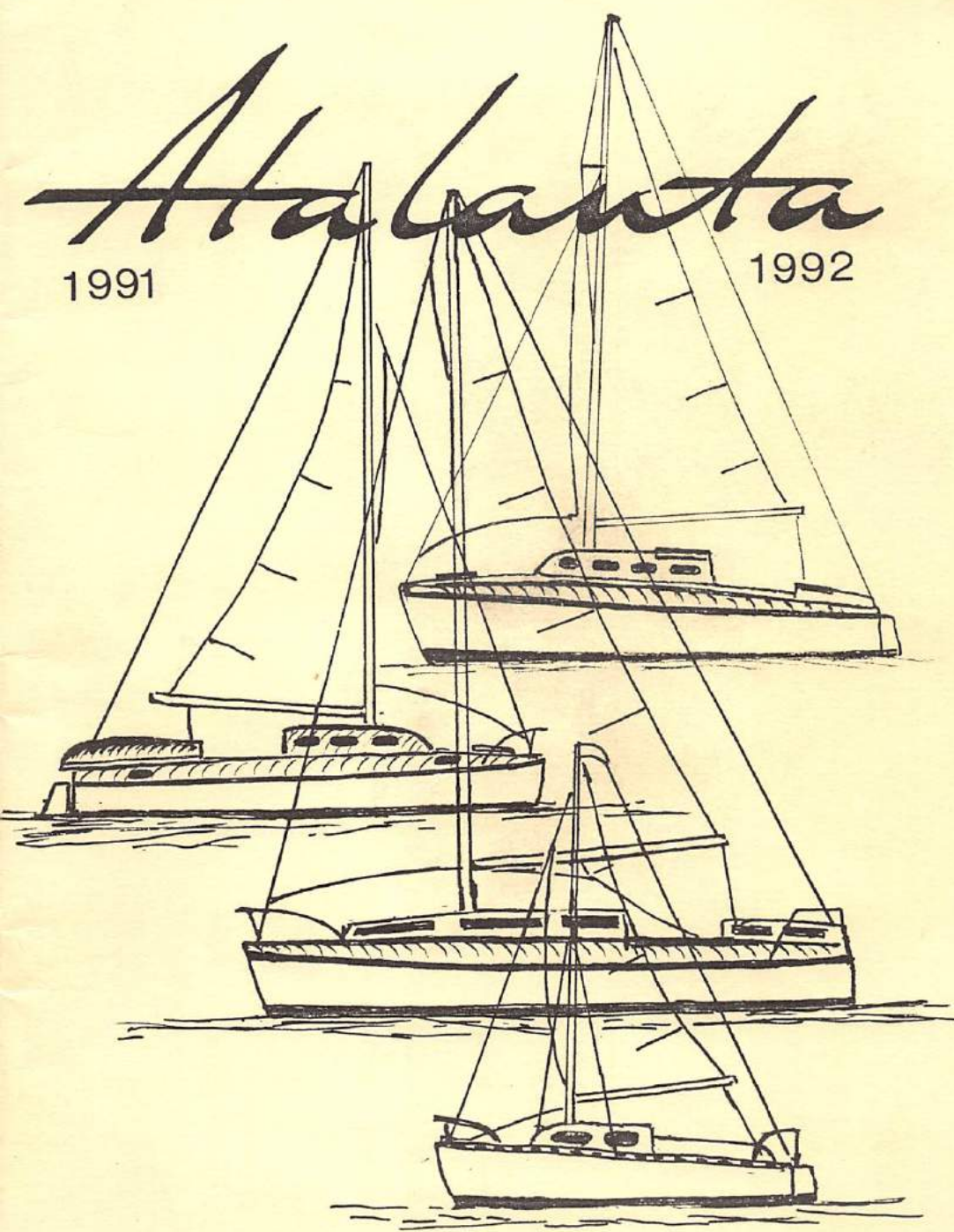


Atalanta

1991

1992



Errata-with the editor's apologies

- Charles Currey's address - Tuffs Hard
P2...Jane Stearn...(editor in doghouse)
P9.Last line. Either West Mersea or East Coast.
(editor disorientated)
P20....after passing the Bull Sand Fort...
(editor has now bought a new pair of glasses)
P41.Maj Gen Odling's tel No. is 070-735-320

ATALANTA OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

33rd Edition

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Patron : Maj Gen W Odling CB OBE MC DL

Commodore : C Currey Esq

Hon Secretary : Prof W S G Parker

Hon Editor : Major C M A R Roberts MC

THE COMMODORE'S MESSAGE

Charles Currey

Bill Odling's years as Commodore were fun, great fun. Quite apart from this, it was astonishing how he managed to build up the enthusiasm for the class; and the extraordinary increase in the attendance at the annual dinner was more than proof of Bill's remarkable efforts - we all owe him a tremendous debt of thanks.

For my part I was surprised and delighted to be asked to carry on, and maybe the Fairey background will continue to help both historically and with the technical detail.

I personally find it most rewarding to see so many Fairey boats - both Atalantas and motorboats too - in my area, the Solent. The condition and general standard of many of them is remarkably good and seems to improve each year.

Bobbie and I really enjoyed the Hereford Forum, and again the effort and attention to detail by the owners of the boats on view, and of the way to get rid of unwanted material, was quite an education. George and Cecile are to be much congratulated on the very great success of this particular meeting. I was very sorry not to make it to West Mersea this year.

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the 1991 Dinner, and in the meantime keep looking after the boats to be ready for next year.

EDITORIAL

Michael Roberts

Beyond the western outskirts of Oxford, in a corner of that vast area of common land called Port Meadow through which the Thames winds its leisurely way to the sea, there is a boat station, the Medley Boat Station, due soon for closure.

There, tied to a pontoon, is the shell - I can call it no more - still afloat, of an Atalanta 31. No name, no number, no mast, and apparently, no owner. Does anyone know anything about this boat?

And from the other side of the Atlantic there is a cry from David Walworth. Does anyone know if there are any active Atalanta owners over there? There are a number recorded in the Register as being in the USA. They cannot all be laid up!

Thank you for your contributions and support, and for getting everything to me on time. Do please keep writing your experiences. It is always a pleasure to read them and put them together in this record of the activities of a very special sailing vessel.

P.S. David Lovelock has written a paper describing twin rudders for an Atalanta. Sadly the article was too late for this Bulletin but will be published next year. Meanwhile if you are interested please contact David, Atalanta Mary (A102).

WEST MERSEA TOWN REGATTA

By Ted and Jean Stearn (A183)

The race this year was held on Saturday, August 17th. This year seven Atalanta 26s entered and all started, as opposed to four last year. They were A1 Atalanta, A95 Hiran, A100 Jaunty, A137 Baby Seal (which won in 1988 and 1989), A148 Johara (which was trailed all the way from Lancashire after an extensive refit and looked very smart), A160 Moyra, and A183 Bluster. We were also delighted to see a Titania which came as an observer and another owner who came to crew; both promised to enter next year. Other supporters were, for good reasons, unable to come but hope to come in 1992. All this bodes well.

What a race we had this year. The wind was so strong, force 5 gusting 6 as the morning progressed, that we were allocated the longest course ever. To begin with we started to the west, (unheard of), round a few small buoys and then off in the usual easterly direction. However, not straight to the Bench Head this time, but round a few more elusive little orange buoys on the way. Then out round the big buoys, Inner Bench Head and North West Knoll out to sea, and back another wiggly course to the finish. All this was done in the company of many other yachts sailing different courses in testing conditions and the excitement may be imagined. At one point I thought Bluster was a goner; but back to the beginning.

