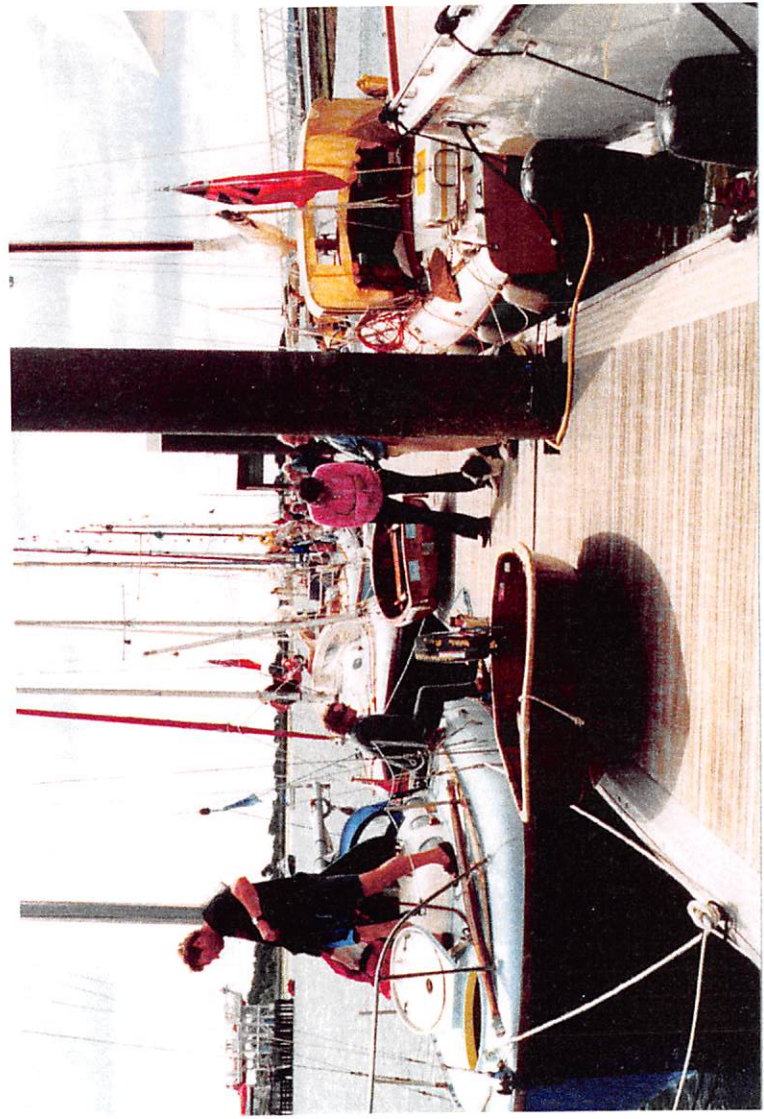


ATALANTA OWNERS' ASSOCIATION



**2005 - 2006
BULLETIN**



ATALANTA OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

2005 – 2006 BULLETIN

47th Edition

Contents

Committee 2005 – 2006		2
From the Commodore	Fred Boothman	3
From the Editor	Mike Dixon	3
Cover photograph	Mark Urry	4
To the Hamble and back “Arosa”	Simon Cooper	5
An appreciation “Jane Duck”	Richard Alan Smith	8
Perverse route to Hamble “Gellie”	Mike Dixon	12
Insulating deckheads “Calista”	Trevor Thompson	13
The AOA Rally 2005 “Bluster”	Jane and Robbie Stearn	15
2005 on the Menai Straits “Sea Major”	Frances and Peter Martin	17
Anniversary Cruise “Solone”	Keith Viewing	18
“Calista’s” South Coast Cruise 2005	Trevor Thompson	24
Check the stirrups and don’t drop the keel	Colin Twyford	27
East Coast Rally, Mersea Town Regatta & Fireworks	Grahame Hill	27
Register of Boats and owners		30
Atalanta		30
Atalanta 31		40
Titania		41
Fulmar		42
Honorary Members		43
Associate Members		44
Alphabetical list of boats		47

Photographs

Front cover	Three of a kind by the late Mrs Urry – see article page 4
Inside front cover	Pontoon activity at Hamble
Inside back cover	Top – wasted keel straps Colin Twyford – see article page 27 Bottom – Trevor Thompson insulating the deckheads – see article on page 13
Back cover	The pontoon at Hamble and early stages of the South Coast Race – both photos by Trevor Thompson

From the Commodore

The 2005 Rally of boats on the Hamble produced a superb gathering of Atalantas, a Titania, a Fulmar and a 31, a number probably not seen since they were manufactured on site. However, the event produced something of a crossroads for the Association. Colin Twyford's period of office as Honorary Secretary came to an end, and his input and enthusiasm will be sorely missed. The question of the future venue, both form and location was discussed but not fully resolved. Personally after the success of the 2005 event, I feel the format should be retained in some way, and I'm keen to find out what the recorded minutes say. Whatever, the decision I intend to be there. Hope to meet you and your boats.

Fred Boothman
Commodore



From the editor

I suspect that for many of you the season is well under way. And you may well be wondering whatever happened to your bulletin that normally drops through the letter box in January.

A number of contributory causes have resulted in the delay but most of them, it has to be said, are of my making. So apologies to all.

This edition is dominated by accounts of the Hamble get-together last year. Some of the accounts are quite hair-raising but what struck me was the determined attitude of the skippers and crew. Difficulties there were in abundance, but I don't think there was one boat that failed to get there – confirming that the boats (and their crews) are made of stern stuff.

The other memory is of the AGM at Hamble – not the meeting itself, though that was memorable for other reasons - but the last minute shift of venue, necessitating the movement of (what seemed like) hundreds of chairs and tables across the Hamble site in the pouring rain.

But not all the articles are about the Hamble, and there's a fascinating account of a season on the Menai Strait.

Technical articles are thin on the ground, but there's a good article from Trevor Thompson on installing insulated deckhead linings. Regrettably, space meant that his excellent set of accompanying photographs had to be left out.

The other technical article is from Colin Twyford, and in light of what happened to "Solone" and nearly happened to "Bluster" – I recommend you consider the content!

It is with mixed feelings that I've decided to sell "Gellie". I've had 15 years of fun and enjoyment with the two "Gellies" and feel the need to move on. I shall continue, for the time being, to edit the bulletin (if you want me to that is!), but if there is someone out there willing to take over (and despite the fact that the last three editors have all been Mikes you don't have to change your name) then I'm more than happy to hand over the reigns.

The very best of sailing to you all.

Mike Dixon

Cover Photograph

Mark S Urry

(The charming photograph on the front cover was sent to Colin Twyford last year. The letter reproduced below accompanied the photograph. Could this be the earliest group photograph the Association has? Ed)

It is with pleasure that I recently discovered your website and I'm delighted to see that your association is still thriving. I have never yet personally owned an Atalanta but my father owned two ("Atalanta" A1 & "Diaphony" A5) when I was much younger and I have cruised, raced and been closely involved with a few others. I notice your Anniversary celebrations of the launching of "Atalanta" and do hope that this event goes well for you. If any photos of "Atalanta" become available I would be very interested. I haven't seen her for many years when she was moored at Rye and painted white.

The enclosed photo may amuse you and perhaps prove useful. I have no objection to this photo being published by yourselves if you wish. Mention of the boats' names and their then current owners would be a simple courtesy.

The photo taken by my mother (now deceased) in Christchurch harbour circa 1959/60 shows from left to right:

- A48 "Atala" built 1958 with owner John A. Strubbe F.R.I.B.A. seated on the foredeck. John is presently living in Winchester and used to keep "Atala" on the Beaulieu river near Bailey's Hard.
- A1 "Atalanta" built 1955 with owner Capt. "Bill" Urry MN.retd. (now deceased) holding the baby in the dinghy. "Atalanta" was usually moored in Christchurch and was then kept in her original two shades of green. She had a Stuart 4hp petrol engine as auxiliary power and her original Egyptian cotton sails. My father's long term affiliation with Atalantas goes back to one of Uffa Fox's earlier designs, the airborne lifeboat. My grandfather owned one of these for most of his life until it was eventually passed on to the RAF museum at Hendon.
- A -1 "Sue-Jan-Wiz" built circa 1953 with owner Howard Bawtree (now deceased) stood in her cockpit. "Sue-Jan-Wiz" (also then based in Christchurch) is really the original Atalanta and is the prototype that Alan Vines built from an extended dinghy hull. Feature such as the roll top decks with hatch for sail handling and the twin lifting keels are clearly visible in this picture, whilst the after cabin and whipstaff steering are mostly hidden.

Unfortunately this photo does not include the first real 'production' version of the Atalanta. My father's A5 "Diaphony" was one of those but we brought her up to later specs by moving the cockpit/cabin bulkhead aft by about twelve inches. This caused her to be mistaken for a later boat but of course the hull and deck forms were not otherwise modified. These boats were different from later boats in that they had a lower after deck and broader hull sections aft. The latter was changed to improve balance and the former to improve headroom aft. In racing, it was often shown that the earlier boats were actually faster than the later ones. "Sue-Jan-Wiz" was a very fast and lively boat but later concessions to security led to reduced sail area and a consequent lack of power. With a modern rig and limitation of cruising gear I am sure that an Atalanta could still put up a very admirable performance. Although designed to plane, this must have been a very exceptional event in the career of most Atalantas and even then reserved to the occasional wave slide. One look at the picture shows that the smallest boat has by far the greatest sail area and this meant that by the standards of the day "Sue-Jan-Wiz" offered a very wild ride at speeds no other Atalanta owner even dreamt of.

Hoping this is of interest to you and wishing you the very best for your anniversary,

Regards, Mark



**To the Hamble and back
"Arosa's" voyage to the Atalanta Anniversary Rally**

Simon Cooper

A 104 "Arosa"

We heard two muffled explosions as the maroons heralded the launch of the Cromer lifeboat. We had set off in *Arosa* that morning (Sunday 7th August) from Hull. The crew was my brother and myself, and Wally who is an experienced dinghy sailor, but this was his first trip in a larger craft.

We had a fast passage across the Wash towards the Norfolk coast running under jib before a NW wind which had built up to force 6 during the day. The seas had also increased to 2 to 3 metres, and, striking the port quarter, tended to push the stern to starboard, requiring fairly energetic work on the helm: one large wave had caused us to broach which resulted in a broken jib boom. Then, at about 10.45 pm, 6 miles east of Cromer and two miles offshore, the helm went slack. It was immediately obvious that the aluminium rudder blade had collapsed. We took in the jib and *Arosa* settled across the wind rising and falling fairly gently on the waves. Although in no immediate danger the onshore wind would inevitable cast us up on the beach in the course of time, so the decision to make a 'Mayday' VHF call was not a difficult one!

Response to our call was immediate from Yarmouth Coastguard. After initial exchanges with the Coastguard, a number of other vessels in the area offered assistance; help from the P and O ferry *Pride of Bruges* was accepted and shortly after she arrived and expertly stationed herself to windward to form a lee. Then the lifeboat made VHF contact and we soon spotted her lights and flashed a high powered torch which enabled her to find us.

