

*Atalanta Owners
Association*

2017- 2018

*59th Annual
Bulletin*



Atalanta Owners' Association

2017 - 2018 Bulletin

Contents

Message from the Commodore	2
Message from the Editor	2
Just in Time by Greg Manning	3
What ought the Association do next? by Mike Dixon - Commodore	7
East Coast Race 2017 by Richard James	9
Dicing With Danger by Simon Cooper	13
Fractional Rig versus Masthead Rig by Richard James	16
Lifelines by Nick Phillips	19
Lessons learned by Dinah Thompson	20
Wooden Boom Roller to Slab Reefing Conversion by Nick Phillips	24
Harrier - a review of the first few years of nurturing T12 by Stephen Taylor	28
Flares and safety by Nick Phillips	36

Front cover photograph:

Message from the Commodore

It's been quite a year as far as the Association is concerned. Details are elsewhere in this bulletin or already reported upon in the newsletters.

Restoration of A1 "Atalanta" continues, though progress over the summer months ground to a halt due to other water themed events. It is still my intention to have her back on the water in 2018 and to this end I have placed orders for new rigging, sails and a replacement engine and associated stern gear. So far I have used four 8' x 4' sheets of marine ply and almost five m² of agba on the hull alone, as well as several lengths, in various dimensions, of sapele/mahogany.

Next year will be fitting as, although the first Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on 7th January 1959, it is recorded that there was a meeting on Wednesday 21st May 1958. It was at the meeting in 1958 that it was recommended that an Association be formed. So sixty years on seems a worthwhile aim for me, though whether I make Monday 21st May 2018 remains to be seen.

I do hope that this year is kind to both you and your boats.

Fair winds.

Mike

Message from the Editor

This year the Bulletin should reach you rather earlier than usual. This is because Dinah and I will be away "cruising" in our motorhome for a while around Christmas.

So thank you all of you who have made the effort to write articles for this Bulletin, and to the tight deadline. However the Bulletin is much smaller than it has been - and that is purely down to how many members have submitted articles. Perhaps that reflects the number of boats that are being restored or sailed, which might not be as many as we would like to believe. Anyway if you feel that you can contribute something for next year it would be much appreciated by me, and particularly by the rest of the members who assure me that they look forward to reading the Bulletin.

Don't forget that there are awards given at the Annual lunch for technical articles, cruise logs, and front cover photographs.

You will also notice that there is a significant change to the format of the Yearbook. All the obsolete addresses have been removed and it has been set out in a different way. For me it represents a significant improvement, because it has been generated automatically from the computerised membership records. So it should be accurate this time! I hope you like it.

Trevor

Just in Time

by Greg Manning

When Roy and I bought A142 in 2001 it was obvious there was a lot of work needed. Had we known how much, we might have taken up gliding not sailing. Having replaced the keel box rear blocks, a third of the hog and fitted a new engine we were able to start sailing, and in a later year set about the toe rails (details in a previous bulletin). We had noticed that all the decks flexed when we walked on them and that the cabin top was not secure to the deck. This particularly manifested itself by copious amounts of water dripping into my ear when trying to sleep if it was raining.



Forecabin

When we stripped the paint off the decks to do the toe rails we should have been more alert, the evidence was there to see. What evidence? Wait and see! With the decks stripped we took the opportunity to improve the fixing of the cabin top to the deck in the hope that it would firm up the whole deck structure. With the experience we have now, I would have removed the external rail between the deck and the cabin top and steamed a new one. As we are both helicopter pilots and, knowing that metal helicopter blades have their aerodynamic section bonded, that means glued, onto a D shaped leading edge, I was happy with the strength of bonding. We cut a V out from under the lower part of the rail for the whole of its thickness. This exposed the cabin top to deck join and, using a syringe, we injected resin until it was dripping from the join in



Aftcabin

the cabin. We then filled the V with Sikaflex. This bonding has proved most successful for thirteen years in that I sleep with dry ears. The cabin top is now more secure and the integrity of the deck structure improved, but not enough!

In an attempt to firm up the deck the following year we made a compression post that now supports the forward part of the cabin top. It is like a lectern stolen from a church and does intrude into the cabin space somewhat. The following year we made a compression post for the aft cabin that fitted over the sling eye on the hog at the bottom and a quick release bracket at the top so it could be removed to allow use of the emergency tiller. Both these were rather unsuccessful and we felt that the amount of flexing of the decks was still enough to be putting strain on their structure.

Fast forward a few years and I noticed in an AOA Bulletin that a boat had external strakes on the aft deck. A142 did not. My initial thought was that perhaps Fairey has changed the design at some time but looking at other pictures I noticed that boats both older and newer all had them. As we had some suitable wood, the next year we stripped the aft deck and lo and behold there were marks where the strakes had been. It was very straight forward to replace them and what a difference, a rigid deck that could be walked on without feeling that one was on a



Spot the Lavvy Seat Competition!

trampoline!

The season before last I noticed a crack in the forward deck on the starboard side, level with the front of the cabin. In order to stop water ingress causing damage to the laminates it needed repairing, so the deck needed stripping and there was the evidence, marks where the strakes had been that we had missed the first time we stripped the decks. The crack was at the forward end of a previous repair that had been made with the grain misaligned from the whole, but most of the repair was sound.

Now at this point I have a confession to make. Many repairs on A142 have been



One man's scrap is another man's gem!

put off until suitable salvaged wood or other materials have become available.



A Picture Saves a Thousand Words

For example we have at least three hard wood lavatory seats incorporated in her, their various curved shapes made them ideal for coamings and the blind end to the cabin top, and the seat covers were large enough to make the forward and aft ends of the external cover boards for the keel boxes.

A couple of years ago I was given two tons of old window frames and various scrap from the local double glazing



Previous Deck Repairs

company and there amongst all the wood were some window sills of mahogany and pitch pine. I was spoilt for choice for a piece to make the new forward deck strakes.

Making and fixing the strakes was straight

forward as the relatively thin strips were easy to steam and secure to the deck. I will save a thousand words by inserting a picture.

I was very pleased with the result and also took the opportunity to fill some damaged areas of the deck. I then sat back smugly on the pulpit and admired my work just before I was about to make it look really smart with some paint.

Then it hit me! Just in time!

