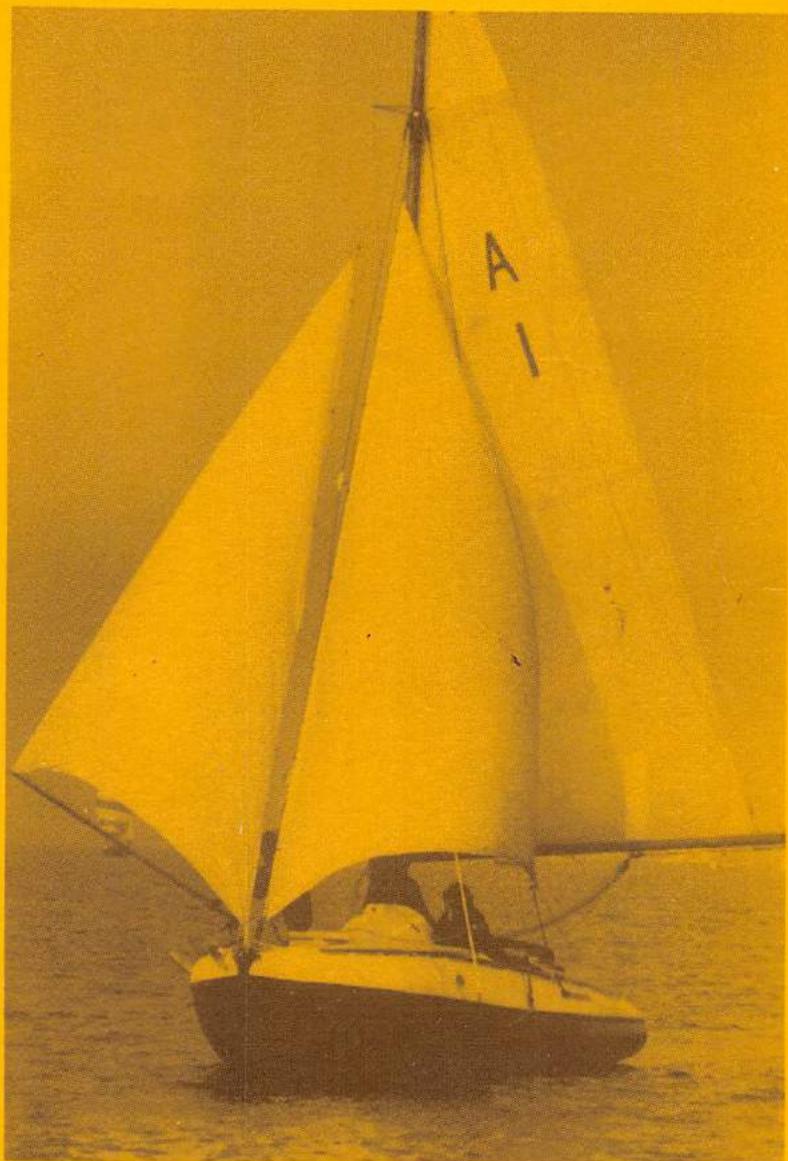


Atalanta

1990 - 1991



ATALANTA OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

32nd Edition

1990-1991 BULLETIN INDEX

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Frontespiece : A1 Atalanta

Back Cover : F47 Sherpa on Hawker's Lake, Keyhaven

THE COMMODORE'S MESSAGE

We have had another glorious summer, but as is to be expected, it resulted in poor winds on the sea.

This was particularly so at the East Coast Regatta when the wind changes upset the plans of many of the skippers. It was nice to see a new owner winning and a lot of new faces at the supper. And it is interesting to note that every boat that has ever competed has won at one time or another - at least I think so - with the exception of Al Atalanta which is very difficult to handicap.

Ted Stearn's arrangements were masterly, and somehow he magicked plenty of transport so that all arrived on time at Gun House.

Next year I believe the Tall Ships Race and Rally will take place mostly around the British Isles, Wales, Cork, Belfast and Aberdeen. It would be a compliment to that excellent organisation and maybe a boost to the Atalanta fleet if we could organise a rally to coincide with their plans. I am asking George to look into it.

Financially, it has been a year of great political uncertainty and danger worldwide, with horrible inflation and petrol price rises at home. I am afraid this is bound to put up the charges made by the Association to a small extent. I am sorry about this.

Good sailing next summer.

FROM THE EDITOR

I live in a small village through which Essex Man travels on his way to work, scattering villagers like chickens in the whirlwind of his passage. Alone in his Mercedes, BMW, Volvo, Range Rover or what have you, he has one hand on the steering wheel, while the other holds a telephone clamped to his ear. And in the background the roar of traffic hurtling down the local dual carriageway.

I have found several ways of escaping from this headlong Gadarene stampede. One is with sketchbook, pencil and paintbox. Another is by shutting myself away in my study - about the size of a large cupboard - and editing this journal, by which means I can join you in your exploits and travels, and in this edition particularly, read, with a touch of sadness and wonder, of Abe Beauvoisin's last voyage in Grace.

Yet another is walking over the hills and far away with my wife, and being thankful that we are still fit enough to tackle them! And then there is always Sherpa, my ageing Fulmar, on Hawker's Lake at Keyhaven. There, alone or with the family, time winds down to the

pace of the slow rise and fall of the tide. You can go out on it, and come back on it. There is really no need to go anywhere. All those other places are crowded out anyway. The mooring is always quiet. Neighbouring boats are either absent or unoccupied. Birds feed on the mud, unconcerned, close by. This year there was an Egret amongst them. And once, some years ago, I saw a pigeon land on the water just astern. Poor thing, I thought, it will drown. But it took off, flew over the boat, landed on the water ahead, and took off again. Strange things happen at sea. Happy sailing.

WEST MERSEA TOWN REGATTA ATALANTA RACE REPORT - 1990

By E F R Stearn

After the difficulty we had last year in identifying the course, the regatta committee were kind enough to give us what we wanted: from the start line by the Nass Beacon as usual to the Bench Head, Inner Bench Head, North West Knoll, then to a race buoy off Bradwell and then to the finish at the Nass Beacon again. Handicapping was the Portsmouth Yardstick with Dr Thursfield's figures for individual Atalantas. The committee were really most keen to accommodate us and to have us there again; they even printed an article on the Atalanta in the programme.

Four Atalantas entered and all started. Searle's A100 "Jaunty", Peter Davies' A137 "Baby Seal" (winner for the last two races), Dorrington's A168 "Kookaburra" and the Stearns' A183 "Bluster". It was good to see McGivern, who used to own "Lyde", turn up to watch the race, and the Allens who are new Atalanta owners (A60 Roamara).

Saturday 11th August dawned hot, bright and clear with a slight breeze from the west. By the start at 0950 hours, there was still a little wind and we all made a good start with "Kookaburra" just first over the line and upwind. "Bluster" soon took the lead with her big spinnaker, but "Baby Seal" was in trouble with hers. As we neared the Bench Head, "Bluster" was losing her lead but was first round the buoy and was able to carry her spinnaker to the Inner Bench Head. A slight shift in the breeze, for that was all it was by now, enabled her spinnaker to help her along towards the N W Knoll too, until the wind ran out on us all.

In this wind hole, with the tide now running fast against us and a speed of only one knot on the speedo, we were all losing ground fast. So, on "Bluster", we dropped the anchor into eight fathoms and the speedo reading went up to two knots! Just the right time for a beer.

And so we sat.

Lunch was out when a puff of wind got the strong home bred crew pulling up the warp and chain and 25 pound anchor out of the 45 feet of water. No sooner was it on deck than the wind dropped, so down it went again. All this time the rest of the fleet were getting farther away, swept back by that spring tide.

Another puff, so up came that anchor again only to descend to the depths when just up, and the wind failed yet once more. Mutiny was brewing, but another beer staved that off until, just before 1400 hours, the wind really came to us.

But not the others, and we were off.

Rounding the N W Knoll we were still able to carry the spinnaker and were prancing along at six knots whilst half a mile away, boats that had retired from other races were becalmed. Shortly after this the committee boat steamed up and told us to miss the last buoy. This we did, and passed the finishing line without a gun and without a committee boat. "Baby Seal" and "Jaunty" finished the race, coming 3rd and 2nd respectively, but "Kookaburra" had to withdraw and motor to Tollesbury in order to cross the sill into the marina where she is berthed; bad luck.

Atalantas are not at their best when there is no wind and a strong tide against them, but what does it matter when we had a fine day, even though we did miss the water sports. All the frustration was forgotten at night, when the Commodore and Margaret Odling gave us yet again, their warm welcome and hospitality at Gun House. We all appreciated their kindness.

