

Atalanta

OWNERS ASSOCIATION BULLETIN 1968-69

A Message from the President of the Association

This is the first "Atalanta Bulletin" produced without any outside help. On behalf of myself and all members of the Association I should like to thank the Hon. Secretary whose efforts have made this possible.

Alan Vines

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Calanques and Mistral

by A. W. Wallbank - "Ploof" - A178

Even the Mediterranean had bad weather in the summer of 1968 and bad weather off the coast of Provence means either fierce mistral blowing out of cloudless skies from the north-west or blustery levanters bringing mist and cloud from the east. The mistral is strongest west of Toulon and, as this was the coast we had planned to explore, we were destined to have the most consistently windy holiday in our experience.

Fortunately, all but the most severe mistral conform to a daily pattern. They reach their highest intensity in mid-afternoon and die away in the evening. After a quiet night and quiet dawn, the wind begins to blow again, but overnight the swell has died down so that, if one starts early, it is possible to have a quiet start to the sail and finish with an exhilarating blow by mid-morning. Indeed, some of the best sailing in the Mediterranean is in the first four hours of a mistral day. It is a feature of the mistral that after several days it either dies away to give a period of typical Mediterranean sunshine and calm, or is replaced by a wind from the east which can at times equal the mistral in its strength. Again we were fortunate in that during the times we were sailing to the east we enjoyed westerly winds and vice versa so that almost all our sailing was off the wind, and we have never used the spinnaker so much in Ploof's history.

Ploof entered the water at Cannes and for the first week we sailed east to re-visit our favourite towns and harbours in that direction. We spent two days at Antibes and two more at Villefranche where we met the Deputy Chairman. Teddy was in great form and overjoyed to find someone who spoke worse French than he did! From Villefranche we ran under spinnaker towards Monte Carlo, but the morning was so hot that we dropped anchor for a swim and lunch in the Anse de la Scaletta. Almost immediately a man swam towards us from a nearby boat and, of all people, it was our Chairman. Alan was nearing the end of his holiday and looked very bronzed and fit, and was soon joined by his friends, while I demonstrated how handy is the drink locker on an Atalanta. After lunch we waved goodbye, and sailed on to Monte Carlo where the swell was sufficient to make us keep out of sight of the Maitre du Port and tuck away in one of the inner quays. Next morning, we found that our anchor had fouled under a mooring chain whereupon we immediately became the centre of interest for the whole harbour. Fortunately, by dropping a weight on a long line down the anchor chain and sending Bobby on to the quay to pull sideways, we freed ourselves immediately and sailed off as though it were our normal method!

There was now a period of fresh easterlies and we had a series of long runs under spinnaker. First we ran straight back to the Ile d'Honorat and tied up in its minute harbour. The evening was enlivened by the sudden arrival of three French yachts, each of which reached in through the narrow entrance under full sail and immediately dropped anchor to fetch up with a horrible jerk, and much shouting and confusion, colliding first with one another and then with every boat moored to leeward. Fortunately, Ploof was under the windward wall and we could afford to enjoy the bristling boat hooks, the tangles and the Gallic curses opposite. From Honorat we sailed slowly across the wide bay of Napoule and into the Rade d'Agay. We spent two days in this lovely sheltered inlet exploring its cliffs and coves and then ran on once again to St. Tropez. Here a large and well-equipped marina has been built and here we stayed for three days waiting for the winds to ease. One morning, we set off and motored through a mountainous swell in the gulf hoping that it would be better farther out, but the nearer we approached the open sea the higher were the waves and as far as we could see they were all topped with white water. Almost blinded by spray and with Ploof pitching like a cork, we seized an opportune moment to go about and return to harbour with the swell threatening to poop us.

St. Tropez was its normal self, that is to say very abnormal. Skirts were more vestigial and bikinis briefer than ever. Other incidents included being awakened one morning by a loud crack and heavy bump on our transom. We rushed on deck in scanty night attire to find that a lunatic had tried to sail out of the enclosed quay under full main and masthead genoa. He had collided with our stern and broken the ensignstaff. Bobby and I cursed him so violently in our Midlands vernacular, helped by all the neighbouring yachtsmen, that eventually he came aboard and very sheepishly offered to give me 50 francs for a new staff. Another incident was one evening when we were enjoying the antics of a trick cyclist on the quay when suddenly he seized your Hon. Sec. hoisted him on his (the cyclist's) back and tore round the quay on one wheel, stopping only inches from the edge, and then reversing violently amidst roars of applause from the crowd and to the intense delight of Bobby.

After another glorious sail round the three capes we called at Cavalaire hoping to see John Kenyon, but as there was no sign of Fille d'Honneur we left next morning in a gentle breeze which was now westerly to sail to the Ile de Levant. As we neared the island the wind increased and when we anchored the swell became too great to launch the dinghy. The midday forecast warned that a very strong mistral was imminent and so we motored across to the deep inlet of Port Man which was already crowded with craft that had heard the same forecast. Here we were storm-bound for two days under a cloudless sky while the gale screamed overhead and occasionally swept down the mountainsides to set every boat in the inlet surging and swinging at its anchor. Eventually, the wind died to give a glorious Mediterranean day in which we visited Levant and climbed up to Heliopolis feeling embarrassingly overdressed! Afterwards, we sailed round the southern shores of Port Cros and into the harbour which was as intriguing as ever. Next day in a strong wind we sailed across to Hyères to collect mail and then to the Ile de Porquerolles. This lovely harbour also has a huge, new marina which has all mod. cons., but which has marred the beauty of the old anchorage.

From Porquerolles we set out for waters and harbours which would be new to us. On a misty morning we sailed across the wide bay of Toulon, round Cap Sicie, and into the Baie de Bandol. As we approached Bandol, the island of Bendor was close to port and it looked so intriguing that we dropped anchor and went ashore. This island has been developed by the Pernod magnate, M. Ricard, who has constructed a little harbour with a phoney facade of old-fashioned shops and houses. The effect was very similar to the pool at the Boat Show. Here we obtained permission to moor and stayed the night there, dwarfed by the huge ketch belonging to Ricard himself. Next day the mistral was so strong that we simply motored across to Bandol, picked up a buoy and spent the day exploring ashore. From Bandol we sailed in mist and cloud across the Bay de Giotat and under the incredibly overhanging rock known as the Bec d'Aigle. From there an unbroken wall of enormously high cliffs stretch to Cassis. Dwarfed by these cliffs, Ploof hardly seemed to move, but at last we tied up in the harbour and made acquaintance with the town of Cassis.

Next morning we set out to explore the famous Calanques de Cassis. These calanques are deep and long gorges in limestone rock partially flooded by the sea. It is like sailing up Dovedale or Cheddar except that the gorges are narrower and the cliffs higher than their English equivalents. The first that we entered was the incredibly beautiful Calanque of En Vau - its vertical limestone walls weathered into fantastic pinnacles which in the brilliant sunshine and blue water formed an unforgettable sight. Amongst such cliffs, Ploof seemed like a toy yacht. Later, we entered the nearby calanque of Port Pin but this was open to the swell which, in the narrow confines of the gorge, was quite frightening. We dropped anchor just sufficiently to turn Ploof around without hitting the rocks and then sailed to the much larger calanque of Port Miou. This must at one time have been as beautiful as En Vau but it has been spoilt by quarrying and by endless lines of moorings. However, we stayed the night there and next morning turned eastwards once more. We sailed back along the enormous cliff wall and then as we neared its eastern end I scanned the cliff face through my field-glasses to try to identify a rock shaped like a Hooded Friar. Eventually, we thought we had found it and

sailed with some trepidation in towards the cliffs. Sure enough, there was a narrow cleft under this rock and behind it the minute Calanque de Figuerolles. Here there is just enough room for one boat and fortunately we were that boat. By midday the wind was so strong that I had to put out anchors over the starboard bow and quarter with corresponding lines to the shore on the port side, so that from the cliff top Ploof looked like a large letter "X". At Figuerolles the rock is a queer conglomerate of pebbles in a hard matrix and this has been weathered into the most fantastic shapes. Similarly the swell has formed many long narrow caves and grottoes which Robert enjoyed exploring in the dinghy. After a day in this calanque and a walk to La Ciotat, we sailed past the Bec d'Aigle and across the bay to Ile des Embiez.

This large yacht harbour was too synthetic for our tastes and so, the wind being too strong to round Cap Sicie, we crossed the bay to the delightful port and town of Sanary.

Early next morning we set out on what was to prove the most exciting sail of our holiday. As we left the harbour, a fisherman was coming in and he warned us by emphatic signs that the sea was too rough. However, we thought we would see for ourselves and sailed out across the bay towards the reefs and islands of Embiez. To save time we chose to thread our way through the Passe du Rouveau, the marks for which are two distant towers astern. In the strong swell the sea was boiling over the rocks but with Mary looking back at the towers (she dared not look ahead) we motored slowly forward through the reef and safely out to sea.



'Ploof at Port Cros'

In a fresh breeze and following sea, we were soon round the dreaded Cap Sicie and, as the wind appeared to be dropping, we hoisted the spinnaker. Of course, the wind now began to increase steadily and soon Ploof was flying along almost like a planing dinghy. The sails were like solid shapes and the sheets like steel bars. We surfed down the forward slopes of the waves and were across the wide bay of Toulon and approaching the narrow channel between the peninsula and the islands in an incredibly short time. A mile out of Porquerolles we handed the spinnaker, then the main and tied up in the harbour with both Ploof and her crew caked with salt.

It had been our intention to explore the coasts of the island but there now began what the papers claimed to be the worst summer mistral for twenty years. A strong mistral does not come in gusts and lulls like an English gale - it is an incessant relentless pressure which piles up the seas into a waste of white water and erodes the equanimity of the most phlegmatic of sailors. Day after day it blew out of a sky almost copper in colour. It was alleged to have reached Force 12 on the mainland and even in harbour at deck level our ventimeter never read less than Force 7 for one whole day in which the screaming of the yacht rigging was drowned by a booming roar like a monstrous organ pipe.

Eventually we awoke one morning to a comparative lull and rapidly cast off to dash across the channel and reach the shelter of the mainland shores. Even there it was a struggle to fight our way under engine to the Port d'Eyeres where we sadly took down our mast. Of course next morning with Ploof safely on her trailer the wind dropped at last.

Mondragon to Marseilles via the Rhone

by John Kenyon - "Fille de l'honneur" - A132

With my wife Marjorie and my youngest son Jack (16), we left Chiswick, London, on the 26th July, for our usual Mediterranean cruise with Fille de l'honneur (132) behind our Land Rover, on this our 5th holiday in France with this boat.

Following our usual route to St. Tropez - Dover, Boulogne, Paris, Lyons and the Rhone Valley, all went well until we came to a "grinding halt" near the small village of Mondragon, some miles north of Orange. Parking the boat on the village square with the help of the locals caused the longest traffic jam France has ever known. We soon discovered that something in the Gear Box had broken and would take 4 or 5 days to repair. In fact, it was nearly 4 weeks later that the A.A. in Paris and London could get a reconditioned Gear Box to Orange, but that is another story.

Shortly after our breakdown we met Julian Amies, his wife and family, owners of the only Sports Shop in Orange. They were the kindest and most helpful people we have ever met in France. Should anybody ever be in trouble in that area, a 'phone call to Julian (Orange 34-08-65) is all that is necessary.