The beginning was a little sad because of a splendid turnout of seven boats only three made a proper start. It would have been much more fun if we had all been racing together. We started into the wind, calling for good tactics. Ours were not brilliant. We got away well on port only to have to tack almost immediately for a boat on starboard. Johara started well and her varnished topsides shone in the bright sun to everyone's admiration. St John Greenhough was without his father who was unfortunately ill. Up to scratch, Johara would have been formidable. We hope she will manage the long journey to join us again next year. As we turned eastwards we got the wind behind us and up went the spinnaker. Ours is better suited to light airs but one does silly things in races and we got away with it, pulling away nicely. It was lovely to see the Atalantas holding their own with some of the classic yachts, whose class we shared. Out at sea things were pretty straightforward and we could identify the other Atalantas; later on we were too busy. Beating back from the North West Knoll came our first nasty moment. The boat inside us and Bluster were on port. Along comes a starboard boat. Boat inside refuses to let us tack, lack of water. Starboard

boat says there is thirteen feet and comes on. We are in the middle. At the eleventh hour they both decided not to make mincemeat of us and no-one was damaged except those sensitive to bad language which was not us on this occasion, being mesmerised by impending doom.

The second nasty moment was almost on the finishing line and was much worse. The wind had freshened considerably; we had roll upon roll in jib and mainsail and everyone was really moving. We were on starboard, approaching boat on port - he did not give way. Those strong pointed bows came straight on. I thought we would have two half Blusters any second. We shouted and screamed; he eventually woke up and time stood still while those lethal bows moved aft and missed us by a hair's breadth. Impolite remarks were the order of the day in our relief. Shortly after that we crossed the line and got our gun. Quite enough excitement for one day.

The final result was close, with Bluster the winner, Baby Seal second and Johara third on corrected time (second over the line). The result might have been closer if some had had cornflakes instead of porridge for breakfast.

The water sports were as usual great fun, with races and the greasy pole.

At night the Patron and Margaret Odling entertained us yet again, at Gun House, to a wonderful meal in their lovely barn, thirty five sitting down to supper. Very many thanks to them for their kindness and to those who helped with transport from West Mersea to and from Gun House. These included the secretary, George Parker and Cecile, who came from Birmingham to join us. Truly a great day for all.

DISCUSSION FORUM AT HEREFORD, MARCH 23/24 1991

(Re-published at George Parker's request from the Spring Newsletter 1991 as a permanent record of a very pleasant and successful occasion, and for the information of continuing value that it contains.)

This meeting was attended by 38 Atalanta owners and wives and described by my wife as the bargain of the year. Certainly for a very modest outlay we had good discussion facilities, accommodation and an excellent dinner and breakfast at the Royal College for the Blind, followed by a liberal buffet lunch at Red House Farm next day. Just as all work and no play makes Jack a dull sailor, the College provided a nice diversion in the form of a musically annotated talk on the development of the piano given by Phillip Kennedy in the College's extensive piano museum.

The technical sessions started with a video made from a film of the DIY construction of Castanet (A130) at Wolverhampton early in the sixties. It all looked very easy but unfortunately the most interesting bit, namely the fitting of the keel boxes and keels, was not recorded. No doubt the camera

man had to lend a hand at that point. The next item, on engines, led to a useful exchange of information on the whereabouts of Cov Vic spares now that the firm was defunct. One member put in a good word for the engine and gave advice on maintaining sensitive components like the magnets.

The fitting of a Yanmar diesel replacement for the Cov Vic was described by St John Greenhough (Johara A148). He had solved the particular problem of mating the engine shaft and the propeller shaft so as to avoid raising the cockpit sole.

The subject of boat electronics was introduced by David Lovelock, an expert in the field, but one with his faith firmly rooted in good seamanship. Top of his list as very desirable instruments were a quality compass, an echo sounder and an R.D.F. The last was a surprise to the writer who has only used RDF as a last resort and with ever increasing exasperation. However, the wisdom of having a VHF radio telephone and the Decca navigator as an aid were conceded and generally endorsed by members present. It was wise to have a licence for the VHF as well.

Particular aspects of safety were discussed and especially the use of buoyancy bags, inflated by compressed air in an emergency, which was described by Jane Stearn (Bluster A183). Keeping the Atalanta afloat in the last resort appeared to be an attractive alternative to abandoning ship in a life raft.

A knock down in a gale or heavy squalls is always a possibility in a light displacement boat and the Commodore described tests on the self righting moment of the Atalanta. With keels only half down the boat is just capable of righting itself. The need to keep the keels fully down in severe conditions is obvious and Charles described a simple device for locking the keels in that position.

Lastly the technique of using West-type resin was described by John Greenhough who dealt in detail with temperature conditions and simple equipment to minimise costs.

At Red House Farm the home of Fred and Melva Boothman (Achates A60), members had an opportunity to inspect two Atalantas - Achates and Blue Jackaroo (A71), the latter belonging to Paul Harris. The keel boxes and keel assembly were exposed in Achates and discarded keel bolts, friction plates and keels were part of a 'black' museum. A Duckling owned by Dave Dallow was an interesting exhibit though much in need of repair.

Finally an auction sale of spare equipment brought by owners was conducted by Charles Currey. He cheerfully and amusingly persuaded our usually careful owners to part with their cash.

After an excellent lunch, our thanks to Fred and Melva were expressed by the Commodore and the meeting dispersed.

THE "ECHO" VERSION (A128)

by Piers Beckett

They did some work in the winter but it would have been better if Mr Grump had spent more time on my keel bolts and less time in The Ship discussing technicalities with the owner of A9. Mrs Grump emerged at Easter and waved a hopeful varnish brush over my topsides, spit and promise stuff really. They slung me in the water with their customary lack of ceremony and left me tied on their awkward Solva mooring where I land with a bilge-bruising thump every six hours. It is very undignified; no-one seems to have told them that I come from the ancient and honourable order of Atalantas and I'm used to better things.

At Whitsun they turned up in their usual tizz, loaded me with a pressure cooker full of cold stew and some unspeakable tins and set off for Lundy. That night I rolled around in a vile cross swell while they went to the pub. They don't think that I might like to go to the pub as well, that tossing about while my anchor cable groans in the fairlead is no fun for me either. They went on to Instow, parked me on the sand and spent the rest of the week riding around in a rubber bubble and drinking before I sailed them home again.

Mr Grump took me round to the Cleddau for the start of the Tall Ships Race and they spent four days gazing adoringly at all the posh clipper things. They think I have no feelings. I got fed up with it and drove over my own jib sheet by Pembroke Dock, making him go all sweaty and say naughty words. He had to jump into the water and chop away with a hacksaw and he came out in a really nasty temper serve him right. On the plus side, if you look very carefully at the BBC film of the event you'll see me bobbing cheerfully at a buoy outside Milford Dock. Recognition at last.

I got used for the Rowing Club annual outing, kids crawling all over, lots of mackerel fishing, all sorts of day trips and the odd race. Everyone seemed very surprised when I came second in one, so next time I pulled out the stops and won. Of course, His Majesty spent the night in the pub boasting about his helmsmanship, but we all know who really wins races.

Then came the summer, and I braced myself for further horrors. They loaded me with food, water and diesel and took off one evening heading south through the calm night, engine thumping and Grumpski in an even worse temper than usual because the wind wouldn't blow from where he wanted it. Gentlemen never sail against the wind but Grump is not a gentleman. They said they were going to Penzance but after a while they sickened of that and went to St Ives instead, where they stayed for two days drying out in the harbour, eating fish and chips and drinking beer. The atmosphere on board improved after that, which was just as well because I was getting into the right mood to spring a leak.