The lifeboat coxswain decided to tow us to Great Yarmouth, the nearest harbour, and offered to put a crewman aboard to assist us. This offer was declined with alacrity: the lifeboat with high freeboard and shallow draft was rolling alarmingly in the seas and I felt that any attempt to come alongside must inevitably result in damage. First a drogue was passed to us, then the towrope, and when both were attached the tow commenced at about midnight. This was when things started to get really exciting as the lifeboat set off at what seemed a breakneck speed causing *Arosa* to veer wildly from side to side. A plea to the lifeboat slowed us down a little, and raising the keels also helped.

The tow seemed to take forever, but at last, as dawn broke, we entered the River Yare and were towed the two miles up-river and berthed at the Town Hall quay at about 6 am. We were then able to meet the lifeboat crew and thank them. I had expected Wally to jump ship after such a disastrous introduction to cruising, but he is made of sterner stuff and declared his intention of staying with us.

After a welcome breakfast, as early as I thought I decently could, I phoned our esteemed (and now retired) Association secretary, Colin Twyford, to ask if he could suggest where we might get a replacement rudder blade. Colin promised to see what he could do and rang off. Shortly after, Marshall Jenkins rang from Brightlingsea to announce that he had an Atalanta rudder blade and would be pleased to pass it on! Rick Wick also kindly rang to offer help.

A few hundred yards from our berth was a small car hire business from which I rented a modest car for a modest £25, and I set off southwards with Wally to keep me awake. Meanwhile David hunted for someone to make up new wire up- and down-hauls for the rudder. (When the lower part of the rudder blade detached itself it was held only by the two wires and as it somersaulted in the wake whilst under tow the wires became completely mangled.)

Arriving in Brightlingsea, Margaret Jenkins provided a life-saving lunch after which we hit the road back to Lowestoft with the precious rudder blade on the back seat. Back at the boat,

David had been successful in obtaining the new wires, so, after returning the car, I nervously tackled the job of fitting the new rudder blade, something normally only attempted on dry land!

I worked from the rubber dinghy moored to *Arosa's* stern: things were not helped by the 2 knot ebb tide and the turgidity of the water which made it impossible to see beneath the surface. However, all went well and after 20 minutes I was able to clamber (rather soggily) on board and report success. *Arosa* was back in commission!

The rest of the evening passed in a sleep-starved haze: we ate in a Japanese restaurant – the only eating establishment in the area that was open – but I have no memory of the meal. However we were up and going in good time the next morning (Tuesday), sailing down the Suffolk coast under main and genoa in a light northerly wind.

Dusk found us nearing the Thames Estuary, which caused me some trepidation. Although having crossed it a few times before, it had always been in daylight, and a master mariner had once confided to me that he would never take a yacht across the estuary at night. However, all went well apart from the difficulty of telling which direction the current was taking the boat in the strong tidal conditions. We passed Rough's Tower fort and continued until we came to the NE end of the Black Deep channel, turning right into it and continuing SW until the left turn into Foulger's Gat. Dawn found us well on the way to North Foreland.

We planned to make a short stop at Dover to take on water (the Town Hall quay at Great Yarmouth had absolutely no facilities, not even a water tap) and tea bags (when provisioning the ship I had failed to appreciate Wally's amazing tea consumption), however when we got there at about 11.30 am we were carrying a fair tide so decided to push on to Folkstone before stopping.

Folkstone was a dump! – a decaying port run by a little Hitler of a harbour master. Buying tea bags was easy, finding a working water tap was more difficult. Having lunched we set off again under engine until we reached Dungeness when a gentle wind got up and we were able to sail.

Thursday found us making gentle progress along the South Coast with a light wind. As we approached the Solent at dusk we could see nothing westwards through the haze, then suddenly the setting sun lit the western horizon with a red glow and there in the distance were the silhouettes of the Calshot power station chimney and the Millennium Tower at Portsmouth. Progress during the night through the Solent against wind and tide was very slow. Once round Gilkicker Point we tacked up the Hillhead shore keeping out of the tide and the big ship traffic and avoiding numerous unlit navigation and racing buoys. We berthed at Hamble Point Marina as dawn broke and turned in for a blissful sleep.

* * * *

The fiftieth anniversary weekend is no doubt fully reported elsewhere in the bulletin. Suffice to say that we had a thoroughly enjoyable time with the opportunity to meet other *Atalanta* owners and see their boats, and to catch up with other old friends. Good use was also made of the excellent on-site chandlers and the sailmakers.

* * * *

David and Wally left to catch trains home on the Sunday morning, and Des joined in the evening. We slipped at 8.30 am the following morning planning to make for West Mersea for the East Coast rally the following Saturday, with a stopover in Calais on the way. The wind was fitful so much of the passage to Calais was made under power. We entered Calais at about 8 pm on Tuesday evening and moored in the marina in the Bassin de l'Ouest.

Wednesday was spent enjoying Calais. The marina is small and friendly and very close to the town centre. We took on fuel, bought provisions, visited an excellent wine store, went sightseeing, and in the evening dined excellently.

Thursday found us underway soon after 8 am in a light wind bound for Ramsgate. (It was a faulty decision to make for Ramsgate as time would tell: it left us just one day to get to West Mersea for the regatta on the Saturday, with no allowance for bad weather, gear failure etc. We should have stiffened our resolve and made straight for the Blackwater.) We arrived at Ramsgate harbour at 6 pm, having motored the final 8 miles, and discovered that Ramsgate Regatta week was in progress with large numbers of yachts having just finished racing milling around hunting for scarce marina berths. The berths in the harbour are divided into two areas, the east marina and the west marina. The east marina is badly silted and this was exacerbated by the tide being near low water springs, so was shunned by the regatta boats: we wound up the keels and had no trouble finding a berth there.

By seven the following morning we were clear of the harbour en route for West Mersea, motor sailing into wind and against a powerful south-running tide. It took 3½ hours to reach North Foreland and on clearing the land the wind increased to around force 5/6 as we headed north under well reefed main and number 2 jib, making for Fisherman's Gat. About 6 miles north of North Foreland, with seas building and the wind showing no sign of abating, I decided to abandon the attempt, as it was obvious we were not going to get into the Blackwater estuary before nightfall and I was nervous about crossing the sandbanks between Black Deep and Barrow Deep in such rough conditions. We therefore reversed course and ran back to Ramsgate.

I was disappointed to miss the West Mersea race, but we decided to have another attempt on the Saturday. The forecast was for similar conditions and wind direction as on the Friday so we planned a different strategy. We were underway by 6.30 am and motor sailed north up the beach to keep out of the worst of the tide, reaching North Foreland soon after 9 am. When clear of Margate Sands we tacked on to a westerly heading, close reaching under reefed main and no 2 jib into Princes Channel helped by the flood tide, passing the new wind farm on Kentish Flats and the Red Sand Towers wartime fort.

We reached the SW Barrow buoy and tacked on to a NE heading into the West Swin channel, with the tide, now ebbing, still helping us in the right direction. We were at the Spin Spitway buoy by 7 pm, which was also low water springs, so we wound up the keels and proceeded rather cautiously through the Spitway into the Blackwater; in fact the least water we recorded was 1.5 m. With the wind now dying we had a slow sail up the Blackwater, admiring the Mersea firework display from afar. We reached the Nass beacon shortly before 10 pm and, not wishing to enter the moorings in the dark, tied up outside to a mooring buoy for the night.

Entering the harbour in the morning we moored alongside *Joann* on the piles where we found the ever hospitable Grahame Hill having breakfast, and said 'hello' to others in the Atalanta fleet. We paddled ashore in the rubber dinghy for a coffee and to replenish our supply of cake bars, then set off at 1 pm on our way north in light winds. It was to be a short passage as we planned to spend the night in Walton Backwaters. Although the Pilot Book advised that entry to the Backwaters should not be attempted in less than half tide, we had no difficulty at low spring tide (however we did raise the keels...).

This was the first time either of us had visited the Backwaters, and, despite the closeness to Felixstowe docks, we found it a fascinating area; peaceful, few other boats, and an abundance of wildlife including an inquisitive seal who 'adopted' us. Our next port was to be Lowestoft, but in the morning, Monday, we felt in no hurry to leave. The fine morning weather deteriorated into heavy rain and poor visibility, but by late afternoon things had started to improve so we set off, being slightly delayed crossing the main Felixstowe channel while we waited for a gigantic container ship to be connected to tugs and enter the port.

We sailed up the coast close hauled against a freshening northerly wind. I was sound asleep when Des woke me in the early hours of the morning at the end of his watch, and in a befuddled state found it more difficult than usual to struggle into my oilskins. As I emerged into the cockpit I realised why: Des was having the sail of his life, heeled to 40° and bouncing from wave top to wave top in a force 6 wind. We quickly wound more reefs into the main and broke out the number 3 jib. We berthed in the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club basin in

Lowestoft harbour in time for breakfast, and found Mike Dixon in *Gellie* already there, on his way back to Aberdeen.

We had planned to leave for the Humber on the following day (Wednesday) but it was not to be, with gale warnings for areas Thames and Humber. I was concerned to hear that a storm force 10 was forecast for the West Coast of Scotland as my sister was cruising there in her *Eventide* – it later transpired that she was snug in the Crinan Canal basin.

We were able leave on Thursday morning, slipping before 5 am to catch the north-running tide. The afternoon found us off the North Norfolk coast surrounded by thunderstorms. We were hit by a vicious squall which caused the port upper spreader to collapse, so we were no longer able to carry a foresail so continued under mainsail and motor. As dusk set in we were treated to some spectacular flashes of lightning; fortunately the storms subsided soon thereafter.

There was a bizarre occurrence early the next morning at about 3 am when we were both in the cockpit during the watch change. A low-flying helicopter (apparently military) approached and circled the boat, then flew a short distance away and started firing its machine guns with streams of red tracer, then repeated the procedure, again circling us and then firing its guns. We were somewhat unnerved by this as it was really too close for comfort, and breathed a sigh of relief when it flew off. This was short-lived as five minutes later the helicopter was back for a repeat performance, after which it did finally disappear for good.

We entered the Humber at around 10 am on the Friday, but too late to catch the morning tide up to Hull, so we went into the 'Fish Dock' at Grimsby to wait for the evening tide. (Tides in the Humber run at 5 knots or more so it is not practical to travel against them.) The marina in the fish dock is friendly and laid back. The people there expressed some surprise that *Arosa* was the second *Atalanta* to pass through within the week, the other *Atalanta* being *Theodora*, returning to Brough from the Hamble rally.

In the evening, with no wind, we motored up to Hull, berthing at 10.45 pm. It had certainly been an eventful voyage!



A 158 "JANE DUCK"

An appreciation

Richard Alan Smith

There was never another boat like her, not before nor since. I remember crossing Rosario Straits; leaving Lopez Island bound for Deception Pass with the air-cooled Lister spewing out warm air against my legs on a cold rainy morning. I remember plowing through the short choppy seas of summer, bone in her teeth and the little Rinky Dink poppling along behind – it was always a treat.

My love affair started when a student of mine in Liverpool said that his dad had a sailboat. His description didn't match anything I could recognize. They sailed it in the Irish Sea; best boat in the world, his dad had said. Her home was a mud berth up a North Country estuary surrounded by buttercups and daffodils until the tide brought in the sea twice a day.