The curved strakes would capture water on their inboard edge, it needed a limber hole but too late now they were secured and anyway had I made one before fitting it would have been a weak point and when trying to bend it would formed a kink at the point of the limber hole.

Then I noticed!

There was a previous deck repair on the port side at the apex of the curve in the strake and another on the starboard side where I had just repaired the previously mentioned crack. Clearly these had been caused by water being trapped behind the strake and the strakes had been removed to allow the repair but why had all the others been removed and not replaced?

A previous repair can be seen on the port side where the wood is lighter in colour and my repair to the crack further forward on the starboard side with the darker wood aft of it where the previous repair is sound.

To allow water to drain away I cut out a small gap in the strake and to maintain



Sorry about the dirty footprints!

structural strength I did it over a deck beam.

Sorry about the dirty foot prints! I cannot get the staff.

Looking through some old bulletins I think I saw another boat with gaps in the outboard strakes but the picture was not clear enough to be sure.

I cannot think how anyone would remove the strakes as Fairey probably knew what they were doing when they built the boat.

All is well that ends well. I have dry ears, A142 has firm decks and I am happy that the problem will not reoccur.



What ought the Association do next?

by Mike Dixon - Commodore

Reflecting over the last twelve month's activities is a bit like the (in)famous curate's egg; good in parts.

Following the lunch at Dartford back in January, I called an ad hoc committee meeting to discuss what we could be doing throughout the year. A number of suggestions were made and in summary, starting with the positives:-

1 The 'phone round. Very useful exercise but the results were all too often disappointing as we discovered that many of the boats which were thought serviceable were, in fact, only fit for parts and then a bonfire. All too often, owners had left it too long before "getting round to it" with the inevitable sad results. Having said that, there were many positive tales as well, though confirmation of what we already knew. The response from our cousins across the pond was particularly heartening.

2 Joining in the Old Gaffer's Association East Coast Race. OK, there was only one Atalanta taking part in the race, but it was a start and we were made most welcome by the OGA.

3 Getting good articles published in "Classic Sailor". Whether this will produce dividends remains to be seen, but at least we are getting ourselves known.

4 Our own East Coast race as part of the West Mersea week,

followed by the supper at the Scout hut. Full report elsewhere, but a great turnout.

Then the not so goods:-

1 The Just Giving initiative which directly benefits the Association. Not everyone does, or indeed wants to shop online, but if you do, then the Association can benefit just by one simple click.

2 The get-together here at our home in Market Harborough; a non-event as only one person managed to say they would come.

And the other initiatives that are happening:-

3 The new website promises to be well worth the wait.

4 The new constitution in place, provided it is approved at February's AGM.

5 Switching the venue of the AGM – three reasons – cost, value for money and to encourage greater attendance.

So I hope you agree that the committee cannot be accused of doing nothing. The initiatives listed above are just a snapshot. I haven't mentioned the ongoing day-to-day activities – the Bulletin, the Yearbook, the two Newsletters etc. Your committee can and do produce some extraordinary results, but what ought we to be doing for the future?

There are three interwoven threads – membership, the age of boats, and events. There may be others, but these three seem to sum up the problems and, more to the point, the opportunities. Taking each of these in turn, I offer the following views:-

Membership – declining and not getting any younger. Anything we can do to reverse this trend ought to be worthy of consideration:

- Website,
- Re-classify membership types – we have taken the first steps with the new Constitution,
- Making it easy (default??) for individuals to remain part of the Association,
- Have we gone far enough? Ought we to consider merging with like-minded Associations – e.g. all the other Fairey Marine sailing boats? It seems to me that our Association is not alone facing the problems – what are other Fairey Marine Associations doing? Can we learn from their experiences? Would a merger be beneficial to all?

Age of boats – We cannot slow the aging process unless the boats are properly maintained. We all know this is a relentless and on-going task, though not as expensive as might be assumed just because we have a liking for old, wooden boats.

- We have already ascertained (by the ‘phone around and email contacts earlier this year) the true state of the boats and what the owners’ intentions are. The results were patchy, but at least we’re getting a truer picture,
- Set up a simple one-on-one mentoring programme which will help offer practical help?
- Have realistic expectations – i.e. scrap the boats which are not worth saving. Concentrate on boats and their owners who really want a good sound boat

of which they can be proud.

- Ought the Association take over boats which are struggling to find new owners? Where would they be stored? Who would look after them? I don’t have answers – perhaps you do.

Events – I lump all those “things” which answer the simple question – “Why ought I to join, why ought I to remain and what’s in it for me?” Many charitable organisations and magazines have a list of benefits. Do we? Are they “in your face”?

- Races
- Rallies
- Shore side events
- Cruises in Company
- Forums
- Bulletins, newsletters
- Website
- Targeted (e) mailings etc etc – the list goes on

But ought we to concentrate on a few good events and then do them with excellence? If so, which events are of interest to you? Would you participate if the committee were to organise particular events?

What now? I would ask all of you to consider my thoughts and then contribute your own. My contact details are listed elsewhere in the Bulletin. Please do get in touch.



East Coast Race 2017

by Richard James

Four Atalanta 26s and a Westerley Centaur were at the 2017 AOA East Coast Rally at West Mersea from 25-27 August 2017. The composition of crews were as follows:



Helene leaving the Orwell

BLUSTER – Jane Stearn, Robert Stearn & Thomas Stearn.

ATALANTA MARY – Alistair Rogers, John Ingleby & Bernard Marshall.

COLCHIDE – Richard James, Mike Dixon & Dominic Dobson.

HELENE – Nick Phillips, Peter Keightley, Oliver Phillips & Ian Pollard.

ROSE – Martin Bennett & Janet Bennett.

Atalanta Mary, Colchide and Helene left Levington at 7 am on Thursday 24 August for the 7 hour passage to West Mersea. The weather was fine, but the westerly wind forced tacking all the way down.

On arrival at the piles, it was evident that things had changed since 2015 and the pile rings and riser rails had been removed in readiness to replace the piles with a plastic floating pontoon later this year.

