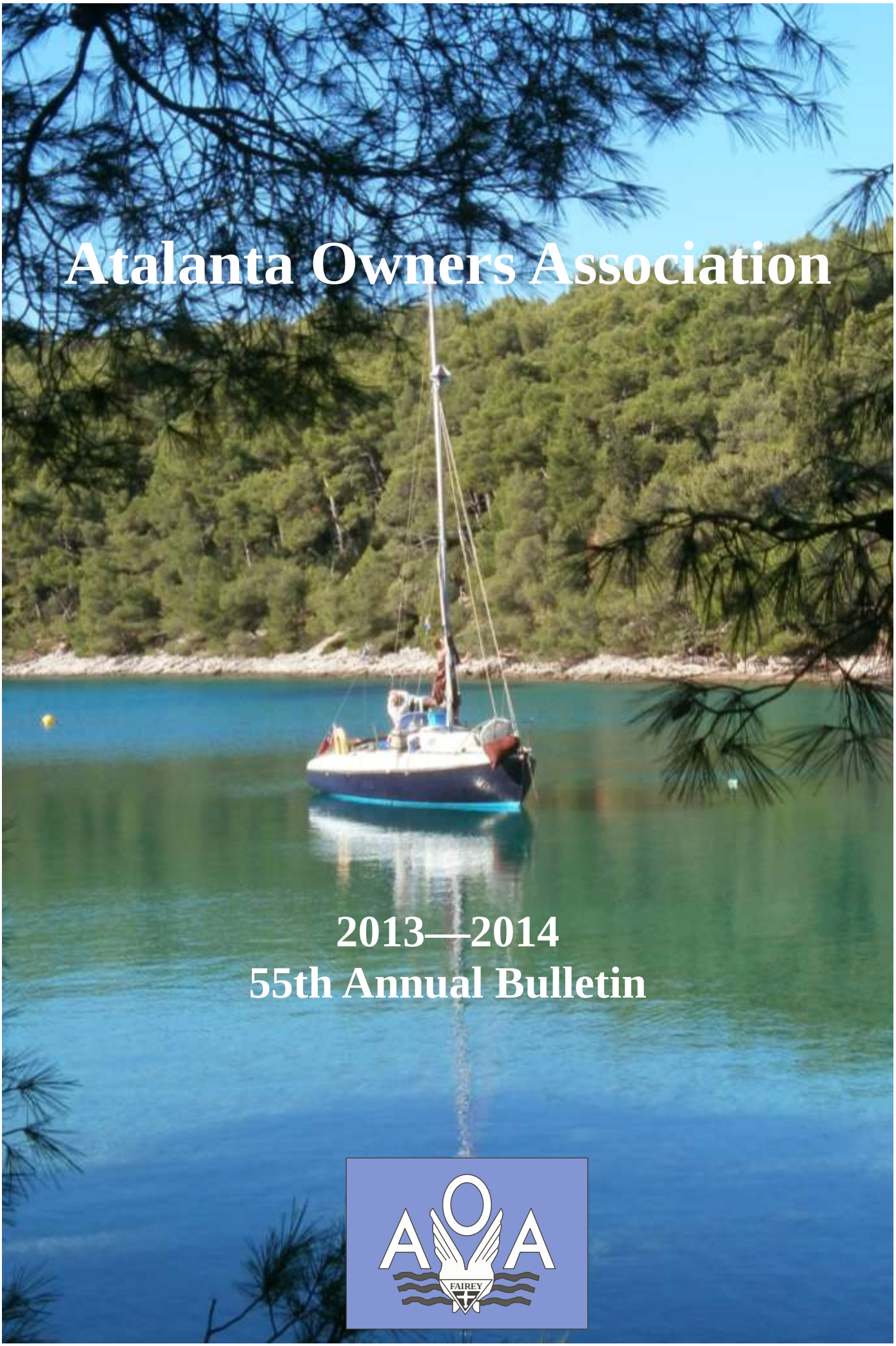


Atalanta Owners Association

2013—2014
55th Annual Bulletin

Atalanta Owners Association
2013 – 2014 Bulletin

55th Edition

Contents

Front cover photograph: "Walrus in Croatia" (see page 32) © Mandy and Chas Hammond

Message from the Commodore

Janet and I hope that you have all enjoyed some good sailing during 2013 and by now will have had some winter seasonable celebrations. Most of you will have laid up waiting for the spring to encourage preparations to launch.

For the first time in 30 years I have not been afloat and spent my time envying my club mates. Happily "Hiran" is in a reasonable condition to need just a spring clean and a lick of varnish *(fingers crossed)* before she takes to the water in 2014.

I am looking forward to meeting many of you at "Doggetts" in January and reading of your exploits in the Bulletin and maybe hearing them when we get together.

Colin Twyford A95

Message from the Editor

We have another grand Bulletin to send out again. It is entirely thanks to the efforts of our members, who have sailed near and far this year, and perhaps equally importantly have written about it. They have also illustrated their activities with plenty of colour photos!

We can honestly claim that the original trailer sailer is still venturing to the Mediterranean, both on her own keels and on her trailer. There are also descriptions of action much nearer to home as well.

Of course there are many articles in this years Bulletin dedicated to repairing and improving our boats, and that is only to be expected when they are up to 58 years old.

Once again I hope you enjoy the Bulletin.

Trevor Thompson

What an Amazing Thing to be Doing…

By Alistair Roger A10

Fairey Mary A102

For the last couple of years I had been looking into ways of doing a bit more sailing. I had tried a bit of race sailing and spent most of it being seasick. I really enjoyed sailing in a small wooden boat. Engaged with its surroundings as epitomized by “Hunters Yard”, Norfolk. I also read many sailing books from "Hornblower" to "Tilman" I am thoroughly bought into romantic ideals of adventure sailing.

By the end of 2012 I had qualified to the coastal skipper level of the RYA curriculum. I had gone on a few cruises, usually a week long and enjoyed these. Thanks to a friend I had also spent a week cruising in Greece. What I really wanted to do was have an adventure and experience the nuances of a protracted single handed voyage. I was also facing an opportunity in my career as a result of an untenable commute and a favourable stock price. But as yet I had no real plans, although I was looking at boats for sale.

The advertisement for "Mary" struck me as she looked so peculiar, in a garden with the keels up. More like something out of Thunderbirds. But she had all the things I wanted. I even thought there was the chance my wife would join me, but that was definitely wishful thinking. The boat had been well looked after and was in remarkably good and original condition. Loaded with bronze fittings and with wooden spars she could definitely be described as a classic. Described as an engineer’s boat I hoped she represented the experience of her designer.

With a friends help she went into the water at Portland Harbour with the aim of sailing her around to the east coast over a number of weekends. I was glad of the shakedown and the chance to see if she needed anything doing. However as it started getting too cold we only got as far as Chichester. But already I had had a couple of cracking sails and had gained some confidence in her.

I settled into winter and started reading some of Uffa Fox's books. I also joined the Cruising Association (CA) and attended some of their lectures. I still had no real plans..

Lock on the River Somme

La Ferte Sous Jouarre

I guess the plan came to life as a result of a lecture by the inland waterways section of the CA. It was given by a couple who had taken a catamaran through the French canals in a similar voyage. This was a great idea as it gave me extensive boat handling exposure before I got to the open sea. It also allowed me to visit Corsica, which I had visited with my wife some years earlier. I also spoke to another CA member who had sailed around Sardinia and proven it to be affordable. The only problem was that my wife wasn't interested in joining me and it meant leaving her looking after the three greyhounds. But an opportunity like this is a once in a lifetime event and I am glad she was happy to do this. So I handed my notice in and set about preparations.