But a tidal bore swept the father overboard and drowned him. The boat was taken to a shed in Boulton where she sat on her muddy trailer through many summers trying to be forgotten under rusting steel trusses amidst broken Massey Fergusons, and a Morris Minor or two.

I climbed a ladder to sit in her cockpit looking over the cabin top blister, past the mast lying in a bed of coiled and twisted rigging. I sat and wondered what it would be like to raise the main and rush back to this cockpit, grabbing the whipstaff and feeling her tense all up; beginning to move on her own. I sat there, looking down into the cabin at a mass of gear and equipment – winches incongruously attached to a steel bulkhead. There were sail bags, a few tools, and no sign of berths. A man wearing a flat hat and a pin stripe suit coat over bib overalls and a rumpled scarf appeared at the ladder scowling and saying something I couldn't quite catch. I moved out of his way as he came aboard. He lifted the cockpit sole which I held against my knees as he slammed the gearbox lever and throttle control back and forth.

Dropping down to the cabin, he cranked the engine. He cranked and muttered and cranked some more until it shuddered to life shaking boat, plates, pots and pans, me and the hatch cover. Smoke filled the shed as he raced the engine. We smiled at each other, the boatman and me, and I heard him shout over the roaring Lister, 'just like a Massey, matey.' One thing led to another and I became the second owner of *Jane Duck*, Fairey Atalanta No. 158 - the most unusual and unforgettable boat I've ever owned.

The Fairey Atalanta

During the Second World War, too many aviators were losing their lives bobbing about in tiny rubber inflatables that pitched to the mercy of rampaging seas until men either starved or died of exposure. At that time, the great British yacht designer Uffa Fox served as Design Consultant to Fairey Marine Ltd., a subsidiary of the Fairey Aviation Company designing survival clothing, small sails and paddles to aid aircrew shot down over the North sea and English Channel. Frustrated at the helplessness of airmen who had no realistic way of getting home, he got the idea of designing a lifeboat to be carried under the fuselage of a bomber and dropped by parachute to ditched aircraft. That would be an improvement over ping-pong paddles and downwind handkerchiefs.

Fox recalls the inception:

I had the idea when at one of our daily tea parties with the office staff in my office and so it was at the tea table that I made the first model with thick drawing paper and strawberry jam. Immediately after tea I went up to the drawing-office and designed first with draughtsmen and then went on with boatbuilders and engineers to make a wooden model of this boat to scale. We also designed the parachutes, and as the drawing-office was on the top floor of Medina Yard, at midnight, when it was all complete, we threw the model out of the window to a draughtsman waiting below. The parachutes opened and unfolded the boat on the way so that the man in the roadway below had no difficulty in catching the complete boat with its parachute.

Uffa Fox, Joys of Life, Newnes: London, 1966

The original folding boat idea gave way to a rigid hull form with watertight compartments, wooden dagger boards and retractable rudders. The boats fitted snugly against the underside of a Lockheed Hudson medium bomber (later, larger versions were fitted to four engined Avro Lancaster's and Flying Fortresses) and were aerodynamically as well as hydrodynamically designed, light and tough enough to survive impact forces of a parachute landing in a choppy English Channel. They were self-righting and could be rowed, sailed or motored back home to England. The idea worked and resulted in the saving of many lives, both British and American.

After the war, Alan Vines of Fairey Marine, who had helped in the development of the airborne lifeboats, was intrigued with the notion of a yacht based on the airborne lifeboat concept. With Uffa's encouragement, he led the development of the Atalanta 26, the name deriving from an early Fairey flying boat.

Particulars:

LOA 26.3 feet

LWL	25.0 feet
Beam	7.7 feet
Draft, keels up	1.5 feet
Draft, keels down	5.75 feet
Ballast	475 pounds in each keel
Light displacement	3,700 pounds
Load displacement	4,500 pounds

Jane Duck was in generally good condition when I found her but needed work. Atalantas were built using the hot moulding method advanced during WW II on such aircraft as the de Havilland Mosquito. The hot moulding process involved placing several layers of thin (5/64th inch) Agba planks diagonally over a solid wood mould. A *Resorcinol* type glue was used which required the application of heat and pressure to set. This was done under a rubber bag placed over the newly glued up hull. A vacuum was then applied until the bag was stretched skin-tight over the hull under pressure. The whole assembly was then cooked in an autoclave at over 100 deg. C.

It was thought that the synthetic resins used as adhesives were proof against fungus and bacteria and that under heat and pressure they impregnated the laminations to make the hull resistant to water penetration and teredo attack. In 1980, *Jane Duck* was about 25 years old when I began the restoration. An enquiry to Fairey produced an abundance of technical information including instructions for making repairs and a bundle of agba mahogany strips. My knife found only small pockets of rot, usually in the way of solid wood and the places that collect fresh water. There was no delamination.

Twin retractable keels weighing 475 pounds each drop vertically from the boat's bottom producing a rather striking similarity to a duck's legs. They are worked by standing in the galley area, facing forward and simultaneously cranking two winches – a very athletic and, to me, supremely satisfying activity. They can be locked in any position, singly or doubly, by a sort of 'disc brake' mechanism that dampens the movement of the keels to any degree of fixity. Upon striking a submerged object, the brake friction is overcome; the keels lift into their trunks and fall back again when the obstacle has been got over. All the forces generated when sailing are taken by the steel reinforced bulkhead to which the keels deliver their loads thus relieving the light wooden shell of the ringing stresses normally associated with a keel boat.

Whenever I'd leap below to grab those brass winch handles in both hands and shift the half-ton of iron ballast in her legs up and down, I felt I was back at submarine school operating the machinery of extremely serious purpose; I knew I was doing important work.

The lifting aluminum rudder is operated with up and down hauls that are connected to a shock cord to absorb the reaction of either accidental or intentional groundings.

Because many Atalanta owners outfitted the hulls at various stages of completion, accommodation differs from boat to boat, but *Jane Duck's* plan is rather typical of those I've seen.

Two berths are located in the main cabin just abaft the sail locker and anchor well in the forepeak. A steel reinforced bulkhead separates the cabin/sleeping area from a small portside galley that gives access to a quarterberth. Opposite the galley, a navigation table with sliding sink below lifts to provide access to another quarterberth. The after cabin contains a queen sized berth athwartship, a small settee and a compact workbench with vise and tool locker.

With its 18-inch keels-up draft, and robust construction, Atalantas can be beached or worked up streams well away from crowded anchorages to take the ground. I lived on *Jane Duck* one summer at the village of Heswall on the Dee Estuary where I anchored a hundred yards or so off shore behind a grassy sand bank that disappeared twice a day, alternating my view from beach to the open sea. There were a dozen or so of us out there in the sand, mud and water ruts of Heswall – keelboats, centerboarders, barge yachts, twin-keelers and boats standing to wooden legs – all tough little boats and all in various stages of uprightness at low tide. Arrivals

and departures were timed so that we could either walk to our boats or take dinghy-loads of supplies. I built a William Atkin designed flat-bottomed dinghy, Rinky Dink that I hauled up on the after deck where she rode most comfortably and attractively as she awaited her time.

Eventually, circumstances required that I ship *Jane Duck* from Liverpool to Seattle. She was chained to the deck of a container ship and in heavy seas that would have meant little to her were she free to make her own way across the Atlantic, she shifted, separating transom and hull. That's how she arrived in Seattle and the first sight of that jagged opening dampened the joy of our reunion. But a Lloyd's of London agent made a cash settlement at the quayside and I set off with much lifted spirits to repair her in the Shilshole Yard. It was a happy week of good work resulting in a transom every bit as strong as the original work, thanks in large part to the wonders of epoxy. When we launched her and I backed off the brakes, however, the keels wouldn't drop. Good English mud had dried and cemented them to their trunks. After a couple of hours, however, the concretized mud softened and they dropped with resounding thuds into the waters of Elliot Bay and we were off on the first of several years of years of sailing in Puget Sound and the surrounding archipelagoes.

In light winds, the *Atalanta* sails like a barge – slowly and gracefully. A cruising chute helps but not a lot and the narrow range of headings possible under this sail rather negate the advantages. As winds increase to about 15 or 20 knots, she stiffens and begins to gain on the reefed down boats that pass her so smugly in lighter airs. Under certain conditions of strong wind and small waves, she has planed most dramatically - but not often. She sails with minimum angle of heel and comfortably, feeling like a much heavier boat. She is not very close winded; happiest under started sheets. Varying the angles of the keels – together or separately, however, provides an infinity of adjustment of the CLR and center of gravity as well as plenty of exercise. *Atalantas* are said to be self-righting if the keels are kept 15 degrees up from full down and cruising logs record dry boats after violent knockdowns at sea.

The whipstaff or vertical tiller connects to the rudder head with a system of aircraft cables. I find it an excellent steering method - comfortable in use and convenient, freeing up the cockpit as it does.

Jane's engine is a two cylinder, air-cooled 12 HP Lister diesel. It is noisier than more modern, water-cooled engines but in my view entirely in keeping with the boat it serves. I never saw fit to replace or repair the erratic electric starter, preferring to wind the huge flywheel by hand, cranking slowly at first then faster and faster until the momentum took hold (more good exercise) and I lifted the injectors one at a time and listened to the single explosions come more rapidly and merge into a continuous roar. I enjoyed starting that engine almost as much as I did feeling the wind fill *Jane's* sails later on.

Jane was a good motor boat holding her course well and going astern predictably. Being designed, essentially, for keeping the sea along tempestuous British coasts but now sailing in the much lighter winds and narrow, fast running channels of Puget Sound and the San Juans meant that I motorsailed a lot and I could leap down to the crank and have her going in seconds.

Not requiring a battery to start the engine, I maintained a kerosene anchor light and read by the faithful, hissing Tilley lamp during long summer evenings at anchor. Freedom from electrical power gave me an increased feeling of independence from things I didn't understand and that seems to me to be at the core of my enjoyment of small boats. The modest sail plan and mighty tumblehome always provided a great sense of security in the Irish Sea but I gradually gained the feeling that she never took the summer winds of the Pacific Northwest very seriously. She was all in reserve – waiting to amend some catastrophe – waiting to serve some higher purpose. Gunkholing, birdwatching, digging for littleneck clams and picking oysters was never quite her style.

Life had taken some shifts and turns that made it difficult to commute to Seattle from Liverpool every summer. So, as has often happened just when my boat was nearing a

perfection of form and function, when I found I knew all of her idiosyncrasies, every quirk and hidden pleasure, I put her up for sale.

A young man appeared at the dock on Bainbridge Island in answer to my ad. He examined her from stem to stern, on deck and below, and I could tell within minutes that *Jane* and I were to part. He said nothing, caught as he was in the headlights of seduction. As we took her out for a trial sail in Eagle Harbor, he followed the whipstaff and keel lifting operation. He watched fascinated as I ratcheted the bronze roller reefing gear that wound the spruce boom round and round, lowering the main and he smiled broadly tending the sheets with the tufnol, bottom handle winches. Returning to the slip, he said he'd take her – plus my foul weather gear, metal bucket decorated with grebes and California gulls, navigation instruments, binoculars and just about everything else I couldn't wear. I left with my suitcase and I've missed that boat ever since.