Closing his shop on Saturday noon, 3rd August, Julian and I fitted a towing-bar to his car and by 5 o'clock that afternoon we had managed to tow the boat 20 miles or so to Le Pontet, a small village on the banks of the Rhone. I'm told my first remark on seeing the river was "You are not going to put me in there". I could not believe it would be possible to control a boat in a 10 or 12 knot current. Another Frenchman said "not to worry", you won't notice it when you are in it", and sure enough this was so.

To our great dismay, we could only find a crane with a maximum load of 2 tons. However, we managed to persuade the driver to have a go, but he soon discovered the boat weighed rather more than his crane would lift. After several attempts, we managed to jack the boat up and slide the trailer away. Carefully manoeuvring the boat over the water, the crane driver released the brake and down she went 15 feet at the speed of an express lift - no damage was done and we were soon moored alongside, with a rickety old ladder lashed vertically to the wharf for gaining access to the boat.

That night we spent preparing the boat for the next stage of our journey. Julian, his wife and daughter had accepted our invitation to join us as far as Marseilles. None of us had any experience of navigation on the Rhone, and it was not until a week or so later we discovered that permission to use the Rhone required a Certificate of Navigation or the use of a Pilot. Our only map was a 1963 A.A. Book and a rough drawing of the few harbours down river, with a warning to turn into the entrances in plenty of time before being swept past by the current.

The next morning at 9 a.m. with six aboard and the mast lashed fore and aft, we cast off, with the engine half-speed ahead. Moving at between 12 - 14 knots, it was not long before we pulled in to Avignon. Here we filled our spare can with petrol, had lunch in the shade of the broken bridge of Le Pont d'Avignon of song fame, and sought as much information we could from the locals on navigation of the Rhone - one thing we were assured, was that it would be quite safe to put up the mast, this we did and were glad of the extra space in the cockpit.

Once more casting off, we were swept down the river, under the road bridge with at least 6 feet to spare above the mast, then before we had covered another mile, there in front of us was a Railway Bridge, quite obviously impossible to pass under. However, luck was with us, and we were able to manoeuvre the boat into an eddy where the Rhone and the Petit Rhone meet. Here we dropped our anchor and 60 feet of chain, and to our great relief, held between the two streams. Jack launched the dinghy, and with skilful use of the out-board engine, managed to get a line ashore. After taking down the mast, we decided to tie up at a small jetty in the Petit Rhone, and spent the night in Avignon, an enchanting town with its floodlit castles and buildings and Open-Air Theatre.

Next morning, Monday, 5th August, was chilly and dull, and we set off after a good breakfast expecting the sun would shine before long. By mid-day, we had reached the small town of Arles, where a very helpful Frenchman went off in his car to get Jerrycans of petrol for us. Here we were advised of a very tricky part of the river to negotiate, where dredging was taking place due to the widening of the river towards the delta. In many places it was only 3 or 4 feet deep. Three times we scraped the bottom and had it not been for our lifting keels, would have been in very serious trouble.

We soon discovered by keeping away from the ruffled or churned up water and following the numbered posts anchored mid-stream, we kept in the deeper water. The only boats we saw during this day were 6 long narrow barges used for freight from Port St. Louis to Lyons.

By late afternoon the weather had taken a turn for the worse. It was raining hard and strong winds blew up from the South - the wind meeting the current caused large waves to break over the bow. Jack had the greatest difficulty to lift the mast to close the forward hatch after shipping quite a quantity of water.

The banks of the river on the last stretch seemed to be almost uninhabited, with no shelter or harbour of any kind. To turn back would have been impossible and I think we all wondered what our fate would be if the engine let us down. With great relief we came suddenly round a bend in the river to Port St. Louis where after hot drinks and dry clothes, we soon recovered from our long day on the Rhone.

On Tuesday, our friends the Amies had to return to Orange, and we were sorry to see them go. Our next problem was to get the boat from the harbour at Port St. Louis into the Bay of Marseilles. There is a canal some 2 miles long with Lock gates only at Port St. Louis. One of these gates had unfortunately been broken in the previous day's storm, but a kindly harbour master let us pass through the useable gate and down to the sea level of the Mediterranean. The alternative route would have been over the Rhone Delta, for which a local fisherman asked 100F merely to guide us in his boat. Apparently the channels in the Delta move from day to day and prove hazardous to yachtsmen.

Wednesday the 7th August we sailed into the Club Nautique, Marseilles, where we were made very welcome - hot showers and an excellent dinner. The following morning with maps and charts and a coast line we knew, we set sail with a strong S.W. wind for Bandol, St. Mandrier, Porquerolles, Port Croix, Illes de Levant, Cavalaire and St. Tropez.

Two weeks behind schedule, and to our great disappointment learned that Bert and Mary Wallbank had passed that way only a few days before.

Growing up with an Atalanta

by Frances Martin - "Seamajor" - A92

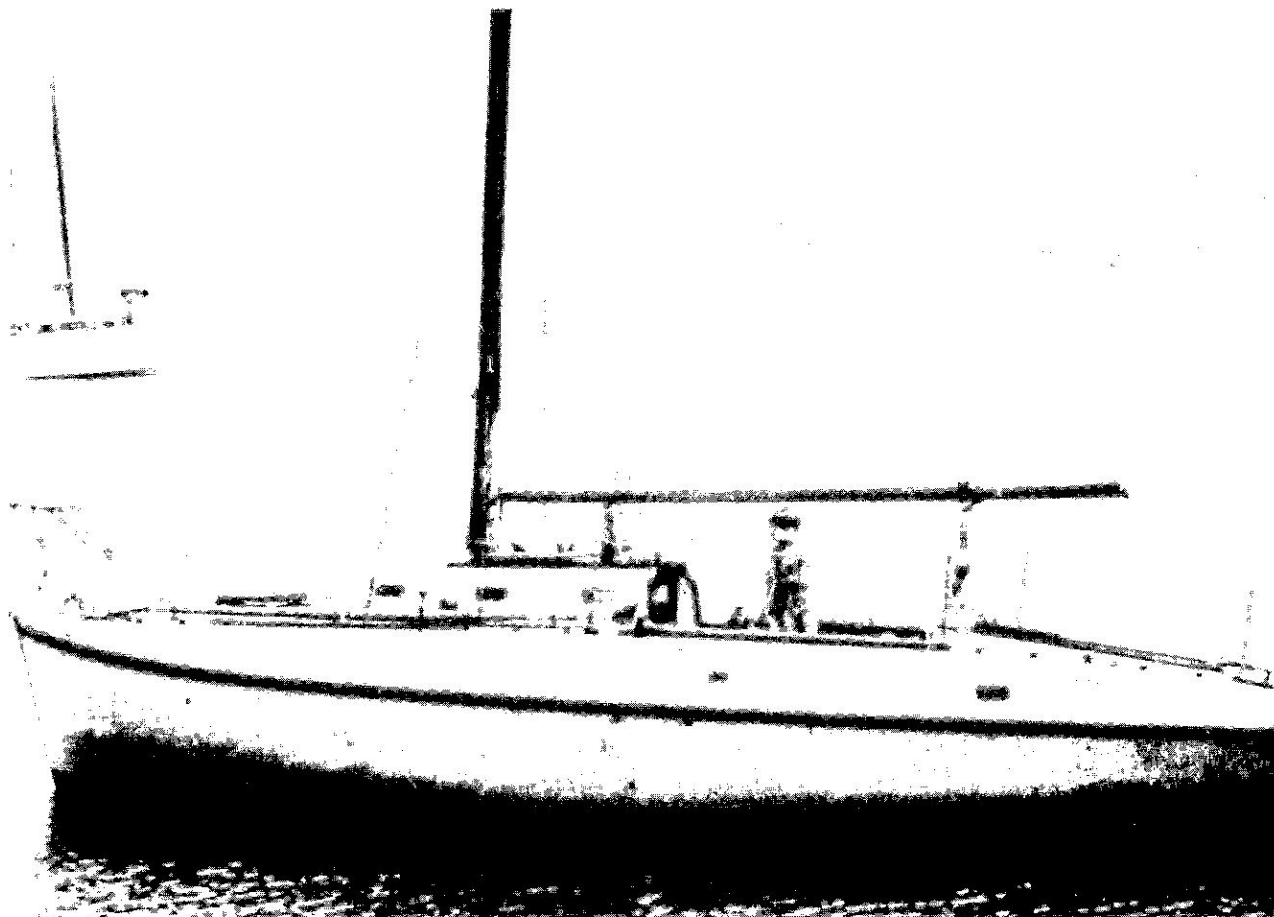
Each year, as the children grow older, we realise more of the possibilities of the Atalanta. This year has brought a great advance in the use the children have been able to make of Sea Major, and consequently their enjoyment has also increased.

Our oldest boy, Kenneth, now aged 7, decided that it was time he learnt to sail the boat, so he was allowed to take the tiller. He was extremely pleased and has already learnt to sail the boat by the feel of the wind and watching the sails, as well as steering the course set by his father. When he reluctantly has to relinquish the tiller to his sister, he makes an excellent crew.

Sheila, aged 9, has always been a great help in the galley but seeing Kenneth at the tiller has made her decide to have her turn too. On our last trip Father and I took the boat out from the mooring at Bangor into the middle of the Menai Straits, and then the children took over and sailed to Gallows Point (near Beaumaris) and back to the mooring. (Father was heard to murmur that now he knew why he had bought an Atalanta - it was lovely to drink tea and watch the view, while the children did the work!) The two younger boys also want to help, so now we have to find jobs for them to do as well. This becomes rather a problem, as Alan (3 years) finds it a full time job getting over the bulkheads! However, tidying up after a sail takes a much shorter time, with Sheila and Kenneth winding up the keels, Michael (5 years) assisting his father to pack up the mainsail, while Alan and I deal with the jib.

The other very enjoyable novelty this year has been swimming from the boat. One lovely weekend in June we sailed to Llanddwyn Island (just outside the western end of the Straits) and no sooner had we anchored in Pilots' Cove than there was a general request for permission to swim. Kenneth had discovered on a previous trip to Puffin Island that it is good fun swimming from the boat, but none of the others followed his lead. It was wonderful this time to see all the children climb down the ladder and swim off to the shore. Father sat in the dinghy in case of accidents, but nothing untoward happened. This bay has everything to offer children, rocks to climb, a derelict lifeboat house to explore, rock pools, a sandy beach and seclusion. The only easy approach is by boat, and since coming by land involves a three mile walk over sand, it never becomes too crowded. We have spent two nights in this anchorage this year. On our first visit we decided to anchor fore and aft, to prevent us swinging too far, as the sheltered portion of the bay is fairly narrow. This was a mistake, as the wind veered during the night and a cross wind made the stern of the boat slap down on the water with an amazing amount of noise. I thought that since I have had bunk boards fitted to my berth I would be able to sleep - but I spent another almost sleepless night. Our second attempt at mooring there proved much more successful; this time we used two anchors at the bows, but in spite of a beautifully calm evening, no worries about drifting, and being very tired, I still did not sleep well! I wonder if anyone can tell me how to get a good night's sleep afloat?