Alistair was single handed on Mary and amazed onlookers by attempting to position Mary geo-stationary alongside his chosen pile at about 45 degrees and cross-tide, then running forward to attempt to hug the pile and get a warp round it. Meanwhile, Dominic and Richard were doing similar in Colchide. Eventually lines were secured, but the lines were catching on the barnacles around the piles. Nick and Bernard arrived on Helene, Nick was unhappy with the bare pile arrangement and went cruising looking for a better location.



Thursday night Debriefing

YACHT	OWNER	START	FINISH	ELAPSED	CORRECTED	POS
A89 Colchide	Richard James	11:30	13:25:18	1:55:18	1:32:14	1
A124 Helene	Nick Phillips	11:30	13:46:50	2:16:50	1:49:28	2
A102 Atalanta Mary	Alistair Rodger	11:30	13:53:26	2:23:26	1:54:45	3
A183 Bluster	Jane Stearn	11:30	14:45:00	3:15:00	2:36:00	4

By luck the owner of a beautiful wooden boat just down river invited him to raft up alongside. Nick inflated his dinghy and popped across with Bernard to Mary and Colchide, who had now rafted up, for some liquid refreshments and we all had a discussion about the twisted single lines around the piles. Dominic had a brainwave to use an anchor chain, this was partially successful dropping down on the falling tide but catching on barnacles during the rising tide, sending shockwaves through the boat when the boat's buoyancy overcame the resistance, leading to a very disturbed night's sleep.

The solution was found next day when 2 fenders were used to support the chain weight and some hacking off of barnacles and cleaning the piles helped the chain to slide up the pile.

Friday was a day of final race preparation for Helene's crew and a saunter around town for Richard, Dominic and Alistair. Just as we were about to return to the boats for an afternoon nap, a phone call was received from Martin Bennett, who had arrived unannounced off the hard, after an early morning start from Ipswich in his Westerly Centaur, Rose, and asked for a lift ashore. Alistair used his inflatable to pick

up Martin and Janet and we all met up and enjoyed the hospitality of the West Mersea Yacht Club. The Stearns arrived in Bluster just after 7 pm, so we had the full complement of 4 Atalantas for the race the next day. All Atalanta crews mustered for drinks aboard Colchide. Is 12 on an Atalanta 26 a record, as it's certainly a record for Colchide?

Race day arrived and there was little or no wind. It was good to see some younger sailors on the Atalantas – Oliver Phillips and Robert



Pre-race rafting



Colchide

Stearn. Commodore Mike arrived and boarded Colchide with enough kit for a trans-Atlantic crossing. There were rumours of a blazer, flannels and straw hat in the bag, but we never looked. Alistair was advised by his crew to remove his Red Ensign for 2 reasons – it was bad etiquette to fly it during the race and it was not the Australian version. Atalanta Mary left the piles first and started dredging within 2 metres, her keels were raised a little and she made another metre, before grounding again, so her keels had to be lifted even more. Alistair claimed he was doing “crew training” for his 2 silver sailors, John Ingleby and Bernard Marshall, who by now had jumped ship from Helene to Mary.

We all motored out hoping for a sea breeze but were greeted with a 40 minute

delay on the race radio, which meant our new start time was exactly 1130. Colchide rafted up alongside Helene for a bit of banter, meanwhile Mary and Bluster cruised around looking for wind. Talk was getting competitive, so Colchide’s crew started to scrub her sides to remove the last of the weed and flotsam. Helene’s crew talked about a possible protest that Colchide was not wearing the AOA Commodore’s pennant, noting that Bluster was wearing the Vice-Commodore’s pennant. Meanwhile Mike was ferreting in his huge bag below - did it contain an iron and portable ironing board to spruce up his blazer and slacks? Richard delegated the helming to Mike, so that he and Dom could concentrate on timing, tactics, weight distribution and genoa sheets.

At 1115 all 4 Atalantas were ready to race

and jockeyed just clear of the start line. At 1125, with less than 5 minutes to go to the start, most boats were sailing backwards on the tide with the distinct possibility that they would cross the line facing the wrong direction, and there was still a mechanical noise emanating from Helene's engine compartment, which Nick tried to dilute by noisily deploying his anchor, albeit without his anchor ball displayed. Meanwhile, Bluster made an early run for the start line, so early in fact that she crossed the line before the start of the race and was ignominiously told by race radio to go back and round the start buoy again.

At the actual start time, Colchide took an early lead followed by Helene and Mary. Bluster lost over 10 minutes re-rounding the start line, then made a miraculous recovery to catch up the rest of the fleet. The flood tide at the windward mark was in full flow and the trick was to use this conveyor belt and steer up tide about 30 degrees to it. During the race, it seemed that Helene was wobbling a bit from side to side and we later learnt that her skipper, Nick Phillips, was using the asymmetric keel raising and lowering technique, partly to gain advantage, but mostly "to give the crew Ian Pollard and Peter Keightley some fitness training".

All races were shortened due to the lack of wind and after 2 hours the 4 Atalantas crossed the finishing line in the order COLCHIDE, HELENE, ATALANTA MARY & BLUSTER.

Next year, Dominic Dobson is available

to the highest bidder, as lucky mascot for future races, having a 100% win ratio, having raced 2 West Mersea Regattas and been on the winning crew both times. Let's hope for more wind next year

As is the AOA tradition, all crews visited the winning boat for refreshments at 4pm, then adjourned to the West Mersea scout hut to enjoy fish and chips, puddings, cheese & biscuits, tea & coffee, topped off by beer and wine. The racing sailors were joined by Martin and Janet Bennet, Dave Allen, Mariana Ingleby & Sheila Dixon. Many thanks to Sarah Thorley, Carol Moss and Mike Thorley for all their hard work organising the evening.

At 8 pm all crews retired to the boats to watch the wonderful town firework display at 9pm, then retired to bed. Sunday morning alarm clocks were set at 4.30 am to catch first light and the ebb tide. Colchide left the piles quietly at 4.55 am and picked up Bluster and Rose on the way for a beautiful early morning sunrise transit out of the Blackwater.



Dicing With Danger

by Simon Cooper

Former owner of A104

When the Army wants to play with explosives it generally confines itself to closely defined battle areas or ranges. The Navy and Air Force have no such restrictions and can practice their percussive activities over the oceans. From time to time over the years I have witnessed their activities from rather closer than I would have liked.