They sailed on to Penzance, tacking inside the Longships which I totally disapproved of and locking into Penzance Dock just before closing time. I was comfortable there, tied up alongside a nice, topside-friendly wooden fishing boat. The next day they heaved out into a moderate North-Wester and steered South.

I enjoyed this bit. They started the engine for two minutes to get out of the dock, and thirty hours later they started it again to manoeuvre alongside a very posh Dehler 36 in Camaret. In between I rollicked along for 120 miles with my genoa billowing to a lovely quartering breeze, my favourite. We had a wonderful introduction to France, streaking down the Chenal du Four with the tide (he does get some things right) and pounding across the Avant Goulet where I did one of my tricks and left a new Jeanneau rolling in my wake. Faces in their cockpit were a study, I can tell you.

There was a bit of a ruction that night. It turned out that Her Ladyship hadn't been able to get any francs in Penzance, it was ten at night, they had no currency and Grumple wanted a beer. How disorganised can you get? Apparently she managed to change a tenner in a bar, thus saving us all from one of his moods. She has her uses.

I liked Brittany. They bought me a brand new flag with little castles on it and went cruising. Tides were strong; you could see the yachts waiting at the headlands like sheep waiting for a gate to open, and if it turned out that they were going one way and you the other then you were wrong. Needless to say he got it wrong quite often.

The water was clear like cut glass and I could see my anchor where they dropped it twenty-five feet down. They'd get up in the morning, pull on shorts and sit in the cockpit eating croissants and jam, dropping crumbs everywhere. Then they'd go for a swim, unmoor or pull up the hook and go somewhere else not too far away. Idyllic.

In Douarnenez they parked me by a pontoon and went off as usual, leaving me to become the main topic of discussion for every passing Frenchman. People greatly admired me and thought I was a very interesting boat, and when the Grumps returned one particularly earnest gentleman asked them if he could take my photo. I always thought of the French as a most discerning people, unlike some.

They went on to Morgat, into the Rade du Brest and right up the river Aulne to Chateaulin, where they worried in case the tide ran out before they reached the lock at Port Launay. I put on a burst of speed with the engine to save their blushes. A beautiful, scenic river with herons and trout and all the accoutrements but still not quite as good as the Barrow in Ireland.

On the way home they stopped at la Palude in L'Aber Wrac'h and we tied up to the least appetising pontoon of the whole trip. In the morning I was

woken from a quiet doze by one of those officer-like voices you hear everywhere in the world, whose merest aside is audible at a hundred yards in a force ten. 'They used to drop them from aircraft in the war, you know,' it was saying. Uh uh, time to go.

Not much wind. Motor all the way to the Scillies dodging an oil rig and admiring the dolphins. The Scillies are fabulous and deserve a trip all of their own but Les Grumps are always in a hurry so they set off next day with the intention of arriving in Pembrokeshire before an approaching low arrived on them. They didn't make it.

In the middle of the Bristol Channel a strong wind warning came through; redundant because it was already doing a six. We got gusts up to 34 knots, seas heaping up and visibility going down until, around midnight, Grump had turned into a seasick version of The Green Slime, crawling incoherently round the cockpit floor with his head in a bucket while She-without-whom-we'd-all-be-at-home-in-bed blithely steered us towards an invisible lee shore at five knots under quadruple-reefed main and pocket-handkerchief jib. I took pity on them and got them safely into Dale about four in the morning, where they dropped the hook and spent two days in Dale Yacht Club bar bleating about being gale-bound fifteen miles from home. There's no pleasing some people.

We'd only been back a week before he shipped up with an enthusiastic young student and shot across to Co Waterford, giving me a chance to inspect my favourite river. I'm sure there are more herons on the Barrow than ever. Unfortunately I had to endure two days of being squashed in the Dunmore Raft; I wonder how he'd like it.

It adds up to about fifteen hundred miles under my keels altogether and some of it was hard going. The Grumps are very chuffed with themselves but we all know who does the work, don't we?

KERRY PIPER'S OVERHAUL (A169)

by Wouter Van Roost

I purchased A169 (Kerry Piper) in September of 1987, and sailed her to my home port in Antwerp a month later. Although her condition could be described as "sail-away", she was in need of an urgent and much needed refit. A169 (Kerry Piper) is still very much like the original version with a Coventry Victor engine and a 3/4 rig. She was lifted out of the water in January 1988 and remained in a hangar of the local marina for the next year and a half.

When she came out of hibernation in June 1989, she had seen a lot of work both inside and out. The hull was completely stripped and treated with epoxy from WEST. Both keels were removed, overhauled, and replaced.

Something I hope I will only need to do again in about twenty years' time ... (the procedures manual supplied by the AOA really works well, it is invaluable when things seem hopeless). The keel bolts were entirely overhauled, but generally in good condition.

The Coventry Victor was taken out of the hull, dismantled and entirely rebuilt, relying heavily on the excellent support of Mr Weaver of Coventry Victor. The original magneto system, which proved to be very unreliable during the ferry, was replaced by a standard high tension coils system. This has worked very satisfactorily ever since.

The interior was re-done, the entire electrical system replaced, including wiring and switch-panel. All wiring is now to a very high specification and two independent batteries take care of the starting of the engine, and of the electrical supplies. We hope to add a shore-inlet and an automatic charger this year. We added considerably to the electrical equipment: a masthead light, new interior lighting, chart table light, overhauled navigation lights, a new VHF and mast-mounted antenna, a bilge blower and central heating. Central heating is through an electrical gas-fired warm air blower, mounted under the starboard cockpit seat. Gas is supplied by a standard camping gas bottle in the outside locker. Warm-air ducts run throughout the ship and now heat the main cabin, the heads, the aft cabin as well as the navigation area. As well as keeping the occupants dry and comfortable, the warm air ducts are also very useful to keep spare clothing dry. The starboard locker usually stores our oilskins and these dry quickly once the air starts circulating. The added comfort of having dry clothes is worth the expense all by itself. There is a thermostat in the main cabin to keep the temperature at a predetermined level. The whole ship takes about five minutes to be at a comfortable level.

On the port side we eliminated a locker and installed a washing up bowl with its own faucet. The forward area has become our "sanitary area" with a new underwater toilet, the water tap, and washing up bowl. It seems to me the ideal area since one is always firmly seated on the toilet and no matter what sea, there is enough support to keep one firmly wedged in place. This area also has a dedicated hot air outlet.

Plans for this winter include making a self-draining chain locker for the anchor chain, just forward of the toilet.

We made new cushions for the entire cabin, doubling the thickness while adding a wedge shaped insert to fill the space between the two cabin seats. This effectively gives us a double bunk of enormous proportions! We have added four back supports in the shape of half-cylindrical cushions that are velcroed to the wooden supports.

For added safety, we decided earlier this year to invest in an outboard engine. This decision was made after some hairy moments on the River Schelde, when our Coventry suddenly decided to call it a day and would not

re-start. The combination of a windless day, some super-tankers and a narrow river with little room for error justified the decision. We tried to find a replacement diesel engine for our Coventry, but since we could not find an off-the-shelf engine that would not require a major re-design of the ship's structure, we decided on the outboard.