What was lacking in the day were two things. The wind, which we can do little about, and it would have nice to see more than four Atalantas racing. The Regatta Committee are very keen to host our race and to welcome us and we should not disappoint them. After all it is anyone's race, as has been shown, and really a not too serious one at that. We hope to see you there next year.

FUNNY-SHAPED BOAT VISITS THE LAND OF LEPRECHAUNS

A 128 'Echo' - Piers Becket

"Milford Haven Coastguard, this is yacht 'Echo' now one mile west of South Bishop Lighthouse on passage to Castletown Berehaven. Five people on board. ETA about 2000 hours Sunday."

"Thank you, 'Echo', we'll log that." Not a hint of doubt. Very professional chaps, these coastguards.

Her Mightiness and I, having reached Cork last year as reported in your pages, were now trying to go all the way round the corner to the far west of Ireland, the true land of leprechauns and fairies. To assist we had John and Pamela, sort of cross-channel hitch hikers on their way to Valentia. They didn't know much about sailing but I told them not to worry about that, with the breezy confidence born of a good night in the Ship Inn, Solva. My little sister had forsaken Leeds for the ocean wave as well. Earlier the three girls had invaded the store and I imagined great congestion on the Haverfordwest Ring Road from lorries racing to restock Tescos. To my surprise, 'Echo' seemed to sail well despite the vast extra weight. At least we wouldn't starve.

It blew a charmed North-Easter and 'Echo' skipped from wave to wave at a speed almost indecent for an old lady, with her genoa heaving to the quartering breeze until, ten miles on from the South Bishop, and mindful of the coming night we reduced to something more seemly - a No. 2 jib and a big fat reef. The motion was lively, the speed wonderful and the vomiting considerable. All was well as we raced down a dark tunnel towards the shipping lanes and fishing fleets of the southern Irish Sea.

The waves piled up, the speed increased still further and soon I was scraping myself off the ceiling of the stern cabin, whence I had retired with a cheery "call me if you have any doubts". There was a wild thump and some very unladylike muttering from the main cabin as little sister, off watch and fast asleep, was shot through the air to arrive, disgusted, on the floor. Pamela looked balefully at the dark humps sliding by, decided to ignore them and concentrated ferociously on the compass. With three people on board who had never done a night passage I had wondered how we would do, but watching them perform I was able to cast doubt aside and catch a little sleep.

As reward for our night's labour we were presented with magnificent dawn. The sky passed from red through gold to blue in a few minutes, Madam made tea, spirits rose and John revealed a vast talent for breakfast making. At that point we had sailed sixty four miles in twelve hours - nearly five and a half knots.

The sun shone bright, the coast of Ireland hazed away in the distance, guillemots plastered the water and Pamela announced that she wished to see a dolphin. Obediently everyone scanned the surface and, at 11.10, the log announces that dolphins were duly sighted. It's not in my handwriting, though, because I was catching forty winks at the time.

The day became hot, the wind faded, the sea turned first oily and then glassy as Helpful Henry, our faithful Yanmar shoved us onward. At a conference over tea and fruit cake we decided to push on through the night. Soon we were crossing the tracks of shipping going to and from Cork some ten miles on the starboard beam. Pamela informed us on her determination to see a whale.

The wind dropped again in the middle of the night while sister and I were watching Galley Head light heave up over the bows. Sharkey, Solva's harbourmaster, once told me that if I were ever becalmed in the Irish Sea, I should shine a spotlight over the side and see what I saw, so accordingly we turned on the halogen and gazed into the deep. I was lost in contemplation of a most peculiar jelly fish when a sort of harrumph made me turn. The boss had woken up and wished to know why we were staring into the sea instead of getting on with the voyage. After a few choice words, Henry was rattling away and sister and I were steering west with great, chastened diligence.

At nine in the morning, after another of John's wonderful breakfasts, we drifted quietly on the tide past the Fastnet Rock, with its famous lighthouse sticking out of the sea like a strange industrial chimney. Cameras clicked and Pamela gazed over the bows like Captain Ahab in search of her whale. Soon we were off Mizzen Head with no word from its notorious overfalls. The sea was wall to wall gannets; a wonderful sight unless you happen to be a mackerel.

The log says that at 1303 hours a whale was sighted. Since this cetacean is thus recorded his existence is legally proven, but I can't say much about it because I was having a little nap at the time. Later though, in Bantry Bay, I can confirm two porpoise, more guillemots than I thought existed in the whole world and an evil-looking black thing that John told us was a Tope, a type of shark, he said.

At 1630 we anchored in Castletown Berehaven - 164 miles in 46 hours at just over four knots, sailing for all but about five hours. We were delighted with ourselves and rowed ashore for a celebratory stout. I noticed that they all seemed quite tired but for some odd reason, I wasn't.

I have always been told that If you want to go west in Ireland, you must first do your distance and leave the sightseeing until the journey home. It is certainly true that this long passage set up a wonderful holiday for us. We sailed through Dursey Sound beneath the cable-car to Darryname and then to Valentia. There we said goodbye to John and Pam and also to little sister, without whom it seemed that the city of Leeds would be quite unable to manage. We would miss their power and great cheerfulness.

An urchin in Valentia was very interested in our funny-shaped boat, so I showed him round.

"It's a lovely boat," he said, "Are you going to renovate it?" I thought of the hard winter months in my shed in Solva and saw my careful, travel-stained varnish through his eight-year-old eyes.

"You should have clipped him round the ear," said Frank the barman when I repaired for a restorative glass of porter and told him the tale.

After Valentia, her majesty and I sailed alone, on to Dingle where we saw a basking shark and Fungi the Dingle dolphin. There we were gale-bound for the only time. There is an end-of-the-world feel about these waters compounded by the knowledge that if the wind stays in the west the only way home is round the north of Ireland; three hundred miles of virtually havenless, stormy water. There are very few cruising boats that far west and most of them are French.

Fortunately, the wind came to the north and we sailed back to Valentia, back to Darryname, my favourite place, back through Dursey Sound (we sailed that both ways, is this a record?) and back round Mizzen Head to Crookhaven. We visited Goleen, Schull, and Clear Island, pootling between the islands under a small jib only, and in Baltimore on regatta night we forgot ourselves and became merrily, completely legless to the sound of flying jigs and reels. Truly Ireland is a wonderful country.

The must-get-home feeling accelerated us away on a pleasant westerly breeze. Five hours with the spinnaker flying, 'Echo' gurgling and the log spinning wildly and we were well on the way to Kinsale, just one big twenty-four hour hop away from home.

Tired and dirty after the long dawn effort of threading through the tides into St Bride's Bay, we picked up our mooring in Solva and I flopped on my bunk. 450 miles in three weeks, three spools of pictures, ten harbours and a head full of the kind of memories dreams are made of; it was a wonderful trip.

"Where are we going next year?" asked her ladyship.

SAILING DINOSAUR (A92 SEAMAJOR)

By Frances Martin

Friday August 3rd. We launched at Queen Anne's Battery, Plymouth, taking about three and a half hours from trailer to buoy. Not bad for two people.

Saturday the 4th. Another sizzling day at 95 degrees in the shade but this time we could enjoy it Mediterranean-style, plunging from the

boat into the water. Much better than stewing in the car on the M5. We only got to Newton Ferrers as the wind ran out.

Sunday the 5th. Quite an active day. First to Salcombe to anchor near the entrance to wait out the six hours of unfavourable tide. We were not charged by the harbourmaster, in Salcombe something of a feat. Then to Dartmouth to a free buoy, again near the entrance, meaning less distance to sail in and out through the fluky winds. Salcombe to Dartmouth had been something of a minor epic, entitled "Death of a Spinnaker"; ours being marked 1961, perhaps death was a merciful release. The wind freshened after Prawle Point (a williwaw) and the sheet detached itself leaving it flogging. Pulling it down caused it to split from side to side and we were spinnaker-less for the rest of the cruise. Has anyone got an unwanted spinnaker for sale, or one in need of a good home?

Monday the 6th. Dartmouth to Torquay. A poor day's sailing, in fact the worst of the holiday. We got stuck off Berry Head with a north wind which varied from 0 to 1½ and with an adverse tide. For once the tidal atlas let us down. A "negligible stream" it was not. We were stationary for over three hours, tacking back and forth until we lost count. In the end the 11 miles took nine hours. We anchored just outside Torquay harbour. Skipper talks of buying a speedboat but then decides it's easier by car.

Tuesday the 7th. Sea breeze sailing at its best. A good breeze comes off the sea by mid-morning, for an exhilarating sail followed by a quiet night at anchor. The British Carribean in fact. Will there ever be another summer like it? Torquay to Lyme Regis, 30 miles in seven hours and the wind died 15 minutes after we picked up a visitor's buoy, outside the harbour which itself dries out.