One experience has been a lesson to us all. When we launched the Atalanta we took with us someone who said that he had sailed before. I was detailed to drive the car round and Sheila and Alan decided to come with me, so we assisted with the launching and once Sea Major was in the water we drove round to wait for her arrival at our mooring. We saw her arrive and tie up and the two boys get into the dinghy followed by our



'Seamajor'

friend. The next thing that I saw was that the dinghy had capsized, and our friend was, as I thought, swimming down tide from the boat. The boys tell me that in spite of their warnings, he insisted on standing on the gunwales of the dinghy to tie up the Atalanta cover, thus capsizing the dinghy. Michael, sitting nearest the painter, grabbed this and only got his feet wet: Kenneth was thrown into the water, but managed to swim a couple of strokes and grab an oar held out to him by his father still on "Seamajor". I watched our friend, wondering why he was swimming away from the boat, until I saw an oar floating ahead of him and then another behind him. It was not until my husband yelled "Borrow a boat and row out and rescue Eddy" that I realised that he was in trouble. Fortunately Eddy grabbed the rope of a moored boat and my husband picked him up with the dinghy. By now Eddy was in such a state that he nearly capsized the dinghy again trying to get in over the side. He later told us that he could not swim, and I realised that but for the fact that we insist on everyone in the dinghy wearing a life jacket, I might have witnessed a drowning without realising it. However, all's well that ends well, and the children are now doubly careful in the dinghy and don't object to wearing their life jackets.

Perusal of the Atalanta Owners' Association bulletin usually fills us with envy of the far-flung and exciting cruises therein recorded - perhaps, one day, we feel, we shall be bold enough to undertake such an adventure, but until then, we can at least feel that we are gradually preparing the children for longer trips.

Cruise to Christchurch in Hullabaloo, May/June 1968

by E. A. Payne - "Hullabaloo" - A166

Having a son, Roger, at the Signals Research and Development Establishment (S.R.D.E.) Christchurch, I was anxious to accept his long-standing invitation to visit him by sea, so made enquiries about finding a crew. I knew that Walter Standing from the Marconi Sailing Club had disposed of his Kingfisher cruiser and was without a boat and that he had frequently given me a hand in the racebox at Stansgate so I approached him and was delighted to find that not only did he accept, but that he was able to supply a further hand, Colin Edmund, whose father is the Skipper of the famous gaff-cutter Theodora, belonging to the Ocean Youth Club.

It was decided to make the cruise to Christchurch during the Spring Bank holiday, which gave us three clear days. The few days before the start were occupied with loading up Hullabaloo with water, petrol, stores and generally checking the boat and its gear. The great day arrived: the Walton Coast Guard was advised of our sail number, time of departure and destination; the crew turned up in good time so that we were able to make our first entry in the log:-

1550 hrs. Left mooring at The Blackwater Sailing Club, Heybridge Basin: Wind S.E. force 3. The weather was fine and clear; but as the wind was dead against us and we were anxious to cross as much of the Thames as possible in daylight, we proceeded under engine, hoping to set sail after rounding Osea pier. However, it was not before Stone that we set sail and then only just managed to weather Thirslet spit beacon and as the next beam would have taken us into St. Lawrence Bay and out of the tide, we decided to hand sails and continue under engine.

1730 hrs. Passed Bradwell Nuclear Power Station: Wind now E.3. It was not until we were well past Bradwell that we were able to set sail and then, with the tide under us, we soon passed the Bench Head, N.W. Knoll, Eagle and Knoll; but with wind against tide, there was by now quite a choppy sea which was not quite so pleasant for those down below poring over the charts planning our course over the sands, and it was not long before both my crew succumbed. It speaks well for their fortitude and strength of will that they were both soon able to carry on with their duties despite the discomfort.

1915 hrs. Passed the Wallet Spitway; sailing fast. As it was now half tide we found there was plenty of water through the Spitway, and we passed in grand style the Whitaker and Heaps and we soon saw the light from the Barrow Deep light vessel, as it was now dusk.

2100 hrs. Barrow Deep left to port: Wind E. force 3., and twentyfive miles of our journey completed: average speed 5 kt. Here we nearly had a major disaster. A sheet fouled the compass supporting ring which sprung and allowed the compass to fall from its gimbals on to the deck. Fortunately the compass appeared to be undamaged and it was soon sprung back into its gimbals: This time we took the precaution of securing it by a thin nylon line.

With visibility excellent and the wind holding, we decided to go through Fisherman's Gat, so bore away, and leaving the Sunk beacon to starboard, picked up the Black Deep 8 where, although now about low water, we found plenty of depth and after leaving No.10 to port soon saw the welcome light from the Tongue L.V. as by now it was quite dark.

I was unable to persuade either of my crew to partake of any refreshment - not even a cup of Bovril - so being fairly confident of our course, I sent them both below for a well-earned rest. Being now alone on deck and having been at the helm since leaving the moorings, I soon realised that I was ravenously hungry. I had taken the precaution of stowing vast quantities of food in the cockpit locker, so now treated myself to a considerable meal, at the same time realising how wonderfully my crew had carried on in spite of their disability and without a grumble.

2-10 hrs. Leaving Tongue L.V. to starboard. Flood started; Wind dying.

After my ample repast, I was feeling that so far we had not done too badly when my complacency was rapidly brought to an end by the presence of the Thames traffic, and as the beam from the Tongue L.V. swung round, it was evident that there was a considerable amount of shipping about. However, the North Foreland lighthouse red sector was picked up and, after what seemed an interminable time, the white sector. This we held for some time but with the wind dying and the flood carrying us up the Thames, we were again back in the red sector. The shipping was now causing anxiety and I reluctantly decided to call Walter and together we decided to drop sail and continue under engine and with navigation, mast head light and stern lights all switched on we were soon on our way again and back in the white sector. The shipping seemed to be very kind to us and on several occasions vessels which seemed to be heading straight for us eventually bore away and although we were doing only two to three knots against the tide, we were nevertheless able to take avoiding action.

As I could still not prevail on Walter to partake of any refreshment and as he seemed to be quite happy at the helm, I went below and turned in.

N. Goodwin L.V. was seen to port in the distance during the night, and the sea was confused while rounding N. Foreland, but by dawn Broadstairs Knoll buoy was passed followed by the Gull Stream and South Black off Deal. Although there was very little wind we set sail in order to show our number to the Coastguard, the Walton station of which had been informed of our departure and route.

0335 hrs. Dover abeam: Wind light variable: Weather overcast. Possibly owing to the port strike, no traffic was entering or leaving the harbour at either entrance, so we passed without incident. The Harbourmaster had very obligingly hoisted his black ball allowing us to enter, but we continued doggedly on our way and passed the Hythe buoy. Here we saw the Maldon cutter Ricky Tickey, much to Colin's joy, as he knew the crew.

1130 hrs. Dungeness abeam: Wind still light variable; sails not doing much good so engine left running at tick-over. The engine, a 16 h.p. Coventry Victor, ran so smoothly and started so readily at the press of a button, that Colin named it "the sewing machine" and throughout the cruise it was thus referred to.

On passing Dungeness I went below and made a brew-up and then turned in, the long haul of some 30 miles across the bay being too much for my patience.

When I came on deck again we were approaching Beachy Head and I found that Colin had set the Spinnaker and was having a great time trying to get it to draw. However, it was not doing us much good and again we had to resort to "the sewing machine".

We were now well over the half-way mark on our outward cruise. By this time I was anxiously measuring the petrol depth in the tank and making calculations about our ability to reach our destination should there still be no wind. As Newhaven was so very little off our course we decided to call in to re-fuel and stretch our legs and we reached the harbour at 2015 hrs.

We tied up at the petrol float but unhappily the attendants had gone home, so Walter and Colin very nobly agreed to go ashore with the spare cans and find a garage. By now the Harbourmaster had followed us down from his office and told us that we might not stay without paying harbour dues but that if we could get away by 2100 hrs. he would let us off. I invited him on board and plied him with sherry and cigarettes, but in the end I had to pay up as the crew did not get back in time. The Harbourmaster was at some pains to explain that this would entitle us to tie up in harbour for the night, but as Walter and Colin had had to walk quite a long way before finding a petrol station, they took advantage of the occasion to refresh themselves at the same time and on returning would not hear of staying for the night; so we left, with a wave from the Harbourmaster from the top of the pier.

It was dusk, with an off-shore breeze, and we sped along happily with large genoa set, so I sent the crew below for a snooze. It seemed an interminable time passing the lights of Brighton and towards midnight I found myself dozing so was obliged to call Colin to do a spell - and didn't he need some wakening!

When I came on deck again at 0400 hrs. Littlehaven was faintly visible astern, and what there was of it, the wind was back to the East. There were a lot of fishing boats about and big ships were passing towards Portsmouth, but after a night of drifting we were rather worried about our position and could find neither the Nab tower nor the Owers L.V. and could get wireless signals from neither. Walter therefore got busy with the wireless and with bearings from Le Havre, Cape Barfleur and St. Catherine's Point obtained a series of error triangles which showed that we were, in fact, too much South. Our course was duly corrected and to our relief, Dunnoose Head on the Isle of Wight appeared through the murk on our starboard bow.

1640 hrs. St. Catherine's Point abeam: Wind light from E.: Sea Calm. After the prolonged spell of Easterly winds, quite a swell of very long wavelength had developed and it was fascinating to see that when in the trough nothing but sea could be seen on the horizon, whilst on a crest the Isle of Wight and all the shipping came into view. We crossed Freshwater Bay with wind dying and the Needles were soon picked up. As we passed the Needles a large steamer was clearing the Shingles and it stopped to put her pilot off. Having passed astern of this boat, we set course for Christchurch Bay, the last lap of our outward passage. Hengistbury Head was seen on our port bow, and the white inflated rubber dome enclosing Roger's satellite dish aerial at S.R.D.E. was soon spotted on the cliffs right ahead. As we approached the buoys at the entrance to the harbour several yachts and fishing boats were anchored waiting for the flood, as the pilot handbook warns sailors that the ebb (known as 'the Run') may reach as much as 9 kts. and there is very little depth over the bar. However, as it would have meant waiting two hours for the flood, by which time it would have been dark, we decided to make a dash for it. This is where the great advantage of the Atalanta, with its adjustable keels and powerful engine, became apparent. We therefore raised the keels to 2.5 ft. and got the anchor ready, while Colin stood by with the lead line. We got safely over the bar, although the rudder did touch, it was quickly lifted and then we met the full force of the ebb. "The Sewing Machine" was opened out to give its full 16 h.p. and although it still ran very quietly there was a distinctly healthy burble heard from the stern of the boat. There was a look of concern on the faces of the fishermen who lined the quay watching our hazardous entry as we made about 1 kt. over the torrent; but once in the harbour we made for the only mooring buoy which was vacant, which, in fact, turned out to be the mooring which Roger had arranged for us in collaboration with the local Cruising Association boatman. Within a very short time Walter and Colin were getting themselves ready to go ashore whilst I launched the rubber dinghy, and they set off for the quay to telephone Roger to come to see us and to the Coastguard to inform Walton of our safe arrival.

After Roger's visit we had a splendid meal on board and turned in: Needless to say, none of us needed any rocking that night! The distance was just about 200 miles and it had taken us 52 hrs., the average speed being 3.85 kt.

The mooring which we used was on the edge of the channel up to Christchurch and with certain conditions of wind and tide we took the ground, but as it was beautiful soft golden sand this did not matter at all - in fact, it was an advantage, for during my daily swimming I was able to scrub down and touch up the hull and topsides, so that by the end of our stay all were in perfect condition.

During our stay at Christchurch I was able to visit Roger's satellite communications establishment where, as a retired Marconi engineer, I was very gratified to note that the equipment was largely Marconi.

