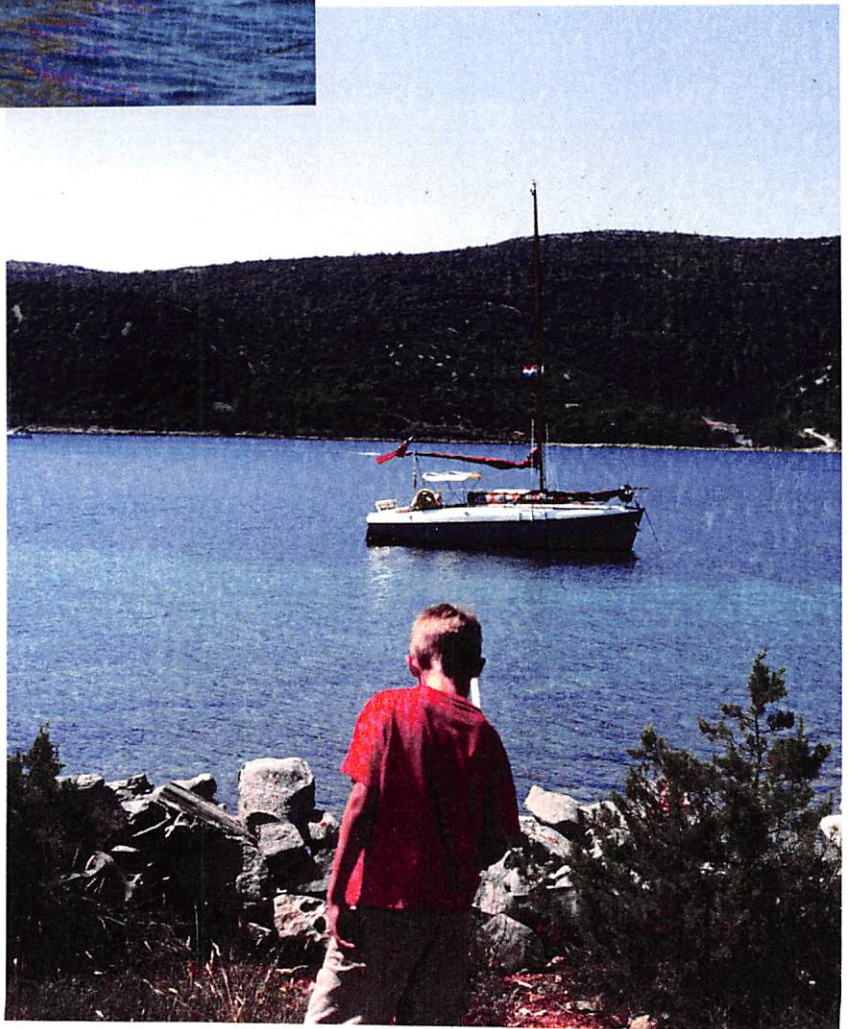


ATALANTA OWNERS' ASSOCIATION



**2006 – 2007
BULLETIN**



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2006 – 2007 BULLETIN

48th Edition

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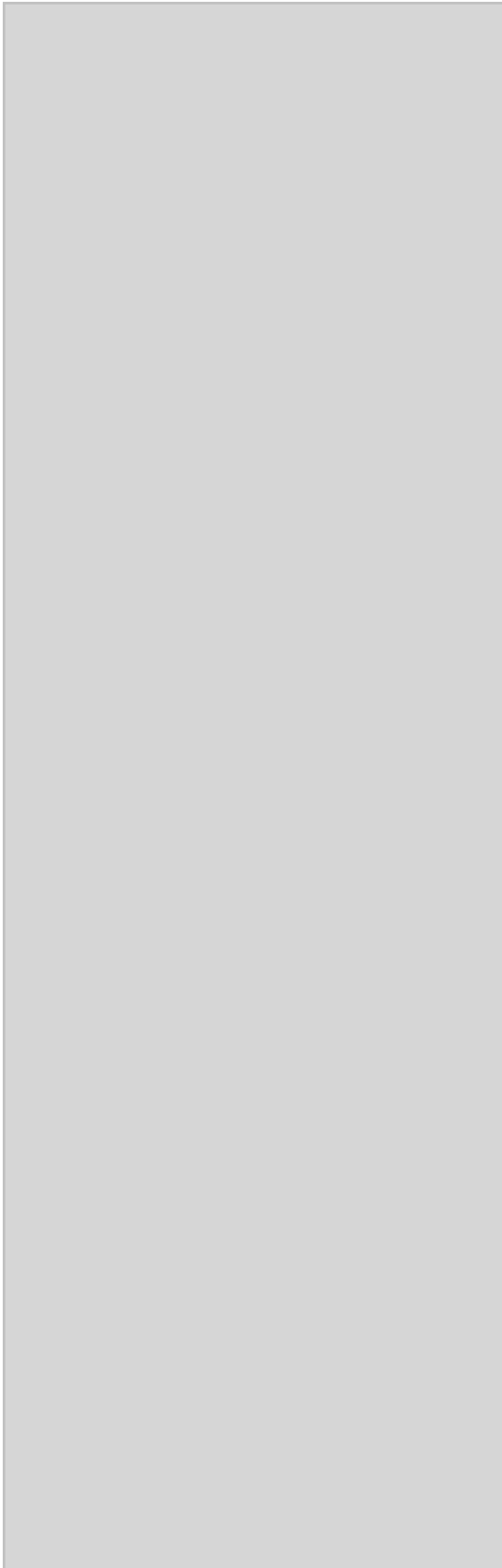
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Inside front cover	T10 "Calista" in Croatia – see article page 12 Photographs by Trevor and Dinah Thompson
Inside back cover	Double bed – see article page 9 Photographs from Peter Martin
Back cover	A31/4 "Gellie" Hamble 2005 Photograph by Trevor Thompson

COMMITTEE 2005 – 2006
(Until AGM January 2007)

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Commodore's address

If, like me, you've been somewhat confused in relation to the Association's recent activities – a feeling of being outside the loop – I can assure you that the AOA is, to use a nautical phrase, back on an even keel. This is in no small way due to the considerable efforts of back-room Association stalwarts.

Since most of you will be reading this post AGM in January, I am confident that any queries you may have had will have been explained fully.

I am confident that the Association is in good heart. As long as there are boats, the Association will continue to serve its members well.

Best wishes and good sailing.

Fred Boothman

From the Editor

As indicated in the last editorial (only a few months ago) I said that I was ready to hand over to a fresh pair of hands. Depending on the decisions taken by members at the January AGM, it looks like this will be my last Bulletin. It's been a privilege and despite the annual last minute panic over the lack of copy, the members unfailingly produce an eclectic mix of articles – so thank you for making the job so easy.

The cover photograph for this year's edition came about by bizarre co-incidence. In late November, Sheila and I were at a laying up dinner in Corby (don't ask – far too complicated!). The after dinner speaker was Dick Holness, co-author of the new East Coast Pilotage guide. One of his slides was A95 "Hiran" on her mooring at Erith with Colin up by the mast. Too good to pass by, Dick Holness waived copyright as long as I put in a plug for the Pilotage Guide (www.eastcoastpilot.com) – so I have!

I know I probably shouldn't but here's another plug. A31/4 "Gellie" is still for sale and whilst I'm not about to give her away, I really do want her used, so please do give me a call as I'm receptive to all offers! It's more important to have her out on the water than to hold out for more money!

I shall continue to be an Associate member and look forward to news and views in the years to come. The very best of good fortune to you and your boats.

Mike Dixon

Homage to an Atalanta

Fred Boothman

Commodore

One thing was clear, our next boat would not be of wood. Tradition was all right but we'd spent far too much time in the boat yard and too little time actually sailing. The fibreglass we came to see was disappointing, but an unusual craft was catching our attention. It was our first sight of an Atalanta. Not pretty, but looking very seaworthy with the curved deck matching the trawler behind it. But it was wood, out of the question, it was dismissed forthwith. A week later we'd bought it, not really knowing why, but it would be revealed in due course. Brought down to the farm, we conducted a fuller inspection and inventory check. The Atalanta was basically sound, but of the inventory very little was present. No radio, no compass, no depth sounder (even the lead version). A Walker trailing log was available – minus rotator – “taken by sharks” the vendors declared. A huge SL toilet blocked solid occupied the fore-cabin – “we use a bucket,” admitted the vendors. No galley of any description was evident and the water tank had never been coupled. No charts, no chart table. Overall neglect was our conclusion, but it could be rescued.

The decision was taken to undertake a rough and ready refit. A galley of sorts was constructed, with washbasin and paraffin cooker using chipboard – so too a chart table opposite – and sundry other items installed. A three week cruise of the Western Isles would then be ventured, a kind of shake-down cruise, find out how things worked and what further changes needed to be made, and on the basis of what we found, whether we wished to keep the Atalanta. As it turned out, the Atalanta was going to give something of a demonstration and a kind of bonding would take place.