Wednesday the 8th. A day on land cycling to visit some friends near Bridport - what a hilly country West Dorset is! With the friend, we did walk up Golden Cap and this had to do as our mountaineering for this year. In the evening a single hander in a boat smaller than ours came over for a chat and a drink, and reassured us greatly about rounding the Bill. In anticipation this had assumed the proportions of an epic and his matter of fact approach cooled our imagination which had been overheated by other yachtsmen's tall stories. His words were, "Take the inshore pass, keep a biscuit's toss from the land and you'll be in Weymouth by 8.00 pm."

Thursday the 9th. Lyme Regis to Weymouth; we left with an hour in hand to sail to Fortune's Well, and did so well that we had to sail back and forth to use up this time. We arrived at the point of the Bill at exactly 6.00 pm, the time advised by our idol, Adlard Coles.

As predicted, Weymouth by 8.00 pm, another glorious sea breeze sail; 30 miles in eight hours.

Friday the 10th. A lazy day exploring Weymouth, sailing the Tinker and exchanging visits with another humble boat, this time a catamaran lived in by an out-of-work bricklayer, his wife and baby. They had just completed their first year on board, in that time progressing from North Wales to Weymouth; Christmas sailing round Land's End, ugh!

Saturday the 11th. Weymouth to Swanage, 22 miles in five hours and, guess what, another sea breeze. Today someone else had the epic. A tiny cabin cruiser powered by a Seagull was drawn west against the wind by the ebbing race off Anvil Point. Other boats spoke to him but he refused aid. Only after we had been at anchor in Swanage did we see him come into harbour.

Sunday the 12th. Swanage to West Poole; it was a nerve wracking experience entering Poole harbour under sail on a Sunday. About 100 boats came out while another 100 came in, all totally without a speed limit. Large motor boats did 30 knots, very frightening at close quarters. We picked up a free buoy just beyond th Royal Marines' old jetty.

Monday the 13th. Another day of cycling, now it was cars at 60 knots to avoid instead. We visited Wareham, Boscombe and Bournemouth. On a previous cruise 17 years before, we had spent a night and day at Wareham quay, but now a sign said, "No mooring between 9.00 am and 9.00 pm." Times change.

Tuesday the 14th. Poole to Lymington, 25 miles in seven hours. In our eagerness to get good close views of the Needles for a picture, we carelessly cut across the tail of the Shingles Bank. Very bumpy water. Here in Lymington, our Seagull needed some attention, the first time in 12 years. Once on the convenient visitors' buoy, we gave it a run and then found that petrol was leaking due to a rusted petrol tank. It didn't take long to track down the local agent, Nick Cox, Chandler, who supplied a plastic petrol tank and gave advice and help in fitting it to our engine.

Wednesday the 15th. Our first and only gale between June and September, and Lymington couldn't have been more snug. Now that we had arrived in the Solent, we paid our first harbour dues of the trip, averaging about £4 a night, with Yarmouth the most expensive and Hamble the cheapest at £2.50.

Thursday the 16th. A wet but exciting sail to Yarmouth, SW 5-6. Four miles took one hour, with the main well reefed. A small tanker "Esso Penzance" was on a converging course with us but we kept our nerve and a steady course and he slowed slightly to pass behind us.

The free hot showers on Yarmouth quay were bliss and the main reason for coming here.

Friday the 17th. The morning was spent on our bikes seeing the west Wight sights, especially the Needles from the land this time. By now we were heavily into nostalgia as we were re-living a previous cruise in these parts made with our children, and every corner brought more memories. In the afternoon to Cowes with WSW 5-6, 10 miles in two hours. Although running, we had to drop the main, being overpressed, and we ran under two poled out jibs. The first visitors' piles were convenient and cheap.

Saturday the 18th. We spent this day cycling around the South and East of the Isle of Wight. We arrived back at the boat to see the highlight of the cruise, Salizanda A150 moored alongside us. We spent a very happy evening talking and exchanging visits with Mr Denning and his son.

Sunday the 19th. Cold and pouring rain, and the first time sweaters were needed. We went to the Service at St Mary's and after that, another highlight; a lady behind us said at the end of the Service, noticing that we were wearing waterproofs, "Come down to the club with us," and we did. The club turned out to be the Island Sailing Club, and the lady was Eve Woodger, and she regaled us with stories of sailing with Uffa, while we looked out from one of the best situated windows in the sailing world. Her friend was Sir Richard Duckworth, a former owner of A179 Emma Duck, and he satisfied my curiosity about the name of his old boat. In the afternoon to Hamble, W 6, six miles in one hour, to another cheap pair of visitors' piles. Unwisely we started under genoa and reefed main so we dropped the genoa to change it, but there didn't seem to be any point in putting up the jib as the reefed main was plenty. Only when we came to the Hamble with its strong ebb did we hoist the jib to help us stem it. En route we had time to admire the numerous windsurfers who fall in to go about, and then get the wind to lift them out on to the other tack.

Monday the 20th. The skipper went to Plymouth by train to retrieve car and trailer, arriving back at Hamble at 1830, having left Southampton station at 0800.

Saturday the 25th. The lost days were windless, but on this day a gentle breeze took us to East Head, Chichester, 19 miles in six hours. By now it was the Bank Holiday and this turned out to be an ideal place for it. So much to see, races all the time and International 14s were especially fascinating to watch with their enormous spinnaker-cum-genos on bowsprits, and helm and crew on trapezes, planing in force 3.

Sunday the 26th. Church at West Wittering, and a gift en route, a freshly killed rabbit on the road. It made an excellent lunch. Fortunately we carry a pressure cooker!

Monday the 27th. No wind, and fog at first, so we stayed put. We "Tinkered" around and burned all the other Tinkers. How well it sails, especially in conditions of wind over tide, but the rig must be really tight and the lone helm must sit on the centreboard case, necessitating a tiller extension. Another red letter day for social life; first a talk with the harbourmaster about the huge motorboat aground on the Winner, "They always try to cut that corner," was his comment. Then a single hander in a junk rigged *virgo Voyager* (smaller than us of course), came over for a lunchtime drink, lamenting the fact that his wife wouldn't join him (don't they all, but how do they treat their wives on board, expecting them to be galley and anchor slaves). In the evening an 18 foot boat anchored near us and we invited "the old man of the sea" to drink with us. He reminded me of the *White Knight* as he not only had a straggly beard, but his boat was hung about with everything, outboard, self-steering, old anchors, bowsprits, gaff, etc. He was living on his boat and undecided whether to make for London or his home port, Portland.

Tuesday the 28th. Incredibly the only Easterly of the holiday, as we returned to Hamble, with once again the wind on our tail giving us four knots.

Wednesday the 29th. Seamajor put back on to the trailer on the old *Fairey Marine* slipway, previously used in 1973 and 1978.

Thus we finish with our two perennial laments. Where, oh where, have all the *Atalantas* gone, as we do so enjoy meeting them on the water? Why don't more "sailors" emulate us in sailing a modest 221 mile cruise entirely without recourse to their motors? If they all like motoring so much, why don't they buy motor boats? Sailing is far more fun, even if one ends up in a minority of one as a *Sailing Dinosaur*.

IF IT DOESN'T WORK, READ THE INSTRUCTIONS

by John Greenhough, Johara A148

I first remember *Fairey Marine* when I was asked to write a series of articles on power boats, the *Hunter* being one. I went around the factory and was impressed by the dedication of the work force and the method of construction. A year later I was sailing in a day boat from Malpas, near Truro, when I saw an *Atalanta* sailing majestically up the