We decided on a YAMAHA 10HP outboard with remote control and electric start. The engine is particularly suited to the Atalanta because it has a sail-prop, can be tilted, has an ultra long tail and can be run on normal gasoline. We have installed a system that keeps it running using the same petrol tank as the Coventry Victor. So far no problems have been encountered. We noticed that the YAMAHA develops more power than the old Coventry Victor, this mainly being due to the wear on the Coventry, the old prop, and the state of the art design of the Japanese engine. A separate battery provides starting power and is being charged separately by the outboard.

The engine proved its worth on its first trip, when on leaving the marina on a fast running tide, the prop from the inboard caught a mooring warp. It was only because the YAMAHA was on stand-by that we managed to get clear of the shore and out of the dangerous tide... The advantage of having a "twin-engined Atalanta" became immediately apparent...

The electrical system will be modified this winter to allow the outboard to feed the main electrical needs.

A169 (Kerry Piper) has also received an entirely new set of sails. Over the years, the owners of Kerry Piper have continuously added to her wardrobe and she now has no less than nine different sails. The only thing we would like to buy next season is a spinnaker.

I have not covered all changes made to Kerry Piper, but suffice it to say that an enormous amount of time has been invested in her. I will not expand on how we re-constructed the wooden toe-rail, strengthened the deck panels, restored the deck from rot after several years under Treadmaster, etc... It was all worthwhile doing, and we now enjoy every minute afloat knowing that Kerry Piper is as safe as she was designed to be. Indeed, both I and my wife are novice sailors and Kerry Piper has got us out of potentially dangerous situations simply by being a most forgiving, confidence-inspiring sailboat. And that alone makes me an eternal Atalanta-fan.

Next season will find A169 (Kerry Piper) at NIEUWPOORT where we will make our base. One day, we hope to have enough experience to cross the Channel, and, who knows, participate in the ATALANTA West Coast Rally...

FALLING IN LOVE WITH A DISASTER

By David Allen (A66)

In January 1990 our Yacht Club Hon Sec rang to ask if I would be willing to help a fellow member of the club (ex-seafarer) to raise his boat which had sunk on its mooring. Unemployed, with a little time on my hands, I decided this would make a positive improvement to life (rather than applying for jobs advertised by idiots - for idiots)!

As a one-time salvage tug skipper, it would give rise (excuse the pun) to using old skills and tricks. A leaner version of the Royal Air Force adage, "Let them sharpen you up, don't let them grind you down", suggested that it would be a good idea to say, "Yes, I'd be delighted to help".

Now the boat in question turned out to be an Atalanta, built at Hamble in 1958. Preparations were made to set the re-floatation into action. We had at this time little knowledge as to why she had sunk but by asking questions of club members and officers it became clear. The craft had been slowly sinking over a two week period.

The manner in which she went down is worth a mention. Slowly, stern first. The aft cabin was filled with an array of boating gear, well above the norm. This overloading was due to the owner recently bringing her round to the Medway from Ramsgate. The main cabin was filled with the owner's own personal possessions, boat's inflatable tender, additional cushions and small gear. The fact that the forehatch was well secured down allowed an air pocket to build up. Hence, over the initial ten days of sighting, the craft remained partially floating in a bow up mode. She finally sank some time during days 12 - 14.

She was placed on a mooring which had a rill passing through the southeast quarter of her turning circle, and the prevailing wind during this time, backing and veering westerly to northwesterly, did not help her plight. As she swung into the rill, the aft trim settled her down and finally she took to the bottom. The incoming tides were invited up through the keel boxes and ran over into the engine compartment.

Four weeks after the boat had sunk and on the very Saturday we planned to carry out the recovery, it decided to blow a severe gale. Undaunted, and decked out in foul weather gear we motored out to the mooring in an Anderson 22, equipped with electric and manual pumps, and necessary tools to salvage the Atalanta. Dropping anchor up wind of her and falling back, we placed ourselves in a position close to the bow of the boat, once the tide had fallen, ready to board her.

Flotsam and jetsam had been in attendance over the past four weeks. The main hatch cover together with boards had gone. The items which floated into the confines of the cabins were a sight to behold. We observed a true jumble. The ingress of swirling mud over fifty six tides or more was

something else. The engine compartment was filled with mud to a depth of two feet, while the aft and main cabins had at least a two to three inch covering all over.

The most satisfactory pump turned out to be the Atalanta's own manual Whale Gusher 10, with a one and a quarter inch bore. The electric pumps, with their small bore holes continually blocked up required clearing often, while the hand pump moved a larger volume of water and mud and required much less clearing. Within the first two to three hours we had the bulk of the water out, which held our hopes high for a refloat. The extent of mud and muddle presented us with little chance to establish whether or not she was holed or suffered structural damage.

Seeking a respite from the cold strong wind, the intrepid heroes covered from head to foot in Punjab brown, giving off the local fragrance of Medway Eau de parfum, repaired to the cabin of the Anderson for a warm up, partial clean up and a late lunch.

The mooring ground in Lower Halstow creek is, in some areas, extremely soft, providing a satisfactory bottom for boats to rest upon. However, in these circumstances it prevented us from walking round the hull and inspecting the underside. We determined that a certain amount of chance had to be taken. The internal hull inspection showed no holes or obvious signs of damage. By the time the new flood tide reached us it was dark. The Atalanta's electrics were completely naff. The remainder of the operation would need to be carried out using torch light and instinctive feel.

Little water entered into the now rising hull. Slowly and gently she began to lift. Water began finding new levels with each change of angle and trim. We were quite relieved, as well as elated, to find our efforts thus rewarded. But what to do once the tide allowed us to proceed up the creek to the maintenance jetty? The strength of the gale would certainly not permit us to tow the Atalanta - especially as she was well below her marks. - using the 5 HP outboard on the Anderson. The decision was rightly made to abort the exercise while all went well and return tomorrow with a motor boat. The micro float switched electric pump was left in working order to man the night hours.

Sunday am: The gale had abated during the early hours, leaving a strong force 5 - 6 wind blowing. The late night and hard work had taken its toll of the recovery team. The motor boat left for the mooring not knowing what the state of play would be. We could see that the Atalanta was still afloat. Once aboard, a cursory inspection discovered that she was leaking through the keel. Months later, when beached, it was found that in the midships section where the laminates meet the keel/keelson, the glue was not doing its job. The electric pump had been working during the night; that is, until the battery ran out of charge. So we pumped out manually.

Time was now of the essence if we were to tow her back to the jetty before the tide left us all out in the creek without water or a paddle.

Making fast the towline to the famous Atalanta forward bollard cleat and slipping the mooring soon had us "underway", though not "under command". A quick sharp shock to the old memory. Must keep a good look-out/hear-out at a safe speed, as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances....this is mandatory ON ALL VESSELS AND AT ALL TIMES. HELP? We don't have anyone on the helm. We are also going away from the tow. Rules for the Preventing Collisions at Sea. Rule 8. Action to avoid collision. Oh what did it say? Action taken to avoid collisions SHALL....be positive....rather than SHOULD as in the 1960 Rules.

That's it, BE POSITIVE. "Please, please free the wheel, tiller or whatever they call it! Yes, that thing sticking up out of the rear cabin". "I can't do it, I'm manning the pump"!

Do not panic. We're all "in sight of one another", "with due regard to the observance of good seamanship". We follow the tow. Others keep away from us. Will we miss all the moored boats?

Alas, back on shore people begin to move down onto the jetty. Lines had to be found and prepared aboard the Atalanta. The steering staff (now we know what it is called) was let go again to perform this exercise. With the rudder blade up, steering had proved hard work, but lashed amidships we had followed the tow quite well.

