

Atalanta Owners Association

2014—2015
56th Annual Bulletin



**Atalanta Owners Association
2014 – 2015 Bulletin**

**56th Edition
Contents**

Message from the Commodore	2
Message from the Editor	2
My Adriatic Odyssey by John Ingleby	3
Kerry Piper's Restoration by Chris Green	8
Tuan Mac 'The Journey' by Jim Pailing	17
How much does it really weigh? by Trevor Thompson	23
Traditional Boat Festival & Classic Malts Cruise by William Kennaway	27
My Fourth (?) Visit to the Shiant Islands by Greg Manning	31
Calista's Summer Cruise by Trevor Thompson	36
Hebridean Odyssey by John Ingleby	41
Short but Sweet by Jane Stearn	48
Croatia Part Two by Chas & Mandy Hammond and crew	52

Front cover photograph: A89 Colchide near Ipswich © Richard James

Message from the Commodore

The coming AGM/Luncheon will herald a new Hon. Sec., as John announced in the Autumn newsletter he and Mariana will be taking a well-earned rest. On behalf of all members I wish to thank them for managing our affairs since May 2009, my how time flies.

A newsletter will be sent soon after the AGM to announce the latest Committee for 2015 and give all members the minutes of the AGM and all available information at that time.

I urge all members to scan the Year Book and seek those boat owners near you and contact them, I have talked to several former members recently and they all say that they would really appreciate contact and in some cases advice.

Our boats are getting older, "Hiran" is nearly 57 and many of us are older as well. The Association as a whole needs to give support and a chat to all owners, especially at this time of the year, that is what will make a successful AOA and I am sure that is what you all require.

In the last Bulletin I said that "Hiran" would take to the water this year, sadly a knee replacement in May prevented the launch and I have had to fiddle with bits and pieces aboard to keep her in shape for a *possible* launch in the coming spring.

By the time you read this we will have had the AGM and hopefully laid plans for the 60th anniversary of the launch and testing of A1 "Atalanta".

I wish you all the very best of sailing and restoration for 2015 and I hope that more boats will be launched than in 2014.

Colin Twyford A95

Message from the Editor

It hardly seems like a year has passed since I was last trying to fill this paragraph with something original!

The panic of early November (when there were no articles to go in the Bulletin) [hint hint] has progressed to the point where there is yet another completed publication overflowing with your cruises and repairs. So I bring you yet another brilliant Bulletin thanks entirely to our members efforts in maintaining their historic craft, sailing them near and far, and, most importantly, writing about it.

Let this Bulletin take you to the heart of the capitol with Jim (on page 17) and Jane (on page 48). Then to the edge of the Kingdom, with Bill (on Page 27), Greg (on page 31) and John (on page 41). Finally trail with us to sail the outer rim of the EU with John (on page3), me (on page 36), and Chas & Mandy (on page 48).

This year we have few technical articles, which might suggest that the active are out there sailing! However join Chris (on page 8) to read about a major restoration project, and me (on page 23) to see how heavy it is.

The Atalanta (and its derivatives) continue to demonstrate their sea keeping abilities, as well as their ability to be trailed thousands of miles to explore new waters! Long may this continue.

Trevor Thompson



The power station at Plomin

May and early June, Derrick and Trevor sailed Calista together back up through the many islands from Dubrovnik to Omisalj, which is on the northern-most Croatian island of Krk.

On Thursday 12 June, Dominic Dobson (A90 Mourne Goblin) and I flew out to meet Trevor and Derrick to share the rest of Calista's trip back to Italy and home. Dom and I climbed out of the taxi on the hot sunny waterfront at Omisalj, to find Derrick and Trevor waiting for us with glasses filled.

Calista was moored nearby in crystal clear water, so after sorting out our gear and some lunch we set off for a swim on the nearby "beach". New yachting facilities are rapidly being developed in many parts of Croatia, with beaches created by dumping quantities of crushed stone rather than sand, so suitable footwear is mandatory. Nevertheless the water was delightfully warm, and beautifully clear away from the milky margin.

That evening we climbed the steep zig-zag path up to the town of Omisalj, perched high on the hillside overlooking the bay, where we enjoyed some more beer and a

dinner to celebrate Derrick's birthday, followed by ice creams on the way back down.

Next day (Friday 13 June) we filled Calista's water tanks and sailed off around the top of the island and under the high bridge, which connects Krk with the mainland, into the Velebitski Channel, the (relatively) narrow strip of water running be-

tween the mountainous coast of mainland Croatia and the string of islands separating it from the Adriatic. Moist, warm westerly winds hit these mountains and brew up enormous thunderclouds, and as the days passed we became accustomed to hearing a separate weather forecast for this Channel.

After a short stop at Crikvenika we sailed across the Channel into the large enclosed bay of Cizici; as soon as the anchor was down in the early afternoon we all stripped off and plunged into the warm clear water. The rest of that day was spent lazing in the sunshine, discussing the following days and enjoying dinner on board.

Saturday 14 June dawned overcast and cooler, so we motored the short distance back across to Crikvenika to replenish ice and food. A gentle wind picked up so we sailed back up the Velebitski Channel, under the bridge and set off westwards straight across Kvarner Bay. After another hour or so, with the wind now against us we started the motor, and as we drew steadily further from land the headwind strengthened. Towards evening, after some 40 miles we decided to find shelter in a narrow inlet leading to the power station at Plomin.

We could see a wedding in progress ashore, and the fishing boats all tied up, and as it was Saturday evening we decided to anchor in the rather narrow channel. Over dinner the wind increased further, and Trevor felt it would be prudent to put down a second anchor. The height of the hills on either side meant that even a small shift of wind caused a 180 degree switch, and with the moon shining through a clear sky Calista swung back and forth through the night.

On the morning of Sunday 15 June we were pleased to find the anchor chain and kedge warp had twisted together only three times. We agreed to reconnoitre the mouth of the river, and although spray was blowing from the tops of the waves by the entrance, we could see it was less violent out at sea and decided to press ahead. Calista made rapid progress under sail southwards in the lee of the island of Cres, where we could see the patterns of ancient fields and terraces on the hillsides. By this time it had started raining so we were wearing light rain gear, and Dom commented that this was weather he is more accustomed to on

the Clyde. The very few other boats we saw were moving under bare poles, and it was a relief to enter Cres harbour and the sheltered marina. After a walk around the town and welcome showers, we enjoyed an excellent dinner in the marina restaurant.

There was still some rain falling the next day (Monday 16 June) but with signs of clearing and with a more favourable wind we sailed off west and then south west towards Medulin, at the bottom of the Istrian peninsular. It was still rough, and after some 35 miles my notes say "bloody hard day's sail", although Trevor commented that with three other Atalanta owners aboard it often felt as though every manoeuvre just happened as soon as it occurred to him! We dropped anchor in Medulin's inner harbour and ate dinner on board.

On Tuesday 17 June, the SW wind was still blowing as we set off under sail, but everything became calmer as soon as we rounded the tip of Istria and headed northwards up the coast. We continued sailing past the large city and busy harbour of Pula, and the National Park island of Brijuni, once the

private home of Marshall Tito.

We had a curious experience around midday. We had been sailing well under spinnaker, when wind suddenly slacked off and within a few minutes became completely calm. We took the spinnaker down, just in time for the wind to spring up again in the totally oppo-



From the clock tower overlooking Vrsar - Calista must be somewhere down there



Grado - and the channels crossing the lagoon

site direction! By this time the sun had emerged, so it was most likely a sudden shift from on-shore to off-shore winds as the land mass warmed up.

This was another long day's sail, and we tied up in the marina at Vrsar, where we rated the showers 10/10 and enjoyed dinner at a restaurant ashore.

The next day (Wednesday 18-June) our plan was for a relatively short sail to Umag, which would be the final port of call in Croatia, and we decided to walk up the hill overlooking Vrsar to climb the clock tower, giving a fantastic view over the marina and harbour below. As can be seen, the west side of Istria is much more popular with yachtsmen, many of whom come over from Italy.

On Thursday 19 June, Trevor "signed out" of Croatia at the Umag Customs Post, and we continued sailing northwards in lighter winds, across the Gulf of Trieste towards Grado in Italy. Like Venice, Grado is located on an island surrounded by shallow waters, and it took us some time to locate the line of markers leading through the dredged channel to the inner lagoon. We tied up at the marina just inside, and by this

time the sun was blazingly hot: cue for creams and sunhats followed by a walk along the beach and around the town, and a real Italian pizza.

The morning of Friday 21st June saw us motoring between withies as we threaded our way through the lagoon from Grado to the marina at San Giorgio. This is located towards the end of a river running through a large industrial area, where we saw huge new lock gates under construction for the Panama Canal.

By lunchtime, Calista was tied up next to the dock where the travel hoist would lift her out, and we retired under the shade in the swimming pool before this operation took place promptly at 5pm.

After washing down with a pressure spray, the trailer was towed into place (using a dumper truck!) and Calista carefully lowered into position. This was an opportunity to inspect the self-feathering and self-reversing propeller which Trevor recently fitted, and which he feels adds 1 knot to Calista's sailing speed. We spent the next couple of hours lashing things in place ready for the tow back home, before enjoy-



End of the voyage

ing a splendid final dinner in the marina restaurant.

Sadly, the celebratory end of our meal was interrupted by a telephone call from Dinah to say that Trevor's Range Rover had broken down as she set out from Milford Haven. This meant that my plan to return overland with Calista had to be curtailed, so on Saturday 22 June I accompanied Dom and Derrick by taxi to Venice Airport where they met their respective wives to spend a few days' touring Venice, and I was fortunate to find an empty seat on a flight to Gatwick.

Trevor stayed behind to sort out storage for Calista, before flying home on Sunday 23 June.

Eventually, Derrick and Trevor set out again from England on Friday 27 June to return overland to Italy, arriving there on Sunday 29 to tow Calista home, where they returned safely on Tuesday 1 July.

In retrospect, the four of us got on together extremely well, and sailing Calista became an almost telepathic experience. With Internet help, Derrick kept in close touch with his business throughout his time

aboard, and Trevor took many photos

which will appear with the next revisions of the "Adriatic Pilot". We put many of the world's ills to rights, and discussed various aspects of owning and towing Atalantas. At other times, we simply enjoyed each others' company with the sounds of wind and waves, as Calista carried us safely and comfortably on her voyage.



Kerry Piper's Restoration

by Chris Green A169

Belgium to UK

A169 Kerry Piper (renamed Mateva) had been ashore on her trailer in Nieuwpoort Belgium for a number of years. She had succumbed to rot in decks and hull and was in danger of deteriorating beyond repair. In search of an Atalanta project, in May 2011 I went over to check her out. I met up with the owner Marc Lodewyckx. He had recently acquired a new Macgregor 26 and needed to move on. We agreed terms and sorted the paperwork over lunch in the YC and I was the new owner of Kerry Piper (reverting to her original name). The original Atalanta trailer had been recently refurbished by Marc, so bringing KP back to Blighty seemed fairly straightforward. Returning with gusto the following week in a hired Land Rover, it all went smoothly until a trailer tyre shredded en-route to Dunkirk. It required a return ferry trip a few days later (Marc having kindly sourced a new tyre) before KP arrived at her new home in Rye, East Sussex.

