor. In spite of the time (03.00) we decided to have a meal, the boys were well awake! After a sleep and breakfast we hailed two boys who were fishing and asked them about the locks, they were about 300 yards away just round the headland. There should be a moral here if I could only find it.

Either the good living in Denmark, or stretching as a result of our temporary hanging by the pulpit resulted in our being charged 20 Dm for the return passage through the canal.

It is not that we make a habit of this sort of thing, but we do always carry plenty of 3mm ply, mastic and the like, so, as we went through the canal, the hole was sandwiched between two layers of ply, well covered with Sylglass tape, and pronounced watertight, which, when put to the test, it proved to be.

Having re-entered the North Sea the wind deserted us again and, worse, the mist thickened into fog, then thick fog. Visibility was down to half a mile for long periods of time and it was rarely more than a mile. Thank goodness for the Seafix! After 48 hours, we were grateful to hear the Texel moaning in the gloom. The drilling platform confirmed that we were still on course, then disaster struck again. Just after midnight the engine stopped. Fuel O.K. this time but a large polythene slick appeared behind us. This polythene was obviously well wrapped round the prop as the boathook would not clear it. At first light we lashed the boarding ladder over the transom and I was duly lowered overboard in a safety harness firmly grasping my son's sharp penknife. A quick dive showed that miles of the stuff was twisted round the prop and shaft but fortunately it was a fairly light gauge and I was able to carve it off reasonably easily. Twenty minutes submersion seemed a good excuse for a warming liquid breakfast after which we proceeded happily!

The mist remained with us, two miles from Outer Gabbard we could still not see it. At this moment the Seafix decided not to work but, with night falling, the wind rising and the mist clearing we felt it was not too terrible, it had served us well. (In fact it worked perfectly all right a couple of hours later) Thames Coastguards were informed of our impending arrival as we were coming up to the deadline in our C.G.66 - anyway it was a good excuse to use the radio.

Our dash into Harwich past the Shipwash and Cork lights was accompanied by much flapping as a batten pocket ripped off and streamed out behind the mainsail. On entering the Orwell we were hailed by the officers on a Custom's launch, they followed us to our moorings at Woolverston, boarded us and completed re-entry formalities at 03.15. We had logged 952 miles in 13 days 4 hours including the days spent in Denmark and compulsory stops in the Kiel canal.

Norway next year?

John Blagden.

Extracted from the log kept by son Paul
and illustrated by Neil.

Butting down the Channel

by Frances Martin (A92)

For the first time we were able to spend our entire summer holiday on Seamajor and we took 39 days to cover 923 miles. We actually lived on board for 46 days, the non-sailing days being spent at various ports sight-seeing. We motored a total of 30 miles, motoring percentage being approx. 3. Can anyone beat this, downwards of course? We had a good reason for being reluctant to motor. Our auxiliary this year was a Seagull Century Plus long shaft - simple and cheap but only 3 knots.

After driving from Bangor and launching the boat, we left Hamble at 1345 on Tuesday 18 July, leaving the trailer and car at Fairey Marine in good but expensive security. With a steady NW 3-4 we reached Cherbourg 18 hours and 82 miles later. For the next two weeks we sailed east along the Normandy coast to Boulogne, whence we crossed to Folkestone. The west wind persisted so we had a beat lasting two weeks down channel to Portland. We crossed to Guernsey for a three day stay in the Channel Isles before going on to St. Malo. Three days of the longed-for north easterly enabled us to travel west as far as Ile de Brehat in comfort and then it was time to retrace our steps to Guernsey before meeting oil pollution - was there any left by then? The 100 mile crossing from St. Peter Port past Alderney (with diversions) to Yarmouth was our longest continuous sail. A short sail to Hamble on 1 September completed our best cruise ever - but we say this every year.

