

Atalanta Owners' Association

65th Annual Bulletin - 2023-2024



Contents

From the Commodore.....	2
From the Editor	2
Double crossing of the Atlantic ocean in Atalanta A170 by Finn Ziem – Richard James.....	3
A grand day out...association trip to Hull – Ian Pollard	7
.Colchide comes home – Stephen McCann (A89)	8
Three seasons on – Greg Manning (A142)	11
Gellie A31/4...The boat that never gives up – Ian Pollard (A31/4).....	13
AOA 2023 Ore and Alde Cruise: The Unbelievable Truth – taken from the website written by Jim Sumberg .	18
Atalanta sand keel refurbishment – Mike Dixon (A1)	22
Disruptors – Jim Sumberg (taken from the website)	23
Whales, Otters and Vikings – Greg Manning (A142).....	27
Re-purposing a blister (A story for the times in which we live) – Mike Dixon (A1).....	31
Recent Boat Movements – Richard James	35
A Good Read – Atalantas between the covers.....	36
The Future of the AOA	37

Cover Photo: Exploring with A142 Sugar Plum by Greg Manning

From the Commodore

This is the last introduction from me. I shall be stepping down in the new year.

At last year's AGM I outlined some of the initiatives being discussed by the Committee to secure the future for the Association. Since then, the initiatives have been developed and proposals made. The proposed changes will be presented at the next AGM and whilst some have implications for the Constitution, they are relatively minor.

To whet your appetite, below is the list of initiatives under consideration; it's quite a thought-provoking list.

- Events (on and off the water)
- Rebranding (refocusing the message/the story we tell)
- Growing the fan base
- Facilitating sales
- Governance, subscriptions, funding, membership
- Bulletin and Yearbook
- Website
- Trophy insurance
- Boat husbandry

The Committee is confident that the changes will secure the AOA's future (more in the article at the end of the bulletin). I do hope that you can attend the AGM, which next year will be combined with the Spring social event, so just one set of travel arrangements to be made and, at the AGM, give your support to the extraordinary work that has been achieved by your Committee.

I was elected as Commodore early in 2017 and it's been a privilege to be in post for the seven years or so. Little did I appreciate that I'd end up at the top so to speak. I still have the letter written in June 1990 by the then Secretary George Parker, welcoming me to the Association. Not as long as some of you, but it still seems like a very long time ago to me.

Anyway, time to move on and allow the new Commodore lead the team with the implementation of the changes mentioned above.

I haven't quite hung up my wellies just yet and will still be around the Association – but in the meantime, many thanks to you all.

Fair winds, favourable tides and may you always be on starboard.

Aye

Mike

From the Editor

This is my second and final foray into editorship, as life and work mean I can no longer support the excellent work and passion of the Committee and Association. Sailing is a melting pot – all walks of life, social demographics, ages, sexes and ethnicities have an affinity for the water so I hope that is the future of the AOA. A flourishing and passionate group of sailors who enjoy sharing their experiences and joy for afloat in this bulletin, on the website, at the in person gatherings and with all the landlocked interested parties.

This edition is slightly lighter on the articles than I had hoped but with the addition of some valuable and interesting articles from the website I hope you still enjoy your read and offer support and articles to the editor for next years edition.

Happy sailing and enjoy the read. Sarah

Double crossing of the Atlantic ocean in Atalanta A170 by Finn Ziem – Richard James

Atalanta hull no 187 was given the sail number A170 and left the Fairey Marine boatyard on 13 August 1962. She was named Tilacius and had a Volvo Penta C10 petrol engine, Sparlight mast and unique lead filled bilge keels. She had owners in Portsmouth and Barnstable for her first 14 years and in 1976 was bought by a person who had bases in St Malo & Paignton. In 1978 she was bought by 27 year old Norwegian Merchant seaman – Finn Ziem, who at the time did not know anything about sailing or sailboats, but chose the Atalanta due to the price. Finn had read books about the adventures of other solo sailors in small boats on the endless oceans, and that created a dream in him. He thought - If they could do it, why not him too?



Finn's first sight of A170 in Devon and the first time he had ever set foot on a sailing boat

A170 had a tubular main sheet horse, large windows on the fore side of the blister and a substantial bridge deck in the cockpit. Uniquely, she also had lead filled bilge keels.

Finn bought the boat via Plymouth yacht broker - Captain Joe Honeywill and he left the boat at Turnchapel Marina in Plymouth for 2 years, and travelled back and forth from Norway a couple of times in order to get her ready for his trip. Finn read several books

about sailing and sailing techniques, among others "Heavy Weather Sailing" by K. Adlard Coles and this book in particular taught him very useful lessons. Finn did a little sailing training by himself in the sheltered waters of Plymouth Sound, but he never had anyone sailing with him, teaching him how to do things. Finn didn't learn how to sail until he set off on his trip. Finn renamed her Butterfly. He didn't know about the existence of the AOA and also didn't know that three Atalantas had already crossed the Atlantic Ocean, the most recent in the 1976 OSTAR.



Turnchapel Marina in Plymouth, Devon



As Finn knew nothing about sails or sailing, this was his jib

He didn't have anything bigger, but he had two different sized storm jibs.

Finn's initial plan was to sail around the world, but after some time he realised he didn't have enough money for such an adventure. Finn set off from Plymouth in August 1980 with very basic navigation kit, comprising one plastic sextant, a Seafix radio direction finder, and a few paper charts. Finn was taught how to use a sextant by the First Officer on his last merchant ship.

His provisions were fresh fruit and vegetables, bread that quickly went mouldy, lots of eggs and canned food, 200 litres of water and 40 litres of petrol. He didn't fish at all. He hardly used any electricity, apart from an occasional use of the lanterns, so he didn't need to charge often the only battery he had.

Finn routed 11,000 nm via: Plymouth to Lisbon, Madeira, Tenerife, Barbados, Bequia (St Vincent), Antigua, St Thomas (USVI), Nassau (Bahamas), Miami, Jacksonville, Beaufort and Charleston, where he realised that he should set course home, so routed a more direct track via: Bermuda, Flores (Azores), Plymouth, then finally to Norway.

About a week after he set off from Plymouth, he encountered the worst gale of the whole trip in the Bay of Biscay. Finn estimated the waves were between 20 – 25 feet high. He had listened to the BBC weather forecast the

Map drawn by Brian Sadler



The voyage begins



Madeira

previous day which warned of Force 8-9 gales.

The storm jib was sheeted tight fore and aft, and helped keep the boat steady on a south-westerly course during the storm. Finn's QM self-steering gear did a fantastic job and he also trailed a 200 metre length of rope in a bight behind the boat. The storm lasted for

two days, and at one time the cockpit almost filled with water. He stated later that it was amazing what a scared man can achieve with a 20 litre bucket.

Finn sailed solo and not in company with any other boats, but in Tenerife he got to know many other yachties, including Julie on Malaprop and Rob & JoJo on Tucantu. He met



Sail repairs after the storms

them again in Barbados and later he met Tucantu in Antigua. Going from Lisbon to Madeira, and then from Madeira to Tenerife, Finn had to manually hand steer most of the way due to a breakdown of his QM self-steering gear.



Leaving Tenerife for Barbados

The longest stretch without seeing land was from Tenerife to Barbados. It took him 33 days to cover the 2700 NM. In his diary he wrote: "Seen land for the first time in 33 days, I wish the trip could have lasted for another 33 days." He wrote it and he meant it!



Barbados

Finn had 8 hours of beauty sleep almost every night, except in highly trafficked waters. However, at least once he was close to being hit by a passing ship.

Finn eat bread and peanut butter all through the days, along with tea and plenty of lovely sweet canned milk in it.

He had neither W/T, VHF nor Short Wave transmitter, only a little FM transistor radio that also could play music cassettes.

He would take a nav fix as often as the weather allowed him, sometimes up to several times a day. This was his main activity on board, and he loved doing it.



Heading west, towards USA



US Coastguard

When in USA waters, he was approached by the US Coastguard, who surprisingly had a Swedish girl onboard, who shouted questions to Finn in Swedish. He wasn't boarded and didn't have to show any papers.



Nassau, Bahamas.

In the several American ports he visited, he was given lots of free beers, but not food. Finn particularly appreciated having all his dirty laundry washed by very friendly people, who also let him use their bathrooms to have wonderful warm showers. Generally he would stay in port for between 7 – 14 days.



Gales on the US East Coast in March 1981 on the return leg



Crazy conditions in Flores harbour on the return leg

When Finn arrived back in Plymouth exactly a year after he left, he rested for one week, then continued his journey along the English Channel, over the North Sea to Bergen, on the west coast of Norway where his adventure

ended. This last leg was over 800 NM and it took Finn 12 days to cover it, most of the time against freezing cold headwinds.

On the final leg of his epic journey, less than one week after leaving Plymouth, in the middle of the freezing cold North Sea, he was struggling against strong headwinds, each and every one of his garments were soaking wet. Not even his sleeping bag was dry. Butterfly didn't have a sprayhood, and slamming into meeting seas with the hatch open, very often resulted in cascades of water finding its way into the cabin. In such conditions even the cockpit was a very cold and wet place to stay.

Finn struggled a lot with the engine throughout the trip, but somehow kept it going all the way.

Finn sold Butterfly later in 1981 and the new owner sold her again a few years later.