The boat was very well fitted out but I added a new main sail, two life jackets, a new hand held VHF, a solar panel, an inflatable

Sailing in the Mediterranean at last

Fairey Mary A102

dinghy, charts and a fold up bike. It took me considerable time to come to terms with the radio requirements. Eventually I stuck a sticker on the back of the portable VHF with the boat name on it, it was now "fixed". One rule I imposed on myself was not to change anything and not to enter into any "redesigns". Adding a mast top VHF aerial was out. I did however re-cover the beds with a 50's material, Perpetua, to enhance the modernist ambience. The limitation was based on the presumption that the design is based on Uffa's experience not mine if I didn't like something it was because I didn't know how to use it. Call it a healthy respect for my own ignorance.

The cost of the canals is surprisingly cheap considering the number of people who are employed to keep them running. It cost me about £120 for an all waterways licence for the year. This is not required for the Somme, which in my opinion is the most tourist friendly. Most French towns appreciate the tourism and provide moorings very cheaply if there is any cost at all. Some have aligned the moorings with camp sites providing showers and toilets. All in all, I would have considered 15Euro to be expensive and more likely to reflect the location than the facilities. I would expect a good shower and power hookup for that. Paris was 23Euro a night with showers but that wasn't the high season. Most of the time however you can find free moorings all of which are shown in the fluviacarte. There were some places with water and electricity all for free but these are now few and far between. There are very few pump out stations for sewage but this is changing. At the

Girolata

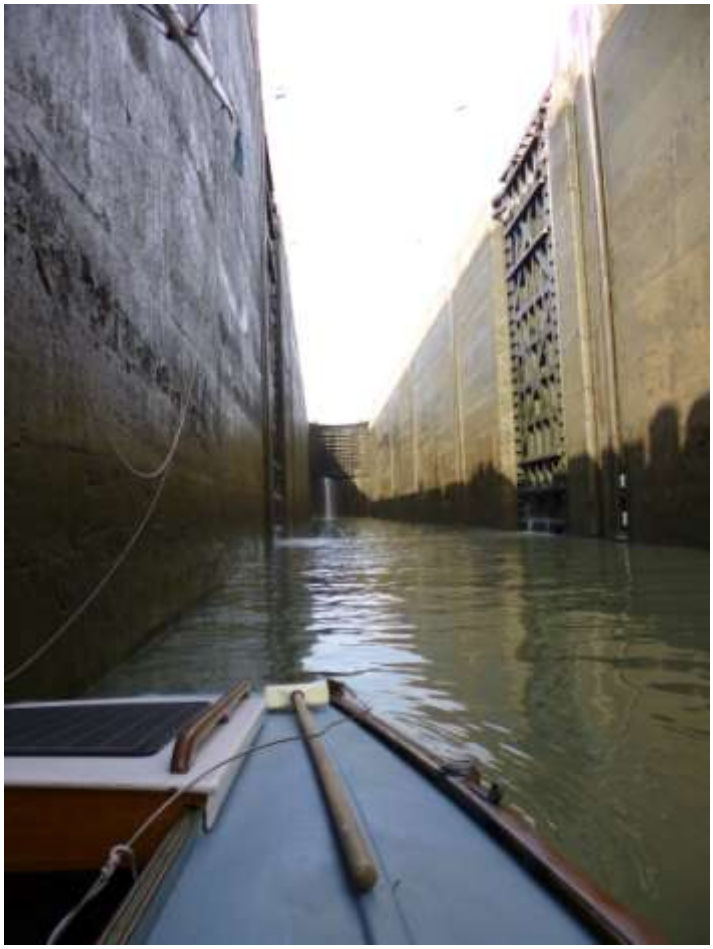
A peaceful night on the River Saone

Saone. Follow this down to Lyon and the junction with the Rhone. Then follow the Rhone to Port St Louis and the Mediterranean.
The Somme and the lateral Marne provide lock keepers who travel along with you preparing the lock ahead. Otherwise there is a mix of remote controls like garage door devices, polls that hang down over the river that you need to twist and manned stations you need to contact via VHF or hope they see you. Some bridges are radar controlled and in one instance it couldn't see Mary so I had to call the VNF to let me through. I am told

moment "pumping into the cut" is difficult to avoid. Sometimes smaller marinas are not staffed on Mondays and therefore cannot collect dues. As I was told in Meaux, "it is Monday, we don't have anybody to come and collect dues so we can't charge you." I had gone to the tourist office to pay and they still didn't charge.

There is a lot of differences between the canals. The Nord for example is very busy with commercial traffic. It has very few free moorings. It is still tree lined but often straight and broad. The Somme and the lateral Marne are smaller and the towns are small and friendly too. The larger rivers towards the south are different again. The Saone and Rhone are big but sweeping and permeated by beautiful towns and cities.

My route was from St Valerie-sur-Somme to Peronne and the Canal du Nord. South through Compiegne and the Oise (pronounced warz) and on to Cergy and the junction with the Seine. Then turn left up the Seine through Paris and left again into the Marne. Follow this to the Champagne district then over the hill at Langres. Pass Auxonne and onto the



A River Rhone lock

a large fry pan can work. VNF or Voies Navigatables de France, is the body responsible for maintaining the waterways.

I took time over the trip of making a point of learning boat handling. I remember making a hash of the mooring in Paris and regardless of the pouring rain I took my time to work out which directions Mary would turn and which ones she wouldn't. I had been introduced to prop steer and found out how to use this to position her for a mooring. Twin rudders are not at their best in reverse. I also used an opportunity in Meaux to moor in a strong cross current. I still have a lot to learn but it is nice to look back and see progress.

I left the boat in Valence for a month for some repairs and three weeks back in the UK. Valence was peculiar in there was a community of skilled people repairing boats. For the week I stayed there I had good company and help in my repairs. Leaving the boat there cost half of what it would leaving it at Port St-Louis. It is also a good location with lots of facilities. It is a quick 3 day run to the Mediterranean from there.

The heat became more bearable once on the Mediterranean, the hottest place was at Avignon. That required a lot of frosted beer to regain a safe core temperature. The Golfe de Fos is comparable to the Solent as regard to commercial traffic. The only difference was the number of anchored ships. It took some time before you could see the anchor chain and I found it difficult to see if they were moving. Bit like those angels out of Doctor Who. When they are moving they are moving quickly and at a distance this can be hard to perceive, look away and at next glance they are almost upon you.

I have a winter mooring booked in Bosa, Sardinia. This worked out at 343Euro for lift out, clean, cradle hire and put back in again and 105Euro a month until she is put back in. On top if this I get a 10% discount as a CA member. But before then, what I really wanted to achieve was to explore the Maddalena Archipelago and to sail into Bonifacio. I still had to get to Corsica and sail down the west coast.

The first night on the Mediterranean was in the Calanque de Morgiret on the Frioul islands just outside Marseilles. What a change from the canals, clear water and white rocks.

Moored stern to in Marseilles

Whist in Marseilles there was a regatta. I was hiding from a Mistral yet they were still going out. A mixture of heat and strong winds meant they returned like fruit pastilles they were so caked in salt (I was later to experience this). Marseilles Marina is surrounded by castles and, unlike the canals, the Marina was a centre piece for the town with many restaurants overlooking the marina. I guess it is less

Sunset in Madallena

"tidal" than the Rhone, which periodically floods.
From Marseilles and the Frioul islands my route took me past Les Calanques and onto the Iles Hyeres. I was really beginning to enjoy myself now. The anchorages were great, the sailing good, not too hot and beautiful islands. My last stop close to the mainland was Port Cros. This is a national park and I think I could have spent a couple of days walking around inland.