The return passage saw the Atalanta quite badly damaged. A full knockdown of Sanda Island ripped the giant SL toilet away. The galley and chart table were smashed to pieces with a dismantled cooker on top and a pan of pre-prepared curry dripping from the roof onto the spread-eagled charts. In addition the engine had pulled two bolts through the hull necessitating constant pumping when under sail. Later we found the rudder severely bent and an odd twist in the mast. But this was the real point; the Atalanta had got us home! (In later years the Atalanta would do it again – it was very forgiving).

Back in the barn the refit commenced. With neither guardrails nor pulpit, we'd found working the foredeck somewhat hazardous and working through the fore hatch held by its flimsy piano hinge was literally asking for it. We went for the recently introduced furling gear, moulded a domed hatch in fibreglass and fitted it with die-cast hinges. That we reckoned would keep us off the deck. To keep us in the cockpit, a large eyebolt was bolted to the sole with limited lifelines to keep us there. New chain plates were fitted and the ones on the transom lengthened to give a better purchase. The mast was very soft at the heel. We replaced it with an aluminium mast ex Centaur. We'd been very impressed (and gratified) by the speed the Atalanta had got back up again after the knockdown, particularly since we were using Egyptian cotton sails – very heavy when wet. Clearly the Atalanta was designed with a safe margin of error in the righting moment, so we decided to raise the aspect ratio a little by increasing the mast height, going for a mast-head genoa and opting for terylene sails. While we were at it, we raised the boom and fitted a spray hood. Finally the underside was streamlined wherever possible with particular attention given to the careful fitting of neoprene sealing rubbers to the keel boxes. We had noted the drag and lack of speed caused by badly fitted rubbers. One act of folly - we opted to have the rudder blade straightened by hydraulic press – we should have replaced it!

Back in the water we were in a position to assess performance. We didn't expect much; the articles we had read relating to contemporary yachts didn't rate the Atalanta in that regard – steady rather than sparkling. So we were pleasantly surprised by the performance under sail. The Irish Sea crossing we were undertaking were giving quite good times, confirmed when crossing with other similar vessels. Later, when we began to enter club races, we were

unlikely to fill the trophy cupboard but we were always there or thereabouts. The Atalanta was always able to show off its pointing ability on the one leg the bilge keel race organisers allowed us.

The most memorable trip was when we slipped the mooring at 0300 on what would be a beautiful summer's day, leaving Incline on the Lleyn Peninsula, with a 4 to 5 rising behind us. Turning through Bardsey, we broad reached across Hell's Mouth, past St Tudwell's Island, across Tremadoc Bay and into Shell island. We picked up our mooring at 0900 – six hours, thirty-six miles – six knots. The Atalanta? – not bad at all.

Finally, to complete this pantheon in praise of the Atalanta, we produced another party piece – this time in the Mediterranean.

Once again we were in deep trouble. We had been over doing it, holding onto full sail for too long when the inevitable broach lost us the rudder. The Atalanta was being set down onto a group of off-liers north of Corfu. We tried all tricks regarding jury rigs to no avail and the situation looked hopeless. The Atalanta, sails flapping madly, seemed to be awaiting instructions.

What if?.....we reasoned. We started to adjust the sail balance by rolling and unrolling the genoa using the furling gear. It took some time and many attempts but eventually the sail flapping ended, the Atalanta stiffened and moved off. The rocky off-liers slipped slowly away. Progress was steady but uni-directional and we were reduced to passive occupants of the cockpit as we ploughed on through the night. But where was the Atalanta taking us? The dreaded Albania – some 25 miles away – was the answer.

Dawn broke over a calm sea. The Atalanta had brought us to inshore Albania. The sails were quite limp. We waited for the boat to be confiscated as we had been warned, and ourselves to be ransomed or placed in some Gulag (or both!). Nothing happened though we could see activity ashore, but no gum boats emerged. Should we wave to attract attention we pondered but concluded it was akin to turkeys voting for an early Christmas. We felt that the Atalanta was urging us to get a grip and “do something” – but what? Looking over the transom, we could see that there was about three inches of the broken rudder blade immersed in the water. What if, we speculated.....? We shifted as much weight aft as we could, including anchor and chain, noting an extra six inches of blade immersion had been gained. The game had changed and the objective now was not to be noticed! We handed the sails, started the engine and gingerly turned the Atalanta in the direction of Corfu. The Albanian Commissars would have to be disappointed. Once again a damaged Atalanta would overcome the circumstances and get us home.

A long-term deal was struck. If we behaved sensibly in future, then so too would the Atalanta. The Atalanta is some boat!



STICKING KEELS

Peter Davies

A137 “Baby Seal”

Finding either one or both keels firmly stuck at the beginning of the season is not at all uncommon. I used to free them by putting a block of wood down the keel box top and hitting it with a lump hammer. I split lots of blocks of wood before I opted for a short length of scaffold pipe. The most effective solution, suggested to me by Colin Twyford, was to put a piece of wood down the keel box and stand on it. The following idea is a direct descendant of this technique.

The starting point is a piece of wood about two metres or more long with a thickness close to the width of the keel box slot. One end has to be fitted with a metal shoe that is easily made from two pieces of metal strip bent into 'U' sections which can then be nailed onto the wood. The type of metal is not critical as they only get wet when in use. Rusting might be problem during storage. The metal needs to be thick enough and hard enough to resist cutting and the keel acting as a wedge to split the wood.

The other end of the wood has the corners planed off and worked into a roughly circular section. This end could also be protected by a metal plate but I did not do this. I whipped the end and dipped the whipping in resin to stop the whipping slipping.

The hinged flap on the cockpit seat must be removed and the section of grating covering the cockpit drain is removed. Insert the prepared piece of wood into the drain and push it down until the metal clad end is in contact with the keel. Mark the height of the cockpit seat and remove the piece of wood from the drain. Drill two holes through the wood of the appropriate diameter to be a snug fit on either very thick dowelling or, better still thick-walled metal tubing. Make the first hole 10 cms. above the height of the cockpit seat and the second hole 20 cms. above the first hole. Cut two pieces of dowelling or metal tube about 30 cms. long and push them into the holes so as to provide short steps on each side of the upright piece of wood.

Slacken the keel bolts and the clamping plates. Wind the keel down about five or six turns. Do not wind the stirrup down too far as the keel may drop suddenly and damage the top pivot bolt. Put the tool down the drain, stand on the cockpit seat and then move your feet so that your heels are on the lower step. Rock back a bit and put your full weight on the step. It is possible to retain your balance by holding onto the cabin top with one hand and the top end of the wood with the other hand. The keel will probably move. If not it does help to have an assistant to hit the top of the tool with a lump hammer. The keel will move. Once it has done so wind it back up again and then wind it down. If it does not go down smoothly repeat the standing and hammering. Once the first few inches of movement have been gained you will have to wind the stirrup a few inches further and use the upper step to stand on.

This approach is effective because of the forces being applied to the keel. In my case the force applied during standing is approximately 1000 foot/pounds, just short of half a ton. A good blow from a lump hammer probably adds another 100 foot/pound as well the sharp impact helping to break the initial binding.

After use the tool can be dismantled and stored under the aft cabin sole or under one of the berths.

Prevention of binding is far better than coping with it once it has happened. I am sure that the best preventative of all would be regular maintenance of the keel mechanism. However, I have never had the boat in a situation where I could have dropped the keels and now I am much too old to even contemplate it.

When laying the boat up ashore leave all six nuts slackened off. Whenever possible wind the keels up and down as far as possible (probably only 10 cms. or so). Make sure that you always leave the keels slightly lowered, as there is then always a chance of breaking mild binding by lifting them. If the keels can be lowered so that they touch the ground, and the nuts are left slack then any wind rock will work the keels from side to side all through the storage period.

Grease is also a good preventative. However do beware. This year one of my grease nipples failed and the ball valve stayed open. After six weeks after launching the water found its way past the grease and leaked through the nipple. Unfortunately this happened some time during a 10 day period when I could not get to the boat. Over the period it had taken approximately 10 gallons of water. When I got the water level low enough I found the leak, the starboard keel bolt doing a first class imitation of a famous Dutch statue with a noticeable dribble. No permanent cure was possible with the boat afloat and in any case I doubt that I shall be able to find an Imperial threaded nipple anyway. The temporary remedy was to repack the bolt with grease, sufficient to stop the water flow. I then cleaned the hole with a bit of wire, and

abraded the outside of the nipple with wet and dry paper lubricated with acetone. Before any water or grease appeared I was able to plug the hole and cover the nipple with a fast setting epoxy paste. This bodge has held all season. It is an unlikely hazard but I hate to think what would have happened had the leak continued for another two or three weeks. It would not have sunk the boat but there would have been a lot of damage. The first warning sign had been overlooked. I had noticed a grease stain on the floorboard under the nipple and merely cleaned it off assuming that it spillage from the greasing. Do check and if you find grease where it should not be then inspect regularly. It is not a problem that I have ever heard about before, but clearly grease nipples below the water line are a potential hazard.