Manoeuvring into the jetty now had to be done Bristol fashion with this lot looking on. Proceeding onto the lee-shore exercised the mind again. When to let go and when to turn up into the wind? Will those ashore be able to secure us soon enough to prevent the Atalanta going up the sea wall?

The boat was very gently let go, the tow line became a stern line, fenders were found and placed portside, fore and aft lines went ashore to the jetty. The Atalanta was safely alongside. Giant Club Mugs of tea and thanks all round. Later, off to the Three Tuns for a well earned Guinness to replenish our strength.

Several months later the owner telephoned and suggested that he would like us to own his Atalanta. The wife and I had been thinking of getting a larger boat some years on, beyond 1993. Here we were being asked to consider a 26 footer which answered our requirements. Lifting keels like the Anderson. Trailable occasionally and the centre cockpit with separate cabins came as a bonus.

Now, when you're unemployed with very little readies coming in, it seems down right irresponsible to buy a wooden boat which is well run down and in need of a major restoration. We contacted sailing friends, Noel Harrison (A135, David Norfolk (now ex-owner A133)). We were also recommended

to contact Prof George Parker (Hon Sec) and Colin Twyford (A95). I soon became aware that I was very ignorant regarding this class of boat. I do thank these members for the help and advice they gave at the time of decision.

I had sailed in my youth with Jack Clements, who owned the sister ship to Peter and Anne Pye's Moonraker. Jack, during the war, was OIC of the Sea Survival Training School in Plymouth. Through him I met the late Charles Wood (AOA member). Charles, like I am, is a Cornishman; he was born in St Ives, and I across the bay at Hayle. In those days we sailed Redwings, Albacores, Fireflies, National 18s and Flying 15s. In my mid teens I worked part-time at The Plymouth Sailing School, owned and run by the Gaskill-Browns. There we trained students in 22 foot sailing airborne lifeboats.

1974 saw me sailing a Flying Fox whilst working at the Sports Council, National Sailing Centre, Cowes, Isle of Wight. Only two Flying Foxes, designed by Uffa, were built by Fairey Marine. I think it was number two, owned by the Duke of Edinburgh and on perpetual loan to the centre. In and out of The Island Sailing Club I met the late Alan Vines, who impressed me greatly. A gentle giant was what I recall. His intellect, charisma and charm created what I refer to as "good chemistry". The few times we spoke were enough to enable me to store up creative motivation. As time now tells, it keeps me working on a major restoration project.

I went specially to West Cowes in the 1960s to meet Uffa Fox when he was making a recording with Ron Goodwin (Plymouthian/composer) called "Songs of the Sea". It was indeed a memory to cherish. A man larger than life with the character to defy all the natural codes of conduct besetting the majority of mere mortals. It is this character which is reflected in the boats he designed and we enjoy sailing.

It is also now, as a member of the Atalanta Owners Association, that I realise what motivates the membership. Without doubt or contradiction, a qualification of membership must surely be the existential life quality, namely eccentricity.

Little seems to change. Cost constraints remain today. Our family circumstances are little different from most members falling within the framework of a micro economy. A restoration project has commenced and has proved the means of keeping my sanity during this time of regression.

After meeting Uffa Fox I read two of his books. "The Joys of Sailing" and "More Joys of Life". I hope I have recalled the titles correctly. They are very good reading and for those of you who have not had the pleasure, do read them. They tell the real life memories of the man who designed our Atalantas. References to Warwick aircraft and sailing lifeboats are most interesting.

Having sailed every boat designed by Uffa, with the exception of the *Atalanta* and its sister cruisers, together with an insight into Uffa Fox, we had little difficulty in saying, "yes, we will buy *Roamara*".

We passed Ted and Jane Stearn's (A183) mooring at Ramsholt on the Deben in August in the *Anderson*. Bluster's tender with cardboard boxes aboard suggested they were away on a cruise. Winning the East Coast Race again no doubt! Perhaps next year *Roamara* will be afloat; certainly, she will be in 1993. You cannot keep a sea romany ashore for too long - *Roamara* and crew - indeed.

Next year I will tell you about the restoration if you like.

P.S. If anyone is interested in photographing or video-ing an *Atalanta* with keels and keel boxes out, now is the time to do so. I will be only too pleased to assist. Audio visual pastimes are not within my ambit.

Bill Auger (A48), an engineer running his own business, has done some good work making up keel pressure plates and renovating keel bolt through tubes for Adrian Rivett (A161). Bill is willing to undertake similar work, business exigencies permitting. He also has access to agba laminate. But please do not rush until I have finished *Roamara*!

FURTHER REPAIRS TO JOHARA (A148) by John Greenhough

.....as I was saying. Last winter I did tackle the hull, but before I tell you of this let me describe my successes and failures after my previous efforts to restore the deck down to the rubbing strake. (*Atalanta* 1990-1991).

The SP320 was mainly effective as a coating and the deck was almost leak-proof. I sent a copy of the Bulletin to Adrian Baker of SP Systems who replied with superiority and condescension, and made no offers of special terms for *Atalanta* owners. I wrote that there was little room for tolerance and that I had tested with a surveyor's instrument used to discover damp. This had shown that I dried better than 15%. I now know that the instrument wasn't sensitive enough, and where moisture in the wood exceeded this figure it came up under the epoxy and had to be sanded off. There are now better, more sensitive electronic meters, which gave me a more accurate reading. While drying the wood out prior to recoating I found that the king plank and a lot of veneer on the stern deck was rotten. I got Jim Reid to come back and gave him a precious piece of Agba kindly donated by T R Proctor, Detour 26. When we looked at the problem we found rot in the top of the transom as well, and the chain plate bolts were as thin as tooth-picks. The plan was to replace the top of the transom with 1½" mahogany, the king plank with 6" wide English oak, and commit the Agba to the area around the king plank. The work took two weeks, and I

replaced the back stay plates in stainless steel as well as all the bolts and rudder fittings. I cleaned and epoxied the rudder, and renewed fittings where necessary. The guide wheels for the rudder had oval bosses and these were re-bushed and bored out.

George Parker, that ever present help, suggested careening the boat to deal with the bottom. We did this with a two ton car jack and rubber tyres. I burned off (most carefully) to the bare wood, the accumulation of paint and anti-fouling. My past and present army service made it possible to obtain a modern respirator without which I think I should have died of poisoning. After I had finished, a friend had all the gel-coat removed from his 32 footer in a day, for £160, by a company called Gelstrip. They also remove old anti-fouling from wooden boats and would have done Johara for a fraction of the cost and time I spent! After sanding I tested for the moisture content of the wood and this varied from 15% on the water line to 80% at the keel, which meant that SP320 was not suitable. SP Systems suggested Acquacure which is supposed to strengthen in wet. I used this for small repairs and ran a fillet along the join of the veneers to the keel. I then applied International pink primer, grey primer, and yacht enamel to six coats. I did not use anti-fouling because I intend to bring her out and hose her down on the slip. After working on one side I turned her and did the other.

When I stripped the bottom I found a small repair in the starboard side. This had been effected in marine ply and although not aesthetically pleasing, Jim Reid pronounced it sound so I gave it a coat of Acquacure for good measure. We also found rot below the rubbing strake which allowed water to enter the forward cabin and galley. Jim cold-moulded a piece of precious Agba which has dealt with that problem. Next year I plan to strip the hull from the water line to the rubbing strake and get rid of the unattractive green paint. We might also drop the keels. It doesn't sound too much and perhaps we shall have her in the water by Whitsun.

