

# Atalanta

OWNERS ASSOCIATION BULLETIN 1973/74



Testing the prototype Atalanta: she floats on her side without flooding, so will take a knockdown and recover without filling.

See: Alan Vines — *Early History of the Atalanta*

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From Alan Vines, President of the Atalanta Owners' Association:

Following requests from members at the annual dinner we have tried to outline the development of the Atalanta, and hope this will interest readers.

Cyril Staal works hard to produce the Bulletin, which is only possible if members keep him supplied with material. Please remember to keep a log in 1974 and send it in by October, you could easily win the trophy and give a lot of pleasure to other owners.

Thanks also to our secretary and his wife for all the hard work they do on behalf of the Association.



#### WANT

Hydraulic lifting device for keels. Could anyone please advise generally as to whether this is a worthwhile alteration, and if so where might I obtain a suitable device?

2. Walker, Dee Bank Cottage, Bryn-y-Felin, Dyserth, Rhyl, Flintshire.

#### ATALANTA OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

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*Contributions for the next issue of the Bulletin should reach the Editor by mid-October.*

# Ten Highlights

W. B. Coolidge — *Tala* — A149

Thinking of another contribution to the Bulletin from the other side of the Atlantic, it seemed to me that focussing on some of the highlights might be better than a running account. Even so it is difficult to select from among so many highlights, and especially to write up the top ten. Here's a try.

## 1. London and Hamble.

Certainly attending the AGM and Dinner last January was a most delightful experience and I am most grateful for the warm welcome given me. The Boat Show was first-rate. And an old British friend drove me down to Hamble where we had a tour of the Fairey Marine plant, autoclaves and all. It was quite an experience to see so many Atalantas about. It was here that I discovered that *Tala's* rudder blade has been backward ever since I bought her! Now, with the blade right way round, my wife can take the helm whereas before she could cope with it only briefly. She says that this alone justified the entire trip.

2. **Cruising à Deux.** She's right too, because this year, when neither son nor daughter who had shared previous cruises were available, my wife and I sallied forth alone. We managed through all kinds of weather for four weeks in New England waters and a couple more in Chesapeake Bay. We wouldn't have done so much if the helm hadn't been so improved.

3. **Bad Weather in June.** We'd been in fog before but never so much. Three times it held us in port for an extra day, and three times it descended on us in mid-passage from one port to another. This was during a two-week cruise in Nantucket Sound, Vineyard Sound, and Buzzards Bay from Hyannis, where we launched, to Nantucket where we spent July. However the ports we tarried in were well worth the extra time. Menemsha at the western end of Marthas Vineyard is a fishing centre so we watched the fishing boats unloading and had ourselves a couple of tasty fresh fish dinners aboard. Cuttyhunk at the end of the Elizabeth Island chain seems more remote than it really is, especially when you climb the highest hill and can barely discern the outline of the nearer shorelines through the blowing fog. West Falmouth is a settled mainland community augmented by summer population and is a yachting centre to boot, so it was a hospitable place to lay over. When the fog descended in mid-passage, we managed to hit the buoys by dead reckoning. The depth finder also helped. Meantime there was comfort in having the radar reflector aloft and the radio direction finder below for use in case of need. Luckily the thunderstorms that came our way did so only when we were in port, though one of them spawned such a downpour that there seemed as much water above us as below. Lightning shattered a nearby flagpole.

4. **Boyhood Ambition Fulfilled.** Leaving Nantucket for Marthas Vineyard the normal course reaches northwesterly up toward the centre of Nantucket Sound before bearing west, a distance of more than 20 miles from Nantucket Harbour to Cape Pogue on eastern Marthas Vineyard. This course avoids the extensive shoal system between the islands. But a direct line from Eel Point at the western end of Nantucket to Cape Pogue is only about 13 miles, partly protected by the small sandy islands of Tuckernuck and

Muskeget and leaving only eight miles of open water. Long ago my boyhood chum and I yearned to sail his 12-foot catboat first to Eel Point, then to Tuckernuck and Muskeget, thence across that eight miles to Cape Pogue. But our mothers well knew that these are tricky waters with heavy currents and shifting shoals and so strictly enjoined us to dismiss any thought of so perilous a venture. This summer my wife and I did it with *Tala*. In the event, the crossing was exciting only in the sense of self-fulfillment. Otherwise it was just a lovely reach. We felt the more secure in the assurance that we could raise the keels if necessary or even add power. I confess to miscalculating the set and drift of the current however.

5. **Narragansett Bay.** We had been to Newport before but never up into Narragansett Bay. It is an excellent sailing ground we want to explore more fully next summer: fine winds, fine harbours, fine scenery. This time we ran only a few miles up the East Passage, bore west around Conancticut Island and put in to Wickford. Then we did a short leg down the West Passage and put in to Dutch Island Harbour. The former is full of boats all the time and offers a lovely quiet old town in which to stretch your legs and replenish your supplies. The latter is really just an anchorage which seems to be a favourite weekend rendezvous for yachtsmen from all over the Bay and as far away as Providence. They come and anchor and sun and swim and eat and beer up and then toward sundown hoist away and return home. But we were headed for Block Island.

6. **Block Island.** This was our most distant goal this summer and we made it. In these parts it's usually called just "Block" and the word we had was "You always have to beat out to Block". It's about 10 miles from Newport or Dutch Island Harbour down along the Rhode Island shore to Point Judith, and another 12 miles out across to Block and into the Harbour of Great Salt Pond. All this is more or less into the prevailing southwest wind, more so if an ebb tide from Long Island Sound is carrying you eastward. Around Block's northern point it runs as much as four knots. But we started out in a brisk northwesterly, running smartly down to near Point Judith where we headed out for the now dimly visible Block. Ahhh, but . . . the wind softened and then died, and there we slatted in a cross swell for an hour or more. And when the wind did finally come in — you guessed it — it was southwest. So the saying held good, and with a vengeance as the breeze rose to a spanking full-sail wind and the current turned against us off the northern point. Beat we did, and by the time we had tacked up across the worst of the current and reached Great Salt Pond we felt a bit beat too.

We enjoyed the visit there as the island has escaped much of the development that has overwhelmed so many other seaside areas. It offers some memorable scenery too. The bluffs to the south facing the open ocean are 200 feet high and eroding in spectacular fashion. Block is a favourite destination for cruising boats, also for day-trip tourists who come over on the several ferry lines. One of the days we were there, however, no ferries, nor anything else, ventured out as a stiff northeaster roiled the waters and brought a heavy downpour. Like several others, we shifted anchorage to the northern corner of the Pond for easier riding.

7. **Good Winds in August.** The southwester en route to Block was only one of several such. Perhaps the best gave us a 30-mile spinnaker run. This came the day after we had had to beat *back* from Block Island to Point Judith, where we overnighted in the busy fishing port of Galilee. It must have been some kind of divine compensation for all that beating. Divine or not, it carried us all the way from one biblical name to another: Galilee to Padanarum. Sometimes the winds were a bit better than good. Our most exciting sails were around the northern and western shores of Marthas Vineyard when a strong wind and strong contrary current set up short steep seas. The clinometer showed us heeled down to 40 degrees off and on, and we rolled in a reef and changed jibs on several occasions.

8. **Exploring Chesapeake Bay.** After trailering down from Hyannis we put *Tala* in the Chesapeake again in September, determined to see more of the Bay. We've had one cruise south that took us to Deale Island and Wenona where the old original skipjacks still drag for oysters under sail. Another cruise took us north and around Kent Island down to St. Michaels and the Wye River, rich in colonial history. We've also overnighted in the Magothy River near Baltimore, and across the Bay at Gratitude, a placid eastern shore town. The wild geese flying south seem to be particularly grateful for Gratitude and the creek north of it where we anchored. Their honking didn't disturb our sleep and we might not have known so many were there but for the carpet of little feathers that lay on the surface when we took the dinghy out for a row next morning. The Chesapeake is beautiful but we find the winds a bit fickle compared to New England. It's great sailing when it's great, but otherwise you power. We have used the engine more here in a month than we did all summer in New England.