There was a very popular pub. on the quay where the local boatmen assembled and they were always very helpful in obtaining petrol and stores and providing local knowledge. Provisions and newspapers we got from the café on the beach, and there were several standpipes from which drinking water could be obtained.

As my crew were not available the following weekend, I had to stay two weeks in harbour, but this was not a bit too long and with splendid weather and plenty of yachts coming and going, there was never a dull moment.

Return Trip - Christchurch to Heybridge - Friday, June 14th, 1968

At slack water I cast off the mooring which had served us so well whilst in harbour and brought Hullabaloo alongside the quay, where our friends the fishermen took our lines. All our fenders were needed to keep us off the quay and as by this time the flood had started, and being stern on, it was almost impossible to move the rudder, such was the force of the tide. Also, whilst awaiting my crew, the wind which had been off-shore, now started to veer and increase in force which added to my difficulty in fending off. However, the wind eventually died and by this time Walter and Colin arrived with Roger who had collected them from the station. Within minutes, they had donned their sailing garb and we were soon away from the quay. The wind was now light and dead against us and as there was still quite a lot of the flood left we decided to make use of it and make the passage inside the Isle of Wight thus giving ourselves the satisfaction of having made the trip round the island.

1920 hrs. Cast off moorings from Christchurch quay. Wind E. Light variable: Course 120° for North Channel buoy to avoid the Shingles Sands and Hurst Castle abeam at 2045 hrs. Passed close to Hurst Point with overfalls rather ominous; heavy shower. Wind now completely gone so proceeded under engine. As visibility was not too good we decided to cross at once to the Isle of Wight where we picked up the Albert Fort on the cliffs and proceeded up the Solent in great style with the tide still under us. The rain had now ceased and the night was fine although still overcast. By now it was dusk and by 2100 hrs. we had the lights of Yarmouth abeam. The Hampstead buoys off Newtown and eventually Egypt Point off Cowes were passed. It was now quite dark and we were obliged to use our searchlight as the numerous unlighted buoys caused us some anxiety.

2200 hrs. Gurnard buoys and lights of Cowes passed - no traffic about. Towards midnight we saw the lights of Ryde with what we thought was its brilliantly-lighted pavilion looking resplendent in the pitch-black darkness. We had been at the helm for quite a long spell and both Walter and I thought we must have been dozing for it seemed the pavilion was moving out to sea! Of course we soon realised that it was the Southampton Ferry boat which was then moving away from the pier, which we were seeing!

As we approached the forts off Seaview the shipping from Southampton down the Spithead became considerable and we prudently kept our course well to the south of the channel. The France, brilliantly illuminated and with her name under the bridge, passed us at an incredibly high speed and was soon out of sight.

Having set course for the Looe channel with the light of the Nab on our starboard bow, I turned in - not without some misgiving - as conditions were suggesting that we might encounter fog. I had not been asleep for long before I was quickly brought back to my senses by Colin rushing down into the Cabin calling for the foghorn. I at once came on deck and was alarmed to find dense fog and to my horror the towering stern of a large cargo boat passing ahead of us. The distance looked like 100 ft., but in all probability it was nearer 100 yards but still uncomfortably close. We blew our horn frequently but it would probably have been of no avail and I expect that the cargo boat had not even seen us. Fog horns were heard from all directions and we spent an anxious half-hour on deck with our eyes skinned until, to our great relief, at dawn the fog began to lift. As we possessed no proper radar reflector, Colin had most enterprisingly hoisted an aluminium saucepan in the rigging in the hope of giving an improved radar response to that due only to our rigging. Is it possible that the cargo boat we had so narrowly missed had actually got a response and, in fact, taken avoiding action?

We had altered course to get us clear of the main deep water shipping channel, and as daylight came we found ourselves amongst numerous boats which were fishing off Selsey Bill. However, fog came down again and we passed rather close to a large yacht and we heard the Nab blowing his fog horn and the coast was not visible. Nevertheless, we were able to pick up the Pullar and Street buoys marking the Looe passage.

0910 hrs. Passed East Borough Buoy: Fog lifted: Wind E., Light variable: We heard the Owers L.V. blowing but it was entered in the log as being just a smudge - our eyes were strained by now and none of us was certain.

By midday it was bright and clear and with a little breeze - albeit ahead - we were able to set sail and with our course set for Beachy Head, Brighton and Newhaven were picked up, the chimneys of Shoreham Power station also, and bearings were taken on them.

1830 hrs. Passed Beachy Head: Wind astern, Light variable, so set spinnaker but did no good so resorted to "the sewing machine". We now started the long haul of about 30 miles to Dungeness, coming well into Pevensy Bay to avoid the worst of the tide.

Dungeness was passed at 0215 with the new Power station plainly visible and another long haul to Dover in prospect. Fortunately there was now no fog, but the wind, what there was of it, still right ahead. The Royal Sovereign L.V. was just visible on our starboard beam and we realised that this would probably be the last time we should see it because it is to be replaced by an unmanned automatic lighthouse.

The lights of Hastings and Fairlight were visible in the distance and we wondered whether we should be able to find our way into Rye harbour in the event of trouble for it was a long way to any other ports of shelter.

Passed Dover at 0645 hrs. and were not inconvenienced by traffic entering or leaving. Misty morning but still very little wind and what there was of it, dead ahead.

Set sail at Deal to show our number to the Coastguard and tacked for quite a while with little progress and tiring ourselves in the process. Had the wind held from the East we should have sailed very well after rounding South Foreland but luck was against us, for as we turned northwards, the wind backed and headed us. By this time we had run the engine quite a lot and I made calculations as to whether our fuel supply would hold out. Ramsgate was dead ahead and I considered it prudent to call in and replenish our supplies. As we approached we got the signal from the Harbourmaster that we might enter the harbour, but as we did so, we noticed a Hovercraft coming towards us at great speed and throwing off huge clouds of spray and evidently also wishing to enter; so although he appeared to wish to give way to us, we considered it more prudent to let him enter first and we therefore made a wide turn and followed in his wake. In the harbour we soon spotted, to the south, a floating petrol station and tied up alongside when a hose was passed aboard and we filled our tanks to our heart's content with the precious liquid. We were asked to move away as soon as possible so were not able to stretch our legs ashore. It soon became obvious that the urgency was due to the Putney-Galais-Putney speedboat race, and high-speed motor boats were coming and going in great numbers, some to take petrol.

1300 hrs. Left Ramsgate: Wind N. Force 2/3: Overcast: Sea agitated. We soon passed Broadstairs and by 1400 hrs. we were with North Foreland lighthouse abeam. As the wind was now blowing quite strongly we considered how best we could use it to our advantage and although it entailed some careful navigation, we decided to take a northwesterly course to the Swin. We therefore tacked first to the Margate Sand beacon, the Pan Sand beacon and the Shivering Sands tower, where the illicit broadcasting station was situated, and so into the West Swin. Here at dusk, it was tantalising to see the wireless towers on Foulness, so near yet so far! By now, although the wind held, it had veered and was now blowing at force 3 from the N.E. so that it was necessary to tack past the Maplin buoys and the Whitaker, which called for considerable concentration and we were very relieved when we eventually picked up the welcome flashing of the Swin Spitway. We were now able to bear away and sailed through the Spitway without once touching the bottom although our keels were lowered to their full 5'6" and it was nearly low water. One boat had not been so successful and was aground about half way across awaiting the flood to carry her off: had we not been so occupied with our own safety and beamed our searchlight on her we should have discovered that it was Theodora, which we had previously seen coming up the Edinburgh channel!

The wind had almost gone and was anyway dead against us so we pressed the button and proceeded under engine. Leaving Walter at the helm, I went below to sleep. When I came on deck at dawn we were passing Bradwell nuclear power station and before going below Walter related how during the night he had mistaken the lights of the power station for an anchored fishing boat and had sought to take avoiding action: he had been with the charts almost continuously since leaving Margate and was doubtless very tired. I took over the helm and proceeded up the river and eventually picked up my mooring at the Blackwater Sailing Club at 0500 hrs. The dinghy was launched and Walter and Colin were soon ashore and were able to get to Colin's house at Maldon in time for breakfast and to report that Theodora would probably be back on the evening tide.

The total time taken for the return trip was 57 hrs., including the stop at Ramsgate. This gave an average speed of about 3.5 kt. The amount of petrol used was 15 gallons.

The cruise both out and back, including the stay in Christchurch harbour, was very successful. We were favoured with good weather and calm seas but owing to the lack of time the crew was able to allow, it was necessary to use the engine more than I should have liked.

The Italanta gave every satisfaction and never any cause for anxiety; it proved very comfortable and the galley was most efficient. The engine behaved remarkably well and its reputation as "the Sewing Machine" was well justified, its petrol consumption being in the region of 0.3 gail/hr., and it was generally run at quarter throttle.

'Zambra' in the Channel Islands

by Anthony Fraiss - "Zambra" - A31/10

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| SKIPPER: | ANTHONY FRAIS |
| FIRST MATE: | BARBARA FRAIS |
| GALLANT CREW: | ROBERT AND IAN |

It was our original intention to leave Hamble on Thursday, August 1st in the late afternoon, with a fair tide, and to anchor in Alum Bay and then set off for Cherbourg at 4.00 a.m., but when we were ready to leave there was a light northerly wind, it was a sunny day and the forecast promised no change for the next 24 hours. So at 5.15 p.m. we decided to motor-sail straight to Cherbourg. We found we could make just over two knots under sail alone (wind force about 2+). Zambra's engine, however, is pretty powerful and, motorsailing, we reached Cherbourg 10 hours 45 minutes after slipping from Fairey's after a very calm crossing.

We berthed on the outside of one of the last pontoons and were fairly comfortable although, as it happened, on the next evening the north winds increased considerably and we spent a pretty bumpy night. In Cherbourg we met Dr. Stevenson and his family, in Sancerre and we also saw Cyn and Alchemy. We collected our "duty-frees" from Henri Ryst and had a good meal ashore on our first night at Hotel Vauban in Rue de la Paix which was well recommended by Dr. Stevenson as being good and reasonable (and it was both). During the day a Pioneer class yacht tied up alongside us with a family of three, Commander Arthur Howell, his wife Marcel and son Raymond and we became running mates for the majority of our holiday.

It so happened that they did not have a copy of Adlard Coles "Channel Harbours" and, armed with Bert Wallbank's copy, I acted as shepherd between the islands and Arthur was quite content to follow in my wake. On Saturday 3rd August we set sail for Alderney. The winds were still northerly, and very light but, more disturbing, visibility was only fair and at times quite poor. However it was an easy and comfortable passage to Alderney except for the Race off Cap de la Have and we were soon anchored in Braye Harbour.