Sadly this historically significant Atalanta developed a leak, and sunk in a Norwegian marina.



Finn approaching the Norwegian Coast with the Seafix radio direction finder

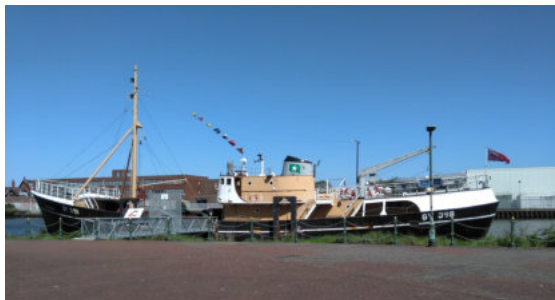
A grand day out...association trip to Hull –
Ian Pollard

This year we had our weekend away based around the recent city of culture, Hull. So in the tradition of our quirky association, we kicked off with a visit to the National fishing museum in Grimsby.



The Ross Tiger

Grimsby, once the home of the largest fishing fleet in Europe. has an amazing interactive display of fishing boats and activities. We took a guided tour of the last sidewinder trawler in existence, 'Ross Tiger. The tour was led by her last commercial skipper, lots of real life anecdotes and memories gave a truly genuine feel to life at sea in the post war period.



The Ross Tiger

The journey to Hull, from Grimsby, by Atalanta is around 3 hours, but we avoided the busy shipping lanes and a potential 7 knot tide by using the Humber bridge, once the longest suspension bridge in Europe. An hour later we were billeted around the pretty marina and ate heartily at the Minerva, one of the original hostelryes on the busy waterfront,

on the edge of the old town with its cinematic shopfronts and cobbled alleyways.

The next day we visited the home berth of A31/4 Gellie, The Humber Yawl Club.



The Humber Yawl Club

Formed in 1883, by some of the early social sailing pioneers such as Albert Strange. Nesting in a creek with drying moorings on the Humber, a thriving sailing community with over 200 members, self funded and run by members. Home to Theodora another Atalanta in the 1970s.

We held an interactive laminating workshop, sharing techniques and advice from the group of experienced Fairey repairers and renovators. A full weekend and hopefully a flavour of sailing/ maritime activities, then and now, in a lesser known area of the UK



The Laminating Workshop

Looking forward to next year's planned weekend away

[.Colchide comes home](#) – Stephen McCann (A89)

Arriving under sail to the mouth of the Hamble, it felt special. Whilst Colchide herself had not been physically 'born' there, sailing past Hamble Point, the historical heart of Fairey Marine, gave me an excited tingle. It had been a long enough journey in a figurative sense to get this point; but now I was set to bring her to a new home, and one from which I hope a thousand adventures could be launched.

Engaging the engine, which started without even a quibble, we started the process of dropping the mainsail and furling the jib. I had press ganged a friend from my band and a friend from my time learning to sail on Dorchester-on-Thames' gravel pit and they set about their duty efficiently whilst we pottered upstream to find the new berth. At this point the Royal Southern Yacht Club tender came steaming past. "I say, is that an Atalanta!?" shouted the smartly turned-out passenger over the engine noise. "Yes, she is indeed!" I replied with pride. "How fabulous, you know that the Fairey Marine company was on the Point...".

At that moment, I knew without doubt that this was the right place for her, she was home. Whilst the friendly gent was a little/fair bit older than me, what struck me most was the fact that the skipper of the tender, who was probably in his late 20s, had taken out his phone and was eagerly taking pictures of her as we headed upstream. The Atalanta seems to evoke wonderful responses from everyone who experience them, older and younger alike. Richard had warned me about this, but now I was experiencing it for myself.

Indeed, I had the same when I eventually managed to get her onto the quayside at the top of the Itchen ready for de-trailering. I hired the skills of a rigger, Jay from Rigmasters who turned out to be quite a gem. I had planned on a number of occasions to launch her from points various, with differing means

of despatch from trailer launch to others; but work, time, weather and the availability of friends to help meant that I needed a simple and robust solution and one that was not really reliant on me. I had even got as far as considering a 4-day epic from Ipswich to Hamble afloat, but late October weather and diminishing daylight convinced me that the combination of 'new boat. new water. a tight window for success' were likely precursors to a Marine Accident Investigation Branch Board of Inquiry!

Excited about the prospect of launching and desperately fitting everything around work, I cajoled the same Sam from the band to drive me in his trusty Defender LWB to Southampton from Colchide's temporary home by the Thames in Benson, Oxfordshire. Arriving late on a Thursday night, I decided to sleep over on her ready for Jay's arrival the next morning.



[Sam and his trusty Landy](#)

I met Jay at about 0730. specifically, I was brushing the last of the leaves that had accumulated from her time at home and was aware that someone was pottering around below the trailer making notes and examining the rigging. "Hello, you must be Jay, do you want a cup of tea?" I cheerily inquired. Without looking up he simply thanked me for my offer and cracked on with what he was doing, not much chat. Not rude at all, but as a seasoned rigger, he had rigging to do and a wet-behind-the-ears weekend sailor was not going to distract him from this task.

After a bit of rooting around, he finally stopped and got my attention. "Have you sailed her yet?". Not at all I informed him. "Well, aspects of this rigging are total museum pieces, and I am not really happy with how the electric cables are attached to the outside of the mast, not to mention the give in the spreaders." He then went on to list some other elements that weren't perfect in his rigger experience with the blunt delivery of someone who had seen thousands of boats and this was yet another owned by a dreamer.

However, he did at least explain that, in fairness, the boat was indeed usable and nothing was beyond some work. At this point, he had not really paid any attention to the rest of the boat beyond anything steel, aluminium or vaguely wire based. "It'll cost a you a bit to sort this, but I see that you have just got the boat, so my advice is you sail her, work out if you like her and only then commit to spending the money. Just don't cross to the Azores with this rig if you can do me a favour". I gulped a little and then went below to allow him to sort the crane to step the mast and prepare her for launching. I busied myself with some tidying tasks.

When I came out of the cockpit I saw Jay standing back now that the mast was on and the spinning of spanners had stopped. He was quietly observing her from a few lengths to port and was drinking in Colchide's shape and form. "Wow" he said taking off his beanie hat, "I just had not appreciated her lines and shape, she is absolutely lovely". I could only smile and agree with him. At that point he knew that I'd be back to sort the rigging!

My journey to acquiring Colchide has been a series of rather random happenstances. I once saw a small article in a sailing magazine about a lady called Margret Dye, who had just passed away. The picture was of her being given an award. The picture was of her being given an award. The article was probably 50 words long but explained that she and her



[My son Rafferty exploring Colchide](#)

late husband Frank Dye were very keen dinghy sailors and Frank had sailed a Wayfarer to Iceland. What!? I thought and instantly bought the book 'Ocean Crossing Wayfarer' and within 2 weeks had a beautiful wooden 16' Wayfarer dinghy on my driveway (without any real idea how to sail her).

I picked her up on the very first day of lockdown and since release have progressively increased my experience now with a crossing of the Bristol Channel and a sail to Lundy under my belt and of course RYA Day Skipper, whilst I build for Coastal. I then read a book called 'The Unlikely Adventure of Jack de Crow' and promptly acquired a yellow Mirror in a swap for a Wayfarer centreboard. This April I ended up sailing on the Black Sea, 15km from Snake Island on the Ukrainian border, with the book's author in an identical Mirror Dinghy to his previous adventure in 1997 (it's a great read) as I set him off in my dinghy which I had gifted him for his follow on journey to Venice. In much the same way, I saw a tiny ad for A1 in the back of Classic Yacht and got talking.

I was pointed to Richard James as he was a former RAF man like myself and following a quick conversation set up my travelling to Ipswich to get to understand the Atalanta a little more.

I was warmly welcomed by Richard and Julia and it turns out that they were married in the church at the end of my road, knew plenty of people I did and we were able to send a picture to a really good friend from the village whose father in law came straight back and said – is that Dickie James!?



A warm welcome from Julia!

We spent a lovely day afloat and got to understand the Atalanta and Colchide a little more. I think that Richard will explain his selling process in a separate article, but once on board, I was hooked and I agreed to be the next custodian after a few weeks thinking and exploring some other options.

At the start of October the time came to drive her to Oxfordshire and Richard sorted out getting her onto the trailer but was sadly not.



Richard shows me the ropes

available to meet me on the day of departure from SYH. So hitching her up to my monster hire truck I set off excitedly for home. My family had gone out for the day and left me to it; they weren't super keen on a 7 hour round trip for another one of dad's half-baked ideas. As I came abeam High Wycombe on the M40 I became aware of a car flashing me from behind – I began to panic thinking that perhaps the boat was falling off the trailer or even that the police had decided that my towing skills were not up to it. Amazingly, it turned out to be my family who had been at John Lewis and had come onto the M40 at the very point I was driving past. Claire told me that as she came on to the motorway she clocked 'a' boat and was remarking to herself at how beautiful this was. Only coming closer could she see the name on her stern and realised that it was me and that the boat was indeed now 'our' boat!



A rather happy owner!