9. **Repairs and Improvements.** Last year's Bulletin had a good article about failure of the plate gear, which pleased me in the sense that it showed *Tala* wasn't the only one to have torn its lifting straps. Now we have new straps welded to the sides of the rounded headpiece. The job was less difficult than it might have been since the keels were up in their boxes, enabling disengagement and removal of the entire lifting mechanism. My improvements have been minimal but satisfying. The anchor chain always seemed to knock the paint off the forward deck aft of the chain rollers and pails. I cut two pieces of neoprene to fit on the deck for about a foot back of the rollers, between the chocks and the bitt, and glued them down with neoprene adhesive. They seem to do the trick and don't look badly either. The most laborious improvement has been purely cosmetic — to strip the cabin top of its coats of blue and white paint and finish it with varnish so it rather resembles the dinghy upside down. All three hatch covers have also been stripped and varnished. A plastic whisky bottle cut horizontally in half and secured within the cabin near the chart table makes a dandy winch-handle holder.

10. **Comments and Compliments.** Now we've become rather blasé about comments such as "Say, that's a real blue-water boat", or "Bet she's rugged", or "Did you sail her across the Atlantic?" But for the first time this summer somebody rowed alongside and exclaimed "This is the most beautiful boat I've ever seen". That recalled a passage in Captain Urry's article in the Bulletin of 1963/64: "I feel now that I can safely say the *Atalanta* is the most perfectly functional boat I have ever sailed in, and yes! the look of the boat grows on you eventually!" Well, the *Atalanta* was ahead of its time and now when you see the burgeoning of the twin-cabin, centre-cockpit, trailerable boats you realize others are slowly catching on, if not up.

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## Two Cruises with *Salizanda*

Margaret Odling — *Salizanda* — A150

### 1972 — to FINLAND

On June 16th, Bill and I and *Salizanda* were all unloaded from a Container Cargo ship at Halsingborg, S.W. Sweden having embarked at Felixstowe. Our crew of two were waiting for us and the next morning we set sail northwards bound for Gothenburg, roughly 130 miles away.

We arrived four days later, having called in at Danish Elsinore and been stormbound for one morning in the little harbour of Glommen. We have sailed this particular coast twice before, and except for the attractive fishing harbours that one puts into each night, it is uninteresting until one approaches Gothenburg, when rocks and islands, which are such a feature of the northern coast line, appear, and one's chart reading has to start in earnest and in detail.

We motor-sailed past the docks and ship-building area of Gothenburg to the west end, where we did a little shopping and sightseeing. That night we tied up to the quay of a small factory about 5 miles upstream of Gothenburg in the Gota river in torrential rain. Except for one other downpour some weeks later, the rest of our 7 week holiday was spent in seemingly endless sunshine and cloudless skies.

Our objective now was to reach the east coast of Sweden via the Trollhattan and Gota Canals. We arrived at the start of the Trollhattan Canal at 5 p.m. the next day and entered the first lock. This canal is not particularly beautiful. It is 45 miles long and the 6 locks are enormous. They are capable of taking vessels of up to 1200 tons. They are electrically operated. The bollards in the walls are placed so far apart they are practically useless to a small yacht and so we latched onto the iron ladder running up the side. As the water surged in and lifted us up at terrific speed we tied and re-tied ourselves to the rungs until we were at the top — and in another world. We spent that night in a rather dreary little basin under a bridge and completing the canal the following evening, tied up in a new small harbour, close to Vanersburg on the edge of Lake Vanern. It was midsummer night and we celebrated with all the other boats by tying a branch to the peak.

Next morning we set sail to cross lake Vanern, which is the third longest lake in Europe. We had looked forward to two days sailing (as of course in the canals we had to motor) but the first promise of wind soon dropped, the water became like glass, the sun shone and so we had to switch on the engine. This state of affairs lasted until we reached the east coast — real heat wave weather. We stayed that night in a tiny harbour beneath the beautiful white castle of Lacko after passing through a marvellous lot of islands.

The next night we arrived at Sjørtorp, the beginning of the Gota Canal.

This canal is quite beautiful. It is 100 miles long, passing through several lakes and there are 57 locks. They are mostly hand operated, not deep and we were expected to help the lock keepers work them. This was great fun, as we travelled the whole canal in company with 5 or 6 other yachts and motor boats and it was when working the locks that we chatted and made friends. Sometimes we had to wait for the locks to empty, but never very long. The traffic is very small, entirely of pleasure boats and consequently the canal does not pay and has to be subsidized by the Government. There is talk of closing it. We did our swimming in the lakes as one is asked not to bathe in the canal, but it is very clean.

We took 4½ days to reach the east coast and the whole way the scenery was lovely. The first night we tied *Salizanda* to a pine tree on an island in lake Vicken; the second night we spent at Motala, a small town; the third night in a yacht basin at the head of a 'step' of 7 locks which took an hour to descend the next day; and the fourth at the quay of the pretty village of Sodarköping. When we reached the sea we turned north and made for Oxelosund. Leaving *Salizanda* in a smart new marina we all went by train to Stockholm and with the temperature in the 90s did some sightseeing. Our crew returned to England and we were joined by Ted and Pat who had flown from England.

Our aim now was to sail up the coast for 130 miles, cross over to Åland Island and continue to Finland where we had arranged for a cargo boat to bring us home.

Ted was keen for us to visit the Royal Swedish Yacht Club which is on the island of Sandhamn 40 miles due east of Stockholm. We arrived there after two lovely days sailing in winds Force 3–4 to find 200 racing yachts crammed side by side round the quay. They had just returned from the Gotland and Baltic Race and great were the celebrations that evening.

We continued up the coast for two more days keeping inside the islands. The marked channels are very wide and there is a good deal of commercial traffic. We were interested to see, one day, two tugs towing a float of timber chained together in bundles which was at least 400 yards long. The scenery is grand.

We made the passage to Åland in 10 hours. There was very little wind which perhaps was lucky as we were told this bit of the Gulf of Bothnia could be very rough. Mariehamn, the capital, is a charming little town. The *gasthamn* was full of Swedish boats. They come over to shop, as food is much cheaper than in Sweden. We were given a great welcome, but told we were flying the wrong courtesy flag. Åland is a semi-independent state and has its own flag.

Between Åland and the Finnish mainland is an archipelago of islands, hundreds and hundreds of them. Some have vegetation, some have not; some are inhabited, most are not. There are marked passages threading between them and never for a moment must one lose one's way on the chart. It was certainly the most exciting sailing we had ever done, in perfect weather, through the most beautiful scenery. We were constantly bird watching and the inhabited islands were ablaze with wild flowers.

After 6 days of this paradise we sailed into Uusikaupunki on the mainland. We left *Salizanda* there, said goodbye to Ted and Pat and went by train to Helsinki. We spent one night in a hotel. The beds had paper sheets!

Returning to Uusikaupunki (which means New Town) Bill and I sailed *Salizanda* north to Rauma. We had hoped for a lazy sail and a swim on the way, but the wind was Force 5 on the nose and it was hard work. Two days later we three were safely aboard a cargo boat making for Erith in the Thames. We arrived the day the dock strike started and we were fortunate to be allowed to put *Salizanda* over the side.

Yes, we had our sauna. On the cargo boat coming home. Very hot and enervating, but it cleaned us up.

