

Atalanta

1997-1998



ATALANTA OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

39th Edition

1997-1998 BULLETIN INDEX

PAGE

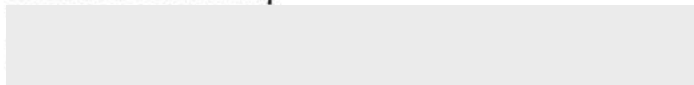
| | |
|--|----|
| Commodore's Message | 1 |
| Obituary- Major General Bill Odling | 1 |
| Editorial | 2 |
| The East Coast Rally <i>Mike Lewis</i> | 3 |
| The Fairey Fulmar <i>Editor</i> | 4 |
| Pilgrim's Progress <i>David Holt</i> | 5 |
| F13 Lucky <i>A Letter from David Franklin</i> | 6 |
| Merlin Ann <i>R M Read</i> | 7 |
| To Muckle Flugga - Another Year <i>Simon Cooper</i> | 9 |
| Gellie's 1997 Cruise to Norway <i>Mike Dixon</i> | 14 |
| Doon the Watter <i>P G & K L Martin</i> | 23 |
| New Sails for A89 <i>Bernard Upton</i> | 27 |
| Dance on the Decks <i>C Twyford</i> | 28 |
| | |
| Register of Owners - ATALANTA 26 | 30 |
| - ATALANTA 31 | 40 |
| - TITANIA | 41 |
| - FULMAR | 42 |
| Honorary Members | 43 |
| Associate Members - Past Owners | 43 |
| Associate Members - Partners and Crew & Potential Buyers. | 45 |

Commodore: Charles Currey Esq.

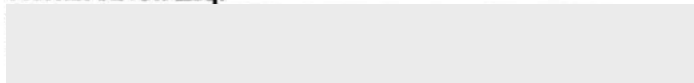
Hon Secretary: Colin Twyford Esq.

Hon Editor: Michael Roberts Esq.

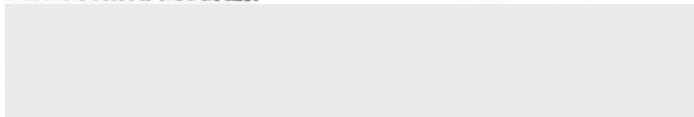
Drawings Master: Maurice Donovan Esq.



Engines: Adrian Rivett Esq.



Auditor: Mrs Monica Mourant



*Frontispiece: BABY SEAL waiting for the wind at Mersea
(photo Simon Cooper)*

FROM THE COMMODORE

Charles Currey

There was good sailing this year although the real summer was a bit late in starting. But it was a sad year too, with the loss of our Patron, Bill Odling. We have so much to thank Bill for; particularly building up the Association by his enthusiasm, always with great humour, and for his example to us all - a truly remarkable man.

His army record was brilliant - and those who went to the service at Fingringhoe will remember a stirring and appropriate ceremony, the support of the many members of his family, the music he loved, and the memories he leaves us with that were so typical of the Man. We will all miss him and our thoughts can only be with Margaret and his family.

Interest in our boat, with its many variants, continues at a very satisfactory level thanks to the splendid efforts of Colin and Janet Twyford - just keep at it, you two!

For those who love messing about in boats, whether on land in some secret shed or workshop, or in the rivers and shallow creeks where others cannot go, or at sea around our coasts, or on the great oceans of the world - Atalanta does it all and we love it!

OBITUARY

Major General William Odling CB OBE MC DL

By George Parker

It is with great regret that we record the death on June 22nd of Maj-Gen William Odling at the age of 88. General Odling, affectionately known as Bill to members, was Patron of our Association for the past seven years. His introduction to the singular world of Atalanta sailing boats was in 1966 when he bought Salizanda (A150) which he and his wife Margaret cruised widely and adventurously out into the North Sea from their Home Port at West Mersea and reaching as far as Finland on one occasion.

For Bill, sailing meant sailing and using the wind not the engine. In 1979, the Odlings decided on one last cruise and visited Holland, returning via Dunkirk, a place of special poignancy for an ex British Army officer. Salizanda passed to E H Denning, her present owner, in the following year and Bill gave up sailing. Swallowing the anchor, however, did not mean parting from the AOA but quite the reverse. To the office of Vice President, (later changed to Vice Commodore), he added the onerous task of Hon. Sec. at a time when the Association was in serious decline.

Bill, with characteristic energy, set about putting the accounts of the Association in good order and launching a vigorous recruitment drive, which

in one notable case secured the membership of an owner while caught with his Atalanta between Salizanda and a lee shore. A lasting benefit to the Association from this period was his painstaking assembly of a Register of Boats for all Atalanta classes, with a history of the ownership of each boat and the occasional enlightening comment.

By the early seventies there were more Atalantas on the East and South East coasts than in the South of England and our participation in the annual Round the Isle of Wight Race ceased after 1972. As a replacement, Bill persuaded the West Mersea Yacht Club to introduce a race for the Atalanta class in their Regatta programme each August. This event has proved most successful and had the added attraction of ending the day with a convivial gathering of skippers and crews for supper, generously provided by the General and his wife at Gun House, their lovely home in nearby Fingringhoe.

In 1983 Bill was elected Commodore and handed over the office of Hon. Sec. to the writer who received his active support. Bill continued as Commodore until 1991 when he insisted on relinquishing the post in favour of Charles Currey, one of the original Fairey Marine team involved in the promotion of the Atalanta from its inception. Unwilling to lose its close connection with the General, the Association invited him to take the newly-created office of Patron, which he very kindly accepted.

In this brief account of the General's considerable contribution to our Association, we acknowledge that his principal life's work was with the Army and the Royal Artillery in particular, where he had a very distinguished career. The astonishing number and variety of the commands he held at home and overseas, in war and peace, were listed in an obituary in the Times of July 1st 1997. The article also mentioned Bill's strong, outgoing personality, his sense of fun and abundant energy, qualities which we knew well. After retirement from the Army he undertook an immense amount of work, much of it centred on the Church and Education. Bill was a devoted family man, proud of his children, grandchildren, and a recent great grandchild.

I personally will miss his friendship and wisdom. His death is mourned by many, and our Association's sincere sympathy goes out to Margaret and her family in their great loss.

EDITORIAL

"FAIREY, Charles Richard MBE FraeS.....British aircraft designer..... born 5 May 1887.....in his school days he had shown his interest in aviation by building models....."

And he won competitions with them too, and in 1918 he was given a contract by the government for the construction of a giant flying boat to be called the Fairey Atalanta.

This information, culled from a short history of aviators, makes no mention of the flying boat having been built, nor is there any mention of the great family of boats that bear Fairey's name, and are still sailing.

One man, however, combined Swinburne with something unique in a sailing vessel bearing a mighty flying machine's name, and preserved the Atalanta Owners Association for posterity.

General Bill Odling, of course. There should be an Atalanta in the National Maritime Museum, not only in honour of Charles Fairey, but of General Bill also.

We read much about Atalantas in this bulletin, so this year I've given Fulmars an airing, long overdue for this gallant little boat.

And so back to Fairey, and the beginning. I spent my teaching years making working models with young children and studying how and why they worked. Many of them now have doctorates, degrees and other qualifications in science, technology, physics, design, electronics, engineering, computer studies, etc.....

I wonder.....

Best wishes to you all, and many thanks, to those of you who contributed, for your support.

EAST COAST RALLY, WEST MERSEA, 9TH AUGUST 1997

By Simon Cooper

That precursor to the Atalanta Race, the West Mersea Town Regatta Programme, brought the Atalanta class to the fore. On the cover photograph, framed between two smacks, was Mike Lewis's Modestine (A48), and inside was an article about the Atalanta class written by Norman Dorrington (owner of Kookaburra, A168) and another by our Commodore describing the Fairey hot moulding process.

The race day dawned fine with a very light westerly wind. Eight Atalantas came to the start - certainly the largest entry for many a year. A short course was set with the first leg down wind and with the last of the ebb, parallel to the Mersea Island shore to no. 1 mark. Rounding this mark was made more interesting because some of the dinghy classes, sailing a different course, were trying to round it in the opposite direction. Arosa (A104) was first at the mark, Bluster (A183) second and Modestine third. The next leg was SE to no. 10 buoy and the zephyr died to a whisper. As the tide turned progress stopped and on Arosa we anchored for a while. When the wind returned it was a sea breeze from the south-east. The next mark was now upwind and up-tide and it was quite a struggle to round it which had the effect of spreading out the fleet. Arosa maintained her lead round the mark with Modestine second.

The next leg was a run northwards towards the Mersea Island shore. Visibility was becoming very hazy which made the marks hard to spot. On

Arosa we were fortunate to have a Stella class yacht to follow, which seemed to know its way. After rounding mark no. 6, the next buoy was no. 2, towards the Bradwell shore, giving a reach, another run towards home, round the MG buoy and across the finish line at the Nass Beacon. The fleet was well strung out with the first three boats home being Arosa, Modestine and Amsara (A136). Other boats which took part and not mentioned above were Kookaburra (A168), Emma Duck (A179), Baby Seal (A137) and Gambol (A17).

The afternoon was warm and sunny and on Arosa we made the best of it, taking the tide up the Blackwater to Osea Island which gave our guest crew and honorary keel winder, Tony, who is helping to restore an Atalanta, a chance to do some helming, and myself to catch up on sleep on the foredeck. In the evening a minibus was laid on to take us to Gun House where Mrs Odling was our hostess for the traditional supper and where we met many old friends including George and Cecile Parker and Mrs Mourant, our Honorary Auditor. Our Secretary, Colin Twyford, was also in attendance, although not sailing this year, as of course was John Searle who had made all the arrangements and whose cajoling had produced such a good turnout of boats. John had hoped to be on the water in his Fairey Fawn, but the gremlins had conspired against him. I think we all missed the genial presence of our late patron, Bill Odling, and were deeply appreciative that Margaret had continued with the annual supper.

THE FAIREY FULMAR

By Michael Roberts

The Southern Evening Echo of 16th December 1958 reported that Fairey Marine were building, by popular demand from the sailing public, a smaller and cheaper version of the Atalanta, to be called the Fulmar. A brief reference is made to this remarkable little boat on page 19 of George Parker's short history of the Atalanta, but a more detailed description is provided by the Echo article. George records a price of £935 in 1959 with sails but no engine, and the Echo a price of £155 for a shell, and £100 for a submersible trailer.

The cut-away diagram shown in the centre pages of this Bulletin gives you some idea of the space inside the cabin but it really has to be seen to be believed, and provided it is not cluttered up with too many lockers (a mistake I made with F47) makes for a very comfortable interior for two, reasonable for three, bit of a scrum for four, and, with a boom tent, just possible for six for a very short period of time!

The decks are clear all round, and the cockpit is large, comfortable, and truly self draining. In F47 (Sherpa) there were two large drain holes aft at deck level in the cockpit, and the aft end of the centre board box also opened into the cockpit. Admittedly water tended to splash in a bit in rough weather, but it

went out - fast.

The interior is well ventilated, there is ample space for two single berths or one double in the bows, and two comfortable quarter berths aft. A folding table can be fitted between the after berths and there is a galley shelf on the port side aft. Locker space in the cockpit is capacious, and also under the berths in the cabin.