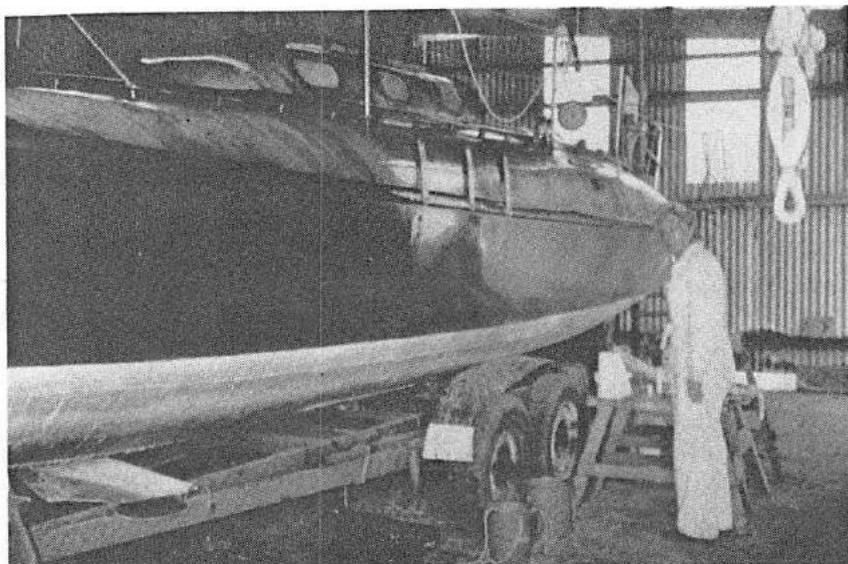
*Showing the
Stern
Bulkhead
Cut Away*



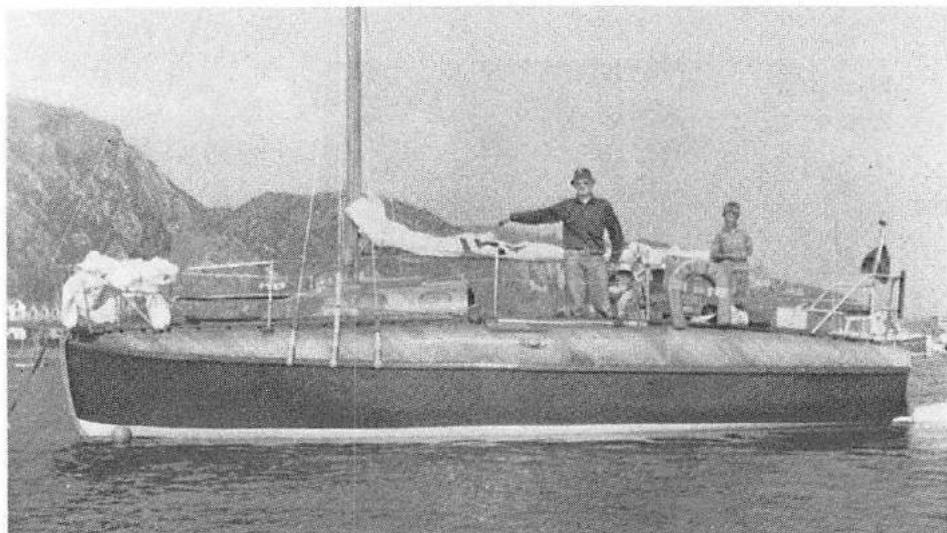
*Jim Reid
at Work!*



*Stripping and
Replacing
Cold Moulding*



*After Epoxy and During Varnishing.
Diana Greenhough in Her Painting Boiler Suit.*



*On the Water in Barmouth Harbour. John Greenhough and
Daniel Powell (aged 9) on Deck. StJohn Greenhough and
Bertram Greenhough (also 9) Below - or Ashore?*

Tresillion river. I don't know whether she ever arrived at Tresillion but the attempt was bold and there could be few yachts of that size which could attempt the passage.

Many, many years later, on doctor's orders, I thought I had given up sailing and sold my Cornish Crabber. But when I became stronger, StJohn, my son, thought that an Atalanta might be a suitable replacement. Two factors determined us, firstly the Ribble is a restricted waterway if one isn't a keen racer and the journey to more interesting waters is long after years of repetition, and secondly StJohn has a Landrover. Over a year, with George Parker's help, we looked at three Atalantas, two of which were quite unsuitable. Then we bought Johara on the strength of the vendor's surveyor's report and the fact that we liked the seller. We expected some problems with an old boat and it is not my intention to list them now. Enough to write that we had ten days sailing in the Clyde last August in beastly weather and she leaked like a sieve.

In October I slipped her and found a partly open barn where I could work in nearly dry but often very cold conditions. This I shared with two friendly goats named Henry and Penelope and two hundred sex crazed hens with a very few lucky cocks. I stripped six or seven coats of paint to the gunnel, removed the hatches, the toe rails and everything that would come off including the engine and prop shaft. During the process, I found that ninety per cent of all screws had "zincd out" as also had the prop shaft. I found the cause of the leaks. The deck had been patched, filled, and almost every artifice used to stop leaks. But worse, the stern bulkhead and the floors and floor boards in the cockpit were rotten, as were some areas on the deck around the transom. I decided to replace all rotten wood and repair the decks by cold moulding. Fortunately we have, in this area, a great expert in cold moulding called Jim Reid whom I enlisted to help. In the event he did all the skilled work while I acted as labourer and did all the stripping and sanding.

M Bennett, Devorguilla, strongly advised using epoxy resins as he had successfully coated his decks with them, using West's epoxy. At the Boat Show I had a long discussion with Adrian Baker who gave me "SP Guide To Using Epoxy In The Restoration of Wooden Craft" and advised me to buy Steve Sleight's "Modern Boatbuilding and Methods". Jim Reid was strongly opposed to using epoxy, in fact, this was the only aspect of refitting where we were not in accord. He used other glues for the cold moulding. I now know his objections and these are: 1, price; 2, the exothermic properties of epoxy; 3, the incredible amount of preparation required before it can be used effectively; 4, the difficulty of working single handed when coating the decks in low

temperatures; 5, the fact that no tolerance can be allowed in making the mix.

There are no short cuts to the use of epoxy but it is possible that if I have followed the instructions Johara will have no leaks in the area from the gunnel up. Anyone intending to use epoxy would be advised to read SP's literature and instructions first and borrow Sleight's book from the library. My copy is available. I used SP320 Spacote to which I added colloidal silica and glass bubbles and reddish microballons where I wanted a darker colour. These materials were suitable for coating, bonding, filling and laminating. I bought them in the largest containers for the sake of good value but even then the cost was over £200. Mixing is a problem which SP have not fully solved. Finally I settled on a large number of 100ml containers, 5ml plastic spoons, and plastic pots. Vital were large caterers' square boxes into which the mix could be decanted after mixing. One cannot confine mixed epoxy for it goes exothermic and smoke comes from the brush while the container becomes a cauldron and bang goes £5 or more. All the substrates must be dry before application or else you seal in trouble. The method Adrian Baker suggested was application to wood heated with an electric paint stripper. This method is wholly effective but needs an extra hand. If the hot air is directed to either brush or pot, the epoxy goes exothermic.

It is a good idea to practise on pieces of wood first. Some advised using Eposeal and I believe this would be easier to apply and might be preferable for new wood. I recommend SP Systems for their clear directions and helpful advice when under way with the work and when problems arise - as they will. I gave the decks two to three coats of SP320 and followed this with two to three coats of Ultravar 2000. The main value with using this is its ultra violet absorbing properties and the quick build-up of coats. It is also expensive. I had not intended to treat the mast but on cleaning it up I found that all the bolts were mild steel and they had rusted to sometimes half their size, causing bolt sickness in the wood. I had to scarf new wood into the base and replace all bolts and screws.

In addition we scrapped the Renault engine and replaced it with a Yanmar GM1 and moved the water tank (now made by Leaflex to shape) under the port forward bunk to compensate for the extra weight. The fuel tank is a smaller plastic one which has been moved down in the hull. StJohn has rewired and put in a new gas system and Jim Reid made a new simple galley which will enable us to concentrate the victuals in that area.

Was it worth it? Perhaps. I will tell you next year unless the doctors were right. Or maybe I will tackle the hull!

RIVER CLYDE TO THE OUTER HEBRIDES AND BACK GRACE (A 127)

By Odet and Allon Beauvoisin

Monday, 25th June 1990 The Cruise began with a fine day to motor Grace down the River Leven, over Dumbarton weir (it was High Water), under the bridge, and raise Grace's mast using the derrick of a friendly fishing boat. We loaded with enough stores for the entire seven weeks - so that the only compulsory stops would be for bread, water and diesel.

Aboard Grace for the whole school holiday were the Skip (Abe Bearvoisin), Mate (Odet Beauvoisin) and Leading Seaman (Allon Beauvoisin, now 16 years old), together with Panda, Piglet, Ging-Ging, Dogmatrix and MacMac, AND Allon's studies for his Higher school exams.

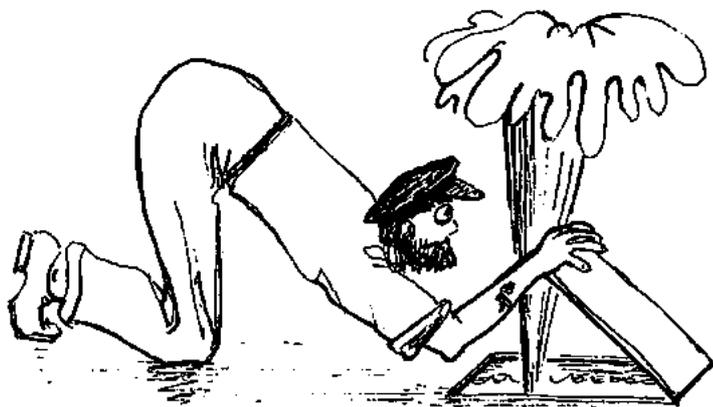
To begin with we took advantage of the calms to shake down gently, as Grace meandered down the Clyde. Skip attended to Thumper's teething troubles (Thumper is Grace's DV10, BUKH diesel engine), e.g. diesel squirting merrily into the bilges from the gap caused by an absent oil seal on the (professionally) renovated oil pump. Skip chopped a ring slice off a suitable pipe and jury-rigged a seal. It worked.