## 1973 – to HOLLAND

In May *Salizanda* went by herself on a cargo ship from Colchester Hythe to Delfzijl, the N.E. corner of Holland. For ten wet days our daughter and family motored her through Friesland and left her at Kampen off the east coast of the IJsselmeer. There Bill and I and a crew of two joined her on June 8th. We raised the mast and in glorious weather sailed clockwise round the south shores of the IJsselmeer between the polders and the mainland, calling in at unspoilt villages, spending a night in Amsterdam in the Six harbour opposite the station and continuing up the west coast visiting the more sophisticated fishing villages as far as Medemblik. The museum at Enkhuizen is a 'must' for anyone who can get to it.

We then crossed over to the N.E. coast and made our way north to the eastern lock of the dyke across the mouth of the IJsselmeer. We had intended to go through and make for the Friesian island of Vlieland, 20-odd miles away, but the wind was Force 6 when we arrived and the Dutch also waiting there advised us not to make the passage. The sea outside the dyke is of course tidal with many currents flowing from the North Sea and across the 'riddle of the sands'. One Dutchman in describing the passage said: "The waves clap their hands above the mast". We spent that night in the harbour of Makkum nearby and hoped that the wind would abate next day. But it didn't, so we decided to enter Friesland and sail by the canals and lakes to the Lauwersee and hope the wind would be right for us to sail across to the smaller Friesian island of Schiermonnikoog.

Friesland is very beautiful and unspoilt and as well as all the dairy lands and cows and huge barns there are many reservation areas for birds.

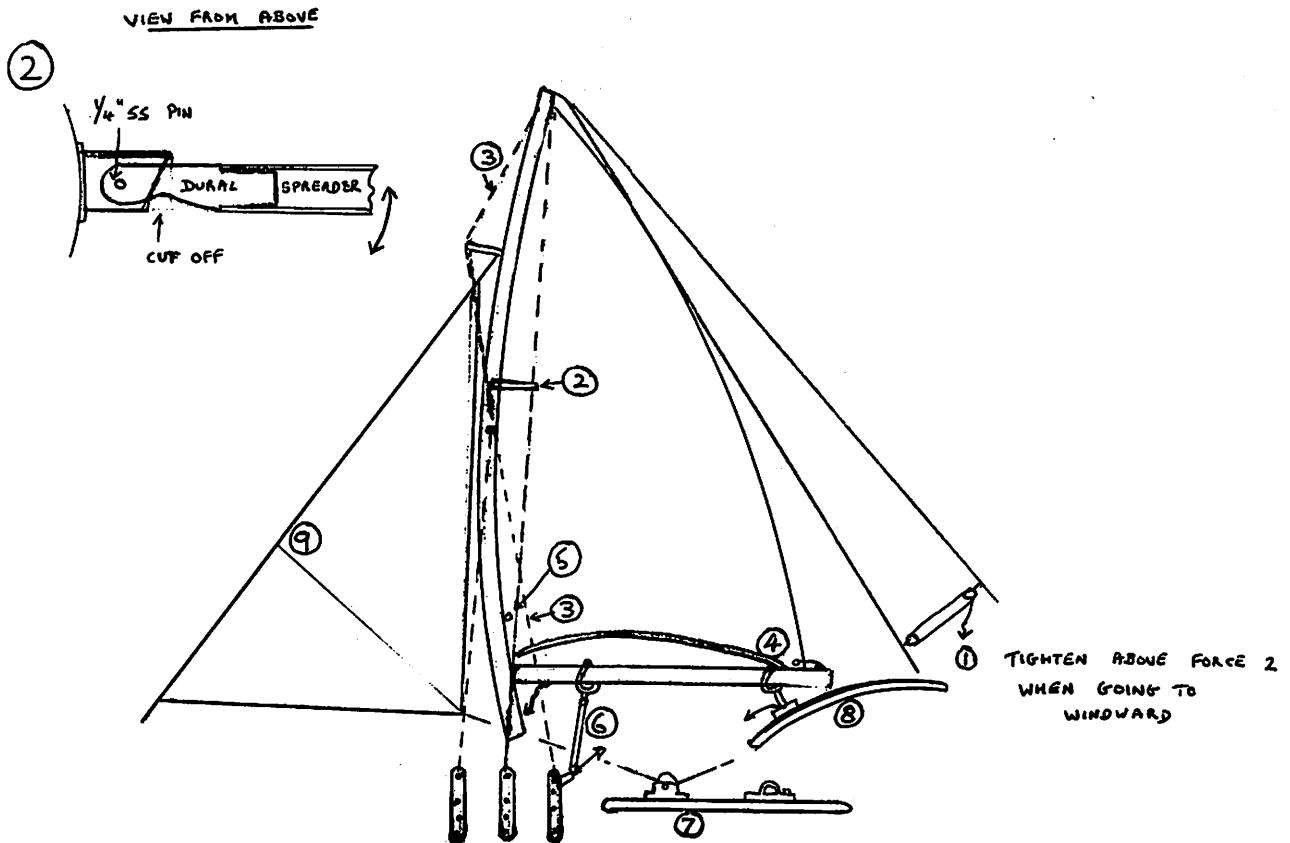
We reached Lauwersee in four days and passed through the lock. We had worked out the tides as one has to arrive at Schiermonnikoog at high tide in order to cross the sill into the tiny yacht harbour. The passage is 7 miles and the last part is a series of S-bends following a line of withies. The island is a bird sanctuary. We saw hundreds of Brent geese. There are only about two cars there, so everyone bicycles. We hired bicycles and had a happy day cycling amongst the sand dunes seeing all kinds of wild life.

We returned 2 days later to the mainland and made our way back to Delfzijl. The first day's sail in the Tietdiem was marvellous with the wind behind us and no other shipping all day. Advice from the skipper:—

1. Keep away from the yacht harbour at Delfzijl, it is an overcrowded sewer.
2. Be careful in the Ems, we found ourselves and two cargo ships and several yachts aground together.
3. See Friesland before you die.

# Some thoughts on tuning an Atalanta

Dr. & Mrs. W. R. R. Thursfield — *Stroller* — A180



After this year's Round the Island Race Capt. Emerson wrote to me saying that there was a rumour that the Atalanta division in this unique event might be discontinued.

Cliff Collins — the Secretary of the I.S.C. — assures me that this is without foundation. However it would surely be a great pity if Atalantas no longer took part in this great race, which provides a stimulus to search for improved performance under sail.

On this theme Capt. Emerson has asked me to write an article and I hope that this may encourage more owners to have a go. Many people have described the Atalanta as a slow old tub but a thoroughbred, by Uffa Fox out of Alan Vines, which responds particularly well to the techniques evolved in dinghy and cruiser racing.

The following are the changes that we have made to the three-quarter sloop rig version over a 12 year period whilst owning two Atalanta 26's, combined with dinghy racing and two years campaigning a half ton copper.

## 1. Mast Bending

One should start with a full mainsail that will perform well on the wind in light airs and off the wind in all conditions. This can then be flattened for windward work in heavy weather and carried longer without reefing. The first step is to tighten the backstay and we have adopted the twin backstay arrangement used in the Twister class which has a twin pulley purchase between the two.

## 2. Crosstree Angulation

The crosstrees must be free to move fore and aft at the mast. If fitted or the latter will resist the mast movement and may be strained.

The inner end is replaced by a solid Dural bar of the same diameter which is turned to plug into the spreader and drilled to act as a hinge joint at the inner end. (See diagram item 2).

## 3. Jumper Stays and Aft Lower Shrouds

The more these are slackened the more bend occurs. The amount this is done depends on ones nerve, but the middle of my mast bends about four inches forwards of a straight line and nothing has broken after five years.

To keep the mast straight athwartship the forward lower shrouds need to be tightened as the aft lower shrouds are slackened until looking up the mast the track is straight. This must be done while going to windward in Force three to four.