Preparation

The game plan was, to repair the external hull damage in one season ashore (2011 - 2012) and launch KP the following year as a floating project. This seemed realistic given my limited availability of 8 – 10 hours per week work on board. Eliminating

the active rot was essential before attempting any repairs – dry storage would be useful. A scaffolding framework was erected around and over KP, covered with heavy duty tarps to provide a weatherproof work shed (**Fig1**); four chain hoists and two webbing slings were added to allow her to be raised as required for full access. Space was allowed for storage of materials, fittings, moving around, working underneath etc; the wooden mast and boom fitted neatly alongside on a raised scaffolding shelf. The construction had consumed a couple of precious weekends, but I was pleased with the end result.

Cuprinol “5 Star” (a pungent solvent based wood rot treatment) was liberally applied by spray and roller to the inside of the hull. The toxic nature of this stuff required the area to be well vented during application and serious personal protection – aka Darth Vader meets SOCO. The treatment eliminates all fungal activity, most importantly kills the voracious “fruiting fungus” of the dry rot. Those familiar with dry rot will appreciate the name is something of a misnomer as the fungus feeds on timber moisture and active areas often have droplets on the timber surface along with a distinctive musty mushroom odour. As dry rot progresses it consumes moisture from the timber; softwood is left shrunken, twisted and brittle – dense hardwood crumbles to the touch. Unlike wet rot which tends to localise around

the moisture source dry rot knows no such boundaries. The fruiting fungus (a crinkly brown rubbery film) sends out lateral *milky* branches from the fruit through any suitably porous medium and also produces colonising dust-like brown spores with old



Fig 1: The tarpaulin shed



Fig 1a: Dry Rot

plywood particularly vulnerable, as evidenced by KP's cockpit issues.

Project revision

Following the treatment, a creosote like odour lingered for several weeks. Once the interior was dry and aerated the extent of the damage could be fully assessed. The dried out rot – somewhere on the Cornish wafer to mummified remains spectrum – came away in swathes, mostly by hand. Each layer of rot damage removed brought further issues to light. It was soon evident that both keelboxes and cockpit bulkheads (from the side deck level down) needed largely rebuilding. The aft bulkhead sits directly above the trailer cradle, so the full extent of the hull damage was only revealed when KP was lifted in the slings. Dry rot had permeated the hull below, seemingly through the original screws fastening the bulkhead to the hull (**fig 1A**).

The whipstaff assembly, which had to be removed with the bulkhead anyway, was dismantled and cleaned (**fig 1B**). Cockpit floor sections and a sizeable section of hull below the wa-

terline in the aft cabin at the turn of the bilge extending aft approx 1500cm (starboard quarter) had all succumbed. Cockpit seats, bulkheads and floor frame were removed. Sections of rot in the hull veneer were cut out and prepared for re-laminating; I also removed an 80x20cm section of glass fibre from the port saloon topsides (**Fig's 2-3**). By the end of 2012 all rot had been removed.

Dust and smaller debris was vacuumed fol-



Fig 1b: whipstaff bearing



Fig 2: GRP repairs to be removed

lowing each foray into the rot. It felt more like a post-mortem than a restoration at this point as I surveyed the carnage. The project timescale was revised upwards - this would take at least one more season ashore. On the plus side, one of the last jobs carried out by KP's previous owner was an overhaul of the keels and lifting assembly which are all in excellent order.

Auxiliary power rethink

The engine replacement was originally to be a 10hp Honda petrol unit driving a hy-

draulic motor, both of which I had already acquired. Given the extended timescale I had a rethink and after researching online at various electric project and boat forums decided upon a 7.5 KW electric DC motor driving the hydraulic motor instead of the original Honda unit (See **Fig 12** in the "Cockpit" section below). NB: Discussion on this in the AOA forum and further progress of the installation will be posted on the AOA website blog as and when. The prop shaft was removed and machined (by Lake Engineering Poole) for a two bladed

folding prop I had acquired to replace the 3 bladed original.



Fig 3: Aft cabin repairs



Fig 4: Transom repairs

2013 Transom and topsides

By spring 2013 all deck fittings had been removed to access deck and topsides repairs; agba veneers, ply and epoxy were in stock ready for the structural work. It was too cold or moist for serious epoxy work until June, so most of the spring and early summer was spent on parallel tasks. This included the lower half of the transom which had delaminated on the interior side. The delamination was removed (approx one third the thickness); a replacement 12mm ply inner section doubler was cut from a template and fitted into place pending final fixing (**Fig 4**).

Repairs to Atalanta hull and deck are set out in **Fairey drawing 12388**. agba veneer was supplied by Robbins Timber (Bristol) and 18mm Ply to BS 1088:2003 'Plywood for Marine

Craft' standards was used for the bulkhead and keelbox repairs, with 4mm used for fascia/doublers etc. With modern epoxy resin the repairs are fairly straightforward. Basically the hole has an inner fill section of veneer trimmed to fit and overlapping external and internal veneer sections are glued either side with diagonal grain in opposite directions. As I am not varnishing the hull, "invisible" repairs (achieved by delaminat-



Fig 5: Deck near the Galley



Fig 6: Strake and stringer repair

ing whole sections of the original veneers) were not required. During 2013 external repairs to hull and deck continued. The galley topside rot had required the removal of a section of the exterior strake and inboard stringer (**Figs 5 -7**). The replacement strake section was bolted through the replaced veneer to the new stringer section for a sound epoxy bond. Replacement veneers were mostly 2mm (not 2.5mm) although I did use 3mm agba for some outer skin repairs. West high density 405 filler mix used for the epoxy gluing produced an equivalent thickness to veneer repairs, which are no doubt stronger than the original. Autumn storms hampered progress from

November, so structural repairs were put on hold.

Nature art

The extreme weather events of winter 2013 /2014 upset the KP work schedule. The December tidal surge caused havoc in the Rye boatyard – vessels were lifted from drying moorings and deposited ashore, while others laid up ashore fell off chocks coming to rest at odd angles on the shore side. KP's micro world (several feet above the HW mark) was awash in a couple of feet of water at the height of the surge. A saturated tool

storage box required urgent stripping down of all the AC and DC tools inside. Luckily the only immediate material losses from this were two 12v batteries – although two of the DC tools went phut over the next couple of months. The high gusting winds December – January caused much damage to buildings on the south coast. I entered the boatyard with some foreboding follow-



Fig 7: Deck repairs



Fig 8: Keel box repairs

ing several days of continuous bashing SW gales - gusting at F10+. Relentless buffeting of the tented workshop had caused the scaffolding structure to *lozenge* and the roof apex to invert. Inside, the surreal scene of collapsed scaffolding, up-ended boards and hanging tarp could have been a post apocalyptic art exhibit, “The Folly of Mankind” sort of thing – it certainly felt like my folly. Fortunately no physical damage was caused, but further frustrating delay resulted as the scaffold frame was dismantled and rebuilt. It was late April 2014 before order was restored and work could be restarted.

2014

Spring 2014 was again either too cold or moist for serious gluing until May/June. Work continued on parallel tasks: Cutting replacement plywood sections for the keelboxes; cockpit floor and bulkheads. The aft bulkhead was constructed in two halves (port and starboard); the forward bulkhead in three parts - the lower section to the height of the companionway step and port and starboard upper sections. Hardwood fabrications included: replacement frame abaft the aft bulkhead;

knee supports for the cockpit floor; washboard tracks; whipstaff bearer plate; mahogany crossmembers to provide fixing points for the cockpit floor and structural support for the replaced bulkheads.

Keel boxes (Figs 8-9)

Reassembling the jig saw puzzle of parts finally began in earnest in June 2014. First, the replacement keel box sections were fitted employing a similar method to that described by Greg Manning (A142) in last year’s annual bulletin; the main difference being that the cockpit bulkheads on KP were removed and the replaced keel-box sections extended from the cockpit to the galley. The outboard boxes had 4mm ply epoxy glued to the face of the originals and roller skimmed with two further epoxy coats. The

original inboard boxes were cut approx 40cm aft of the keel lifting mechanism; the replacement sections were 45°edge-joined with epoxy resin and clamped. The bottom edge of the inboard box sections sit in a stepped lip (approx 5cm deep) at the base of the keelbox and were set in a bed of



Fig 9: Keel boxes



Fig 10: Knees

thickened epoxy to ensure a watertight join. With keelboxes completed (big sigh of relief here) the cockpit could now be reassembled. NB: Dominic Dobson's *AOA Renovation* photo album for Mourné Goblin was a useful reference point for cockpit reassembly work. Having removed so much of KP's superstructure, the open engine bay with no floor, seats or bulkheads had become the disorientating norm; checking out photo's of another cockpit rebuild helped bring everything back into perspective!

Cockpit (Fig's 10-12)
The replacement fore and aft cockpit bulkheads were epoxied in place together with mahogany crossmembers. The sawn mahogany frame (abaft the aft bulkhead) was epoxied to the

hull and to the new bulkhead each side of the keelson. The original hardwood framework supporting the cockpit floor and engine bay hatch had been affected by dry rot near both cockpit bulkheads. A replacement was made up in plywood and coated both sides with clear epoxy resin to protect against rot. New frame and surrounding drain away were supported aft of the keelboxes with interim mahogany knee supports and at each end to hardwood bearers attached to the bulkhead crossmembers. The drain-away surrounding the hatch was extended to cover the keelboxes with two 40mm drain fittings each side. A similar arrangement on "Jaunty" had worked very well. The DC motor, batteries and hydraulics are to be fitted after completing the structural work.

The engine bay has no permanent hatch arrangement as yet; this will be left until the



Fig 11: Cockpit



thankfully not fully established before the treatment arrested the fungal activity. These isolated areas presented as crusted surface patches with minimal penetration. Although it is said that epoxy treatment alone can restore this lower level type of damage (through absorption), my preference, having gone this far, was to extend the veneer replacement / epoxy treatment

to include all affected areas. The starboard

Fig 12: Engine Bay

final configuration of the electric hydraulic propulsion unit. Similarly the new cockpit seat tops are not yet glued in - to allow access for tanks pipes and cable runs etc.