I was nervous of the crossing to Corsica. It is 100 miles and would therefore include a night passage. I never doubted that I would arrive just whether I would enjoy it. I didn't know if I was going to get sick or not. The weather forecasts suggested little wind but a good clear run. I wanted to sail and in the light winds I got the spinnaker up. I was afraid of the spinnaker as the one I was used to took three people to handle it and would cause a broach if you blinked. But no such problem. She was lovely. I saw my first dolphin and in the middle of the night Mary and I ran over a bloom of jellyfish. They were luminescent and displayed as they were compressed by the bow wave. I stuck my head out the forward hatch to watch this. One managed to get stuck in the keel box and lit up the cockpit. The trip was now truly awesome.
My arrival in Corsica, Calvi to be precise, was a day before another storm. I went to the marina thinking I deserved a cold beer and a shower. They said they were full, so I headed out to a nearby bay. I heard later that their language was a little shorter when the storm came in and other boats were seeking shelter. Three boats moored outside the marina, on buoys or at anchor, ended up on the beach. Early in the morning after my arrival the swell started pushing in and I had to move out. This made it interesting to lift the anchor, but gave me enormous confidence in the anchor in good holding.

Sailing down the western coast of Corsica was lovely, predominantly a north west

wind. I can only remember one morning with an uncomfortable swell and little wind. I stuck the motor on until I had cleared the headland and changed direction to follow the swell. There are many places to anchor and good shelter. The landscape of Corsica is amazing, not only a beautiful coast but a mountainous interior.

Girolata (pictured) is notable for its simplicity as well as it opulence. 90% restaurants it is empty in winter and services a stream of sightseeing boats all summer.

Just south of Ajaccio I had an accident when climbing down one of my twin rudders. I was going in for a swim and to check the anchor. I should have been using a ladder but I had got into this bad habit. I managed to nip off the tip of my ring finger. Climbing into the water I put my weight onto the rudder and it applied enough pressure to nip it clean off. I was lucky and a nearby boat organised an ambulance and gave me first aid. I spent two nights in hospital feeling very stupid but glad to have organised my European health care card. There was another strong wind predicted and I sat in the hospital watching the weather forecast. I was adamant this incident was not going to stop me from completing my adventure.

As luck would have it I was going to meet up with a friend, Alan, who was going to spend a week on Sardinia with his wife. I made quick progress to get to where they were. This gave me the necessary break to get me past any initial concern of an infection. I was also glad of the company. The place they had chosen, Isola Rossa, had a lot to offer. Not least of which was a great fish shop. We soon organised a BBQ and sampled the local langoustines, octopus and fish. We also managed a couple of day trips. This was the end of August and there is an enormous jump in marina costs between August and September. Isola Rossa was on the expensive side with 9x3 prices being 27Euro for August and 19Euro for September.

One thing worth looking into is that marina's quote prices based on length by width. Isola Rossa had price brackets for 8x3 and 9x3 metres. Now this is ambiguous as Mary is 8.02x2.29. Now if the price is by volume then I would be in the lower bracket. If it is by containment then I am in the higher, but

A peaceful nights anchorage

BBQ'd local langoustines in Isola Rossa

they may as well just use length. If nothing else this ambiguity is a good start for negotiation. Having not spotted this early enough I lost this argument.

Alan was great at getting some very good photos and hopefully he and Jen had a really good holiday. All of the pictures on the next page except the last one are Alans (alankellyphotography.co.uk). I left the same day as they did and headed back up towards Capo Testa. Capo Testa is an outcrop of rocks that has been shaped by the dramatic winds that blow through the Bonifacio Straits. As Corsica is high the wind tends to go around and through the straits giving some very strong winds there.

I travelled to Maddalena staying at Baia di Santa Reparata and Porto Pozzo on the way. Maddalena was a great marina. It only charged 13Euro a night (you had to pay 1Euro for the toilet and 2Euro for the shower). By now strong winds were looking to occur at the rate of one a week. I sat out one here for 4 nights. It was a very nice place to spend some time. The town centre was near by and very pretty. Attached to the church is a museum that contains a cross and two candle sticks Nelson gave to the town in thanks for their hospitality.

I did have a couple of hours fun watching the lads from the marina help moor some charter boats. In Sardinia the marinas help you moor by pushing your boat against the wind using a rubber dinghy. They are quite good at it and are really only just holding your boat steady as you back in and gain your lines. It is almost exclusively stern to with a bow line. In this case the wind was significant as was the size of the boats. The dexterity of these blokes was acrobatic, I could only hope that none of the crew got hurt as they held their boats off others by pushing pulpits etc.

Next to Maddalena is the island of Caprera, which is now a nature reserve. It is accessi-

ble by a small bridge so I took the bike and cycled around the island. The wind was that strong by the time I headed back that I had real trouble cycling over the bridge. Caprera is also the last resting place of Giuseppe Garibaldi, a key player in the unification of Italy. It has some of the most spectacular beaches and in the distance I could see some luxury yachts in what looked like a race. It could have been a bit of friendly competition after the Perini -Navi Cup. There were very few boats moving in or out of Maddalena though.

There was supposed to be a couple of days break in the weather then a big wind was forecast. I decided to head back to Corsica and sit it out in an anchorage on the lee side of the island. I went to Isola Budelli where there are some laid buoys near Deadman's Reef. With an extra crew member, scouting for rocks, these islands would make for some great "gunk-holing". After a night at Budelli I went to Ile Cavallo and Cala di Zeri for lunch before heading to Port de Rondinara where I waited out the storm. The forecast said this blow would run at 115km/hr around Bonifacio.

Rondinara is good sand holding, a beautiful beach and a bar. It was recommended by somebody in Maddalena and a fine place to weather a storm. There was also a Wharram designed 21ft "Tiki" catamaran with two German lads on it. It seemed quite small and they basically camped on the platform between the hulls. But they did have a gas powered fridge lashed to the mast, so I was impressed. We kept each other company for the next few days whilst the storm blew over. I was keen to crack on as I was running out of time. The swell in the Bonifacio Straits would still be running strongly and why face that if I didn't have to? I opted to go north to Porto Vecchio instead. By now I was really into trying to make the most of the sailing experience but being on the lee of the island made for some interesting and fickle wind. Becalmed one moment and overpowered the next. Rounding the corner into the Porto Vecchio bay the wind blew strong and on the nose. I downed sail and motored in getting caked in salt as I went. Being back in France there was no help mooring and a strong wind blew into the marina. So for all my experience I wasn't proud of my mooring but at least I didn't hit anything. The showers weren't working so I finally went off and bought a garden hose and set up a shower in the cockpit.

From here I headed south and beat against a head wind down to Porto Novo. That bay is as beautiful as it was wild. Mary beat along with reassuring purpose though never as good on a port tack as on starboard. This was because the main was reefed and left a lot of belly. I have heard of people stuffing cushions into the reef to avoid this. This was a beautifully selfish sail. I was enjoying myself and I didn't need to care about any crew. Banging into waves and getting covered in spray on a warm day.

The next day was Bonifacio. I had visited here before and knew it to be special so was looking forward to this. There was little wind but I was happy to use the motor as my passage gave me little margin for error. Between Ile Cavallo and mainland Corsica there are a lot of isolated rocks. I did mark

Galley full of local produce

way points and I had to stick quite rigidly to them. The south east coast of Corsica is shallow and rocky. I guess this area is quite dangerous as the usual westerlies whip around the island creating fluky winds. I could see patches of smooth water where the current was coming up against rocks and going up.

To quote the pilot guide. "Bonifacio has been identified with the harbour of the Laestrygonians in the Odyssey and it matches the description well". The entrance is not very wide but lined with white cliffs. The town is perched on the top of the peninsula and with fortifications it is quite daunting. The magnificence of its height can be felt when walking up to the old town.