The old type of piano jumper stays are not strong enough and need replacing with 1 by 19.

## 4. Foot of Mainsail

A powerful outhawl helps to flatten the lower part of the main and having an alloy boom I use a 6 part purchase inside the boom with a pulley built into the aft end. A keyhole slot provides a jam for the rope emerging at the bottom of the boom at the front end. Either a zip or a tape sewn on to the foot of the sail extended in a curve convex upwards from

tack to clew will complete the good work. I favour the latter as cheaper and more reliable.

#### 5. Cunningham Hole

This can be used with force applied by a handy billy.

#### 6. Kicking Strap

This is probably the most important extra of all. It greatly increases speed and safety on the run and improves performance on the reach.

A boom claw allows the kicker to be used when reefed and a two part handy billy can be clipped to a shackle attached to the after most chain plate. The pin of the shackle can in fact replace a cleavis pin.

#### 7. Genoa Track

I have bolted a long piece of wood to the topsides amidships to carry a genoa track which allows adjustment of the sheet lead and provides a point of attachment for the kicker when reaching. This being through an adjustable slide with an eye.

#### 8. Mainsheet Traveller

We have a ballbearing traveller which moves very easily and with the mainsheet attached to the moving part any increase in wind strength, when going to windward, automatically lets the mainsail pay off a little to leeward and also tightens the mainsheet as the track follows the curve of the horse. Limiting lines allow control and can be used to hold the main up to windward in light airs, which is a good thing to do.

#### 9. Genoa

A tight forestay is vital and it is again a case of how far dare one go.

Tightening up the backstay tweaker adds to the permanent load and applies a total load for the brief period of the boat's life when one is going to windward (in Force two upwards).

A stretch luff takes the flow forwards when the leech is starting to curl with increasing wind and a heat sealed leech is much better than the usual weighty leech line assembly. This is strong enough not to tear but I avoid letting the leech flog for any longer than is necessary.

Good sail cloth is well worth the extra cost and my sails are all of Vectis cloth and beautifully cut by Ratseys of Cowes. The leech of foresails, main and spinnaker have little or no curl to produce drag which heels an Atalanta with its relative low ballast ratio.

#### 10. Propellor

A folding or feathering propeller is worth fifteen to twenty minutes 'Round the Island'.

Due to the shallow draft of an Atalanta this poses a particularly difficult problem if one wishes to have good performance under both sail and power. An eleven inch diameter propeller is the maximum size that can be used in the usual position and this means direct drive and a three bladed propeller if power is placed first. A two bladed folding propeller is a compromise towards sailing efficiency and I have a model by Banford which locks for going astern (unfortunately this firm has gone out of business). If a slow revving engine or reduction gear is used it is possible to use a three bladed propeller with coarse pitch which could be left free to rotate when sailing. A fine pitch propeller creates about the same drag whether clamped or free to rotate.

In my first Atalanta I had a Coventry Victor MW4 engine with two to one reduction and variable pitch 16 inch propeller. This feathered and was remarkably successful but very expensive and necessitated seven inches increase in draft astern.

One day a completely retractable propeller may be evolved with hydraulic or Z drive.

#### 11. Keels

On the run it pays to retract the keels completely but one wants to keep out of the way of the boats that you are overtaking as control is reduced. *Don't get luffed with your keels up!*

#### 12. Spinnaker

Having only one I chose a rather flat cut reaching sail as speed is greatly increased on a reach and only a little is lost on the run in light airs. If it blows hard you soon reach maximum hull speed.

A mast head spinnaker can be flown by a three-quarter sloop rig in light to moderate winds but must of course be declared when racing and incur a mast head handicap.

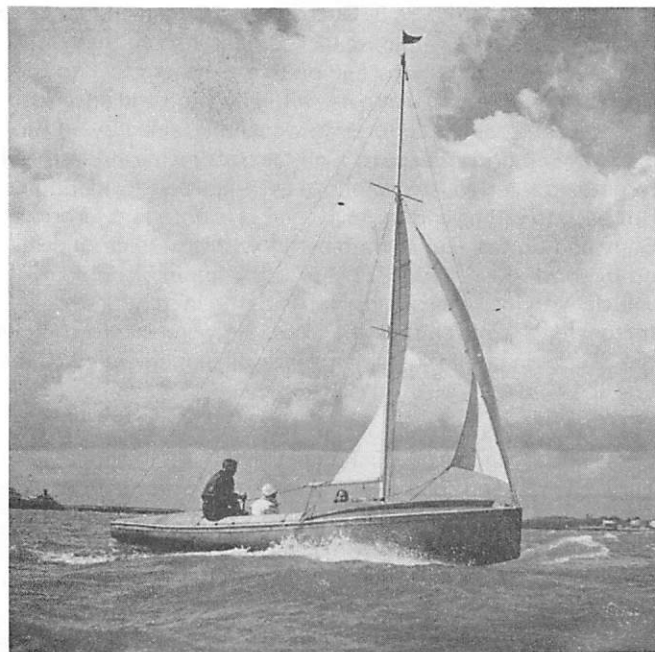
#### 13. Scrubbing

An easy way to have a quick scrub is to come into two feet of water on a rising tide where the sandy beach shelves gradually. Two anchors are run out to sea and a line is taken from the mast head to a Landrover, third anchor, stake or a gang of slaves. The boat is then careened with keels and rudder retracted and the whole things taken about half an hour. Of course a little man **always** comes out to tell me that I am in shallow water and in danger of going aground!

14. So much for speed on water. We have recently been introduced to the Scott Stabiliser. This is a friction damper which stops the boat from snaking when towing. We towed 'Stroller' to Mallaig this year and found that this super gadget enabled us to travel in a relaxed manner at much greater speeds than before. The maximum speed attained cannot be divulged in print.

#### We obtained the following items from these suppliers:

Boom Claw	Gibbs
Handy Billy	Lewmar
6 part/4 part/2 part purchase	Lewmar
Genoa track, pulley & slides	Lewmar
Mainsheet traveller	Proctor
Sails	Ratseys of Cowes
Scott Stabiliser	John Scott, 81 Osborne Place, Aberdeen



# Round the Island Race Reports

Dennis Emerson – *Diaphony* – A5

A dark gray dawn as four to five hundred yachts headed east of the start line off Cowes, noting the wind, noting the tide and deciding tactics for crossing the line.

**Diaphony's** crew were three, myself, my wife Betty and Ian Savage. As we discussed tactics we saw a number of the 9 Atalantas entered but mainly keeping an eye on the consistent winners Dr. and Mrs. Thursfield in **Stroller**.

At 0515 we crossed the line with a lightweight orange Genoa set in a NNW 2-3 on course towards Hurst and the Needles. The start is a thrilling sight with the Solent crowded with yachts of all types with a galaxy of coloured sails set. Atalantas were around us, **Stroller** of course ahead, **Quatorze** just ahead, **La Loessa** astern and **Lac Lac** abeam towards the island shore. Off Yarmouth the Australian boat **Appolo** passed close with a fantastic rush of water (as someone remarked – like a covey of W.C.'s being simultaneously flushed!). We were badly winded when **Carrilion** (Div. I) luffed across our bows. Another Division I boat hit the N. Shingles Buoy dead centre with a most expensive thump.

With the wind still north we rounded the Palm Buoy just off the Needles and another reach to St. Catherines. And the decision to sail inshore or offshore . . . ? **Lac Lac** who was inshore sailed out and was abeam awhile then pulled ahead towards St. Catherines. **Quatorze** was having trouble with their spinnaker (little did we know how much) – (see their story).

With the wind increasing for a while to about Force 4 after St. Catherines, but fine sunny weather, we sailed in close company with **Quatorze**, took their photograph, then **Diaphony** suddenly, it must have been a moment of pique, became a racing yacht and rushed past **Quatorze**. We quickly handed the Genoa for Jib but approaching Bembridge Buoy it was back to a heavier Genoa.