Aft cabin (Fig's 13– 15)

Dry rot in the aft cabin extended from the bulkhead to the turn of the bilge on the starboard quarter for approx 1500mm. Most of this was traceable from the fruiting fungus in the original port cockpit seat (adjacent to the bulkhead) which had traversed the lower section of the aft bulkhead. Spores had dispersed beyond the fruit tendrils and early stages of new rot were evident in isolated patches. These had

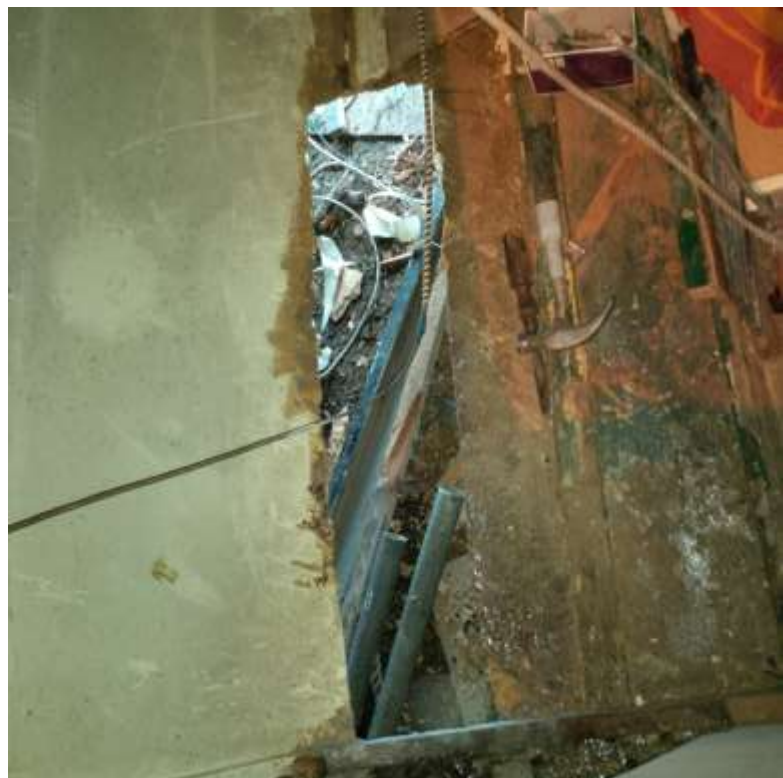


Fig 13: Aft Cabin



Fig 14: Aft Cabin Repairs

turn of bilge and below the aft bulkhead all had veneers replaced. The end result is that the monocoque structural integrity has been restored and I will sleep sounder aboard when KP is finally afloat! The loo will be relocated just inside the starboard bulkhead with a similar arrangement to that on Jaunty A100. NB: Not all damage required the total removal of veneers; lesser affected areas needed only the replacement of the top inner or outer layer.

Final thoughts (so far)

At the time of writing (October 2014) the hope is to finish exterior repairs / epoxy gluing etc before colder weather kicks in. Interior refit is planned over the winter and next spring exterior finishing etc - not exactly a *doddle*, but does feel good to have completed most of the structural work, much of the remaining time will be taken up with hard slog tasks like sanding off and painting, refitting the toe-rail and deck fittings etc. A few test-

ing jobs remain, such as fitting the electric/hydraulic motor system and a keel raising mechanism, with controls for both on one (discreet) consol. I was lucky to find some original vintage gear from the Atalanta era including a slide out galley sink, an original Taylor's paraffin cooker/oven and a refurbished Baby Blake loo (currently a feature and discussion point in the lounge). Seat covers – cockpit tent and sail covers are yet to be made up. NB: Keeping the hank-on sails arrangement, so the focsle (sans toilet) is designated for sail stowage and bosun's locker. That done, only the electrics and plumbing and the wooden mast to sort out before launching.

The only question remaining, is which year will that be?



Fig 15: More Aft Cabin Repairs

Tuan Mac 'The Journey' by Jim Pailing FM56

When all repairs are complete another pops up and bites your stern ! Such is life ! The wonderful steel fabricated backstay fixture had been dripping condensation down the sternpost with predictable results. A splendid example of 'sticking plaster' technology. (Nurses fix everything with sticking plaster because it is to hand.) Obviously the perpetrator was in the 'iron wrestling' game and this was his solution to the problem of fitting an emergency tiller. Would have been much easier with a 'dog leg' tiller around the existing backstay mechanism. However having pondered the damage it occurred to me that most of Tuan Mac's other damage was probably due to condensation, daily, not rain, occasionally? Following this 'bolt ray' revelation the backstay anchoring strip was reinstated on the outside of the sternpost and a linking strip attached to tie it into the top rudder bearing which is through bolted. Great believer in small diameter bolts through lumps of wood !

After a sail across Roydon Village Mari-



Repaired back stay fitting

na, which at least interested the locals and which also showed some interesting 'wrinkles in our baggy sails', we left, lock-



Sailing across the Marina



Just clearing the bridge!

ing up into the R.Stort. This is navigable from Bishops Stortford, where the bishops forded the to the Lee at Hoddesdon. Whilst the Stort is agricultural in its history and usage and greatly resembles a Mid-

lands contour canal, the R.Lee, soon encountered, is industrial and straight. However the big, big, big problem (is that three bigs ?) was the bridge above Aqueduct Lock near Broxbourne. With the wife's Dutch cruiser we had difficulties squeezing under. Often passing walkers were encouraged to sign indentures for a short trip as ballast. Contingency plans were made with a

brand new Stanley saw at the ready to circumscribe the rather over tall 'sentry box' wheelhouse if necessary !

Well, well, well! We squeezed under with an inch clear of the halyard winch handle



Automatic lock operation

acting as an extempore height gauge. (Sharp Stanley saw returned to scabbard !)

Memories form an important part of cruising, perhaps a form of self-analysis ? A while ago came across a pair of young couples on the Lee who had borrowed the boss's narrow boat which had a very nice Ruston diesel, no alternator and a spread of batteries, all flat !

And, of course, no hand crank. Solved the problems and had a meal together, parted with fond farewells.

They were all in advertising and one of the group, a very good photographer, sent pics of their trip, one of which was of 'pylons marching into the sunset'. Tried to find the spot, failed!

Ponders End, what a name! Splendid crane in blue and yellow, 60's British Waterways colours. (Not many people know that!)

Press button locks, 'nuff said !

One of the big advantages of the Fisherman as far as canal and river cruising goes, is the accessibility of the prop.

With the wife's Dutch cruiser I had to invest in a set of diving gear, relearn skills gained in the RN and flop into the water with sharp knife clenched between teeth ! (Slight exaggeration surely ?) The Fisherman's prop can be attacked with the aid of the 'Pailing Patent Prodder' Actually a long handled garden weeding fork suitably modified and sharpened.

Abandoned Tuan Mac a short spit from Limehouse Basin, under the



Mast raising at Limehouse Basin

bridge in Commercial Road as returning on the following Saturday to continue trip. Always noticed the white ensign flying atop a nearby church, St Annes and always assumed it was a 'Vice Bishop's' pennant but no, it is the 'real deal' flown as the vicar is honorary chaplain to the RN. For those who revel in regalia, nearby St Peters, a floating mission at Canary Wharf, flies the blue ensign and St Dunstons in Stepney, the red as an indicator to





A Fisherman really does sail!

ships on the Thames to register births, marriages and deaths !

Saturday saw the crew arrive, No.1 son, and we demonstrated the ease of erecting a Fisherman's mast. I will always remember the sunny summer's evening some time ago when from the flats behind came the soaring soprano voice of, I think, Catherine Jenkins. Just a few bars as a warm up, then no more. Wonderful !

Out through the swing bridge on the top of the flood, pedalled down to Greenwich at an ever increasing speed. No speed limit on Lower Thames, lots of fast trip boats and bags of choppy wash, exciting !

Slight unease at engine temperature, so stop at Greenwich Yacht Club. Suspect water loss, top up header tank. Very friendly club, good bar but restricted access due to a time lock system. Up with the early morning fog! Check lights, don't work!

No.1 son is a 'leccy' so he fixes. Lucky! Broken wire in negative return. Why do so

many boats have 'iffy' electrics? Job for the winter? Steadily through the barrier, surreal! Michael Crawford seen punting through the other arch. (Joke!)

Motor on and the AOA pennant wakes up ! Have a dabble with the genoa in the Yantlet Channel, it does sail! Hoist the main off Canvey, it actually sails quite well. Yes, that is a squall line approaching over your shoulder, Robert! We thunder across channel, keeping a very good look out of course, till the bottom gets

too close to the top. Splendid! Down with main methinks and umm, plan B? Yes, go about and broad reach across to Southend Pier in the distance. Held her track quite well on genoa alone. Well pleased! Boarded by RNLi! That's different. 'Everything alright, sir '? 'Well, yes actually, have a coffee and a chocolate brownie?' 'Don't mind if I do, sir! Leigh on Sea? OK! Landfall buoy, a green and a red, a dog leg, then two reds. Another green and a red, a dog leg and two more reds and



Just a social visit

you're there ! Simple !
Lovely people ! Ditch
crawled into Leigh;
good at that. Some
buoys floating! Moor
next to a convenient
trawler. I say to Robert,
'what if they go fishing
tonight'? 'On a Satur-
day night, Dad? Get
real'! ' Nailed' busi-
ness card to mast and
went to pub. (Son spent
his gap year fishing for
tuna off Aus.)

Out of Leigh on the
flood and on to Shoe-
bury Ness passing the
concrete Phoenix unit
abandoned during WW2
on its way to make up
the Mulberry harbour off Normandy.
Towed by a small steam tug known as a
TID no doubt. Why do I know this I hear
you say? Well, at my Midshipman's



Navigation in the Thames Estuary

Board I was asked by a shirty Lieutenant
how I knew the answer to the question,
'what does TID stand for' ? Accused me of
having cheated by consorting with my fel-



Tuan Mac sailing in a strong breeze

low Mids! What a 'hawsehole', I knew because I bummed a trip on the last one operating in Pompey harbour as being coal fired, steam reciprocating it was a bit rare! (TID - towed inshore dock) 'There is a TID' tug, the Brent, further up the Blackwater at The Hythe Quay at Maldon. Turned the corner and slid up Maplin Sands, Robert learning how to take fixes on the way with the Isle of Grain chimney astern and Foulness lattice masts abeam, abeam and still, yes, abeam. Not a breath of wind, engine all the way. 'Hey Dad, are they likely to be firing on the artillery ranges '? 'Don't be silly, lad, it's Sunday'!

Having tried, unsuccessfully, to cut the corner and slide into Burnham, we were forced by a sudden loss of depth to 'exit stage east' and make for the main channel and round the Whittaker Beacon which in turn forced the decision to make the run for home and go for the Blackwater. Sur-

prisingly soon the familiar Bradwell nuclear power station loomed into view across the peninsula and passing Knoll, Eagle and Bench Head, we were nearly there . Nearly! The utterly reliable, if somewhat noisy Perkins 4/107 droned on and drove us home. Past Radio Caroline. Radio Caroline ! Memories! How does it go? :-

'I can smile at the old days. I was beautiful then. I remember'

Managed a super sail on the Saturday with the working jib and a 'foot' of reefing in the main, no more wrinkles and went like a train ! Just goes to prove a Fisherman was designed for a stiff breeze. The wife approved too! Then came Sunday and into the capable hands of Sam Longley and his team, all 'Masters of the Rollers' at the splendid Stone Sailing Club. High and dry and ready for repairs. Next year 90% sailing and 10% maintenance, maybe ?



Ashore at Stone Sailing Club

How much does it really weigh?

By Trevor Thompson T10

The recent trip to Croatia (and the resultant replacement towing vehicle) made me think about how much surplus weight we carry when sailing, and therefore how much we are towing when we drive across Europe.