We left home at 1230 on July 16 having spent the morning putting Seamajor on the trailer and loading her with a vast amount of tins and other gear to last five of us for seven weeks. We had two trailer punctures on succeeding days and spent a fair amount of time roaming around Southampton getting the wheel welded and new tyres fitted. Once in Cherbourg, the west wind made the next decision for us - to go east. It was strong enough to push us through the Barfleur Race against tide and lumpy waves - we were too late on our way. We anchored near Ile de Tatihou and visited its castles and gun emplacements. For the night we dried out alongside the quay of St. Vaast la Hogue. Fortunately we had an old edition of "Normandy Harbours and Pilotage" which rated this port as delightful, as we found it. The current edition says it smells - true but they are easily avoidable. More islands next day with the Iles St. Marcouf having a castle and houses occupied only by herring gulls. En route from here we passed the landing beaches of Utah and Omaha, the latter littered with wrecks, some buoyed and others unmarked. In the dying wind we tried to anchor nearby but this so agitated a passing fisherman that we thought better of it and reluctantly motored to Port en Bessin for the night. This was another delightful spot, full of French atmosphere and smells.

The following day with a very fickle wind we sailed and drifted to Courselles sur Mer - a misnomer at low tide as there is just a sandy beach with no sign of a channel. We waited a long time at anchor offshore in a calm but when the tide did finally arrive it swept us in with such speed that we almost missed the mooring on which we spent the night. The smell of the mud on which we dried

out has to be experienced. Ashore we visited the Sherman tank which is a memorial to Canadians at June beach and then returned for the narrowest squeak of the trip. A French fisherman got his large boat out of control and almost rammed our moored boat. The next destination was to be Le Havre but half way across the bay the SW3 completely died leaving us 12 miles from the nearest land so we had to motor all the way. We wished we had hugged the land to make an intermediate port available for this sort of eventuality. Once in Le Havre our minor troubles were not over. Boats moor head on to a pontoon with the stern attached to two buoys. When entering it is difficult to see which buoys you have to go between. We chose the wrong ones and so got ropes tangled round our keels. After attracting much attention by our commotion we finally got it sorted out. Next time we entered we were much more adept and picked up a buoy first and allowed the boat to drift round into position.

Next day the wind was still too unreliable to take us far so we went to Deauville where we spent two nights, for the same price as one. Nearby Trouville is a beautiful old town full of half timbered buildings. We went down to the famous beach for a swim and admired some of the wind-surfers on their 'planches a voile.' Experts make it look so easy but for half an hour we tried to help a girl get wind borne, quite without success. On our way back to Le Havre we went up the Seine as far as Honfleur. We did not go into the picturesque basin because we wanted to take the tide out again but we saw enough of the town to realise why it was such a magnet for yachtsmen. The basin is surrounded by houses and shops as many as 8 storeys high; many are half timbered and there are some magnificent wooden old churches. The trip back to Le Havre was exhilarating tacking into a NW5.

Our next stop was at Fecamp and enroute we passed the spectacular cliffs at Etretat with their natural arches. Fecamp was very convenient as one did not have to lock in. Before we left a visit to the Benedictine distillery was obligatory to get some suitable samples and the Abbey church was magnificent but spoilt by its resident swifts and the droppings. It was afternoon before we left for St. Valery en Caux with a NW2. This is a locking in basin with a lifting bridge so we had to wait on a buoy outside. The following day the wind was so light and variable that once outside the harbour mouth we drifted backwards so we anchored to wait for the tide. With two of the crew rowing the tender with Seamajor in tow we slowly drifted towards Dieppe. Sometimes there was enough wind to sail but we ended up motoring through a heavy thunderstorm while lightning played around. This was the first rain for nearly a fortnight so we could not complain in this otherwise poor summer.