During the week we sailed via the beauties of the Kyles of Bute, Holy Isle by Arran, and then furthest south to the Isle of Sanda to await a favourable tide to round the Mull of Kintyre westwards. We checked the weather forecast with our new navigation equipment - which is a mini television on which Skip studies the BBC meteorological isobar chart at 1325, to help to interpret the approaching weather systems forecast in the 1355 shipping forecasts.

It rained all the way round the Mull of Kintyre, but with a following easterly wind, Grace was able to skirt the edge of the overfalls via the cable-width smooth gap between them and the cliff face. We watched in awe as a local fishing boat manoeuvred even closer to the looming cliffs, avoiding the turmoil of seas entirely.

The Island of Gigha was our next stop, where Skip opened the engine room. It was awash with diesel.

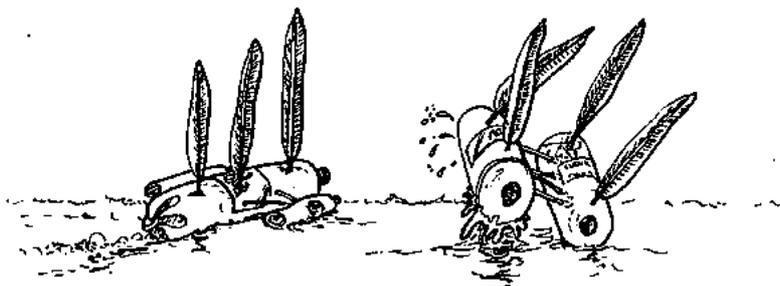
The pipe to the low pressure pump had come off, and had filled the bilge with three gallons of diesel. The next day was spent with Skip filtering the rescued diesel, while the crew explored Gigha and ordered six wholemeal loaves at the shop.



Monday, 2nd July, Skip's 59th Birthday And we made the mistake of giving him a water pistol which had an appalling range for a toy!



Grace continued northwards, alternating full-sail and motor-sail, up the sound between the Isle of Jura and the Mainland, stopping for three days at the uninhabited MacCormac Island. Fierce ENE winds and deluging rain. Grace raised her keels and tied up alongside the cliff face inside the natural lagoon. A bedraggled dinghy with a damp family of three rafted alongside. We gradually discovered that last year's oilskins were no longer watertight. No problem; we had plenty of dry clothing. We spent the days watching the water rip and boil as it raced northwards against the strong wind. Our Leading Seaman and their Cabin boy indulged in Naval Architecture. Using tide line flotsam (mainly plastic fizz-bottles, feathers and sticks), they made tri-marans, galleons and catamarans, and raced them across an inland pool.



The evenings were spent with the Leading Seaman's clarinet joining the seagulls in chorus.

Friday, 6th July Light variables. We sailed north via the Firth of Lorne towards Tobermoray on the Isle of Mull. The forecast was uninviting with heavy rain and SW winds of Force 6 and over. A 2grey, high, wet-looking front crept towards us from the west. We managed to sail to within four miles of Tobermoray before the wind switched direction and blew down the Sound against us. On with Thumper! We anchored close inshore with keels and rudder up. Tobermoray is getting very crowded - but sells exceptionally tasty bread.

We spent the next day fending off other (deep keeled) yachts which insisted on anchoring alongside, or even further inshore. Skip threatened to paint a large notice saying, "I ONLY DRAW 2 FEET". By this time the permeability of the oilskins was becoming irritating, so Skip bought replacements at the local ironmongers.

Tuesday, 10th July Wind WNW force 4. Forecast W force 6, rain. We sailed out westwards to the Island of Canna during the gap between weather fronts. The next bout of rain brought a soggy, temporary calm, and we engine'd in to Canna's superb anchorage, arriving just before the wind shifted SW force 5. Overnight it rose to force 8 and stayed there.

Wednesday brought heavy rain and strong westerly winds. We decided to stay. The Leading Seaman went ashore to do some longed-for piano practice. (He develops serious withdrawal symptoms when we cannot find a piano at an anchorage). He returned with a visitor, a man who had waited for years to have a closer look at an Atalanta. He seemed suitably impressed, so he was treated to tea.

Thursday, 12th July Forecast wind was W backing SW backing S, force 4, so we decided to cross the Minch for Loch Maddy (North Uist). The Leading Seaman proved that he could take Grace out alone, setting out under engine then raising the mainsail to assist, once we were clear of the cliffs. The wind contrarily veered NW, setting a nasty chop of wind-over-tide round Neist Point on Skye. We kept Thumper on to help us clear this extremity before the tide began to ebb strongly against us. Once clear, Grace settled to a comfortable reach across the Minch, picking up a visitor's mooring in Loch Maddy by late afternoon. The evening shipping forecast predicted SE winds in the Hebrides - which resurrected Skip's desire to head out for St Kilda once more.

Friday, 13th July All ashore to replenish stores of bread and water - and to buy some very strong elastic. The Tobermoray oilskins had disastrously slack waists. Skip had replaced his oilskin elastic with a cord - then found the cord jammed in a knot at an urgent moment. Elastic seemed wiser.

Back on board. Visibility was phenomenal, the wind non-existent. The forecast predicted SE, force 3 to 4 with haze. We departed to explore more of the Sound of Harris en route to the Isle of Berneray, which is on the Atlantic border of the Sound. Skip loves using the Atalanta's dinghy-depth qualities to manoeuvre in such challenging places - sideways tides of unpredictable direction (even the pilot book says so), reefs that stay awash, shifting sandbars with only two feet of clear water over them and all this in sunshine with a gentle following breeze.

Skip wanted to try a southern passage that he had worked-out from the chart during the days of rain. Grace sailed majestically through the eastern anchorage, made by two islets and a fish farm, rounded their northeastern tip, then headed for the narrow, elongated gorge between the awash reefs of Spiers and Sgeir a Bata. Some neat helming and intuitively skilful navigation saw Grace safely through a gap scarcely 10 feet wide. The seals kindly perched on the submerged reefs, marking their position for us. The local flag was missing from the underwater rock which denoted where we joined the 'Prawn Channel' - another seal kindly levitated over it for us.



Late afternoon, we tied up in Berneray Harbour and renewed old acquaintances from the St Kilda trip last year. The Leading Seaman and Mate took a cruise on the ferry (Endeavour of Berneray) to watch the locals' route to North Uist as well as their passage between the mid-sound islands to Leverborough.

The tide was so low that the ferry scraped across sandbanks twice; slowing down and tilting despite her surging engines. The amount of power required to cross these swirling, surging currents that rush through the Sound of Harris and vortex round the mid stream islands, has to be seen to be appreciated. Grace's little 10 horsepower engine would not be able to carry her across an adverse tide here.

Local knowledge pointed out houses and cairns which lined up to indicate if you were being swept sideways (always assuming visibility; here the local boats have radar before depth sounder or Decca). The Leverburgh pier has deep water all round; too deep for Grace; and the shallow nooks are well strewn with small local lobster boats (none of which has less than eight knots of power!).

The evening's inshore forecast predicted clear, fair weather, but SE force 6 to 7 in exposed areas. South easterlies always whip through the Sound of Harris with fierce acceleration. We were glad to be tied up in harbour.

Sunday, 15th July Rain, which did not clear till early evening. Skip repaired three splits in the genoa. The Leading Seaman went off on an expedition with a local friend. The Mate trimmed Skip's hair in the shelter of the harbour's huge diesel tanks. Then Skip and the Mate took an evening stroll - Skip on the folding bike, as usual. This bike shares the aft cabin with the Leading Seaman and has been nicknamed 'Skip's wheelchair'. Its support enables him to explore ashore as long as the track is reasonably flat, though on good days, the mate and Leading Seaman have been known to push Skip up the inclines.

By late evening the entire crew had been hijacked into the house of Alec Dan and Big John for an impromptu Ceilidh. The Leading Seaman had been bribed with the use of a Casio Keyboard. Skip was bought by the smell of real pancakes (drop scones). The company waxed happy. The music grew and varied with the addition of tin whistle and chanter. The jokes began, and continued in spiral down to playground level. By 2300 all were aching with laughter.