"Never anchor in Braye harbour if the wind is in the north-east". That is what it says in the books. So, obligingly, the wind came round to the north-east and we were anchored in Braye harbour! And we soon found out how right the books were! We and several other boats made various moves to find a more comfortable lie, but the only good one was near the East wall and this was not allowed because the mail steamer needs room to swing. Fortunately the winds had not become too strong or we would have been in considerable trouble and I understand that in these circumstances the Harbour Master packs all the yachts into the inner harbour which dries, as very few boats can hold to anchor when it roughs up in the outer harbour. I would not like to put any people off visiting Braye and I understand the north-east wind is not at all common in that area and in fact on the way home we came there again with a westerly wind and had a supremely comfortable night. The town of Braye comprises a row of cottages, a couple of hotels a pub and a shop. You can however put your climbing boots on and walk up and up to St. Annes where there is a thriving town with lots of shops, restaurants and the like. Alderney is pleasant to walk around the wherever you stop you can get splendid views and see lovely flowers, interesting houses and appreciate the unspoilt life of the island. The telephone boxes amused us they looked like little sentry boxes with glass sides and the telephone itself comprises an ear piece hanging beside a wooden box to which is attached a handle. This you have to turn to wake the operator up and then eventually the modern electronic wonder takes over. At the end of the parade in Braye Street there is a hotel called "The Moorings". On our return we had an excellent meal there served by the Proprietress herself who told us of her big plans for the Hotel. She wants to make it a popular haven for yachtsmen and the plans do sound most interesting. You can certainly get a bath there at the moment and this may be found useful after a rough crossing. After a couple of days in Alderney we set off for St. Peter Port, Guernsey. Again the winds were northerly, light, but sufficient for a pleasant sail though visibility remained quite poor and at times worrying. Again we had the Pioneer in our wake and our passage took us through the Swinge and the Little Russell Channel. Here the tides are a little difficult as they vary so much hour by hour and this is fine so long as you can get good sights but after we lost the brief transit we had off Great Nannel and the Isle of Berhou and the few glimpses at the series of rocks lying to the west of Alderney we had to keep a sharp look out for the Grand Amfroque rock and light which should have appeared at least a mile away on our port bow. After the usual anxious look-out for what seemed an exceedingly long period we caught a glimpse of it less than a mile away and dead ahead so I took a bearing and then signalled to the Pioneer and we both steered off 80° to starboard until I caught a glimpse of the Platte Fougere. We were never fortunate enough to see two marks together and we were also unfortunate in that we were approaching dusk but we worked our way down the Little Russell heaving sighs of relief each time we found another mark and then suddenly above the mist we saw the top leading light of Peter Port. Coming in on the bearing we soon saw the alternately flashing red and white light at the entrance and came in without any difficulty. We were hailed rounding the north wall and were told to anchor north of a red flashing light in the harbour, but the sight that met us was of the most crowded anchorage we had ever seen. What would happen in a change of wind baffles the imagination! We weaved in and out looking for a suitable position and eventually found ourselves very near the starboard quarter of Sancerre. The Pioneer anchored on our starboard hand but it wasn't long before we moved (and then again) until we finally felt reasonably safe but the next two nights were disturbed by just what we expected. Boats touching and all sorts of mysterious noises which wake one in the small hours. During our stay in Peter Port I moved for both water and diesel and in each case came back to what I hoped would be a better position. One night a folk boat came in, weaved in and out of the harbour and finally landed up just ahead of me. The skipper and his crew took the dinghy ashore and evidently went back home for the boat was there, unattended, and hit me in the night. No visible damage fortunately but most annoying and then the harbour launch moving an offending motor boat (which had been tied on to a yacht) accidentally let go the tow and this came back into me. Another trouble for Atalantas is that when their keels are up they swing whilst at spring tide the majority of other boats touch the bottom at low tide so the Atalantas are well advised to go right into shallows where they will sit at the bottom for certainty. But this chronicle of harbouring difficulties is out-weighted by the pleasure of being in Guernsey. The Yacht Club is very welcoming and the island is most attractive and interesting to walk around and drive around (we hired a self drive car). In this way it was possible in a short stay to see some of the very special sights that Guernsey has to offer and in particular we would recommend a look at the Little Chapel which is in the middle of the island. We can sincerely recommend a well served very reasonable meal at Le Boeuf Qui Ris which is just behind the Yacht Club. Excellent service and comfort is provided and it has a good cellar. Our stay in Peter Port was prolonged by extensive mist and fog and there were many yachts champing at the bit (to use a Land Lubber's metaphor) waiting to go home, or on, as in our case, and we lost time but made the most of our stay in Guernsey. We would have liked to have gone on to Brittany but unfortunately our holiday time was running out and we decided it would be better to go to Jersey where we could at least spend a couple of days and so as soon as we could make it we left for St. Helier. Arthur and Marcel were now having to go home and we were rather touched by their farewell gesture, for as we weighed anchor and set sail we saw them doing the same thing. This we could not understand for our fair tide was their foul tide but what they had done in spite of the difficulty of anchoring again in the harbour was to escort us out into the channel and say farewell. We are so glad we shall be seeing more of them.

Once again we had very light winds with only just adequate visibility but this was improving hour by hour and the winds were taking on a bit of west. We motor sailed quite a bit of the way and then I took a radio bearing and found myself heading for a course which would have left La Corbiere so far to the north that I would not have seen it. I discovered afterwards that in north winds the tide charts are completely unreliable around the island and that this is a hazard to be taken into consideration.

I came in on the radio bearing and as soon as we saw La Corbiere with time on our hands and a fair tide we decided to sail the rest of the way. It was slow going but calm and very inspiring as one can sail within a couple of cables of the high headlands right along the coast and right across the mouth of the bays which looked very prosperous. We encountered no difficulty in making our entrance at St. Helier, the difficulties all started when we got there. We were told to berth at No. 5 quay. No. 5 quay comprises a pontoon to which are moored 4 trots of yachts and each trot numbering between 10 - 15 abreast and very few shore lines are used and in fact it would be unlikely that the outboard yachts would have such long shore lines. In light winds the trots weave around like reeds but in heavy winds like we got that night we were crashing into one another and it was quite a shambles by the morning. It is hard to believe that the Port Authorities are not prepared to provide better facilities. The pontoon arrangement is quite clever, it rises on to various stages so that the maximum number of rungs one has to climb would be only 4 or 5 and then you step on to a stage and up a decent stairway. Going ashore from No. 14 boat is quite amusing, it is a case of excusez moi, sorry to bother you, excusez moi, sorry to trouble you, may I cross, bitte, excusez moi, excusez moi and when you get ashore and discover that you have left the shopping bag behind it is a case of excusez moi, excusez moi, bitte, sorry old chap and so on and on the way out again you need a fixed apologetic smile on your face and everybody understands.

Really I think that if you are going to St. Helier it is best to go right into the harbour and sit on the mud or come into the basin by the yacht club and take a drying out mooring or lie alongside the wall. But we liked Jersey. Apart from the fact that we had friends staying in St. Brellades Bay and spent a luxurious day with them at their hotel and that we knew someone that lived in Gorey and spent a delightful evening at their home overlooking the harbour, we really owe our great memories of Jersey to Vic. Vic was the man standing at the counter of a self drive hire firm. We had tried many of these firms to hire a car for one day but found the minimum hire period was 3 days until we got to Vic and Vic told us we would be wasting our time trying to see the island on our own but for a negotiated sum he would give us a day that we would not forget and that we would eat at places where the food was (and he put his fingers to his lips French style signifying the quality of a charcoal cooked steak). We agreed that Vic should pick us up at 10.30 next morning.

The Channel Islands were occupied by the Germans during the war and they left behind many marks of their presence. Vic was a boy at the time but he got to know many of the Germans and he got to know his way around their dug outs and various underground caches and we saw some extraordinary things that I should not think one tourist in 10,000 sees. In one case we crawled down an overgrown chimney to a 2 ft. high tunnel and into a complex of rooms (naturally Vic had a torch) and we saw in the dim light the complete living quarters of a gun crew, kitchen with tiled floor, bedroom, air ventilation (the lot) and to our amazement the gun was still in place with all its moving parts still well oiled and working. This was at La Corbiere. We saw the Fantastic Gardens where, particularly, if you can get hold of the Proprietor, a funny little character right out of Walt Disney and dressed to match you learned not only the use of some of the more common plants and also some of the more exotic specimens, but you pick up quite a lot of information about the various religious cults in different parts of the world and their connection with plant life. We saw the German underground hospital and museums and we saw fields of heather on the cliff tops that Scotland would have been proud of. All together we acclaim it as one of the most interesting days we had spent. Whilst in Guernsey we met Commander Ellingham and his family on Aries and dined out with them.

The time had now come to think seriously about getting home. The winds were now westerly and not very strong but the trouble was to get to Alderney from St. Heliers you need 5 hours fair tide which you can get from Grosnez Point which is on the north west tip of Jersey but to get there at the beginning of the fair tide you have some 12 miles of foul tide from St. Heliers although there is a little inshore eddy just around Corbiere. Our trouble was that not only did we have to beat this tide but also the wind was in our face so we decided to motor to Grosnez and then sail and if necessary add the engine if there was any risk of finding ourselves at the wrong end of the Alderney race. It all worked out as planned, however, and we had a good sail from Grosnez but had in fact one hour or so of motor sailing to make sure that we would be through the race before it became a strong enemy. Back in Alderney harbour we found Braye harbour half empty and a very comfortable anchorage in the west wind gave us a good night's rest. We had planned the next day possibly to stay in Braye and explore more of the land but the 6.40 forecast gave us 4 - 5 westerly becoming southerly force 6 - 7 later with squalls and warned us of a complex depression covering the whole area which would bring about a continuing northerly air stream. At 6.45 a.m. I knocked the boys up and said (breakfast or no breakfast) we will be under way within 30 minutes. I wanted to beat the weather and certainly get out of Braye before the winds came round to the north. We had a superb sail for 5 hours and then the sky clouded, a little drop of rain, the sea became more lumpy and I took in the whisker pole reefed the main and all this only just in time. The seas really surged round us and one huge wave broke right beside us knocking the boat over some 40° and a cascade of water shot over the cockpit. The wind was almost due south and I was going north and with the main sail reefed I no longer had the security of my kicking strap against the gybe and with seas on the quarter I would have had to have come a long way off course to have avoided the risk of gybing and so I decided to add the motor at 2000 R.P.M. to reduce the risk of damage should an accidental gybe occur and at the same time to help me along somewhat. And by jove it did! People may not believe us but from time to time our Harrier speedometer needle touched 10 knots when we were going down into some of the troughs. Of course there were compensating moments when we were riding up and the needle dropped to a mere 7 but we knew we had been making good time because we tied up alongside Poole quay 9 hours after leaving Alderney and having taken a slightly longer trip than necessary, arriving rather too far to the east in Bournemouth Bay. This meant quite a slog against the tide up to Studland. A day spent in Poole and then the best sail of the holiday with a useful north westerly breeze and a really sunny day and a fair tide all the way we made Poole to Hamble in 5 hours. Total mileage just short of 300. Not a big cruise but an enjoyable holiday and we really got to know our new boat.

Birmingham - Amsterdam via The Grand Union Canal

by A. L. S. Jackson - "Talanta" - A80.

I bought my 26' Atalanta some three years ago in Holland, and I saw that the facilities offered to yachtsmen were so attractive that I was determined to cruise the Dutch canals at the earliest opportunity. With a yacht like a Fairey Atalanta which draws 4' 8" with the centre boards up the limited depth of inland water ways presents no problems.

I trail my yacht to my home for the winter so that Birmingham could be called my home port. My son Robert aged 15 who takes an active interest in our Midlands Waterways convinced me that our 7' 9" beam boat could be launched into the Grand Union Canal in Birmingham, and the Thames could be reached 115 miles away with ease. Having reached the Thames, a logical extension of our intended cruise would be to continue out of the Estuary, and across to Holland, and some months later this is just what we did.