Tactics again at Bembridge, adverse tide, wind now backed to the NW and about Force 3. **Quatorze** and **Cirdan** and **La Loessa** continued offshore, while we tacked right inshore then out and right around the Buoy and on to a starboard tack to the Forts. While trying to overcome a flukey wind and adverse tide to pass through the forts we were entertained by an Air Show at Bembridge Airport. Light aircraft racing at masthead height and the Red Arrows above us in faultless formation. But back to sailing and through the Forts onto N. Sturbridge Buoy and Cowes. Quite a number of yachts were grounded on the Ryde Sands led on I believe by Captain Marigold in **Jellicle** with his keels raised! Norris Castle in sight and fortunately a wind shift to the SW so we were able to complete the course on one tack. Atalanta wise all alone we crossed the line at 1723.

Taking 12 hours 8 mins. for the course of about 60 miles. Sails handed, engine on, to a quiet corner of the marina. Large sherries and soon one of Betty's rapid production superb dinners. A beautiful summer's evening, dining in the Atalanta cockpit, relaxing with a glass of wine after a fine day's sail. Excellent! Is there anything better? Later a stroll to the I.S.C. and the computerised results:—

1.	A180 – <b>Stroller</b> – Dr. & Mrs. Thursfield	7.54.21
2.	A122 – <b>Jellicle</b> – Captain J. R. Marigold	8.24.16
3.	A146 – <b>Sherpa</b> – Mr. A. G. Parkes	8.24.44
4.	A69 – <b>Lac Lac</b> – Mr. J. D. Saunders	8.27.22
5.	A5 – <b>Diaphony</b> – Capt. & Mrs. D. Emerson	8.57.57
6.	A181 – <b>Cirdan</b> – Mr. I. T. Parker	9. 7.34
7.	A157 – <b>Quatorze</b> – Mr. A. T. Huntingdon	9.23.11
8.	A16 – <b>La Loessa</b> – Mr. B. C. Munden	10.02.00
9.	A101 – <b>Amida</b> – Mr. J. S. Brough	Not seen to start

Corrected times

So congratulations again to Dr. & Mrs. Thursfield and crew. Also 2, 3 and 4 who finished with only 4 actual minutes between them. As **Stroller** was 44 actual minutes ahead of the next Atalanta I asked him to impart a little of his expert Atalanta handling to us; efficient sailing helps even when cruising (*see page 6*). Therefore with perhaps a number of 'tuned' Atalantas may I ask for more entries next year? It is a fine days sail, excellently social, the entry fee was £3 this year and you receive a tankard for finishing. The date is always a Saturday early in July. I usually have this date early so a phone call to LITTLEWICK GREEN 2831 will enable you to note the date in your new 1974 diary.

TCF With reference to Portsmouth numbers and in collaboration with Dr. Thursfield the 1974 TCF's will be calculated as follows:—

	Basic Atalanta TCF	.7050
<b>Deduct</b>	For engine and Feather Prop	.0068
	"    "    Fixed 2 blade	.0136
	"    "    Fixed 3 blade	.0194
<b>Add</b>	No engine	.0068
	Spinnaker	.0194
	Masthead Rig	.0194

Send your entry to me with the following details:—  
Entry fee (to be advised: cheques + 10p for stamps to Island Sailing Club).

Class No.  
Name of Yacht.  
Engine and Feather Prop, or 2 blade fixed, or 3 blade fixed.  
Spinnaker  
Rig: Standard or Masthead.

Dennis Emerson, The Cottage, Burchetts Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 6QS.



We left Fairey's at 03.30 in convoy with three or four other Atalanta's, and at 05.15 made a good start from the right-hand end of the line in company with *Sherpa*, *Stroller* and a gaggle of S.C.O.D.

The Powers-that-Be had, this year, amde us the scratch boat, and we had planned to overcome this handicap with a secret weapon. From the helmsman's point of view, our spinnaker gives the impression that it is a cast-off, if not from an old 'J' type then from at least a 12-metre. It is a vast blue and white creation which billows to the sky in Force 1, and by Force 3 the plates and rudder vibrate, the propellor-shaft whirls and 'hands to water-ski' seems a distinct possibility.

We anticipated that the further we got into the lee of the island the more the wind would drop and our spinnaker really give us the advantage our handicap required. Perhaps the lighthouse-keeper at that precise moment decided to blow out his candles, but an almighty puff came from nowhere; suddenly there was wet water where the deck should have been, and our secret weapon was full of English Channel instead of air. The tiller was useless as the rudder came out of the water, and there we lay hanging on for dear life, the writer at least wishing he had had the sense to wear his safety harness.

We lay there, more or less flat, for what seemed an age and just as we were beginning to get a little anxious wondering what to do next, with great good fortune the outboard (or by now more correctly the vertical) fitting on the spinnaker boom parted. Almost instantly *Quatorze* began to rise a little, until progress along the deck again became possible. The full strength of all hands was required for the next ten minutes or more to get the sail back on board, and even longer to sort out the chaos below deck.

For us the race was now over, as by the time we could resume a course the main body was half way to St. Catherine's. Nevertheless it was a wonderful day's sail in a fine wind. We enjoyed many a private battle with tail-enders before eventually arriving at the finishing line. Next year, if we launch our secret weapon all hands will wear safety harness – whatever the wind strength.

We were very keen this year as we had just started playing with spinnakers. We started the race fairly well close to the West Brambles and reached in company with *Quatorze* and *Jellicle* and a few others. *Stroller* we saw abeam half way across to the Island. When all the big class one boats came up just before Hurst Castle we thought we would follow their example and raise fear and despondency in our rivals by setting our spinnaker. This seemed to help although initially we lost a bit of ground in the setting of it. After Hurst the wind dropped light so we tried the big spinnaker which gave us an interesting gybe round the Palm Buoy. After we had sorted ourselves out we reckon that we were second to *Stroller*. *Jellicle* with her blue foresail seemed to be dropping back close to the Island while we followed *Stroller* on the straight line to St. Catherine's.

We got slowly left behind *Stroller* but seemed to be gaining on all the others. We changed back to the small spinnaker and fairly tore along. Squalls at St. Catherine's first reduced us to genoa and then to No. 1 jib. Then as we cleared Dunnose the wind eased and we were back to the genoa. The wind continued to drop and by the time we had rounded Bembridge Ledge we were on our own lying second with no other Atalanta in sight. We slowly worked our way to the Fort and then lay more or less becalmed and were dismayed to see *Jellicle* and *Lac Lac* beating steadily past Bembridge close to the shore. They beat steadily round to what appeared to us, almost to Ryde and then reached out to the Fort, sailed round and left us still wallowing. We eventually got round the Fort against what was by then a foul tide and following the example of *Jellicle* cut inshore over the Ryde sand where after having run aground a few times we reached out for the West Sturbridge. There, we were pleased to pass *Lac Lac* who had stayed out in the tide. Back to the Wooton side after *Jellicle*, with whom we slowly closed, and it was then a light beat to the finish. When we tacked she did in truly professional style, and although we tried to break away she covered us all the time. As the wind freshened we seemed to pull up some lost ground and when it eased we not only held our own but we slowly crept up; not enough, however, as by the line we were still 40 seconds behind. Well done *Jellicle*, you gave us an exciting race – and well done *Stroller*.

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## Phlegm – Avon Style

On the whole, Avon inflatables give little trouble; if they do, the news does not reach me. However, a friend report that while on a beach during the summer he heard a particularly loud report, which almost duped the local lifeboatmen into thinking it was a maroon, come from an Avon awaiting the return of its owner.