Rudder Refurbishment

Trevor Thompson

T10 "Calista"

Since we first bought "Calista" (which must be all of 8 years ago now) I have been frustrated by trying to keep the paint adhering to her rudder. Perhaps the situation was not helped by having coated the hull with "Coperbot" instead of traditional antifouling. Last winter I decided to do something about the rudder – particularly since I had just read the article on rudders "Time to change rudder blades" (AOA 1979). "Calista" has therefore recently been treated to a new rudder blade and a reconditioned rudder stock.

I have no issues or adverse comments to make on the original article – but a few updates and additions to add.

Firstly, I obtained a blank of aluminium alloy of the equivalent grade and 12mm thick from a commercial supplier and paid just under £100 for it. I used 12mm because it was the closest to the original thickness that I could find. The next size down is 10mm which I considered too thin – in that it was too loose a fit in the stock. I marked out the new rudder by basically drawing around the existing one and cutting it out with a jig saw. I used a metal cutting blade and lubricated it with turpentine substitute. Note that the correct lubricant is Paraffin (kerosene), but the turps worked OK. It is important to keep the lubricant away from the motor because it is clearly inflammable. As long as the tool is well lubricated it will not be a problem, but be careful as there is in theory a fire hazard here. I then used an orbital sander with an aluminium oxide pad (with no lubricant) to clean up the blade, including smoothing the edges, rounding them off, and cleaning up all of the scratches on the sides of the blade. It worked well and did not take too long, but it did use up a few pads. I found that the blade was a tight fit and would not fit fully into the stock so I "sanded it down" a bit more until it did fit. Amazing that you can actually remove 0.5mm like that! I only removed the metal where it was preventing it entering the stock – leaving the area where it emerges from the stock as thick as possible to maximise the strength.

All of the rudder components were dismantled and the paint thoroughly removed. The stock itself had the bearings for the pintles removed. They are a press fit but they may need drilling out. Take care not to cut into the alloy stock if you do have to drill them out. The bushes seem harder than the stock so if you go off centre then the drill wanders into the soft alloy. The top pintle is a press fit into an alloy block and is held in with a pin from the side. The pin can be drifted out and the pintle then removed. Some heat helped here – alloy expands more than stainless – so it tends to slacken off the fit. The lower pintle is all stainless and fixed into the skeg – so I left that alone.

The object of stripping it all down (and particularly removing all of the stainless inserts from the alloy) was to allow the alloy parts to be anodised. I am convinced that this is the key to success with these rudders. The aluminium anodising is an electrical insulator as well as a

very hard surface, which will resist wear. The electrical insulation is critical, because it is by insulating all of the aluminium components from each other and other materials that corrosion can be prevented. The problem is electrolytic corrosion. This is where two different metals placed in a solution create a battery. I am sure we all remember how to make a battery with a lemon. This is just the same except that instead of lemon juice we have salt water. Each metal has a different voltage potential and the strength of the battery depends upon which metals are in the salt water. For example stainless steel and aluminium have similar voltages, so there is a weak battery effect. On the other hand, the coppers and brasses have very different voltages to aluminium and create a strong battery and therefore really powerful corrosion. By the way all of the other metals have to be removed before anodising because they react in the anodising bath and destroy the solution, which annoys the anodisers.

I used my lathe to make up new "top hat" bushes for the pintles, and for the blade pivot. I used "Nylatron", a bearing grade of nylon which has a light green colour. It is a good self lubricating plastics material which is cheaper than PTFE (which would have been even better). The only problem with these special bearing plastics is that they slightly absorb water over time and can expand by 10%. So the bearing has to be made slightly slack, but without being sloppy. If it is too tight it will seize up after a few weeks in the water! I made a new bush for the centre of the blade, and made it wide enough to fill the width of the slot (so that the rudder would not slop about and there would be less contact between the stock and the blade).

I also drilled two holes in the sides of the stock – where they had become splayed apart – and made bearings to take up the slack. In other words, I turned up a rod to fit into the hole and left a wider section sticking out into the slot. There was one on each side, opposing each other. If the cheeks of the stock were 15 mm apart at that point I made the blocks stick out 2.5mm – so that the 12 mm blade had no slop ($1.5 + 1.5 + 12 = 15$).

The effect of this has been to completely remove the movement between the blade and stock, so that the steering is much more precise. Incidentally it also improves the insulation between the stock and blade. It stops the blade from rubbing against the stock and wearing away the anodising!

At the same time I made a new blade pivot pin from the same grade of alloy as the blade – now I have read the article I know I should have used a different grade for the pin – but it works so far so I will leave it alone. I almost made the pin out of Nylon! I am still not sure that the loads on the pin are so great as to need such a strong alloy. Anyway I made two new nuts for the pivot pin, and I did make those out of "Nylatron". Instead of flats to use a spanner I drilled a hole into each nut so that two Allen keys (or round pins) could be used to loosen and tighten them.

Any work on the rudder would be incomplete without refurbishing the pivot for the whipstaff. I took it all to pieces and made a new bearing out of phosphor bronze, complete with lubrication hole and slot. The greaser used to just pump the grease out of the bearing as fast as it was turned. Now the bearing fits properly it only takes half a turn for the greaser to be impossible to turn further, which seems to indicate that the clearance on the bush is about right.

I was also annoyed by the play between the whipstaff and the wires. I noticed that the square section where the whipstaff pivots was moving on the shaft, so I fitted a tapered pin to lock it firmly. I also made a new pivot pin and locking screws for the whipstaff pivot to cut out play in that joint.

I dismantled all of the rudder pulleys in the aft cabin and made new brass bushes for them. I am currently contemplating fitting sealed stainless steel ball races to reduce steering friction. The stainless steering wires were also replaced. I suspect that they are meant to be replaced frequently.

So how does it all work? Well after 4 weeks in Welsh waters and 6 weeks in the Adriatic I can confirm that the steering is much more positive, perhaps a little stiff if anything. Also there

have been no signs of corrosion in any of the components. The blade and stock have all of their paint intact, and that is a first (it has always bubbled and lifted off in the past). Perhaps part of the solution is the new blade which does not have any pitting in it, but I am convinced that the anodising is really the difference. The rudder stock and the pintles are also totally clear of corrosion, and they are the original items so the difference does seem to be in the anodising. Note that I have left the rudder unpainted above the waterline.

The one thing which is left over – and intrigues me - is the provision of emergency steering. It looks as if the “tiller” on the rudder head has an extension into the cabin which is of a round cross section, as if it was intended to take a tube over it. Was this intended to have an emergency tiller protruding into the cockpit from the aft cabin? Has anyone got one? Has anyone seen drawings for emergency steering?



The Double Bed

PG Martin

A92 “Sea Major”

The appeal for technical articles in last year's bulletin cannot go unanswered. We have had this arrangement of the double bed for many years but as we get older, we feel the cold more, and so the need for old-fashioned “bundling” becomes greater. The bed must run lengthways in the fore cabin and the first essential is deep comfortable covered foam mattresses. In the daytime these will be arranged normally. Another essential is a pair of folding bunkboards, needed anyway in rough weather or bouncy anchorages.

To start with, a piece of fairly thin marine plywood the size and shape of one of the existing bunks is supported by many 50mm square blocks. This is to bring the mattress on the existing bunk to exactly the same height as the central mattress will be. So don't cut the supports to length until this crucial height is determined (Picture 1).

Supporting the central mattress over the central part of the fore cabin is surprisingly easy. The bunkboards are lifted to the horizontal position and cut so they fit exactly together – losing a little of their area at the fore end. A strong piece of 25mm thick wood must be cut to shape to fit the gap between the horizontal bunk boards at their aft end (Picture 2).

Only one more device is needed – a means to support the two bunkboards and the central plank firmly in the horizontal position. We use two vertical posts, one for'd and one aft. They are located in position by short pieces of 6mm dowel rod permanently in position in the posts top and bottom. The lower end of the posts fit into sockets in the central hog. The upper end of the posts locate into the in-fill piece of thick wood. Each of these posts must be wide enough to support both the bunkboards and the central plank. It needs two people to locate the posts. Finally, a 20cm length of 6mm metal rod is located on the top of the bunkboards and central plank slotted into three lacing eyes – so that the whole structure is totally firm, yet easily dismantled for daytime use of the cabin (Picture 3).

Picture 4 shows the bed fully assembled. Highly recommended both for the fun of constructing it and for the fun of using it.



Twenty years of reefing "Baby Seal"

Peter Davies

When I first owned the boat it was fitted with the standard boom roller reefing system with the mainsheet attached to a roller claw. There was also a storm headsail that could be set in place of any other headsail. I always enjoyed sailing the boat in heavy weather and would often go to sea when most other people were coming in for shelter. The disadvantages of the original system soon began to show.

For a start, the roller claw was inadequate. Under heavy sheet loads the attachment end began to twist. It could be straightened fairly easily but it seemed to become progressively more prone to twisting. The solution was to have a second longitudinal bar welded so that the claw was held both sides of the boom. This cured the twisting problem which only encouraged me to sail the boat in even heavier weather.