Our stay in Dieppe was longer than intended because the following day was calm with intermittent heavy rain. Between showers we managed to see the parish church, beautifully light and airy with stonework like lace, and the castle perched on a hill. On the second day the foghorn was sounding and there were heavy showers again. At last on the third day we got moving again with a bang. 58 miles to Boulogne took us 10 hours, our fastest average over this sort of distance and with little help, on balance, from the tide. The wind gave

us a broad reach and was about force 5. We carried the spinnaker all day except while we cooked and ate our lunch. All our distances incidentally were measured on the chart, we do not believe all that implicitly in the log. A day in Boulogne proved very interesting. We visited the old "Haute Ville" on the hill with its wide town walls. Unfortunately the castle is derelict and the Cathedral is modern. This was not a suitable day for sailing anyway as we realised when a boat beat in from Calais with its mainsail blown out.

By now the longing for England was so great that we simply had to cross the Channel. The 0633 forecast was reasonable so we set off for Folkestone. Outside the harbour mouth the waves were terrifying and a trawler in front of us turned round and retreated. After a mile or two the waves became more reasonable with only the odd one breaking into the cockpit. This was the only time on the entire holiday that we rigged lifelines. After two miles the harbour had disappeared in the murk. We were relieved to sight the Colbart buoy dead on the nose, an hour or two later. This was a fair reward for the skipper who had made himself seasick by working out his navigation down below - it was too wet up top. At 1355 the Varne report was an unequivocal force 6 and we were glad that this sail had been a reach and not a beat. Once again we do not believe in reporting our impression of the wind force having heard the story of too many "local" gales. Our next sighting was the South Varne buoy and later the white cliffs behind Folkestone. The crossing took 5 hours for the 31 miles - Seamajor continued to excel herself.

We had not wanted to continue to Calais because we had been there on a previous trip, but, more important our youngest son had to spend his birthday money in British shops to get better value. This he duly did, on a knife and spike in a leather case to go on his belt. Next day was one of relaxation as with a SW5 it did not seem safe to try to get into Rye. Just as well as a yacht was towed into Folkestone by a fishing boat. It had been trying to get from Ramsgate to Calais but lost its dinghy and two of its crew were prostrate with seasickness.

At first light we left next day bound west for the first time this trip and we had to beat for 54 miles to Newhaven. Not 54 miles through the water but direct distance between ports. The first part to Dungeness was easy as the tide helped but one cannot have favourable tide for 16 hours. SW5, what a day! We thought we should never see the Royal Sovereign and even when we did, we never seemed to get any nearer. Rye had been ruled out. The light seemed like something out of a science fiction film. At last the tide was with us again and we hustled under Beachy Head being slowly overtaken by one of the back markers in the Round Britain race - a junk-rigged schooner. We were very thankful to moor in Newhaven marina in the dark. The helming all day had been done by Kenneth our eldest son, now 17, who had also helmed the entire crossing from Boulogne. He seems quite indefatigable and as he is generally agreed to be the best helm, we just let him carry on until he asks someone to take over. He is never happier than when helming, which is the reason that we have no other type of self-steering gear, we just don't need it while he is with us.

Having heard about Brighton Marina we decided that we must pay it a visit, so the following morning after leaving at 0600, we drifted to Brighton where we went in to a berth just inside the marina where there was space for hundreds of boats but only two were occupied. While we were having breakfast we discovered why; this part of the marina is still under construction and we were told which berth to occupy in the inner basin. This involved locking in but once inside it is a really magnificent marina. Everything has been landscaped, even the space for rubbish has a concrete surround which makes it look more like a flower vase and every facility has been laid-on to the pontoons. These are made of teak, are extremely comfortable to walk on and there is no chance of a splinter. The only snag is the distance from Brighton although there is a bus once an hour from the marina's landward entrance. We spent the rest of the day in Brighton and part of the next morning, too. The aquarium, with its four performing dolphins, proved popular with all the family.

As soon as the tide turned in our favour we set sail for Littlehampton. The wind was still westerly and varied between three and six; we seemed to spend our time changing sails, reefing and shaking out the reef! With the tide coming out of Littlehampton against us, we were making no headway even with the Seagull and the sails pulling and eventually we had to ask a passing fishing boat to give us a tow. This he did, leaving us alongside another yacht by the harbour wall while he went further upstream. He returned later (by land) to ask if we needed any help with the motor as he knew someone who could do so. It was marvellous to find anyone so helpful.