Despite Skip's announcement that Grace leaves for Plocropool (Harris) in the morning, Big John and Alec Dan decided to take the Leading Seaman out to de-creel lobsters with them (0630 start!). If they had not returned before mid-flood tide, Skip threatened Grace would sail anyway, and collect our Leading Seaman en route. We trooped back to Grace in the midnight gloaming, clutching a bag of 12 fresh eggs, a gift from Alec Dan's wife, "to build up the Leading Seaman".

Monday, 16th July 0630: The Leading Seaman disappeared on to the lobster boat (CY30). Alec Dan tied their bags of earlier catches off Grace's toe rail, draped like a necklace just below the water. "Come High or Low Water, we'll be back by two," promised Big John. Skip and the Mate deharbourized Grace; stowing the lockers, dinghy and bike in a manner fit for tacking at some heel.

1300: Leading Seaman returned, full of new skills, such as separating warring velvet crabs, and challenging octopi to new feats of colour

change. (If the octopus was placed across an orange and grey striped plastic fish box, the confusion caused the creature to turn orange with grey dots; whereas it could mimic yellow or green oilskins with impeccable accuracy.)

1312: Thumper on. Departed eastward using the unmarked 'Prawn Channel' which Skip had deciphered from the chart last year. An hour later, Grace was in the Minch and heading north on a dead run with the main and the genoa poled out to starboard (poled out with the boat hook which Skip had designed to serve as spinnaker pole and

TV aerial as well). We anchored in Plocropool and had a massive omelette for dinner, eaten out in the cockpit in calm sunshine.

We stayed until Friday with a short sail up to Tarbert for bread. We had old acquaintances to renew; fresh oatcakes and homemade gooseberry jam to taste; and Skip needed time to recuperate.

Friday, 20th July Calm and fair. We set off at 0710 under engine, bound SE across the Minch via Neist Point, intending to reach Canna some 48 miles away.

1812: Thumper stopped after a moment's clattering cacophony. Blown something.

0815: Leading Seaman on helm keeping Grace as close to the wind as possible. The wind freshening and gradually veering, allowing us to point south to Neist Point on a close haul. Main and genoa up in a hurry. Skip spent 40 minutes diagnosing the engine problem - a broken pushrod to the exhaust valve. The cup had sheered (metal fatigue) letting the exhaust fire up the air filter. Thumper is kaput until the rod is replaced. It is not a normal spare to carry around. In all his years, Skip had never seen this type of failure in a diesel engine. (Just as a matter of interest, the Mate calculated the engine hours used from the time Grace left Berneray if we had set for St Kilda, we'd have reached half way before the SE wind freshened against our return. Entering Berneray Harbour sans engine is impossible.)

1300: The Leading Seaman was fishing for mackerel off the stern, and had caught two big enough for dinner. Wind, light S by W. Grace crept towards Neist Point. There is one thing about sailing Grace up into very light head winds it reminds us why we wanted a reliable diesel engine in the first place. Grace was proceeding gracefully, blowing trails of large bubbles in her wake but not exactly "fast".

Skip radioed the Stornoway Coastguard, who did an hour's detective work then ordered a new pushrod for Grace via a marina near Oban. The part would be mailed straight from the south of England to our friends on Canna. The Leading Seaman was bouncing with delight at the prospect of long access to the piano while we awaited Canna's thrice-weekly mail ferry.

1347: Flat calm. Skip and the Leading Seaman were rowing/paddling Grace from either side of the cockpit. A fulmar paddled after us like a towed toy and eventually paddled on past!

1625: SW force 3; close to Dunvegan Head (Skye) and tacking in to the long loch to avoid the worst of the contrary tide. We used the same technique into Loch Pooltiel.

1856: Neist Point in sight. Dinner. Today's mackerel in parsley and garlic sauce, followed by pineapple in fudge sauce.

1916: Stornoway Coastguard forecast winds W, 3 veering NW; fine; good visibility. Outlook, light NW. Decision: to continue sailing overnight and hope to reach Canna by daybreak.

2037: Goosewinging past Neist Point, Skip below for a kip. Watch system underway to provide Grace with one crew member on helm, one on standby and one asleep, throughout the night; changing every two hours.

Midnight, the genoa was lowered at dark o'clock to forestall a pitch black encounter with the cliffs of Canna. Wind was a light northerly, about force 3.

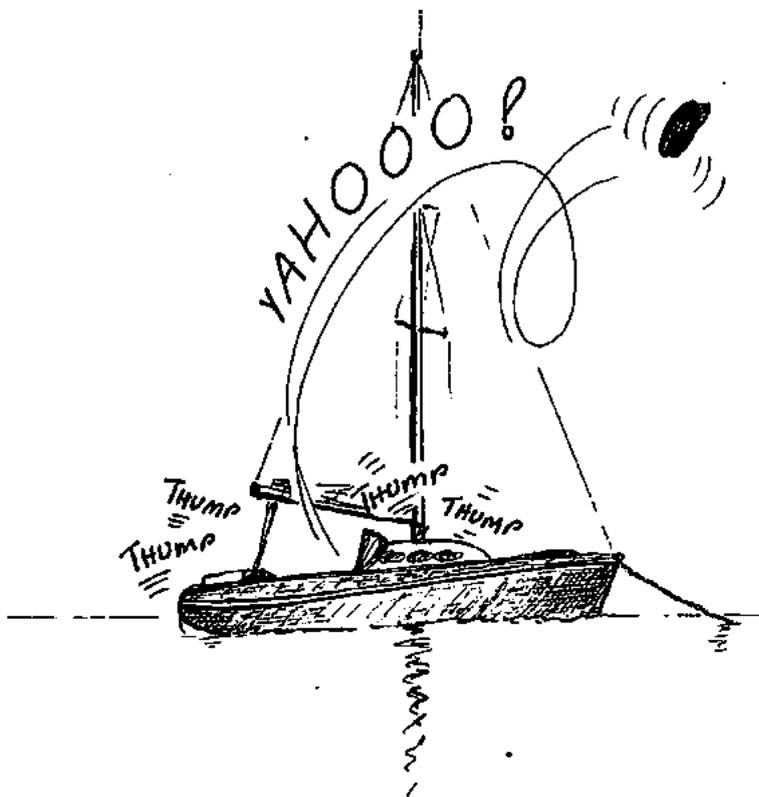
Saturday, 31st July 0434: Sailed in to Canna Harbour magnificently, just before sunrise. Backed the main and ballooned the genoa to dig in the anchor. Tea and bunk!

1320: Breakfast, then all crew ashore. The Leading Seaman went to his piano, the Mate was given bread and rolls by the inhabitants (no shop on Canna). They also phoned a bread order to Mallaig to be added to their ferried grocery delivery on Monday. Skip wandered off to find a possible alternative for Thumper's shattered pushrod. He was directed up the hills to the tractor's graveyard. Joined later by the Leading Seaman and Mate, he dismantled two ancient tractor engines, and in the second one unearthed a pushrod identical to Thumper's in all but the width at its base. A little machining on our friendly local's grindstone, and

1908: Skip started Thumper with the extractor pushrod, and slight adjustment to the tappets. The engine was fully functional again. Power was required urgently to keep Grace manoeuvrable in the rapidly overcrowding anchorage. Not all newcomers knew where their brakes were.

Weekend Blissful weather, enjoyed building sand dams and exploring the shore lines.

Monday, 23rd July 1800: Ferry. The new pushrod arrived! Fast work, excellent service. Skip fitted it immediately, but retained the tractor spare.



Grace stayed at Canna for a few days' relaxation, then set off southwards. Most of the winds blew from the SE during the next week. A stop at Arisaig, and then a longer stay in the enclosed NW anchorage of Gometra (an idyllic island off the west coast of the Isle of Ulva, which is off the west of the Isle of Mull). Plenty of spectacular coastline to comb on foot, though Skip built a catchment dam and spout in a burn so that we could replenish our water supply.

The weather turned foul with wet, contrary winds - and none of us fancied heavy tacking, so Grace remained in Gometra for five days.

Tuesday 31st July Saw a weather window in the rain and a southerly wind force 4. Grace tacked SW out to the Treshnish

Islands, then back in towards Iona; eventually pootling in via the north (locals only) entrance to Tinker's Hole on the Isle of Erraid. A new gale warning (S, force 8, imminent) was already in the forecast. We settled down to a quiet night and a candlelit reading from "The Kontiki Expedition".

Thursday, 2nd August A beautiful roller coaster of a sail across the south coast of Mull, gliding over deep, long Atlantic swells left by the gale. We anchored that night near friends in Loch Craignish (north of Crinan).

Friday, 3rd August Onwards and southwards down the Sound of Jura, mainly a close reach in a moderate W by SW, which veered W by N in the afternoon. Anchored at Gigha and prepared to sail round the Mull of Kintyre through the next weather window. Overnight news that our daughter had become engaged (shore telephones are useful items).