This soon showed up another problem as I began to have need of even deeper reefs. With each turn of mainsail round the boom the leech of the sail became more slack and the boom drooped lower. At its limits the boom was almost scraping on the sheet horse. The remedy was to fish the boom, i.e. to make the boom have a taper so the leech end was approximately one inch greater diameter than the gooseneck end. To achieve this I glued and nailed strips of wood approximately half an inch thick at one end and tapered to the minimum thickness at the other to the outboard end of the boom. These strips were approximately half the length of the boom. When the glue had dried the strips were sanded down to get a nice circular cross section and the gaps between them was filled with resin. This went a long way towards solving the drooping problem but did little to help with the slackening of the leech unless there was one person in the cockpit ready to keep pulling the rolling sail taut towards the end of the boom. Otherwise the leech worked forward with each roll and the sail ended up wrinkled with a slack leech. However, it was a workable system even though far from ideal as so much depended on how well the sail was rolled.

Come 1990 I decided it was time to replace the original mainsail. I am not quite sure why I opted to have one line of reef points put in at the level that would reduce the sail area to half. I think the reasoning was that if any part of the roller system was to fail then there was the option of one very large slab reef with the mainsheet being taken back to the topping lift attachment. Fortunately no eventuality ever occurred to test this arrangement.

The following year I decided to fit a headsail reefing system and a new headsail as the original sail was well past its sell by date. For two years I had been using a second hand Dragon genoa which was beautifully cut but was a pain to use as it had a zipped luff. This was no sail to use short handed, or to try to lower with a bad swell running. However, in moderate weather its radial cut far out performed the original Atalanta sail despite it being a fraction smaller in area.

The convenience of headsail roller reefing made me think about getting rid of the mainsail roller reefing system and going over to slab reefing. I took off the claw system, lightening the boom considerably, and had a second line of reefing points put into the mainsail. I then had two reefing positions, the first slightly more than with the more usual three lines of points system, and the second somewhere near to the normal third reef. I left the roller system handle and pawl part of the gear in place and gipped a spare shackle at the boom end so that in an emergency I could shift the mainsheet to this and revert to roller reefing if necessary.

Initially the two reefs were rigged with single lines that were fixed to the boom, went through the reefing cringle before coming back down the other side of the sail to a cheek block before going forward to cleats near the gooseneck. This system worked well enough until the day I nearly garrotted my crew when he got his head between the slack in the second reefing line and the boom just as the sail began to draw again. He was lucky to get away just losing his glasses in what was a seriously dangerous situation.

To avoid this problem the next modification was to fix plastic tubing the length of the boom and to run the lines through the tubes. Any slack in the second reefing line was thus kept out of the cockpit area until it could be taken out and cleated off near the gooseneck. However, the tubing did constrain the angle through which the lines could be pulled and the forward ends of the tubes kept getting pulled off the boom. It was safe, but it was not convenient.

I was discussing this problem with Marshall Jenkins (Gambol A 17) and he outlined his fixed reefing pennant system which did not have any lines permanently running along the boom. I do not think that I ever quite understood his system but I was able to work out a derivative that I am still using. Two cheek blocks are required for each reefing pennant, one fixed each side of the boom. Positioning them is tricky as they must be far enough aft to pull the foot of the sail taut and not too far aft so that the foot of the sail cannot lift away from the boom. A single line is then threaded through both cheek blocks and the ends are knotted together at the cringle. An Englefield clip is threaded onto the line so that it is one the line between the cheek blocks on the underside of the boom. The knot has to be tied to the cringle to stop the knotted end gradually working away from the sail; without this additional restraint the knot will gradually work its way down to a cheek block and stop the pennant pulling the sail down properly. It pays to use distinctively coloured lines so that identifying the correct lines is easy. The lines that would normally run along the boom are replaced with detachable lines each with an Englefield clip at one end. To take in the first reef the appropriate line is clipped to the pennant and the reef taken in. The second pennant will become slack but the spare bight of line will be safely out of the way over the stern deck. A suitably positioned cleat on the boom allows this bight of line to be hooked up tidily. When another reef is required the process is repeated by hooking on another reefing line. By using coloured pennants and matching removable lines there is no confusion as to which line belongs where. At no time are there any loose bights of line in the cockpit area. The system is very safe.

The final modification to my mainsail reefing system was necessitated by my own idiocy. About five years ago I picked up an 8mm. Pickup line between two buoys. I was single handed, the wind caught the boat and the line began to slip. I was silly enough to wrap the line round my hand to check the slippage and found that the stretch in the line made it impossible to let go. I dislocated nearly all the knuckles of my left hand. The end result is that I now have a very poor grip with my left hand and I certainly cannot pull in the reefing lines by hand. The solution was to fit a five part tackle to the boom near the gooseneck and Englefield clips to the end of the tackle and the reefing lines. It was also necessary to put two cleats on the boom near the gooseneck and to tie a short length of line into the reefing lines near the ends which go to the tackle. When the lines have been hauled taut the additional bit of line is cleated off and the tackle slackened so that the Englefield clips can be undone thus freeing off the tackle for when the next reef is required.

If conditions get really bad my two reefs are not enough. The mainsail has to come off and the boom is unshipped and tied down and a trysail bent on instead. However, this is not often. I think that I have probably only had to do this half a dozen times since I had the boat.

Thee headsail roller reefing system copes well enough up to F6 or thereabouts. Above that wind speed the amount of sail reduction leads to a rather poor set as well as moving the reduced sail too far forward to create a really effective slot. The answer has been to fix a temporary forestay. Initially I anchored this to a U bolt just behind the fore-hatch which is probably just about the ideal position for it. However, it really did interfere with the opening of the hatch and the U bolt has now been moved to the top of the windlass just in front of the hatch. The position is not so good but life is easier. When conditions merit it the headsail is rolled right away and the sheets are tied off so that there is no slack to foul anything else. The storm sail is set on the temporary stay. It works far better than a slightly baggy rolled forestay.

Other modifications not mentioned above as they are not directly related to the problems of reefing are getting rid of the sheet horse and substituting twin main sheets, and fitting permanently rigged gybe preventers. Getting rid of the sheet horse lightens the boat and improves access to the rear cabin. The twin mainsheets also make fully controlled gybes possible, and easy, in any strength of wind. Over quite a wide angle one sheet can be used to set the sail angle and the other used as a very powerful kicking strap This benefit is lost once

the point of attachment to the boom goes outside the width of the cockpit. However, after that point the kicking strap is less useful and the gybe preventers come into their own. With a preventer fitted it is safe to use a tiller-pilot on a downwind run or let a novice learn to steer on a run. An accidental gybe just causes the top of the sail to flip over but the boom stays safely in one place.

Ironically, now that I have got my sail controls as I want them for all conditions I have very little need of any of these modifications. I have given up serious cruising and confine myself to day sailing. Whitby harbour is impossible for small boats to either enter or leave with any northerly component of any strength. Other strong winds come off the land which provides a weather shore. It is usual to be able to assess just how much sail to set before leaving the moorings and all reefing can be done at leisure before going to sea.



“Calista’s” Summer Cruise – 2006

Dinah Thompson

T10 “Calista”

Summer 2006 saw us towing “Calista” across Europe to a marina in Northern Italy, from where we started our cruise down the Croatian coast. This is a journey that we have now successfully completed several times, trying various routes. This year’s route differed slightly from previous years in that we took the ferry from Dover to Calais, rather than Portsmouth to Le Havre, but once we had skirted Paris we followed a now familiar route stopping off at campsites in Melun, Chalons-sur-Saone, and Quincinetto in the Dolomites. We spent an extra day on the journey down in an attempt to make the journey less tiring for Trevor as driver, and less boring for the boys.

Over the years we have tried various routes across Europe, but now prefer to use the French motorway system. We have to pay tolls but the motorways are less crowded than in Germany and Austria, and, with the exception of the Mont Blanc tunnel, all the tunnels have one-way traffic only.

We were away from home for six weeks and got as far south as Vis. The purpose of the trip was to up-date our “Adriatic Pilot”, but the boys insisted that it had to be a holiday as well. A lot of time was spent swimming, walking and exploring castles and old towns as well as sailing. It was a summer unlike any other with unsettled weather and frequent vicious thunderstorms. Fortunately Croatia has plenty of secure anchorages.

We left home on Saturday 22nd July and stayed at a campsite near Ashford in Kent, enabling us to have a good night’s sleep before crossing to France the next day. The journey through France was split into short sections by spending one night at a campsite near Melun, and a second night near Chalons-sur-Saone. On the Tuesday we crossed into Italy via the Mont Blanc tunnel. The height of the boat was checked at the toll booth, and confirmed as 2.99m. Another cm and the toll would have been 250 euros, rather than 42.10 euros! We spent another night at a campsite near Aosta, and the following day covered 300 miles to reach S. Giorgio. Two of the campsites we have used several times in the past, but the other two were located using the internet. All were booked in advance.

We had also contacted Marina S. Giorgio di Nogaro in advance, but there is never any problem launching “Calista” there. The marina is very professional, and we can leave car and trailer in a secure area whilst we are away. The marina has a swimming pool, luxurious showers, laundry facilities and an excellent restaurant – all very welcome after five days on

the road. Nearby is a large supermarket where we are able to stock up with essential groceries.