Although my passage from Bonifacio to Bosa was mixed with the sadness of an ending adventure I was still amazed by the ancient landscape of Sardinia. Once past Asinara there are fewer signs of human inhabitation. The rock formations north of Alghero, near "Capo Caccia", are well worth visiting. There are massive caves behind the cliff faces. One is called Neptune's Grotto and is a major tourist attraction. From the sea you can see the path you need to walk down to visit the cave. It is not for the faint hearted.

Behind these cliffs and around "Capo Caccia" is the large bay of Porto Conte. This is a big bay made all the better by meeting the couple from the CA who spoke of sailing Sardinia on a budget. I had seen them the night before at the bottom of Asinara and left shortly after them that morning. They sail a fast catamaran and I set myself up to try to follow them. I had no chance and took the dent to my ego. They had sailed the whole way and arrived at 4ish. I had to motor as I was becalmed and was there for 6pm. The next morning we packed their bikes into the back cabin and all sailed for Alghero. We had a great sail there and then cycled back.

Alghero has a massive Spanish influence and is loaded with places to eat and small streets to wander around. I sailed directly from Alghero to Bosa but as it was my last day I tried to avoid the motor. With 20 miles to cover if I managed 2kts it would be a long day but a calm sunny one. I did a bit better than that and arrived in good time.

With mixed feelings of accomplishment and the end of an adventure I pulled the mast down, changed the oil in the engine and cleaned thoroughly. Bosa is a proper little town with a town square and street restaurants without hordes of tourists. It even has its own castle which I still haven't seen. I am not sure what is going to happen next year but at the very least it is a lovely place to visit to repair the cabin roof and replace some of the paint. I ordered a tarpaulin which I have had delivered directly there. At least I shouldn't need to worry about frost damage, though the sun has ruined the varnish on the cabin roof.

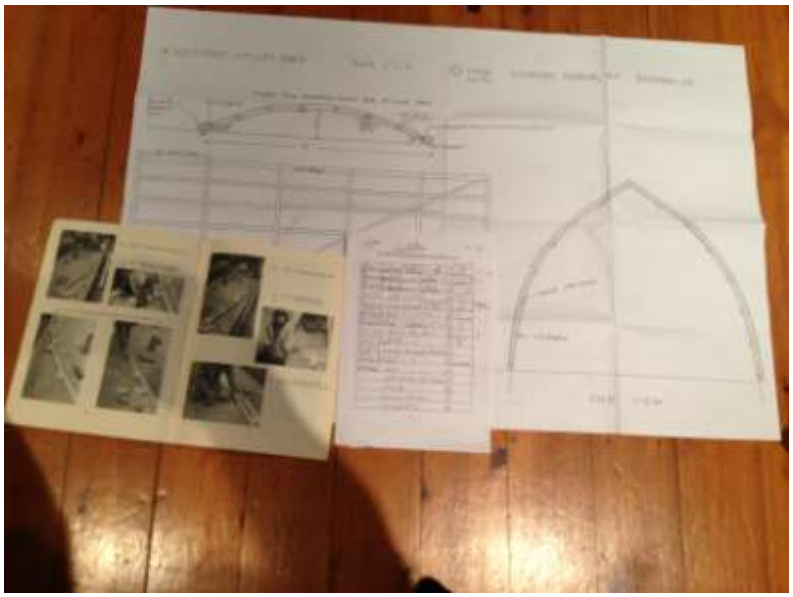
Final days sailing with friends

A New Winter Home For A17 Gambol

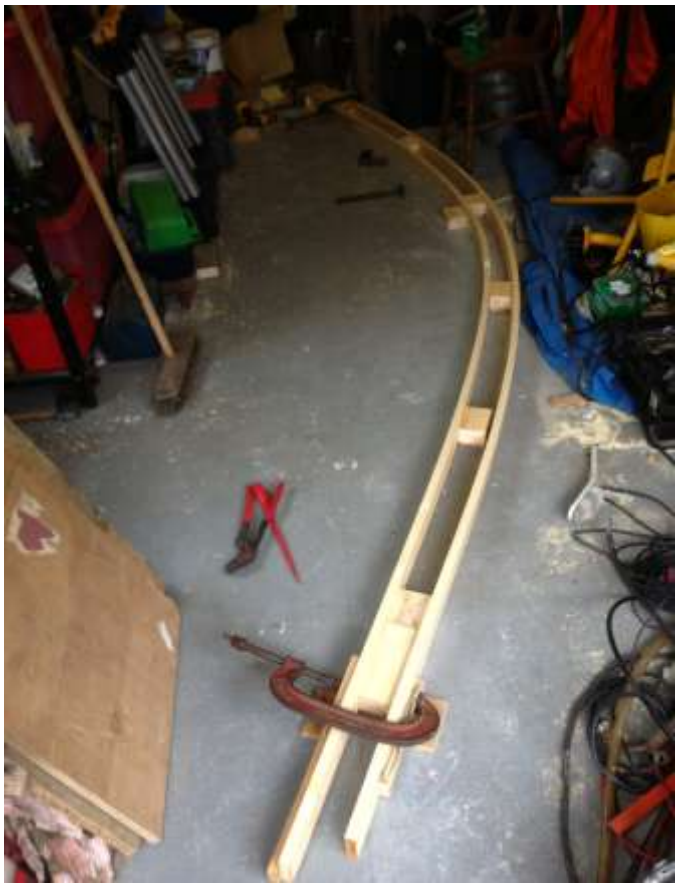
By Simon Garratt A17

In December 2012 after struggling for several winters to get Gambol ready for the season much before the end of May, due to poor weather, bare timber and also frankly being jealous of those with boat sheds and the like I decided to take action. An internet search (http://www.by-the-sea.com/stimsonmarine/bowroof.html) and $20 resulted with me being in possession of a set of plans and instruction booklet (with pictures) for a Stimson bow-roof shed. (You can also use it to grow plants in, always assuming you have any spare time – a neighbouring policeman has jokingly said he's got his eye on me). It also has a nautical feel to it.

The instructions are very good and the frame is straight forward and satisfying to build. Perhaps the most difficult and time consuming part of the build was to clear enough floor space in my single garage to set out and fasten down the blocks which the bows are bent around!



Plan, cutting list template & instructions



Bows laid out prior to fastening.

I went for nine sets of bows making twenty of these in total as I have adapted the plans and added lift off doors to the front. These have worked out really well in terms of ventilation on the rare days the sun is out in the spring and also getting the boat out - though they are a struggle to get on and off (but made slightly easier by trimming the bottom hinge pin down so the top hinge is engaged while lowering the door onto the bottom hinge pin).

The main cost of the build is obviously in the timber (I spent around £300) and clearly if you have access to cheap or free timber this will bring the cost down. Due to space being tight by the side of my house I could only build one 13' wide which is not quite wide enough to get round easily and the mast has to come off the boat to get it in and out (I hang it down the side of the shed). The timbers for the bow were 4.2m x 75mm x

22mm (13’ 9” x 3” x 1”) and I paid the extra for treated timber (though I had to wait as the dipping machine froze up). The really important thing is to ensure that the wood is knot free and straight grained. It’s a waste of time and money if the timber is not clear of defects - by the last frame I could look at a piece and tell where it would fail and at £2.64 a pop each breakage hurts. If you can get longer lengths than needed you can trim one end to move any knots etc away from the pressure points. The longer broken bits can, however, be used to brace the structure. One important modification I made as I did not have the space to raise the shed in one go (using carpet as a hinge – see instructions!) was to screw chocks to the ends of the bows to support the ridge beam. I used Spax floor board screws to hold the bows together (Screwfix code 88716 £14.95 for 300). These are good because they have a reverse thread at the top which stops them from working loose as the structure moves in a breeze. You could also glue them together for added strength. I chose not to so that I could adapt them later if required.