We all know that the Atalanta weighs 2 tons, which is what it said in the original sales brochure. However it is not so easy to work out if that is what the empty boat weighs, or if that is what it weighs when ready for sea.

Of course there is also the inevitable growth in weight which occurs when you add some desirable piece of kit – it doesn't matter whether it is a digital log, a new cooker, roller furling, a liferaft, or even an inflatable dinghy. It all adds weight, which has to go onto the trailer or into the car when towing. Even repairs and reinforcements can add weight.

The law on trailing also changes with time, and while our 1956 series 1 LandRover is just as capable of towing an Atalanta as the one featured in the original brochure, the roads and traffic it runs on have changed dramatically since the 1950's.

Modern towing vehicles have two critical pieces of information *maximum towing weight*, and *gross train weight* marked on a plate under the bonnet. The first indicates the total weight of a braked trailer which the vehicle can tow, and the second indicates the total weight of the whole lot, trailer, load, passengers, and vehicle. There are many medium sized 4x4's which can tow 2500kg, and a few that can tow 3000kg. Some large 4x4's (including a few pickup trucks) can tow 3500kg.

So it isn't just the weight of the boat that needs checking, but also that of the passengers, and all the food, clothes and extra equipment, whether it is in the boat or the boot of the car, which needs checking. It isn't just the total weight either, it also matters where it is carried, and it might be necessary to move heavy items into the back of the car – or even leave them at home!

There is only one way to find out! So we used the local public weighbridge to weigh boat car and trailer, and the bathroom scales to weigh the movable "stuff".

So here are some of the results:

Calista weighs 2435.5kg. This includes mast, boom and spinnaker pole, 10L fuel, but otherwise empty. No anchor, cable, cushions, sails, or movable items. Bear in



Calista on her way to Italy



In the channel tunnel behind a hire car

mind that she has cork lining under the decks, Eberspacher heater, refrigerator, oven, and roller furling which are not original, and explain some of the difference between 2000kg notional weight and the 2435kg actual weight. I am not convinced that the 2000kg even included the engine!

Of course at the time of weighing she had been afloat for 8 months, and sitting in the rain for over a month. Could she have actually absorbed water? Perhaps that is something to check in the spring!

The trailer itself weighs 970kg. We have a substantial 6 wheel trailer which will be heavier than most trailers, but any trailer for an Atalanta is likely to weigh 750kg. My choice of trailer is going to have an effect on what I can carry when towing, not because it can't take the weight, but because it is already 220kg more than it needs to be.

Our new towing car can carry/tow a total of 6000 kg, and boat and trailer weigh 3405kg.

So where does that leave us? We can add 95kg of “stuff” to the boat, and add 500kg to the car. At least the berth cushions (34kg) can stay on board! So that probably leaves us 25kg each for clothes, and 10kg for food for the trip which can stay on the boat while trailing.

Don't forget that the passenger's weight has to be included in the 500kg that can go in the car.

Here are the weights of some of the things that we usually have on board when *sailing*:

Item	weight in	Kg
Liferaft		25
Dinghy		27
Tool box		12
Lifejackets		6
Sleeping bags		2
Rudder blade		16
Main anchor		7.6

Anchor chain	40
Kedge anchor	7.6
Kedge warp	4
Mooring ropes	9
Main sheet	3
Hob	4
Cooker oven	22
Fenders	9
Manuals	5
First aid kit	3
Diesel	84
Water	180
Genoa + genoa sheets	7
Electric cable	3
Mediterranean covers	3
Oil lamps and glasses	2
Box of boat spares	4
Solar panel	1
Pressure cooker	2
Wok	0.5
Pans	3
Bimini sidescreens	4
Sail cover	2
Trailer boxes	14
Cabin cushions	34
Cockpit cushions	6.5

Mainsail	9
Lantern	1.3
Cockpit cover	2
Kicking strap	2
Box of bits	4
Engine spares	2
Straps & carpet strips	12
Wheel changing kit	6
Charts	1

So we can take some of it in the back of the car, but not all of it.

Of course there are some things that can be got rid of altogether.

Electronic copies of the equipment manuals would enable the paper manuals to stay at home (saving 5kg), and we can ditch the pressure cooker(2kg) – I never use it!

There are storage boxes (14kg) on the trailer where we keep tools and straps, they leak, so they can go. At the moment we carry 50m of 6mm chain (40kg), which could



How about this for a new tow vehicle—an improvement on a RangeRover?



Almost there!

be replaced by 10m of chain and 150ft of rope – probably saving 28kg.

So this winter will see us thinking about what **unnecessary** weight we have on board.

For example do we really need 10 dinner plates on board? “Every little counts” as they say!!

In summary, your boat **may** be lighter, and your trailer might well be lighter, but if your tow car has lower maximum weights (many do) then you may have to think about what weight you carry as well.



Umag Marina—our first Croatian harbour

Traditional Baot Festival and Classic Malts Cruise in A31/6 Caperdonich by William Kennaway



En route we encountered lots of wildlife, including a minke whale close to the boat off Fife Ness, lots of dolphins, and thousands of young guillemots leaving their nesting site on the coastal cliffs near Stonehaven.

The photo opposite shows us in Portsoy harbour with a rowing skiff rafted against us and with the 70' sailing drifter "Reaper" and a seine-netter in the background.

The photo below left shows the start of a skiff race at the harbour – there were 19 skiffs racing at the Festival.



Photo above shows yours truly in Portsoy with the iPad, which doubled as passage planner and camera on the trip.

My Bukh diesel played up at Portsoy – a badly leaking fuel pump – but was quickly sorted, as with its big fishing fleet there are lots of diesel engineers in the north-east .

The skiff race

This summer A31/6 Caperdonich repeated the circumnavigation of Scotland she first did in 2011, but this time anti-clockwise, as our first objective was the Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival at the end of June.

We left our home port of St Monans in Fife on 20th June, and reached Portsoy on the north-east coast on the first day of the Festival on the 26th, stopping at Stonehaven, Peterhead and Banff.

Caperdonich then headed for the west coast, the objective this time being to sample some of the skipper's favourite tipples at source.

A31/6 is itself named after a Speyside distillery, but that wasn't do-able as (i) the River Spey isn't navigable and (ii) the distillery itself closed in the recession of the 1980s.

After Portsoy we called in at Buckie, then joined the Caledonian Canal at Inverness.

We had five days on the canal, mostly in brilliant sunshine, as shown in the photo opposite taken as we ran down Loch Ness.

Ascending and descending the canal locks was fairly easy even though I only had one crewman – the locks are hydraulically operated by the lockkeepers, and boats can be walked between the locks along the ramped towpaths.

And we had interesting chats with the Dutch, Scandinavian and Italian crews accompanying us through the locks .

We left the boat for a week or so at Corpach at the west end of the canal, so I could do penance for deserting my wife for weeks on the ocean wave by taking her to a different kind of festival - Glyndebourne.

The photo below shows Caperdonich at Corpach with Ben Nevis in the background .



Running down Loch Ness

Thereafter we headed down the Firth of Lorne - via Mull with its Ledaig malt - to Crinan, and then further south to Jura and Islay .

The photo at the top of the next page shows Caperdonich on a mooring in Small Isles Bay at Craighouse on the Isle of Jura, a huge island with a population of just 200 - and its own distillery.

Islay was the next island on our itinerary with its amazing total of eight distilleries, all on the coast and accessible by boat.

Tragically this is where my luck ran out, as my somewhat elderly sole crewman jumped ship complaining of heat exhaustion, meaning that I only managed to sample one of Islay's malts – Caol Ila.

Corpach and Ben Nevis

Next port of call was Oban where we sampled the malt of that name, then headed on to Skye stopping at the Isle of Canna. On Skye we put in at Carbost on Loch Harport where we sampled another of my favourite malts - Talisker .

So I had to abandon Islay and return to Crinan where I picked up a new crew for the



Small Isles Bay on the Island of Jura



The Ardrishaig end of the canal

trip through to the Clyde via the Crinan Canal.

The photo above shows Caperdonich at the Ardrishaig end of the canal, with my

youngish able-bodied crew resting after the exertions of the canal with its manually-operated lock gates.

This crew stayed with me on the Clyde as far as Rothesay on Bute, from where I took her single-handed into Greenock and then into Bowling for the Forth-Clyde canal transit back to the east coast - and for a visit to Auchentoshan distillery near the canal. This time I managed the canal single-handed with lock-keeper assistance as far as Falkirk near its eastern end, where I

was joined by my wife, daughter and granddaughter for a boat lift on the Falkirk Wheel and through the remaining locks out into the Forth .

The canal now has a new sealock exit to the Forth, and it runs spectacularly between the Kelpies – two 100' high horsehead sculptures, as shown on the photo opposite.

My wife stayed on as crew for the last leg of the voyage down the Forth estuary which was without incident till we got to Anstruther where we were booked in for the town's annual Muster of visiting boats. Just outside the harbour mouth I picked up a lobster pot line round my prop and had to be ignominiously towed in by a fishing boat.

But there was a silver lining - Caperdonich won the Muster's Furthest Travelled Boat trophy, because although her homeport St Monans is only 3 miles from Anstruther, Caperdonich had sailed 460 nautical miles between the two!



The Kelpies

My Fourth(?) Visit to the Shiant Islands
By Greg Manning

Page 59 of the 2014 AA Road Atlas will help those who may not know where the Shiant Islands are and, for those who do not have a Road Atlas they are thirteen miles north of Skye and 5 miles off the SE coast of Lewis. There are three main islands with two joined by an isthmus and together they are about a mile by a mile.

The Cruising Guide has warnings in heavy type of strong tides, outfalls around the Islands, mentions poor anchorages and maybe even a hint of sea serpents. Even though Sugar Plum has been moored in Loch



A142 Sugar Plum anchored off the isthmus



Motoring in the rain. This is meant to be an adventure!

Gairloch (not to be confused with Gare Loch) for twelve years and the Shiant Islands have often been seen on the horizon in good visibility, they have until this year been a place that we will visit “One Day”

I had a particular desire to visit as I had been there before, well not exactly “been there” but... On the 2nd of November 1996 as a North Sea helicopter pilot I was flying as a HTUFT (Helicopter Taken Up From Trade) in support of a major NATO maritime Exercise. Late in the day we were tasked with winching some urgent spares to a Spanish destroyer and as it was public transport winching (as opposed to SAR winching) we were not cleared to do this after dark. Setting off from Stornaway things were not going well. The Royal Navy name all their shore bases as ships and the Spanish Navy may do the same, but we were sure that they did not have a base on Lewis which was where our Nav computer wanted us to go. The input was from Decca and we were in an area of poor coverage. Three times we



Anchored in four metres. Note the natural arch.

returned to the Shiant Islands as an easily identifiable place to re-initialise the Nav computer before the penny dropped and I remembered that when its little brain got confused the computer would wind the calculate wind to 99 knots which rather affected its accuracy. Having entered a reasonable wind manually we found the destroyer and of course it was before the end of civil twilight when we finished the winching!