The first time I experienced naval ordinance was in around 1963 when training with Royal Naval Reserves at Portsmouth. One summer evening a friend and I borrowed a RNSA dinghy for a sail in the Solent. Becalmed between Ryde and Portsmouth we saw coming in our direction from the west an enormous naval vessel, its course heading unwaveringly for us.

As it got nearer we recognised it as a cruiser, and my friend started muttering 'steam gives way to sail'. Panic started to set in as it continued to head directly for us: at the last moment it deviated a fraction of a degree to starboard and slowed to a stop about 100 yards from us. The immediate panic was over but we were now concerned about what was to happen next – had we upset them so much that a boarding party was about to come our way? What did happen next

was an almighty bang. 'Crikey!' I thought. 'Firing a 6 inch gun to subdue an errant sailing dinghy is way over the top!' Then the gun boomed a second time and, noticing a Dutch ensign flying at the stern, it dawned on us that we were not, in fact, the object of the warship's wrath and that it had arrived on a courtesy visit and was firing a salute, shortly answered by a shore-based gun.

My next experience of being shot at came a year later when, as a lowly engine room rating in the Royal Naval Reserves I was undergoing my annual fortnight's training in a Ton Class minesweeper.

On this particular day we were tasked to act as the target ship for the Home Fleet (those were the days!) in an area south of the Isle of Wight. We reached our allotted position and could just discern the fleet, which included the flagship HMS Tiger, as a grey smudge some 20 miles away. The idea was, when firing at us the fleet would aim about 1½ degrees to starboard of us so the shot should miss us by about ¼ of a mile. The shooting was impressive with salvos falling in a tight group, but worryingly close to us: although the shells were not explosive, a 6 inch shell hitting a wooden minesweeper would seriously damage it.

Having become the proud owner of A104 'Arosa' in 1989, the next brush with explosive danger was in 1994. Brother



A104 Arosa

David and I had sailed from York to Amsterdam, meeting wife Sue and daughter Bryony there (they had come the cushy way by ferry from Hull). We spent a week together cruising the Markermeer and IJsselmeer before the girls returned to the UK. David and I then locked out from the northern IJsselmeer and made for the Friesian island of Vlieland for the night

continuing on to Terschelling to the east the following day.

The channel between the two islands is separated by a narrow sand spit from an aircraft bombing range which was very active on this occasion, with Tornado aircraft dropping their bombs just a few hundred yards from us – a grandstand view, but again rather too close for comfort.

In 2000 we again experienced some discomfort whilst sailing from Hull to West Mersea for the Atalanta annual East Coast race. We had left Hull at around 4am and taken the tide down the Humber.

By 9am we were passing Cleethorpes and approaching the Donna Nook bombing range. It was a superb sunny morning, calm with a gentle breeze and seals basking on the beach. The bombing range extends a long way out from the coast so we were tempted to take a short cut through it.

We passed the Coastguard station and could see no warning signs or flags so

decided to push on. Soon we came to a fluorescent float and remarked that this must be a target – and with that the sky was suddenly filled with aircraft buzzing around like a swarm of angry wasps.

Fortunately they delayed their attack until we were 300 or 400 yards from the target, and then let loose with their bombs. We could have admired this impressive display of firepower but were far more interested in putting as much distance as possible between us and the action.

The final scare was in 2005 while returning from the Hamble celebration of 50 years since Atalanta A1 was built. On the way back to Hull we had put in to Calais, Ramsgate, West Mersea for the East Coast race (but arrived a day late due to being storm-bound in Ramsgate), Walton Backwaters and Lowestoft.

On the final leg to Hull we were nearing the Humber entrance at around 1am when a helicopter started circling us, then hovered a little way off, and, to our surprise, began firing a machine gun with red tracer into the sea, and then made off. A few minutes later it returned and repeated the exercise.

Being dark we weren't able to identify the helicopter. Despite enquiries when we arrived at Grimsby to await the tide

to take us up to Hull, we got no real answer to this rather spooky happening.



Fractional Rig versus Masthead Rig – Which is better?

by Richard James

When Colchide and Fairey Mary left Levington Marina for the West Mersea Regatta on 24 August 2017, we noticed that Fairey Mary was pointing about 10 degrees higher than Colchide, whilst beating past Clacton. This started a discussion when we arrived whether it was Mary's twin rudders or her fractional rig. Many Atalanta owners have stated in the past that they prefer fractional rigs.

There are pros and cons to both. There are sailors that love their fractional rigs and those that prefer masthead rigs.

The fractional rig is very popular amongst racing sailboats. A fractional rig has the forestay attached to a point below the top of the mast, usually at about $\frac{3}{4}$ height, instead of the top of the mast. This creates a headsail area that is less than it would be if the forestay were attached all the way up the mast. This in turn makes the larger portion of the total sail area in the mainsail rather than the foresail.

A fractional rig makes the boat easier to manage around a racecourse because the crew is now dealing with a slightly smaller foresail.

Because of the position of the forestay in relation to tension coming from the shrouds, adding tension to the forestay can add bend to the mast. This can result in a flatter mainsail with less heeling forces. This can be both good and bad.

A fractional rig is more difficult to tune and often requires constant tuning to adapt to different wind conditions and sail changes. This is because the shrouds act as backstay tension instead of a standard backstay. The shrouds must keep the mast in column and control forestay tension, so they are performing multiple jobs. Finding the right balance of tensions becomes more complicated.

Another problem with fractional rigs is that they require spreaders that sweep back. That is really not that big of a problem until you are going dead downwind and want the mainsail as far out as possible. The mainsail touches the spreaders and starts to chafe. For this reason, the crew in fractional rig sailboats usually let out the mainsail until it lightly touches the spreaders instead of letting it all the way out.

So masthead rigs are better?

Not necessarily. Mast head rigs are more common on cruising sailboats and can be considered a more traditional way to rig a boat. On a masthead rig boat, the forestay attaches all the way up the mast and usually has a backstay that directly opposes it.

The benefits of the masthead rig are simple. They are much easier to tune and some consider it a more secure rig. For this reason, many long distance cruisers prefer them. The masthead rig is a setup that can usually be "set and forget." Once tuned, there is not much retuning needed unlike with fractional rigs.

Masthead rig boats will tend to have a smaller mainsail and larger jib or genoa. This will result in a boat that's a bit harder



Atalantas: both masthead and 3/4 rigged!

to tack and manoeuvre around a racecourse.