We had the same problem getting out against the in-coming tide and Kenneth had to tow us out by walking along the break-water, thus revealing what its ancient catwalk was for. With the wind a "variable force 2 to 5" the Looe Channel was rough but in the evening we spent a lot of time wondering whether to head for Langstone Harbour or Bembridge. In the end it was decided for us because the wind picked up to help us and the tide was taking us to Bembridge, so after eight and a half hours, we picked up a buoy behind St. Helen's Fort. Seamajor rolled for most of the night and by 0715 we decided that we would probably all be sick if we stayed where we were, so we sailed to Wooton Creek. Here we visited Quarr Abbey, both old and new. Part of the old Abbey has been converted into a house and the new is a beautiful modern brick building, an example of modern architecture at its best. When the tide was favorable, we left under "oar power" as there was virtually no wind.

Our next port of call after a morning in Cowes and a visit to Osborne House, was Yarmouth and then a short hop to Keyhaven. At Yarmouth, Michael, who with Kenneth is a keen Fireball sailor, managed to find another Fireball enthusiast with whom he went for a sail. Alan ferried the rest of us ashore and to see the life-boat. At Keyhaven we visited Hurst Castle, one of the few Henry the Eighth coastal defences still on our list of unvisited sites. A 19 came in while we were in Keyhaven but we were unsuccessful in contacting them.

The next few days were spent in and around Poole Harbour. We spent a pleasant day anchored in Studland Bay, climbing the Old Harry rocks, and taking

photographs and swimming. We moved to Shipstall Point for the night, so that we were able to go bird-watching on the Arne Nature Reserve. Subsequent nights were spent at Goat Horn Point and in the Wych Channel, the days being occupied by visits to Poole town because of the strong winds.

Tired of waiting for a favourable wind, we set out the next morning for Swanage in a south westerly force six. (The practice race for the half-ton world cup was cancelled because of the wind strength) The race off Old Harry Rocks was quite bad enough for me and another boat which went on to look at the St. Albans race, came back and joined us in Swanage. We had a look at the town and then headed back to Poole Harbour for a more comfortable night!

With a lower wind strength forecast, we set the sails the following morning and ghosted, under oar power again, until we were off Swanage when the wind came - south-westerly of course! Fortunately it was only blowing about force two when we went through the St. Albans race but even so we were relieved when we came out of the turbulent seas without a wave breaking into the cockpit. We arrived at Weymouth nearly 8 hours later and tied up alongside other yachts at the quay.

After a visit to Radipole Lake, (bird-watching again,) and doing some shopping, we rowed out of the harbour and sailed to Portland Harbour, where we picked up a mooring and went to see Portland Castle - yet another of Henry the Eighth's coastal defences. This one had been used as a private residence at some time, as its windows showed.

Visits to Rufus Castle and Sandsfoot Castle were on the agenda for the following day after which we went out into Weymouth Bay so that Michael could fish. However, a short period of lying a hull soon had us under way again and moving too fast for fishing. We returned to Sandsfoot for the night.

Sunday August 20th. The great day had arrived! Everything seemed favourable for a crossing to the Channel Islands. The forecast was westerly force four, with good visibility, so at 1230 we left Portland Harbour once more. We ran into rough seas between the West Shambles buoy and the Bill, but otherwise the crossing was uneventful until the wind died and Kenneth again took to the dinghy and rowed, towing Seamajor. At 0830 we tied up alongside a number of other yachts, mostly French, to wait for the St. Peter Port marina to open. We spent the rest of the day catching up on sleep and shopping.

We paid a quick visit to Hermon our way to Sark and Havre Gosselin, which is a most picturesque and popular anchorage; 11 boats were there with us. During the night we discovered that there is an unpleasant roll in the bay with a north-going tide, so the following morning we left for Jersey. The tide turned about noon so we anchored in St. Ouen's bay, had lunch and saw the Rocca Tower by tender. By the time we left an unpleasant roll had started again. With the favourable tide we shot past the rocks of La Corbiere and entered the St. Helier

marina. This was a revelation. We had been dreading the difficult mooring situation in St. Helier but the very reasonably priced and accessible marina has changed all that. Highly recommended.