On the 5th of July everything was looking good for our adventure to the Shiant Islands, neap tides and light wind with a southerly component. Roy and I spent the night aboard on our mooring at Sheildaig in Lock Gairloch listening to the

heavy rain which had stopped by the time we motored off the mooring at 9am on a damp but calm morning. The wind never did materialise so we motored all the way and with five miles to go we lost sight of the Islands in heavy rain. Poo!

The advantage of having to motor all the way was that we arrived in the early afternoon

which gave us daylight hours to explore but only after we had anchored in four metres, put up our boom-over tent and had scones with homemade



The Croft House, now a Bothy, and the view south to Skye



A slip on the rocky cliff could have been fatal!

slippery boulder and rock strewn cliff. All the way up I was very conscious that a slip would, if not fatal, result in a free ride in a helicopter, the SAR from Stornaway being the most likely. I tried to see if there was a path that had been used when the Island was crofted as the obvious cultivated area was on the finger of land over the natural arch beyond the highest point I was aiming for. I didn't see one so how the crofter had got there is a mystery.

strawberry jam and Cornish cream. Miracle of miracles by the time we had eaten the rain had stopped, the sky was clear and the water was so clear we could easily see the bottom.

I rowed ashore in the dingy to explore while Roy decided to stay on board to fish and acquaint himself with the vagaries of the pressure cooker. The first place to visit was what had been the only croft on the Island and is now a Bothy. The visitor's book is a fascinating record of the many Ornithologist Groups and visiting yachts that have called in over the years.

I then decided to explore the largest of the Islands, Garbh Eilean, which meant climbing up a steep wet

The walk across the Island to the highest point of 160metres revealed an amazing view with Skye to the south and Outer Hebrides from horizon to horizon to the west. When sailing around the Minch we often hear motor vessels reporting on an IMO Adopted Recommended Route but we never knew what they were. Imagine my surprise to see a large Cruise Liner hove to with the passengers being given a talk over the tannoy about the Shiant islands. It was very satisfying standing on them and not gorging at them!



Looking west from Garbh Eilean towards Lewis with a Liner hove to.



Now that is what you call a natural Arch!

Having feasted on the view I walked back to face the scramble back down the cliff. To say I took it carefully would be an understatement.

It was then time to explore the coast and look at the most amazing natural arch so I set off in the inflatable dinghy rowing along under towering cliffs inhabited by huge colonies of birds. Not being much of an ornithologist they were all called “birds”. That is not quite true as I can recognise a puffin from a gannet! It was then time to row through the natural arch which has to be the longest in the UK although it isn't written anywhere that I can find. I was rather naughty as when I got there there was a strong current and I was not sure that I was going to be able to row back but He Ho nothing ventured. I did have some fun thoughts about what I

would do if I couldn't row back! The water was so clear I could see about twelve feet down.

I did manage the row back and got back to Sugar Plum to find that Roy had mastered the pressure cooker but also had a bit of a problem. He had caught a monster fish but his line

was not strong enough to land it so I had to lift it out from the dinghy. Shame it couldn't be dinner but that was cooked already. The monster was all bone and fins and very difficult to gut. It got stowed in the bilge and taken home to make fish pie. The domestic Manageress wasn't impressed with our hunter gathering skills! It was a Pollock—they are fairly tasteless but it - couldn't go to waste.

We were naughty, being so close in-



To make two fish pies, first take one Pollock.



The view of the isthmus where any wind with a Sl'y component will funnel through to the anchorage.

shore and in such an isolated place we did not show an anchor light so imagine our surprise as lights appeared of a large sailing vessel that then moored in the bay two cables away. Over night the forecast wind arrived and funnelling over the isthmus between the Islands of Garbh Eilean and Eilean an Tighe right where we were anchored. We realised why there were warnings of the anchorage being only for fair weather.

We woke to a clear morning and there anchored nearby was the boat that had snuck in after dark. It was a brigantine which then ferried Japanese tourists ashore in their tender. Time for us to go as the magic had gone. We motored round the north of the Islands where the Giant that had made the Giant's Causeway must have prac-

tised and left his failed attempts out of sight but never the less they were impressive cliffs.

As we turned east for home in a Sl'y F4 we set sail and even with that little wind and a neap tide it was uncomfortably choppy until we got well clear of the Shiant's so all the warnings are true.

The sail back to Gairloch was a reach the whole way with our number one jib and alternating between a reef and full main as the wind increased to something a bit fresher than a F4. It was one of the best sails we have ever had. Although the trip to the Shiant Islands was only two days they were the best two days sailing one could hope for.



The Giants failed attempts!

Calista's Summer Cruise by Trevor Thompson T10

You will already know that Calista visited Croatia this summer from reading John Ingleby's account of the last week of the trip.

I am not going to give you a blow by blow account of a trip which lasted for a total of 10 weeks, including 8 weeks sailing. However I will share some of the highlights, and challenges which it generated.

Magnus (son no 2) sailed with me for the first week, and Dinah for the first 2 weeks.

Problems with cars caused a slight delay at the beginning, coupled with weather close

to what you would expect in the UK, coupled with tight deadlines for crew changes made the first few weeks somewhat stressful.

We made the deadlines, using a hire car to take Magnus to the airport, but otherwise catching up successfully. We actually made it to Dubrovnik with a day to spare.

There is no spring or autumn in the Mediterranean, the weather just flips between summer and winter, with "spring" consisting of a few days of "summer", followed by a week of "winter". The stretches of "summer" get longer as true summer gets closer. In 2014 summer was late arriving.

So making long passages was not easy.





The new exhaust bend—and the old

For example Dinah and I spent Saturday 3rd May sailing in light airs, (forecast 30 to 40 knots from NE) before the wind headed us and it started to rain. By midday we had given up on beating to windward in the rain, and found good all round shelter in one of the many “Uvala Vela Luka’s” to be found in Croatia. The name means “bay of the big harbour”! After lunch we did some local exploring while we waited for forecast strong wind to arrive, before taking a chance and sailing the 7 miles out to the island of Kaprije, where we picked up a mooring in the main harbour. Sunday 4th was spent huddled in the boat with the heater on all day. There was a strong NE wind with occasional thunder showers and we were rolling in the swell which was creeping around the island and into the harbour. On Monday the 5th we decided we could not waste any more time so we set off at 0600, reaching to the SE with a single reef in



Anchored with line ashore in Luka Polace on Otok Mljet



Magnus demonstrating an improved technique for sailing in the rain



Dinah in the first week of the cruise—yes it was cold

the main and 2 reefs in the genoa, and making 6 knots over the ground in a strong NE wind. By 0900 the wind had dropped to force 3 and we shook out all of our reefs. Of course the wind continued to drop and we were motoring in a flat calm (where did the swell go?) by 0930! Even that didn't last long, and we had the spinnaker up by 1345, and were running dead down wind at 5 knots. We managed to carry the spinnaker all the way to Hvar town, when Dinah suggested that we needed to stow it. I was not convinced – we were doing 7knots surrounded by white caps, in the narrows between the island of Hvar and the Pakleni islands. With the spinnaker stowed we were still making over 5 knots under main alone. We were making such good progress that we had to continue, and by dusk at 1930 we were motoring again,

and entered another “Uvala Luka” on the northern end of the Peljesac peninsula in pitch darkness, and flat calm, to anchor in 7.5 metres with good all round shelter again. A magical days run of 85.26 miles! Dinah left in Dubrovnik and I spent 3 days sorting out washing, and finding engine parts while I waited for Derrick and Beth to arrive. The strange secretions building up around the exhaust turned out not to be a hole in the exhaust, but an exhaust manifold in two pieces, held together only by pressure in the rubber exhaust hose. Luckily the Lombardini agent was just outside the marina entrance, and the spares arrived in 3 days as promised.

The intention had been to sail south to Montenegro and Albania, but with the three of us on board the weather turned foul again, and we got as far as Cavtat before getting storm bound again. We waited in Cavtat on the 12th and 13th, until the harbour became untenable in a strong NW wind, so we motored into the wind to U Zaglav, on the mainland north of Dubrovnik. The plan to go further south was abandoned and we started to just have a holiday, exploring Ston, O Mljet and the Elaphite Islands before returning Beth to Dubrovnik 10 days later.

The trip up the canal to Ston was special. We tied up at the small quay and went exploring. Ston and Mali Ston are two small walled towns which guarded the border of the republic of Dubrovnik, being linked by a wall climbing over the Peljesac peninsula. The harbour at Mali Ston is a miniature version of that at Dubrovnik. We had to walk the walls! However we did it first thing in the morning, while it was cool.

Derrick and I spent the next 4 weeks exploring, gently working our way back northwards. Of course the weather was starting to warm up, and it was only a few days before we were swimming. The sea temperature was starting to rise, and Derrick was happy to swim in 20 degrees,

whereas I consider 24 degrees the minimum. The air temperature was soon in the 30's – true Mediterranean sailing!

Perhaps I should mention that our comfort throughout the trip was aided by the bimini. Early on it was invaluable to keep the rain and wind off us, and we often sailed with the front and sides in place, inside a canvas wheelhouse (without the wheel). Certainly Dinah and I would not have been able to use the aft cabin as a bedroom without it. As the weather warmed up it acted as a true bimini, and you will see that it is “up” in most of the photos. In fact it supports the solar panel so it was up for 8 weeks. It also encourages the use of the table in the cockpit.

There were a couple of days in harbour towards the end of the trip when the air was so hot that we attached the awnings to shade the decks. There are three separate sections, two of which zip onto the front and back of the bimini instead of the front and back curtains. They do keep the boat cooler.



Beth at the helm



Magical sailing!

Once we were into June our progress became much more relaxing, breakfast in the cockpit, then sailing, then stopping in some bay for a swim and lunch. Then on again in the afternoon. Some days we were able to sail, and sometimes we had to motor in a calm. We were usually anchored in a sheltered bay for our evening meal, again taken in the cockpit, and often including a glass or two of local wine.

We collected John and Dominic on the 12th June at Omisalj, very close to the airport for Rijeka (which is miles from Rijeka), which of course you already know about.

One week later Calista was lifted back on to her trailer ready for the journey back to Wales.



Derrick working from “home”



Walking the walls at Ston

Hebridean Odyssey

by John Ingleby –
A105 Taka Maru –
sailing in A147
Chamois

George Ward is one of the AOA's longest-serving members, with even longer experience of sailing the Western Isles. He acquired A147 Chamois in 1974, and in 1981, following severe damage inflicted by a large yacht dragging her mooring and demolishing much of the starboard topside above the rubbing strip, a major rebuild was required. Fortunately the old Naval workshops at Port Edgar had become available for rental and work could be car-



George Ward and Chamois A147

ried out in reasonable conditions. The work comprised the necessary hull repairs and at the same time the cabin was replaced with an 'Atalanta shaped' GRP cabin about 18in

longer, 3in higher and 8in wider than the original. The toe rails were also replaced with aluminium extrusions with off-cuts used as hand-holds on the cabin top.