Here's an extract from "The History of the Atalanta"

THREE QUARTER AND MASTHEAD RIG

The standard rig was the so-called three quarter rig when the forestay holding the luff of the foresail was secured approximately three quarters of the way up the mast. This rig, and the sail area, was based on experience gained with the Atalanta prototype and met the design criterion that the boat should be able to go to sea in all weathers. She had to be light enough to tow, but with adequate weight in the keels to ensure self-righting

and safety at sea. The sail area of the standard boat with main and genoa met that requirement.

Some owners, and especially those who sailed in light weather conditions, felt the need for more sail. Alan Vines therefore experimented with a masthead rig fitted to the standard boat and mast with only small modifications, and sailed the boat extensively in all conditions. To windward in strong winds Alan found that performance was not improved as the longer forestay was more difficult to keep taut. In light winds, however the masthead genoa improved the performance considerably both to windward and on a reach. The masthead spinnaker was a



Masthead rigged Atalantas leading the field?

marked improvement on a run or a reach because the increase in sail area amounted to about 60 sq ft. He carried a masthead spinnaker in winds up to Force 4 and tried the effect of broaching in these conditions. The boat heeled to about 45 degrees, but bore away and came up quickly as the spinnaker sheet was eased.

minutes before the Atalantas.



In the 1958 Round the Island Race, with winds from calm to strong squalls, Alan Vines sailed the Fairey Marine demonstration Atalanta A77 with a masthead rig and finished 44 minutes ahead of the next Atalanta (A61 Ellissa) in a total time of just over 10 hours. Moreover, he overhauled many of the main part of the fleet who started 15

Lifelines by Nick Phillips

A character conscious skipper, he
owned an old gaff cutter,
Swore no push- or pulpit, her
lovely lines would clutter.

He was true to his convictions,
convinced that he was right,
Until he was washed clean off his
foredeck on a wild and stormy
night.

"I've changed my mind" he
shouted, "I'll fit guardrails all
around".

'Least they think that's what he
shouted, the night that he was
drowned.

All my previous boats have had stoutly
mounted stanchions and lifelines. Helene
came with lifelines and jackstays but the
stanchions are only 16" high. The
geometry of the Atalanta deck renders
these almost useless other than as
handholds. Worse, their presence
encourages one to
relax in the
knowledge they are
there. They also
make access to the
cockpit by dinghy
or pontoon from the
side more difficult.

Of course there is
also the aesthetic to
consider. Some are
of the view that
rails and pulpit
pollute the clean
1950s lines. Others

think that 3' tall stanchions and lines look
right for a sea-going yacht.

I had pretty much made the decision to lose
them and rely on "One hand for me, one for
the ship" when a crew member challenged
this in light of my unrelated decision to
revert to hanked on foresails. "How would I
stow them efficiently in a blow?" I am not
a fan of stuffing the sails through open
forehatches. So Helene has adopted the
approach shown in the photo. A single
stanchion and the pulpit support double
guardwires around the foredeck. The
wires then drop to a U bolt on each side just
forward of the cockpit.

I am very pleased with the set up. Ideal sail
stowage on the foredeck rails, a forced
double take in transition from cockpit to
deck and vice versa, seaworthy appearance
looking forward from the cockpit,
unrestrained access from either side.

Only the aesthete and the seaman could
complain...



Helene

Lessons learned by Dinah Thompson

How time passes - when you're having fun. It is now nearly two decades since we bought "Calista" as a temporary means of returning to Croatia to revise the information for our book, "Adriatic Pilot".

We already had a boat, a 26' bilge keeled and junk rigged yacht that we had owned since 1981, and with which we were quite happy, although she was too big to trail. With two children of school age we didn't feel that we could afford the time or effort involved in sailing to the Adriatic, so an inexpensive trailer sailer seemed the solution.

We looked at boats such as Telstars (a trimaran) and Cornish Crabbers, and then somehow or other we started looking at Atalantas. We must have been to see three or four, travelling to different parts of the country, but none was quite right. And then Trevor found "Calista".

"Calista" is a Fairey Titania, based on the

iconic Atalanta hull, but with more spacious accommodation. From our point of view she was ideal. There was the separate aft cabin for the boys, then aged 4 and 9, a grown-ups' area that could be used by the family during the day, and a roomy galley and a heads compartment. She could also be towed behind our Landrover. Unlike many of the other boats we had looked at, "Calista" was in the later stages of a restoration. The owner, Chris, had spent a lot of money employing a professional boatbuilder to restore her, and had had the engine rebuilt. Chris accepted our offer, and not long after we drove down to the boatyard in Kent to collect her. Lesson number one was about to be learned....

The crane lifted "Calista" onto her trailer, and off we set. By the time we reached the M20 it was evident we had a serious problem. The trailer was tending to snake at 20 mph, and we were in danger of having an accident. So we stopped, had a cup of tea to steady our nerves, and Trevor had a closer look at the set up. He decided that the problem was caused by "Calista" being incorrectly positioned on her trailer. We

managed to phone through to the boat yard and they agreed to lift her again and reposition her on the trailer. So back to Faversham at a snail's pace, where "Calista" was lifted and correctly positioned on her trailer.

Ever since then we have been meticulous in making sure that we have the correct amount



Lunch break in Austria



Exploring Croatia

of nose weight. We also fitted an anti-snaking device, and there are marks on the hull to show where slings have to go and to indicate the correct position on the trailer. Despite that we had another serious instance of snaking, caused by the vehicle going too fast down a hill. The permanent solution is that we now have a six wheeled trailer which is more stable at towing, and our latest tow vehicles have cruise control. We still ensure that she is correctly positioned on the trailer, and stow things in the right places to adjust the noseweight. A number of Atalantas have come to grief when being towed. Their stories have been told in previous Bulletins.

Our first adventure away in "Calista" was over the spring half term. It was meant to be a dry run for our summer holiday cruise to the Adriatic. This time we got "Calista" safely to Pembrokeshire, parked her up in the yard, and whilst the boys were playing Trevor and I decided to raise the mast.

Those of you who know me, know that I am knee high to a grasshopper. Well we got the mast up to a certain position, and then got stuck, neither able to raise or lower the mast. Fortunately in our moment of need a passer-by realised our predicament, and being both tall

and long armed, managed to help us get the mast the rest of the way up.