The last bit of randomness is that having just put her on the water I was commuting to my office in London. I am not there very frequently at the moment so it was out of the blue. On the Elizabeth line, having waited for a seat to come free I managed to sit down a few stops away from my destination. At this point a man sat beside me and was engaged in reading his book. I glanced across and instantly the word Colchis leaped out of the page at me. Colchide was named after the Colchis people. They were actually referenced in story of Jason and the Argonauts as they were the custodians of the mythical Golden Fleece. Turns out that in Georgia /Armenia on the western shores of the Black Sea, they did indeed take gold from the streams by dipping sheep fleeces to capture the flecks of gold in the water. Excitedly, I interrupted the gent who took off his headphones. "This may appear totally random, but on that page is actually the name of my boat!". "Really, he replied – wow, I am Armenian and that is the name of my tribe..!". Now what are the chances of that....

Three seasons on – Greg Manning (A142)

Sugar Plum's Coppercoating was finally finished in June 2021 and she was then launched at Arisaig on the West Coast of Scotland. It was a very short season and on lift out in the first week of September there was no fouling visible.

In 2022 she was launched in the first week of June and lifted out again in the first week of September and the very little marine growth in isolated places was easily removed with a Scotchbright pad.

Whilst preparing her for the six hour drive to launch this year it was found that the coating including the Hemple primer recommended by Coppercoat had completely flaked off one side of the stainless steel skeg. It was very disappointing as the previous primer had adhered for nearly twenty years and had

proven very difficult to remove. There was no time to take remedial action.



The coating both primer and Coppercoat had flaked off the skeg

Sugar Plum was lifted out in the first week of September and I was aghast to see the whole under water area was covered in marine growth of between two and four inches long. The coating had peeled off the other side of the skeg and the whole skeg was covered in small crustaceans. I was not in a position to pressure wash the hull there but did hose the weed and trailer down to remove all the salt water. (Despite what some people seem to think salt water and trailers do not mix!)

On arrival home I pressure washed the hull but even with an underbody lance was unable to remove the weed from the hull inboard of the keel box covers and the nearly horizontal bilge inboard of them.

I phoned Coppercoat for advice and was told the problem was that I had not abraded the coating with fine wet and dry sandpaper.

It is lucky it has been an Indian Summer as laying on my back for many hours under the hull now slung and on trestles would have been even more unpleasant had it been cold. As it was scrubbing the weed off with slimy water running down my arms and soaking my clothes was not what I had planned to be doing.

I do release the keels annually to service the pivot and brake mechanism, even with the

keels in this position only half the inside of the boxes can be reached. The area to the left has been cleaned and abraded. Note the areas of the stainless steel keelbox covers where the coating has partly flaked off.

I pondered why I had not been aware that the surface needed abrading so I looked again at the Coppercoat website and below is a “cut and paste” extract from the section headed “How it works”.



The bilge area after pressure washing with weed still attached that could only be removed by scrubbing with a course Scotchbright pad

“On immersion sea water attacks the exposed pure copper powder, causing the formation of cuprous oxide. This highly effective antifouling agent deters growth until the surface degrades further to become cupric hydrochloride. This final copper form is highly unstable, and is washed away by the movement of the yacht, thereby removing any accumulating silt or slime. This automatically reveals a fresh copper-rich surface, whereby the process recommences”.

There is no mention of the need to abrade the surface; it states that a fresh copper-rich

surface is “automatically” revealed. No wonder I had the mental model that once applied I could enjoy years of not having to anti-foul Sugar Plum.

When applying transitional anti-fouling, areas that are difficult to reach can easily be covered using a four inch roller on a long handle. Abrading the surface requires direct access to all the hull including such areas as inside the keel boxes.

I now have a number of problems. Firstly I have to annually abrade the underwater area



With the keels released for servicing they were easy to clean and abrade but even with them in this safe position only part of the inside of the keel boxes could be reached

which is a far more demanding, unpleasant and time consuming task than rolling on a coat of traditional anti-fouling. Secondly I have to find a primer that will adhere to the stainless steel skeg, I do have some Coppercoat left over to then cover it. Thirdly I have the stainless steel covers to the rubber keel box seals where the coating has partly come off and I have to work out how to now treat them. Finally I have the inside of the keel boxes to try to abrade which is a really difficult task.

There is also an additional problem that small areas of damage to the Coppercoat that will occur over the years cannot easily be repaired. With traditional antifouling they will be covered during repetitive re applications.



The stainless steel skeg area after cleaning and abrading showing that all the coating has failed to adhere to the stainless steel areas

The big question is, would I have applied Coppercoat had I known when I decided to do so what I know now? At the moment the answer is a clear no, I hope that in future years I might have a change of heart but I am not holding my breath.

The other question is would I recommend Coppercoat to others, I do not think you need to read between the lines for the answer.

Gellie A31/4...The boat that never gives up

— Ian Pollard (A31/4)

We've had Fairey Atalanta 26/31s a Fulmar and Ducklings for about 25 years now. So, staples and epoxy resin is in the blood! When the children were small a 26 was the perfect boat for summer adventures. However, when puberty came they became more reluctant to squeeze into the rear cabin. I remember a rally in West Mersea rafting up to Zambra, a goliath in comparison. Whose crew seemed to appear from endless corridors and proper bunks with privacy curtains, helping me bail our from my leaky stern gland at midnight.

In 2017 I was offered the opportunity of saving Gellie. She was lying on the hard in Rosneath, battered in a famous storm in Rhu Harbour in 2015. Mast broken in half, furling system mangled like a paper clip, and large holes bashed in her hull and topsides from flailing top section of mast in 100mph winds. She was full of gungy water, literally 3 ft deep.

She had a good pedigree, survived a 10 hour tow off Cornwall in a Force 11, during Mike Dixon's UK circumnavigation after an extensive 2 year restoration from the hog upwards. She was a survivor, although most of the committee that visited her had stated that she was too far gone, too much damage, too big a job.

Restorations and renovations are never easy, but living 200 miles away with limited time,

Scottish West Coast weather meant that, after 2 years of draining yard fees, travel costs, rain and the dreaded midges, not much progress.



Speaker hole location



Bulkhead damage



Holes galore



Extensive hull repairs



After re laminating, wood fuller smooth edges



Sanding of filler and top laminate, finally undercoated with primer



Deck repairs – 28 days and counting



Gellie and the extraction of the damaged engine

Even the temporary tents and tarpaulins were blown away in summer gales!

Eventually, low-loader transport and another small mortgage later saw a move to Goole. In 2019 we made a six wheeled trailer, so that we could avoid expensive crange and take advantage of the slipway....more holes were replaced with Agba...the engine was unseized and perhaps the following summer might see water....

In the summer of 2020, with COVID restrictions lifted, I was able to persuade our children that 4 weeks intense cleaning and painting would give us 2 weeks on the canal, as a better holiday than trying to book a campsite etc opening with restrictions on facilities and capacities. No sailing, but a suitable trial launching into the Aire and Calder at Goole, without a mast...possibly a



MG Magnette brings the Duckling before launching

new direction, as a narrow boat. The Engine worked well, we even had new cushions covered, by Katie, our youngest...perhaps a future talent?

Launching in 2021 saw a borrowed 26ft mast from Peter Keighthley, a fellow Atalanta owner. We set off down river towards Hull, with an attempt to join in the West Mersea rally. A leaking raw water pump was replaced with an electric Jabsco pump within 24 hours courtesy of ASAP supplies next day delivery service. The leaking pump had sprayed corrosive water over the engine during the 5 hour passage. Finally fixed in Grimsby, not to be delayed any further, perhaps setting off in a 4 to 5 Easterly against the flood tide, solo, wasn't the best idea. The plan was to get to Spurn Point as the tide turned to get full advantage of a good push out of the wash....

Hopefully, I'd be in West Mersea in time for the race and social. Unfortunately, the keels not fully down gave tremendous weather helm. Fighting with the whipstaff, going head to wind didn't last long, the rear bulkhead gave way, splitting between the intermediary rudder wire, idler wheel and a 6 inch speaker housing in the starboard bulkhead. The 2 inch plywood housing had been weakened by the 6 inch diameter hole drilled out for the speaker too close to the little wheel housing where the rudder pressure was exerting on the wire. Lessons learnt, not that I'd installed the stereo system! Luckily, I'd always sailed with tools, a cordless drill and odd bits of timber. After an hour of sailing / motoring in

concentric circles, I was able to escape the busy shipping lane, in order to effect a temporary repair. A 20 degree angle of rudder was better than nothing. With the 7 knot tide, biggest one of the year, I was now half way to Hull. I decided to punch the tide as it's easier to get through the lock gates in Hull rather than back to Grimsby. At full revs I was able to maintain a speed of 7 knots to get in 3 hours after high water with about a foot to spare, perhaps the lack of keel depth gave an advantage! At least if you miss the lock time in Hull there is a fairly well protected outer harbour, which dries, but is sheltered. The downside of Grimsby is that if you have to wait for a commercial craft to lock out, you have to circle outside in the channel, too tricky with a strong tide and poor steering, although you can pay £20 for a lock in out of the free flow timing.

Eventually, I was able to bring Gellie to Brough Haven, the Humber Yawl Club set up in 1883. She stayed in the water for 9 months, over winter, developing some delamination due to insecurity screw holes around the rear bulkheads and forward blister area. At least she'd survived again.

After repairing the bulkhead in early 2021, I realised that the winter mooring had been unkind to the temporary patches over the original storm damage from Rhu. Mike phoned a month before the UF50 event. Sometimes, it takes a push, a moment of madness, a pledge to get one moving. In an instant I'd agreed that it'd be good to make it to the big event on the Isle of Wight. I'd got 28 days to renovate, re- equip, launch and get crew to travel the 300 or so nautical miles. I wouldn't attempt a solo voyage again after the steering escapade!