Next day we spent in St. Helier, looking at Elizabeth Castle, which was started by Raleigh, and added to at various times, latterly by the Germans. Visits to shops and museums followed and then we were ready to leave for St. Malo next morning. We sailed between the Minquiers and Iles Chausey without seeing either of them, only the buoys. Two miles off we got our first sight of Brittany, the Rochefort tower off St. Malo. The entrance is well guarded by great jagged pinnacles and we were thankful for the numerous beacons. At first view there seems to be no channel at all and I could see why the French cardinal system had evolved to suit isolated rocks of which Brittany has more than its share.

Next morning was devoted to absorbing the atmosphere of St. Malo, the town walls, the Fort Nationale, the Hotel de Ville and the street markets. Certainly it is a perfect town of the 17th century all the more so when we realised that it was rebuilt after destruction in World War II. In the afternoon we sailed past Cap Frehel to Erquy where we anchored in the lee of the land just outside the harbour, which dries. In an easterly an excellent berth. On Sunday morning we watched the local club sailing before leaving for Ile Brehat. As we started to look for an anchorage, the sinking sun against us made it difficult to see beacons and buoys. Suddenly with relief we spotted a group of boats at anchor in comfort in La Chambre on the south side of the island. We joined them - there's always room for one more.

Next morning we walked part way across the island to buy bread and then drifted up the river Trieux to Lezardrieux. This reminiscent of the Dart in Devon. The boys swam and said that the water was very warm. To La Corderie for the night, another Brehat anchorage and another walk over a different part of the island. All things come to an end and so we very reluctantly had to start making tracks for Britain again. We left Brehat early in the morning, motoring through a calm, a crime that we would not have committed had there been an alternative - the 40 miles to Peter Port was too far to row. After an hour or two a breeze came up and pushed us past the Roches Douvres. Strangely we saw the rocks before the lighthouse. Back in U.K. again we stocked up with cheap Channel Isles supplies and petrol.

At 1440 on August 30 we set sail for Alderney which we passed 5 hours later, the race on its best behaviour. Alas we could not spare a day to land on Alderney but we had a very good view of the eastern side. During the night, the wind varied from NE 1-3 to NW 3-4 and as a result we kept changing our British destination in order to avoid tacking. After a very tedious calm patch we sighted St. Albans head. Not too bad as at the time we were making for Weymouth and had some west going tide. By now the nor'wester was strong enough to push over the tide to Anvil point and we soon approached the Needles with fair tide. By the time we reached Yarmouth in the dusk the 100 miles had taken 29 hours. The following morning we sailed to Hamble, put Seamajor on the trailer and started for home.

I enjoyed the Channel Isles and the Brittany coast much more than Normandy and am already anticipating eagerly next year's cruise. The only thing which puts me off is that for the first time in my life, seasickness has struck. This happened on 2 separate occasions, neither of them in a very rough sea. Most of us suffered it at one time or another - there is no reasonable explanation, for what seemed like arbitrary attacks.

The total cost of 7 weeks afloat and travelling to and from Hamble but not counting boat maintenance or capital cost was £350 for 5 people - at £10 a week each cheaper than staying at home. We soon discovered the cheap things in France - bread, potatoes and fruit. Compared with home life, there are no electricity bills no petrol for the car and at many anchorages no accommodation charges. Roll on retirement so that we can spend 4 or 5 months a year aboard Seamajor, supposing that both she and we are still in the land of the living. The first essential is a good supply of second hand paperbacks to while away the bad days and the long sea crossings!

A120 HAPPY RETURN VISITS THE FRENCH CANALS

We decided the time had come this summer to venture further afield and visit the French canals. Our plan was to cross the Channel from Ramsgate to Calais which was where we hoped to enter the canal system.