Since then Trevor has found the standard method of raising and lowering the mast, and has constructed "A" frames, which, with the use of the spinnaker pole and a strong sheet and block and tackle, make raising and lowering the mast easier and safer. This manoeuvre is now carried out when the boat is on her trailer, following another hairy incident in Italy when we were trying to do the same thing when on the water. As you know, when you are on a boat on the water, any movement of crew or said water can mean that the boat heels with rather dramatic consequences.

So back to our maiden voyage. We got "Calista" into the water, got the engine to go, hoisted sails etc, and had a successful few hours. We picked up a mooring, had supper, a bedtime story, and so to bed. The next morning it was raining. We could hear the pitter patter of rain drops on the deck, and blow me, if it wasn't dripping on to my

face! However that was nothing. When we got out of bed and stood up in the cabin it was to find the floorboards were floating and there were several inches of water inside the boat.



It ain't half hot!

We spent most of that week onboard with me upside down in the bilges bailing, passing buckets to the boys to pass out of the hatch and overboard. So despite all the work done on "Calista" the boatbuilder had skimped on epoxy. We spent the next few days locating the leaks, and sealing them with chewing gum (it does work), and then sealing them properly before our holiday. We still had leaks when we finally got to the Adriatic, but we went round with a pencil marking where they were. Now nearly two decades on, with lots of work tracing leaks, and sealing them "Calista" has generally dry bilges.

That first trip to the Adriatic in "Calista" was a success despite the leaks. The boat proved to be fast and comfortable, and instead of selling her when we got home, we kept her. One of the deciding factors was most probably Colin Twyford. He was so supportive and encouraging, and generous with his time and advice. We joined the Association, and have become more and more drawn in, as other members have helped us.



Night sailing can be fun when it's warm

So another lesson learned is that the support of like minded people with shared interests is a source of advice, help, and friendship. The AOA has added enormously to our enjoyment of "Calista", and we still have her, not the other boat.

When we bought "Calista" she still had

her original Ford 100E engine. A petrol engine would not have been our preference, but we like things to be as original as possible, and besides which, we couldn't afford a replacement diesel. The engine worked and was in good condition. However another trip to the Adriatic taught us another valuable lesson. We had launched Calista



Uvala Krivica, on Otok Mali Lošinj

in San Giorgio di Nogaro, in northern Italy, stocked up with supplies, fresh water and refuelled with petrol at the marina. Ready, we motored off down river bound for Croatia. We hadn't gone far when the engine cut out on us. We quickly anchored and Trevor soon had the engine cover off. A bit of poking about and he eventually got the engine going...for fifteen minutes when it spluttered to a halt again.

To cut a long story short we eventually managed to get back to the marina where a local marine engineer had a look at the engine. He couldn't find the problem and suggested a new engine, but that wasn't an option. We found that we could run the engine for fifteen minutes every hour, so decided that we would sail across to Croatia, just using the engine for the final fifteen minutes to get into a berth.

To start off there was plenty of wind to sail, but of course at night, the breeze died away, so progress was slow. We augmented it by motoring for 15 minutes every hour. As the hours went by the

motor would run for a little longer each time, until eventually it would run continuously. Our crossing was slow, but we got to Istria safely.

The next time we used the engine it just kept going. The penny dropped. The issue had been stale petrol which had been sitting in the tank all winter. The new fuel from the marina in Italy had taken a while to get through.

Our cruise down the Istrian coast and across to Mali Lošinj was mainly under sail, with the engine used to get into harbour.

By the time we reached Mali Lošinj we needed to refuel, so we filled up at the fuel station on the harbour side. The fuel station in Mali Lošinj was used by cars as well as boats, so the petrol was fresh.

Petrol goes off after a short time, and it clogs the carburettor. We are now careful to drain petrol out of petrol engines when they are not going to be used. However the long term solution with "Calista" has been to replace the engine with a diesel which we did some years ago



Forward end starboard – reefing line block and cleats, modified roller bronze fitting

Wooden Boom Roller to Slab Reefing Conversion by Nick Phillips

Helene's previous owner had invested in the hope of a return in silverware. Helene (3/4 rig, wooden mast) had been set up with new sails and gear for racing. This included leading main halyard and topping lift aft to the cockpit. A

significant downside in this approach for me was the aesthetic blight of an aluminium boom, offset by the practical internal slab-reefing lines.

I set about converting the original wooden boom for slab reefing. This posed a few challenges:

- how to fasten reefing blocks securely to a hollow boom?

- how to securely attach mainsheet without the claw and metalwork?
- how to remove the roller reefing gear ideally without preventing reversion if required in the future



Boom aft, port, showing backing strip for reefing comb and mainsheet attachment



Boom forward reefing line details

- how to speed up pulling in the reefs

Consulting drawing A24211 it was clear that the hollow boom had some solid sections. Specifically, the ends, where the mainsheet claw sits and 3' abaft the mast.

comb to minimise friction. The fastenings, two of which are in the solid section designed for the mainsheet, pass right through the comb and boom with a backing strip on the other side. The two reefing lines (number 1 redeployed for the third reef) are led along the boom to a double block fixed at the forward end, returning to

Reefing Lines

For the reefing lines I decided the size of sail did not warrant blocks and adopted a reefing comb. Raising the boom with the topping lift first means little resistance to pulling in the reef. I epoxied 1/2 a sheave in each hollow of the



Forward end port showing outhaul cleat, modified roller-fitting and gooseneck



engineering that helps defines the Atalanta and her Fairey background. I replaced the handles with a wooden spacer and locked the boom from turning using a bolt against the old reefing pawl. The only destructive modification apart

Gooseneck

cleats over the hatch. The block is fastened to the roller reefing fitting flange.

Mainsheet Attachment

Solving the mainsheet attachment was more mentally taxing. There were many designs none of which felt satisfactory as they relied on potentially boom-splitting fastenings. The answer came when I decided to adopt a loose foot to the main. Removing the bolt-rope from the boom enabled wrap around webbing attachment of the mainsheet. This has no fastenings, utilising slots cut in the reefing comb for positioning and simple buckles for adjustment. The loose foot also adds the potential for greater sail-shape control.