Ridge beam support chock

Marking the correct angle for the ridge

Once the first bow is finished it needs to be marked and cut to the correct angle. Subsequent bows can be marked with a bevel gauge and “just” repeated a further nineteen times - though in the end I left one frame out to allow easy access to the boat under the cover.

The doors were mounted on heavy duty lift off hinges purchased from a well known auction web site. I also changed the design of the unfinished door so that I could put a door within the door to allow easy access – though it’s one of those jobs I have never got round to doing. I bought the tarpaulin for the ends from the same auction site. For the main tarpaulin I purchased two from Bradshaws direct, a smaller one to cover the aft cabin (7.0m x 4.0m) and a larger one (7.0m x 7.0m) to cover the cockpit and forward at a total cost of £128.49. The rationale being that I wanted to be able to pull back the cover over the cockpit to allow fresh air in and large items to be removed easily – this has worked well. I chose a Monotex 250gsm in clear as this allows working underneath in daylight conditions

Just the bracing to finish

though it does have greenhouse properties and the varnish etc is being exposed continually to UV degradation. I have taken to covering up varnish & paint with dust sheets & shading the boat in the spring by tucking dust sheets between the tarpaulin & frame to keep the midday sun off the boat.

good air flow through the shed especially as I still have the other end open – another job still outstanding! The design suggests battening the cover onto the bows which I did on the smaller tarp but is not so easy on the larger one. I got some cheap ratchet straps and heavy duty screw eyes to achieve the same thing but – another job I haven't done. I also covered the ridge in carpet to prevent the tarpaulin from being chafed.

I didn't keep really accurate costs but think that with screws, bolts etc the total cost was around £500 and with the better working conditions was money and time well spent. If anyone is serious about building one themselves please feel free to contact me for any more information or advice as required.

The design enables snow to be shed from the roof easily, to support a heavy duty tarpaulin and all in strong winds. With the lightweight tarpaulin I used and my sheltered location, with hindsight it would be possible to reduce the number of frames used and therefore the cost. The only down side with a lightweight tarpaulin is that it does "slat" in a breeze. The design of the doors also allows a

Finished—just needs the cover

"ENDYMION"

By Norman Dorrington

I think I ought, before I go, to place on record my memories of being towed into my berth by a working barge horse. I don't suppose there are many yachtsmen left who can claim that privilege.

In 1949 a friend and I paid £60 for a very old clinker built ship's lifeboat. It was moored at Putney, on the Thames, and we arranged with a local boatman to tow us down through London, under Tower Bridge, to Limehouse Dock.

At that time the dock had two locks into the Thames, one leading directly into "The Cut". As soon as the tide was high enough we entered the lock and were lifted up to the canal level. "The Cut" was full of steel lighters, some empty and some piled high with timber. Wharf-side berths were at a premium and, as soon as a lighter was emptied, it was untied and pushed out into the canal. Evidently, when the water level in the Thames was just below the water in "The Cut", they opened both lock gates and let the water rush out. The empty lighters were swept out into the Thames and rounded up by waiting tugs.

Not wanting to be around when this happened we pushed our way through, using our hands and feet, until we reached the end of "The Cut" at Bow Lock. Here we could use the towpath and begin the long journey through East London, via Hackney Marshes, to Clapton and Radley's Boatyard, where we had arranged for the boat to be put ashore.

We worked on it all through the winter of 1949 and the following spring and summer. We completed the conversion from lifeboat to yacht by September 1950.

We bought a British Anzani outboard motor for £25. As the boat had a canoe stern and a low freeboard it worked best hanging over the side of the cockpit. I visited the Anzani works in West London on the Thames, and they had a large poster on the wall of Bleriot landing the first plane to cross the Channel, and a framed cheque from Buckingham Palace for a lawn mower. Evidently both were powered by Anzani engines.

My friend said that the fastest boat in Nelson's navy was the "Endymion" so we called her that. She never lived up to her name.

September was rather late for a maiden voyage but we were keen to get started. We lowered the mast and motored back down the River Lea to Bow Lock where we spent our first night on board. The next morning we had an early start and the tide was so high that we went out into Bow Creek over the top of the lock gates.

Unfortunately we had not gone far down the Thames when the shear-pin broke in the propeller and we were swept on to a metal lighter moored off the Tate and Lyle sugar works at Canning Town. Fortunately the damage was only superficial and we managed to get a line aboard and hang there whilst we replaced the shear-pin and hoisted the mast.

With a strong west wind behind us we made good time down the Thames to Canvey Island and dropped our hook in Hole Haven. We had hoped to be sailing off Southend, but for the next couple of days we were pinned down by gales. I read afterwards that the Queen Mary (the original one) was blown onto a sandbank off the Isle of Wight.

We then thought we ought to try and get back up the river but it was hard going

Endymion sailing on the East Coast

against a strong west wind. We spent a night anchored in the shallows of Sea Reach, rocking madly when the steam tugs tore by.

Eventually we were off Commodore Colin's club at Erith when the engine stopped. Fortunately the boatman saw us and came out with a workboat and towed us to a mooring. He left us a dinghy so that we could get ashore to the club which was on a lightship. As it was now the end of the week we arranged to leave the boat there and come back the following weekend to take it home.

We spent the following Friday night on board at Erith and set off on Saturday morning. We only got as far as Barking when the engine failed again and we managed to anchor on the North side of the river. Not only was the tide now against us but we found we had anchored near the Northern Outfall and were surrounded by raw sewage.

Once again fortune smiled upon us and a young lad in a workboat took pity on us and towed us to North Woolwich Railway Pier where we tied up alongside the tugs. He would take nothing for his troubles.

We spent Saturday night there and tried all day Sunday to get the engine working without success. After another night I got up early and went round the tugs to find one going up stream and managed to persuade the skipper to tow us up to the mouth of Bow Creek. The tow was a bit of a nightmare and I thought that our boat would be shaken to bits. Luckily our tow-rope broke and after some messing around we took one of their hawsers on board and

persuaded the skipper to take it a bit slower.

He dropped us off as arranged and he also would take nothing for it. It was not long after the war and I think yachts in that area were a bit of a novelty.

Using a couple of improvised paddles and the tide we managed to get up the creek and through Bow Lock to the canal. Then once again we had the long tow home.

Just after Old Ford Lock we were overtaken by a large grey horse pulling a loaded timber barge. Once more we were taken pity on and the bargee threw us a line that we gratefully accepted. It was sheer heaven to do the next few miles lying back in the cockpit and letting the horse do the work. As we approached the boatyard we cast off and glided into our mooring, very glad to be home safely.

The next year we were able to get away earlier and with sojourns at Benfleet and Burnham we reached Hullbridge on the Crouch, where we kept her at anchor for some years. We paid 25p per week to a chap living on a houseboat to keep an eye on her. Eventually we both started families so sold her for £100.

I had to wait till 1973 to buy our Atalanta ,"Kookaburra", with my brother, and enjoyed sailing it for the next 38 years, Some people think the Atalanta is a Spartan boat but it was a palace compared to the old "Endymion". However, she was my introduction to sailing and will always have a special place in my heart.

Rebuilding "Tuanmac"

By Jim Paling

Tuanmac on her inland mooring

Glad that you have opened the doors of your splendid organisation to us friendly Fisherman owners who, no doubt, will struggle along in your wake under sail but will, no doubt, struggle along in your wake under power! However to over use an already overworked phrase the Fisherman ticks all my boxes. Short in length for low cost, both for river license and moorings. Shallow draft for the R.Lee and low air draft (with mast down!) that will get under the lowest bridge (Aqueduct Lock footbridge near Cheshunt), which at 7ft 10ins in old money, as against the 6ft 10ins listed in the guide books, is the most serious obstacle.