We had some new dodgers with "Happy Return" written on them made for the trip. These would mean we could be easily recognised and, we hoped, dryer if the weather proved unfriendly. We also invested in an Avon four man liferaft which we keep in the aft cabin. We had heard that drinking water was scarce on the canals so we also took twelve extra gallons in an assortment of containers mostly stored at the foot of the berths in the aft cabin.

At 10.30 on the morning of 22nd July we left our mooring on the Crouch and made our way through Havengore Bridge to cross the Thames Estuary. This crossing was uncomfortably rough and we were glad to reach the shelter of the East Swale at about 7.0 p.m. Gales were forecast for the next day and so we stayed at anchor. The East Swale is a very beautiful and peaceful anchorage disturbed that day only by a splendid view of a flying display by the Red Arrows over Whitstable whilst we ate our supper.

On the 24th the wind had dropped and it was much calmer and sunnier. We enjoyed sailing along quite near the shore past the chalk cliffs and caves at Margate and the North Foreland lighthouse. We arrived early at Ramsgate and were introduced for the first time to the huge international throng of cross-channel sailing yachts. We had to moor alongside two other boats. The customs came round checking where everyone had come from and where they were going before we locked into the inner harbour.

Because the lock gates can only open around high water we were bound to leave at about 4.30 the next morning. We set off into a rather choppy sea leaving the boys asleep in their bunks. It was sunny and warm and the visibility so good

that we only just lost sight of the white cliffs of Dover as we neared Cap Gris Nez. There was, however, an uncomfortable swell all the way across which made us all feel queer and both boys were sea-sick. The shipping lanes were very busy but the cross channel ferries were the worst to avoid as they all seemed to be heading in our direction. The hovercraft travel so fast that they take their own evasive action. We entered Calais harbour at about 3.00 feeling very pleased with ourselves and uncertain as to whether we should fly our Q flag. Some people did and some didn't so we flew ours anyway and our French courtesy flag but nobody official took any notice. We waited until high tide when the gate and bridge opened to let us into the Yacht Basin and then we went ashore to explore.

That evening we took down our mast ready for the canals. We have found we can lower and raise the mast quite easily ourselves using our spinnaker boom as a cantilever and the jib halyard to winch it up and down. Our elder son rigged up a broom as a make-shift flag staff complete with halyards so we could still fly our French flag.

The following morning we locked into the Canal de Calais. We had brought plenty of extra mooring warps and fenders for the canals plus two rond anchors. Nevertheless we moored ourselves for lunch that day with only one rope and an anchor pushed nonchalantly into the bank. It was then that we met our first passing barge. As it approached we realized the huge quantity of water it was displacing and we were sucked helplessly out into midstream, our anchor torn from the bank. Our bow roller caught the steel stern of the barge with a sickening clonk. Fortunately no real damage was done and we had learnt our lesson!

The barges, which were the main traffic, were all huge floating homes. Some even carried the family car and one had an adventure playground on top of the hold! Apart from the barges we found the canals quite empty. We caused enormous interest to people on the bank. The bridges and locks were all willingly opened for us and everyone was friendly and helpful. We did have to use our school French as nobody seemed to speak English. The weather was glorious and the Canals de Calais and Bourbourg and the River Aa were beautiful with stately rows of poplar trees on either side and king-cups and other flowers decorating their banks.

We wanted to go at least a little way into Belgium so we could hoist our Belgian flag and this meant passing through Dunkirk to reach the Canal de Furnes. Here we met our only serious obstacle. Dunkirk was very busy with commercial traffic which we had to be careful to avoid and the water was so foul in places with weed, dead animals and rubbish that it hardly looked like water at all. It was HERE that we came to a standstill with a huge polythene bag wrapped around our propeller. We managed to reach the bank where our noble skipper lowered himself reluctantly into the disgusting flotsam to tear us free. We filled a washing-up bowl with warm water and disinfectant for him to sluice down afterwards.