Having obtained a six months licence from the British Waterways at a cost of £10. 0. Od., we utilised their craning facilities, and "Talanta" was lowered into the Grand Union Canal at Wharf Road, Tyseley. The charge for this service was 30/-d

Hemmings and Morris Boat Yard at Olton had agreed to my using their yard for re-rigging the yacht after its winter lay up, and travellers crossing Lincoln Road Bridge a few weeks before Easter could enjoy the sight of a fully rigged sailing boat complete with mast and sails. We fitted the yacht complete so that we knew that some time in the distant future when we reached the Thames we would have a complete boat, and that everything would come together.

We then lowered the mast, stowed the sails, and checked that our maximum height above the water was just under 7' (the bridge clearances give 7' 6").

I had been warned by a number of experienced friends that canals were a favourite place for depositing old bicycles and rubbish, but apart from some polythene round the prop shaft in the Leamington Pound our journey was without mishap.

British Waterways publish a complete map of the route of the Grand Union Canal together with interesting details of canal history and I have no doubt that many readers will be familiar with this publication.

At the beginning of the Easter Holiday we set out for Braunston, and in all it took us six week-ends to reach London. Our Easter trip finished at Barlow's dock, and Blue Line Cruisers allowed "Talanta" to stay at their excellent Marina until we returned a fortnight later.

Each week end we had different guests on board, and all were fascinated by the peace and beauty of the English Country side as seen from the canal. From Braunston the next section of the canal is particularly attractive through woods and meadows, tunnels, and cuttings the canal meanders to the home of the British Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruern. There are 115 locks between Birmingham and London, and we found that we averaged about 20 miles most week-ends.

Readers may be wondering how the return journeys to and from "Talanta" were arranged. The problem was solved thanks to a small Raleigh Scooter which travelled very well on the afterdeck of "Talanta" and was used to fetch the car at the end of each trip. The Scooter travelled just as easily on the lowered lid of my wife's mini so that we had transport available at all times.

Each week-end brought us nearer to London, we climbed over the Chiltern Hills, shared locks with Barges, enjoyed the hospitality of a number of Yacht clubs en route and eventually found ourselves on the Paddington Arm of the Regents Canal. It was my intention to go straight through to the Regents Canal Dock, but I was advised by Officers of the Waterway that the St. Pancras Yacht Basin was a much better place to lie until the time of our departure for Holland.

"Talanta" stayed about three weeks at St. Pancras Yacht Basin watched over by Members of a very active cruising Association.

We decided to leave for the Continent during the last week in June, and in the comparative calm of the Regents Canal Dock we re-rigged the mast and made "Talanta" ready for sea, the weather forecast promised gales in the Thames and Dover sea areas. We could not lock out until high water the following afternoon, and the lock keeper told us "Not to worry" for conditions should have improved by morning. As it happened the radio again promised Gales Humber, Thames, Dover but with a westerly wind behind us we decided to go out, and have a look at the river. With a following wind and the tide under us we raced down the 30 miles of the Thames, and at eight o'clock were off Tilbury. South End Pier came up and as the weather seemed to be improving we continued on our way. Using Stamfords excellent chart of the Thames Estuary we threaded our way out through the Princes Channel and settled down for the night heading almost due east.

With two hour watches and four of us in crew the night went quickly and by mid-day the wind had gone down to a mere whisper. The Belgian coast came into view during the late afternoon, and a few hours later we entered Ostend Harbour to enjoy the facilities offered by the North Sea Yacht Club.

The following day was Sunday and, after watching an interesting Pageant depicting the wedding of Ostend to the sea, we caught a favourable tide eastwards to Breskens, a small yacht and fishing harbour opposite Flushing.

The waters of the Westerscheldt Estuary can be very dangerous in bad weather. We were lucky and, with moderate favourable winds and a spring tide under us, we swept up the Scheldt past the lock entrance of Terneuzen which leads back to the Belgian Canals. Mid-day saw us at the entrance of the Beveland canal at Hansweert. We sailed past a long queue of barges which were waiting to clear customs and we were called into the lock to occupy a very small corner between the lower gate and a fairly large barge. It was here that whilst purchasing ice cream one of the crew members came back and said quite casually that he had cleared customs. All he had been asked by the Officer was the name of the Skipper and the size of the ship.

The versatility of the Atalanta was soon to be put to the test. We came to a railway bridge and we were told that the bridge would not be opened until the following day. So with block and tackle, we lowered the mast, and within minutes we were on our way once more. By tea time we had locked out into the East Scheldt and a strong tide carried us towards the Zijpe and we spent the night in Bruinisse.

Good charts are essential for these waters and for our cruise I had asked L. J. Harri of 90 Prins Hendrikkade Amsterdam for a list of charts available. I eventually bought four charts published by the Bureau of Water - Tourism and five charts printed specially for small boats by the Hydrograph Bureau. Every channel is clearly marked with numbered and lettered buoys and providing one has modern charts navigation is easy.

Next morning the tide swept us past Willemstad and by lunch time we had sailed right up Hollandsne Diep, the Kil Canal and entered Dordrecht. Here the yacht harbour is right in the centre of the town and, leaving "Talanta" in the care of the Harbour Master (at a cost of 2/6d. per day), we made our way back to England via Rotterdam, and the ferry from the Hook of Holland.

A few weeks later we rejoined "Talanta" in Dordrecht and started our Dutch cruise. We were able to sail to Rotterdam, but as it was our intention to make our way through canals with many low bridges we lowered the mast during our stay at the Royal Rotterdam Yacht Club. From the top of the Euromast we could see the Parkhaven, and the set of locks leading from the New Maase into the Delft Canal. It was our intention to travel to Amsterdam by a route which ran roughly parallel to the north sea and which lead through towns which played important parts in the history of Holland. Delft for example is a delightful old town with cobbled streets and canals criss-crossing in every direction. We visited the famous pottery works and enjoyed watching the skilled craftsmen at work.

From Delft it is but a short way to Leiden and the Kagerplassen. This is a huge lake about four miles long on which yachts of all sizes were to be seen. We stayed for a short time at Warmond whose only purpose now seems to be catering for yachtsmen. From the Kagerplassen there are two routes to Amsterdam both of which encircle the Haarlemmer Polder - we chose the northern route and called at Haarlem. The other way would have taken us past Aalsmeer and the flower-growing centre of Holland. Whichever route the traveller takes, one can see how the canal serves to drain all the surrounding land. Even Schipol Airport, which we passed at a later stage of our trip, is well below sea level.

We entered the outskirts of Amsterdam and at a lock at the end of the Nieuwe Mere we had to pay 2½ Guilders (6/3d.) for the use of Amsterdam Waters for a week. Apart from the odd shilling here or there passing through bridges this was the first large sum we had been called upon to pay. This payment entitled us to use all their waters to moor where ever we found it convenient. We did, in fact, find a little arm leading off the Amstel River, and stayed near Fredericks Plein for a few days whilst exploring Amsterdam.

It was our intention to visit the Island of Marken on the IJsselmeer and, having locked out into what used to be the Zuider Zee, we set off for this historic isle. Extreme care needs to be taken sailing on the IJsselmeer as, owing to the shallow waters, a very nasty sea can develop very quickly. However, thanks to the well buoyed channel, we skirted the newly erected dykes, and entered Marken Harbour.

We were somehow disappointed with Marken, possibly because the closing of the Zuider Zee from the North Sea desalinated the water so fishing had declined, and the little port catered nowadays for the Tourist, and there was no basic fishing industry.

From Marken we sailed over to Monniendam, and via the North Holland canal found our way back to Amsterdam.

The quickest way south from Amsterdam is via the Amsterdam Rhine Canal and large yachts with fixed masts are recommended to use this route. We chose to follow the River Amstel, from which Amsterdam gets its name, south to Gouda, and then back to Dordrecht.

This completed our fortnight's cruise of the Inland waters of Holland and there remained only the question of getting the boat back to England.

A few weeks later my Son and I returned to Dordrecht and started the journey to England.

The first day, with a favourable tide, we left Dordrecht, and had travelled across Hollandshe Diep, the Volerack and into the Zijpe before the tide went foul. With motor and sail we pressed on across the East Scheldt and by early evening had made Zandcreek, and had locked into the tideless waters of the Veersemeer. We spent the night at a Belgian Yacht Club, the members of which travel to Holland each weekend to enjoy these splendid Dutch waters.

The next day gave us an easy sail to Veere for lunch, and entering the Walcheren canal we crossed the Island and arrived at the Flushing Sea locks by early evening.

Rather than use the Yacht Harbour we lay alongside a "Free Radio Station" that was in for a refit. They were good company and next time I hear Radio Carlone or a similar station I shall remember the conditions under which they have to work.

Next morning, before going through the lock, we climbed the banks of the sea wall and looked out over the Estuary. Way in the distance we could see the Mole of Zeebrugge, the sun was shining and the wind blew from the north east, force about three. We locked out and with a tide of about 5 knots under us, we had a splendid sail down the Belgian and French Coast. By early evening we were snug inside the Harbour of Dunkirk.

The following day brought similar conditions, and after sailing for about eight hours on the same tack, came up to the East Goodwins Lightship. It was then to be either an all-night slog with a foul tide and wind to Dover or a quick run downwind to Ramsgate. Robert did not need any persuading, we altered course, and ran down the side of the Goodwin Sands, a couple of hours later we were in the Outer Harbour of Ramsgate.

After clearing customs, and with the help of the Yacht Club, temporary accommodation was found for us in the inner harbour, and the following week-end the Harbour Authority lifted the boat out on to its road trailer.

In 'Tomboy' to Terschelling

by Colonel O. M. Roome - "Tomboy" - A11.

The Crew: Oliver Roome Peter 17 Melanie 7
Isobel Roome Harry 13

He anchored them fast where the Texel shoaled
And his colours aloft he flew.

Newbolt.

For our cruise this year we turned our eyes once more to Holland - for the fourth time in 'Tomboy'. In order to break new ground and to please the family with some sandy beaches we set our sights on the Friesian Islands and the Wadden Zee.

We decided to make the passage from Yarmouth, Isle of Wight to IJmuiden with the male members of the crew, and the ladies would join us in Amsterdam. Accordingly, after completing all preparations for sea, we set off at 1630 on Tuesday, 23rd July on the young flood tide. We were in the middle of the long spell of North-Easterly weather that characterized this summer and we anticipated a good deal of beating before reaching IJmuiden, 256 miles to windward. In the event we were lucky. We were clear of Selsey Bill by dark, just making the Looe channel before the buoys became invisible. The hands then turned in and the Skipper took the night watch - a well-established pattern that has served us well. With six rolls in the main and the wind ahead of the beam but free, and our self-steering gear behaving well, we made good time through the night. We passed Beachy Head at breakfast time and Dungeness at 1300, but then had a frustrating beat to Dover in a light Easterly and with a foul tide. The South Foreland was eventually abeam at dusk and we set off into the North Sea, with its bewildering mass of lights, from light vessels and lighthouses.

After a quiet second night out close hauled the wind freshened at dawn and kindly backed to NNW, enabling us to fetch our course for IJmuiden comfortably. Averaging 5 knots we tore along in a sea getting steadily lumpier, until at tea time we took six rolls in the main and changed the jib, and just before dark we took the main down, in an ever-freshening wind. Under this rig we were snug for the night, in spite of a considerable sea running, and at 0615 on 26th July, the third morning out, we entered IJmuiden harbour, with 266 miles on the log - our longest passage to date.