Having done my 'bit' towards wooden boat restoration, or more appropriately, retribution, in the shapes of a 44ft Knud Riemers classic and a Dauntless, I came to the conclusion I should implement my own boat building rules, long ago invented and even longer forgotten:-

1. Do not buy a wooden boat.
2. Ensure any boat is placed in back garden for convenience.
3. Do not buy a wooden boat.

Hull damage near the chainplates

An aspect of the Fisherman that appealed was that it was produced by Fairey Marine and should be a little more 'precision engineered' and less 'garden gate' which has been my view of wooden boats to date. Tuan Mac was in bit of a state and I am sure that the previous owner would not disagree! Closed wooden box, moisture, heat, condensation, ad infinitum. After delivery on the back of a very large, Hiab wielding, Foden 8 wheeler, work began ! Then came boat building rule No.22:

22. That any decay visible in a wooden boat is only 20% of the total!

Upon disassembly of the starboard side deck it became obvious that water ingress had occurred through the chainplates and the 'twee' little plywood grommet that had been a poor attempt to seal them. Not helped by the bimetallic corrosion of the plates themselves and the gunmetal turnbuckles affixed thereto. I assumed that the resin bonding of the hull itself would resist deterioration; wrong ! Unfortunately the top inch or so of the hull had started to delaminate and whilst many who enthuse about Agba and its flexibility, resin absorption and longevity, leave it 'unattended' for a while and it starts to dry and takes on the appearance of a tulip! So, quick clamp job between strips of ply, with generous application of epoxy resin and off to the Fisherman's Friend!

Well, in a previous life I got involved with the rebuilding of gliders The Fisherman has many similarities, which is to be expected, and the chainplates bolted to mahogany blocks tucked under the gunwale and through bolted with ½" bolts with the heads sited outside on the Agba hull is very similar to aircraft main spar fixings. However it is not wise to leave aeroplanes outside for 50 years! Might take advantage here and modify the design by putting the chainplates on the outside to lose the hole in the deck, through bolting with big washers on the inside to protect the blocks and spreading the load, and also 'skin' the area

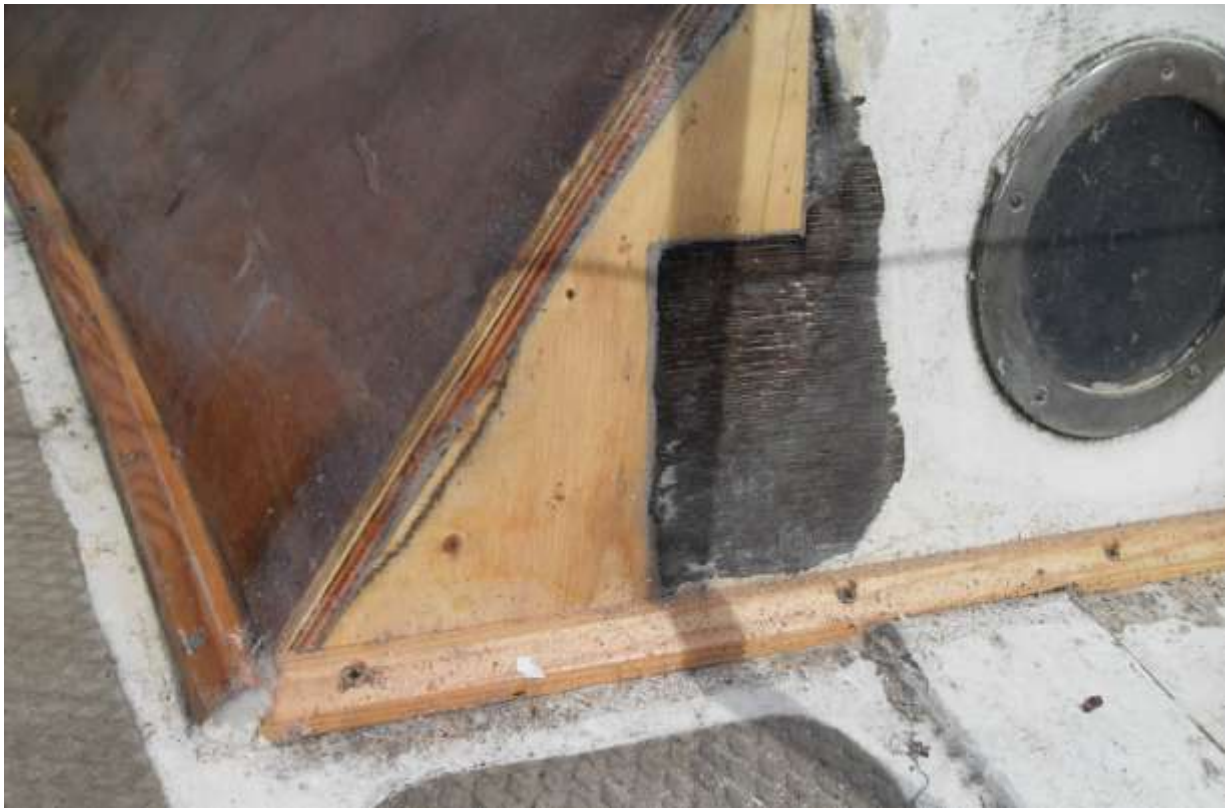
Coachroof side, and deck damage

around the chainplates with ply inside and outside to reinforce the Agba and again dissipating any load.
A 10ft length of 3/ 8" pine strip was attached to the inside of the hull by epoxy which is the first part of the laminated gunwale. This retains the shape and gives a firm basis to clamp against.
There are three strips in total over the chainplates, two more elsewhere. Then two layers inboard and two outboard of ¼" birch ply epoxied to the Agba hull. Every G clamp I possess was pressed into service to secure the edges of ¼" ply load spreaders secured with the 'biggest staple gun in the world'! That totals to an extra 1" of material where there was ¾" before.
Don't think this is excessive as by my rule of thumb , the chainplates, shackles and turnbuckles look as if they would transmit far more load than the poor Agba would take. The rust stains around the original mountings show more than simple water ingress methinks and the heads of the 3/8 bolts were beginning to submerge below the surface !

Repairs to the gunwhales where the chainplates are located

Repairs to the side deck

'Wood is good or wood is for wimps', take your pick ? However a bit of research started in gliding repair days has shown that good softwood, pine, either Scots, White or Yellow has a density near to mahogany and therefore is 'good stuff' compared to spruce which is much less dense. Mr Wickes 'joinery quality' looked good, not too many knots which get lost when laminating anyway and glues well.
Pressing on; the side decks are next in the hope that I can beat the bad weather and get the cabin sealed up. Everything becomes a bit tedious with the boat open as it is but the secret seems to be several Polytarps attached more or less flexibly. I am aiming for three. Bricks on cords are good. Dangle them in the water where you have nothing else to secure to
Having stabilised the top edge and the outside of the hull next job was building up on the initial 3/8" strip bonded to the inside of the hull with epoxy. Gave much thought to the joins. Some were a bit close to deck beams and the decision was taken to stagger these, using a 45^0 angle where possible. Had to chase the rot further forward than at first envisaged and had to grind out one area of softness splicing a fillet in at a shallow angle. Interestingly came across an 'aircraft' type splice running up to the chainplates. The 17 to 1 is the angle which is deemed to enable a join to be made with no loss of strength.
Very satisfying to plane hull edge prior to fitting side deck especially as I have at last learnt how to set up a No4 plane. Should know better, but often when sharpening in the past have found the plane doesn't take a 'bite' at the wood simply skating over the surface. I put it down to the frog not being adjusted properly. But having a magnifying glass handy I looked at the assembled plane closely and the penny dropped ! The sharpening angles, given by Mr Stanley in great detail of course, are crucial. In fact the actual cutting angle of the assembled plane is probably 91^0 so if you do not retain the angles stated when sharpening you lose the extra degree needed to make it cut.
'Simple!'
Big problems! The front cabin deck beam I had hoped to retain, but removing the cladding strip showed it to be 'beyond redemption'. Even the official number crumbled to tomato compost ! The beam is arched, an-