The other main alteration was to the shrouds which had been bonded with aluminium. Colin Twyford, A95 Hiran, had problems with his. Apparently insurance companies may not pay up if a mast is lost when this material is used instead of bronze. We had decided to convert to mast-head rig as our mast has the correct proportions. We bought a Rotostay and they suggested having a new main sail from Arun Sails. Our hope was that this would correct the excessive weather helm. But it hasn't to date, and canting the mast further forward has not helped. Previously Johara would not stem the tide in the Ribble in light airs, but it will now. The sail arrangement caused StJohn to design a new mast top fitting and to convert the jumper to diamond configuration. This was a particularly lengthy process, and we have only had four sails in the Ribble to test the new gear. We have slipped her again in preparation for the journey to West Mersea for the town Regatta. We would have preferred more experiment before this bleeding in strange waters.

In the event, at 0400 hours on our day of departure, I was stricken with a serious infection the result of which was that my summer cruise had to be abandoned. Fortunately StJohn, Bertram aged 10, and Benjamin aged 14 were able to go and two recruits from Mersea helped out with the result that Johara trailed Ted Stearn, Bluster A183, in the race and came third on handicap. StJohn tells me that we have not cured the weather helm even with a reef in the main and genoa unreefed. So it's back to the drawing board.

Here are some useful names and addresses:-

Hoghton Timber Co, British Hardwood Merchants, Units 3 & 4 Higher Walton Trading Estate, Higher Walton, Preston, Lancashire. Tel 0772 323566. The proprietor is called George. He found me all my wood, mahogany, oak and ash cut to size and rough planed in a day at reasonable prices.

Jim Reid, 1 Coniston Crescent, Cleveleys. Tel 0253 855971. Shipwright, expert in cold moulding.

Gelstrip, 40 South Furzeham Road, Brixham, Devon TQ5 8JD. Tel: 0836 705263. This is the firm I mention which goes all over the country stripping paint and gelcoat with a tool they have developed for the job.

TO HOORN - ANOTHER YEAR

Simon Cooper (A104)

Daughter Bryony, whilst Euro-railing around Europe, lit upon Hoorn, a port in the Markermeer. Back home, she waxed lyrical about the town so I rashly said we would pop over in the boat in the summer. We duly made plans for a week's cruise in August 1991 engaging the services of brother David. This would be the first time out of the Humber for us and Atalanta 'Arosa'. We bought a quarantine flag, a Dutch courtesy flag and some charts in preparation. Studying the charts produced a bit of a shock; Holland was about twice as far away as I had thought ... Nothing daunted, we decided to press on with the project. Bryony press-ganged her friend and fellow Birmingham University student Christina, who had no sailing experience but plenty of pluck.

Departure was from the home port of Hull on the morning tide of 1st August with myself (the owner) and the girls (the crew) bound for Overy Staithe on the North Norfolk coast to pick up my brother (the sailing master). The wind was in the south-east as we beat down a choppy Humber, past the Bull Sand Fort and Spurn Head, and were soon out of sight of land in poor visibility.

At this point we had a strange experience - we were harrassed by another yacht! A boat about the same length as 'Arosa' appeared about half a mile away and headed towards us. She was motor-sailing and crewed by two

middle aged unsmiling, unwavering men. She came within a boat's length to leeward of us and sailed for a bit on a parallel course and then bore away before going about and crossing close ahead of us, finally disappearing into the murk. With the whole of the North Sea to operate in the reason for this close encounter eluded us.

We continued to beat down the Lincolnshire coast and although the visibility improved there was some uncertainty as to our position due to the lack of features on this low-lying coast. This was resolved at dusk when we sighted the big wheel in the fairground on Mablethorpe seafront. Off Theddlethorpe, the natural gas terminal, a barge was working displaying a yellow flashing light; our collision regulations told us that this was actually a hovercraft in non-displacement mode ...

During the night as we crossed the Wash the crew and I stood two hour alternative watches. The wind went round to the SW but fell light. The crew spent the 2.00 to 4.00 am watch resolutely heading south but actually travelled two and a half miles to the east. It was necessary to motor for a time until the breeze picked up.

Landfall was the west end of Scolt Head Island. We breakfasted as we sailed east along the island on a glorious sunny morning. Arriving early for the tide at Overy bar we practised our man overboard drill, then went aground on the bar having strayed too far inshore. So we upped the keels and anchored for an hour then motored over the bar, slipping between the sandhills and into familiar waters, where I had sailed my other Fairey Marine built boat, a Firefly, for some 30 years. We followed Fred Lane in his motor boat up the harbour to the village, anchoring above the hard. Ten minutes later a support team consisting of my mother, sister and nephew arrived in a commandeered rowing boat. Later in the day another support team (my wife) arrived hot-foot from Yorkshire with the rest of the provisions, which had been left behind.

That night we all slept very soundly in proper beds. In the morning brother David arrived and we moved the boat up to Overy quay to load stores etc. Peter Beck, manager of the boat house and local fount of all sailing knowledge, waved us off, demanding that we bring him a cheese back from Holland as evidence that we had got there. From Overy we made for Wells bar buoy and then turned due east for Den Helder which is on the same latitude. In warm sunny weather we cruised gently along the Norfolk coast.

During the night the owner had just handed over the watch to the crew in very calm conditions and had fixed the boat right on the Haisboro Sand when we heard and saw, eerily, a line of breakers - an overfall. We beat a hasty retreat!

The next day we continued east in a gentle breeze, reading, playing cards, watching jelly fish and freeing the Walker log of seaweed, vast masses of which were floating on the surface.

Early the next morning we passed through an oil field and then at breakfast time sighted Holland - a low, featureless coast. The only landmark was Den Helder's high lighthouse which was right where it should be - David had made a perfect landfall! We had a choppy sail up the Schulpden Gat entering Den Helder during mid morning and berthing at the small marina run by the Royal Netherlands Yacht Club. After tying up I set off on a route march to the far side of the harbour to make my number with the customs and immigration authorities whilst the crew tidied ship.

The only mishap which occurred during the crossing was when the boat was well heeled, water dribbled in around the bottom of the perspex windows, running down the aft side of the keel lifting mechanism boxes and flowed into the lockers immediately outboard. As we were using these mainly for storing tins and cans little damage was done, although the TCP nestling among the cans of beer imparted its fragrance over the outside of everything, giving the beer a unique taste when swigged from the can.

During the afternoon the marina was invaded by a fleet of nine or ten modern 45 foot yachts belonging to the Pelerains de Mer (Pilgrims of the Sea) - apparently a French religious sect who see yachting as a way to salvation. Among the crews were several monks; we felt that their habits were less than ideal for yachting - especially in drafty conditions.

Next morning we made a leisurely start for Den Oever, the entrance to the IJsselmeer. We had a gap in the charts between Den Helder and Den Oever but followed buoys and poles, closely pursued by a Dutch yacht. We hoped this meant we were on course, but were worried in case it thought we knew the way. We reached the lifting bridge and lock through the dyke at Den Oever at lunchtime. A short wait and then we were through into a yachtsman's paradise. The IJsselmeer is a vast inland expanse of water - one cannot see the far side - with a plethora of traditional Dutch barges and fishing craft.

By evening we had reached the little port of Enkhuizen which is at the end of the dyke where one locks through into the Markermeer. With Hoorn still 10 miles away we decided that Enkhuizen was as far as we could go if the owner and sailing master were to get back to work the following Monday. The town has two marinas, a small one run by the Royal Netherlands yacht Club (which was full) and a larger one in a big circular basin. The latter also had a notice saying 'Hafen Vol' but we were allowed to anchor elsewhere in the basin. We inflated the dinghy and paddled ashore landing on a grassy area. We marvelled at the quaintness and tidiness of the town, admired the little cottages, the line of fish smoke-houses and the little dock full of traditional Dutch fishing craft. We were a little puzzled by the lack of inhabitants, the only living creatures visible were sheep and goats grazing on the green, with a black and white kid making friends with the crew. After walking a little further we came to

a turnstile which we were on the wrong side of - and the penny dropped. We had landed in a folk museum!