28 days...and as we all know, a small patch of delamination quickly grows into layers of agba repairs, a small area around a screw on the topside chased back 3 feet below the waterline. Luckily, one of my dinghy racing rivals from the Middle East had returned to

the UK and was waiting for the new school returning in September. Joe Zammit was from a long line of seafarers, based in Scarborough, last year had returned from the UAE via Iran, overland. Not shy of hard work, a pint and an adventure on a quirky old boat.

Together, with much help from family and friends, bacon sandwiches and Theakston's best, Gellie was transformed. Not completely finished, but some major areas repaired and repainted. At least we could walk on the starboard deck.

High pressure and a rare light westerly wind meant that tidal projections weren't met and we had to re-launch 3 days late...no time for the important sea trials.. literally we had to launch and set off on the same evening tide.

After an hour we were watching a sunset over the Humber bridge sailing at a respectable 5 knots.



Outward, under the bridge...5 knots

Keels were down, hydraulics working. As the light faded, so did the wind, time for the reliable, relatively modern Isuzu to fire up. Still 5 knots, so not a problem, until we reached Immingham...The revs slowed, steamy oily vapour seemed to emerge from the cockpit floor. Difficult to discern in the dark, so we stopped the engine and drifted with the tide. Deciding to anchor at Spurn Point and investigate in daylight.

Unfortunately, a gentle breeze didn't give enough steerage with the tide taking us towards a big channel marker. Restarting the engine gave us enough to get out of the channel, but didn't last long before a clunk gave out a fateful signal, that the engine wasn't going to start again.



Sunset over Immingham 5 knots with engine

Touching the mud in the shallows gave us a sign to weigh anchor and retract keels...re assess in the light of a new day.

The next day saw early morning fog burn off to a pleasant breeze and bright sunshine. We sailed down to spurn point on the tide, anchored and re assessed. For a long passage with a fickle wind and no engine...the oil in the sump was now in the bilge, it was sensible to sail back to Brough on the following tide...better luck next time.



Safely back in the Haven



Returning to Brough, gull winged

Lessons learnt...

- Keep crew and helpers fed and watered.
- Thoroughly clean / paint your engine. Particularly the sump and hard to reach areas... the corrosive water from the failed water pump had corroded a small hole in the sump...fatal!
- Avoid weakening structural areas, like bulkheads, for example with speaker installations.
- Stuck keels can effect dramatically helming.
- Give plenty of time to trial operations before sailing on long passages.
- Practice anchor deployment, it really saved us several times.
- Carry spare bits of wood, screws and tools to do temporary repairs.
- Good to give ourselves an aim, a deadline but also nothing wrong with admitting defeat, can always sail again...it was the right decision to sail back to a safe haven.

I'm currently in the middle of painting 3 layers of anti corrosive paint on the new engine's sump, soon ready to re launch and trial in the river before serious journeys considered!

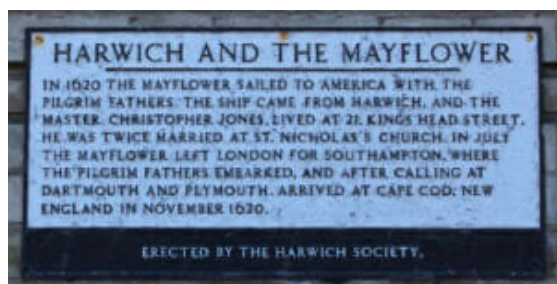
AOA 2023 Ore and Alde Cruise: The Unbelievable Truth – taken from the website written by Jim Sumberg

[Round 1: Thursday, 6 July – Wrabness towards Walton Backwaters](#)

Through pounding surf Helene’s heavily laden tender pulled slowly away from the white sands of Wrabness beach. Despite being wet and exhausted, the crew, working in double-quick time, succeeded in sailing the ship off its mooring by 1630h. With a light SE breeze and the ebb between her keels, Helene drifted purposefully past Parkeston Quay, where a near-encounter with an overly vigilant Border Force vessel resulted in an appropriately salty verbal exchange. Needless to say, Helene’s crew gave no quarter.

Approaching the roundabout at the centre of Harwich Harbour, an executive decision was made to take the second exit and head for the Backwaters.

It is a little-known fact that the Pilgrims who left Harwich on the Mayflower in 1620 fermented cabbage in barrels during the voyage to ward off scurvy. They named the resulting tasty treat Stourcroust in memory of their beloved river. During the Berlin Conference of 1884/85 the Germans engaged in prolonged political skulduggery to have the name changed to something more European sounding. This explains why, every year on Tea Party Day, the citizens of the City of Boston feast on baked beans, frankfurters and steamed brown bread (GF available), with lashings of American Stourcroust.



The crew had to strain every sinew in working the ship up the Hamford Water approach channel against the last of the ebb. Even repeated swinging of the lead did not avert

intimate – if fleeting – contact ‘down there’. So, you will understand why there was relief all around – and double rations of tea! – when, at 2030h, the hook finally tasted the sulphurous black bottom at the far end of Hamford Water.

Maurice Griffiths, when a sub-sub-chief designer at Oyster Yachts, always carried a gramophone on his cruises to the Walton Backwaters. At the top of his playlist were Handel’s Water Music and Vaughn Williams’ The Lark Ascending.

[Round 2: Friday, 7 July – Hamford Water towards River Deben](#)

There are three significant navigational challenges in a passage between the Backwaters and the Deben: the Hamford Water approach (avoid going aground); the Harwich approach shipping channel (avoid getting run down and/or swept onto Landguard Point); and the Deben mouth (avoid an embarrassing and painful end on the treacherous and ever shifting banks that guard the entrance like a pack of underfed seadogs).



The River Deben entrance can be a frightening place. This unfortunate local skipper followed Helene in

After a well-earned lie-in and a hearty East Coast breakfast of granola and kimshi, the ship was sailed off its anchor at 0900h. Exiting the Walton Backwaters was managed without incident, but the light breeze brought Landguard Point to within spitting distance on the port side, and it was only by raising Helene’s Yanmar topsail that tragedy was averted. At the Deben entrance the locals proved as friendly and helpful as always – at

the narrowest point between the sand, a large yacht coming out straight at Helene, slipped by with only a fraction of a cable to spare and shouted "CROSS CURRENT". Having studied the pilotage notes the crew were fully prepared for this frightening news and took immediate evasive action.

And in a flash, at 1200h Helene was in, with Felixstowe Ferry and the beautiful Deben now laid out ahead. What a sense of quiet accomplishment. The airman's wind and sunshine made it difficult to stop, so, we sailed on, with running commentary on hundreds of small yachts moored along the way. We eschewed the charms of The Rocks, the hedonism at Waldringfield, and the Methersgate Mermaids until we reached the Windmill at Woodbridge. Here there is a growing fleet of Deben Cherubs. The Deben Cherub is a 21 ft yacht named after the mistress of Ethelred's brother, Pontifices-de-Bois, the first Lord Mayor of Woodbridge.

But stomachs were rumbling and a safe harbour was needed for the night, so the crew brought her head round and began the long beat south. Waldringfield and The Rocks were passed over again in favour of Ramsholt, where a buoy was picked up under sail, very close to where Jane Stearn's A183 Bluster lay for so many years. This most peaceful setting, in the lee of the church, and just far enough from the pub to avoid temptation, provided the crew with a couple of twilight hours after dinner to devote to baggywrinkle, whittling and yarning.



[Round 3: Saturday, 8 July – Ramsholt toward Walton Backwaters](#)

Even the most peaceful slumbers must end, and as the crew reluctantly re-entered the harsh world of naval discipline there was already a hint of commotion at the Ramsholt Arms. Before slipping under sail at 0930, Helene's standing rigging was re-tuned in preparation for an arduous return to the Backwaters. Tacking down in front of the pub the ship was hailed by an approaching launch – 'Are you part of the stag do?'. Perhaps the crew's sailing technique was not quite as on point as had been imagined! Following moves by Amsterdam City Council to stop loud behaviour by roaming gangs of Essex youth, Ramsholt is fast becoming a go-to location for stag parties.

Never mind, it was then straight through a fleet of Wayfarers and a tacking duel with a beautiful Crusader, which, unable to stomach the embarrassment of drinking Helene's wake, turned tail and ran for home. Another cruising day, another 'Atalanta moment'.

By 1200h the ship was tied securely to a buoy at Felixstowe Ferry while making 5 knots through the water. The crew were tense with anticipation of the recommended half-flood window to depart. But what was this? Well before time, a single-handed gaffer under full sail and engine, departs, and by hugging the eastern side, throws the recommended track to the wind. By 1330 Helene had also slipped and following the gaffer's track, was soon clear of the bar without drama. The wind was so light that mechanical assistance was required to approach, and cross, the Harwich

approach channel; but then it was a beautiful sail to the Backwaters, through Hamford Water, and into Landamere creek. The anchor was down at 1630h, with Helene lying next to the converted, gaff ketch rigged lifeboat 'Stenoa'. Built in 1929 she was launched 235 times, saving 148 lives, and participated in the Dunkirk evacuation; then after being moved to the reserve fleet, was launched 76 more times saving 49 lives.