Repairs to the coachroof

gled and fitted at the ends between the gun whales so is a tad complex
Think we have the solution, large lump of 8x2" pine with an approximation of curve by measurement drawn and excess top corners cut off and glued to bottom corners to make up for curve. Then make up thin ply template from this and offer up to cabin roof. If the shape is acceptable then redraw on beam and cut out on a big , big, bandsaw. Probably would have been easier to remove the front deck, insert and plane down to size. Added gussets under each end to give additional support and 'job done'.
The side decks were originally made with three layers of the 'magic' Agba. Not so enthusiastic about it when it is used flat. It had shown signs of decay and is being replaced with ply which measures 11mm, near the 3/8 original. Sometimes wonder whether to use Imperial measurements or Metric. The Europeans have obviously 'ripped off' our system! How else could ¼"= 6mm, 3/8"= 10mm, ½" =12mm, 5/8 =16mm and an inch =25mm ? However I do tend use inches for anything above 2" and metric below, carefully avoiding the 56/65" pitfall!

One advantage of taking decayed parts apart is the chance to rectify by redesign and it became obvious that apart from the chainplates, water ingress was allowed by the screws fixing the toe rail, unfortunately poised directly above the hull moulding ! The opportunity was taken to add an additional skin of ¼" ply to the side deck, taken an extra ½" over the rubbing strake to shed the water more effectively.
In the rebuild, my normal suspicion of resins and things plastic was completely allayed. Repairs by insertion of ply into areas damaged by decay were totally successful. With 'biscuits' inlayed and then filled with more epoxy mixed with powder filler which looked remarkably like porridge! Sanded down with an abrasive disc the finish was homogenous, taking paint well. I used a two part primer, the standard primer and then gloss. Looks good!

West Mersea Regatta
By Jane Stearn A183

As usual, for various reasons, there were one or two fallers by the wayside but we managed to muster three competitors for the West Mersea Regatta which is a bare minimum before the organizers decide we are not worth bothering about. However, that is all about to change.
Read on.
Bluster A183, Tammy Norry A45, and Zambra A31/10 entered. We missed our old friend Kookaburra, a participant of many years. Bluster arrived from the R.Deben first on the Friday and had an enormous amount of trouble mooring to the piles in a strong cross wind with the grotty lines provided. I intend to contact the moorings people about it next year. Later Zambra came alongside having come up the other way from Conyer on the Swale. No sign of Tammy Norry. By Saturday the wind had dropped to F2/3 and Bluster and Zambra made it out to the start at 0920. We sail as part of a class called Slow Classics and are allocated a course accordingly. The trouble is that it does not cater for Extra Slow Classics, ie. Atalantas. Bluster and Zambra had a good ding dong race, first one being ahead, then the other, and the wind improved. But Zambra had to leave for Maldon before the end. Tammy Norry was sailing with us by now, in all sorts of funny directions! She had not raced here before and it was lovely to have her. Unfortunately she spent Friday night in Brightlingsea and could not make the start in time. Inevitably the four hour time limit came before any of us had finished so the race was null and void. Bluster continued just to see how late she was and it was 22 minutes. The wind was quite respectable by the end and if we had been one of the later starts we would have made it.
The afternoon was a washout, it rained and rained and rained demolishing the Water Sports and causing the cancellation of the firework display in the evening. We all adjourned to the Scout Hut for a magnificent supper provided by Mike and Sarah Thorley, to whom our grateful thanks. As well as the crews John and Mariana and Dave Allen came, making fourteen in all, and Colin rang to wish us well.
Now to the exciting bit, which I hope all will read and not have given up by now. The organizing committee is apparently new and alert to our plight. No finishers, no awards**. If we can commit to a minimum of five entries by next Easter, for the August race, they will give us a class of our own and a course that we can finish**. Our future participation in this lovely Atalanta occasion depends on us achieving this. So if your restoration is nearly done then speed it up please. If you have never come but sail within a suitable distance, as many do, then consider it for next year, perhaps making it part of your summer cruise. Tammy Norry trailed to Mersea; consider that. There will be details in the newsletter. And if you do come I can promise you will not regret it.
Jane Stearn, A183.

Caperdonich at Pitenweem

A31/6 Caperdonich - Fife to the Clyde for a Fife Regatta

By Bill Kennoway

This summer we again took Caperdonich through from Fife on the east coast of Scotland through the canal system to the Clyde estuary on the west coast. The photo above shows Caperdonich at Pittenweem in Fife.

The lure that drew us back was the prospect of attending a William Fife Regatta being held on the Clyde in late June.

"Some of the finest classic yachts of the 19th and early 20th century were designed and built by the firm of William Fife in its yard at Fairlie on the Clyde, and a regatta for Fife-built boats is held there every 5 years."

Getting through to the Clyde meant negotiating the Forth-Clyde canal.

We chose to go to the Clyde and back via the Forth-Clyde canal rather than the round trip going back via the Caledonian canal as we had done 2 years ago – this gave us an overall sailing distance of 320Nm compared to 450Nm for the round trip.

For a canal that goes through the Central Belt of Scotland, the Forth-Clyde is surprisingly green, as the photo to the right shows – even the section through the north of Glasgow is largely through wooded

Forth and Clyde Canal

Twenty William Fife Yachts racing

countryside,.
Our only mishap on the canal was my own fault – stern rope around the prop ! It happened just at a canalside pub, so I had an audience when I climbed off the back of the boat to cut the rope free. But thank God for that stern ladder I fitted.

The William Fife Regatta was magnificent. It was held over 5 days, with the first day's racing from Largs, then from Rothesay, Tighnabruaich, Portavadie on Loch Fyne, and back to Largs

Twenty Wm Fife boats took part, ranging from 19' to 107'.

The 90' "Latifa" in the photo to the left was sailed from Italy to the regatta by her owner, who broke his leg in the Bay of Biscay while single-handed. But he recovered enough for Latifa to take the overall race prize in the regatta.

Caperdonich was part of the small spectator fleet, and the weather was very lively for most of the race days – so much so that on leaving Portavadie harbour in a F8, my tiller snapped in two.

Fortunately there was enough of a stump of the tiller left to let me reverse her back into harbour and onto a pontoon without further damage.

This was the first time I had put into Portavadie marina, as its previous history as an oil rig construction site had always deterred me. It is actually one of the nicest harbours on the west coast, completely sheltered and with beautifully-designed facilities and excellent restaurant and chan-

More Fife Yachts racing

dlery. But sadly the nearest shipwright is in Largs, so it meant a three-day stopover and a bus/ferry/ train/taxi trip back to Fife to get my tiller fixed.

Infuriatingly my camera packed in on the first day of the regatta, but there are lots of great photos on the regatta website http://www.fiferegatta.com/index.php/gallery/2013-gallery/ and an even better videoclip of close-quarter racing by the big boats http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30f3jPNhnIE

The photo to right left shows my crew-member and daughter-in-law Saskia posing on board the 8 metre class Fife yacht "Saskia", which did very well in the races.

One consequence of the enforced stopover at Portavadie was that it threw my crewing

Saskia

Caperdinich and the Falkirk wheel

schedule into disarray.

This turned out not to be a problem as when I got back to the boat, the weather was fair with light westerlies, so I had a memorable two days single-handed sailing from Portavadie to Bowling harbour on the Upper Clyde, which is the entrance to the Forth-Clyde canal.