There may be 20 footers around now of more advanced design, but this one, for its time, was remarkable. And even today, it still is.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

A letter from David Holt

F53 Pilgrim came into my possession in 1993 (I was then 53 and she is sail No 53 - and wasn't she designed/built about 1953?). Anyway it seemed Pilgrim and I were meant for each other.

The decks were completely rotten as was the starboard frame adjacent to the winding gear and the timbers supporting the cockpit seats. The boat had a PVC cover laid over the beautiful stainless steel railings which formed a catchment area of approximately 100 square feet. Through this cover some 1000 litres of water had collected in her various compartments and as each bucket went over the side, it fizzed in the grass like champagne. Her nick-name became Bubbles as a result.

Surprisingly, since the boat had obviously been neglected for a considerable time, the hull had only a few small patches where rot had set in and relatively little structural repairing was needed. The paint had peeled down to timber for most of the area below the water-line. On close examination it is clear that Fairey knew what they were doing when it came to constructing these marvellous boats.

My immediate task was to re-deck her and remove the existing paint. This being almost complete and down to timber almost everywhere, I now intend to epoxy coat her prior to repainting. The keel and winding gear will have to come out and much of the latter completely replaced as rust has practically eaten right through all but the upright support and flanges.

As my project has progressed I have become more and more smitten with the lines and "feel" of the Fulmar and look forward to launching her next year. As a picture can tell a thousand words, I enclose a couple of pictures which indicate the state she was in as received. If any member has any knowledge of her history and previous owners, I would be very grateful for their information.

(A drawing of one of the pictures is in the centre pages. Ed.)

F13 LUCKY

A letter from David Franklin

Casting around for news of Fulmars, I received this reply from David Franklin:-

"My interest in the Fulmar is quite simply explained. We started as a family with teenage children with a Mirror, rapidly graduated to a Firefly (of which I had some experience racing whilst at Edinburgh University Medical School) and have stayed with Fairey ever since!

We next acquired a Falcon (only ours is still in its original day boat format and without a "lid" and huge Gaff main sail as advocated by Charles Stock with "Shoal Waters"). This has given us great pleasure day sailing around the Moray Firth and out of Gairloch on the West Coast in company at times with a Drascombe Longboat owned by a friend.

With the "children" now pursuing medicine in various far flung places, my wife and I were beginning to feel a bit long in the tooth for open boat sailing and cast about for a boat offering a bit of shelter. We thought about the Atalanta but settled instead for the Fulmar on the grounds that we could still trail-sail from the west coast, and quite frankly we preferred its lines which reminded us very much of the Falcon. Incidentally, knowing how the Albacore was "stretched" to produce the Atalanta Prototype, can anyone tell us whether there is a similar relationship between the Falcon and the Fulmar?

I contacted the Secretary of AOA for information about Fulmars and was told that a certain John Searle had several but that it was unlikely that he could be persuaded to part with one. I developed early misgivings when I phoned and was told abruptly to phone back later. I persevered with the follow-on call and discovered that this was not a case of John in a rare patch of ill humour; he had simply been trying to work with some of his epoxy resin before it set!

After some discussion we decided to make the long journey to Norfolk to see what was available. In his farmyard John cultivates boats. He is very selective. At that time there were two Fulmars, Sea Rover and your own Sherpa, two Atalantas, and a third in the water. We settled for the Fulmar F13 called Sea Rover then, but apparently known to everyone as Lucky in affectionate terms.

She is in her original state with no inboard engine, but an auxiliary outboard on a cantilever bracket. She needs a lot of work done on her, but we are not afraid of that, having already re-decked both the Firefly and the Falcon. Unfortunately she has developed a patch of dry rot which appears to have started within the starboard stem locker and spread round to involve the transom, which needs to be re-built. Luckily, apart from a small patch, the hull has been spared.

The main trouble has been finding time from trying to keep the NHS afloat to work on the boats. We promise you that Lucky will eventually be back in the water, but currently she resides with the rest of our Fairey family in a horticultural tunnel converted from a traditional low inverted U shape to a tall inverted U shape, which makes a grand boat shed, but is the source of much amusement to our friends.

There is a gaping hole in her stern, but the rot has been removed and she will be treated with fungicide and re-built this winter. John Searle has been a great source of advice and we are also indebted to him for much practical help. He advocates using epoxy resin as an adhesive but I wonder whether "Cascamite" might be nearer the original format? Can anyone offer a second opinion on this, please?

Our hope is to have all three of our Fairey family sailing in company next year. If we succeed, we had thought of calling F13 Sona which is the Gaelic for Lucky but also implies Fortunate.

We will keep you informed of developments.

MERLIN ANN (F49)

By R M Read

F49 (as she then was) started life around 1961 as a bare hull - or shell as Fairey Marine termed their hot-moulded hulls. This was delivered to a site near the Dapdune Wharf in Guildford alongside the River Wey - where, incidentally, barges had been built when the river was first canalised to make it navigable from Weybridge to Godalming.

Along with the shell, deck beams, deck panels, bulkhead frames and a coachroof were also supplied. Because of some design changes - described in more detail below - the bulkheads themselves were fabricated on site from 8 foot by 4 foot sheets of plywood and the keelboxes likewise.

The reason for the change of design of the keelbox was because it was decided to install twin bilge drop keels - as on the Atalanta but of a much lower weight and with a simpler operating mechanism. Additionally, this design gave more room in the centre cabin, as the keelboxes formed part of the bunk structure. Another bonus was that it was possible to install the inboard engine further forward between the keelboxes where they extended into the cockpit area.

Having obtained all the items required for the first stage of construction, work commenced on installing the deck beams (the hull had been supplied with the gunwales already installed), then followed the deck panels and coachroof so as to protect the building operation from the elements as the project was being undertaken out of doors.

Work then proceeded on the inside to fit the bulkhead frames, then

bulkheads, followed by the keelboxes. The cockpit seats and floor were also constructed and a Hirth petrol/paraffin engine with variable pitch propeller was installed.

As Merlin Ann would be used initially on the River Wey and the non-tidal section of the River Thames, it was decided to launch her without the drop keels - which had not yet been made - and so she was hoisted into the river at the Wharf around 1965 (our daughter was about two years of age then - and had not been born when the project started!)

Our first "cruise" was from Guildford to Godalming - a distance of some five miles! Although such a short distance, it did initiate us into the mystery of lock working, having to work no less than four locks before reaching Godalming! For a number of years we used Merlin Ann in this way - usually holidaying on the non-tidal reaches of the Thames - and having to work most of the twelve locks on our journey to Weybridge - but then having the luxury of the fully manned Thames locks!

Eventually, Merlin Ann was lifted out and placed back on to her original building site and work commenced on fabricating the keels, the bulkhead/keelbox support plates and hoist mechanism. This work took a number of years to complete, and during this period an aluminium mast kit was purchased and made up, and a tabernacle fitted to the coachroof.

After her relaunch a number of trips were made on the tidal part of the Thames, mooring - at various times - at Richmond, Lambeth Pier and the King George V Docks opposite Woolwich. Our last trip was made to Queenborough on the River Swale, and was the first time we actually sailed Merlin Ann, having hoisted the mast just below Tower Bridge, and having to lower it again on our return journey up-river at this point.

Having completed this trip it was decided to remove the Stuart Turner 2-cylinder engine (which itself had replaced the Hirth engine) and replace it with a 2-cylinder marinised Kubota diesel; then, having completed this engine change, a trailer was constructed to enable Merlin Ann to be transported to the Isle of Wight to be laid up prior to being placed on a mooring in Wootton Creek.

By now, it was around 1987 - and some 26 years since our association with Merlin Ann had begun, and the elements and wear and tear had begun to take their toll. After a period of some three years being laid up - again out of doors, it was noticed that the hull was showing some areas of decay in the region of the stern quarters, where the hull meets the transom. Because of other commitments no attempt has been made to deal with this and, sadly, there she remains still on dry land - albeit, however, under a polythene cover to protect her from any further deterioration until enough spare time and enthusiasm can be found to get her seaworthy once more.

TO MUCKLE FLUGGA - ANOTHER YEAR

By Simon Cooper - AROSA A104

I looked worriedly at the barometer and noticing that it had fallen substantially since the afternoon; then I realised. Then Arosa had been close to sea-level, now she was at an altitude of nearly 1,000 feet near Beattock Summit in the Scottish Borders.

Brother David and I had set off from York with Arosa in tow heading north and had parked for the night on the first stage of a planned voyage to Shetland where my other brother Andrew, a GP, and his family lives. The next day (Monday May 12th) we resumed the trek north in showery weather - past Sterling, Perth, Inverness, Invergordon and through Thurso arriving at Scrabster Harbour at around 4.00 pm. We made our number with the very helpful harbourmaster and 'phoned Hugh Simpson, the crane hire man. Arosa was in the water by 6.30 pm and we rigged the mast, ate supper and then discussed what we should do next.

As with most of our cruises, because of the last minute rush to get the boat ready and organise the towing, detailed planning of the sailing tends to be neglected: this year, because we had advanced the date by a week at short notice, the charts and sailing directions had arrived from the chart agent only two days before we left. A glance at the chart of the Pentland Firth indicated that some forethought might be necessary. In particular the chart showed a phenomenon known as 'The Merry Men of Mey' - a tide race extending the full width of the Firth. The chart also gave the following warning: "Difficulties can be encountered when transiting either with or against the tide". Not relishing this challenge, it seemed wise to head north from Scrabster up the west side of the Orkneys which would avoid sailing through the Firth. Perusal of the tidal atlas showed tides running at up to 3 knots so it was obviously necessary to pay some attention to them. After some deliberation David declared that the optimum time to depart was 4.30 am the next morning. Fortunately I managed to persuade him that we could leave at 8.30 am and still catch the tides.

Next morning, with a comfortable wind from the south, we were on our way. Crossing the Firth was uneventful and soon we were admiring the Old Man of Hoy - an impressive stack off the west coast of Hoy. We continued on up the west side of Mainland, past the imposing headlands of Marwick Head, topped by the Kitchener memorial, and Brough Head with its lighthouse sitting on a distinctly shaped offshore rock. Arosa was now really travelling and during the three hours after rounding Brough Head we averaged 6.3 knots. Beyond Rousay Island we turned towards the east into Westray Firth, taking in a reef as the wind was rising. Supper was eaten as we sailed up the firth towards the Point of Huro, at the south end of Westray. Having rounded the point we passed through Weatherness Sound and on northwards past Sanday

as night fell (at around 11 pm in these far flung northern parts). A little later, off North Ronaldsay, we snagged the line of a fisherman's buoy - David's speciality. We wound up the keels and the buoy floated clear.

We passed the powerful light on the northern tip of North Ronaldsay and soon saw the Fair Isle light on the starboard bow. By 6.00 am Fair Isle was abeam, and an hour later Fitful Head on Shetland hove into view, with the closer, but lower, Sumburgh Head appearing a little later. We made a course well to the east of Sumburgh Head to avoid the infamous 'rost' and continued up the long south-pointing leg of Mainland, past Mousa Island, crossing parallel 60 north, and into Bressay Sound with Lerwick on its western side.