After clearing Customs we sailed quietly up the huge North Sea Canal to Amsterdam and secured in the yacht harbour by the Central Station. That afternoon the ladies, to their intense surprise, were met at Schiphol Airport by the younger members of the crew, and escorted back aboard. That evening we advanced our clocks an hour to our normal ship's time - one hour ahead of the rest of the world - a scheme of things with many advantages.

Next morning found us negotiating the huge Oranje lock and bridge and by lunch time we were in the Zuider Zee. A glorious sunny afternoon developed, with a freshening wind, and we had a splendid sail up this beautiful sea to Hoorn, one of the delightful old Dutch deep-water ports, which we reached at 1900. The harbour was full of yachts of all sizes - fuller even than on our previous visit two years before. Next day, the 28th, after a lazy Sunday morning we sailed for Enkhuizen, another lovely old Dutch period town and harbour. We had a fresh but sunny beat in, passing some considerably larger Dutch yachts on the way. Another afternoon's sail, with a light head wind and short little snubbing sea, brought us to Hinderloopen, near the NE corner of the Zuider Zee - a small, quiet and delightful harbour and town, where attractive painted Friesian furniture is made. The harbour-master, who was most helpful and spoke good English, keeps a special book for visiting British yachts to fill in. The NE tip is the sandy area of this sea, and we anchored outside the harbour next morning for a bathe before sailing on to Kornwerderzand (our first sail off the wind in the Zuider Zee) where we locked quickly through and out into the Wadden Zee. A freshening and backing wind gave us a good beat in to Harlingen, a sizeable port and fishing harbour in Friesland. For the Dutch canals we use charts obtained from the Bureau voor Watertoerisme, Museumplein 5, Amsterdam, which are excellent. The yacht harbour shown at Harlingen on this issue of chart - lying just off the Van Harinxma Canal - is in a rather dirty and shallow backwater, but it is entirely quiet and secluded and much to be preferred to lying among the fishermen in the main canal running through the town, which we saw some other yachts doing.

Next day - Wednesday, 31st July - we made an earlier start and motored four miles inland to the small town of Franeker. Here we visited a fascinating planetarium, built by a woolcomber in his own house almost 200 years ago. The planets circle the sun round the ceiling of the room, with dials for sun and moonrise and set, phases of the moon, etc. All the dials and planet movement are driven by a single clockwork mechanism, made by the same man. A wonderful achievement. Returning aboard at lunch time we sailed back to Harlingen and, locking quickly through, we were out again in the Wadden Zee by 1515, bound for the island of Terschelling. With a fair wind at last we soon had the spinnaker set, and with the tide under us we sped along. Until the wind died, that is. And inevitably the tide turned fo'l before we reached our destination, and we had a hard plug for two hours to get in to West Terschelling before dark. On arrival we were given a snug berth by the harbour-master and charged no harbour dues. Terschelling was the goal for our cruise, and we spent a day here bathing and lazing. Unfortunately the sea was thick with jellyfish and the town with trippers.

On Friday, 2nd August we set off after lunch (and a visit to the good local Natural History museum and aquarium) for Vlieland, the next island to the South. The passage was short, but the fair tide out of Terschelling became foul on the approach to Vlieland, as the ebb drains the water from each end of the islands simultaneously. Enthused by a recent re-reading of The Riddle of the Sands we sailed past the harbour, and feeling our way, grounding from time to time, we eventually anchored near a drying sandbank. After a run

ashore on it we sailed back to the little artificial harbour of Vlieland, where a number of other yachts were lying, of various nationalities as at every harbour in Holland. These islands feel very remote, and this feeling was enhanced when, later that evening, we tried to telephone an English number, to find that the 'phones do not work to the mainland at night.

In order to save time we now decided to sail down the outside of Holland to The Hook, rather than go through the canals and lakes. Accordingly next morning found us slipping at 0530 (0430 your time - see what I mean ?) on the first leg of the trip, bound for Den Helder. Sailing round the outside of Vlieland and Texel we had a fair wind, and the tide most of the way. By 1200 we were snug in the yacht harbour in the Naval base at Den Helder, with 32 miles behind us and rain deluging round us. A lull in the rain later gave us the chance of a quick dash ashore. Our next leg was planned to IJmuiden, 30 miles on, and again we were away early - 0600 - to catch the tide. The Easterly breeze still held, giving us a reach in calm water. With IJmuiden abeam at 1230 the wind was too good to waste, so we pressed on for The Hook, carrying the spinnaker for the last eight hours and arriving, 66 miles out from Den Helder, at 2000. We motored two miles up the Maas to the Berghaven, where it is possible to berth, although one is not over-welcome.

The next two days took us first to Hellevoetsluis, past the huge 2½ mile dam and sluices being built to enclose the Haringvliet (the channel running along the North side of the island of Goeree and Overflakkee), and then to Middelharnis - a charming little harbour and town on the island of Overflakkee itself, where we contacted friends from an earlier cruise. Wednesday, 7th August found us cruising down inside the islands of South Holland and Zeeland. The vast programme of dams and locks, which aims to prevent a repetition of the disastrous floods of 1953, has caused the tides to run very strongly among the islands, but the channels are all well marked. The wind eventually left us and we motored the last five miles into Zierikzee, arriving at 2100. Zierikzee is a nice old Zeeland town and port, though it has become rather trippery from the opening up of the country by the motorway programme. We spent a day there, and collected some mail at the Post Office.

Our destination for the 9th was Zeebrugge, and we decided to take the outside passage past Westkappelle, rather than go by the Walcheren Canal and Flushing, as we have done before. Leaving at 0730 after a night of heavy rain, which had obligingly stopped as we turned out, we set off down our namesake, the Roompot, in a very light NNE air and with about two miles visibility. We had had no more than 2 to 5 miles visibility ever since arriving in Holland. By 0900 the wind had gone and we motored on, bringing up the Belgian coast after lunch. We anchored for a bathe just East of Zeebrugge and then motored on in to the harbour, where we found several British yachts as well as many other nationalities. We stayed at Zeebrugge the next day and took a train to visit the lovely old city of Bruges.

On the 11th we had a quiet sail to Nieuport which we had always leapfrogged on our coastal sailing hitherto. The head of the harbour and the town are some 1½ miles inland up a canal which, since it was a Sunday, was packed with boats of all descriptions, not to mention bathers and water-skiers - all very dangerous. We were shown civilly to the visitors' berth - safe and snug but in the leeward corner of the harbour on this day and therefore dirty. The town had little to offer and the only other point of note was that the wind was showing signs of turning Westerly, after so many weeks in the East. The next day confirmed this, when a long windward sail of eleven hours brought us to Calais, to anchor in the outer harbour for the night.

There was a dirty forecast in the night and a fresh North-wester blew, and in the morning we put the ladies aboard a Townsend ferry for Dover before getting under way. The wind was NW force 4-5, backing and freshening, with poor visibility. We were well reefed down and took in more as we went. We had a rough Channel crossing, in which cooking was not really practicable, for the first time on the cruise. But there would in any event have been no customers. At 1345 Dungeness came up fine on the lee bow, and after a rough beat across Rye Bay we entered Rye harbour at 1730, an hour after high water. The transformation to still water was sudden and welcome. We were greeted most helpfully by the harbour-master and shown to Atalanta (A1)'s berth, as she was away cruising. We quickly cleared Customs, and later took the ground as the tide ebbed. The weather had improved by next morning and we put in a 14-hour sail to reach Shoreham (44 miles) by evening - a large and almost empty harbour with an unhelpful port authority. There had been a gale warning that evening and next morning, but no gale, so on Thursday, 15th August we made another 0630 start, determined to complete the last 54 miles to Yarmouth. We had a good sail in a freshening wind, ending up in style with a beat down Solent with six rolls in the main, reaching Yarmouth at 2000.

This has been our most ambitious cruise in 'Tomboy', in which we sailed 760 miles by the chart, and returned refreshed from a pretty energetic holiday.

Achates to Ushant

by I. C. Humphreys - "Achates" - A60.

For this year's cruise we were accompanied by our daughter, Mary Gay and her friend Tony. Last winter we thought we'd like a look at Ushant, so we set ourselves L'aberwrac'h as a minimum and Ushant if time and weather permitted.

We left the Yachtharbour at Emsworth at mid-day on the 29th July and made our way to St. Peter Port via Yarmouth and Braye. We filled up with petrol on the morning of 2nd July and sailed when the foul tide in the Little Russel had eased, at 10.15, bound for Ploumanac'h. This was our first season with D/F and we got a very useful fix off the Brittany coast using a Radio bearing to the Roches Douvres and an optical bearing on Les Heaux lighthouse. This was at 17.15 and gave us 22 miles to go, which we covered by 20.40 after quite a turbulent sail.

By now we felt like an easy day and as the mate hadn't been to Roscoff we put to sea after a lunch of crêpes at St. Gueric bay. It was a warm and sunny afternoon and we were anchored in Roscoff in time for tea. By now the tides were getting inconveniently late and we could not sail through the Chenal de L'isle de Batz until 14.10. This next stretch of coast is rocky but attractive and we were lucky enough to have good visibility in which to enjoy it. The landmarks have delightful names, Basse Platte, Aman Ar Ross buoy, Lizen Ven buoys and so on. There are several channels into L'aberwrac'h, but we took the quickest, by La Malouin, an easily recognised rocky islet. The wind was forecast to increase so we motored up the river and anchored just beyond Beg An Toul beacon, below Paluden, at 20.50 where we ate most of our day's catch.

The weather deteriorated. We spent a day getting our stores from the Bellview Hotel and another fog-bound. Eventually we put to sea again at 1505 on the 8th, having slept at Paluden again to escape the noise at L'aberwrac'h where reclamation work was progressing for 22 hours out of the 24. The wind was light and it took us an hour to reach the open sea.

We were now entering the Chenal de Four where, just to confuse, there are two "Le Four" lighthouses four miles apart. We passed Portsall at 1755 and the southern Le Four at 1845. Twenty minutes later we were hailed by a French vessel like a small Dragon, liberally crewed by a mixed collection of young French who had run out of petrol for their Seagull and, by now, no wind. We thought this a rather casual way to treat the Chenal de four and as they declined a tow into L'aberildut, whence we were bound, we had to part with precious petrol.

L'aberildut had a lighthouse only 40 feet above sea level, but to make up for this there is a water tower a mile back that looks much more like a lighthouse. The harbour entrance is navigable at about half tide but as there is a natural sill the harbour does not dry and we picked up a mooring at 1955. It is protected from all directions and has a pleasant winding river, though on a much smaller scale than the one at L'aberwrac'h. However, it is extremely muddy and going ashore is a dirty business, except at high tide. The younger members of the crew got so muddy swimming that the mate had to wash them down under the village pump. At L'aberildut we lost part of the self-steering overboard in the muddy water and also got the loo blocked up, so next morning was devoted to ship's business.

Mistrusting the many off-shore rocks we decided to start the 12 mile passage to the corner of Ushant with two hours of flood left, which would give us the ebb to assist along the North shore without getting strong enough to sweep us past Lampaul Bay. It was a brisk day and at 1650, seventy minutes out from L'aberildut we put in two rolls and another two half an hour later. At 1745 we were north of Stiff Lighthouse which stands on the cliffs at the N.E. corner of Ushant which is in the shape of an H with deep bays at the East and Western ends. With the Easterly wind prevailing at the time Stiff Bay would have been untenable, so we had another ten miles to sail to Lampaul. At 1815 we shook out the reefs just before running into an area of swell and overfalls, to the North West of Nividic lighthouse.