When the latter eventually reached his craft, his arms laden with carriers full of essential stores, he found one end of his conveyance split completely along its seam and lying uselessly limp. He carefully scrambled aboard, rolled up the shattered fragments, started the outboard engine and went on his way unperturbed.

C.S.

# "It's all a question of getting organized"

Phil Walker — *Wintersett* — A58

Maybe it was this innocent remark which precipitated a most forlorn and hopeless season for poor *Wintersett*. Even in the warm August sunshine she lay still and lifeless upon the jacked up trailer. I am sure that the better than average summer only came about by the fact that for the first time in 20 years we were to miss a season afloat. On this gloomy November day my wife and I held inquest and asked, 'Why?'

'It's all a question of getting organised . . .', I would reply, and we thought back to pre-Atalanta days just over two years ago. Our hard chine sloop of 22' had done us proud service for eight years, for although intended as an estuary cruiser she had carried us, sometimes precariously, the whole length of Britain's western coast. Now we wished for a more comfortable and sedate lady who would take kindly to conditions at sea no matter what they might be. We wanted to explore in shallow water, weather out foul days well tucked in, we wanted to trail her home and keep on top of the inevitable maintenance. The Atalanta does these things well, and so one wet day in June 1971 *Wintersett* became ours. She was trailed home from her laying-up place in Cheltenham along the increasingly hilly roads to Rhyl.

There was much to do that summer, new gear to buy, and hasty work to complete before we had that ultimate thrill of the first sail in her. By early August the great event took place, *Wintersett* sailed gently with offshore wind on the beam bound for the Menai Straits. As the riding light went up on the second night at that most wonderful of anchorages Aber Menai, we were filled with delight thinking of all kinds of places we would sail to and explore in the future. With an air of Christmas-like anticipation, I awoke the following day and excitedly hoisted sails, weighed anchor and caught the spring ebb out past the bar before pointing *Wintersett's* bow toward the horizon. Ireland here we come!

Sunday 8th August, 1971. After a bumpy ride we made it to Wicklow, ultimately reaching Dunmore East in day hops. Dunmore has been a favourite calling place of mine for many years, and in Ireland the welcome never seems to wear out, which of course means you are involved in a merry social round. Thus you can imagine my surprise when one morning after a hectic night, I groped my way to the hatch where on looking round I saw another yacht tied up alongside us. I noticed she was from Portmadoc, then from her forehatch there appeared a most attractive blonde, whilst from the main hatch appeared an equally attractive brunette. This was too much, I rubbed my eyes again; yes, it was definitely real. Down below Thelma drowsily murmured as the news was broken to her; '. . . And all those times I came here in bachelor days', I went on, 'and never before has a boat load of girls tied up alongside'. Thelma took no notice thinking that this was some joke to get her up, however when it was her turn to look, she saw two men and no girls at all. By midday our curiosity was over. Richard and Daphne, Pete and Marion all came aboard for drinks. They all roared with laughter at my first impressions which were definitely put down to an overdose of Guinness the previous night.

On the Saturday night the six of us went to the pub, later returning to Richard's 'Colin Archer' type sloop for coffee. By midnight great plans were being made for a cruise in company to the Scilly Isles starting the next morning. I think

we were just returning to our bunks when we should really have been starting. All I know is that our heads were not ready for such a passage until Monday, and Richard, Pete and their wives soberly decided to go across to Milford Haven since they had to return to Portmadoc soon. So as the sun rose over the horizon *Wintersett* and the Portmadoc yacht *Dilys* left Dunmore in close company as far as Hook point when our courses obviously separated as we headed south for the Scillies. The first day at sea was pleasant enough but as the miles were being clocked up on the second morning there were ponderous swells which coupled with rather poor visibility made Thelma and I too seasick for fun. However, being a glutton for punishment, I ran the engine with the fuel tap in the closed position until it stopped, which made me even more sick as the smelly job of air-venting the system was begun. Bargain hunters would certainly have been offered an Atalanta at a give-away price at that particular moment.

Later that day we were very thankful for the calm anchorage in Hugh Town, having made the passage in thirty hours; alas, no record. Soon Thelma rustled up poached egg in a splendid effort to get our tummies back to normal, and it is remarkable that this simple meal tasted better than any banquet. When we had eaten and tidied up our ship the riding light was lit and soon both boat and crew were resting contentedly.

What actually roused me from my deep slumber I cannot remember, but half in a dream and yet sensing something of reality I staggered in a startled daze for the hatch. How eerie it was, but in a moment which seemed like an eternity I realised that we had a violent thunderstorm raging all around us. I saw a person, probably naked, rowing a line out in a dinghy. The harbour was alive with activity: yachts dragging, people shouting and waving torches. In an instant, life and panic were amplified a thousand times by the many masts fighting a screeching battle against the fiendish squall, whilst lightning with grotesque power heralded thunder, loud thunder, creating a scene even more grotesque, even more powerful. It soon reached an almighty crescendo which made us cringe in primitive fear.

After going round in a complete circle the storm eventually went away, the rain eventually ceased, we eventually returned to sleep.

Later the next day winds were northerly and light, which suited our plans to explore the various islands. A week later they were still northerly portending a long and difficult homeward trip.

By August 24th we had decided to sail to Falmouth and fetch the trailer to take her home. On this passage however, we were to experience our most frightening moments to date. We left Hugh Town in the evening with fair weather, motor-sailing nicely as far as Wolf Rock light when we hit a solid wall of fog. However it was all very pleasant with flat seas and unbelievable phosphorescence. Porpoises played around joyfully adding yet more light to our glowing bow wave. Somewhere in the distance a steamer siren sounded, and within ten minutes all was silent again. The time was now 0200 hrs. That customary glance at my watch was cut short on hearing the faint sound of engines. We cut our own engine to listen more carefully. I gave our fog signal, but the sound of engines got louder still. Now, this had me really

worried, as *Wintersett* wallowed lamely in a very busy shipping lane. Thelma's hearing seemed better than mine and I agreed with her that we were being approached from the stern by something rather large. We had the radar reflector up, the six cell torch was at hand and lifejackets were checked just in case we felt like leaving ship in a hurry. Decision-making was hard as throbbing engines were too close for comfort. Just when do you jump for it? That night I really wondered. In desperation all effort was summoned to make a sensible decision, but procrastination was slowly winning as second by second this iron monster came brutally nearer. Now lights were to be seen, 'maybe he'll miss us,' I thought, 'but its going to be close'. In thirty seconds the mass of lights which towered above us had disappeared into the mist, and poor Thelma, who had been so terribly frightened, wasted no time in brewing the best cup of coffee I have ever tasted. The fact that quite a lot of it got spilt as we rolled madly in the steamer's wash just didn't seem to matter — there must be a more pleasant way than this of putting ten years on your life!

The rest of the trip to Falmouth was carried out without a hitch though the thick fog persisted all morning. Later on that day *Wintersett* was securely anchored at St. Mawes. The following day saw us driving fast to North Wales in a little hired car, and the day after saw us in convoy once again, though this time with Land-Rover and trailer on the return trip. By the weekend our first *Atalanta* cruise was over. The trailing side proved a useful forerunner to our long road haul across France in 1972 and the sailing side made us aware of various gear deficiencies which we hoped to make up in the future. Just for the record, it is interesting to note that we met up with our friends in the Portmadoc yacht the following winter, and they told us of the Force 5 and 6 Northerlies which they had to tack against all the way home.

After their battle, they sure envied us the trailerability of the *Atalanta*. The year 1973 no doubt brought great poverty to most yachtsmen as they dug deep into their pockets to buy as much as possible before the dreaded V.A.T. became law. I know much of the winter was spent in local chandlers as we madly tried to forecast what might be needed in the future. A new inflatable, a liferaft, some form of self steering, and so on; our list was a long one. Stowage on board became essential for every piece of new equipment, and so fittings were designed and made, though it all took quite a lot of working out.