Approaching the Small Boat Dock, mainly reserved for yachts, we pressed the engine starter button with a disappointing result, so we sailed in to a flag waving reception committee on the Victoria Pier consisting of sister-in-law, nephew, niece and friend. We berthed at 3.15 pm having taken 31 hours for the passage which the log recorded as 134 miles, giving a passage speed of 4.3 knots.

The evening was spent having welcome showers at brother Andrew's house, eating, drinking and re-charging the boat's battery. The next morning the electrics were checked and the battery re-installed: everything now seemed fine. Around midday we set off south to visit the island of Mousa, about 10 miles south of Lerwick. The wind still came from the south so we beat out of Bressay Sound, but failed as we reached the Bressay light towards the southern end so it was engine on and motoring for the rest of the trip.

We dropped anchor in a little bay on the west side of the island and rowed ashore in the rubber dinghy. Mousa is uninhabited but has an almost complete broch, an iron age defensive tower. We walked about half a mile to the broch and spent some time exploring it, assisted by torches thoughtfully provided at the entrance. The tower is perhaps sixty feet tall and thirty feet diameter at the base and is of dry-stone construction. Entrance is through a tunnel into the centre courtyard. The outer wall is hollow and contains galleries and rooms, with the staircase spiralling up through it to the parapet around the top.

We motored back to Lerwick and blotted our copybook somewhat by being late for supper at my brother's. On our return to the boat that evening we had to move berth to the other side of the dock to make room for the participants in the annual Bergen to Lerwick race who were expected to begin arriving during the night.

The next day, Friday 16th May, dawned foggy. The Norwegian boats were gradually trickling in through the murk. The Norwegian yachtsmen are renowned for their drinking on their annual visit to Lerwick so it seemed a good idea to leave the town to them. As soon as we could see across the sound we set off for Out Skerries, a small group of islands and rocks to the north-east of

Lerwick - in fact the most easterly of the isles of Shetland. We sailed out through the north entrance of the Sound with the gentle SE wind, passing between Green Holm stack and the notorious Soldian Rock. Thereafter we were able to keep check on our position as various splendidly named rocks and stacks appeared and vanished in the mist - names such as Hoo Stack, Muckle Fladdicap and Flaeshans of Rumble. By 3.30 pm we were off the south-western end of Skerries and as we approached the harbour entrance the inter-island ro-ro ferry (which takes about 6 cars or 2 vans) came out carrying the mobile library. As the mist lifted to reveal a beautiful sunny afternoon we sailed in through the South Mouth of the natural harbour and made for the jetty assisted by the numerous transit marks which have been erected to guide one to almost any part of the harbour one might wish to get to. A lad in an outboard motor powered boat directed us to a wall beside the jetty and we tied up at 4.30 pm.

We were soon visited by the harbour master, Mr Williamson, who seemed most embarrassed at having to ask us to pay harbour dues - £3.50 plus VAT - but for that we could stay for as long as we liked. The jetty and wall had recently been improved using a grant from the European Community Regional Development Fund (so a plaque told us). The wall against which we were lying was fendered with lorry tyres attached with stainless steel chains and shackles (the Regional Development Fund obviously does not do things by halves!). In addition the Fund had paid for an immaculate little shower and toilet block - centrally heated and with unlimited hot water.

We strolled around the island before supper - besides perhaps thirty houses there was a store, school, church and two fish farms. Arctic terns were nesting, and on the wind-swept, spray-soaked, sheep-grazed slopes we found small violets growing. In the harbour, eider ducks made their characteristic almost human "Ohhhhh" noises.

In the morning (Saturday 17th May) we visited the island store for essentials such as potatoes and Mars Bars. The store had the appearance of a run-down barn from the outside but inside was very comprehensively stocked, with posters inside exhorting the inhabitants to use their local store or face losing it. Where else they might shop was not clear.

The shelter of the harbour fooled us. We motored out through the north-east mouth, a long channel between the two islands of the group, to be met by a howling NE gale funnelling in through the entrance, and a large swell. Our 8 hp was barely enough to progress against it, but making a fraction of a knot over the ground we were out at last, hoisting a well reefed main and no. 2 jib. We had planned to make for Unst, the northernmost Shetland island, with a vague idea of rounding Muckle Flugga, the most northerly point of the British Isles. However we found that we could not lay the eastern end of the island of Fetlar, and not relishing a 10 mile windward flog into a force 7 wind, (well,

force 6 at least!) and a pretty rumbustious sea, we bore away to the north-west and into the lee of Fetlar where we hove-to to review the situation. The decision was to make for Mid Yell which we entered at about 1.30 pm, entering the voe between Whitehill headland to the south and Hascosay Island to the north. We made for Linkhouse Pier on the south side, berthing alongside a scallop dredger (after a spot of keel winding when we discovered a shallow patch).

After we had lunched we wrapped up well against the increasingly strong and cold NE wind and explored the hinterland. Mid Yell seemed a pretty well set-up community with two stores, a junior high school, a playing field, leisure centre and the Hilltop Bar. It was to the latter establishment to which we decided to repair in the evening; hardly had we left the pier when a gentleman stopped his car to give us a lift up to the bar, even though he wasn't going there himself. After a substantial fish and chip supper we listened to the Saturday night attraction, Sheila Henderson and her band. It was not wistful folksy music as I had hoped, but over-amplified pop which was obviously far more to the liking of the clientele.

The shipping forecast on Sunday morning was east to north-east force 6 to 7, occasionally 8, so we stayed firmly put. During the morning a red throated diver was spotted. After lunch we climbed the nearby Hill of Lussetter, 101 metres. We were getting worried that the ship's library might be exhausted before we escaped from Mid Yell.

Monday's forecast was similar. We went shopping and also passed the time of day with the skipper of the scalloper beside which we were moored. He told us that when the oil tanker Braer grounded and broke up on Sumburgh Head the number of scallopers doubled overnight, with their skippers all claiming (and receiving) compensation.

The wind was gradually removing the narrow beach and depositing it on the street running along the waterfront. A road sweeper turned up to deal with it but soon gave up the unequal struggle. The evening found us again climbing up to the Hilltop Bar. There was a football match at the sports ground; the spectators had taken to their cars and pounded their horns each time their team scored. After the match the visiting team had a little time to kill before their minibus had to leave to catch a ferry, so they adjourned to the bar where they squeezed a whole evening's drinking together with about five games on the pool table into 15 minutes.

Tuesday, and the easterly gale still raged, but the forecast gave some hope of abatement. We heard that some of the Norwegian yachts had set off home into the teeth of the easterly storm with several returning to Lerwick with gear failure and one being dismasted. In the afternoon we walked across the island to Whale Firth which runs in from the west side of the island. On the way we passed a family of Shetland ponies, including dog-sized foals. Back

at the boat things were getting desperate - we had almost finished reading the ship's library.

Wednesday dawned with the wind northerly force 5 to 6 and by 7.30 am we had escaped from Mid Yell, heading south for Lerwick under a well reefed main and no. 2 jib. We passed through Linga Sound, between the island of Whalsay and West Linga and on past the impressive breakers on the Inner Voder rocks, then between the Unicorn and Brethren rocks, round Rova head and into Bressay Sound, berthing under engine at Lerwick at 1.00 pm. Sister-in-law Sue was on the dock side to greet us and a little later brother Andrew joined us for lunch. Andrew's practice was keeping him very busy, which was a pity because it would have been fun if he could have joined us for part of the trip.

After showers, reprovisioning, purchasing a few souvenirs and watering ship, we slipped at 5.00 pm heading home, running south to Sumburgh Head. We could hardly believe our luck, having following winds on both the outward and homeward legs. Two porpoises heaved past as we left Bressay Sound. By 9.00 pm we were off Sumburgh Head, giving it a wide berth to avoid the roost, but as it turned out, not wide enough as we suddenly found ourselves going through the edge of the race; the waves at least 20 feet high, were extremely steep but fortunately only a few of them were breaking. David had turned in and wisely stayed firmly in his bunk. After about 10 minutes we were through; Arosa, as usual, had dealt with things effectively and without fuss, the only casualty being the kettle which had jumped off the stove and put another dent in itself.

By 3.00 am, we were 5 miles west of Fair Isle and soon afterwards had to take avoiding action for a steamer who obviously thought he had the sea to himself. North Ronaldsay lighthouse was sighted at 6.00 am but the low lying island was not visible for another hour. We followed the same route as on the outwards journey, to the west of North Ronaldsay and Sanday, passing through Weatherness Sound into Westray Firth shortly before 2.00 pm, shaking out the reef and hoisting the genoa for the first time during the voyage in the easing wind. Soon afterwards we passed small Wart Holm island, seemingly devoid of vegetation but with a flock of sheep lining the shore and all chomping happily (?) at seaweed.

We carried a fair tide out of Westray Firth and all the way south past Mainland and Hoy. Visibility appeared good and as we ran down past Hoy we expected to see mainland Scotland, but there was no sign of it. Eventually a grey shadow materialised into Dunnet Head, the impressive headland jutting out into the Firth to the east of Scrabster.

As supper-time approached an investigation by the duty cook revealed a serious miscalculation on the part of the catering manager. The meal consisted of almost our last tins: baked beans and corned beef boiled up

together - which tasted remarkably good. We supped as we wafted gently across the notorious Firth, which seemed as tame as the Solent, but on a larger scale with better scenery and without all the other boats.

At about 11.00 pm the full moon rose from a cloud bank above Dunnet Head: first the eyes then the smiling mouth. By midnight the wind had fallen light so we retrieved the log and turned on the engine, berthing at Scrabster at about a quarter to one, being met even at this hour by a helpful harbour official. The passage time from Lerwick was almost identical to that for the outward leg. The following morning we packed the boat up, being craned out by a driver who couldn't understand why anyone should want to take their boat out of the water so early in the season. After a substantial lunch at the Mission to Seamen, we headed south for the 500 mile drive back to York after a thoroughly enjoyable and satisfying cruise. We had enjoyed superb scenery, good sailing (except when we were stormbound!) and observing an abundance of seabirds, including fulmars, puffins, guillemots and gannets as well as the ruthless great skuas and their rakish cousins, the arctic skuas.

GELLIE'S 1997 CRUISE TO NORWAY

By Mike Dixon T4

It had been the usual Friday night rush from work, followed by the predictable thrash in *The Ship*, so it was not surprising that Saturday was slow to start. Despite the torpor, we managed to motor out from Stonehaven at 0812 with the weather pretty well mirroring our state of health - dull and flat. The plan was to head straight for Stavanger, some 280 miles north north east, hoping to cover the distance in less than three days.

There were four of us on board; Jane who has sailed on Gellie many times before; Adrian who had spent a week on board two years previously and Denise who had never set foot on board a boat in her life. In addition to her human cargo, Gellie was groaning at the seams with duty free drink and food; supplies are expensive in Norway!

The morning passed in a half awake half asleep daze and although we attempted to sail during the afternoon, the wind wasn't really anything to write home about, and we continued under engine through the night. By just after four the next morning, the wind had settled in the north, and allowed us to set sail at last. And what a soldier's wind it turned out to be! Steady force three to four, occasional five from the north or north west right through until we arrived.