Dinner music was provided by a pair of very energetic skylarks, accompanied by the 'pop' of the emerging mud and the doleful notes of singing samphire, about which Maurice Griffiths waxed so lyrical.

[Round 4: Sunday, 9 July – Landemere Creek towards River Orwell](#)

An East Coast cruise without tasting the hallowed waters of the Orwell, and the ale at the Butt & Oyster, is simply not on. So, by 0930, after a botched attempt to sail off the anchor – 'no skipper, she won't come round in a narrow creek in a light breeze with the jib alone' – the ship ghosted out with the ebb.

In Hamford Water the helmsman looked into the fragrant warmth of Helene's forward cabin to see the table draped with fresh linen, groaning with omelette, kimchi and steaming coffee. The crew feasted and praised the God of Velcro as Helene's autopilot steered down the narrow channel.

The rain, oh, the rain. It started as Helene rounded the Harwich breakwater and slipped slowly through the assembled racing fleet, as the tension mounted in anticipation of the 10-minute gun. But this ship was bound north, with no time for the trivial pursuit of racing. She would have had an uninterrupted run if the crew had not been so dramatically warned off crossing the Stour Channel by a harbour pilot boat when approaching the Guard buoy. The crew could only assume that the pilot thought that the giant dredger that was now just off Helene's starboard bow would come off worse from a collision with a hot-moulded hussy.



The helmsman's eye was caught by a 30' Colchester smack quickly overtaking Helene, while at the same time passing over the Shotley Spit. 'Why, let's take advantage of this valuable local knowledge' the helmsman mused. 'After all', he reasoned, 'she must certainly draw more than us.' The Smack continued to pull ahead as Helene's lead line showed 0.7m. With much commotion the crew were called to general quarters and the keels were quickly lifted. Onward.

The Orwell River was named after George Orwell following the publication of his award-winning work of social commentary, 'The Road to Ha'penny Pier'.



By 1400 the ship had been secured to a buoy close in to Pin Mill, surrounded by smacks and bawleys. Helene was among her own kind. Arthur Ransom's 'Selena King' lay nearby. The now highly desirable junk-rig version of the King-fisher 20+ was first produced in Pin Mill at Larry King's yard, and marketed first as an environmentally sustainable, sail-powered coastal fishing boat.

The crew slipped ashore at HW to stretch their legs after the long days confined aboard (and to seek local refreshment). The Butt & Oyster Pub is named after a near-by red buoy called 'Butt.' This is the only Trinity House navigational aid whose official name includes a full stop. Originally designated 'Butterman's Bay' the name was shortened during a bout of political correctness gone berserk so as not to offend overly portly smacksmen. The signature dish of Pin Mill's only pub is boiled butt of beef with oyster sauce, served with a large side of samphire-wasabi puree. On the night, the pudding was a stargazer-dinghy pie, to a locally inspired Jack Holt recipe.



The 'project boat' corner at King's yard

Round 5: Monday, 10 July – Pin Mill towards Wrabness

As the crew were called to muster in the cockpit, still bleary-eyed, they were met with the oddest sound. Faint, but distinctive – yes, it was each of those beautiful smacks, bawleys, and wooden yachts taking it in turn to void their bilges, each on what seemed like a 15-minute cycle. Before sailing off the mooring at 0840 the crew once again thanked the gods of the Hamble for the ship's recently received 'dry bilge' certificate from Lloyds.

Below Pin Mill the crew sang out 'Good Morning' to a young man who was busy cleaning the deck of a yacht. He looked up at Helene, and without missing a beat replied, in a very strong Jamaican accent, 'That boat looks like a car ... and that is definitely a

compliment'. Another day, another Atalanta moment.

The trots of empty buoys provided ample opportunity to practice picking-up under sail. Practice makes perfect, and later calculations showed Helene had set a new record for the longest distance between Pin Mill and Wrabness at nine miles. The manoeuvres also added a surprising new weapon to Helene's armoury. The scandal of her ill-fitting new mainsail is well all too well known, but it transpires that the scandal can be used to very good effect when applied even to the old sail. The strategically scandalised main made upwind approaches much more controlled.



There are two main yachting traditions on the East Coast, Corinthian and Orwellian, both named after rivers. Above Parkinson Quay the Stour is simply a delight. And delighted the crew was to sail onto Helene's mooring at Wrabness at 1430, with gusting wind against a strong flood tide.

And finally, just for the official record, 'Helene *did not* have physical relations with that mark, the nearby N cardinal tower.'

Atalanta sand keel refurbishment – Mike Dixon (A1)

One job which I'd put off doing at the time of Atalanta's three-year long restoration, was examining and refurbishing her sand keel. Since her initial re-launch, there had been a persistent leak along the centre line in the engine compartment and both cabins. Annoying to start with, but the leak into the engine bay didn't get any better and a float-switch controlled bilge pump was fitted. The problem persisted though, and clearly some remedial action was necessary.

Leakage along the centreline is not unique to A1. Nor is leakage through the hull/keel box joints – though these were sound on A1.

Recently, Jim Sumberg posted a series of images on the website on his experiences on Helene – recommended reading for anyone with the problem.

With A1 out of the water and tucked up in her barn for the winter, it was time to resolve the issue. She was sitting on her trailer and sections of the sand keel were beneath the trailer/boat chocks. Whilst it is possible to jack the boat up and remove the trailer from beneath the boat, this demands a lot of effort. I elected to tackle the job in stages, moving the chocks as necessary to gain access to the full length of the sand keel bit by bit. This worked fine and though the actual job was probably prolonged as a result, it did have some unintended benefits, the main one being I only had to deal with fairly short lengths of new timber at any one time.

The process went something like this –

1. Remove metal keel bands. Hack off the old sand keel using an old chisel (there are screws in there) and a large hammer.



Old sandkeel hacked off

2. Extract the remaining screws or bits of screws. You can be quite brutal digging round what remains of the screws until you get a good grip – in my case Mole grips were particularly useful. Very important to make sure all the screw are out as you will be going up there with a router and old screws and router bits don't mix too well.
3. Then go along the area with a belt sander until the bottom of the hull is more or less smooth. Only take off sufficient material to make it smooth – about the same width as the original sand keel.



Hull faired off using belt sander

4. I then got the router and cut a groove 32 mm wide and 12 mm deep along the length of the underside of the hull and into the keelson (which is inside the boat). Actual dimensions will be determined by the extent of the blackened and/or soft wood where water had penetrated – the source of the leaks. This routing was a bit hit and miss as despite numerous experiments, I couldn't work out how to fix a guide and as a result, the routed groove was a bit wobbly in places.
5. In the groove, meticulously drill all remaining screw holes, and epoxy dowels of the correct diameter into the holes. Once the epoxy has gone off, cut off the dowel's excess and fair the groove with a suitable wood chisel.
6. Now the re-build. Mahogany is great if you can find it and afford it; I used Sapele.

- The groove needs filling first. I had battens of wood planed to fit the groove. These were epoxied in place with props and wedges which made sure the batten followed the slight rocker of the hull form. Let the epoxy go off and then deploy the belt sander again to remove any proud timber/epoxy. You should be back to a nice smooth hull again, but this time with a nice new strip of wood in place.



Groove routed out, screw holes plugged with dowels and new batten epoxied in place



New batten faired off using belt sander

- Next, the new sand keel. Sapele again, and bought to the correct profile. More expensive perhaps, but it saves time and there's no waste. The new sand keel was epoxied in place with the appropriate props and wedges. Once the epoxy has gone off, fair everything off.



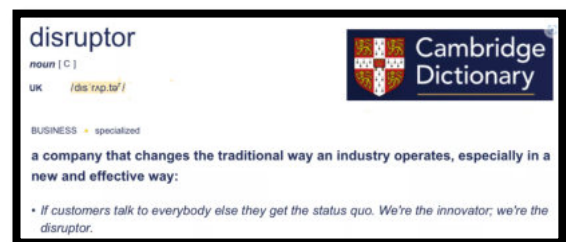
New sandkeel epoxied in place



Final fairing off before coating

- Finally, replace the metal keel bands. Very important to make sure the screws that you use only penetrate the sand keel – in other words - short.
- You will have noticed that apart from the metal banding, I have not used screws at all. The prime suspect for the leaks is the de-zincification of the screws originally used to attach the sand keel. I have complete faith in properly applied epoxy to the extent that in this instance, I do not have any screws at all, apart from the short ones holding the metal keel bands onto the sand keel.

Disruptors – Jim Sumberg (taken from the website)



In today's business world being recognised as a 'disruptor' is a badge of honour (and sometimes a ticket to riches). Disruptors see opportunities in mature markets, opportunities they seek to exploit by introducing new technology, new business models and/or new partnerships. Disruptors are not interested in incremental change, they are game-changers: if successful, they fundamentally reshape markets, or create whole new markets. Uber and Airbnb are

classic examples of disrupters, but there are many others.

Of course, not all would-be disrupters are successful: moving from radical vision to market disruption, to say nothing of market domination, is neither straight-forward nor guaranteed.

Here we ask the question: with the introduction of the Atalanta, did Fairey Marine successfully disrupt the post-war market for small cruising yachts?