Ushant, with its steep coastline and five lighthouses, including Creach, reputed to be the most powerful in the world, has quite an awe inspiring reputation. In his North Brittany book, Adlard Coles states that the best way to see Nividic light is by taxi. Taking this as a challenge, the skipper was adorned with two cameras and the binoculars as we turned round the end of the island, two cables clear of Nividic. In less than two minutes the wind freshened to force five and by now we were close hauled and heading for a half mile line of rocks extending off the other promontory of the deep and narrow Lampaul Bay, which we had hoped to be able to lay. The tide, several knots of it, was setting across the bay towards the line of rocks so there was no time to reef and there was nothing for it but to tack like a scalded cat, up the Bay, navigation on recollection of Adlard Coles's sketch map. The mate was sent to consult the pilot, but by the time she had found her glasses and the place in the book we were some miles beyond the dangers with which she regaled us. She caught up with our position some hundred yards short of the lifeboat slip, sheltered from the wind and trying to start the motor.

The tiny fishing harbour entrance is only 26 feet wide and we ran aground half way through it. Backing out we fouled the prop with seaweed and ended up punting back to a mooring with our ten foot boat hook. This long boathook has earned its keep many a time. Presently the cox'n of the lifeboat rowed out to his lobster pots and told us to lie to the lifeboat mooring, so we presented him with a tea-cloth showing all the lifeboat stations around the British Isles.

During the night the wind turned on-shore so we decided to depart on the afternoon tide at 1500, leaving us the morning to do Ushant. Lampaul is quite a little town with a supermarket. The island's bleak and Tony found it reminiscent of the Hebrides. There is a second tiny harbour at Stiff but it is not a proposition for a yacht. Each harbour has a lifeboat slip nearby. Wherever we went we were cheered by the story of a British boat with three aboard rescued by the Lampaul lifeboat, but not until the father had perished leaving a boy and girl. This story, coupled with poor visibility discouraged us from our original plan to sail through the Passage de Fromveur, with its eight knot tide, thus completing a circuit of the island. We had a reasonable breeze but were uneasy about the visibility and from Stiff on we motor sailed, our main interest being to get into L'aberildut whilst we could still be sure of seeing it.

The following day, the 11th, we left as early as we could on the flood to go to L'aberbenoit. Visibility was still poor and the seas confused. We located Basse Faupian buoy but it was quite obvious that we could not find our way into the harbour of our choice and settled for L'aberwrac'h glad to be in sheltered water again. We anchored near the lifeboat slip and were kept awake most of the night by the dredger.

We put out at 1330 on the 12th with sunshine, good visibility and no wind. Thanks to the engine, we tied up in Roscoff at 1800. I had thought to take Achates to St. Pol de Leon, but the more we studied the pilot, the less we liked it, so we compromised by going by 'bus. The Cathedral of St. Pol is quite impressive, even in pouring rain and we were lucky enough to see a wedding in which some of the party were wearing local costume, albeit a not very attractive one. In the afternoon, the rain having stopped, we took Achates to the Isle de Batz, anchoring well in Porz Kernoch on a falling tide. The crew split up and the master and mate climbed the lighthouse and enjoyed a magnificent view. On the other end of the island is a signal station but they were flying nothing more momentous than a line of nappies. We returned to Roscoff for the night and had some anxious moments as they were celebrating the 14th in advance, the 14th being a Sunday and were tossing fireworks into the harbour.

We left at 1700, contemplating a day at La Corderie on the Isle of Brehat, where M.G. and Tony had not been. We were preceded by an open 18 footer which must have had quite a sail as we had an off-shore force 6 and a sky as black as ink. Well reefed down we overhauled the dinghy and it was lost to sight by 0915 when we were abeam of Plougastel radiomast, some 19 miles from Roscoff. There were still nearly four hours of fair tide, but Brehat is exposed and Tregier tedious, so we decided to call it a day and anchored in Ploumanac'h at 10.20. There are far worse places to be stormbound. We lay over for a day and set off for Guernsey at 0720 on the 16th July. It was a stern wind and we rolled, but we were able to set the masthead spinnaker for over a couple of hours. We were lucky enough to dodge a number of heavy showers and made a good passage, during which we had to stop the crew fishing for they had caught 19 mackerel and nobody seems to want your surplus. In the end we gave them to the customs boatman.

Once we have left Brittany we feel nearly home, but there was one little bit of excitement left. Back in our home port we found the car battery flat and had to crank the engine. At the last moment, fully loaded up, we stopped outside the harbour office to hand over our keys. Tony offered to crank the engine and I stood half-in and half-out of the car. Somehow the gear lever had been knocked into Drive and the car started forwards pushing me off balance. Tony jumped back and fell over and I could only pull the wheel round but as I was hanging onto it I couldn't reach the brake pedal or turn back again, so we ran down into the marina and made a couple of holes in a pontoon and spent the afternoon getting the car back onto the road before the tide came up again.

* * * * *

We didn't use the self-steering. On the way to Brittany we were in too much hurry and after that we had lost a crucial part. It works very well, but if you moor in shallow water the arrangement is very inconvenient. I am planning to modify my gear so that the trim tab can be left in-situ when the rudder is raised and also to provide a quick-locking system to enable the engine to be used in spite of the tab.

Already well under way is my main winter task of installing a Volvo Penta MD1 diesel in place of the Stuart P55. I will report on the new engine next year, I hope. Finally I am hoping to make an Oliver Roome pram hood.

Alterations of Atlanta - A166, 'Hullabaloo', made by E. A. Payne

1. If a wooden crosspiece is screwed near the top of the whipstaff, the helmsman can then reach it while leaning back against the cockpit coaming without crouching forward as is so often necessary, specially when putting the helm down; incidentally, this forms a convenient stowage support for the main sheet when the yacht is not in use.
2. A seat 6 to 8 inches high for the helmsman enables him to obtain a superb view over the top of the cabin, which is invaluable when taking moorings or sailing in congested waters; in most yachts, the helmsman has to stand to obtain such a view.
3. All too often it is found that the bolts securing the fore-hatch have become loose and are hanging down out of their grooves, thereby permitting the hatch to be opened from the outside; this can be avoided by fitting metal strips to secure the bolts in their slots, these being hinged at one end and having a slot at the other which can be secured under the head of a screw.
4. The engine ventilators running up the sides of the bulkhead form very convenient hand grips, especially for those getting aboard from dinghy, but they will soon be torn away from their fastenings unless reinforced by strong metal bands passing round the tops and screwed to the bulkhead.
5. Similarly, the shelves in the main cabin are not strong enough to support anyone during rough weather; it is far better to fit one stout hand grip over each side of the entrance to the galley - incidentally, these can then be used to support a curtain to give cabin privacy.
6. Sometimes the keel clamping bolts turn, thereby making it impossible to tighten their nuts; the heads of these bolts can be prevented from turning by passing through the head a small screw whose pointed tip can engage into a hole drilled in the clamping plate; all this can easily be done by removing the inspection covers under the bunks, when a breast drill will enter.
7. The sharp corners on the hatch cover brass runners can easily be removed with a hack saw and then rounded with a file to prevent hurting the ankles of the crew and this has found to be very well worth the trouble.
8. To assist the single-handed yachtsman getting aboard again in the event of falling overboard, a couple of fathoms of stout line can be secured to the two after cleats and coiled on the deck just forward of the ensign staff to prevent it being blown overboard; then the person overboard can reach up and put a bight in this line to form a foothold, and by gripping the staff socket (Not the staff) and the back stays, clamber up on the rudder - this requires practice, but might well be a matter of life or death.
9. In the unlikely event of steering gear failure, emergency steering can be done by slipping a metal tube over the stub projecting from the rudder in the after cabin and inserting the mop handle, so steering to a limited amount of helm angle can be achieved.
10. The jib sheets can be attached to the clew by a toggle formed by a short piece of nylon line having an eye spliced in one end and a man-rope head in the other; spring clips have been known to open when the jib flogs and the pin of a shackle can so easily be dropped and being of metal, either could endanger the crew.

Round the Island - July 6th

by A. W. Wallbank - "Ploof" - A178.

The dawn of July 6th was dull and lowering but by mid-morning the sun was breaking through and weather conditions were ideal. The wind was light and at times very variable but what there was of it followed the fleet around the Island. In fact "Ploof" carried a spinnaker for at least some part of every leg of the course until the homeward stretch from the North Sturbridge. Even this was a very lop-sided beat with long port tacks alternating with short hitches on starboard.

At 8 a.m. the Atalantas crossed the starting line with the JOG fleet. "PLOOF" made a cracking start and for at least thirty seconds was the leading Atalanta. However, as the tide and wind carried us down the Solent, boat after boat crept past us and by the time we reached The Needles we must have been "tail-end Charlie". We tried a boomed-out Genoa, shy spinnaker, and even both together, but "Ploof" refused to respond. Under these conditions the main body of the fleet was soon behind us forming a multi-coloured wall of spinnakers, which effectively blanketed what little wind was coming our way.

As we rounded Palm Buoy, we had intended to go inshore but, seeing what looked to be a hundred boats becalmed under the cliffs, we kept well out to sea. At first this seemed wholly wrong as the becalmed boats inshore began to find a wind and move ahead of us, but things were reversed as we neared St. Catherine's and slowly we passed some of the Atalantas that had beaten us to The Needles.

From Bembridge Ledge through the Forts, the tide was adverse, but as we neared Cowes it began to carry us westwards. The head wind became lighter and more variable, and we soon realised that we must keep up-tide of the finishing line in case the wind dropped altogether. Eventually we had our gun and tried to find room on the trots at Cowes, which were so crowded that it looked as though one could have crossed the Medina on moored boats.

With Dr. Thursfield at the helm of an Atalanta again, it was no surprise to find that he had won in "Stroller", with Oliver Roome in "Tomboy" and John Kenyon in "Fille d'Honneur" close behind him. Poor "Kerry Piper" was well up with the Atalanta fleet as she neared the finishing line but the wind fell and the tide swept her outside the limit mark, so that it was some hours before she could sail back and cross the line correctly.

Once again we must thank Sir Arthur McDonald for organising our division so well. Unfortunately he will not be able to do this service for us next year, but the Association is most grateful to him for his past services.

Full results are as follows:-

RESULTS

| | | |
|-----|------|--------------------|
| 1. | A180 | "STROLLER" |
| 2. | A 11 | "TOMBOY OF TERHOU" |
| 3. | A132 | "FILLE D'HONNEUR" |
| 4. | A141 | "RAKIA" |
| 5. | A164 | "SCARWEATHER" |
| 6. | A 9 | "EREINA" |
| 7. | A178 | "PLOOR" |
| 8. | A 82 | "KOOMELA" |
| 9. | A174 | "CORDYL" |
| 10. | A 48 | "ATALA" |
| 11. | A140 | "TREENLAUR" |
| 12. | A147 | "CHAMOIS" |
| 13. | A108 | "SOLVENDO" |
| 14. | A101 | "AMIDA" |
| 15. | A120 | "JEVI II" |
| 16. | A160 | "MOYRA" |
| 17. | A169 | "KERRY PIPER" |