After initial bewilderment, Denise was in her element and very quickly got the hang of steering a compass course, and along with the rest of us, did her stint in the galley. Remaining on the one tack the entire trip across didn't give her much experience of sailing as we found out a week later!

On the Monday afternoon, the wind backed sufficiently for us to fly the spinnaker, thus providing everyone with entertainment for about six hours before the wind freshened and things became rather too interesting! Late afternoon saw us raise the land - indeterminate lumps but at least they were in the right place. A couple of heavy squalls passed through accompanied by heavy rain that left everything crisp and clear.

Navigation was easy thanks to the GPS, but in these days of North Sea oil exploration and production one is rarely out of sight of some fixed structure or another. Navigation by visible way points!

Although we were going to make a night time arrival I wasn't concerned, as one of the features of Norway is the remarkable incidence of superbly placed sectored lighthouses. Unlike the UK where the authorities seem Hell bent on removing or decommissioning lights, in Norway they are continually upgrading existing lights and installing new ones. The result is that once you have identified the lights, which is sometimes difficult with background shore lights, you can navigate with complete confidence through the narrowest of channels just by keeping within the appropriate sectors.

So we came to Norway - well pleased with the passage across, motoring the remaining few miles to moor alongside in the marina just after 0100 local time on the Tuesday morning. Other than the non-return valve on the heads discharge inverting (why is it that only the skipper knows how to repair the heads when most of the time everyone has an opinion about most issues on board?), and a close encounter with an intransigent Peterhead registered fishing boat (I have its number!), it had been an event free crossing and everyone was in fine spirits.

Norway

Apart from Adrian (far too cheerful for his own good!) we had a lie in, before organising ourselves for the day. The skipper was decidedly grumpy - well at least that was the opinion of the crew whilst we cleaned Gellie. Once the chores were complete, the crew wisely went off to do their own thing, leaving the skipper to report in to the Immigration and Customs and to purchase one of the superb Norwegian charts. Spirits were restored by mid afternoon. The crew had bought fish and bread from the market to provide the basis for the evening meal. Adrian got going in the galley whilst Jane filleted the fish, The skipper did the washing up!

It was decided to day sail in and out of Stavanger, mainly on account of the many crew changes expected over the following week. Adrian was going back to Newcastle on the Friday ferry, to be followed by Denise on the Sunday. Meanwhile John Keepax was expected either on the Sunday or Monday (probably with Gwen), and Andy from the Eda Frandsen would be joining us for the trip home on the Monday. Plus the fact that Denise was off to see her Aunt in Oslo for a couple of days. One of these days I'll organise a

cruise with no crew changes whatsoever. The other deciding factor was that there are dozens of places to visit, all within an easy day's sail.

Wednesday saw Denise off to Oslo and the rest of us off to the Lysefjord and the Pulpit Rock. The weather was disappointing, with quite heavy cloud and not much wind. We managed to sail some of the way down Hogs Fjord, past Tingholmen (one of the many wee lighthouses that resemble overgrown cattle feeders), and Ådnøya, to Forsand where we entered the deep-sided Lysefjord itself. The cliffs are spectacular and in many ways quite overwhelming. I for one felt quite awed by the fact that Gellie was so completely dwarfed by these massive natural features. Pulpit Rock itself is a large natural flat-topped outcrop 600 metres above the fjord. It's a famous tourist spot, and there are organised coach and walking tours up to the top, as well as sightseeing cruises from Stavanger.

For quite long stretches, immediately to the west of Pulpit Rock it's possible to sail literally alongside the cliffs, as they drop sheer to enormous depths. There are no mooring points of course but we did manage a cautious approach at one point to allow Jane to leap ashore for rock samples. There was some drizzle on the way home, but despite this we thoroughly enjoyed the day and arrived back alongside the marina in Stavanger at 1900.

It turned into a superb evening. We were entertained by the antics of a dog from one of the Norwegian boats further along the pontoon. It had a thoroughly understandable dislike of outboard motors, and spent all its time dashing up and down the pontoon barking aggressively at any outboard in the vicinity. Dinner was somewhat protracted on account of a lot of the local people expressing great interest in this unusual English(!) boat. One in particular knew of the original links back to the days of Fairey Aviation. Kjell (pronounces Shell) was a sailor himself and having established our plans regarding day sails, suggested some of the better places that could be visited. One place not to be missed apparently was the Gates of Paradise - a narrow channel between a couple of islands, with a jetty where it was possible to lie alongside. It sounded too good to miss and we promised to visit it the next day. After dinner, we spent a pleasant couple of hours in the company of John Belshaw and his crew Tomac on Jabberwock and Nicki and Jamie from New Zealand on Sianora.

After re-fuelling the next morning, Thursday, we set off under power for the Gates of Paradise. It was a glorious morning, sunny and warm, quite different from the previous day. It was to turn out to be one of the most bizarre days of the trip.

One really nice feature of sailing amongst the islands is that you are never short of things to see. The scenery itself is magnificent and some of the buildings are quite stunning, often just a single building on an island, complete with its own jetty protected by an arm of land. There is a constant stream of

pleasure craft as well, many of which are used for commuting and, or course, the ferries and hydrofoils plying between the larger island and towns. Whilst threading our way up towards Rossøya, Adrian missed much of all this as he prepared the lunch of stuffed peppers and cod à l'orange.

The approach to the Gates of Paradise was nowhere near as tortuous as the chart would have me believe. Once again, the Norwegians use of perches and natural features in transit was to prove excellent. The actual "Gates" were about two boat lengths wide before the channel opened out into a small bay, in one corner of which was the neatly constructed wooden jetty, complete with tables, rubbish bins and a toilet block - all of which blended in well with the natural features. We were to see other examples of these superb facilities later in the week.

Three or four boats were already alongside, but there was room for Gellie. Collecting the wherewithal for lunch we established ourselves on an area of flat rock. No sooner had we flashed up the barbecue than we became aware of the sound of brass instruments being played somewhere. A couple of minutes later a boat sailed from round the corner with its two trumpet-playing crew. The tune was "When the Saints". Rounding up, the boat came alongside in a tangle of sails and ropes. It was Kjell, slightly the worse for wear! He had followed us up from his home port and had come to invite us to his home for a musical evening. He sketched out where we should moor on a scrap of paper. Later examination of the chart showed no obvious sign of anything remotely resembling an inlet. However, we promised to give him a call on the radio later on.

The setting was beautiful - kids splashing in the shallows, a small boy with a bucket of decent sized fish, families enjoying the sunshine. Adrian's magnificent lunch was delicious, helped down with a couple of glasses of red wine. Jane went swimming, claiming that the water was "really warm". I was sceptical of her claims - this was Norway, not the Mediterranean! After lunch we picked wild blueberries that were growing in profusion on the hillside just above the beach.

Whether it was the wine or just the day itself, Adrian dared Jane to swim back to Gellie with him. Never one to avoid a challenge, she was off, closely followed by Adrian, leaving the skipper to carry the clothes (yes, it was that kind of swimming!), glasses, rubbish and blueberries back to the boat. Back at the boat, they were treading water round the jetty, contemplating the fine crop of mussels growing on the wooden piles. We'd seen mussels at the fish market, so were reasonably confident that they were clean. Between them they harvested a large saucepan-full, before clambering back on board.

Whilst they were drying off, the skipper was being ridiculed as a wimp for not going in swimming, so just after leaving the jetty, he executed a rather inelegant dive from the bow pulpit, thus testing the crew's reactions for a

"proper" man overboard retrieval. Fortunately, Jane had been right - the water was lovely and warm. With the skipper safely back on board, we set off back down towards Vassøy - discussing whether we wanted to spend the evening in the company of Kjell and his friends. In the end, we decided it was churlish to refuse, especially as we were not tied down to commitments back in Stavanger.

We managed to sail for a couple of hours in the late afternoon, and listened out for Kjell (having no idea what his boat was called). Some time later there was a call on the radio, most of which was meaningless but the call did include the words "... of Stonehaven". We surmised correctly that not too many Stonehaven boats were around and we established that Kjell would come out in a small boat and pilot us in.

Just after 1900, we spotted an inflatable heading towards us. A couple of minutes later, Kjell hoisted his rather large shaggy brown dog on board - no easy feat for the poor animal given the rounded topsides, before he clambered aboard himself. Rummaging around in his pocket for a cigarette, he calmly, but quite determinedly stated "I will steer". The next twenty minutes were every skipper's worst nightmare. Here was a 'pilot' even more the worse for wear, on board a boat he didn't know, piloting it into a hole in the rocks that looked as if could accommodate, at best, a small rowing boat. The only saving grace was that I knew his boat was inside. We made it of course, to find ourselves inside this almost landlocked natural harbour complete with moorings and a small wooden jetty, where we moored alongside Kjell's boat Algenie. Kjell accepted a whisky (we all needed one, especially the skipper!), before leaving us to enjoy our supper of mussels and blueberries, promising to return in his van to collect us an hour later.

The island of Vassøy is barely a mile long but quite well populated. Originally the community consisted of island people, but over the years an influx of Stavanger commuters has seen a growth in housing. The island does boast a road, along which a somewhat battered van appeared an hour later. Jane sat in front with Kjell (still the worse for wear - and driving!) whilst Adrian and I crouched in the back. It was touch and go as to whether the van would manage to overcome the initial incline from the jetty, but with much grinding and groaning we made it up to the top. Kjell then drove somewhat erratically up the road to his home, where his daughter greeted us.

Kjell's musical talent was OK, but unfortunately the promised friends and neighbours failed to materialise. It was a bit one sided until Adrian retuned the guitar and kept us entertained with 60's and 70's songs from a couple of Kjell's old English music books.

The hospitality was generous, though it became obvious as the evening drew on that our host was slowly but surely becoming incoherent, much to the embarrassment of his daughter. The three of us mutually decided it was time

to bid farewell claiming the walk back to Gellie would do us the world of good. Unfortunately Kjell insisted on driving, but was persuaded by his daughter that this would be none too clever. We made our way along the road, mulling over what had been an extraordinary day, arriving back on board about midnight. Half way through a final night-cap, Kjell arrived by bicycle (how he stayed on it heaven only knows!) to go on board his own boat. The three of us figured we didn't want to encourage Kjell any further, so the cabin light was doused. We sat there attempting to keep quiet but every now and then erupting in giggling fits (especially Jane!). Kjell settled down eventually and Jane was able to negotiate the cockpit to the sanctuary of the after cabin.

Friday was Adrian's last day, so we sailed early and had breakfast under way. Heading north from Vassøy, we altered course between Oddaholmen and Klovningen to the west. We had a look see in amongst the small group of islands to the north of Line, before rounding Bru and heading for the small harbour at Tunge. In looking for a vacant berth, the keels touched bottom. Moving to a deeper part of the harbour, we were invited alongside a fishing boat, where we moored for a couple of hours. Stuffing some sandwiches and a couple of beers into a bag, we walked round to the nearby headland, complete with its own sturdy lighthouse.