It is certainly arguable that in the run up to and immediately following WWII, the market for small cruising yachts in the UK resembled a mature market. While new yachts were being designed and built, there was little technical innovation. Boats were still built primarily from wood, in relatively small-scale yards, using long-established methods. With some notable exceptions, yachting was still very much a pursuit of adult men. The plywood and GRP revolutions were still over the horizon, as was the re-orientation toward family cruising.

Drawing from an earlier analysis¹ we suggest four elements of Fairey's foray into this market in 1956 had the potential to cause significant disruption.

Hot-moulding

First, was the use of hot-moulded wood veneers, a technology that had already proved its worth in other contexts, to construct a hull, deck and blister assembly that was both light and strong. While wood was still the primary construction material, hot moulding fundamentally changed the types and quantity of wood required, and the skills required to work it.

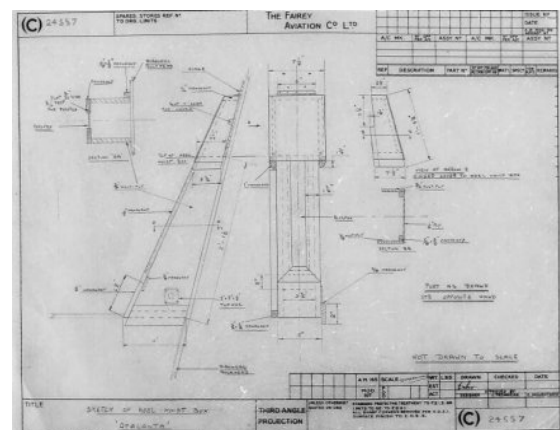
'Production Line' Build Process

Second, was the industrialisation of the building process, which was facilitated by hot-moulding. Fairey's site on the Hamble River was more factory than boatyard; and its

employees, more industrial workers than traditional craftsmen. The industrialised and standardised work routines that produced the Atalanta drew on Fairey's experience of wartime airplane manufacture, and its post-war success with the mass production of sailing dinghies.

Engineering and Design

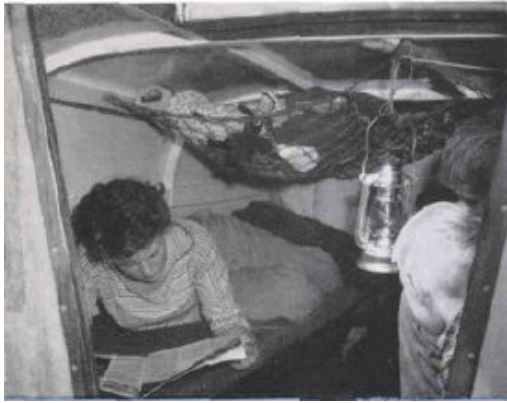
Third, was the way new design elements, such as the twin lifting keels, were engineered into the boats. For example, it is impossible to imagine the Atalanta's keel lifting mechanism emerging from either the drawing table of a yacht designer or a traditional boatyard. It has 'machine shop' rather than 'boat shop' written all over it, directly reflecting Fairey's expertise in aviation engineering. Any doubt about this can be quickly dispelled by inspecting the drawings for the Atalanta, which are available on the AOA website.



Sketch of keel hoist box

Marketing

Fourth and finally, was the way that Fairey re-imagined the market for small cruising yachts. The Atalanta was portrayed and marketed as a trailable, seaworthy, comfortable family cruiser, qualities that were directly linked to hot moulding and lifting keels. The market segment that was targeted consisted of people moving up from dinghies to accommodate their growing families. This vision is captured in part in an image used in the marketing materials, showing two children enjoying the comfort and independence of the rear cabin.



A26, 1957, original brochure

So, with so much potential to cause disruption, what actually happened?

Over a 10-year period Fairey produced a total of 187 Atalantas, but by the late 1960s the company was no longer producing sailing cruisers. Other than the Atalanta (and its close relatives, the Fulmar, Titania and Atalanta 31), hot moulding was never used again to mass produce small cruising yachts. It is hard to argue, therefore, that hot moulding did much to disrupt the market (although it did lay the basis for cold moulding, which while still in use, has never been particularly popular for small production yachts).

Traditional wood construction was certainly on the way out, only Fairey had backed the wrong horse: it was GRP rather than hot moulding that would revolutionise yacht construction. However, Fairey's model of industrialised yacht manufacture was completely compatible with GRP and it rapidly came to dominate the industry in other's hands. And as Fairey rightly foresaw, the real growth potential was in the new market for affordable family cruisers.

We conclude that Fairey did not directly or significantly disrupt the small cruiser market through the introduction of the Atalanta. Nevertheless, the GRP-based disruption that was soon to follow built directly on some key contributions made by Fairey. Ironically, the company itself was not to profit from this disruption and the undreamed-of growth in the small cruiser market that soon followed.

Deux roues valent mieux qu'une - French Cleats For the Slipway – Nick Phillips

I have a fondness for small, rigid, tenders with built-in methods to haul them up causeways and beaches whilst cruising. There are many such wheel attachments available and some dinghies with moulded-in wheels. I was very attached to the DIY solution which had been implemented on a dinghy I bought for Helene - a wheel permanently mounted to the transom.

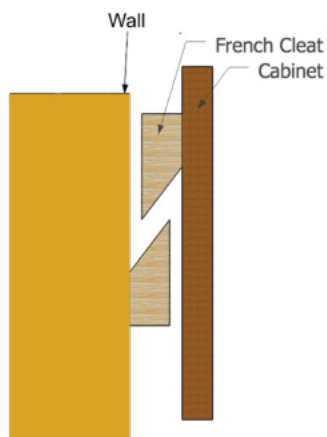


Mark 1 dinghy wheel taken before dinghy was tidied up

Although not pretty, made from old garden decking, it worked brilliantly. Row ashore, jump out, grab the handle at the front and pull up above the high tide mark.

BUT it had some drawbacks. Permanently fixed to the transom the wheel was noisy when underway, spinning and rattling; and ashore it required a strong arm and wrist to keep the dinghy on an even keel port-to-starboard balancing on its one wheel. I resolved the drawbacks by selling 'Ben Gun' with Helene.

When I bought my lazy-man-plastic-pocket-cruiser-with-an-extra-spar I decided to develop the idea for my new tender, which happened to be an exact sister to Ben Gun. Inspiration came from across the English Channel, via Norfolk and the store cupboards in a friend's garage. His very heavy wall-mounted tool cupboards are hung using French Cleats.



French cleat diagram

I inverted the cupboard-style cleat, fixing a block to the dinghy and building the 'housing' into a frame with the wheels.



Wheel assembly with bevel socket at base



Wheel assembly with bevel socket at base



Wheels in place



Transom block with downward facing bevel at base

The wheels are easily attached and detached, relying purely on the dinghy weight to keep them in place.

The Mk.2 solution works well. Both drawbacks of the Mk.1 have been addressed: they are removable for towing and support the boat on an even keel ashore. But as with all progress, they have introduced a new problem. They take up room when stowed inside the dinghy; they are over-built and heavy. The boffins are already working on a Mk.3 design ...

Whales, Otters and Vikings – Greg Manning (A142)

We all have different reasons to want to sail, own a boat or be on the water. For some it is a social activity visiting hostelrys in different locations, for some just the freedom of being away from terra firma and for some they just like getting wet cold and miserable. Me, I like exploring and if I can find an anchorage that even those with a chart plotter are reluctant to enter I hope to be there, oh and I love maintaining Sugar Plum.



Me, I like exploring

By chance I saw a program on BBC Scotland about an inland Loch on Skye that archaeologists had identified as having been used by the Vikings as a haven for their longships; that had to be visited. My wife had a friend who had a cottage near the Kyle of Loch Alsh and these two mature Ladies had taken a rib trip to the Island of Soay and even though they had not entered the north harbour that had to be visited too. They had also visited St Kilda and whilst the chart store on Sugar Plum has the charts it may be an adventure too far as both I and her are getting older!

The adventure started in July 2022, I decided to expand my solo sailing with a trip the twenty or so miles to Soay and in particular the north harbour. This is where Gavin Maxwell who wrote the Ring of Bright Water had a whaling factory between 1945 and 1948. He was catching and processing basking sharks which must have been more abundant then than now as I have only seen them a couple of times in the twenty years I have sailed on the west coast. The voyage was a mix of light airs and a reef in the main, and as I motored during the light airs I arrived at Soay earlier than expected and the bar was above water. For those used to soft sand or mud bars in the South this bar was rock and another boat was mooring in the bay apparently waiting to enter.

I decided to anchor and have a meal but the only obvious mooring was at An Dubh-Chamas a bay a few cables north which I found totally obstructed by a fish farm. Looking at the chart I found a small area on the Skye shore just east of Ulfhart Point that showed what might be a suitable anchorage for a short stop. I anchored with a slight on-shore breeze at thirty degrees to the shore. Bother, I had difficulty securing the chain on the Fairey original bollard. When I returned to the cockpit and gave the engine a burst to set the anchor it was clear that it was not holding. I then had an equal problem securing the anchor once raised as we drifted shorewards. Lesson learnt, the next purchase was a chain hook that I spliced onto a short pennant so in future solo anchor handing will be easy and safe.

Plan C was to set the tiller pilot and motor slowly westwards along Soay sound as I cooked and ate a meal. By the time I had washed up we were almost at the Viking refuge of Loch na h-Airde. Referring to the chart and the 1/50,000 OS map I found where the entrance should be but I couldn't identify either an entrance or a safe mooring. In my mind, I thought I could only get ashore by

being dropped off in a dinghy whilst someone held off but that was for the future.