Monday, 6th August Forecast NW, force 5 to 6, moderating to force 4 and becoming W to SW force 3 to 4 by evening.

0840: Grace left Gigha, southbound over an adverse tide, in order to catch the beginnings of the tidal race round the Mull of Kintyre - before the overfalls built up nastily.

1500: Confused, cross and lumpy sea. Steep SW swell broken into peaks by the WNW force 5 wind. Good visibility. The rounding of the peninsular was at least an hour off. Seas were increasing in size and steepness; swelling up into pyramid peaks beneath Grace, lifting her then dropping her sideways into unpredictable hollows.

1615: Steering broke. Took Skip 30 seconds to discover that the cleat holding the port helm ropes had torn out of the bulkhead. Leading Seaman and Skip fitted the tiller/whipstaff to the original rudder lines, with haste. Freed off the mainsail to counteract Grace's desire to head up into the wind.

1627: Skip at the tiller announced that the handling of Grace was improved one hundred per cent by having a helm with 5:1 ratio. The 1:1 tiller is BRAVO DELTA SIERRA hard work. Discovered that the rudder blade had been slightly kicked back by the engine when we left Gigha; and the heavy sea off Kintyre made short work of finding a weakness. We forgot to double check the rudder downhaul when we set sail and Thumper stood down.

1640: Grace was a good four miles offshore to avoid all overfalls (!?!). The Kintyre lighthouse was visible. When Sanda Island was bearing 95°m, Grace could alter course and run straight for it. Shewas planing/surfing down humpbacked swells. The wind had backed westerly and was at the top of force 5.

1836: Sanda Isle clear of Kintyre (105°m). Seas even bigger and more confused. Rathlin Island and the Northern Ireland coast crystal clear. Skip has always longed to sail round the Mull of Kintyre (rather than motor sail). He now said that motoring in flat calms would suffice over this stretch of water in the future.

1853: Gybed. Course 95°m for Sanda. Almost a dead run, wallowing hiccupingly over erratic pinnacles of grey, spumed sea.

1928: Rounded Kintyre Point. The lighthouse dropped out of sight behind the cliffs and, suddenly, we had smooth sea. It was as though someone switched off the wave machine; or ran over the surface with a huge iron! Most unexpected; most welcome.

2037: Dropped anchor at Sanda Isle in eight feet of water (three foot rise here). All exhausted and exhilarated by the dramatic, changeable sea conditions and the practical application of practised teamwork. A great sail. Grace was lying quietly in little or no wind.

7th to 16th August Gently picked perfectly fair winds to sail up the Clyde via Arran, Holy Isle, Inchmarnoch Island and up the West Kyle to the Narrows of Bute. There we met Grace's previous owner, who sails his own, self-built, cement yacht. Skip had also designed and built his own cement yacht (in the 1960s) so both skippers had much expertise in common, as well as their admiration of Atalantas. The Leading Seaman and Mate spent nights searching the SE sky for the Levis Comet - which the Leading Seaman eventually found in Pegasus.

Sadly, the school term was about to begin (17th August in Scotland) and Grace was moored at her Autumn mooring in the Gareloch, to await our free weekends. It was hard to return to shore life after such a blissful summer. Skip's technique of sailing where the wind goes and doing something else if the wind goes too hard, leads to exquisite summers.

A wonderful seven weeks. Thanks Skip.

The Skip, Abe, has admired Atalantas since their inception - and it has been with great pleasure that he has sailed Grace (A 127) for the past eight years. She is a tolerant boat, with a forgiving nature; inclined to respond to the winter ministrations of a practised boat builder/improver. Grace's gentle sailability enabled Abe to continue sailing long after his heart condition became disabling, twelve and a half years ago.

Three and a half weeks after the summer cruise, Abe died during a heart operation having trained his Leading Seaman and Mate up

to a standard where they should be able to keep Grace in the seas and sailing to which she has grown accustomed.

MAREEL'S 1990 SEASON

By Phillip Allison

By the end of the 1989 season, I was becoming somewhat fed up with various aspects of my sailing. True, "Mareel's" keels now worked beautifully (see Bulletin 1988/89), and the hull and rigging were generally in pretty fair condition, but there were various other problems. In 1988, the hydraulic wheel steering had packed in, and had been replaced by a Teleflex system, which was stiff. The rudder head (aluminium over steel) was bulging alarmingly, and there was obviously a lot of corrosion and gunge there; the cockpit seats were cracking; and above all, the engine didn't work.

I'm quite sure that no mechanic would agree that "the engine didn't work". It was an elderly Stuart Turner in perfectly good condition. But sometimes water got to the magneto; or the jets got blocked; and the dynamo needed to be replaced. So from time to time a mechanic would look at it (involving always a long delay between the request and the action, it seemed) and then it would work fine, till the next time. Unfortunately, I'm no mechanic and it gave me no pleasure to tinker about with machinery in a boat full of children, bobbing around in the middle of the Forth. And the Forth itself was losing its charm; a great stretch of sometimes beautiful, windswept water, with, it's true, a number of charming tidal fishing harbours a long way from civilisation and my moorings, but essentially devoid of sheltered anchorages (except at Inverkeithing inner harbour: between the shipbreaker's yard and the paper-mill, in the dredged runnel between the mudbanks. Yes, that sort of anchorage).

So, a double decision was taken: to replace the engine and "refurbish" the boat a bit and to move to the Clyde. In November 1989, therefore, "Mareel" went into the shed, the old engine was removed, and a new Yanmar GM10 diesel was plumbed in, in its place. The new engine took up noticeably less room fore and aft and athwartships than the old (and actually allows access to the bilge below it for cleaning or sponging out, a great luxury), but stands higher, topped by a fine, new, varnished engine box which provides an excellent seat in shelter and safety for the children (or me!) in mid-cockpit, while not unduly hindering access to the fore-cabin. At the same time, the rudder was removed, taken to bits, cleaned off, reassembled and repainted, and the cockpit seat tops replaced with good, thick ply that doesn't flex and crack when my fourteen-and-a-half stone lands on it thump from a quayside ladder.

I also had her surveyed, without any horrible bugs and holes being shown up.

By the end of June, I was on holiday. The old engine had - I hoped - found a happy home with A 177 "Emira" under refit in Wells (Somerset) and "Mareel" was in the water - in the Forth again for the last time in a while. The new engine worked beautifully: it is noisy (no silencer as yet) and I'm not sure that it pushes the boat as fast as the old Stuart did - though I've probably been a bit lily-livered about giving it plenty of throttle while it's running in - but (O frabjous day, calloo, callay) it starts when I press the button, and it runs till I pull the stop switch: just like the motor car; lovely. and it consumes about a quarter of the quantity of fuel that the old Stuart used.

Well, off down the Forth we trundled and into Aberdour, where the boat was moored to the quay and used as a maritime climbing frame by my own four children (aged three to 12) and their assorted friends for the next couple of weeks. It's not the WRTWR or even Corinthian Cruising, but it's a good way to spend a family holiday and we and "Mareel" have done it annually since 1982.

At the end of the fortnight, we moved over to the West en famille, displacing my long-suffering batchelor uncle from his small cottage, and invading my parents. I told the contractor with whom I'd arranged for the boat to be shifted, to carry on. Some four months earlier, he and I had arranged that he should view the boat out of the water, and that he would talk to the yard to ensure that there would be no problems. Perhaps I should have realised that he might only look at the boat en passant and not talk with the yard, so that when the trailer was actually offered up, it proved too small for the job. Ah well, he was cheap and I widened his vocabulary.

So I found another (dearer but competent) contractor within a couple of days - by which time the crane at Rhu, where I had taken a mooring, was already booked for another boat. But we altered the schedule so the boat was craned in and masted at Inverkip, some fifteen miles away from her eventual Rhu moorings. I was impressed by the efficiency of the marinas: they knew precisely what they were up to, and did it (and no more) fast and courteously - as fast and courteously indeed as they lightened my wallet.

The day of "Mareel's" launch at Inverkip was lovely: hot, sunny, and virtually windless. Not the weather for fast passages under sail; but ideal for chucking a couple of sons aboard (the seven-year-old arrived with little sailor dolls on key rings, bought from the marina chandlery. He had a far more exciting passage in his imagination than we did in reality) and chugging gently up-firth, tightening the rigging and testing

systems. By now, having dribbled WD40 into the pipes off and on for a year or so, I had the steering working freely, the engine clonked along happily, and all was well. "Well?" Well, almost all. The masthead light kept fusing. I checked the connections, I checked all I could see, I put a piece of copper wire in lieu of the fuse, to see what would happen: I shall replace the switch this winter, and I still don't know where the short was.