It was a day of motoring, apart from an hour or so when the sails were up more in hope than real expectation, as we made our way back down by Fjorden towards Stavanger. I wanted to go on board the STA schooner Sir Winston Churchill to see the Captain, Hugh O'Neil, and decided the easiest way was to go alongside Malcolm Miller, berthed alongside the Churchill.

It was with some surprise that I discovered Denise on board. Apparently, she had arrived back in Stavanger earlier that morning and had spent much of the day tramping round all the likely spots looking for Gellie. Eventually she had sought refuge on the Churchill. She gratefully clambered down on board demanding sustenance as we let go. Once back at the marina, Adrian bid us farewell - we were sorry to see him go and not just because we missed his cooking!

The three British boats decided to have an impromptu barbecue in the corner of the marina. John and Tomac from Jabberwock, James and Jean from Seannachie and the three of us managed to rustle up quite a spread between us. In true British spirit, we ignored the elements, piling on more layers of clothing as the evening grew chillier. Later on we went for a walk round towards the main quaysides to admire the Tall Ships that by now were filling the harbour. There were a couple of wild parties on board the two STA schooners - both crews were leaving to go home later that night.

It rained quite heavily that night so there wasn't much incentive to get up early on Saturday morning. We had a late breakfast and got away about

1100, the three of us plus John. We had a good wind all day, which was a pleasant change.

It was now that the deficiencies of Denise's sailing knowledge became apparent. All the way across the North Sea, we had been on one long beam or broad reach. Imagine her confusion when it became necessary to tack for the first time. Never mind, she soon got the hang of it! Heading south, we rounded Gandsflua and into Riskafjorden. We looked into Hommersåk, before tacking to the north and sailing alongside the jetty at Sluppen on the island of Uskjo. It was a glorious afternoon and we spent a lazy couple of hours swimming and exploring.

Sailing from the jetty, we rounded the east side of Uskakalven and tacked all the way back to Stavanger. Many more of the Tall Ships had arrived, but despite sailing to and fro in the hope that we might be able to get in amongst them, the guard boats left us in no doubt that we were to "leave the harbour". The marina was especially crowded with boats in for the Saturday night, but we managed to squeeze in alongside a Norwegian boat. After squaring away, inter-boat hospitality was exchanged whilst we discussed possible destinations for the next day with the Norwegian skipper.

Sunday was another lovely day with a brisk north westerly breeze. Having survived the Gellie experience the previous day, John joined us again as we sailed about 1100. By now we were becoming quite used to the channels and sailing much closer to islands and isolated rocks. I had no hesitation in tacking up the narrow channel between Tunsøy and Hellesøy before heading east towards Idse. It was splendid down wind sail to the north end of Idsal where we handed sails, tucked ourselves round the corner and moored bows on to the rocks of Kyrkja. Both Jane and John had moored Mediterranean style before but this was the first time I had experienced it for myself.

The setting was idyllic - a backdrop of pine clad hills, a deep blue sea and with Gellie lying quietly, with her stem just inches from the rocks. Scrambling up to the top of the nearby rocky outcrop, we had a superb panoramic view over the surrounding islands. It was really hot where Gellie was moored in the lee of the headland, but we kept cool by alternating between beers for the inside and occasional dips into the sea for the outside. Despite John having forgotten his costume, there were no repeat performances of the Gates of Paradise!

I inflated the dinghy before we sailed so that we could get some photos of Gellie under sail. Tacking back and forth across the bay, I avoided running over the dinghy whilst the "marooned" crew aimed cameras in our general direction. Once out from the lee of the headland, Gellie let us know in no uncertain terms that she was over canvassed. With a couple of reefs in the main and several wraps in the genoa, we headed north west up the Idsefjorden to gain offing before tacking and sailing close-hauled towards the small islands

about half way back towards Stavanger. We managed to lay the gap between Grash and Herda, and maintain the course across to Hellesøy and on to Stavanger. A cracking good sail - and still warm enough to wear shorts and tee shirt despite the spray coming over the weather bow.

John invited us to dine on board Jabberwock - another shared culinary event. Afterwards we escorted Denise to the ferry terminal to see her off. She was sorry to go - claiming she hadn't had so much fun for a long time. Even in the short time on board, Denise had become a really good hand.

Sauntering back round the quayside where the Tall Ships were berthed, we found the Eda Fransden. In making her way on board, Jane almost knocked herself senseless by walking into the main boom of the vessel berthed inboard of Eda, fortunately denting little more than her pride. At any rate, it didn't prevent her accepting a couple of drinks along with Andy and his wife Liz from Eda, and the skipper and mate from Golden Vanity. We agreed we would pick up Andy from Eda the following evening, providing we could get Gellie past the guard boats.

That night, just after we turned in, we experienced a humdinger of a thunderstorm. Out in the open sea the tell-tale signs which herald an impending storm are all too obvious, but in the marina, sheltered as we were by office blocks and warehouses, there was little or no warning and the unexpected suddenness of it caught us all by surprise.

The first inkling of what was to come was a gust of wind that caused Gellie to heel, for all the worlds as if someone had moved from one side of the boat to the other. Then a distant rumble of thunder - more of a deep sigh as if from within the boat.

The storm rattled round for the best part of a couple of hours. Sleep was forgotten as we experienced the raw intensity of the lightning, the accompanying thunder and the gusts of wind that rocked the boat. As it abated, we stood in the cabin looking out over the marina in the belief that we had seen the last of it. But not a bit of it. We were treated to one spectacular final outburst before the storm exhausted itself.

We awoke to a fine Monday morning. Jane elected to sail with John Belshaw on Jabberwock, and Gwen joined John Keepax and me on board Gellie. The two boats set off late morning to Lindøya, where we hoped to find another jetty. It was quickly established that Gellie was no match for John in his 36 ft. van der Stadt, so we pretended that we were in no hurry and slowly ambled round a couple of islands first. The wind was very light and Gellie barely made a couple of knots. Gwen reckoned the sun was over the yard arm somewhere and requested a pre lunch drink. We almost sailed up alongside Jabberwock, but the wind died completely just on the final approach. I spent an hour going over the engine and other mechanical bits and pieces in preparation for our trip back across the North Sea and even managed to pick up

the shipping forecast on long wave. Then a last swim in Norway and a walk amongst the pine trees bordering the beach. Another boiling hot day!

We took the direct route back to Stavanger, motoring all the way, arriving back alongside John in the marina at 1700. John Keepax drove Gwen to the airport so that she could catch her flight back to Aberdeen. Meanwhile I prepared Gellie for her trip in amongst the Tall Ships. Subterfuge was in order and we dressed overall, wore the official Cutty Sark Tall Ships tee shirts and had the large yellow name board ready should we be challenged by the guard boats. Jane, John and I set off, and had no problems entering the reserved area and were able to go alongside Eda Fransden without mishap. Once there, we rigged the name board in shrouds and became a Tall Ship for an hour. Andy hadn't arrived back from his trip, but we were treated to the legendary hospitality of the Robinson's whilst we awaited his return. I took the opportunity of climbing to Eda's crosstrees for some photos - as usual, Gellie looks very narrow beamed when viewed from above.

Andy stowed his gear aboard and we set off back round to the marina at 1900. A joint dinner effort between the two boats again, and a fairly early night.

The Trip Home

We motored from the marina at 0530 UK time in a flat calm. Gellie was not quite as laden as she had been on the trip over, thank goodness, but we had made sure that the fuel tank and cans were full to the brim as the forecast was indicating light or non-existent wind.

We did get some reasonable sailing in that first day, averaging about four knots for over eight hours, but the further we got away from the coast, the lighter the wind became. Engine and Autohelm on!

The second day, Wednesday, saw much the same though the wind was barely force two from the east. Though we sailed for a couple of hours we didn't even manage three knots but the peace was wonderful! The engine was given a thorough check over and the main fuel tank topped up from cans.

We were becalmed with not a single object or vessel in sight. Jane remarked that she had always wanted to go swimming in these circumstances, and after all, why not. She changed and went in off the stern ladder and swam round the boat. Not to be outdone, the skipper followed suit, though without changing first. It really was a remarkable experience, turning away from Gellie and realising the next nearest thing was the sea bed some seventy five metres below. We established afterwards that we were about six miles from the median line between Norwegian and Scottish waters.

The remainder of the trip was under power. Although tedious, the glorious weather compensated and we spent long hours on deck soaking up the sun, Meals were highlights, to be accompanied by a moderate libation. Watch keeping was easy, with the Autohelm removing the boredom of steering the

FULMARS - ASHORE AND AFLOAT

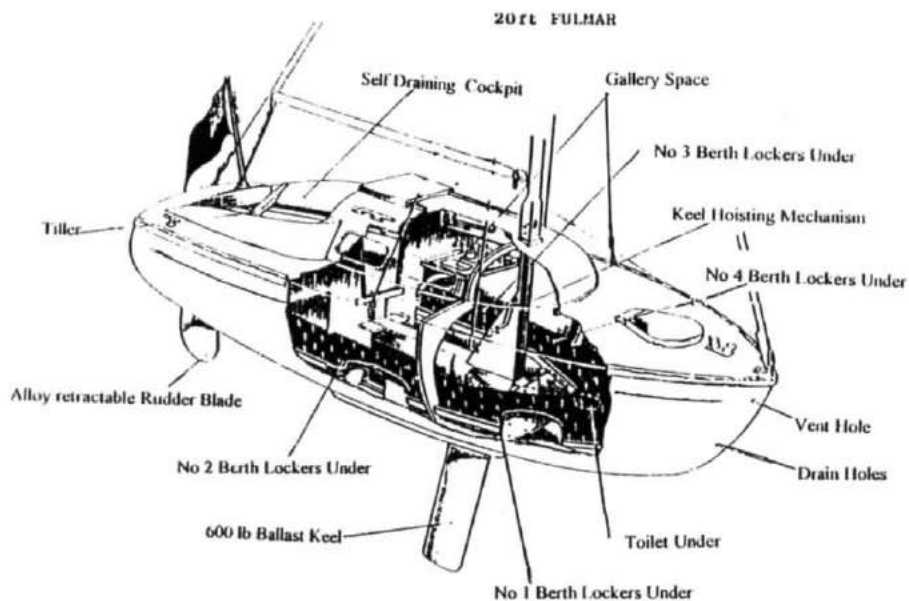
See:-

The Fairey Fulmar

Pilgrim's Progress

F13 Lucky

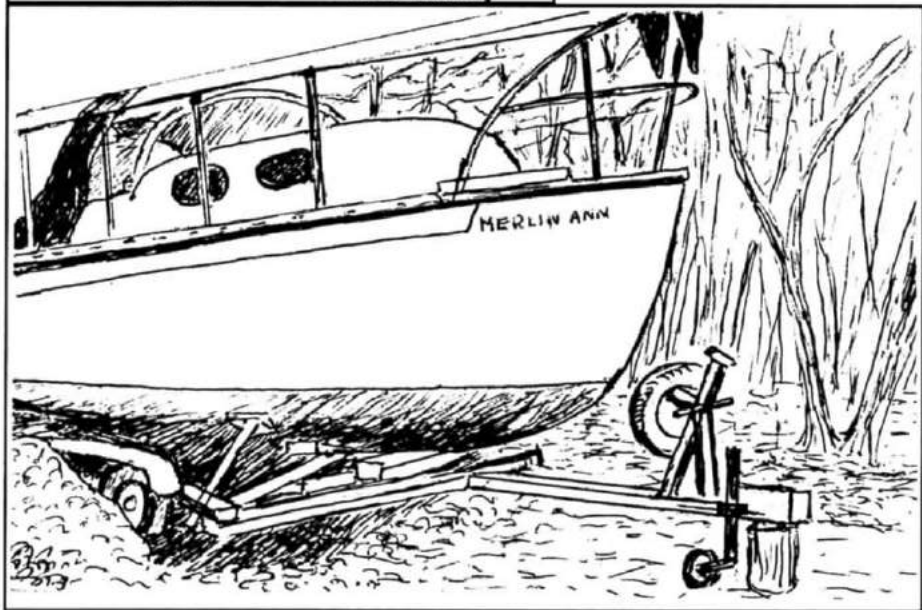
Merlin Ann



See Article - "The Fairey Fulmar"