A Post script:

Within this memoir, I would be amiss if I did not mention a less tangible connection with a much-loved boat. Shortly after I sold her, a dear friend and architect, Peter Richardson, gave me a drawing that he'd done of the boat for my birthday. Pete had sailed in her one summer and missed her as I did. It is a beautiful drawing, as fresh and lively as Uffa Fox's Jam and paper model of the prototype must have been and I've kept it near my desk for over twenty years.

Eventually Pete found his own *Atalanta*, loved her and died in her one night in Caernarfon Harbor in the north of Wales. Pete's *Atalanta* is now in the capable hands of his trapeze artist, sailor daughter and her fire-eating husband who will sail her once again into the Menai Straits and out into the Seas beyond.



Perverse route to Hamble

Mike Dixon

A31/4 "Gellie"

Gellie and her crew took the scenic route to Hamble.

We set off from Stonehaven on the 3rd June, bound north. 2005 not only saw the 50th anniversary of the building of the first *Atalanta*, but also the Victory Round Britain rally organised by the Cruising Association. Hence our apparent lack of directional ability. Briefly, the rally was organised along the lines of rendezvous ports with ten days or so "free" sailing in between each port.

"Gellie" was the smallest and oldest boat in the rally but that didn't deter us from joining in the celebrations along the way. We initiated the dancing in Orkney and hosted a party on board for 27 people in Craobh Haven – all under cover as it was tipping down with rain. "Gellie's" waterline was well submerged.

Our passage to the Hamble took us to Peterhead, several ports in Orkney, the Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival, the Caledonian Canal, Oban, a circumnavigation of Mull, Craobh Haven, Jura, Gigha, Bangor Northern Island, Portaferry and Strangford Loch, Ardglass, Howth (near Dublin), Arklow, Milford Dock, Newlyn, Falmouth, Dartmouth and Studland Bay, before fetching up, just in time, at Hamble Point. Almost 1400 miles.

"Gellie" did well with no mishaps in complete contrast with the previous year's epic. Having said that, the itinerary of the rally was demanding, and in hindsight way too ambitious and we spent far too much time motoring, just to maintain the schedule. I have to say that once or twice I considered abandoning the rally, but having passed the half way stage, it seemed easier to continue. There were at least two crew on board at all times apart from the Howth to Milford leg, when I was let down at the last minute, but fortunately that leg was in clear flat calm conditions – which meant motoring with the autohelm on, whilst the skipper enjoyed the sunshine in solitary splendour.

I suppose I ought to mention the South Coast Race, since everyone is far too polite to point out that we came a resounding last. I could offer mitigating circumstances but you wouldn't believe them anyway. Suffice to say that I don't really do racing and "Gellie" was in serious cruising mode – probably best part of a ton overweight. I have to say though, that it was somewhat harrowing to see the transoms of so many boats disappearing over the horizon!

After the weekend at Hamble, all we had to do was to get home – via West Mersea of course! The trip along the south coast and across the Thames estuary went well, crossing paths with other Atalantas at various times.

Once again, we managed to screw up the race instructions at West Mersea. The instructions were on the front doormat at Stonehaven some 500 miles away and despite the best efforts of the other boats to provide us with the race information, we failed to get to the start line in time. As it turned out, it transpired that confusion reigned throughout the fleet, so I guess we were in good company.

The trip home was marked by very settled conditions and apart from being holed up in Lowestoft whilst a brisk northerly blew through, we motored steadily home, finally arriving on 12th September.



Insulating Atalantas and Titanias to prevent condensation

Trevor Thompson

T10 "Calista"

Have you suffered from condensation inside your Atalanta? Calista certainly does when the weather is cool and damp, and it has adversely effected a number of our early season cruises.

It is inevitable that there will be condensation under the decks and coachroof because they are so thin – and have so little in the way of insulating properties. We have however solved the problem in a way which preserves the original appearance of the inside, without using plastics materials.

The solution is to fix cork sheet into each separate panel under the coachroof and the decks. I did the main cabin last winter, and it has been such a success that I am currently insulating the aft cabin.

Where to get the cork from? Cork is available in a wide variety of forms from Cantril Ltd. I used 4 mm thick cork sheets 1metre by 2 metres. It is available in different thicknesses and sizes. I fixed it in position with a waterproof PVA wood adhesive which I bought from a local builders merchant for £5.00 per litre.

The process I used is described below:

1. Removing the paint.

The first stage was to remove the existing paint from the area to be glued to expose the wood. I did it one panel at a time, using a hot air gun and a sharp scraper. I was very gentle with the heat – just enough to soften the paint and the work was really done with the scraper.

2. Making a rough pattern.

I used heavy duty lining paper (the sort decorators use on rough walls) to make individual patterns for each piece of cork. Firstly a piece slightly too big was pressed into the space.

3. Finishing off the Pattern.

A pencil was used to mark the exact shape of the pattern before cutting it out with wallpaper scissors.

4. Transferring the shape to the cork.

By using sheets 1m x 2m I ensured that most panels would not need a visible join. The last thing I wanted was someone to say I had used domestic cork wall tiles! Fit the pattern onto the cork sheet in a way which will minimise the waste, and draw around the pattern.

5. Cutting the cork.

Following the pencil lines the cork was cut to size. The trick is to hold a metal rule or straight edge firmly in place as a guide, and replace the blades in the Stanley knife frequently.

6. Testing the fit.

The cut panel was offered up to see that it was the correct shape. Sometimes slight extra trimming was required, and very occasionally a second attempt was required. Note that the cork sheet has a rough and a smooth side – I tried to consistently use the smooth side as the exposed side – and glue to the rough side.

7. Applying the glue.

I found it best to take the top off the glue altogether – the quantity of glue required is more than will easily flow through the small spout provided. I like to use sufficient glue to ensure complete coverage. I want it to stick!

8. Final fitting.

The glued panel is offered up and pressed in place. The curved panels will stay in place on their own if they are a tight fit, but the flat ones require support until the glue dries.

9. Holding the cork in place.

The staple gun is useful to secure the flat panels temporarily, until the glue dries. It is supposed to dry in a few hours, but the semi permeable nature of the materials and the areas being glued mean that it can take 48 hours to thoroughly set.

10. Finishing the edges.

I used a glue gun to run a fillet of a waterproof but over-paintable acrylic mastic all around each panel. It covers any slight gaps. And produces a fair curve which looks finished off. A finger drawn over the mastic smoothes it out.

11. Finished and ready to paint.

Part of the aft cabin insulated and ready to paint.

12. The forward end of the inside of the coachroof.

This is a view of last years work on the inside of the coachroof. This was the most difficult part because of the three dimensional curvature. It was covered in radial strips, the edges of which can just be seen in the photo.

13. Under the sidedeck.

Under the sidedeck. You would never know it had been insulated – but it makes all the difference!



The AOA rally 2005

A 183 “Bluster”

Jane and Robbie Stearn

Bluster is thirty nine years old, and feeling her age a bit but nevertheless a very seaworthy boat. Her skipper is a good deal older and out of respect for both does not usually push her so hard. Bluster has been in our possession for thirty years and always will be, down the family. She was at Hamble in 1996 and determined to be there again in 2005, even if the wind did do its best to prevent it.

The getting there, the most difficult part, was luckily sailed with the tougher crew; son and two grandsons. From home port, Ramsholt, to the Hamble, in twelve days via France clocked up 385 miles. As far as Boulogne was a doddle but then the west wind set in.

On August 3rd we spent over thirteen hours hard on the wind; a wind which eventually reached Force 6. Both boat and skipper survived fine but with the skipper rather blood-covered from a cut on the head and Bluster rather full of water. The trip was interesting. I was immensely impressed with the way the boat kept sailing, even with nine rolls in the main and a pocket handkerchief jib, pounding into large seas. Unfortunately conditions were not conducive to taking photographs. Robbie, aged fifteen, has written an account of the day which I append.

After as good a dry out as possible we set out again the next day but with a head wind we were getting nowhere so gave up and went back to Dieppe to do some more drying out. The third day was even more difficult, beating into the F6, 9 rolls in the main and large waves so we had to retreat back and enter Dieppe a third time.

On Saturday we actually made Fecamp but again not without problems. Not the wind this time, which was favourable as it was for the rest of the outward passage, but that all the strong winds had stirred up masses of seaweed and when motoring almost stopped the engine. Three times Jonathan had to strip and go overboard and was I glad to have him or it would have had to be me! The other problem was that the alternator warning light came on so no engine. Sailing into a berth in the marina in Fecamp was a great (and successful) experience.

The “ingenieur” next day diagnosed water in the electrics; not surprising so no problem and it gradually stopped happening. He would not charge us. France has a greater love for sailors than GB I think. After an overnight stop in a rather boring Le Havre we left in the dark at another distasteful 0430 start and made St.Vaast by teatime. V.nice.

The next night we crossed to Bembridge. It was the boy's first night crossing on watch and could not have been a better one; good wind, good weather and plenty of shipping to avoid with the thrill of the occasional huge ship altering course for little us. So we made the Solent with a day in hand as planned in the end.

The return journey with Carol and Tim all simplicity and far too much under power so no problem in getting to West Mersea for the East Coast race and supper and finally Ramsholt ending with a spanking beat up the beautiful R. Deben. Perfect.

Robbie Stearn's account of the Boulogne to Dieppe voyage

The small patch of blue sky to be seen through the gap left by the top washboard had me enraptured for a moment after waking up at 0600. Hazy anticipation of something approaching a beautiful day's sail welled up, to be squashed utterly by the realisation that force 5 to 6, W to SW with rain at times did not leave much room for a balmy day of blue sky. Still, everyone knows that beating into a "strong breeze" and accompanying swell in a 26 footer is fun...? Puffy-eyed, in oilies and fleeces, the small patch of blue that had filled the sky in the realms of imagination dwindled into insignificance, obscured by the lead sheet drawn across the sky.

Amusement for the day came from the two sets of contradictory signals in direct opposition to each other barring the way out of Boulogne. Green-green-white or triple red? The choice is yours.

Beaten to the VHF by Jolotta just ahead it transpired that we shouldn't worry about the three red, they were broken anyway. Admittedly suspicions had been aroused by a trawler sailing through the signals and out of the harbour entrance.

Sails up, reefs in, Oliver appeared from the aft cabin having been deposited on the floor as we came hard on the wind. He gazed blearily at the enveloping grey-blue vista of sky and sea, sat down on the leeward cockpit seat and went back to sleep.

As the wind built and the coast drifted away to port the 50 mile stretch to Dieppe seemed ever wetter and longer; no bad thing of course and punctuated by gleeful exchanges such as:

"Where are we?"

"Just over the fold in the chart"

Although equally by less gleeful exchanges:

"How far have we come?"

"About three miles in the last one and a half hours"

I tell a lie though. For the first few hours the wind built and died a reasonable amount. Our boat speed remained at 2/3 knots, though that was just by the by, the real reason for the never ending stream of reefing and shaking outs was just to annoy Oliver. Being on the leeward side he was perfectly situated for both the jib sheets and the furling line.

Later on, five o'clock say, after the sun had come out, the wind had increased and the swell lengthened we were discovered, O joy of joys, to be windward of the track. "Free her off" went the gleeful cry.

Every new fix gave our position as windward of track and we were only too happy to let out the sails and watch the speeds climb. It is at this point however that I must digress.