Friday, 28th July

"Calista" finally left the marina at midday. We motored down the river and were out on the Adriatic an hour later, where we hoisted the sail and steered for Croatia. Alex did a passage plan to Umag. Not far from Umag, however, we decided to press on for Novigrad and had dinner at sea. When we reached Novigrad the customs office was closed, so we went over to the northern part of the bay and anchored.

Just as it was getting dark, we heard a rushing of wind in the trees, and were then hit by a vicious squall and torrential rain. We were in for a major storm so decided to pick up a heavy mooring nearby. It took two attempts, with Alex on the helm and Trevor and me on the foredeck. The thunder, lightning, wind and rain were alarming, with the storm passing directly over us. The wind was gusting from all directions, but we were sheltered from the worst of it. The town's lights went out (although the breakwater lights still functioned) and the disco music and funfair were silenced. Although the boys fell asleep Trevor and I didn't get to sleep until the early hours of the morning.

Saturday, 29/7/06

Saturday was a beautiful morning with clear skies and a limpid sea. Trevor and I had a swim around the boat. Alex dipped his toes in the water, but was alarmed to see a shoal of small fish sheltering by our rudder being hunted by larger fish, including an 18" garfish! Magnus decided that the water was too cold for him!

After breakfast we dropped the mooring and went to the Customs' Quay to sign in officially. It took some while for the paperwork to be completed by which time we had a queue of five people behind us. Back at the quay it was busy – being Saturday there was an influx of Italians who had come over in their powerboats for the weekend! Leaving the boys on the boat Trevor and I went to do some shopping and to investigate the new marina under construction.

We were finally underway at noon. It was a beautiful afternoon, and we managed to fly the new spinnaker for a while. Later on the sky started to cloud over with some towering cumulus nimbus over the Istrian peninsula. We decided to go down the Fazanski Kanal, rather than outside the Brioni Islands to give ourselves the option of nipping into Pula if necessary. As it happens the wind increased, and there were black clouds and lightning as we reached the end of the channel, so we dropped the main and went into Pula. We anchored in 6m in the Vela Draga, well away from two other yachts at anchor.

Fortunately we had a quiet evening and night as the storm did not develop.

Sunday, 30/7/06

Our 29th Wedding Anniversary. We got up at 5.30 to another pristine morning with not a breath of wind and clear opalescent sky. There were dolphins hunting their breakfast within the harbour. The boys did not share our excitement when we called them to watch. Alex came out to help get Calista under way, but Magnus didn't stir.

Trevor pulled up the anchor and was delighted to find that we had been anchored in really thick grey clay – excellent holding! We sailed under genoa from the harbour entrance to Luka Paltana where we anchored in 3m before 08.00. Today was to be a day at anchor, so Magnus and I rowed ashore for a long walk and to explore, whilst Alex read, and Trevor pottered.

In the afternoon we all swam and read, and then Trevor and Alex rowed over to the north side to collect water. Alex also went for a long run (to keep himself match fit!). Our evening meal was enjoyed in the cockpit with a moonlit sea.

Monday, 31/7/06

Trevor and I were up at 5.30 and underway by 6.00, bound for Mali Losinj. We motor sailed from Luka Paltana, but were able to shut the engine down when east of Rt Kamenjak. Eventually the boys materialised, but Magnus felt sick so did without breakfast. The wind was light and the sea slight. Whilst we were putting up the spinnaker we had a school of dolphins around us – great excitement, even eliciting a slight show of interest from Magnus!

The spinnaker kept collapsing, so we took it down and motor-sailed to Unije. At 13.30 we anchored in the bay to the east of Rt Vnetak for a quick swim and lunch.

After lunch we had a spinnaker reach all the way to Uvala Inglesi on Otok Losinj, where we anchored in 10m, putting out all the chain. The boys rigged the boat covers, inflated the dinghy and then rowed inshore to do some diving and bird watching. The migratory birds from Italy met with their approval!

At 18.30 upped anchor to move to Uvala Artaturi and anchored in our usual corner and had a quick swim before dinner in the cockpit.

Tuesday 1/8/06

Having had a peaceful night we were up early and motored to Mali Losinj for supplies. We arrived at the outer marina as a queue was forming to go through the bridge, so we hung around taking photos.

We continued to the town marina, and tied up alongside the quay near the fuel berth. Magnus and I went to buy bread, a Croatian version of petit pains au chocolat, and fresh milk for breakfast. After breakfast we did some more shopping, buying fresh sardines at the fish market, and fruit and vegetables at the covered market. We also refilled the water tanks by container, and bought two containers of diesel from the fuel berth (so avoiding the hassle of queue jumpers). Just before leaving we treated ourselves to ice-creams.

By raising the keels we were able to take a short cut through a gap leading to the SW side of Losinj and then sail south. The earlier hot sunshine gave way to clouds and the promise of thunderstorms, so we decided to head for Luka Krvica. Inside Krvica we raised the keels and went to the far end. Alex dropped the anchor and I swam a line ashore. The water was not too cold, so the boys got out their masks and snorkels and Trevor also had a swim. In the evening, before dinner, we went for a walk around the shore and had a look out to sea. It didn't look rough, but the boats nearer the entrance were surging about. Just as we got back onboard it started to rain heavily, and we had yet another thunderstorm.

Whilst we were having supper we were treated to a live jazz concert from one of the other boats. Whoever was playing the trumpet was very good, and got rounds of applause. Alex and Magnus were not that impressed! The concert ended at about 11pm, and was shortly followed by a celestial son et lumiere. We were glad to be in a secure anchorage.

Wednesday, 2/8/06

Trevor and I were up early and set off for Ilovik under motor, where we anchored SE of the village for breakfast. After breakfast we continued to Silba under sail. With a gentle following wind Trevor and Alex hoisted the spinnaker and were pleased with its set. It pulled well, and looked good.

We picked up a visitors' buoy in the southern part of the anchorage between Ist and Molat (the Prolaz Zapuntel) and went for a swim before lunch, which we had in the cockpit. After lunch we crossed over to look at the anchorage off Zapuntel village, and then hoisted the sail and continued down the west side of Molat. We had a good sail down to the Zaliv Panterea at the northern end of Dugi Otok, but the afternoon got progressively greyer with a build up of threatening clouds.

Entering the Zaliv Pantera there were a number of boats anchored or on visitors' buoys in the outer anchorage. There is also a new marina close to the village. We went past it, and into

the shelter of Uvala Cuna beyond. The boys were interested in the nubile crew on a French motor boat, rather than in the scenery. We anchored in 4m and went for a swim. The temperature was the highest so far - 32□

Overnight we had a tremendous thunderstorm and torrential rain, so were glad that we were in a secure anchorage with the cockpit tent up.

Thursday, 3/8/06

We woke bright and early to a lovely sunny morning and had a swim before breakfast – again the water was warm, and clearer than yesterday afternoon. After breakfast we rowed ashore to explore and to do some shopping. Trevor was delighted to discover that the local shop sold Vranac!

After lunch Magnus rowed me to the narrow gap beyond the village and we sat there waiting for Trevor and Alex to sail out. We took some good photographs before being picked up.

From the village we ran up to the north end of Dugi Otok, and then beat down the east coast of the island. As the afternoon progressed it clouded over, and we had to put in a reef. On our way down the east coast we looked in at Bozava. It was, however, quite crowded, and did not offer the best shelter in the conditions. We therefore continued to the hamlet of Dumboka to the south. It is not somewhere we had previously visited as it had been in a prohibited area. Near the village is a submarine pen (hence being prohibited). As we approached we could see a boat moored in the entrance to the submarine pen. The boys were keen to moor there as well, or even anchor off, but there were already two other yachts at anchor and depths were over 15m. Instead we went into Dumboka and tied up alongside the quay, behind a knuckle, where our lines were taken by a Slovenian yachtsman.

We went for a walk to explore the submarine pen, Magnus remembering to take his head torch. The boys walked to the far end of the pen and reported that it was in very good repair. Whilst we were there it started to rain heavily, so we hurried back to the boat. We had yet another tremendous thunderstorm with strong winds, an excuse for the boys to watch “Johnny English” on the laptop.

Friday, 4/8/06

We woke up to a beautiful morning. We sailed to Brbinj/Luka where it was quite windy. Trevor dropped me off at the ferry quay for 8.00 am and I was first in the queue for bread. I bought some cheese – it was so hard that the lady behind the counter couldn't cut it! A customer helped her out. I didn't then have the heart to say I only wanted half the chunk! Needless to say, we subsequently had problems cutting it ourselves – a chainsaw would have been useful.

From the ferry port we sailed round to Brbinj proper where we had a swim and then breakfast. After breakfast we set off once again with a following wind. It was difficult to hold the boat in the gusts so we took in a reef. We had a cracking sail down to the Prolaz Mali Zdrelec, where we stopped for the afternoon to have a swim and a late lunch. Again, a lot of visitors' buoys have been laid, all of which were in use. We anchored well inside the buoys in 2 metres.