MERLIN ANN
Tying up a stern rope
in Millmead Lock
*from a photo by
Robert Read*

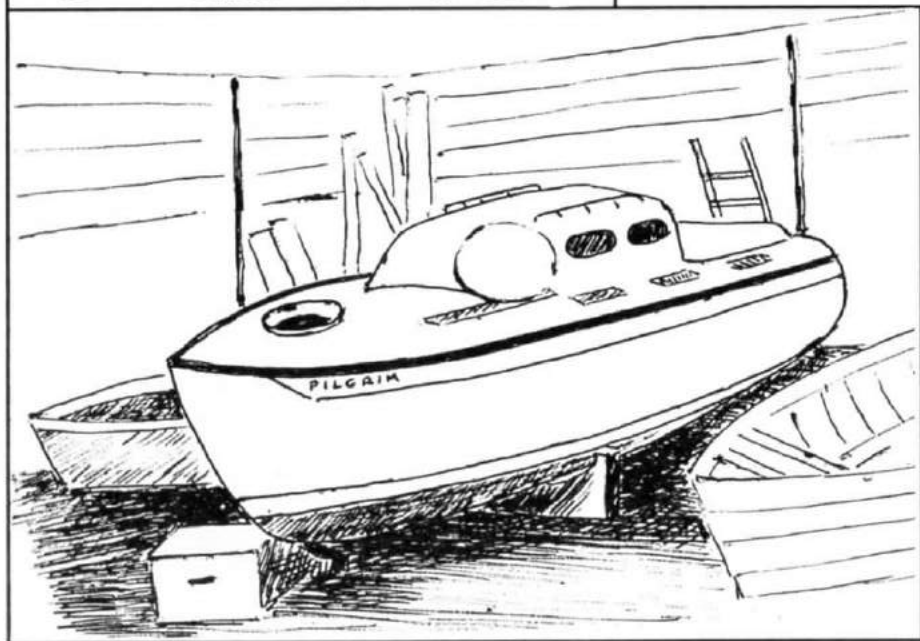


Boat parked near laying up site at Wootton Bridge
from a photo by Robert Read

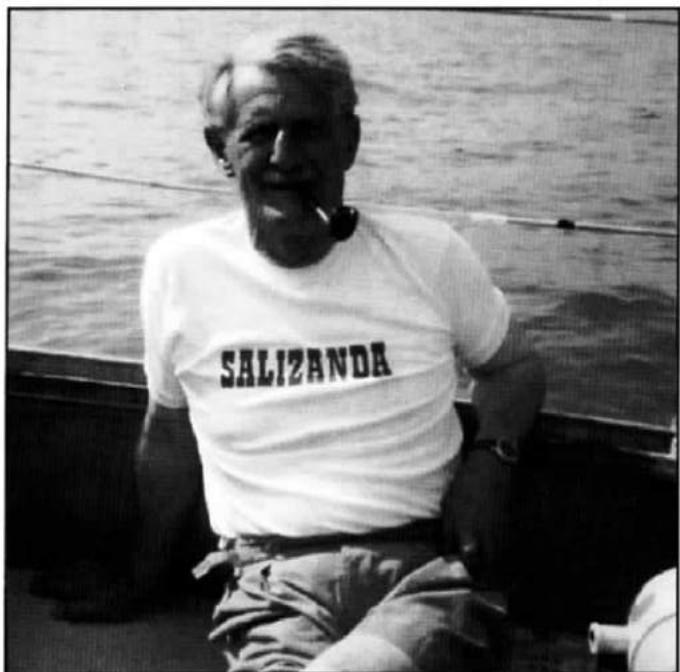


*SHERPA on her
mooring at Keyhaven
from a photo by
Michael Roberts*

*Owned by
Michael Roberts
1969-1989.
Now owned by
John Searle*



PILGRIM in David Holt's Workshop - from a photo by David Holt

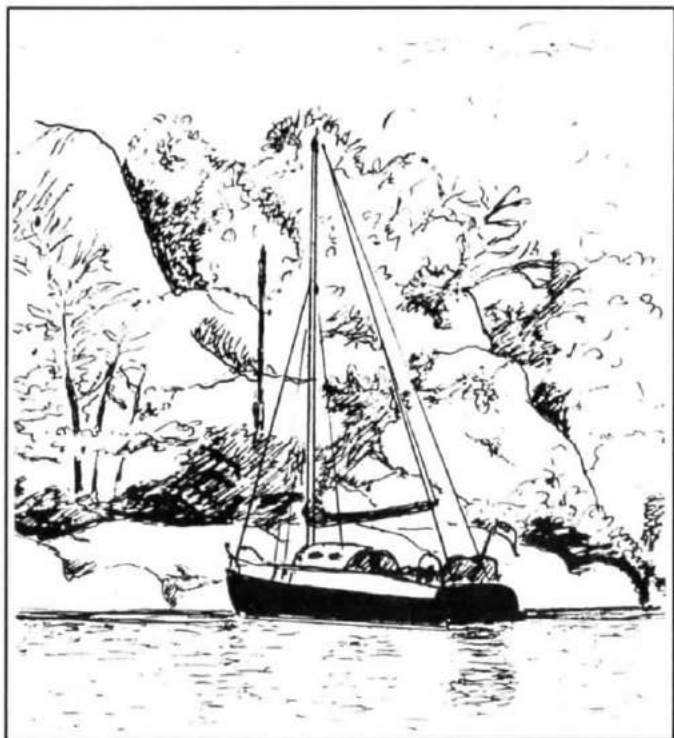


General Bill Odling as we always remember him

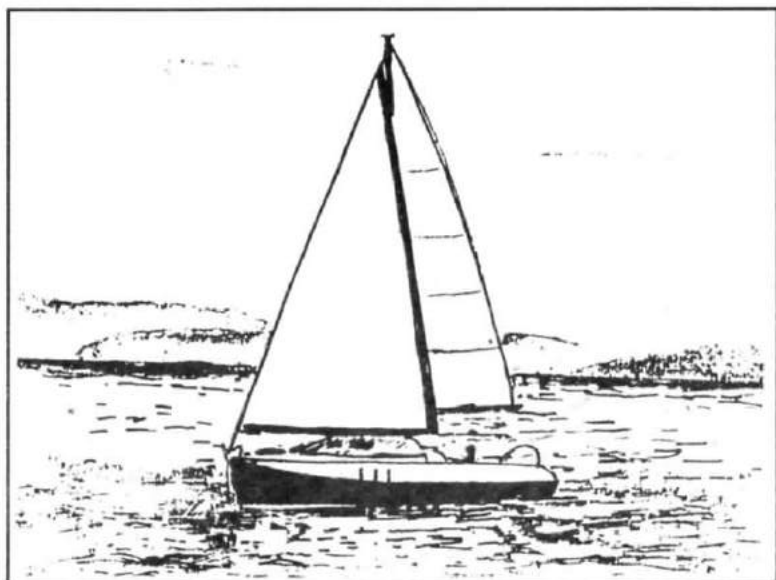


AMSARA, EMMA DUCK AND KOOKABURRA at Mersea 1997

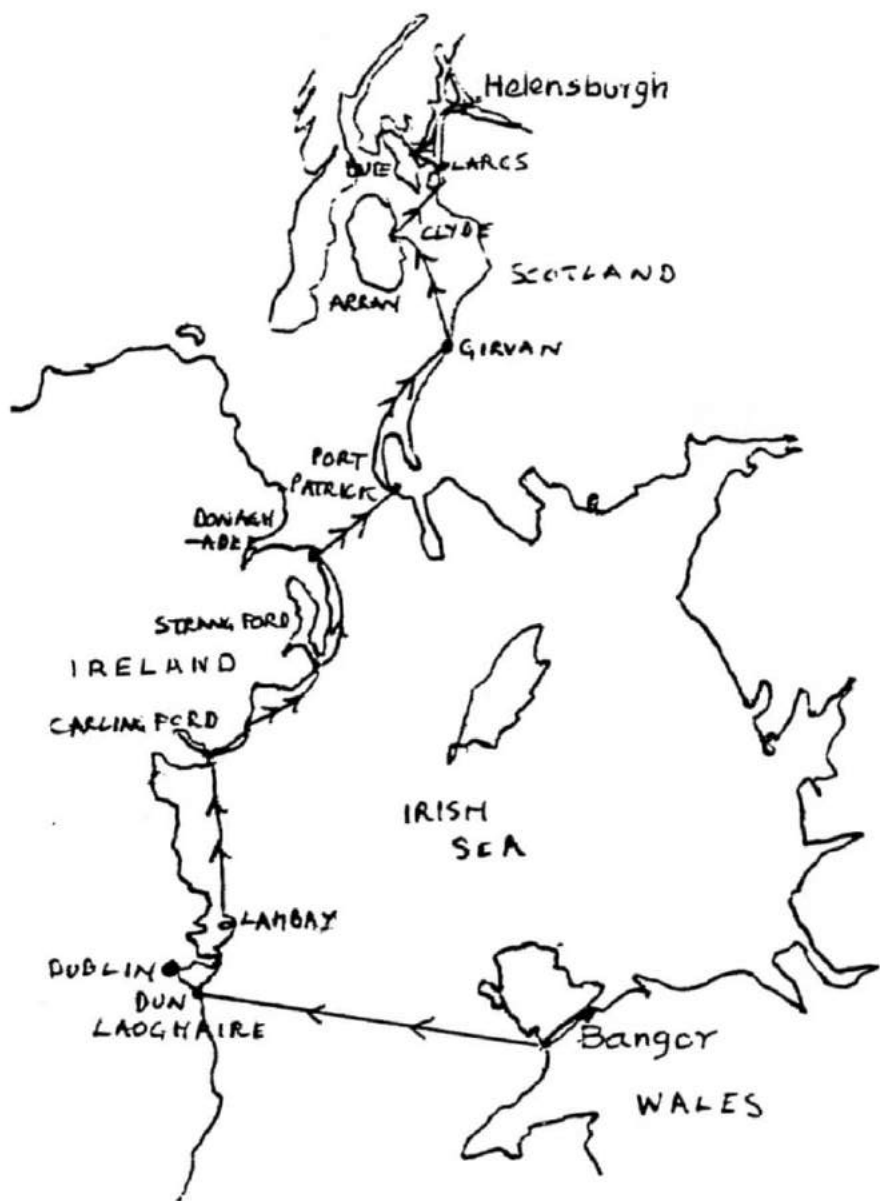
photo: Margaret Jenkins



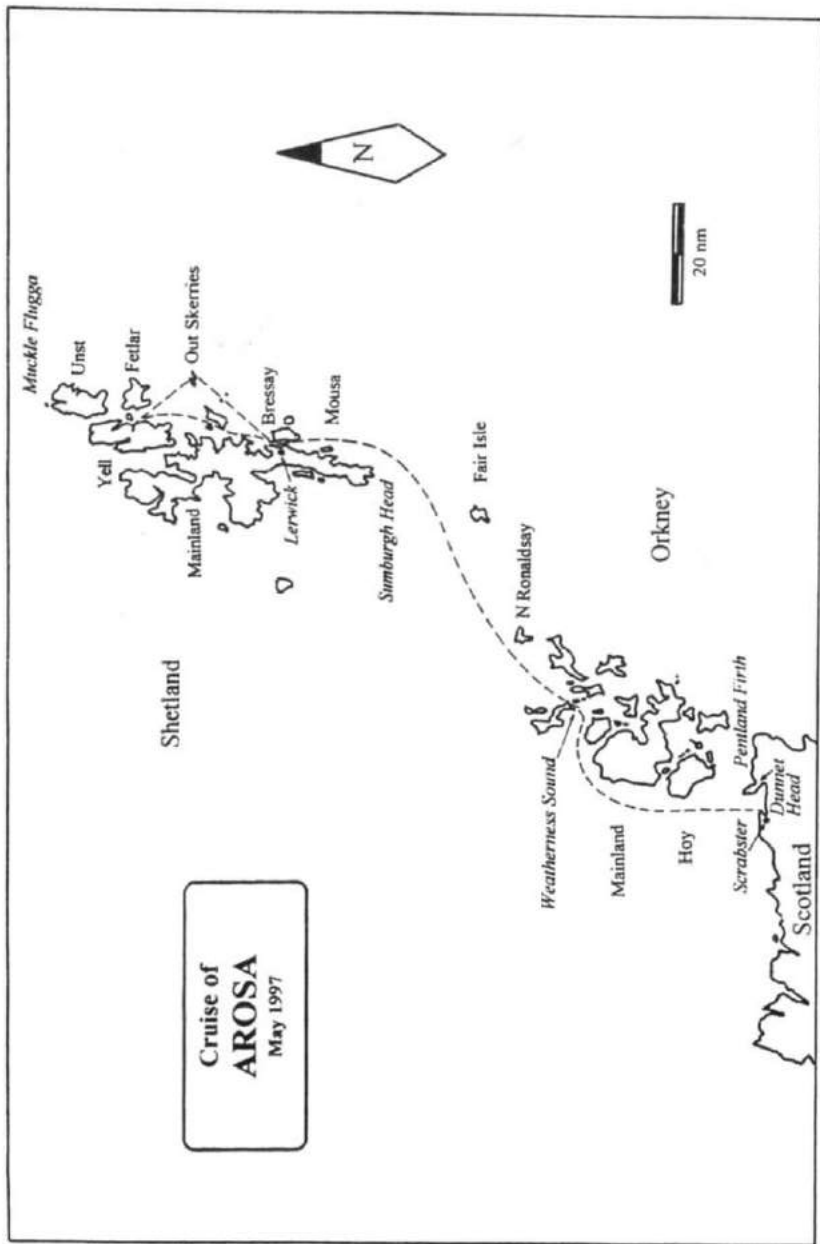
GELLIE in Norway - Idsal - Kyrkja: *from a photo by Mike Dixon*



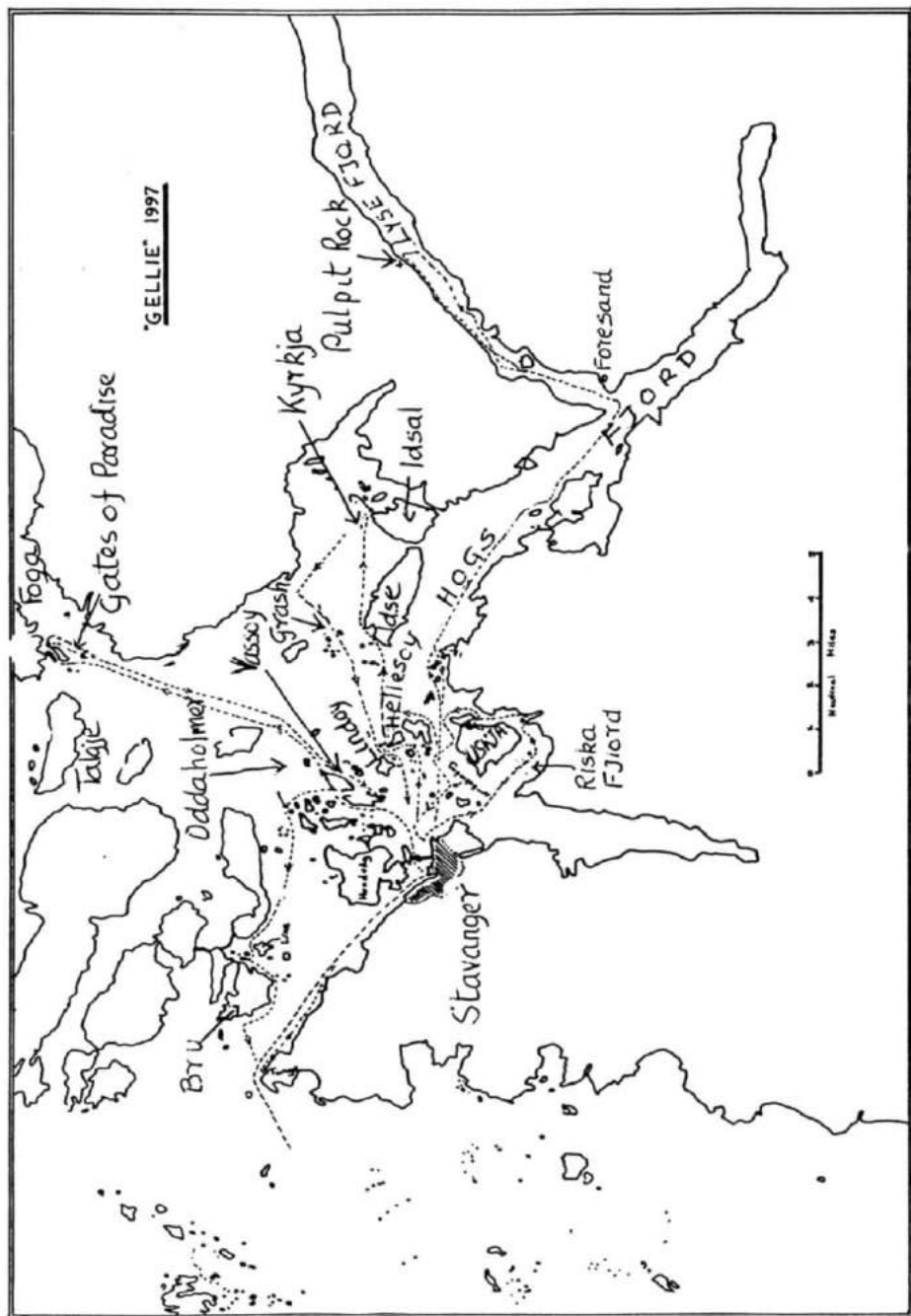
See Article - "New Sails for A89 COLCHIDE."
From a photo by Bernard Upton



See Article - "Doon the Watter"



See Article - "To Muckle Flugga - Another Year"



See Article - "GELLIE's 1997 Cruise to Norway"

same compass course hour after hour. The familiar set of visual waypoints alleviated the systematic position fixing by GPS and of course there is always one fishing boat that gets in the way! All in all it was very reminiscent of the trip back from Holland in 1995, even to the extent of thick fog fifteen miles out from the Scottish coast.

The final few hours were tense, with everyone on deck straining their eyes peering into the murk. One or two false alarms kept the tension high, but the Gods smiled as we approached the final mile into Stonehaven bay where the visibility improved. We moored alongside the outer harbour at 0148 hours on the Friday morning, just over 68 hours from Stavanger.

DOON THE WATTER

By P G and K L Martin Seamajor (A92)

This article was written in 1977. It has not been published before and completes Seamajor's travels up to 1996.

There is an apocryphal story about two Glaswegians discussing their arduous day out on the Clyde, or as they put it "doon the watter". First Glaswegian "I wish noo we hadnae good". Second Glaswegian "I wish to Goad we hadnae went". We did not feel quite as badly as this about our summer sail on the Clyde, but at least we agreed with the natives about their disagreeable weather.