As stated earlier, we hoped to be able to take an *Atalanta* home for maintenance but, for us, this meant a change of house also since the access was unsuitable for a large load. By June of this year we stumbled on a possibility, with a large shed in the grounds making the ideal workshop and space alongside for the *Atalanta*. So the season of '73 passed with me designing a permanent domestic situation in conjunction with storage and workshop facilities on hand. It would make it easier for us not only to keep *Wintersett* in tip-top order but also to make the laying-up period a time for fascinating innovation. You see, "it's all a question of getting organised".

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## Early History of the *Atalanta*

Alan Vines

In about 1950 we always spent our summer holidays in Seagrove Bay, Seaview, Isle of Wight. It has a flat sandy beach with boats moored off and drying out at low tide. The family went by car with dogs, etc., and I sailed a *Firefly* from Hamble. It was during these trips that I found how seaworthy a light dinghy could be in quite bad conditions.

As the children got bigger we had to have a larger boat than a *Firefly*, so I decided the ideal solution would be a big *Firefly* with ballasted keels to keep the boat right side up, instead of aerobatics with minimum draft and altogether very light. The result was that Fairey Marine built **Sujanwiz**, named after my three daughters. The general specification was: 22 ft, overall, 9 inch draught with keels up, hull of moulded plywood 3/16ths inches thick, deck of 1/8th inch ply, ballast in the form of twin retractable loaded dagger plates, and sloop rig.

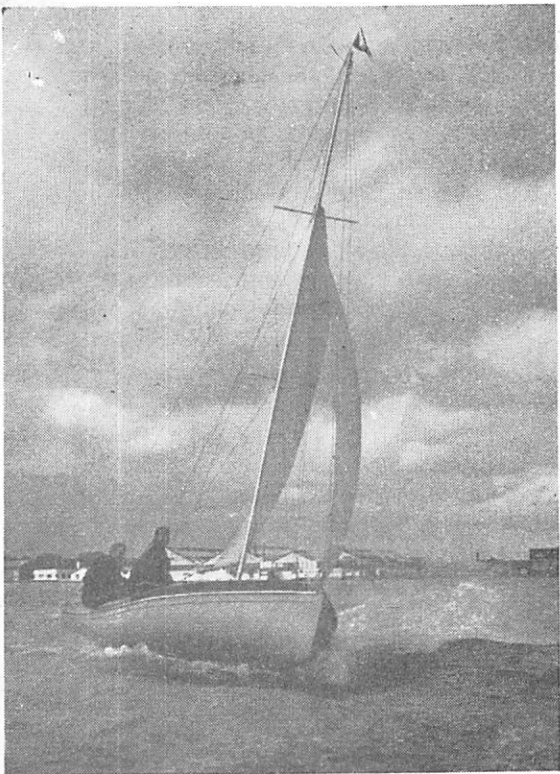
We sailed **Sujanwiz** for several summers and quite often visited Uffa Fox at Cowes, always under sail as we had no engine and only oars. Uffa had always taken a great interest in the boat and the children, as my wife came from Cowes and had known Uffa long before he took to boats. One day when we are at Cowes Uffa said: "Why don't Fairey Marine develop your boat?" After a time, to my delight, they agreed to do so and built a prototype.

Uffa Fox drew the lines keeping the bow full for safety when wave-riding down a swell into the wave in front. This has worked well and also makes it possible to use the forehatch for sail-changing in bad weather. Fairey Marine, helped by the test facilities of Fairey Aviation, did the engineering of the keels, etc., and the result in 1955 was the *Atalanta* prototype, named after the last flying-boat built by Fairey Aviation.

The boat was sailed hard for one season and the first production boats were completed in 1956. The layout followed the general lines of **Sujanwiz**, the main difference being swinging keels in place of loaded dagger plates, as these tended to jam solid when hitting the bottom as well as move about in a seaway. The swinging keels and clamps have worked well. In shallow water sail with one keel down and the other half up; when you hit go about, lift the keel and off you go.

I hope that these notes will be of interest to owners. Some don't like the rounded decks, but they do make a strong light hull and reduce the windage; which is important in a very shallow-draft hull.

The following article describes the boat in detail. It appeared in the pages of *Yachting World*, December 1952, and is reprinted here by kind permission of the Editor of that magazine.



Not many six-berth boats will plane under reduced canvases.

LET us suppose, for a moment, that we have approached a yacht architect for a design for a four-berth week-end cruiser, capable of sleeping six at a pinch and with a cockpit capable of seating that number. She must cost no more than £600 or so; but, in consideration for her being such a cheap boat, we are prepared to accept something out of the ordinary and will waive a requirement like full standing headroom throughout! We will accept, for instance, a tent over the cockpit in place of a cabin, a bucket toilet and the minimum of galley convenience. Our designer would begin to look at us askance. We do not,

# Sujanwiz

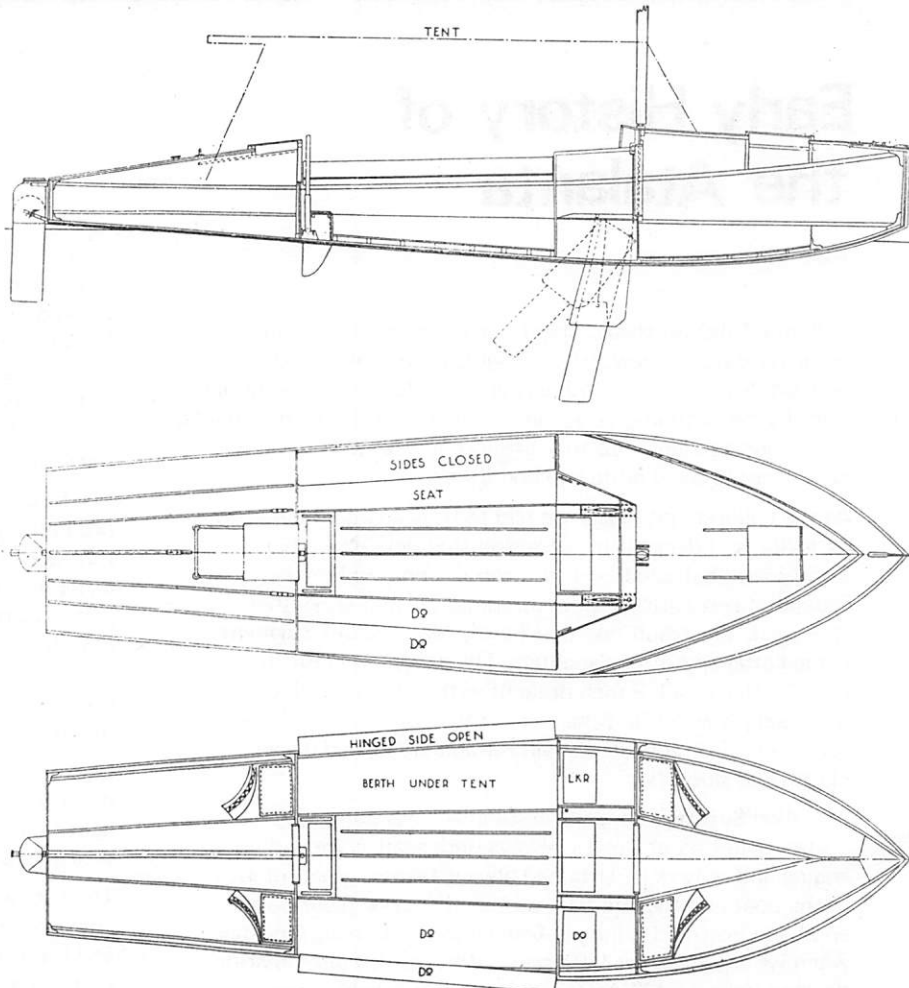
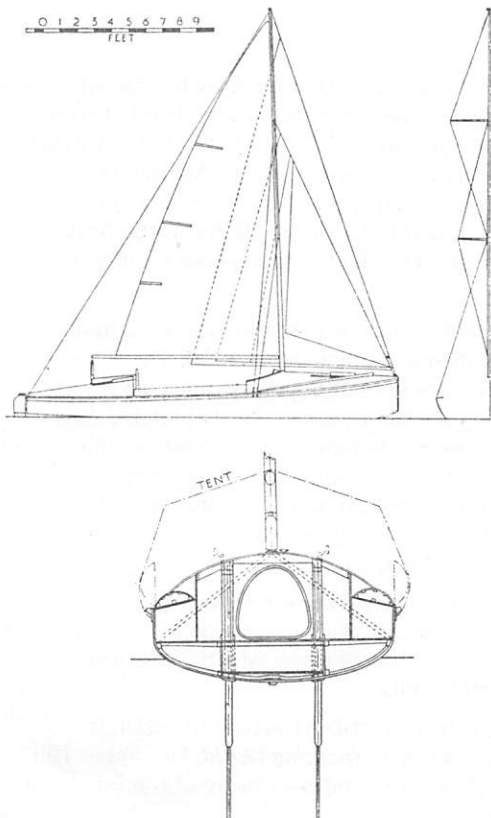
A QUART IN A PINT POT