We retreated to the dinghy and investigated the marina where despite the full sign we found a berth into which we moved the boat. I found some difficulty landing on staging four feet up from the dinghy; as I reached for the staging the dinghy with my feet in it slid smartly away leaving me hanging by my fingertips. The crew magnanimously came to my rescue. After supper the crew went ashore and got marooned in a bar by a thunderstorm (so they claimed). In the bar they got chatting to a local who offered them jobs pollinating tomato plants but, loyally, they declined.

The following morning was spent sightseeing and purchasing postcards, presents and provisions. I replenished the fuel tank with 7 guilders (£2.00) worth of diesel - the single-pot Yanmar seems to run on air! Then back to Den Helder with the wind light and on the nose. Two days in the IJsselmeer was far too short. Two weeks would be adequate and even two months not excessive.

Our IJsselmeer chart had only one depth contour on it - the 1 metre one! So once again we were glad we had lifting keels, running aground just before reaching Den Oever. We passed rapidly through lock and lifting bridge into the narrow channel to Den Helder where again our keels grooved the seabed. We entered Den Helder as dusk fell and berthed in the last available space in the marina (the fuel Pontoon!). We dined well in the small restaurant and bar at the marina. Christina found herself adopted by a somewhat inebriated Dutchman who insisted on taking her round to the other diners to get their opinions of the various dishes on the menu: we settled for an excellent Indonesian dish.

In the morning Bryony and Christina hired bicycles and, after a minor collision with one another caused by unfamiliarity with back peddling brakes, set off to do the shopping. In the meantime I visited the customs to bid them farewell. The girls returned (having visited a teddy bear museum) and we slipped and headed back down the Schulpen Gat into a rumbustious North Sea: a good force 4 to 5 with 6 to 8 foot waves which were occasionally breaking. It was now that 'Arosa' really showed her mettle. Hard on the wind she took all in her stride, the cockpit remaining dry apart from the odd drops of spray rebounding when a breaker landed on the foredeck. Waves coming aboard were immediately shed by the rounded deck in contrast to most yachts where the water cascades aft along the windward areas of the cabin side. I had previously marvelled at the way the forehatch managed to be watertight without the use of a rubber seal: we now discovered that it was far from watertight which made using the heads a distinctly hazardous business.

Our destination was Hull and the wind was East of North just enabling us to lay a course for the Humber. But generally it backed, and we found ourselves heading more and more south of track.

During the afternoon I discovered THE SMELL. Opening the port locker under the cooker, in order to sponge out the water which had leaked from the keel box, I found it awash in a foul smelling white liquid. Something nasty had dissolved itself in the seawater, but what? Only tins were stowed in the locker and they were all intact. The locker was dried out and sealed for the rest of the trip.

That night David had an unwelcome bit of excitement during his watch. He saw, coming over the northern horizon, a ferry ablaze with lights. As it closed on a converging course he found it impossible to identify its navigation lights among all the other wattage. I was hurriedly roused for a second opinion and a faint red light was finally detected - was it the port navigation light or just part of the disco illuminations? As we pressed the starter button the faint red turned to an equally feeble green and we breathed a sigh of relief as it passed astern.

In the early morning, having been pushed by the wind many miles south of track, we could at last lay the Humber on the other tack. At midday we passed the Smiths Knoll lightship of weather forecast fame, and then headed north-west through the gas field where we watched a helicopter landing and taking off from a platform.

The Dudgeon light vessel was passed in the early hours of the following morning and by mid-morning land was sighted, but the Lincolnshire coast is almost as featureless as the Dutch, and it was only a couple of hours later that it became apparent that David had achieved another perfect landfall as the Rosse Spit buoy and Spurn Head lighthouse appeared.

During the morning our only gear failure occurred when the starboard slotboard detached itself from the keel (the port one had done the same thing last year). We managed to secure it satisfactorily and for what remained of the trip we had to take care not to drop anything down the void it had left.

We used the engine intermittently during the morning and afternoon as we needed to catch the tide up the Humber (failure to do so would have meant another night at sea and certainly mutiny by the crew). Proudly we hoisted the quarantine flag but were rather disgruntled by the fact that every yacht we met passed on the port side so that the yellow flag was hidden by the mainsail. However, we solved the problem; after padding the Bull Sand Fort, the wind was from dead ahead so we decided to down sail and motor up to Hull to try and ensure we got there before the tide turned (our little whizzer, although very stout hearted, is no match for the Humber's 5 knots plus tide).

The only remaining excitement was the owner running the ship aground in his favourite place - something he does habitually when coming up the Humber. By now the keel raising was well practised and we were very soon on our way again, locking into Hull Marina with half an hour to spare

before the top of the tide. We berthed, 'phoned the support team to come and fetch us, persuaded an eminent gentleman to come down from the upper deck of his 35 knot luxury powerboat and take a group photo of the crew, posted the custom's form, and that was that.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Dear Major Roberts

Yes, there are still Atalantas in active use on this side of the Atlantic. Even more amazing, sometimes they're recognized. Comments ranging from "That has to be an Uffa Fox design," to "I never thought I'd see one of those again." This last from a friend who had grown up in Hamble, but now lives here in Bristol.

Le Bateau Ivre (A146), keeps looking better and better. What was said in the Autumn Newsletter about, "A little skill, a lot of hard work, and some West resin and paint ..." is so true. One nice thing about these boats is that the hull shell itself seems to hold up incredibly well. Consequently, it is possible to continue to use the boat while restoring it. Since purchasing A146 in September of 1984 (for the princely sum of \$500, you can imagine her condition), there has been only one summer that I did not have her in the water.

This past winter the big project was a new mast. Two years ago I dropped the mast while lowering it. It hit the gallows and broke between the spreaders and the base. I patched it with a fibreglass bandage, which I painted Band-Aid pink to remind me not to be stupid while lowering the mast. I was fortunate in having unreduced copies of the mast blueprints, which was crucial as the mast sections are drawn full size. In addition, I had a source of Sitka Spruce. It took a while and there were some steps backwards, but the end result was well worth it. For the past two years I have been working at Eric Goetz Custom Sailboats. One of the benefits is that we can use the shop for personal projects. This has been an enormous help. I considered going to a masthead rig but all the headsails fit the fractional rig. I may yet convert to masthead, just replacing the jumpers with a second set of spreaders. On the other hand, perhaps I'll just go sailing. The only change that I made to the mast was not using the old wire reel winches. I found them to be quite a pain. Instead, I replaced the wire halyards with line, put turning blocks on to the cabin house and led the halyards aft to a winch alongside the hatch. This is much better. I also rigged a downhaul for the jib. That way I can muzzle the jib from the cockpit. I also replaced all of the standing rigging. I incorporated a backstay adjuster into the rig this year. It is very useful for controlling the mainsail's shape.

The other splurge was a new stove. There is a company in Vancouver, British Columbia, called Force 10. This year they came out with a two burner stove with oven and broiler that is short enough to fit, yet still had a usable oven. It makes cruising much more civilized. It's fired by LPG. Be very disciplined about always shutting off the tank. These new stoves are pretty well engineered, incorporating things such as thermocouples to shut off the fuel in case the burners go out.