We left Bangor, North Wales, our home port, rather hurriedly in a Northerly 2 or 3, having filled a quarter berth with stores which later proved very difficult to get out again. Sheila now 18 and with a delicate tummy, had declined to accompany us this year and so, in theory at least, we should have had more space. We set the spinnaker and raced through the Swellies, the narrow rock-strewn whirlpool-infested part of the Menai Straits. We passed the last stopping place, Llanddwyn Island, heeling over on a reach still under spinnaker. We were doing about 6 knots when we set course for the Kish light tower at the entrance to Dublin Bay. The course is thoughtfully marked on the Stanford chart so navigation is scarcely needed, and we hoped two tides would balance out.

Surprisingly the wind did not die during the night, but we had to replace the spinnaker with the genoa. The spinny flapped around and woke the sleepers. We had a free and easy watch-keeping system. When someone awoke they took over the helm or lookout. We were never out of sight of the loom of the lights on each side. We got a bit too close for comfort to various large trawlers and steamers, but arrived in Dun Laoghaire 19 hours and 77 miles out from Bangor. We discovered that the moment of truth is when one can see both a red and a green light coming closer on the beam. It seemed best to maintain

a straight course and this always worked successfully.

We took the train to Dublin to see the sights and ended up eating our lunch sitting on the steps of a statue. We were conducted around Dublin Castle by a charming guide who opened our eyes to the Irish view of history, particularly that for 1916. When we returned to the boat we were well and truly worn out.

Next day we sailed a few miles north to Ireland's Eye: a perfect island, lacking only grass skirted beauties to be a paradise. Here there was swimming, bird-watching and rock climbing. After a peaceful night in the shelter of the island, easterly 1 or 2, we shopped in nearby Howth and then continued north to Lambay Island, owned by Lord Revelstoke who graciously gave us permission to land and bird-watch. An inquisitive seal followed us while we rowed the tender, but seemed to know when we got the camera out as he or she then disappeared. Lambay suffers from an excess of seagulls and is a little tiring to walk over, but we enjoyed our visit.

The following day we used an easterly 1 to 3 to sail to Skerries, the clear Irish water enabling us to observe countless beautiful jellyfish. The yacht club in Skerries has a class of "Measles", a wonderful name for a 7' 6" children's sailing dinghy. We eyed this with interest as our 7' 6" tender fits well on the back of the Seamajor and this season Dad had attempted to rig it out with a sail and leeboards with mixed success.