George prefers running with the genoa poled out instead of a spinnaker, on occasion with a second foresail hoisted on the other side. An ingenious spray hood provides shelter from the worst weather, and an additional section rolls out to form an enclosed cockpit tent.

I felt very fortunate when George invited me to sail with him in the Western Isles in July. On Friday 11th July, I set out by rail for Edinburgh and then Perth to



A147's Hebridean voyage, starting northwards from Kilmelford



A147 with Skye Bridge behind. Note her two genoa poles.

meet up with George and drive to his home at Ballindean by Inchtire, about halfway between Perth and Dundee. Estelle provided a welcome dinner, after which our third crew member arrived, Carol Boyd a friend of the family.

The fourth crew member, daughter Morag Ward, joined us early on Saturday when we loaded up George's LandRover to drive three hours across Scotland, to A147's home port at

Kilmelford, which is 15 miles South of Oban.

Arriving just after midday, we had started loading up when disaster struck!

Morag tripped on the rear deck and fell heavily onto her left arm and it didn't take long to diagnose a fracture. George and Morag sped off to Oban Hospital while Carol and I finished unloading. With no mobile reception in the boatyard, we repaired to nearby Culfail Hotel, and learned that Morag had broken both bones in her forearm, requiring surgery.

Later, having fed at the hotel, the three of us turned in aboard Chamois, and on Sunday George took Morag's kit back to Oban. After surgery in Oban, it was decided that Morag's daughter would drive over to take her back to Dundee for final treatment and recovery. Morag is always the Quartermaster for A147's trips, planning and buying provisions, and this accident was particularly disappointing because she previously had to abandon plans for sailing earlier in the summer.

previously had to abandon plans for sailing earlier in the summer.



The colourful waterfront at Tobermory



Wind Surf - photo courtesy Wikipedia

So after a day's delay, around midday we three remaining crew set off from Kilmelford to catch the flood tide through Cuin Sound, past the Isle of Kerrera opposite Oban, into the Sound of Mull. About halfway along the Sound the wind slacked off and we decided to motor on to Tobermory, where we dropped anchor by the wooded SW edge of the harbour.

After dinner, we were invited aboard "Maiden Light", a beautiful 50ft wooden sailing yacht with varnished hull owned by sailing friends of George. You can stand upright in the engine room!

Next day (Monday 14th) the S-E wind strengthened, so after showers and filling up with water, we set off for Ardnamurchan Point in f5 gusts and heavy rain. Carol was forced below decks, and eventually George decided to remove the genoa pole. At this point I lost some tension on the sheet, and a sudden eddy wrapped the genoa around the forestay to form an over-size "bra", whipping about and cracking in the wind like a demented ani-

mal. There was nothing for it but to slog back under motor against wind and tide to Tobermory, where two hours later, Carol had recovered and the genoa was finally untangled. We tied up alongside "Maiden Light" to sort ourselves out.

Setting off again, we reached Ardnamurchan Point, where wind and tide combine to generate notoriously violent seas, and this time I was the one to succumb to seasickness. The remaining crew thoughtfully headed the short distance across to the tiny island of Muck, while I retired to my bunk for the rest of the day and night.

Tuesday 15th was altogether calmer and drier, and we sailed away N from Muck towards Mallaig, then onwards through the Sound of Sleat, where at one point two dolphins played around the boat for 5 minutes. Later in the day, still under sail, we harnessed the tide to speed through the narrow straight of Kyle Rhea and then through Loch Alsh to moor on the visitor pontoon at Kyle of Lochalsh, within sight of the Skye Bridge.

Wednesday 16th dawned overcast with mist and light rain. However, stronger winds were forecast, so we decided to use the visitors' showers before setting off under motor beneath the bridge, N-E across the Inner Sound. As the mist cleared, we hoisted sails and headed S-E between the islands of



View from the Lochmaddy Hotel



Kisimull Castle, Castlebay, Isle of Barra

Scalpay and Raasay. Entering the Sound of Raasay, the wind had freshened and the scenery became dramatic: on one side of the Sound bursts of sun lit the heather-clad hills, while rain-soaked clouds cloaked dark grey mountains on the other side.

As we continued N up the Sound of Raasay, we were overtaken by a ferry, at which point a large pod of dolphins appeared racing towards us over the waves, to disappear beneath Chamois and reappear on the other side as they sped off to inspect the ferry. Later, as we drew abreast of Loch Portree, we saw the extraordinary “Wind Surf” a 5-masted computer-controlled sailing ship, moored in Portree harbour.

About this time the radio started giving out gale warnings, and George reassured us we would be safe in the sheltered an-

chorage at the N tip of the Isle of Rona. On arriving, however, we found that sailors within a large radius all had the same idea for there were several boats anchored, all within rather close range of each other.

We had a rather hairy time finding a spot shallow enough to take the anchor, yet far enough from the rocky edges and other boats. Eventually George put both anchors down near a beautiful alu-

minium boat with a Dutch flag, from which faces peered anxiously at us as the wind blew harder and harder. Thankfully no harm came to either boat, although we slept fully clothed just in case. The wind died away in the morning and we woke to find it had shifted right around.

Thursday 17th – With a friendly wave to our Dutch neighbour, we set off to motor N-W across to the tip of Skye, and then roughly



High Street, Arinagour



Fingal's Cave, Staffa

S-W to Lochmaddy. For an exhibition of marine life, this day was hard to beat, with numerous birds and sea mammals heading for the rich fishing waters in this area. Puffins sped past with beaks full of sand eels, noisy crowds of guillemots swam off at our approach. Seagulls, petrels and the occasional skua patrolled the area.

Large clouds of gannets circled and folded their wings to dive into the water with a splash. On emerging, if a fish had been caught they paused and wiggled their tails to swallow the catch, while others just spread their wings to try again. I was watching one taking off nearby when a smooth blue-grey shape appeared directly below the gannet's feet – a Minke whale!

The second half of the day was less eventful, and with barely a breath of wind we continued to Lochmaddy on North Uist. George was pleasantly surprised to find newly-constructed visitor pontoons instead of the expected anchorage, and the Lochmaddy Hotel provided our first meal ashore, enjoyed with a calm sunny view across the bay.

Next day's forecast promised warmer weather with an Easterly f4-5, but although it turned out sunny there was little wind, so we motored 23 miles S, with brief glimpses of another whale and a dolphin on the way to Loch Boisedale, where a large new marina is under construction. We were able to pick up a visitor mooring, and row ashore to look for supplies.

Saturday 19th – An E wind sprang up during the night, but died away again as we motored 18 miles further S to Castlebay, Barra, where

we arrived at 13:00 to pick up a visitor mooring overlooking the magnificent Kismull Castle:

By now it was getting warm, and after lunch we went ashore to visit the Co-op for supplies and 5 gal. diesel, followed by an ice cream. Having stored everything aboard, we returned ashore for a visit to the Castle.

Sunday 20th – We made an early start from Barra and motored due E towards Canna. After a couple of hours the wind picked up, after three days of motoring it was a relief to be sailing again.

By contrast to the activity at Loch Boisdale and Castlebay, the anchorage at Canna was blissfully quiet. Two very “official” looking motor vessels arrived, apparently tourist boats, and took parties ashore. Carol cooked us a delicious kedgerree.

Monday 21st – An early fog lifted to reveal flat calm water in Canna harbour, with clouds gradually clearing away from the tops of Rhum. The wind remained calm while we motored 30 miles S across a flat calm, milky sea to the island of Coll. Visitor moorings at the harbour of Arinagour are a long way from the landing, so we anchored close in and went ashore to admire the attractive fishermen's cottages and book dinner at the Coll Hotel. By now it was hot enough for shorts and T-shirts!

The Coll Hotel offers boaters a splendid shower, which we took turns to enjoy before dinner ashore. Coll is a popular destination, with boats sailing over from Ire-

land to tour the island and enjoy the beautiful beaches on its W side.

Tuesday 22nd – This and the next days were in many ways the highlight of our Hebridean tour. A high pressure system settled all over the UK, and the winds remained light S/S-E, definitely sun-cream weather.

Leaving Coll we motor-sailed S-E to the Treshnish Islands, where another boat helped us locate the narrow passage between vicious-looking rocks into the anchorage at Lunga, and we landed to explore the puffin burrows. This is a popular spot, with trip boats arriving and departing all the time: the puffins have learnt that prowling skuas and gulls keep well away from humans, so they entertain the crowds by hopping about and posing for the cameras.

From Lunga we continued S-W to Staffa where we anchored alarmingly close to the landing stage, and went ashore to explore



Carol and George, at Easdale

the amazing hexagonal rock formations at Fingal's Cave.

We had some difficulties leaving Staffa, owing to a large, heavy piece of rope caught in the anchor. George looped another rope around it while freeing the anchor – not very comfortable so close to the rocks!

From Staffa we headed due N to the quiet North Anchorage on Gometra, where we were the only boat to anchor overnight.

Wednesday 23rd – Leaving Gometra we headed S again, past Staffa to Iona, and thankfully a SE breeze strong enough for sailing.

Entering the Sound of Iona, with its ferry plying back and forth, we anchored in Martyrs Bay and went ashore. While my companions shopped and relaxed on the beach, I walked up to admire the Cathedral founded by St Columba in 527AD and restored to its present glory in the last Century.

After tea we set off again for Ardanalish, a “secret” anchorage on the S coast of Skye. Rounding a buoy out at sea, we turned 90 degrees to motor straight into a rocky inlet, where the anchorage appeared suddenly between rocks on the starboard side.

Thursday 24th – Continuing almost due E we headed across to the Garvellachs or “Islands of the Sea” where St Brendan founded a monastery in 542 AD. We managed to sail until the wind dropped and then motor to the anchorage on Eileach an Naoimh or “Island of Saints”. While Carol cooled off by swimming, George and I climbed through the heather to find the monks' tiny “beehive” cells and explore the monastery ruins. We had the anchorage to ourselves overnight.

Friday 25th – With a good breeze early on it felt cooler, time to change back into shirt & long trousers. Still with an E wind,

we sailed N for 2 hours until becalmed, then turned E to motor across to Easdale, where we went ashore for soup, ice cream and a visit to the museum. In the 19th century Easdale was a thriving port shipping slates from the nearby quarries, until a huge storm inundated the quarry in 1881. Today, although there is plenty of evidence of its past, the once busy town is now a tourist spot.

From Easdale, we motored a short distance further along the coast to Puilladobhain anchorage (which means “pool of the otter”). By now, thunder clouds were visible over the mainland.

We took a short walk over the headland to the pub known as “Tign an Truish” meaning 'House of Trousers’. The name originates from the days when kilts were forbidden, and men changed into trousers before crossing the “Bridge over Atlantic” to the mainland. (This bridge is visible from the Oban road, so we were only a few miles from our final destination as the crow flies). Here, the owners of “Maiden Light” joined us for dinner and recounting each others' voyages.

Saturday 26th – We motored back to Kilmelford through Easdale Harbour and Cuin Sound, under a cloudy sky that turned overcast and finally started to rain. By the time we finished unloading Chamois it was pouring down, and we were glad to remove oilskins and heat up the LandRover for the journey back across Scotland to Inchtur.