Late afternoon we left the anchorage and crossed over to Sukosan, where we had a look at the village quay and the ruined castle before going into the marina. Going to such a large marina goes against our principles, but we had promised to take Magnus to Zadar, and it seemed the most secure place to leave “Calista” whilst we went sightseeing. We also needed to get our laundry done. We were directed to a berth on the south side of the marina, from which we discovered it took us nearly an hour to walk round to the reception area. We paid for two nights (ouch!), got information on the buses into Zadar, and investigated the laundry. Alex decided that the cost was worthwhile because of the luxurious showers. Alex also spent a lot of time drooling over the power boats with their “toy” jet-skis.

Saturday, 5/8/06

After hot showers and breakfast we rowed the dirty washing over to the laundry, and then caught the bus into Zadar. We spent what was left of the morning and early afternoon

walking around the old town, visiting the forum, walking along the promenade (with its sea organ!), and then over to Zadar marina. Lunch was pizza eaten at a pizzeria in a narrow street in the old town. We got back to Sukosan in time to collect the laundry, which cost a fortune, but the towels and tea towels had been ironed and everything neatly folded. We also stocked up on food from the marina supermarket.

Sunday, 6/8/06

Luxurious hot showers, refilled water tanks, and then we were off. Trevor wanted to refuel, but was put off by the Sunday morning crowd waiting to do the same. Out in the channel I was launched in the dinghy whilst the crew sailed the boat, with her spinnaker up, past me. I managed to get some good photographs, before being recovered. We then continued to a sheltered bay south of Pasman village for lunch and to deflate the dinghy, and then on towards Marina Hramina and Betina. We had a good run under genoa and main.

In the evening we anchored in a bay on the northwest side of Tjiesno. There was a popular camp site ashore, with over 100 speedboats moored bows to the banks of the bay. Fortunately the disco stopped by 11 and we had a peaceful night.

Monday, 7/8/06

We were up and waiting to go through the bridge at 9, together with a number of other boats. Once through the bridge we went onto Tribunj and continued to Sepurine and Prvic Luka, before entering the Kanal Sv. Ante. It was a bit like the M4, with some crazy driving to match. As we went past the fort at Sv. Ante the boys expressed an interest in exploring it. We therefore anchored in the bay next to it in 9m. Whilst Trevor and the boys went ashore I stayed to bake Magnus' birthday cake. When they came back they judged it a successful field trip and reported that the fort was in good repair. As we were about to have lunch we were hit by torrential rain and some fearsome gusts. It was therefore decided that it would be safer to move across the channel to anchor at the top end of one of the bays, where we would only be in 4metres and in better shelter. We successfully achieved this, passing a big American yacht on the way in as well as a New Zealand boat. Snug at the top we had lunch. Once the rain had stopped Trevor and the boys rowed to the top of the inlet to inspect a half submerged car (a Mini).

Back on board, and we hoisted the anchor and motored to Sibenik. En route we noted a couple of caves deliberately cut in the rock to hide patrol boats. Neither Trevor nor I remembered them from previous visits!

From Sibenik we went up to Zaton. Trevor had a snooze en route, but was woken to have a look at the village. There was an American motor yacht anchored in the bay, and a British yacht alongside the quay. From Zaton we motored up to the Pruklijansko Jezero where we anchored for the night in the inlet north of Rasline. We went to the far end, raising the keels. Predictably a Croatian motor yacht decided to anchor nearby, assuming that there would be plenty of water for him. He promptly ran aground and had to reverse out in a flurry of wash and weed.

Whilst I prepared dinner the boys rowed ashore to check out the local talent and the facilities. A fisherman approached us and let us know that he wanted to put a net across the inlet, and would that cause us a problem? As he was going to be taking it in at 5 am we said it wouldn't be a problem. The boys returned with smiles on their faces, and tucked into salmon fishcakes with gusto.

Tuesday, 8/8/06

The most important day of the holiday – Magnus' fourteenth birthday! It dawned bright and sunny, with blue skies. Magnus also dawned bright and sunny. He was up before 8 am and came through to the main cabin to open his birthday presents and cards. Trevor and Magnus then went ashore for fresh milk and bread, and to check out whether there was water available or not.

After breakfast we motored to Skradin. We joined the merry throng of charter boats, and finally anchored in the bay opposite the town. There were scores of boats anchored already,

but we were able to go well inside them and anchor in 2 metres. Trevor and I went for a swim doing three laps of the boat although the temperature was just 26 degrees!

After lunch we rowed over to the town quay and took a tripping boat up to the falls. The boat trip was free – we just had to pay to enter the park. It was incredibly busy, and we kept having to stop whilst people had their photographs taken on the bridge with the backdrop of the falls. The falls were magnificent, and the mill village further up had been tastefully restored. There was plenty of information on the flora and fauna, although Magnus was disturbed to find out that the Krka National Park is home to the horned nose viper- a poisonous snake. From then on Magnus walked around stamping his feet – hard.

We had an ice cream before catching the boat back to Skradin.

Back on “Calista” there was some debate as to where we should go for Magnus’ birthday meal, but the decision was ultimately to go to Zaton. We motored down to Zaton and tied up alongside the quay. We booked a table at Konoba Porat, where we had an excellent fish meal, starting with risotto, and then a platter of mixed grilled fish. The waiter brought us a free dessert, and Trevor treated himself to grappa with the coffee. After dinner we walked along the path towards another inlet with a restaurant, just to investigate it. Back onboard Alex and Magnus slept well, but Trevor and I were kept awake by the revellers in the cafes next to the quay. It was gone two before there was anything resembling peace. No wonder other yachts were anchored out in the bay!

Wednesday, 9/8/06

Despite our disturbed night Trevor and I were up, washed, dressed, water tanks refilled and underway by 8, bound for Sibenik. It was a grey, but still morning.

At Sibenik we refuelled, and whilst Trevor and the boys gilled around in the harbour, I went to the main post office (which confirmed that they could not change travellers’ cheques) and then to a bank, where I was successful. On the way back to the quay I had a look at the yacht quay and got some information from the concessionaire about facilities and costs.

Once I had been retrieved we set off down the Kanal Sv. Ante. It was not as busy as on the way up to Sibenik, so we had a chance to look at two patrol boat caves cut into the side of the channel.

Once out of the channel we headed up to look at the bridge at Jadrtovac, cursing the various motorboats en route. One came dangerously fast and close to us, which excited rude gestures from the normally placid Trevor. In future we shall photograph the registration number and report the incident as a near miss. Unfortunately this time we didn’t think to get the information in time.

Having checked out Jadrtovac we were able to sail to Rogoznica, where we anchored at the top end of the bay between Uvala Soline and Uvala Stupin. We went for a swim, and the boys went off ashore with their radios to explore.

Overnight we had flashes of lightning and some thunder.

Thursday, 10/8/06

Yet another grey day when we set off under motor. We got the sail up outside Rogoznica, and headed south towards Trogir, looking at various anchorages en route. Whilst we were sailing I picked up the forecast which warned of imminent winds of 45 knots. As the wind was starting to pick up and the sky looked menacing we decided that discretion was the better part of valour, and put into Vinisce, where we anchored at the top end of the bay.

The wind didn’t reach 45 knots, and as conditions seemed to be improving, we left late afternoon and continued towards Trogirski Zaliv. We were able to sail with full main and genoa, but eventually had to motorsail. We reached Uvala Gblidguk in early evening and went to the very top of the anchorage, raised the keels, and anchored in just over 1 metre. The bay is still undeveloped, unlike the rest of the shoreline around the Trogirski Zaliv.

We had a peaceful night, and no thunderstorms.

Friday, 11/8/06

We awoke to a beautiful morning, with clear blue skies and sun, and set off early for Trogir without bothering with a swim first. At the entrance to Uvala Gbldguk there were two big British yachts anchored: a motor yacht and a huge sailing yacht. We congratulated ourselves on having a Titania with the ability to sneak into the shallows for shelter.

At Trogir there must have been well over 50 yachts anchored in the channel to the west of the town. We went close inshore and anchored in less than 2 metres. After breakfast we split into two parties: Magnus and I were taken ashore to explore the town and do the shopping, whilst Trevor and Alex rowed under the bridge and circum-navigated the old town. Magnus and I wandered around the old streets, visited the cathedral, admired Radovan's portal, and then visited Kamerlengo Tower. The views from the tower were worth the entrance fee and the hot climb. Back at street level Magnus and I found an internet café where we were able to buy writeable CDroms for downloading photographs at vast expense – 2 kunas each, so we bought 20! We then met up with the circumnavigators of the sewers, who returned to Calista whilst we went to the supermarket and open market for supplies.

From Trogir we headed out towards Otok Solta, and anchored amongst the islands off Maslenica and Uvala Soline, where we had a swim in beautifully clear water. After lunch we had a look at Maslenica harbour and Uvala Soline. Uvala Soline was popular, with yachts anchored parallel to each other with stern lines ashore. They all had fenders out and it was just like a marina, but without the facilities.