When we had arrived at Rhu, we used the boat for a series of forays up the Gareloch, either en famille or with half the family motoring ahead to set up a camp fire and picnic, while the rest of us followed by boat. Anchoring was sheltered; the winds were light; it didn't rain (In the West of Scotland? Yes.); the water was deep enough to leave the keels down all the time: the mooring didn't dry, didn't try to dry, didn't get within 10 feet of drying. I began to wonder why I had a boat with drop keels.

In due course and a couple of weeks or so, I thought that perhaps we should try something rather more like a Proper Cruise and even Sleep on Board. So, eldest son Austyn (12), daughter Catherine (10) and I set off down-firth bound for the Kyles of Bute. The wind was light, the sun shone, we played "I Spy", and in the quiet of the evening we came to anchor in the bay beyond the Rhubodach ferry, below the oakwood, just opposite Colintrave, in about five metres of water at low water. The water was still, the woods quiet, the little road down to the ferry had intermittent traffic, and in the night when the ferry and we had gone to bed the loudest noise was the jumping of fish out by the Burnt Isles. We ate something dehydrated with baked beans, popped over on the late (8 pm!) ferry to the wee pub at Colintrave for a pint. Guinness for me, coke for the troops: there's a lamentable shortage of real ale in the West of Scotland, and decent whisky and rowing a minute pram dinghy full of bodies are bad bedfellows. We had a game of pool and telephoned home to arrange for the rest of the family to come down by car (two hours and two ferries) to meet us for a picnic in our blissful spot. Then we turned in. The next day the picnic took place, still in glorious calm weather, and in the evening the family went back to Cardross, leaving us to sleep again in the boat. But by now the glass was dropping, and bad weather was forecast.

I awoke at 4.00 am to find it blowing quite hard. We had a bit of a lee from the Rhubodach point, but not much. By 7.00 am, we were all awake, and it was blowing really quite hard. We could have run for shelter to Caladh harbour or up Loch Ridden, but both were a long way from the phone or the pub or - in the case of Caladh - the road. We could sit it out: the anchor was holding nicely, though our lee was not perfect and the yacht was starting to pitch a bit; but

the children were beginning to look a bit pale and suffer from boredom.

Upwind of us, on the starboard bow, in shelter, was a bank - a mussel scalp at the mouth of a little burn which enters the Kyle just west of Rhubodach point. I turned on the engine (it works, it works, every time, it works!), gave it full throttle, motored out the anchor and just piled "Mareel" into the bank. When she grounded I raised the keels (well, you know, you've done it often and often) and in about three feet of water I re-anchored. It was still blowing far too hard to take to the dinghy. We were tender of wet feet and legs (why I don't know, for it was chucking with rain and before the morning was out we were well and truly drookit; but there is a difference, as you dry out, between rain and salt sea water). We lay there in perfect but damp comfort, gently trying to dry out wet clothes and hankies in front of the Primus, eating breakfast (tea and muesli all round) and waiting for the tide to drop. After a couple of hours, we walked to the beach, carrying the dinghy, and hitched into Rothesay for warmth, dryness, some food, a phone call home and "Superman" on screen at the restored, cast iron Winter Gardens pavilion.

"Mareel" was perfectly safe where she was: the anchor was well dug-in and the bank smooth, so that evening my long-suffering wife Carol, having deposited a niece and her chum in our Edinburgh house for the Festival, drove all the way back to Colintrave and across the ferry, and picked us up and took us home for hot baths and home-cooking. Now I knew why I had a boat with lifting keels on the Clyde.

The fact that I dare not use the dinghy to get ashore worried me. I have two dinghies - the larger an ancient, solid, tough, 10 foot fibreglass job I often tow: but for a proper passage I prefer to travel light, and leave it on the moorings. The other dinghy is a six foot Barrowboat. It sits on the after cabin and the wheel below its bow transom runs on a wooden rail raised from the after cabin hatch, so that the hatch may be opened in situ. It's a pretty little boat, but it's light and a bit cranky; its plastic rowlocks are useless, it rows like a bitch, and its buoyancy is suspect. Two tasks this winter are to fit it with a flotation collar around the gunwhale, and to fit proper galvanised rowlocks.

I waited a couple of days, then Carol and the children ran me back down to pick up the boat. It was still pretty windy, but after a struggle to row the dinghy out, I boarded "Mareel" in all of two feet of water, motored out to deep water, lowered the keels, set the jib and set off as a rate of knots down-Kyle.

That sail was glorious: there was eventually enough wind for a comfy full-sail reach right up the firth (about Force 4) with bright sun, blue sea, white horses. And the seas were slight, not the great, grey, sullen seas of the Forth. I decided then to keep "Mareel" on the Clyde for a while; so now she is laid up at the yard at Kilcreggan which has looked after me and my tore-outs off and on for thirty years. This year's jobs aboard are to fit a silencer to the exhaust, and to raise the forward cabin sole to the horizontal, so that every cupful of water doesn't gurgle above the floorboards.

A LETTER FROM AMERICA

2 November 1990

P O Box 1121, Bristol
RI 02809, USA

Dear Major Roberts

Hi! In the last Newsletter, Autumn 1990, there was a request for more material for the Bulletin. In addition, it would be good to report in from this side of the Atlantic. I'll give a brief synopsis of one of several trips this summer.

This took place over the weekend of the 28th and 29th July 1990. The crew consisted of David Walworth, skipper, and Libby Twyford, crew. The idea was to sail from Bristol, Rhode Island to Dutch Island Harbor, near the western mouth of Narragansett Bay, a distance of 18 miles.

We got under way at 1100 on the 28th. The day was beautiful - 80°F, with the wind NW, 10 to 15 knots. This resulted in a broad reach most of the way. The spinnaker was set and we settled into cruising mode. As the day wore on, the wind gradually lightened. We reached Dutch Island, but it was too early to anchor for the evening. Therefore we continued on to the mouth of the bay. The wind died, of course. After drifting for about fifteen minutes, a southerly breeze around 10 knots sprang up. The spinnaker came down and the 140% mylar jib went up. We sailed out into the ocean for a mile or so and then turned back towards the harbor. As the sun went down, so did the breeze. Eventually the engine went on. After anchoring and eating dinner, we went to sleep around 2300.

The next morning we woke to another beautiful day. After a good breakfast, we decided to sail back to Bristol via Newport. The breeze was 10 knots, SW. We sailed out the west mouth of the bay and up the east mouth, towards Newport. While sailing through Newport Harbor, looking at all the fancy boats, including Sir Thomas Lipton's old J boat, Shamrock V, we were hailed by some people on another sailboat. They asked a few things about Le Bateau Ivre. It was

obvious that they knew about Atalantas. Turns out, their family had bought A 173, Peace, new in 1963. I believe that they said their family had owned her for many years. They knew Charles Currey and I believe, Alan Vines.

After this interchange, we continued on our way back to Bristol. The wind, never that strong, left us completely around 1300 and the motor came on again. After two hours of motoring, the wind filled in again, when we were about five miles from the mooring. At this point, the racing yachts Matador 2 and Matador sailed by. They were out crew training and tuning up the brand new Matador 2 against Matador. This was exciting to watch as David helped build Matador 2, having worked for the builder, Eric Goetz, Custom Sailboats, since September 1989. After watching them sail by, we set the spinnaker and mainsail and had a beautiful run back to the mooring, gybing downwind. A successful trip.

A nice addendum to this is that Nancy Walworth, David's sister, had married Bob Chant two weeks previously, on 15 July. They met helping David sail the Bateau up to Maine. As they had met on Le Bateau Ivre, the mainsail and spinnaker were used as decorations at the wedding reception.

David Walworth
Le Bateau Ivre - A 146

ABE BEAUVOISIN - A 127 GRACE

After suffering from a heart condition for some years, Abe Beauvoisin died during an operation on 12th September 1990. He was the enthusiastic owner of Grace in which, loyally supported by his wife Odet and son Allon, he explored each summer the wonderful though often hazardous waterways off the West Coast of Scotland. One of these annual cruises was reported in 1986 and won the Sinclair Trophy. Odet described the cruise in 'Highlights From The Log Of Grace', and illustrated the article with lively pen and ink drawings, all of which were repeated on the cover of the 1986-7 Bulletin.

In the 1989 season, Abe and his crew received the Etchells Trophy for their cruise to St Kilda in the Outer Hebrides. An extract from the log of this cruise, again written and illustrated with amusing sketches by Odet, appeared in the 1989-90 Bulletin. This gives a good idea of the thrills and risks involved and of Abe's navigational skills. Abe was not afraid of being adventurous in Grace, trusting to the seaworthiness of the Atalanta and the competence of his crew.

The Association notes with sadness the passing of an active and valued member, and we offer our sincere sympathy to his wife and son.

Hon Sec