I motored back to the entrance to the north harbour of Soay. The boat that had been at the mouth had not entered, but with keels up so we only drew a metre, we motored into the harbour in 2.9 metres having easily found the lead in marks.



Moored in Soay North Harbour

Once moored I went ashore to explore the old whaling station. The masonry of the main house was sound and plumb but the rest of the area derelict works. The most depressing aspect was the vast amounts of fairly modern abandoned fishing gear. One ton bags of polypropylene rope will be an environmental hazard for more years than any of the old whaling stations.

I was a bit naughty the next day and not fancying a wet close-hauled five-hour sail back to Arisaig chugged all the way. This gave me plenty of time to dream of returning to explore the Viking longship refuge.

I didn't have crew for the rest of 2022 so a return to Loch na h-Airde did not occur until the 14th of June 2023 when Roy my previous co-owner was free for a few days.

By the time we had driven to Arisaig from Aberdeenshire we did not drop our mooring until 2:15pm. The wind was forecast to be NE'ly so the 15 mile to Loch Scresort on Rhum would be an ideal night stop.



Gavin Maxwell's old whaling station on Soay

Alas the wind was NW'ly so the motor came into use. We hadn't been to Rhum for many years and imagine our surprise to find ten visitor moorings and at least the same number of boats already there instead of us having the mooring to ourselves. We anchored and as it was a fine evening we had supper in the cockpit whilst all the other boat crews seemed to prefer to stay below and miss the setting sun.

A fine morning in Scotland is one where there is no dew in the cockpit, and what a fine morning it was. We had breakfast with the sun lighting up Kinloch Castle with no sign of life on the other boats. Eventually, an Irish Gentleman rowed over to chat about his previous ownership of a Fulmar. Most usefully he mentioned an addition to the Memory Maps for the west coast of Scotland which was a large scale addition called Antares. It was a pretty calm morning so we motored nearly all the way to the entrance to Loch na h-Airde and while we did so Roy purchased and downloaded the Antares charts onto his mobile phone. It was brilliant and showed the mooring at the entrance to Loch na h-Airde but there was still no obvious entrance to the Loch. We did not identify the concealed start of the channel until we had rowed right up to it.

It was calm so we were happy to leave Sugar Plum anchored while we rowed ashore and into the channel leading inland to Loch na h-Airde. It was as fine a day as could be dreamt of and the visit ashore was amazing as can be

seen from the picture. It was low water when we were there and it would be interesting to see how the channel would be at high water springs.



The remains of a wharf in the Loch



Loch n h-Airde from seaward



The channel to Loch na h-Airde from the sound of Soay



Top - A second slipway with the remains of a covered building behind, Bottom - The upper section of the channel with a sluice near the Loch



Top - One of the slipways or could it have been a noost (Shetland word for a winter refuge for a boat protected by banking), Bottom - The obvious man made stonework of the channel

We were very lucky with the tides for entering and leaving Soay north harbour for our overnight anchorage albeit we needed an early start in the morning. It was lucky I had entered before as the upper lead-in mark was lost in similar coloured silver birch trees! We were taken aback as we left Soay to see a huge cruise liner making her way to anchor in Loch Scavaig. With little wind, we motored back to Arisaig a well satisfied crew.

I am sure I am not alone when, as every season arrives, I anticipate great adventures, stable weather conditions and fair winds. I usually end the season feeling a little disappointed due to missing the good weather due to other commitments or the weather Gods just not being cooperative. The weather during 2023 just seemed to be so variable and unsettled that no amount of Alka Seltzer would have been the right medicine. The short trip to explore of Loch na h-Airde was a highlight of the season and made up for all the other disappointments.

The story is not quite over. Having visited Gavin Maxwell's whaling station I did think that a visit to where he then lived at Sandaig Bay on the north shore of the mouth of Loch Hourn and where he wrote The Ring of Bright Water was needed to complete the story. Sugar Plum had been there many years ago arriving at last light and leaving early to catch the tide through Kyle Rhea.

The planned single handed trip on August the 14th was to explore the eleven miles of Loch Hourn with its four narrows to navigate. As it would be a real pilotage challenge a night stop at Sandaig on the outbound leg was planned to give the whole day to explore Loch Hourn.

The passage to Sandaig was sailing for the first half and then a chug on the motor in perfect weather before anchoring at 4 pm. I went ashore knowing nothing of Gavin Maxwell nor had I read any of his books.



I went ashore.

The beach showed little sign that it was visited very often although there were signs that a lot of people has been in the woods behind the cottage and around a spectacular water fall no doubt having walked down from the road above the bay.



The only building in Sandaig Bay, no sign of Gavin's two storehouse

I found the large boulder marking where Gavin Maxwell's ashes were interned and it was not until I returned home that I discovered that he had lived in a two story house that had burned down. I saw no signs that there had been a house but then I wasn't really looking for it.



The boulder and Plaque marking where Gavin Maxwell's ashes are interred

The next day I explored Loch Hourn but that is another story.



Exploring Loch Hourn, but that is another story.

For an interesting look at Loch na h-Airde see BBC Scotland, Scotland from the Sky, Skye's Vikings on U tube.

We love to see the scenery on your trips – it gives ideas of where we might travel next. Don't forget that half the fun is the sharing!

Re-purposing a blister (A story for the times in which we live) – Mike Dixon (A1)

Last year, when four of us went down to Rye to rescue parts and spares from Emma Duck, I came up with the half-baked idea of coming home with the blister. We all know that the boat ended up on the top of a huge bonfire – but there was a gaping hole where the blister used to be.



Emma Duck's Blister

Restoring the blister was straightforward. The fibreglass sheathing was beginning to peel, but apart from a small area, no water had penetrated the veneers. There was a small area of rot low down on the fore side and a short length of the quarter round bead had to be replaced.



Blister home for repair

I also removed the metal mast step and epoxied a thin piece of sapele to cover all the holes.

The whole lot was thoroughly rubbed down and seven coats of conventional varnish applied. But what next?



Blister refurbished – to be varnished



Varnished. Now what to do?

Earlier this year I had reluctantly come to the view that Atalanta (A1) had to move on. She was becoming difficult for me to manage, and it was time to pass her on to someone better able to look after her. But as one door closes, another opens.

I also have an open day boat, Teal – a 15ft Peterboat - with a standing lugsail, but being an open day boat, without accommodation. Added to which there is a pickup truck which is used for towing. So this is where the half baked idea turned into a project.

The blister would become the top of an accommodation pod which fitted on top of the pickup's flatbed. I could then tow Teal to events, secure in the knowledge that accommodation needs were taken care of. What could be simpler?



Initial construction – the blister on top of the box

Armed with the concept, I began to consider and design the features of the pod. First problem – the flat bed was too short to allow me to stretch out full length. Solution – build the 'bunk' diagonally across the pod. How about a loo? And whilst we're at it – a cooker? Height? Ventilation? Stowage? Hold-down straps? And so on.



Ventilation – the Perspex eyebrow



Interior – Diagonal bunk

I was about halfway through to design and construction phase, making it up more or less as I went along, when it occurred to me that the pod couldn't spend its entire life on the back of the pickup. It would have to be demountable. Stout castors were fixed underneath, and a bespoke stand was built so the pod could be rolled off the flatbed and onto the stand. More to the point, it works.



Transferring from the pick-up to the cradle

The pod had its first outing at the end of August when I took Teal up to Ullswater in the Lake District. All in all, a great weekend, the pod worked well, some excellent company, drink was taken, and Teal performed impeccably.



Transfer complete

Still some tweaks and finishing touches to make, but for now at least, Emma Duck's blister lives on.



The pod lashed down on the pick-up

Shore-based Social Weekend and AGM South Coast 11th – 12th May 2024

This year we are continuing our theme of a early-season social gathering based around nautical activities. It will be a full weekend of activities, socialising, meals and chat about Atalantas.

The weekend will be planned to be convenient for travel from around the country and it is likely that some will make a longer weekend of it.

We will also hold the AGM meeting during the weekend. As well as the normal governance agenda this year we will be discussing the "Future of the AOA" ideas outlined on page 37.

Further Details will be published early in the New Year but in the meantime please put the dates in your diary.

Recent Boat Movements – Richard James

A68 Curlew has been sold to David Ewing from Staffordshire. David has joined the AOA and is hoping to keep A68 on the south coast.



A68 Curlew

A89 Colchide has been sold to Steve McCann from Oxfordshire and she is now berthed on the River Hamble. Steve has joined the AOA and has some grand plans for A89 which he will keep us informed about.

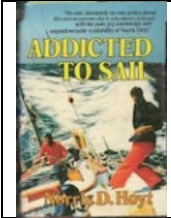
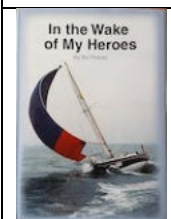

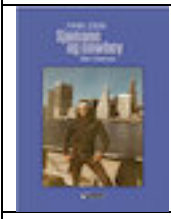
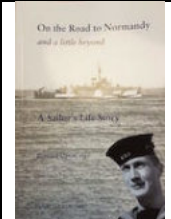




A89 Colchide (left) and A124 Helene (right)

A124 Helene has been sold to AOA member Hans-Erich Viet, who now has 3 Atalantas. A124 will join A95 Hiran and A110 Trientje P in Germany. Hans had a motoring holiday in the UK in September 2023 and took the opportunity to buy some spare parts from Ian Pollard's collection in Yorkshire.