Outhaul

The outhaul line was then led down the now vacant boom groove between blocks fixed at each end. The sail clew is held to the boom with a webbing loop.

Roller Reefing gear

The bronze boom end and reefing ratchet is, in my mind, one of the bits of



Extension of mast track, closing the gap between slide gate and gooseneck.

from a few holes was removal of the top of the flange to avoid chafing the sail foot.

Speeding up reefing

With resolution of the clew management my focus turned to the tack. A revised gooseneck with horns enabled rapid setting of the luff. Except for the

15" gap from boom to start of track which necessitates removing just the right amount of slides from the track. I asked around - "why is there a gap?" I could find no real reason suspecting it might be to allow the boom to fold against the mast. So I filled in the gap and extended the track to within 2" of the gooseneck.

Conclusion

It works. What a difference. Top up the topping lift; drop the luff a little, hook on the reef cringle and re-tension; haul in the reefing line and cleat; release topping lift. It looks good too. Ignoring aesthetics, perhaps the biggest improvements have come from extending the mainsail track and going loose footed.



Gooseneck



Harrier - a review of the first few years of nurturing T12

by Stephen Taylor

My eldest son, George and I bought Tily Ho [T12] somewhat on a whim from TimPalmer in September 2014. I had been looking idly for a Fairey Fisherman but was instructed by George that these would be too big to conveniently move but he was willing to allow me to consider an Atalanta.

You might think that with advancing years would come greater respect for one's wisdom but apparently not so!

There is a slight mismatch in the two owners approach to sailing, on the one hand is the "it must be time for a cup of tea" school that enjoys the benefits of a mobile water colour studio and the other approach constantly trying to maximise the speed [I have frequently suggested that George gets a Flying Fifteen and lets me get on with my tea and cake].

One of the original justifications for choosing the Titania was that we could use her on the French canals [we have a cottage more or less on the Nantes - Brest canal] and southern Brittany.

This seems less and less likely as the younger owner has developed an increasingly proprietorial attitude and seems unlikely to allow the senior partner to go

off unsupervised!

Having hitched her up and brought her home we realised that we had nowhere sufficiently level to satisfactorily house our new pride and joy, now rechristened with her original name Harrier. So her initial berth was on the old farm access track that ran in front of the house.

Tim had removed the engine but eBay produced a nice little 2 cylinder Yanmar still in its packing case. We devised new arrangements for the exhaust and cooling water systems and George made new stainless steel fuel tanks that fit under the cockpit seats freeing the void under the coaming for convenient holes into which stuff can be stuffed.

New coaming and hatch covers were made, at last the archive of bits of Iroko and Mahogany was being justified, and once that was in place, the electrics replaced and everything else seeming to be functional we launched her into the muddy and fast flowing estuary of the Tamar to swing on a



Saltash slip - our first launch

mooring off the Cargreen Yacht Club. The usual terrible summer weather and too many other commitments resulted in not enough time on the water and we hauled her out to sit on the trailer under tarpaulins. By spring the rather startling lemon yellow of the topside curves had become safety orange - many people think she must be lifeboat so we reckoned we might as well go along with it. The 'caravan blue' that coated everything else was giving way to a tasteful frigate grey on the decks and the coach roof was taken back to bare wood allowing some minor repairs to the laminates.

The junction between the coach roof and deck was less than perfect so we cut out a slot under the existing quadrant moulding and packed this with Sikaflex and refixed it with lots of screws. The coach roof was finished and coats of gleaming varnish applied after Oxalic acid had done its work bleaching out most of the stains. Unfortunately the

finish was somewhat blighted by a dust storm two days before relaunching when the final coat was going on and the non slip finish has still to be sanded back and a decent standard of varnish finish completed.

Again we missed the fine spring, and another summer of vile weather together with the usual excuses allowed only a couple of trips to Salcombe and local creeks. Cargreen is a good 2 hours + depending on the tide to get down to Plymouth Breakwater. A good days outing is a trip out and around the Eddystone lighthouse.

We had noticed a curious damp spot on the top of the keel in the forward compartment that would not go away and drilling it out and driving in a cedar spile had not sorted it. Whilst investigating the keel followers it had become evident that there were some hidden issues around the keel boxes that needed sorting out, so the momentous decision was reached to build a boatshed

where such things could be addressed properly. Eastcott is an old farmhouse sited to shelter from the driving wind and rain but being on the side of a Cornishcombe means there is no flat land. The discussion as to where to site the boatshed were so lengthy as repeatedly to drive people out of earshot. By the end of the summer last year [also beset with weeks of rain] we decided on a site and started work



The Eddystone light with Cornwall beyond



proper job of it so the structure was designed to allow us to lift the boat off the trailer and hang it from the roof and incorporate a storage mezzanine to absorb some of the materials involved in George's architectural metalwork business - a handy side line when it comes to any boat metalwork and boatsheds.

With the base laid, retaining walls up and the steel frame carrying the new roof we eased the boat in up the steep

Harrier in the dry at last

excavating a substantial hole. Once the weather worsened the route that the dumper took to remove the spoil got increasingly impassable and was eventually abandoned with the machine half way down the side of the hill hung up in the trees.

The decision had been made that if we were going to build the thing we might as well do a



The first test of the boatshed hoist

ramp and at last had Harrier swaying gently from her chain hoist.

Access to the underside became much easier and sure enough we found that the through fixings for the galvanised keel stops at the rear of the keel boxes had allowed water to penetrate into and between the mahogany and plywood bulkhead and as a result the



Saturated keel box framing



Starboard side keel box end being cut out 1

whole area was soft. Hours of chopping out with chisel and multi

tool eventually removed the two blocks of mahogany. Water continued to drip from the voids within and around this area but fortunately the sides of the keel boxes were relatively unaffected. So new Iroko blocks were fitted and epoxied into place and new stainless keel stops fabricated, incorporating cable ways and sheaves for the keel followers, and bolted into place - no more leaks expected there for a few years to come. We had also spotted that the shaft log had also become somewhat detached so a new one was fabricated out of aged oak and refitted with epoxy and bronze screws never to move again.