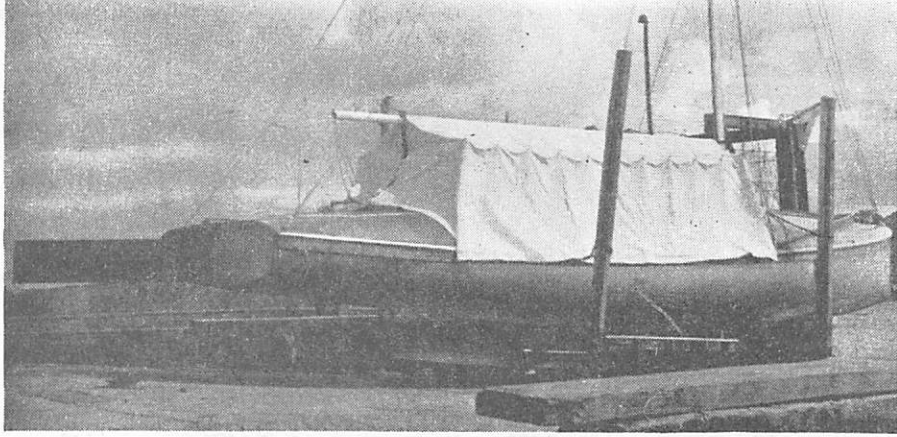
(PHOTOGRAPHS BY EILEEN RAMSAY)

however, want to be bothered with a dinghy; so we need a boat which can be sailed up to a beach so that the occupants can step ashore dry shod. That would shake him. In the matter of performance, however, we are completely uncompromising. The boat must be really fast and, when we come to think of it, it would be a good idea if she could plane off the wind. This would, no doubt, draw a little heavy sarcasm. "What would you like, shall we say, 10 knots?" Brushing this aside as unworthy of reply we continue by demanding a boat which could be towed on a two-wheeled trailer behind a small car. This would restrict the overall length to 22ft and the beam to

about 6ft 3in, which is about the maximum practicable. It follows, of course, that she must be very light so that she can be man-handled on to the trailer. Nine consultants out of ten would by now adopt a soothing conciliatory attitude, for obvious reasons! Undaunted we continue. The hull must be stable and self-righting with buoyancy and fit for use in the Solent or in open water anywhere along the South Coast. "Yes, yes," he would say, "get in touch with me on April the first and I will have just the thing for you." As we close the door we hear him mutter something which sounds like, "Round the bend!"

Yet this is briefly what Alan Vines set





Tent over cockpit makes snug cabin at night

out to do. The result was a break from tradition which resulted in a most successful boat. There is, however, nothing about her which is not perfectly sound practice.

His first step was to obtain the shell of a moulded ply 14ft International. The transom was removed and the hull sawn down the centre line and opened out. A triangular sheet of ply was then inserted. Two 8ft sheets of ply were then glued to the after end of the hull, bringing the total length up to 22ft. A new transom was then glued in. It is wider than need be, but room was required in the after part of the boat for accommodation, and it has the advantage of making the hull very stable.

To obtain the necessary number of sleeping berths the hull is divided into three parts separated by two bulkheads. Under the foredeck there is a cabin with bunks for sleeping two people on air mattresses; while the after cabin provides the same accommodation and a large stowage compartment where bedding and clothing can be kept dry under all conditions.

The centre part of the boat makes a large cockpit by day and, with a tent erected, a cabin by night. The seats on either side are permanent buoyancy compartments; while the side decks, curved like those of a Merlin, hinge on their outer edge so that they can be raised at night. This widens the seats into two more berths.

The tent, which is rigged over the boom, makes a cabin 8ft 6in by 6ft with comfortable sitting headroom, and provides reasonable accommodation for cooking and meals. When closed it is very snug inside.

At the forward end of the cockpit on either side are two large lockers, which

stow sails, cooking utensils, food and other requirements.

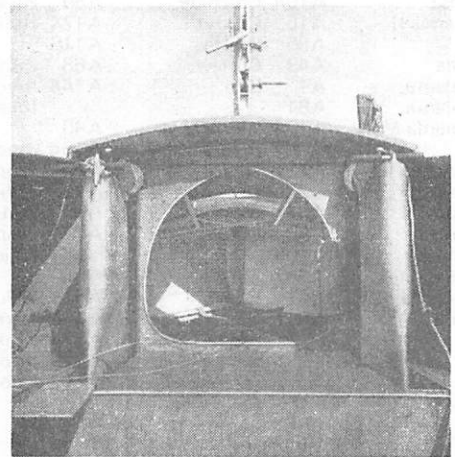
The inner walls of these lockers form the side of the casings for the twin-loaded dagger plates, of 150lb each, through which two wooden extensions are lowered for windward work. With the plates down the boat is self righting. Two plates were used in place of the usual one to allow access to the forecabin and to split the weight for manhandling. This arrangement, besides giving easy access to the forecabin, also relieves the loads on the hull which would be considerably greater were one deeper and heavier keel employed. The keels have been placed well forward to keep the cockpit clear, so two trimmers are fitted at the after end of the cockpit, and these make the boat steady and easy to steer when running and reaching, even in rough water. The lifting rudder allows easy beaching and the boat is steered by a vertical tiller mounted just forward of the after bulkhead.

The mast is stepped on deck, also so as not to impede progress below. The mast is only 21ft above the deck and the sail area has been kept small. There is only 98 sq ft in the mainsail and 65 in the working staysail (about the same as an International 14ft dinghy), with a masthead genoa of 110 sq ft for light weather.

This boat has been proved in practice, and experience indicates that for day sailing and an occasional week-end she does all that her designer could ask of her. Her performance to windward, considering the small sail plan, is all that could be expected; but her performance off the wind is sparkling, especially in rough water, when she wave-rides and planes very easily. In spite of her flat sections she is a surprisingly good sea boat and the full bow keeps her dry and buoyant in a seaway. The many competitors in the 1952



Transom is wider than necessary but gives a stable hull



Casings for twin loaded dagger-plates allow easy access to fore-cabin

round the Island race will remember that conditions were somewhat severe, and certainly bad enough to cause anxiety to the skipper of the normal 22ft cruiser. Yet, Alan Vines finished without difficulty and in better time than many far bigger boats.

In average weather Sujawiz has about the same sail area as a 14ft International