A Good Read – Atalantas between the covers

The website includes a section on books which feature Atalantas. Below are a selection. If you know of any Atalanta related books which are not referenced please let Nick, Webmaster, know. Nick can also organise the lending of some of the books if you are interested.

	<p>Addicted to Sail, Norris D Hoyt ISBN 0-393-003316-3 Jan 1987 Last chapter deals with Sailing with F.O.B in the USA and Canada. Hoyt was a veryexperienced ocean and coastal racer who bought F.O.B. for family sailing andcovered many miles on the trailer and the water around North America.</p>
	<p>In the Wake of my Heroes, Bill King. Private, via simonfi@ntlworld.com Jan 2007 Chapters 3&4 are dedicated to his exploits in A146 Sherpa. There was a lot offamily sailing and much more short-handed long distance cruising and then theRound Britain Race in 1973. His weekend's sailing was to sail to North Brittany onthe Saturday, and sail back on the Sunday. The book includes a lot of detail on theRound Britain race and how he made his own self-steering gear.</p>
	<p>Out of Arklow: A Life of Change. By Danny O'Neill. ISBN 978-1-4918-9599-3 2014 Danny O'Neill owned A78 Marianda for 18 years in the 1980s and 1990s. He wroteabout his cruising and work on Marianda in the 1990 and 1996 Bulletins. In thebook Danny recounts his life working on boats, as a fisherman and later as anofficer or master on ships. There are two chapters on his time with Marianda.</p>
	<p>Sailor and Cowboy by Finn Ziem. ISBN: 9788230013021. Published: Kolofon, 2015 The story of an adventurous Norwegian who spent time as a cowboy in Argentina,travelled the Amazon catching piranhas and alligators, rode a motorcycle alongthe 'Pan-American Highway'. Oh, and sailed Atalanta A170 in both directionsacross the Atlantic. Read about this adventure in this Bulletin.</p>
	<p>In the Wake of my Heroes, Bill King. Private, via simonfi@ntlworld.com Jan 2007 Chapters 3&4 are dedicated to his exploits in A146 Sherpa. There was a lot offamily sailing and much more short-handed long distance cruising and then theRound Britain Race in 1973. His weekend's sailing was to sail to North Brittany onthe Saturday, and sail back on the Sunday. The book includes a lot of detail on theRound Britain race and how he made his own self-steering gear.</p>
	<p>Under Two Flags: A Memoir , Ellen Coile. [ISBN-13: 978-1532007927 Aug 2017] A different perspective on Atalanta ownership. Ellen's husband, Russell Coile, hasalso written a book "Disasterman" about his military career and including achapter on their Atalanta A101 Patience. (Russell led the AOA American sectionfor many years.) But Ellen, who was English, tells the story from her perspective.And her achievements were every bit as significant as her husbands'.</p>
	<p>Uffa – Yachting's Eccentric Genius, Malcolm Turner. ISBN: 978-1-9144893-5-8 Sun Rise Publishing. A new biography of the great man, casting new light on his life and manyachievements. It includes many previously unpublished photographs.</p>

The Future of the AOA – The Committee

As outlined at the 2023 AGM and in last year’s Annual Bulletin classic boats and the Fairey yachts in particular are facing significant challenges for the future. Whilst we have a fleet of actively sailed and maintained boats and more safely stored there are others which are in danger of being lost.

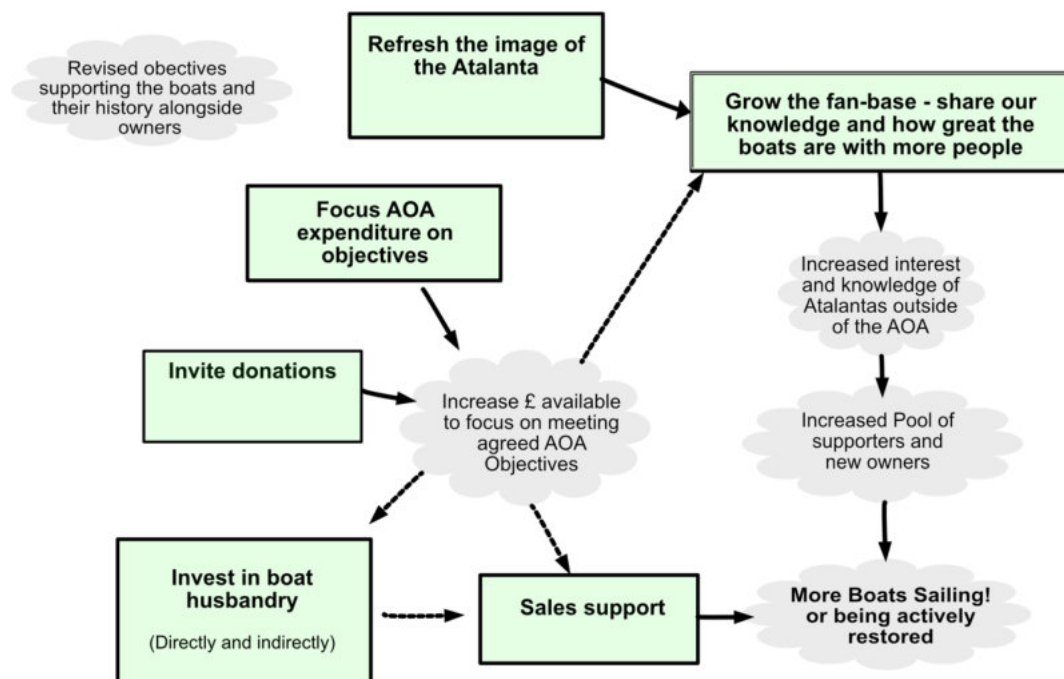
The Committee have been thinking hard about the role of the AOA in the future of the Fairey yachts and how we can maintain or grow the active fleet. They started by considering the established purpose of the AOA. Currently predominantly an Owners’ organisation they are suggesting that this be extended to include, explicitly, growing the number of boats sailing or being actively restored.

They have considered what actions this might require under three headings:

- Actively seek new owners and supporters
- Increase support to owners for ‘Boat Husbandry’
- Increase AOA ability to invest in ensuring the longevity of the boats

The Committee are working on the following proposals. Some, for example refreshing the Atalanta image and saving costs on the website, we can just get on with. Others, highlighted in blue below, require discussion and agreement with Members. They will be included on the AGM agenda in May and will require minor amendments to the Constitution.

THE AOA FUTURE - INCREASING THE EMPHASIS ON THE BOATSs



Actively seek new owners and supporters

- Refresh the image of the Atalanta we present, emphasising sailing qualities and relevance to sailing today. At the moment the first time many hear about Atalantas is likely to be reading an advert for a boat in poor condition on eBay or viewing restoration images.
- Grow the fan base and 'spread the word' about Atalantas
 - Events (on and off the water) for Members and where appropriate a wider audience
 - Get more boats being seen sailing (e.g. Uffa Fox 50 event)
 - A National Open Day, with owners welcoming anyone interested aboard to see an Atalanta. This is in the diary for 2024 – 28th July.
 - Include attractions and activities of interest outside the AOA in social events
 - Greater presence on social media, the internet and yachting magazines
 - Create a 'Fairey Atalanta' Mailing List, extending the current 'Website Digest' and feed with content
 - [Open up more of our materials for public viewing](#)
 - [Open the AOA archive of bulletins, papers and drawings](#)
 - [Share the Bulletin, Newsletters and other content to the 'Fairey Atalanta' mailing list](#)
- More actively facilitate boat sales
 - Support sellers with promotion through AOA and other relevant media and sales advice
 - Support purchasers with advice about the boats, assistance with boat assessments and potentially with transport

Increase Support to Owners for 'Boat Husbandry'

- Actively engage with restorers for encouragement and support and 'storers' to promote the best outcomes for their boats. At least an annual conversation, more frequent where appropriate.
- Consider boat husbandry training, workshops. work parties etc
- Continue the 'Salvaged Parts' scheme making parts available at low prices
- Establish and maintain a 'Boat Fund' to Invest in direct support to preserve 'At Risk' boats for example through loan of covers, transportation assistance, and rescuing boats about to be scrapped.

Increase AOA ability to invest in achieving the revised objectives

- Reduce administration costs and in particular website costs, [Yearbook distribution, insurance, and postage](#)
- More actively encourage donations towards preserving the boats

[And in the future, the Committee are keen to discuss what further changes may be relevant for the AOA to assure the longevity of the Fairey Marine yacht classes. Subjects already highlighted are considering how the AOA might directly invest in boat preservation and restoration and possible 'Charity' status.](#)

The Committee recognise that this work will require a lot of effort and we need to increase the number of people working on it. The team of Officers and Committee is changing quite significantly through the first half of 2024 and our plans take account of this. We will get on with as much as we can and seek to involve people from across the AOA Membership, particularly newer and younger members. We need Authors, Editors, Event organisers, Social Media and boating forum users, video photographers, and so on.



*Finn Ziem's double Atlantic crossing in A170 in 1980 as a new sailor.
Map courtesy of Brian Sadler*



Copyright Atlanta Owners' Association 2023

Printed and bound by Wensum Print, Norwich