Whilst we were passing through the boats anchored by the islands a police boat came to check their documentation. They showed no interest in checking our papers, but sped past with a cheery wave. Later on we noticed them anchored in a bay having a swim. Beats being a policeman in Swansea.

We continued along the Solta coast checking out the various anchorages and Rogac, where we thought about spending the night. The decision was made to continue to Uvala Necujam. That was also very busy, so instead of joining the crowds at the head of the inlet, we anchored close to the east shore near a holiday camp. The boys went ashore to check information for us.

The forecast was for strong north-east winds, and we debated moving on, but by this time it was dark. Trevor felt that we would be OK where we were, although it was more exposed than we normally like. Despite the thunder and lightning the wind was not too strong, and we had a safe night. The only disturbance was from a tourist boat dropping off passengers at the quay.

Saturday, 12/8/06

Whilst the boys slept Trevor and I got the anchor up early and continued on our way, looking in at Stomorska etc on way. By the time we reached the Splitska Vrata both boys were up. There were few yachts around, but several ferries, including a hydrofoil which Alex photographed. We crossed over to Milna, where we filled up the water tanks at the Sardine Factory quay. We were charged 30 kuna for the privilege. I took the opportunity to wash some clothes at the same time.

At lunchtime we anchored in one of the bays outside of the entrance to Milna, but it took several attempts for the anchor to hold. After lunch we set off aiming to get to Hvar or Vis, but out of the shelter of Brac the seas were rough, and the forecast was not that brilliant. We therefore returned to Bobovisce to shelter.

In Bobovisce we went to the anchorage, rather than the village quay, lifting the keels to go beyond a couple of shallow draft Croatian motor boats. The man in one got quite agitated

letting us know that it was very shallow. Once we had anchored I swam a line ashore. Later in the evening Alex went for a run, and didn't get back until after dark.

Sunday, 13/08/06

We had torrential rain in the night, and the day dawned grey, so it was a morning for reading and relaxing. At lunchtime Trevor and I rowed ashore to walk to the village to see if we could get some food. It was a pleasant walk, and we spotted an apiary up above the road into the village. We found the village shop just as the man was closing. He reopened the shop however and we bought bread, wine and other essentials. It started to rain again just as we got back to "Calista". We then had a ferocious storm, with horizontal rain, flattened seas, thunder and lightning. A couple of yachts dragged their anchors, but we were fortunately well away from the action. Once the storm had passed Trevor noticed that the water level was dropping dramatically, and then rising again. It was the first time we had ever experienced a seiche. Fortunately we had weed and mud underneath us, not rock.

In the evening, once the rain had stopped Alex and Magnus went for a run, and came back muddy, sweaty, tired, but feeling pleased with themselves.

Monday, 14/08/06

The weather had improved so we were able to leave Bobovisce. We headed through the Splitska Vrata and steered for Hvar Island, deciding to go to Stari Grad. We had a good sail there and arrived mid day. Buoys had been laid for visitors off the quay, and as there were a couple still available, we picked one up, rather than go stern to the quay. We thought we were far enough in to be out of the way, but as the afternoon and evening wore on we had other boats anchoring close to us. Not very comfortable.

We rowed ashore to explore, and had a drink at a café overlooking the quay and decided to return in the evening for a meal. The boys were sent off to locate and investigate the laundry in the town. They found it, but it was shut. We discovered a cantina in the old town and bought 5 litres of Plavac (a local wine) and a bottle of Prosek from the producer. There were a number of places hiring cars and scooters, and after some discussion we decided that it made sense to hire a car the following day to visit Jelsa, Vrboska, and Hvar town. Some of the cars on hire looked decrepit, and the boys stated that a clapped out beetle with a roll bar and yellow paint job would not do their image any good. Fortunately we found a Europcar agency and booked a car for the following day.

We went to the restaurant for pizzas, and then strolled along the quay yacht watching before rowing "home" to bed.

Tuesday, 15/08/06

A sunny morning to start with, but it gradually clouded over, and then rained as we went ashore to the hire car. Trevor and I had collected it earlier, and had delivered a bag of dirty clothes to the laundry. The rain didn't last long, and the sun eventually came out when we were in Jelsa. We visited Jelsa first, back tracked to Vrboska, had a picnic lunch, and then crossed the island to drive along the south shore. We drove to Hvar town and had an interesting time exploring the old town, bought ice-creams, and tried to change some money. All the banks were closed and eventually it dawned on me that today was a public holiday! We climbed the hill behind the town up to the fort, which we thoroughly explored. Fortunately we were able to buy cold drinks in the fort. On the way back to Stari Grad, we stopped at the big supermarket near the island ferry berth.

A full day, but we achieved a lot, and took some excellent photographs.

Wednesday, 16/08/06

A brass marching band on the quay, with a priest in attendance, woke us early. Today was Stari Grad's patron saint's day (Sv. Roka), hence the band. Trevor and I collected and paid for the laundry before returning the hire car.

Once we were organised we dropped the mooring buoy and motored out of Stari Grad. There was a swimming race for youngsters underway as we left, with a barrier laid the length of the

harbour out towards the hotels and ferry berth. Once out of the way we hoisted the sails and sailed along the north coast of Hvar, stopping for lunch and a swim, and inspecting Uvala Vira. We then sailed through the Pakleni Islands and onto Vis. The wind gradually picked up, and we debated putting in a reef about 5 miles north of Vis.

In Vis harbour we inspected all the berthing options. All the quays and anchorages were chock-a-block, and with a strong wind, none of them appealed. Eventually we anchored off the Czech House north of Kut, setting the anchor alarm. We had a peaceful night, and didn't drag.

Thursday, 17/08/06

Magnus and I were dropped ashore near the fuel berth and had an interesting morning exploring Vis town. We found the Greek necropolis, the Roman baths, the church cemetery and a nineteenth century fort. Eventually we were collected from the pier near the ferry berth. Alex had received an email with his A level results, and was not too despondent.

We had lunch en route to the Pakleni Islands, where we eventually anchored in Uvala Soline in late afternoon. The water was very clean, clear, and cool. I swam a line ashore, and coming back knocked against a sea urchin. Unfortunately I ended up with a few spines breaking off in my calf. Trevor and the boys conducted minor surgery to remove the spines.

Friday, 18/08/06

Trevor and I were up early. Trevor swam ashore to retrieve the stern line and managed to avoid the sea urchins, but the sea was chillier than the night before! We got the boat underway, and eventually the boys materialised for breakfast. A gentle sail and motor sail before we reached the anchorage in Kaprije in the late afternoon. We all had a swim, and after dinner went ashore for a run (the boys) or a walk (the OAPs).

Saturday, 19/08/06

Trevor and I rowed ashore to take photos and to buy bread and milk. Fresh milk was available in the local shop! The table was set for breakfast when we returned. It was a leisurely start to the day because we were not actually going anywhere in particular. As we were eating breakfast a Frenchman rowed over. He had recognised "Calista" and said that he had a copy of our "Adriatic Pilot".

After breakfast we discovered that we were out of water in both tanks, so we set off for the mainland and Vodice and arrived just as lunch was ready. We filled up with diesel at 73 pence UK per litre. We also had to pay for the water at 5 kuna for a timed period. It took 2 coins for us to totally fill the tanks, sinks, and all of the saucepans!!

We sailed and motored in a roundabout way and ended up exactly where we started from, stopping for a swim en route. We had investigated anchoring in Uvala Potkucina, but the weather was unsettled with a black sky and the wind starting to pick up so we decided to go back to Kaprije, where the shelter was better.

Sunday, 20/08/06

We left Kaprije after breakfast, having had a quiet night. The sky was overcast, but the wind was no more than force 3, and the sea slight. We motored over to Uvala Muna, which hadn't changed in 20 years! There were mainly local boats there, plus one visitor. From Uvala Muna we sailed to the Kornati Islands, checking out some of the anchorages en route, before anchoring in Ravni Zakan for a swim and lunch. The water there is really clear. Whilst we were having lunch one of the park warden boats came along to collect our entry fees. After lunch we continued on our way, eventually reaching Uvala Lavsa, where we proposed spending the night. Another yacht tried to race us into the inlet so that they could pick up one of the visitors' buoys, but as we intended anchoring, they were wasting their time! We anchored beyond the other boats, and whilst Alex and Magnus stayed on board reading Trevor and I went ashore to dispose of the rubbish (in one of the skips provided) and then for a walk. We climbed to the top of the hill and were able to look down on the marina at Piskera. On our way back to the boat we realised that there was another seiche in progress, so we used the opportunity to check out the inner reaches of the inlet and to check on the exact location of the rocks.

Overnight we had another dramatic thunderstorm, but were perfectly secure.

Monday, 21/08/06

The morning started off grey, so the photographs we took in Piskera were disappointing, but as the morning progressed the sun came out. Photographs taken later in the day turned out well. We visited several anchorages, and eventually Magnus and I took the dinghy and landed on Otok Kornat, whilst Trevor and Alex sailed round to Uvala Levrnak, Magnus and I checked out the chapel and then proceeded to climb the hill up to the fortress. There was no path, so we ended up mountaineering. Once at the top the views in all directions were fantastic, but Magnus was disappointed in the castle. It was basically one large, roofless and empty room! However, we have now been to visit it, and the photographs were worth the hot steep climb. On the way down we radioed Trevor to say he could come and collect us, but he suggested it was easier for us to row across the channel and over the shallows, than for him to drop the mooring and motor round.