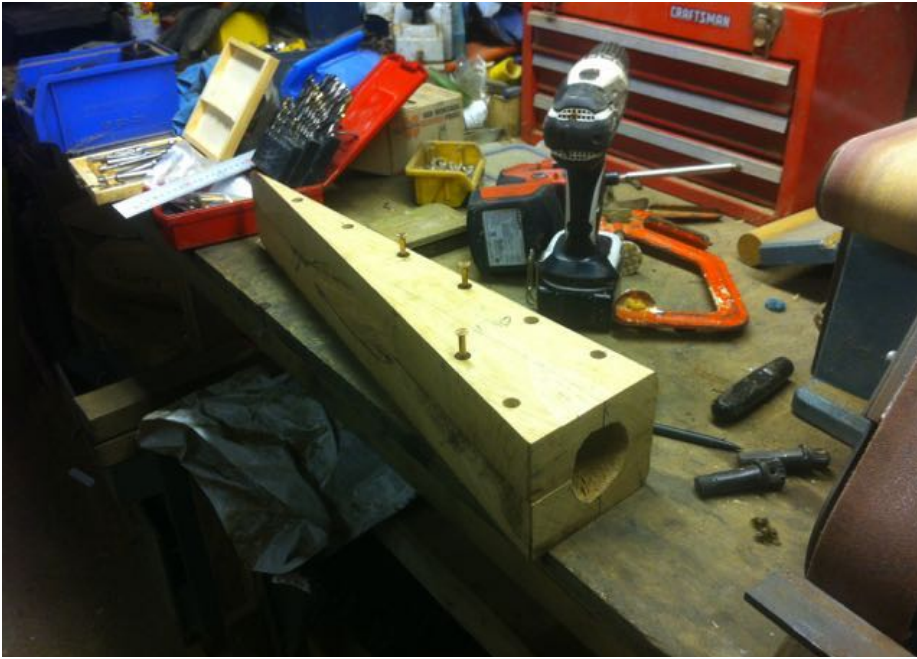


Starboard keel box end being cut out 2



Stainless keel stop and follower guide

Poking around in the vicinity of our damp spot revealed that under a thick coating of antifouling the 'sand keel', the 6" wide strip laid over the junction of the hull veneers under the keel, had become largely detached and at sometime in the past some bright spark had decide to refix this using steel screws. The



The new outer shaft block

encouraged us to route a 1" x 2" slot the length of the boat, which effectively removed virtually all the soft timber. Once the new section was jacked up and epoxied in place we felt that problem was solved, particularly as George fabricated a full length 4mm thick stainless steel strip in

result was that the full length of the keel contained soft spots every 6" or so. Having a nice long piece of Iroko from a building being demolished



Router jig and slot to keel underway

place of the original sand keel.

All the keel components were removed, blast cleaned and zinc sprayed. With the boat suspended we stripped the topsides back to bare wood, scraped off the antifouling and repainted the hull.



Iroko insert being glued into the keel



Stainless keel band receiving Sikaflex

One or two minor areas of veneer repair were revealed but nothing substantial. Everything seemed in good general condition except around the junction of the vertical rudder support piece, where the joint with the transom was less than perfect. However we ran through the paint build up and got her back in the water and went sailing. New sails arrived in place of the rather baggy originals. Following a couple of trips to Salcombe a week in



Zinc sprayed keels



Skeg mounting

Falmouth was planned, but first an overnight trip to Looe [glassy calm with a couple of dolphins] and anchoring off Kingsand on the way back. George went over to give the bottom a quick scrub but came back aboard the with the news that the skeg and rudder assembly were loose to the extent that it could be flexed by hand. We motored gingerly back to the mooring and decided that



No need to lie on your back to antifoul

we would err on the side of caution and within a week we had her hauled out and safely back home in her commodious quarters.

Contrary to expectations the skeg fixings comprised a couple of stainless bars screwed/epoxied through the keel and into the skeg but these had lost their grip in the end grain and could no longer be tightened. This area had always been damp, now we could see why - more soft, dark patches. A slot was cut out to remove all the decay and a mahogany block epoxied into place to receive the new fixings.

Connections between the rudder post and the skeg also utilised a couple of stainless bars but with no nuts or heads on the outer ends - in effect drifts relying

on friction to hold them in place. It turned out that it was the aluminium pintle that held the two components together. Considerable persuasion was needed to part this from the timber and when it was eventually removed more dark, wasted timber was revealed! A further strip of Iroko was let into this together with a reprofiled top where it mated onto the underside of the keel.

At the time of writing the skeg is awaiting a stainless steel shoe to be fixed to the keel to receive it and rudder post.

That will complete the structural work [all



A new topside colour for 2017

we know about] and we can get back to less challenging tasks and hope for an early relaunch and better weather in the spring.



Sailing at last



Flares and safety

Emergency - have you got your flares?

by Nick Phillips

The expiry of another set of flares made me challenge years of engrained 'seamanship' advice. Whilst acknowledging that the need for flares represents a drastic failure in my seamanship and a request for others to risk their lives for my failure, I have always carried them. But they are increasingly hard to dispose of, are dangerous in use, and burn for relatively short periods of time.

A few minutes on Google at the start of the year showed that others had already exercised this chain of thought. LED flares, whilst very expensive, do get round the safety concerns regarding the explosion / fire risks in setting them off. They also stay alight for significantly longer increasing the window for rescuers to find me. This is fine, if you can afford it, to replace handheld flares but are not much use in the role of parachute flare to raise the alarm in the first place.

And then the RYA and MCA joined the debate taking part in my head. The MCA have dropped flares as mandatory equipment in their latest equipment lists, and the RYA are actively promoting the use of electronic alternatives. VHF for coastal, PLB and EPIRB for offshore.

So, for my sailing which is predominantly day sailing in coastal waters with an occasional cross-channel

trip, I have adopted a DSC VHF at the navstation and a floating handheld DSC VHF. No flares. And an approach to sailing verging on being seen as a wimp.....

Rya general <http://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/current-affairs/Pages/carriage-of-pyrotechnic-flares.aspx>

Broader advice <http://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/safe-boating/keep-in-touch/Pages/calling-for-help.aspx>

<http://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/current-affairs/Pages/disposal-of-flares.aspx>

<http://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/safe-boating/look-after-yourself/equipment-for-uk-pleasure-vessels/Pages/hub.aspx>





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