When I was six, in fact on that very day, I was on my way back from an Atalanta race on the Solent. I say I in that young child egotism that we all know and love; I mean my dad, his Mum, and me. We were in Bluster, sailing out of Ramsgate into a choppy North Foreland sea. I was wedged in between the cockpit benches, mercifully dry and out of the wind. I also couldn't see the (what were to me) towering waves. All went swimmingly until one fateful wave caught us

beam on, breaking over the cockpit and me in a never ending white water, salt water, pressure shower. Or so it seemed at the time.

To the present- freed on to a close reach the beam sea splashed us liberally but no more than the swell we had met near head-on earlier. Until, that is, one fateful wave which broke over the cockpit in a never-ending white water etc. etc.

The Dieppe harbour mouth, once the spray had cleared, was welcomingly near and a boat decked out in wet clothes was soon to be seen in the marina.

I still rather like the idea that the same wave, having been twice round the world, came back to get me nine years later.



A92 "Sea Major"

2005 on the Menai Straits

Frances and Peter Martin

As there has been a long gap in which A92 did not appear on the Straits it seems a good idea to update conditions there in 2005. There has been an enormous increase in the numbers of large powerboats with large engines, due presumably to Britain becoming a more affluent society. What follows will be clearer if we reveal our own deep-seated belief in motorless sailing. We have used the same mooring area, west of Bangor pier since 1966. This dries at LWS so sailing opportunities are governed by the tide. The Straits are quite short, under twenty miles, so it does not represent much of a trip for a powerboat. The eastern end of the Straits has no speed limit, more's the pity, and so this year staying on our mooring is quite a penance, especially at weekends, when the wash of incessant powerboats produces severe rolling. Winds tend to be NE or SW, down or up the Straits, and of course the tidal streams are the same. A spring tide against a strong wind can produce amazingly high and short seas. Many years ago when we had a strong family labour force we launched from the trailer on a local slipway. However our youngest is now forty and all offspring have moved away. So we now get our local shipyard, Dickies of Bangor to launch using their sheltered dock using the straddle lift. However getting the mast up or down with only two of us needs luck to get calm weather. The launching site is on the east of the pier, opposite side to our mooring, and this explains the following.

Our first launch, 39 years ago, was an epic and so was that in 2005. The actual launch into the dock went smoothly, but in the shelter we did not realise the wind strength. So, outside the dock we met a seriously lumpy sea, tide against wind SW 6, and the outboard could not cope, bouncing in and out of the water as it did. We hoisted the wrong jib, still not gauging the wind correctly. We could in no way hoist the main and tacking was out. We fell back on gibing, but there was nothing for it but to abandon getting to our mooring. So there was only one seamanlike thing to do. We reached back into Bangor Bay and put down the anchor, complete with chum, which is a weight which slides part way down the chain and takes the snatch out of the gusts. Rowing ashore in the dinghy was very hard work, directly upwind. Next day the wind was SW 5 and we were determined to reach the mooring. The next problem was to raise the anchor. Hauling at it achieved nothing. Fortunately the Bangor mud held it well.

Hoisting and backing the jib into the strong wind soon broke it out. Once under way it was a rush to get the anchor on deck, where its attached mud soon dirtied the jib. We had an exhilarating sail round the pier and fortune favoured us with an easy pick up of the buoy.

Our next outing was a wonderful contrast. Our eldest son, wife and two teenage boys joined us for a very pleasant sail in a force three. The boys took turns on the helm and a good time was had by all. So far everything effective has been done under sail.

We are fortunate in that our moorings are well spaced; perhaps because not everyone wants a drying space. So leaving the mooring under sail is hardly ever a problem. However picking up the mooring is quite different. Ideal conditions are medium wind against a small tidal stream. We approach up tide with the jib alone and let the jib fly when almost on the buoy. Our hook and line on the end of a long pole is a device that few other yachtsmen seem to use; perhaps with a powerful motor and reverse gear there is no need. When the hook is around the mooring line, a sharp pull detaches it from the pole and the hook springs shut. The hook is attached to the boat previously by twenty feet of line. We have used this for almost forty years. I believe it is called a "Grabit". Strong wind and a large tide will involve tacking up to the mooring and of course using main and jib. This is a severe test of sailing ability and this year we were somewhat rusty in our sailing skills. Some days we got a lot of practice though, needing six attempts one day. As the season progressed we did get better at this – managing the pick-up sometimes at our second attempt.

In all this we have assumed SW and NE winds only. Unusually this year we have had some NW winds, that is across the Straits. This means that the Anglesey side is sheltered but the wind is better on the Bangor side where our moorings are. This gives us the rare Luxury of reaching up tide to the mooring and releasing sheets at the last minute. There is however one snag with these conditions. We have to tack around Bangor pier to proceed towards Beaumaris, our favourite sail. Tacking into this sheltered area demands patience and it is essential in these conditions to leave the mooring with the tidal stream running NE, i.e. no later than two hours before HW.

This long and maybe boring account shows how much challenge and fun there can be in totally motorless sailing and one does not have to go far from home to experience it. Ellen Macarthur races from Ambrose Light to the Lizard and misses out on all the fun that we have. However our motorless record was spoilt when we motored 100 metres upwind in Dickies narrow dock for our laying up day. We would have liked to warp up this, but we could not keep our laying up operatives waiting.



Anniversary Cruise

Keith Viewing

A 162 "Solone"

The idea of joining the Atalanta fleet in the 50th Anniversary this year had immense appeal. There was no need for more adventures in the shipping lanes, or to wait for a slant to Alderney. Rather, a stress-free holiday was assured at Hamble Point with a wonderful opportunity to find new friends in our classic boats.

At Christchurch where the boat is kept the afternoon light reflects upon the river, and in the distance upon those incredibly white and razor-topped chalky cliffs of the Needles that mark the Isle of Wight and the lee shore of your dreams. Even that red-striped lighthouse appears huge and gives good warning of a short but dangerous sail to enter the Solent, either by Hurst Castle on the shingle spit, or by the Needles channel.

There were no disappointments at Hamble! The AGM was in the old Fairey works where our boats were built, with a race to celebrate the launch of A1, in 1955. Solone, A 162, was one

of ten boats on the pontoon and we thought her well preserved. There were only seven owners since 1961; the first had bought a kit and Barrett of Canterbury had chosen wisely. Three of the owners had kept the boat for 10 years, two for about six years, and another for two. She was named 'Pigro' in 1965, and we still think of that choice! The excellent Mark Tullis of Windermere changed her name to 'Solone' 13 years later and so she remains, safe in her hanger between the branches of the River Avon, within range of the Priory bells and close to the saltings where New Forrest ponies sleep rough and play in the summer sun.

We had wondered about the other boats and more so concerning the crews. The accounts in the bulletins of the Atalanta Association were proof of a dedicated enthusiasm and a particular knowledge, for as was so often said by strangers, 'Somebody has actually designed that boat'. No problem there; it was if we were back in Science Museum at South Kensington, rushing from one wonderful exhibit to another, gasping at the magic as the stories of years unfolded.

To Hamble.

The shake-down sail before the meeting would take Solone and daughter Pia back to Poole and the ever hospitable Redclyffe Y. C. to shelter from the storm, well hidden in the reeds of the narrow channel to Whareham town. A tale of coffee shops with time to savour the library, feed the ducks, kedge from a mud bank, moor for the night to that old Scottish MFV, and be observed by a falcon in the cross trees of the neighbouring boat. Then to listen to the tales of the long grass as it whispered in the wind, and in general to readjust to another life. One misty and rain soaked evening the cattle were terrified by the fireworks at Whareham, but soothing words brought the herd to the hedge and soon they understood that the explosions and muted flashes were irrelevant. Peace was restored.

From Poole one afternoon it was a fast sail across the bay with a good F6 astern to close the shore at Hurst narrows and to ride the swirling flood away from the Shingles bank and clear of the tide-rip over 'the Trap'. Good name, and better still to be in steady water again sailing easily with the flood past Yarmouth; all ungainly ferries, a narrow entrance and lots of masts. No recognition there, but the full-rigged ship 'Amsterdam' swung at anchor in the roads, and so we carried on to Newtown River in the rain. We wondered whether it was here, 60 years ago, that the half-decked sloop had moored to the jetty whilst a SW gale blew for three days and nights. There was only a boat cover suspended beneath the boom, but we sheltered close to the 'Gerald', a Thames Barge waiting to load, and made the best of it. There was little change in those years; all was peace with the magic of the curlew and oystercatchers and a hundred and forty Canada geese on the pasture. Solone could anchor at the limit of the oyster beds with only one other shoal boat in the vicinity, and float to the landing on the tide!

From Newtown it was a another good sail to Hamble in a busy stretch of water, now with a plethora of buoys and plastic motor craft that shaved past at 40 knots to see you ride the wash. Strange after Newtown, where they were not, and amazing that such a place of beauty could be preserved so close to a major port and city. Bravo for the National Trust!

The AGM, 2005.

The welcome at Hamble was amazing. Friend Ian and I did as instructed, but one young lady had other things on her mind and the muted intonations of air traffic control were a mystery to strangers from foreign parts. But there they were; a friendly wave and this is the place to be. 'Come alongside, fill the vacant space, there will be 10 boats, and only two more to come. We have the entire pontoon to ourselves'.

Well, that was something! The previous visit to School Lane, Hamble, was in 1960 when a berth was sought for our 18ft Uffa Fox-Fairey Jollyboat. The old flying boat slip was in use, the sheds contained wooden boats in the making and the magic of the vacuum bag was explained as we looked in at the giant autoclave. Different now, with all sorts of service companies, a chandlery, a fractured lead keel from a super-yacht, and lots of plastic craft with an appeal to some.

The welcome was confirmed as the enthusiasts came to inspect yet another of their favourite craft. Sailors, engineers and electrical experts were all interested, and as in the Science Museum, the shiny lever of the hydraulic pump was worked with gusto and one keel or the other raised and lowered-from the cockpit. One of our guests insisted that the floor boards be raised for a close inspection of the nether regions, not very deep as we all know, but a source of concern when the winter cover is blown free and rain water breeds the worst. Another knelt, arms akimbo and declaimed upon the great and brooding monster of the Perkins 4107, 'by Royal Appointment, you know'. Somebody said that the over-size air intakes were 'pure Tin Tin' He had a point, but others again were for the rudder stock and blade and whether it really was stainless steel. Some looked at the Sailor radios, but the only response was-silence!

Then came our secretaries, Colin and Martin and then two of the elegant Sujanziz girls lookin' good; imagine! What a club, and a huge privilege to be amongst them. We ran up our signal flags, oversize (made before VHF), with each flag for the Christian name of absent friends. 'Miff', that lovely super-bright collie of Charles and Mandy Hammond, (the organisers here), wagged his tail and understood it all.

The race was all that a race should be; a good wind, even gusty at times and a short chop that stopped most of the lighter boats, but not all as Achaetes surged ahead and almost out of view. The wind cold, but then there was the excitement of a luffing match with the beautiful new Gellie, Samson post shining on the bow, and with Bluster and the lads having the time of their lives, and who cares who will sail through our lee? This was grand stuff, marker buoys were missed, but helm down, come around and sail back with a cheery wave to those who would have done well (much better) at school. Catch up, as the mass of the Perkins carried our way through the swell, and then back to the AGM with all of its charm and memorable surprises of Charles Curry and the silver shimmer of the Etchells trophy under the spots. Charles, our patron, is known to all, but that evening he told of derring does with the International 14 ft class, of the magic of the early planing dinghies, of his boat 'Thunder', then of 'Lightning,' and of Peter Scott and John Winter in 'Thunder and Lightning' when they had raced in Canada, 1938. Magic stuff.