Morag joined us for dinner that evening, now with her forearm healed and only requiring physiotherapy to regain strength. I am deeply grateful to George for such a memorable and thoughtfully planned tour of the Western Isles, to Morag for her comprehensive provisioning of our trip, to Estelle for her warm hospitality at the start and end, and to Carol for her total competence and imaginative recipes. When visiting Scotland, Hoagie and Tablet are not to be missed!



Short but Sweet by Jane Stearn A183

When you know time is very limited you know where you would like to go and maybe you get there; maybe you do not. It turns out quite different but so what, you have been sailing. Once a year I get a family short cruise which is usually of the “do not” variety and nobody minds. This year I had a fancy to go up the Somme estuary again as it is tricky and an adventure I thought boys would enjoy, especially if it turned out like last time we did it when we went aground for hours with the seals and a very nervous saxophonist and nearly got tipped over when the water came rushing back. No such troubles this time in the whole cruise, I am afraid; very undramatic.

Friday, June 13th.

I had a delivery crew this far so the cruise starts from Dover. Son Jonathan and younger grandson Oliver whizzed down from Scotland and found me in Dover's



The Thames Barrier

tidal basin. It was to be a horribly early start. At least they are not my favourite things but once you have got over the beastly, intrusive alarm call and left your super warm cocoon it is actually rather nice and this was June so plenty of light.

Saturday, June 14th.

We left at 0415 in a northerly F3 and a rising barometer so what could possibly go wrong? Sorry, absolutely nothing. We did have to start with a bit of motor sailing but we soon got rid of the noise and had a great sail to Boulogne. Atalantas not being the fastest boats we arrived at 0920. I really like Boulogne with its still existent fishing fleet, smells and all. The facilities have improved beyond recognition which pleased Ol. He really likes two showers a day. The young are very clean these days I find. He and Jonathan went up the hill to explore while I did tomorrow's planning. I now regret this as it was all in vain anyway and I have since discovered a scrumptious French wine I could have been buying. Resolution: go again next year. All meticulously planned when in came doom. The forecast for tomorrow was strong winds at the top of springs and the advice was that entry to the Somme should not be attempted. We had no extra days for hanging about, so a short conference was held on change of plan. You cannot go to France without having the pleasure of a French meal; at least I can't, so we opted for Calais.



Queen Elizabeth Bridge



The London Arena

Sunday, June 15th.

We had a rip roaring sail round the corner, two deep reefs in and Bluster going beautifully. She likes a decent wind and I love to see the old boat giving of her best. They kept us waiting a bit to get in. Who said the Channel Tunnel would kill the ferries. If anything they have multiplied. Sunday in France is a proper do, shops shut, all quiet. But the French luckily do like food. Finding a restaurant of choice was a bit difficult because my grandsons are vegans, but we found one that did at least stoop to chips. Jonathan and I had a lovely meal, but we soon discovered that vegan was a foreign word in France. They just could not understand anyone not wanting their great food. Poor old Ol was very short changed. Further conference on the future. Elder grandson Robbie was to join us when we got back to England. He is living in London at present so we decided to go and collect him from home.

Monday, June 16th.

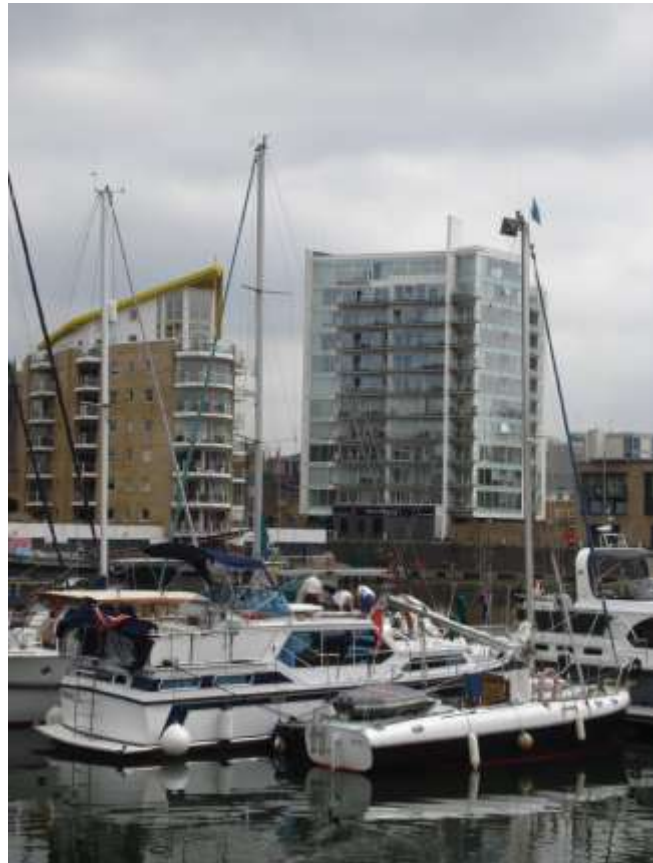
All this time the weather was fine and dry; a great bonus. We left at 0905 in a NNE 5 and set out for Ramsgate. Leaving Calais we saw a beautiful odd sight. Dozens of gulls on nests on every tiny ledge, all touching. I wish I had a picture to show you. Forty five minutes later the wind dropped slightly so we shook the reefs out. What optimism, but the conditions did last for four hours and then it was back to the reefs again. We got to Ramsgate OK but

as crossings go it could not have been described as a very pleasant one.

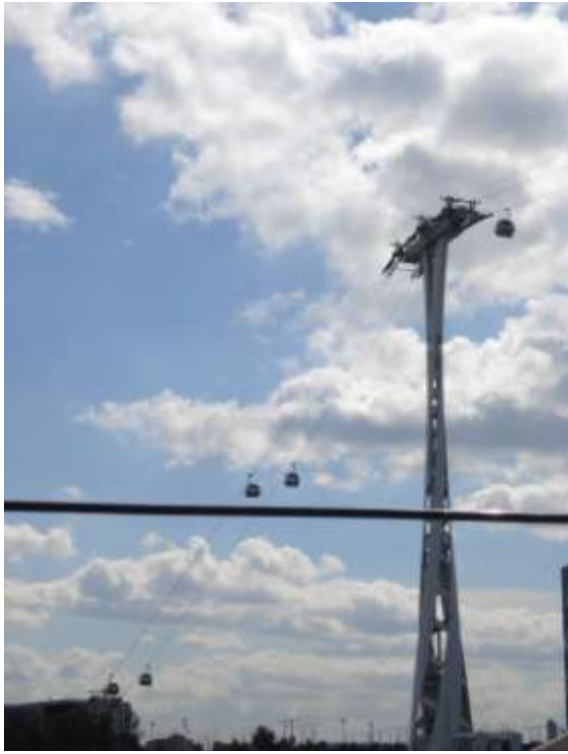
Tuesday, June 17th.

Going up the Thames requires a whole favourable tide so you need a good departure point. The wind was still blowing, a NE F5 this time. We took the "Overland" route. For those who do not know it this is a shallow way across the shoals into the Medway. In a broad reach we were able to reduce the reefs. You pass the shallows off the ruins of Reculver where Barnes Wallace tested his bouncing bombs.

Out to sea we were never far from numerous wind farms, all busily turning. It was quite late when we got into Queenborough so it was just pick up a mooring and prepare some food. I have a two burner Taylor Paraffin cooker because I like the idea of no gas. In fact I have yet to discover how you manage to create a gas bottle locker with no access to the interior in an Atalanta. The point of mentioning this is to explain it does not make getting up a main meal of two completely different diets, late at night



Limehouse Basin



Gondolas move slowly suspended high above you

when you are starving, any the easier. Ol is very adaptable. I get what he needs and he prepares it. A bit lazy of me I know, not learning how to make tasty vegan food, but it is a whole new ball game. With plenty of alcohol to while away the waiting time all was well. We just ate and turned in.

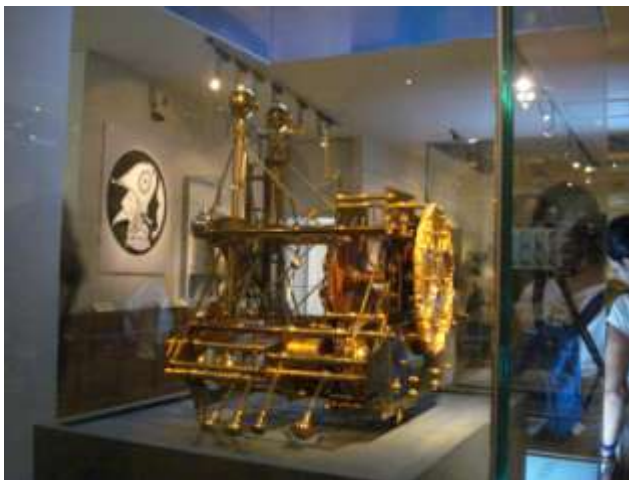
Wednesday, June 18th.

Two of my family have birthdays today and I had forgotten to post the cards. That is what sailing does for you, lovely. We slipped our mooring at 0930 and put the engine on to get out of the Medway. After Garrison Point at the entrance there is a convenient swatchway into the Thames, but it was closed. This is where the proposed Boris Island would go, but no sign of any activity. So it was the long way round. The wind had dropped to NE F4-5 so it was full sail up river, making 3-4k. Atalanta owners will understand this rather low speed but to others it must seem a bit archaic. The trouble is you do need to get to London before the tide turns. This meant making an average of 4 1/2 k. so it was intermittent

use of the engine while we followed the chart. The lower reaches are not very inspiring. Highlights were the Queen Elizabeth Bridge and seeing the activity at the new Gateway container terminal, rushing to outdo Felixstowe in attracting the new supertankers. Real interest starts at the Thames Barrier. You have to get permission to go through by VHF at a certain place long before you get there. It is all very well organised and an impressive sight when you arrive. There is the odd ferry to dodge but later you see a different way to cross the river as the gondolas move slowly suspended high above you. Familiar London landmarks crowd in now. Sailing in London is quite a different perspective and definitely fun. The view of Greenwich from the river is truly magnificent. We had been discussing longitude and the Harrison clocks so Greenwich was tomorrow's destination. Finding the entrance to the lock into Limehouse Basin is not for the faint-hearted but Jonathan was best spotter. We had radioed ahead so all was waiting for us, and we entered at 1720, just as the tide was turning. Robbie joined us here. The Docklands Light Railway is nearby. The headquarters of the Cruising Association where I helped for many years are on the side of the basin so I took the crew in to my old haunts to show them round and for a drink. Low and behold there was a special supper laid on and some old friends were there. Bonus. Second bonus was



At the Greenwich Observatory



Inside the observatory

amazing. There were three options for the meal and one was vegan! It made up for France. I was impressed.

Thursday, June 19th.