Alex had made a pizza from scratch for lunch, so after a grand lunch in the cockpit, we dropped the mooring and continued to Uvala Tripuljak on Dugi Otok for shelter. We had a good sail and looked into various anchorages en route. We finally reached Uvala Tripuljak mid afternoon, and went up to the top to anchor in less than 2m. As we had run out of food and money Alex, Trevor and I walked to Sali, leaving Magnus in charge and with a radio. According to Thompson and Thompson Sali was just a mile away, but it seemed a lot farther than that, and was up hill. A tarmaced road has replaced the former dirt track. We reached Sali, investigated the quay and facilities, did our shopping and finally got some cash from an ATM. Alex insisted on buying a watermelon and offered to carry it back to the boat. A long trek back to the boat, where we found that Magnus had repelled boarders. The park wardens had come for some money, but as he didn't have any money to pay them they had promised to return the next day. We had dinner and went to bed.

Tuesday, 22/08/06

The threatened winds never materialised, so we had a peaceful night. The morning was beautiful, and we motored out of the anchorage, putting up the sail as we went. However the wind died away and we were back to motoring when we were passing Sali. The beautiful British classic yacht we had admired yesterday was drifting off Sali with full sail set, but no sign of the crew. We took some photos of her before continuing up the east coast of Dugi Otok. Again we checked out various villages and anchorages, stopping at Luka for water and shopping. Luka is run down, with a derelict building on the quay, but brand new water and electricity points have been installed. We took advantage of them to fill the tanks. From Luka we sailed across to Kablin and then on to Otok Olib for the night. We anchored and took lines ashore at our favourite anchorage in the southern part of Olib, where we went for a swim. The water is very clean, and there are plenty of sea urchins to avoid. We didn't bother going ashore, but just stayed onboard reading.

Wednesday, 23/08/06

After a peaceful night we were up early and heading north for Otok Losinj. We stopped for a swim in the lee of the small islands off the SE side of Otok Losinj before continuing up the east coast of Otok Losinj calling in at the various harbours, including Veli Losinj, and Nerezine. We went into both the boatyard at Nerezine and the main harbour looking for the new fuel berth, but it was farther north on an exposed bit of coast. We were able to refuel, get rid of rubbish and treat ourselves to ice-creams. From Nerezine we headed up to Osor as we intended going through the canal. Trevor dropped Magnus and me ashore at Osor with the cameras, and then he and Alex picked up a mooring to wait for the bridge opening. Magnus and I explored the town, found the old Roman walls, lots of modern sculptures, and were able to buy some fresh vegetables. We then went to the canal to photograph the boats going through. It was quite alarming! The current was phenomenal and the standard of driving was worse than on the M25. We seriously thought that one yacht, which was out of control, was going to plough into the back of a fishing boat, or hit the sides of the canal. Finally Trevor and Alex came through very sedately, having been warned by radio of what lay ahead! Once everyone had gone through and the melee had spilled out into the bay, Trevor and Alex came

back for us. Instead of spending the night at Osor we proceeded to Ustrinska Luka for the night. We anchored and took a line ashore, and all had a swim before dinner. Alex did some long distance swimming.

Thursday, 24/08/06

We were up early as we had a long passage across to the Istrian peninsula. The passage was uneventful, and we finally anchored at the top end of Uvala Soline, south of Pula. Trevor, Magnus and I went ashore to go shopping and ended up walking to Uvala Paltana which was where the nearest shop was to be found. We came back with enough food and drink to keep us going for a couple of days.

Friday, 25/08/06

Overnight we had yet another thunderstorm, with heavy rain. Trevor and I got up at 7 after our early morning cuppa, and whilst Trevor took the rubbish ashore, I cleared up down below. As Trevor was bringing the dinghy onboard a little "market" boat came alongside. We bought bread (brown!!!), croissants, eggs, and nectarines for 100 kuna from a friendly vendor. He told us that he goes round the boats twice a day from mid May until mid September. His English was very good -he had learnt English in school in Sudan. He came to Yugoslavia 30 years ago to study, and has been here ever since.

Just before 8 we were ready to leave and motored out. Outside Uvala Soline we motored until there was sufficient wind to set the genoa. There was an unpleasant swell, so we decided to go inside the Fazanski Kanal to get some shelter from it. Just off Brioni harbour we noticed that the sky ahead looked threatening, soon followed by flashes of lightning and rumbles of thunder. Counting the gaps it was obvious that they were getting closer, and when we started to see white tops to the waves we decided to anchor close inshore whilst it blew over. We were feeling rather pleased with our decision when we noticed that a swathe of pine trees had had their tops ripped off fairly recently. A caravan had also been splatted by something, and a chalet lost its roof.

Once the thunderstorm had passed inland we raised the anchor and continued on our way, hoisting main and genoa. The weather improved and turned out warm and sunny. After lunch we put up the spinnaker and at times were making over 5 knots. Just off Porec the wind died so we dropped the spinnaker and continued under engine and main. Once the spinnaker was down the wind picked up again, so Trevor set the genoa and we goosewinged. The original plan was to go to Umag, but wind and sea started to increase, the sky looked threatening, and there was lightning over Istria. After considering the options (4 miles to Novigrad, 11 to Umag, black, black skies, lightning, etc) we changed our plans and went into Novigrad. About 5 other yachts had the same thoughts so we all converged on Novigrad together. We took the sails down outside and entered under engine with strong winds. There were no buoys free so we decided to go into the new marina, where we would at least be able to get showers. It was nice to stop and feel that we were safe for the night! Very posh hotel and marina, and the damage was a mere 28 quid for one night.

We all had hot showers before Trevor and Alex prepared dinner (potatoes, fried sprats and cucumber).

Saturday, 26/08/06

Fearsome thunderstorms in the night and torrential rain, making the 28 quid spent on marina fees money well spent! The morning dawned bright, with large areas of blue sky. The Italian forecast on channel 68 said variable 3, with possibility of thunder and fog. The Croatian forecast was for winds NE 4-14 knots, with NW or W in the open sea and up to 20 knots. Thunderstorms also mentioned as a possibility.

After showers, and breakfast, and some shopping, Alex took us out of the marina, and avoided hitting any of the local racing fleet who were milling around in the harbour. There was very little wind, blue skies, and sunshine – perfect for those of nervous disposition. We motored up the coast to Umag to take photographs and officially check out. Magnus took us off the customs berth and out of the harbour, and then steered north towards Slovenia. There

was still insufficient wind to sail, so we continued under motor, and went to take photos of Portoroz and Piran. Once that was done and we had had lunch we set course for Grado. There was sufficient wind for us to hoist main and genoa and sail on a reach for Grado, but once the speed went down from 4 to 1.5 knots we decided to motorsail. There were some towering cumulus nimbus clouds over Slovenia, and Trevor saw several flashes of lightning, and there looked to be rain as well. Fortunately none of the thunderstorms came our way.

We entered the lagoon at Grado and had a good look around, checking out the marinas and berthing possibilities, before taking the "inland" route to San Giorgio di Nogaro. We ran aground a couple of times, but got off easily enough. Finally we were motoring up the river to San Giorgio, feeling a bit despondent that the holiday was over. However once tied up at the marina we were able to go for a swim and check that the car was still there. The cover had come off, but otherwise there was no damage.

Sunday, 27/08/06

Today was spent getting the boat ready to come out of the water, taking the mast down with Alex's assistance, and doing the laundry. We had several swims, and then in the evening went to the restaurant for a final meal. Alex packed his bag ready for his flight home tomorrow.

Monday, 28/08/06

We were up early for showers, and after breakfast took Alex to Venice airport. Once we were back we arranged for "Calista" to come out. "Calista" was lifted out of the water and put on her trailer. It was a sad moment. Afterwards Trevor and I went shopping at the Eurospar, leaving Magnus on board tidying up (!) and reading.

Tuesday, 29/08/06

We hit the road and headed for home. The night was spent at Camping Mombarone, where we were made very welcome again.

Wednesday, 30/08/06

We were keen to get home so today we travelled from Mombarone, through the Mont Blanc Tunnel, where our modifications to reduce the height of the boat were not necessary, and on to Melun and Camping la Belle Etoile. We got a warm welcome, despite our late arrival, and had a good nights sleep.

Thursday, 31/08/06

Melun to Calais, with the only event being a broken trailer brake cable at Melun, probably caused by Trevor braking hard in the town. Trevor did not discover the broken cable until we were on the ferry! We were fortunate in that we were able to change our ferry booking and get on an earlier (by 2 days!) ferry home. Once back in Kent we went back to the same campsite we had stayed on six weeks ago, and were made welcome.

Friday, 1/09/06

Final leg today, from Kent to home. Fortunately it was an uneventful trip, and we got home to find the house still standing. Back to normality....