There was Calista, who had done the Croatia thing and had kindly responded at length upon the mysteries of trailers. There was our Commodore, who in an aside, mentioned that an Atalanta could recover from a knockdown. His amazing story of the self-righting test was found (Bulletin 1977/78) and read as soon as we returned to foreign parts. Again we wondered at those quiet men and women who took their experiences and their boats in their stride. There were our friends from Atalanta Mary, and the heroine of the day, Jane Stearn who almost single-handed had preferred to repair the classic Taylor's paraffin stove on Bluster rather than to borrow a gas bomb!

To Ramsgate.

The cruise from Hamble to West Mersea seemed daunting until we realised that several of the boats had sailed great distances and on dangerous coasts. Very quiet about that; Mike on Gellie said little, and Trevor and Dinah on Calista had a rough trip around Lands End, but the boys were not bothered! Grahame Hill had sailed Joann solo on the French coast in mixed weather to reach Hamble, and now was anxious to return to West Mersea to confirm the Atalanta contingent in the regatta. The Bulletin told us that Joann had won the Round the Island (of Wight) Race in 1964, and she left early on the tide and was lost as Ian and I in Solone, perkinised down the North Channel of Spithead well clear of Portsmouth and between the forts. We headed for Selsea Bill and the inshore passage to the Owers banks with the lovely red, white and blue cruising chute pulling steadily in the sun. Mike in his 31 ft Gellie came up astern and passed us easily, all very trim and spanking new. Bluster, Calista, and Theodora were somewhere ahead, but Calista was the boat in the know, with new navigation software that displayed the tidal streams and her tan sails and attractive green hull were easy to see. Jane on Bluster had recommended Brighton for that night and at 6.3 knots over the ground we were all alongside between 1830 and 1700hrs. Mixed feelings about Brighton; they change the security numbers at midnight but the fuse in the cuisine of an 'Italian' restaurant was set for about 0230 hrs and Lord Baden-Powell was thanked yet again!

Johnathan Stearn and the boys had left Bluster to find more oil fields in the North Sea, so Carol and Tim joined for the cruise. The discussion that evening centred on the ETD for Dover and Jane was for an early start to carry the tide to the Straits. This was by far too much for the ancients on Solone, but when Bluster made ready next morning the gentle movement of the boat brought us to the vague outline of Carol on the fore deck, painter in hand, and not even 0500! Carol declined assistance and then made the most memorable statement of the entire trip; 'I just wanted to be ready'. There was an example! On Solone we jumped to it, and were away half an hour later with Calista on the beam and Theodora and Joann following fast.

Two hours later we were close to Beachy Head and had caught Calista as we motor-sailed through a misty morn and flat calm until the course was changed for Dungeness. There was every opportunity to wonder how an aggressor could hope to scale those walls of chalk, and the soft and slippery slopes at Fairlight, where the transition from tree ferns to deciduous forest was said to be preserved. Then there was Rye tucked in the bay, remembered from 60 years ago when that half-decked day boat had surfed through the narrow entrance to be greeted by an incredulous Harbour Master. When told that Newhaven was the port of departure, he looked to seaward, shook his head, and handed a receipt for harbour dues; 1s and 4 p. Turning back to our log of that trip to the Thames, the page fell open at a letter from Eric Hiscock;

'But in the circumstances I cannot honestly advise you that such a venture is in the best seamanlike tradition. If your boat was a fully decked cruiser, no matter how small, the matter might be different, for a decked yacht in open water is safe and can ride out almost anything. But just one heavy crest breaking aboard a half-decker might fill her. Though you would of course, not set out unless the weather seemed settled. The weather has a habit of changing very quickly, and between Chichester and Dover, harbours are few and far between, so that bad weather might well overtake you between them.'

At Dungeness, the great bulk of the nuclear power station rose from that remarkable accumulation of flint-shingle, and we wondered at the mass of chalk to be eroded and liberate sufficient flint to form that ever-growing spit. From the air, the annual gain to seaward was reminiscent of tree-rings. Porpoise played, the buoy was abeam by 1540 hrs, and then a breeze helped us on to Folkstone. Calista with her genie-chart was going well inshore, Bluster almost out of sight in the Channel and the admirable Theodora not far astern.

Dover was a solid sight of a massive harbour, huge fort, and slumped chalk cliffs in part green with good strong trees well established. We were headed in the final approach and had to furl the genoa and that was just as well for the tide surged around the mole and you really did need the Perkins to reach the all-tide section of the Marina. Then the fleet suddenly closed together and all were secure by 2000hrs with showers close by and suppers on board.

Gellie was first away on the following morning and scooted through the outer harbour to emerge from the north entrance to save tide and time for the long trip to Stonehaven. The tide swirled green-blue, the mist hid approaching ferries and one wondered just how many ships were out there? Again Calista took the in-shore passage and was close to the cliffs of the South Foreland with her mackerel paravane hunting astern. Then Bluster went ahead and Solone was content to follow. There was the memory of a virtual forest of masts as the sea changed to sandy brown, occasional funnels still painted, and twisted and rusted superstructures that told dreadful stories of the times. The day-boat had sailed through in silence and now we were on the same route through the Goodwins with only an occasional buoy to mark a channel or a wreck.

Ramsgate.

Solone was going well at noon, but close to the Downs channel buoy there was a terrific bang and now there were thoughts of another wreck unmarked on the chart. But soon the gentle thump on the swell told that the starboard keel had separated from the brand-new, shiny,

hydraulic ram. That spelt disaster for some and was proved as the pump retracted the ram and the stirrup and keel remained below. The weather was good and a gentle north-easterly eased us forward to the Ramsgate approach channel where we sailed close to the racing fleet and big multi-coloured boats passed by one by one; a brave sight.

Ramsgate was wonderful and the place to be for a boat in distress and August Bank Holiday no exception. One enquiry led to another; try the yard on the river near Sandwich, and the hoist at Ramsgate could move Solone to a car park and a transporter could be found in a day or two. The commercial yard was short-staffed for the holiday and others spoke seriously of 'short straws'. We knew how they felt. The Estuary would have to be crossed on the following day when the weather would change, and the route selected from our chart of 1938, with corrections to 1946, simply would not do. And the names of several banks had changed from those on our William Heather chart of 1801 studied so earnestly at home!

Theodora suggested a shingle bank, secure the keel, and take a chance, and that was good advice. The search was for short lengths of 5 mm rigging wire, thimbles, wire-clamps, some 12 mm multi-plate, and a short length of soft-wood, and in all of this success came easily in an Internet Café of all places, and with a generous smile. What a place where time and manner has stood still! But best to return the defective gear to the source, and so we clamped the stirrup with a wooden wedge, took the south-going tide to Dover and wished bon voyage to the others, good friends all.

The return.

The trip back to Dover went well with the South Foreland by 1630 and a helpful and interested response from Harbour Control. There was an hour before LW and a suitable shingle bank was exposed close to the all-tide marina. The concrete ramp for the hover-craft was really too steep, and so wide that it would be difficult to moor, so Control was right, as he was bound to be, and came alongside to make sure. Solone slid onto the shingle, anchored, secured to a post and two turns of the 5 mm ss rigging wire did the trick and soon a combination of the wash from passing craft and low water had raised the keel completely. We had wondered about the port keel, and secured that with 12 mm multi-plate to be prepared.

The long way home was started at 0530 the following morning with a forecast of WNW 5-6 that gave Solone an off-shore reach to Dungeness in three hours, but a foul tide by 1715. We were on the wind in long tacks around Beachy Head and the young flood and the gusts resulted in a short swell in the over-falls that was unpleasant. Around the Head, a rain squall had blotted out the Newhaven and Cuckmere valleys and the coast was completely obscured by cloud. With one leg down, the boat was distinctly over-powered by the wind despite a few rolls in the genoa and the main sheet tight on the track at the leeward stop. To plot the fix was difficult, but that was done and we tacked in-shore with some relief.

Newhaven was little different in 60 years, rather grey and foreboding in the drizzle, but the great bastion of the breakwater remained firm against south westerly swells. A modern hydro-foil catamaran ferry had replaced the coasters and sailing barges; the ebb ran and Solone pushed against it into the pool to moor and go in search of authority, a shower, and whatever the town had to offer aficionados. Perhaps it was the motley collection of craft, or the weird erosion of the yellow-clay banks, but most likely it was an abandoned 20 ft cabin sloop with over-size fittings attached to under-size equipment, the cockpit a shambles, the builder's plate unrecognisable, and even now, four months afterwards, best forgotten. Authority was found, the showers enjoyed, the town explored and the river and canal past Glyndebourne, close to home, savoured once again.

The rain had cleared in the night and as we ran down the mole on the ebb there was a wonderful view of the chalk downs rising above the valley, a patchwork of green and golden yellow that cheered us no end. Authority had turned out to be a charming gentleman eager to discuss the mysteries of the Seagull engine and to utter that fearsome statement; 'Never use multi-grade oil on a Seagull'. Readers are warned! By 1130 on that morning we were well clear of Newhaven and eventually it dawned that the row of zeros' on the GPS really did indicate the longitude of Greenwich and there was a stripe on the cliffs to prove it; entry fee

five ponds, perhaps? The wind was now N 3-4 with F-5 expected and three days of SW gales to follow, so we pushed on and by mid-afternoon had reached the impressive beacon on Mixon Point where at LW, the narrow channel through the Owers gravel banks ran green and porpoise kept company. Then the young flood swept us into Chichester and Solone was anchored at East Head by 1900 hrs. There was time to consider the passing parade of gaffers homeward bound on a peaceful Saturday evening, but one modern yacht was graced by two young girls, standing on the cross trees about 8 m above deck, perfectly at ease with a much better view than most.

We dried of course and the moon path on the waters was magic again. East Head and Newtown River were all that you really need and so we left for Newtown after lunch with many other boats bound for home. Spithead was sailed easily in a NW-3, but as we entered the Solent mid-afternoon, the wind had hardened and strong on the nose. The genoa was furled, and then a reef was needed, even in those narrow waters, but the mainsail on Solone is fully battened and the first reef very deep so that the boat was under-powered against the swell. We missed our starboard keel and wondered for how long the port keel would remain intact. But all was well and in Newtown we found a vacant buoy, relaxed in the cockpit and considered the driving mist and the curlew as they worked the saltings. We were pleased to have arrived safe and sound in those conditions and then into the river came a fleet of eight Drascombes of different sizes, and some we thought by far too small to be out and about, and one single-handed too.

The last leg of the trip was from Newtown to Christchurch, so we would leave on the ebb, but should enter Christchurch on the flood. The tidal stream on that day was strong and the wind fresh from the W. We preferred to sail with a full main, take full advantage of the mainsheet track and reduce the genoa, well aware that the boat was tender in the gusts. That was fine until Hurst Castle where the ebb swept Solone at frightening speed to the NE Shingles buoy. With full sail on a broad reach and the Perkins well above cruising revs, we headed for the inshore counter-current, but we had over-shot and were too far out. The course now was to lee-bow the stream and ease Solone carefully past the buoy only a few metres from the stern, and when clear, along the very fringe of the Shingles bank to the inshore (North) channel. Touch and go! That took some time and Ian and I wondered how many other craft had made the same mistake, but were lost.