This was our day to go and see the Harrison clocks. The DLR takes you there handily and we climbed the hill to the Observatory. Notice:” The Harrison clocks have been removed to prepare for an exhibition in July”. Second goal of the voyage hit the dust. The Observatory is wonderful. Having seen the Greenwich Meridian marked out with a brass line and stood on it we spent the whole of a long morning marvelling at the ingenuity of the old astronomers who managed to come up with so many answers from such total ignorance. There was also a replica of the last of the clocks so the boys were not too disappointed. Since my last visit many years ago the whole museum has been updated and I would suggest is now a must for sailors if they get the chance. After a late but very good lunch in the Maritime Museum`s refectory we set about the museum itself. This had also undergone a transformation, and now covers three floors so we started at the bottom and worked upwards. Mistake. No-one told us the two upper floors close early, so if you go, start at the top.

Friday, June 20th.

Time to start for home. The strong winds had departed and we drifted down river in a S F2 and the mainsail aided by the en-

gine all too often. The objective was a choice between Queenborough again or anchoring in Stangate Creek The boys opted for Stangate because samphire does not grow in the highlands of Scotland and the boys were suffering withdrawal symptoms. The tide was a bit low for reaching it but they returned with a beautiful crop. Samphire is at its best in June, and it is vegan! Except that of course vegans cannot have butter on it. I am glad I have not joined the tribe.

Saturday, June 21st.

Last day. Long trip, leaving at 0630 in a S F3 or less. Full sail still needed some help but later it freshened and we had a good hour`s lovely sailing. But the weather was on the move. The high pressure we had enjoyed all the week was drifting east and a low decided to come in today. The wind gradually increased, backed to the worst possible NE F4-5. Reef in again but progress was very slow and frustrating. We really wanted to get into the R. Deben over the bar which necessitates a rising tide. Normally we just wind up the keels and enter about one hour after low water but we got so far behind we were hours late. The only plus to this was that we did not have to wind the keels up. Not that the boys mind doing this. Oh to be young and strong. We did make it. I like to sail home up the river and it is usually possible so I had my wish and did the last three miles under full sail to Bluster`s own mooring. Well, I did warn you there would be nothing dramatic. You may not have had fantastic time reading this, but we had a lovely cruise.



CroatiaPart Two (How Things Change)!!

by Chas & Mandy Hammond and crew
(soon to be Mr and Mrs Isted) A119

Following our amazing trip to Croatia in 2013, we headed off again on the 20th August 2014 full of excitement and anticipation for our 7 weeks plus cruise in sunshine and blue skies. It's probably good you can't see into the future because we may well have decided to stay and enjoy the fabulous summer England was providing, but then we would have passed on the opportunity of all those character building moments such as-----read on!!!

Our first exciting moment came in Brussels. Due to an input malfunction with the sat nav we found ourselves in the city centre side by side with the trams, and not a lot of room to spare due to the ever narrowing streets. Ignoring Silvia (satnav) we thankfully picked up a ring road sign and hot footed it back to the Autobahn. Just outside Munich, the engine coughed and went into engine save me mode and which gave us minimum RPM, a very painful, slow crawl up some steep foothills. We pulled off the motorway and spent the night in a garage car park with beautiful views of the mountains. We thought we may be staying a while but

after three hours of investigation work, no problems were found and we were sent on our way with fingers crossed and buttocks clenched. We arrived safely at our final destination in Italy, Marina San Giorgio Di



Walrus Land Yacht

Nogaro looking forward to launching Walrus and heading to Croatia.

The Adriatic was having a terrible summer, which we had our first taste of. Two days of high winds and heavy rain. We were a little shell shocked. You prepare for many situations, but somehow being cold was not one of them!!! Perhaps we were a little naive.

Sunday 24th August: The sun came out, and we left Italy sailing the 6 hours to Novigrad

on the Istrian peninsula, making this our port of entry into Croatia. It felt good to be back. The sun shone as we made our way down the coast, calling at Rovinj and Luka Veruda, close to Pula. We waited again for strong winds to die before attempting the next big crossing to the Islands. Perhaps we left a little too soon as we experienced a big sea and strong winds, but Walrus rode the waves and apart from the keels banging a bit in a cross sea it was a good trip to Uvala Maraccol a beautiful bay on



Sun shade

the Island of Unije. This is the most beautiful, romantic island which we enjoyed to the full, walking, swimming and watching the sunset over the sea.

Our plan from here was to leisurely cruise the 80 miles to Zadar to collect middle daughter, Amy and Andy taking in our favourite islands on the way before 8 days of exploring new destinations to the south and west.

On leaving Unije we had a lovely sail to Susak, an island to the south. We anchored in a bay on the west side and thought we had arrived in paradise. Clear blue warm water, the sun blazing down from a blue sky. Unfortunately, it is rather exposed for an overnight mooring, so up came the anchor and we motored round to the little harbour. The harbour master and his gorgeous wife greeted us like long lost friends recognising Walrus from last year. The arrival of a quirky old wooden sailing yacht stirs up plenty of interest. The harbour was full of boats, many on route to their winter ports, finishing the season a month early because the weath-



Before the BORA

er had been so uncharacteristically bad, strong windy storms and rain. The forecast was unsettled for the next few days, but we had been used to these strong wind warnings last year, we headed to Mali Losinj with the aim to stay one night. We dropped anchor in the beautiful bay of Valdarka, having passed through the canal to take us to the eastern side of the island. An unprotected bay from the bora but we were only staying the night!!! It was gorgeous, the water warm and crystal clear. We swam and enjoyed a hot solar shower and settled down

to a peaceful evening of star gazing.

Up early ready to head south before the weather turned again for the worse. "Start the engine Mandy". Nothing. "What are you doing wrong?" Still nothing! Both batteries were completely flat. The connection to the alternator had corroded, so we probably had not been charging since the start of our voyage. We travel with the outboard on a bracket on the transom, a real-



Will you marry me? 55



Walrus full compliment. 6.8knots

ly reliable Honda, until now. Luckily, the skipper can turn his hand to most things and we were soon moving across the bay to tie up along the wall while we waited for an engineer, unfortunately, it was a Sunday, but the sun was shining and we spent a lovely day with the locals swimming and picnicking. The only worrying thing was the number of people who stopped to tell us how unsafe Walrus would be next to the wall as a strong bora was forecast. On each account we added a few more fenders! As darkness fell a fishing boat returned, the crew were clearly anxious about leaving us for the night and so decided to tie us at the end of a line of 5 fishing boats. As you would expect the outboard would not start, and we carried out the manouver with the dinghy and chucking lines over long distances. With their help an anchor was dropped at 90 degrees to the hull, to keep us from banging into our neighbour. A category RED bora was forecast to blow in during the night. The rain began, the wind blew and a fearsome thunder storm raged over

head. I was scared, more because of the thunder and lightning, but morning came and the wind was still blowing, it was pouring with rain and cold!! The engineers arrived but deemed it too dangerous to make the trip across the 5 fishing boats to little Walrus on the end!! I can't say I blame them, the boats were pitching all over the place. They would return once the weather improved! We were suffering a bad attack of cabin fever so a walk to Mali Losinj wrapped in waterproofs and woolly hats bought us some sanity. The harbour which had been empty the previous day was now jammed

with boats, 100 or more, every mooring taken and rafted out to boot. The wind had picked up even more by the time we returned, with a big sea pushing in the entrance, sucking the water up and creating big waves. It was a scary night, the wind picked up to 80kmph. Chas packed a grab bag and I packed my rucksack, I'm not sure how we would have left, it would have been dangerous to scramble across the boats. Walrus rode the storm just fine and morning came again!! The locals came to see if their boats and us had survived the night, they were so kind and offered us all





Skaradin

the help we needed. We learnt a lot about their lives. Croatia is being sold bit by bit and the foreigners bring in their own labour who work for next to nothing, taking jobs from locals. It was like listening to the radio at home! After a further 5 days holed up in the bay the wind dropped enough for us to poke our noses out and try and get to Zadar, time was running out!!

Our first instinct was to turn straight round and come back in!! Skipper said it's not as bad as it looks and once we get in the lee of the islands things will settle down, which they did, but not before taking a couple green ones into the cockpit. We kept going south all day dodging the worst sea conditions, staying in the lee of the islands when we could. 10 hours later with 45 nautical miles under our hull we sailed into Zadar after an exhilarating and testing sail for boat and crew, all passed with flying colours!! Our crew for the next week Amy and her boyfriend Andy flew in from Stansted, and were with us on board one hour after landing. Amy and Andy had a great week with great weather and good sailing conditions - this is more like it!!! During their week on board we visited Sibinik, Skradin, the Krka Falls and The

Kornati National Park. The highlight of the week being the announcement of a wedding! Andy the romantic young man asked Amy to marry him, she said yes and we had a great evening celebrating.

Sunday 14th September. Amy and Andy departed for England and we began our journey north and then home. We were hoping for more settled weather and a bit more sunshine. We got off to a good start

on the Island of Ugljan, an island to the west of Zadar. We took a buoy in Mulin bay with one other boat for company and contemplated our next month's travel, with the intention of not revisiting our steps of last year, and taking our time.

We realized that we had been wounded by some of our experiences and what should have been a leisurely trip home, ended up in being a bit of a dash with us always watching the weather and pushing on "in case" things got bad again. There were always low pressure systems waiting, with winds from the south west bringing thundery, squally, unsettled conditions. We would have two nice days followed by five bad days!! Before we knew it we were back in Italy after a whistle stop tour taking in Dugi



Otok, Otok Silba, Otok Ilovic, Mali Losinj and then Veruda and Porec on the Istrian peninsula and Piran in Slovenia (nice place, we will spend more time here next time).

Monday 22nd September. Walrus became our shore based hotel (land yacht-YOT) and we spent two days in Venice, where we experienced the most uncharacteristic weather, amazing thunder storms, with hail the size of marbles, which made us feel relieved to be on land.



Otok Kornat

Thursday 25th September. We set sail in our land yacht following the tracks of our out bound voyage up and over the Alps. We stayed for three days in Eben (10 miles from Schaldming), towing her to record height of 1850 metres above sea level. (Is this a record for the mighty Atlanta?) After three days of magnificent walking, the highlight of which was the Der Dachstein glacier where we encountered minus 4 degrees C, 50cm of fresh snow, 100kmh winds, and zero visibility, it was time the land yacht set sail north bound, for sunnier climates.

Sunday 28th September. Continuing the trends of the past month or more Sod was never far away to make sure our voyage

was as difficult as possible. After incorporating two more visits to the garage we eventually limped into Calais. What a relief to be on home soil. But just to remind us, Sod visited again as we pulled out of Port Dover, the Mighty Mitsubishi spluttered and coughed once more. We nursed the sick vehicle home and slept for a week.

The Match Facts

Total land miles	2500mls
Total sea miles	473 nmls
Total days onboard	42 days
Days Sea Yottin	29 days
Days Land Yottin	3days
Weather sunny days	12 days
Windy/rainy days	30 days
Highest elevation	1850m
Lowest	sea level
Garages visited	3

Emotional breakdowns: just the one!

Are we going again next year?
YES WE ARE.

Walrus out!



Otok Kornat