This winter I intend to make an all new rudder, along the lines of a daggerboard. I am also planning on replacing the plexiglass in the coach house windows. My only question is how to form the curve, especially in the forwardmost ones. If anyone has any experience in this area, please get in touch.

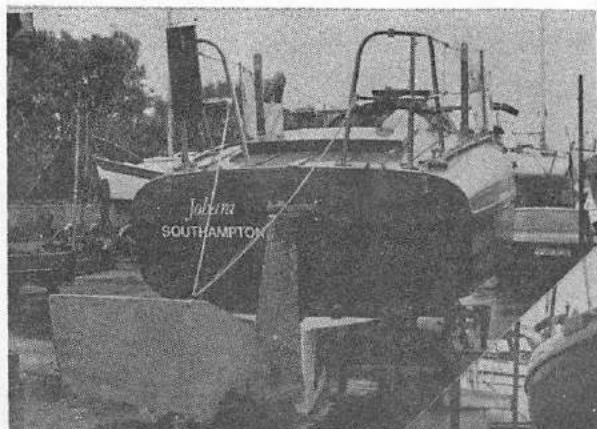
One last appeal. Are there any other North American owners out there who are actively sailing their boats? If so, please write. Can you imagine more than one Atalanta seen in company in this country?

David Walworth (A146)



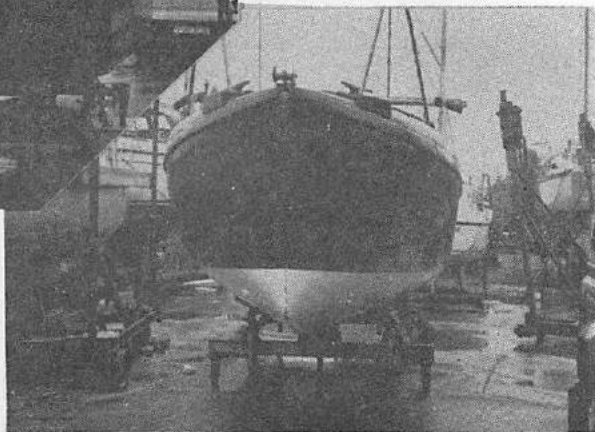
See article "Falling in Love with a Disaster"
ROAMARA
Skipper surrounded by salvage and seeing visions!

La Bittan live - see "Letter from America"



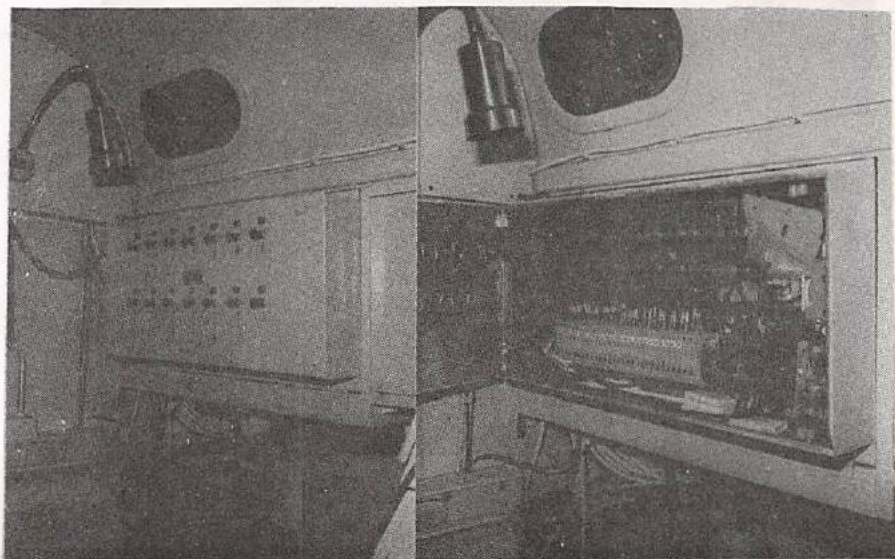
*Johara showing the
new section of the
Transom (top half)*

*Ready for stripping
the mast. See
article "Further
Repairs to Johara"*



Le Bateau Ivre -- see "Letter from America"

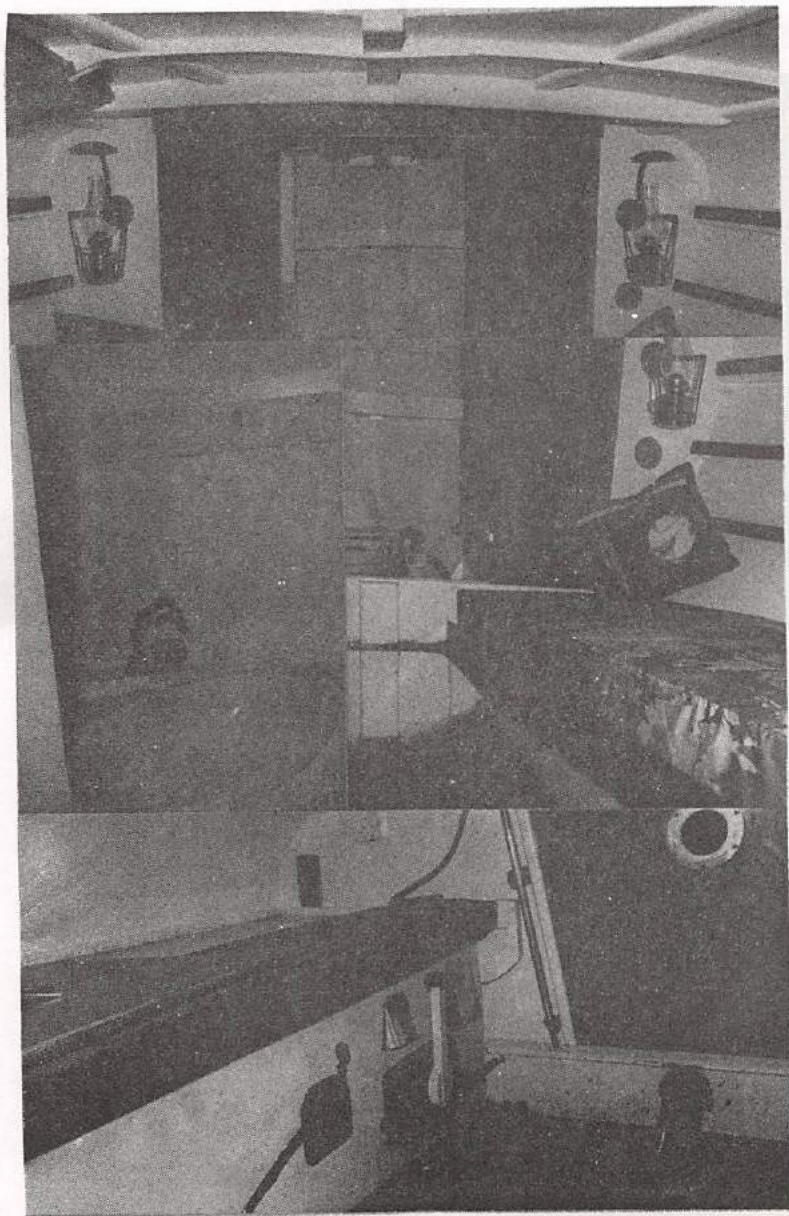
Kerry Piper



New electrical panel -- closed (Left) and open (Right)




*Kerry Piper in Antwerp Marina
see Article "Kerry Piper's Overhaul"*



*Control Comfort and Elegance on Board.
See "Kerry Piper's Overhaul"*

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