The ebb was still strong at Christchurch and the procession was slow in that very narrow entrance that they call 'The Run'. Within the harbour the channel between the mud banks was shallow and even with the keels and rudder blade retracted Solone grounded, and then backed off. But about mid-way hundreds of swans stood knee deep on each bank and fed upon whatever swans feed upon in that environment. Then it was into the river, make fast and give thanks to all concerned.

The moral!

And the moral to the story? There was time to consider that as the flaps on the aircraft were retracted and you could see the rams at work between wisps of cloud. One hoped that somebody had secured the bolts, and if not, that there was a locking pin to prevent the flaps from coming adrift. Should one recommend to the flight engineer that he find a few lengths of 6 mm ss wire, for in our experience 5 mm was barely adequate?



T10 "Calista"

"Callista's" South Coast Cruise 2005

Trevor Thompson

25th July

After watching the weather for weeks – and seeing high pressure settled over the West Country for weeks (with light easterly winds predominating) it was inevitable that the flow of depressions should have returned just in time for Calista's departure on the 25th July. We had everything loaded and ready by Monday morning, and after a quick detour into Neyland marina for water and fuel, we were off. Magnus and Trevor were to take her as far as we could before Alex and Dinah joined us – wherever we got to. The forecast was for Northerly 5, and Magnus was assured that it would not be rough, we were off. He still has not forgiven me for that – I mistakenly told him afterwards that I knew it would not be much fun.

To start with it was a fine broad reach under full main and working jib, with a flat sea and the sun shining down from a cloudless sky. After clearing the end of the firing range we changed course directly towards Padstow. As the afternoon wore on the wind strengthened to that force 5 and we were sailing fast, down wind, and rolling a bit in the waves which inevitably were getting bigger the as we got further from the lee of the Welsh coast. Magnus did his share of steering, until he found her too difficult to steer. He had always been reluctant to take the helm – and this was an ideal opportunity for him to gain confidence – the autohelm was not back from being repaired yet!

In the early evening, due west of Lundy, it was increasingly difficult to prevent the main from gybing, and Magnus was not feeling too good. We should have reefed earlier – but that is easy to say now. On one gybe the mainsail tore out of the boom slot, which meant that Magnus had to steer while I reefed the main using the roller reefing gear. We started to tack down wind to stop the gybing.

We spent the rest of the evening, with Magnus navigating using the GPS and Trevor steering, and Magnus relieving me on the helm at regular intervals.

We anchored off the beach just clear of the doom bar at 0200 in the dark, in about 5 feet of water to escape the slight swell that was creeping around the headland. Magnus went to bed while Trevor kept anchor watch until 0430, when there was plenty of water for us to cross the bar. Trevor took Calista in – leaving the crew to his well earned rest, and worked her slowly up to Rock where we picked up a mooring.

27th July

We spent two nights here, one of which we spent on the beach so that we could scrub the rudder, before continuing on our way south again with Northerly winds, this time for St Ives, where we spent a night aground in the harbour. Weather forecast was not good – strong westerlies – so we retreated to Hayle. That left us on a drying visitors berth for three nights while a depression crossed. The compensations included lots of shore leave (which Magnus particularly enjoyed), and real Cornish pasties for lunch.

30th July

The forecast was not particularly good, NW 4 or 5, but Magnus was resigned to a bit of an uncomfortable ride until we gained the shelter after rounding the Longships, and this looked about the best chance for some days to come. We left Hayle, at the top of the tide, and motored clear of the bar. Off St Ives we were motor sailing, on a very fine reach, almost close hauled, and making good progress past all of the abandoned tin mines. However the sea was somewhat lumpy and we were resigned to it. Passed Cape Cornwall, which was not very distinctive, on a fast reach to the Longships, and then tacked round (to ease the strain on the mainsail) and into the shelter of the land at last. Life was much easier in calm water and we closed the engine off to enjoy the remainder of the trip around to Newlyn, where we tied up to a raft of yachts.

31st July

After a relaxing evening on board we set off for the next leg in fine spirits – after all we had done the hard bit and the rest was downhill all the way to the Hamble. Magnus, with his sea legs firmly regained was now playing a full part in steering, hoisting sails and harbour work, took Calista outside St. Michaels Mount and along the coast. We toyed with the idea of the spinnaker, but decided against it. Round the Lizard, the Manacles and into the Helford River in time for tea. We anchored near the entrance, and later motored up the river, for a look see, picked up a mooring, and blew the dinghy up. We walked around and ended up in the pub for a drink.

1st August

Find a railway station! Dinah and Alex were due to catch a train to join us, and we had left it open so that we could be in any of the ports served by the main GWR line to Penzance. So our trip today was up river to Truro. We like exploring, so this was an ideal opportunity to indulge in some ditch crawling. Past Falmouth, and up the river with the tide, and into Truro just before high water where we were met by the harbour master who helped us tie up – and advised us as to where the mud was most level. We were soon aground, coupled to mains electricity, and into the showers. Water tanks filled and three trips to the supermarket followed.

2nd August

We spent the morning cleaning and tidying the boat – and finishing off the shopping -before walking up to the station to meet the crew at the station. Quite a walk in the heat. They arrived to great rejoicing and with a mountain of gear (including the autohelm which had been sorely missed so far). We were just in time to catch the tide back down the river, and the new crew delighted in the views and treasures of the Truro river. We spent the night on a visitor's buoy at the Smugglers Inn which served Cornish Pasties and real ale. Back down to Falmouth and another night in the visitor's marina and trips to the Maritime Museum and chandlers. Maritime museum voted a big disappointment all round. The modern fashion of having few exhibits and lots of games leaves us all cold.

4th August

The next few days saw us cruising steadily east via Fowey, Salcombe and Dartmouth. In each case we went up the rivers, towards Kingsbridge and right up to Totness. Rather than the rush of the first part of the trip we were not taking it easy and letting our urge to explore be fully satisfied. Magnus's birthday is always spent in a different place each year, and in this case it was spent between Dartmouth and Totness.

8th and 9th August

After Birthday celebrations we persuaded the crew that an overnight passage to Poole would be a good idea, as a means of avoiding the race off Portland Bill. At least with four of us watch keeping would be easier – especially with the autohelm. Well it worked, and we were able to enter Poole in the early afternoon, and anchored in shallow water in Bramble Point Bay for the night. Both boys went ashore to light a cooking fire on the beach, and Dinah and I joined them in the dusk.

10th and 11th August

We motored up the harbour and anchored off the new marina on the Quay, just inside the moorings, for a trip ashore shopping. After a lazy sail in near calm conditions with a wonderful sunset past Brownsea Island and back to Bramble Bush Bay we all went ashore in the dark and had a memorable barbeque in the dark. The next morning we left for the trip into the Solent, with a force three on the quarter. Of course our timing was all wrong and we spent hours sailing at full belt in what was now a force 5, with the engine adding its thrust, slowly making over the tide all the way up to Newtown Creek. Of course all the moorings were taken and we were able to just find space to anchor close to "Solone" – the first Atalanta we had seen on the whole trip.

12th August

We left Newtown Creek after lunch and sailed the last leg to Hamble Point Marina with great excitement, and finally tied up among the Atalantas. After the weekends events we continued on our way to the east coast rally sometimes in company with Joann, Solone, Theodora, Bluster and Gellie.

15th August

We watched the others leave as the morning progressed, and Dinah ordered a taxi to take Alex to the station to spend a week on a course at Dartmouth Naval College. Trevor and Magnus motored upriver to fill the fuel tanks and returned to pick Dinah up at the pontoon. We set off in pursuit of the others, and after a windless start we were soon sailing. A lovely wind from the west progressively increased to from force 3, to a good 4 or even 5. Off Spithead we hoisted the spinnaker, and apart from lowering it for ten minutes to negotiate the dogleg from the Medbury Bank to the Street Buoy (off Selsey Bill) we kept the spinnaker flying until dusk when we approached Brighton marina. We had the longest and fastest spinnaker run that we have ever experienced on that passage. Low and behold there were Joann, Solone, Theodora, Bluster just tying up as we entered the marina.

The next day's passage to Dover was a long windless motor, which degenerated into a beat once we passed Dungeness. After a frustrating board into the bay where we could not quite point up to Folkstone, we ended up with the jib down and the engine on. A short passage on the 17th took us to Ramsgate, where we spent the rest of the day shopping and wandering around the harbour. The weather forecast threatened rain for Friday the 19th so we spent the 18th threading our way across the Thames Estuary by way of the N Edinburgh Channel and the Barrow Deep and into West Mersea, to tie up at the piles. We spent most of Friday reading on board – since no one showed any interest in venturing ashore in the dinghy in the pouring rain.

The 20th were taken up by the Regatta and social events. We sailed off entirely on our own for the first time in a week, to the marina at Burnham on Crouch ready for Trevor to catch a train to a meeting in London on the Monday.

22nd August

Magnus and Dinah spent the next few days at the marina, exploring Burnham on Crouch, while Trevor went to his meeting, and then caught the train back home to collect the car, trailer and Alex. By the time I reached home Alex had sorted out his kit from a weeks course and fitted the wheels onto the trailer. We were on the road early, and arrived at Burnham in the early afternoon.

24th August

We recovered Calista onto her trailer, and stowed the rig and the rudder ready for the journey. We enjoyed a meal in the marina restaurant, before starting for Wales the next morning. We uncoupled the trailer and left half the crew at the motorway services so that I could drive Alex to his school to collect his GCSE results at 10.00 on Thursday 25th August. We then recoupled the trailer and continued to Llawrenny to re-launch Calista, and put her on her mooring, before driving home to sort out the aftermath of our extended holiday.



Check the stirrups and don't drop the keel

Colin Twyford

A 95 "Hiran"

I usually drop the keels on Hiran every four or five years and the winter of 2005/06 was the dreaded year. Last time I had the metalwork (bolts, pressure plates and stirrups) professionally coated with a bitumen-based paint, as used on North Sea oil rigs, I was assured. The inner faces of the plates had been in contact with the keel, naturally all the paint had been removed and the surface was rusted. The bolts were covered with the bitumen paint on the exposed end, with the surface area inside the bracket tubes painted with a red oxide and well greased through the grease nipples, they were rusted where the paint had been scraped off by movement of the plates and keel, it was also noticeable that the flats on the bolts and the locking tabs were degraded by rust and needed to be restored with welding. The condition of these parts was anticipated as they had all been replaced some twenty-two years ago. When I checked the lowering stirrups, replaced about ten years ago, I was concerned to find that the 5/8" holes at the lower end, which spring onto the keel studs, were worn down to within 1/4" of the end of the stirrup. As the hole was originally centred 1" from the end of the stirrup, this meant that it was now rusted down by 7/16" and was an oval shape over an inch in length. The small amount of metal left was supporting the whole weight of the 480 lbs keel and if it had dropped even a small distance, it was likely to have broken through. At the South Coast Rally last year, Keith Viewing owner of A162 "Solone" had the misfortune to drop a keel, though I do not know whether this was the cause. Jane Stearn owner of A183 "Bluster" tells me that she has to have the stirrups repaired quite frequently. This time I shall have the metalwork galvanised once the welding repairs and renovation has been completed. *(See illustration of worn stirrup)*

Making the clamping easier

Some years ago I had nuts welded onto the ends of the clamping nuts and have a ratchet spanner hanging between the brackets. It makes the task of tightening the bolts very much easier.