Next day, flying the spinnaker for thirty miles we crossed an unmarked shooting range and finally arrived at Carlingford, passing the romantically named Haulbowline light at the rock-filled entrance to Carlingford Lough. We had a few words with the warden in his speedboat just after we heard the strange rattle of heavy machine gun fire up ahead as we approached the range, and pointed out to him that it was just as quick to go on as to go back. Obliging they held their fire as we crossed. Although it does not mention the range, we nevertheless highly recommend the Irish Cruising Club's pilot to East and North Irish coasts. It is a mine of information and best of all obviates the purchase of most of the costly Admiralty charts, except for passage-making ones at 200,000 scale. King John's castle at Carlingford is well worth a visit and makes a contrast in its upkeep with Greencastle on the northern side of the lough, which is the boundary between the Irish Republic and Ulster. Each country has a different appeal.

Kilkeel was our next stop; a modernised fishing port with what seemed like the world's narrowest entrance. We rowed, sailed and motored out of it next day and en route caught two coalfish plus the usual mackerel before the wind died. We rowed into Strangford narrows before accepting a tow to Audley roads from another yacht. We were pleased that our compass brought us across the 10 mile wide misty Duntrum Bay to meet St. John's light exactly in the right place.

Next day we shopped in Strangford village and later ran against the tide to the East Down Y.C., managing to overtake our new friend's Anderson 22; a poor return for his tow the previous day. We spent a peaceful night in the very sheltered Ringhaddy anchorage. Today produced the first drizzle of the holiday, after 10 days, very good for a U K summer we felt. When the mist went at about midday, we tacked back to Audley and visited Castle Ward. This is an interesting example of two different architectural styles. Lady Bangor wanted a gothic house and Lord Bangor a classical one, so the two sides of the house are each in their respective styles; a glorious example of "His and Hers". Audley was the only place in a month where were charged harbour dues, but 15 pence a night is not exorbitant. For several days now there were gale warnings and near gales from the south, so we were confined to Strangford Lough. Apparently the 8 knot ebb against an onshore wind at the entrance has to be seen to be believed. The confinement was no hardship as Strangford is 20 miles long and has innumerable islands and bays; a yachtsman's paradise as the blurb says. One snag was that we had to navigate using the 200,000 scale general chart, as the skipper had foolishly forgotten to purchase the large scale one - 2156. We survived.

We whiled away the time by visiting various sights such as Ringhaddy Castle and Motte, Audleystown, Barrow and Walshestown Castle. When Audley roads became uncomfortable in the strong south easterly, we moved across the lough to Ballyhenry. Another day was occupied in a sailing trip to Kircubbin and yet another going to White Rock for very welcome hot showers at the Strangford Lough Y.C. By now the wind was returning to the north and we had 6 knot return passages over the smooth waters of the lough.

So finally we left Strangford, and in retrospect it had provided the pleasantest sailing of the holiday. Tacking north up the Irish coast in force 4 to 5 we landed on a "freak wave", beloved of journalists, with such a terrible crash that our youngest crew member thought that the boat was holed. Apparently half an inch of Fairey Marine's moulded ply is proof against this sort of thing. We were thankful to reach Donaghadee where we were welcomed by a friendly fisherman in Boy James, to which we made fast as there was no room to anchor.

The next afternoon we close-reached to Portpatrick, Scotland, a small safe harbour to which we rowed towing Seamajor. Our engine after 20 years is entitled to its ups and downs and we prefer not to depend on it. In fact we motored about 2 miles out of the 415 that we sailed in the total 4 weeks; a percentage of 0.5. Is this a record?

Early next morning we shot up the Galloway coast at maximum speed until the wind died at Corsewell Point, the mouth of the Clyde. It took 11 hours to cover the remaining 20 miles to Girvan, where a masthead rigged Folkboat overtook us. Once again on the following day a good offshore breeze soon

died, but eventually we drifted and rowed to Lamlash, a natural harbour on the Isle of Arran, sheltered by the remarkably steep Holy Island.

Next day we decided to emulate the late W H Tilman and to combine our sailing with some mountaineering. The sharp and shapely peaks from Goat Fell to Cir Mhor proved irresistible to the two of us. We walked for 12 hours almost non-stop. Meanwhile the boat-minding party of Mum, Michael and Alan saw a basking shark and A162, the most modified Atalanta 26 of all. During the gale of the following day our anchor tore through the kelp even in the lee of Holy Island and we hurriedly threw out the kedge which held. We kept anchor watch that night when even the Royal Navy in the shape of a frigate and a fleet auxiliary came in for shelter.

After shopping in Lamlash we ran under spinnaker to Largs and got cleaned up in the new swimming pool. Then we tacked up the Clyde to Rhu near Helensburgh, where we disdained the almost completed marina. After spending a day visiting friends at nearby Cardross we entertained another group of friends to a sail up Gareloch and back again, getting a good view of the British submarine base at Faslane. Rule Britannia.

As forecasts up to now had always seemed to overestimate the wind strength we didn't think anything of going ashore in a predicted 7. Unfortunately the advertised strength did materialise and the two of us had to row our tender very hard indeed against wind and waves to get back to Seamajor. Needless to say we got soaked. In the afternoon we tacked to Gourock in a force 6. Next morning was windless and rainy so Dad spent 25 hours going home by train and returning with the car and empty trailer. Thus we were poised for a quick homeward trip.

Next day we left Gourock with hardly any wind until it suddenly blew up into SW 5, dead on the nose, the sort of change we had come to expect on the Clyde. So we tacked "Doon the Watter" to Rothesay on the Isle of Bute.

Next day during our third Scottish gale in ten days we visited the Castle and the younger members of the crew practically lived in the salt water swimming pool.

On our penultimate day we used a squally SW 5 to 6 to reach up the East Kyle of Bute amongst the Burnt Isles until on turning a corner into the wind, we were knocked over to 50 degrees before we could luff as the water lapped the cockpit coaming. On the way back Mum made some comment about not quite being able to touch a navigation buoy implying that the helmsman was sailing too close. So of course I arranged that one of the crew touched the next one but Seamajor didn't. We saw no evidence of the supposed strong tides in the Kyles of Bute. After a brief stop back at Rothesay we had our most exciting sail of the holiday; surfing down five foot waves at maximum speed on a very broad reach towards Great Cumbræ Island, Largs and the trailer. The Largs anchorage was too bumpy for comfort so we sailed

back to the lee of Great Cumbrae for a quiet night.

At 0600 hours on the final day we rowed and sailed to Barrfields slip at Largs where we recovered onto the trailer in spite of one foot waves caused by the onshore wind. Fortunately the forecast gale did not materialise at this early hour. The drive home back to Bangor took 12 hours, quite a contrast to our outward trip of 29 days.

We enjoyed our cruise in the sheltered waters of the Clyde in spite of variable winds and cold nights, but the Irish fortnight was by far the pleasantest on account of settled weather. An anticyclone from 5 to 15 August did the trick.

NEW SAILS FOR A 89 COLCHIDE - After 33 years

By Bernard Upton

The following is a precis of Bernard Upton's article which is long and very detailed and can be had in its original form on application from the Editor, the Secretary, or the Author.

The 1964 Genoa and Mainsail made by Messrs Williams of Hamble had given good service in the Channel, the Mediterranean, and Lac Lemane but were now showing signs of age. Some years ago at the dinner, speaking to Charles Currey, I asked him about a fully battened main sail for an Atalanta, and he was enthusiastic. It was time for a change, and the price lists for these two sails quoted in the 1994 newsletter prompted me to order two new ones.

So in 1995 I ordered a bi radial Genoa from Southern Sails of Wimborne, Dorset, followed in 1996 by an order for a new mainsail from Voiles Gautier of Morges near Lausanne. Perhaps it is worth noting here that A89 has a Sparlight mast and boom in aluminium of 1963 vintage, together with an early model (1976) Rotostay Furler.

On a September morning in 1996 M Gautier came to the boat and took all the measurements on the spot, and the new main was delivered on Friday of the same week. It was a surprise to receive 4 full length battens, slab reefing with loose foot in 7 oz Dacron. I was expecting a cruiser sail something like the original

It was clear however, that the dimensions of the new sails had to be compared with the old ones to ensure that the new ones were safe.

The total area of the two new sails came out at 36.45 sq m, and the old sails at 24.06 sq m, most of the increase being due to the new Genoa. I concluded however, that since authors on the subject consider a sail area two to two and a half times the wetted area of the hull is safe, it looked as if the new sails on the Atalanta would be safe enough.

The underwater wetted area on the Atalanta is 14.40 sq m, so the sail area is only 1.56 times the wetted area (24.06 divided by 14.40) whereas with

the new sail area of 36.45 sq m the same sum comes out at 2.53 times.

I came to this somewhat risky conclusion for two reasons:-

a) All the yachts on this lake are over canvassed but don't suffer too many mishaps.

b) Because of improvements in sail design and furling gear sail can be shortened very rapidly. (I can remove an area of 28 sq m from my 36.45 sq m in 3 minutes, even single handed).

Since having the new sails I have done about 120 hours sailing (alone) and tried a number of manoeuvres e.g. using one sail only and picking up a buoy, tacking etc. With the old sails this was more difficult: they did not respond quickly. No longer a problem; with a bare whisper of wind A89 turns on one sail, tacks easily and seems to be more precision orientated, and pointing higher than before.

In light winds keels have been half down. The rudder (this one lifts vertically) is also half down, but full down in a blow. The boat sails for long periods without touching the tiller, so you can walk around and admire the view.

Finally the cost of the two sails was £1000. A painful sum, but I now believe it was worth every penny. Sailing around has become a pleasure and A89 is as fast as any glass boat of the same size. Also she has a lot of style - you could call it class!

And all this is anyway what the French call the 3rd age physiotherapy.

DANCE ON THE DECKS (A95 Hiran)

By C Twyford

One of the commonest problems that Atalanta owners suffer from are soft decks. I offer the following suggestion. Remove paint on deck and deck head. Remove toe rails (they seem to be screwed down) and runners. The glue under the runners has deteriorated and moisture has travelled down the screws to the centre laminate. This could mean larger repairs than initially visible!

Once these repairs are effected, check that all deck strips have a backing on the deck head in the fore cabin (Hiran did not). Add a layer of laminate well bonded with West/SP in each of the areas on the deck head (I used 1/8th marine ply on the flat sections and laminate on the curved areas which left a strip round the blister about 3/8th of an inch). A backing pad was placed in each section under the longest deck strip in the toilet, fore cabin and galley areas.

There is a further weak area where the front of the blister joins on to the deck. I screwed a strip of alloy along the centre support beam. Deck strips were replaced with West/SP and the rails were attached with new cheeses and stainless bolts at intervals. A backing pad was also placed under the hatch

runners in the blister area, and these pads were extended into the forward area as well. The same principal was used in the rear cabin with a couple of cross supports added.

There are two support beams in the rear cabin, one about 18 inches forward of the transom, hinged to the hog with a brass sliding catch securing it into a wooden gate on the deck head, and a second one just behind the hatch opening which fits into a wooden gate on the deck head and has a bolt into the hog.

You can then dance on the decks and stand on the blister!