We passed through the customs into Belgium and everyone there suddenly spoke only Dutch and understood neither French nor English. We went on as far as Furnes which was a quiet, elegant Flemish town dominated by two big cathedrals. We bought some more supplies there before starting back on our return journey.

That night was spent on the border where we could walk across to see the Dunes of Dunkirk. We had never realized that they were so huge, miles deep and quite thickly covered in vegetation. We could see the blue sea miles in the distance. It was terribly hot and almost unbearable to stand for long on the sand.

There were lots of fishermen on the banks everywhere and we bought ourselves some french type Roach poles and some light fishing tackle. We caught nothing until we were back at Calais waiting to lock out of the canals where we hooked an eel. Then, in the Yacht Basin, we caught a huge Mullet on a piece of bread. This was very exciting but whilst we were all admiring him he did a superb flip to rejoin his friends in the water. By this time it was pouring with rain and we walked round to the other side of the harbour to introduce ourselves to another Atalanta we had noticed. It was Kerry Piper, A169, from Belgium and they were planning to sail to Ramsgate the following day.

The visibility had been very bad in the channel for the last few days so the favourable forecast for the next day meant that when the lock gates opened a stampede of at least 50 yachts all left together. We sailed back home in company with Kerry Piper. Reaching Ramsgate, we had to tie up abreast of about eight yachts before the lock opened to allow us into the marina. As there was a swell building up, this caused quite a few problems with bigger boats moored on the outside crushing smaller boats on the inside. Whilst we waited there for the customs to clear us we cooked the three mackerel we had caught by trailing a spinner across the channel. We finally locked in at about 10.00 in the dark. Ramsgate looked most attractive with lights strung along the front. We went ashore and bought some delicious hot doughnuts which we ate walking along the beach.

We had to delay sailing next day due to more gales and when we finally left in quite a stiff wind the sea was still rather rough but it made exciting sailing. We even had a close up view off the North Foreland of a helicopter rescue of two people from the water.

We spent one more night in the East Swale before our final journey home through Havengore Creek. This time we felt so well travelled and confident to lead the way through into the river Roach ahead of a string of more diffident craft.

Jane Moon
Summer 1978

OVERSEAS NEWS

From G. Powell A123, New Zealand.

We were delighted to be able to meet Rod White, from "Flyer". The meeting was aboard Coromanda - at the time up on the hard.

We wonder how many Atalantas are permanently afloat - ours is, on a mooring less than 2 miles from the centre of the city, and has been for the last ten years approximately. The trailer had fallen to bits: in this country of steep hills, trailing would possibly be a more expensive and arduous exercise than in the U.K.

Being permanently at sea produced deep rusting of the lifting straps for the ballast keels, to a point where we replaced them with stainless steel - an engineering saga of frustration overcome by ingenuity in dismantling the bulkhead keel suspension, which exercise became necessary because the lubricating nipples had been ignored, preventing one pin being extracted. The whole port bulkhead was removed to our engineer's workshop, where it finally yielded to a press exerting 12 tons on it.

My co-owner is as busy as I, and we sail only very intermittently. We believe the day will come when we can do more.

Our last decent voyage was to the northern part of the Hauraki Gulf last January, when the return leg of about 30 miles was accomplished in about 6 hours running and reaching, starting with spinnaker and ending in a half gale with smallest jib and fully reefed main. Running, we are as good as many modern designs, but, sadly, to windward nowadays is very slow work.

Cort Williamson (A179) was last heard of heading for Tunisia, having 'done' the French Canals, Mediterranean Coast, Part of Italy, Elba, Corsica and Sardinia!

SAIL SUPPLIES - From E. Payne A166.

Members who are wishing to replace their sails may be interested to know that the Atalanta sail makers are, J.R. Williams, Sail lofts, Satchells Lane, Hamble, Southampton. They have the sail plans for all the sails, and make a very good job of them; delivery is quick and the prices are very competitive. At the beginning of this season I ordered a main and genoa and have been very satisfied with their performance.