A65 "Joann"

East Coast Rally, Mersea Town Regatta & Fireworks

Grahame Hill

Once again Joann took part in the racing on the Saturday. New main well and truly worn in after trips to St. Katherine's in London, Ostende in Belgium, Veere in Holland and the South Coast rally. Winds ranging from force 0 to 9. I arrived Friday night having sailed from Brighton via Wivenhoe and a couple of days of domestic chores. Much mutterings about the condemned haemorrhoids preceded the journey. (Piles to you, but I wanted to check if the computer could spoil it). On arrival we saw that the piles have been renewed! As ever the best place to moor for a view of the fireworks they tend to be crowded. I always have fun mooring up to them, this time I was so tired I did not care and moored up perfectly first time. I must remember that for future reference.

Of the fleet that started out from Southampton, one became weather-bound in Calais, one lost a keel bolt and one forgot to turn left and was homeward bound for Hull. The remaining flotilla

of Atalantas assembled. It was good to see so many boats in place before the race. Gellie, Calista, Joann, Jaunty and Bluster were on the piles and the promise of more to come.

The race boards were collected from the clubhouse, fastened to the rail using cable ties and preparations made to leave in the morning. The tender was moored across the piles to give me a chance to keep a good view. Jaunty had arrived using the tender as motive power, smack style, her new engine had stubbornly refused to start. Discussions took place as to what we would do in the morning. I volunteered to be the tug.

Saturday dawned and preparations for the racing began. Jaunty fresh from her restoration looked resplendent and I was amazed at how little of the forefoot touched the water. I feel that Joann must be a tad heavy in the bow but it probably accounts for the performance to windward. I can usually point a couple of degrees higher than Bluster. Joann became an honorary catamaran for the slalom course through the moorings. With seconds to spare the normal monohulls resumed and we started. Gellie, due to issues with crew arrival and her round Britain whiz was confined to quarters.

Incredibly close racing up to the first mark required ultra thin fag paper fenders. Bluster, Jaunty, Joann and Calista powered towards the mark. A change of course to port to was needed to fetch the second mark. This was a run with a good swell. Joann in the middle and the stress factor rose. No spinnakers thank goodness! Is it outside the rules to fend off the opposition boom end? Would it be frowned on if I took out the opposition rig with an accidental gybe? How do you slow down to duck out of the sandwich? The first are racing decisions the last was being driven by fear. I am a bit of a wuss in close combat. As we approached the mark, the usual uncertainty over the course reared its ugly head. I did a quick shimmy to ensure I covered all the options. The flotilla split into two. Joann and Bluster, Jaunty and Calista. Each flotilla – ette set off on separate courses after the mark. Places changed, gaps increased and decreased. Bluster started pinching hard to windward as we returned towards the finish line near the end of the first lap. I watched with interest, if no understanding, only later did discussion bring the answer. The rules state that no boat is to cross the start and finish line during the race. Bluster was going for the outer limit mark. I just followed everybody else. I am sailing and at this stage I was not being paid to think. We continued and on a run Bluster was catching up. On the trip back from the Hamble I found out that Jane is not averse to raising the keels a little in the name of speed. Temptation was to try it, Joann is fitted with hydraulic rams to lift the keels and I fitted a pump from a Mercedes van tail lift last winter, so a quick press of the button would have done, but the bottle went. I started to want the windward leg. Gellie was enjoying a cruise by this time and made a delightful sight with her cream sails. Pushing Joann to windward I overdid it, one of my audible heel indicators hurled itself across the galley. Another mug joins the collection designed for compact storage. I cannot be bothered to stick it together every time I want a cup of tea. Storage in bag 13 it is! At the finish Joann crossed the line first soon followed by Bluster. Jaunty led Calista in the extended alternative course. . Enough said that I now have the wooden boat trophy for the day's activities despite everyone being convinced that we were all disqualified for different reasons.

Joann met up with Pertwee, a ferro-concrete smack with a shed, copied from a Wivenhoe smack from the turn of the century, and Five Isles, a much smaller craft but also equipped with a shed. They were moored in the quarters and after offering and receiving of libations Joann returned with Jaunty as a catamaran. Panic was caused when we successfully navigated between two boats whose owners worked out our combined beam to be about one foot less than the gap between them. The weather was kind and the wind fair. The Thorley's excelled in their organisation of the supper at the village hall. I could not manage without them. Somehow enough transport was arranged and we sat down to a magnificent meal with dessert and convivial company. After presentations we went to our boats. The fireworks were, as usual, excellent but if anything the numbers were down due to the unusual timing. This is one evening that I really enjoy.

It transpires that Kookaburra was confined to barracks with engine failure and it was good to see Arosa make it to West Mersea for the Sunday morning before we had all been forced to depart.

Having split the leech on my genoa in the South coast rally and sewn it up with more strength than style. Next year sees Joann with a new genoa. I suppose 33 years is not a bad life span! The main had lasted 42 years so I felt it should have had a little more life in it. I started the process of getting quotes for a new genny. One problem with having the history of the Atalanta booklet is that I could not resist the appearance of the early mitre cut. My sailmaker said it was possible to make a roller reefing mitre cut sail with tan stitching. As they say in Star Trek "make it so!"

I look forward to seeing you next year, Why not come over to the East coast if you have not been for some time. My wife is threatening to lynch me if I bring the wooden boat home again!

**ALPHABETICAL LIST
OF BOAT NAMES**

A20	ACANTHA
A60	ACHATES
A132	AEGLIN
A113	AKU
A32	ALCHEMY
A7	ALOUETTE DE MER
A161	AMBER ELLEN
A136	AMSARA
A3	ANDANA
A126	APPLE
A36	AQUILA
A184	AQUILO II
A8	ARABESQUE
F62	ARIEL
A18	ARIES
A104	AROSA
A15	ARTEMISII
A1	ATALANTA
A102	ATALANTA MARY
A137	BABY SEAL
A51	BACARDI
A67	BAJAN
A31/3	BALLOO
F52	BANSHEE
A98	BEKI
A109	BELTINE
A135	BLOOM
F54	BLUE BELL
A77	BLUE GOOSE
A71	BLUE JACKAROO
A183	BLUSTER
A149	BRITT
T10	CALISTA
A120	CAMEO
A31/6	CAPERDONICH
A180	CASCADE
A130	CASTANET
A70	CATALINA
A147	CHAMOIS
A21	CHUFF
A181	CIRDAN
A114	CLAUDIA
A143	CLYMENE
A62	COCO
A89	COLCHIDE
A174	CORDYL
A123	COROMANDA
A34	CRICKET
A68	CURLEW
A144	CYN
A40	DALRIADA
A154	DEANNIE

A139	DELIA ANN
A84	DESIREE
A31/9	DESTINY
A26	DETOUR
A16	DEVORQUILLA
A5	DIAPHONY
F23	DODO
A31	DOLFIJN
F26	DRIFTWOOD
F3	DUNSHEEN
A54	EALA
A52	ECCO 1
A128	ECHO
A61	ELISSA
A31/5	ELPENOR II
A179	EMMA DUCK
A178	ENDEAVOUR
A39	EPENETUS
A74	EQUANIL
A9	EREINA
A50	ESCAPE
F64	FAERIE QUEEN
A83	FLYING FOX
A31/2	FREEDOM II
T8	FRINGILLA
A79	FRISK
F31	FRODO
F37	GABIOTTA
A41	GALE
A17	GAMBOL
A31/4	GELLIE
A127	GRACE
A23	GYPSY
A94	HAZEL G
A124	HELENE
A95	HIRAN
A166	HULLABALLO
T2	HYSKIER III
A186	ILVERSDEN
A76	INSHALLAH
A175	INYONIYA MANZI
A82	JACARANDA
A158	JANE DUCK
A100	JAUNTY
A122	JELLCLE
A65	JOANN
A97	JOANNE
A148	JOHARA
A59	JULIETTA
A145	JULLIANA IIII
A140	KATE
A85	KICKY-WICKY
T6	KITTIWAKE
A168	KOOKABURRA
A121	KOTORA
T4	KYTRA

A12	LALOESSA
A69	LAQ LAQ
A146	LE BATEAU IVRE
A48	LIDIA
A159	LINDORA
A14	LOUTRE
F13	LUCKY
A73	LYDE
A78	MARIANDA
A22	MARY JANE OF MORETON
A169	MATEVA
A167	MATHILDA
A24	MELANIEN
F49	MERLIN ANN
A29	METEOR
A87	METHUSELAH
T3	MIDSUMMER
A155	MIRANDA
T7	MISSEY MOUSE
A151	MISTURA
A31/7	MOBY DICK
A90	MOURNE GOBLIN
A160	MOYRA
F14	NOGGIN
T1	NURU ALBAHAR
T11	NYERI
A57	ODYSSEY
A33	PAM
A64	PARADOX
A101	PATIENCE IV
A173	PEACE
A31/12	PEANUT
A37	PEGASUS
A176	PERSEPHONE
A31/11	PETESARK
A185	PETREL
F9	PETRONELLA
F53	PILGRIM
A125	POLARIS II
A43	PONENTE
A103	PUFFIN
A42	PUMULA
A116	QUADRILLE
A157	QUATORZE
A177	QUINTEFFENCE
A141	RAKIA
A66	ROAMARA
A13	ROLLIN' HOME
A72	RONDOR
A27	SABOT
A115	SABRINA OF CROYDE
A150	SALIZANDA II
A31/1	SANCERRE
A86	SASSI
A133	SCALLYWAG
A164	SCARWEATHER
A35	SCHERZO
A92	SEA MAJOR

A129	SEA ROUGE II
F?	SELENE
A153	SERENITY
A75	SHANG
F47	SHERPA
A182	SKIMMER
A165	SLOEBERRY
A4	SNUFFBOX
A162	SOLONE
A108	SOLVENDO
T5	SOLWAY TIDE
A163	SOUNION
F2	STEEL DEAL
F27	STORMBIRD
A131	STREGA
A55	SUE
A118	SUNSTREAM
A138	SWEET SUE
A105	TAKA MARU
A80	TALANTA
A45	TAMMY NORRY
F1	TANGAROA TU
A142	TAOR MINA
T9	TARQUILLA OF AUNE
A2	TELLULA
A88	TENGA
A49	TERRAPINA
A38	THE BEAVER
A46	THEODORA
A170	TILACIOUS
T12	TILY-HO
A99	TOKO
A11	TOMBOY OF TERHOU
A171	TOUCH
A30	TRIO
A31/8	TRIO OF PLAYFORD
A110	TURNSTONE
A117	TURTLE
A44	VAGA
A19	VALARE
F19	VALIS
F48	VANITY III
A25	VIRGO
A47	WALRUS
A119	WALRUS
F?	WILD GOOSE
A81	WINDJAMMER
A58	WINTERSET
A107	XAPU
A156	XIRT
A56	YAMBO II
A91	YARINA
A31/10	ZAMBRA