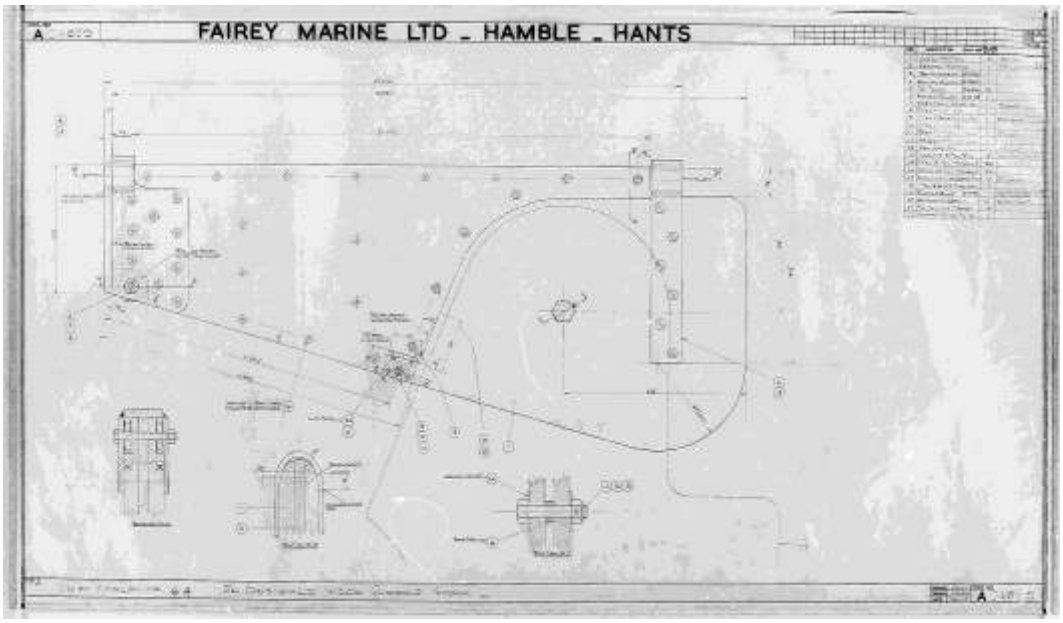
There were no mishaps on the return trip to Fife, but we had one memorable afternoon. At Falkirk we took Caperdonich up the Falkirk Wheel, the boat lift that connects the Forth-Clyde and the Union canals

As the photo above shows we were joined by a group of my son's friends, so we ended up with 10 people on board for the 100' vertical lift above the Forth Valley (there were several young children below decks).

Fairey Marine's Wooden Rudder Stock

By Trevor Thompson T10

Earlier this year I was presented with an opportunity to try out the Fairey Marine designed wooden rudder stock as described in the following drawings:



A24829 Wooden rudder stock assembly
C24831 Bottom rudder gudgeon,
B24830 Top rudder gudgeon and tiller

The design is much the same as the alloy rudder stock with which we are all familiar. The significant difference is that the wooden stock is significantly thicker than the alloy one and of course that means that special rudder fittings with a wider gap for the stock to fit into are required to go with it. Two cheeks and one spacer cut to rough shape from 18mm thick Robbin's Elite plywood. The spacer has to be reduced to a thickness of 14mm:

This plywood is made from rotary cut veneers which create a circular grain pattern, while the veneer used on the transom is sliced from 5 inch thick boards, creating a characteristic striped grain pattern. So to provide a consistent appearance the outer faces of both cheeks have been veneered with the same veneer as used on the transom outer layer:

Prior to bonding the two cheeks and spacer together the edge of the spacer was coated with epoxy primer and a ceramic rich epoxy

paint to seal and protect parts which will be hard to maintain after assembly:

The inside faces of the two cheeks were coated in epoxy as a primer, and then covered with glass cloth. That area where the blade will sit was then coated in the ceramic rich epoxy to resist abrasion:

The three components were bonded together:

The edges of the stock were planed, and sanded. The leading edge was fitted with a solid mahogany block to fill in the area between the pintle and gudgeon. That area on the trailing edge which is above the waterline was veneered.

The pivot for the blade is an M15 A4 stainless bolt fitted with large washers and nut. This is as per the drawing apart from a metric thread replacing a Whitworth thread. The bush in the rudder blade had to be replaced with a new bush with a hole to fit the new bolt. The rudder blade was trial fitted into the stock to check that full movement of the blade was achievable:

Brass plates were created from 3mm brass plate to reinforce the bearings for the downhaul pulley shaft (as per the drawings), and the axle holes were created:

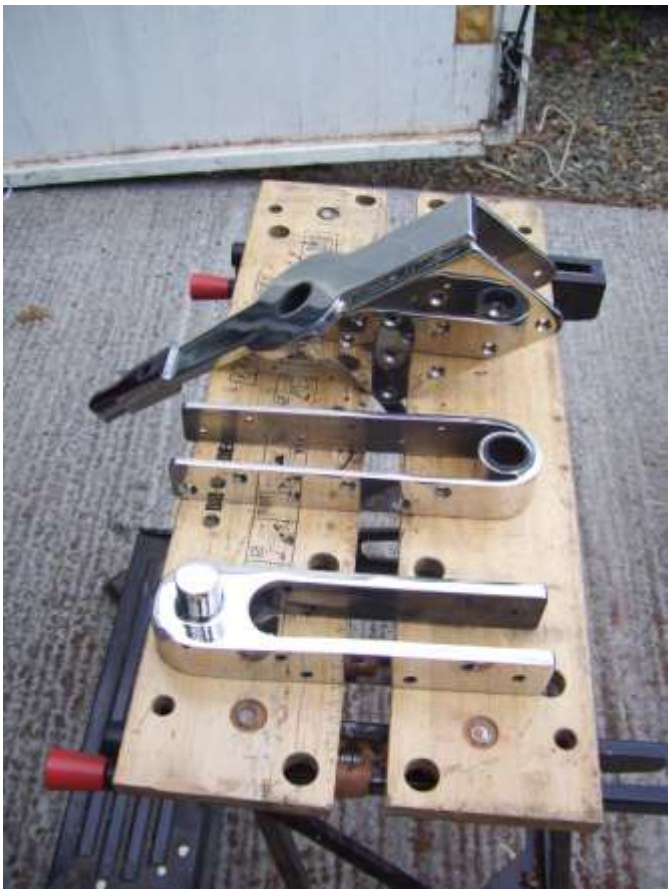
The veneer was cut away at the head of the stock, to reduce the thickness to that of the head fitting, and cut-outs created for the uphaul and downhaul wires to pass through. Cut-outs were also created for the two pulleys to fit into:

The finished rudder stock was coated with two coats of epoxy to seal the surface:

Since the new rudder stock is wider than the original it was necessary to make new stainless steel axles for the pulleys. A new uphaul pulley was also made:

It would have been possible to make mild steel rudder fittings to go with this new stock, and to have them galvanised.

In this case the replacement rudder fittings were specially made commercially from stainless:



Tiller/ top gudgeon, and bottom gudgeon fitted, the immersed part of the rudder stock epoxy primed, and the final coats of epoxy antifouling applied. Finally the rudder has been refitted, connected to the control wires and the whipstaff (tiller) and the rudder uphaul and downhaul have been reassembled.

Calista showing off her new transom, skeg and rudder

Note that the rudder blade is fitted to test the assembly and then will be removed for transport.

After a short seasons use I can confirm that the rudder works as expected. As to whether the alloy or wooden stock is better is difficult to say.

Certainly the blade pivots easily yet has no discernible play, and the stock takes the considerable strain of steering with the blade fully raised.

For anyone wanting to make a rudder stock to these drawings I would suggest that the dimensions of the old rudder stock are checked – since the distance between rudder fittings on our all welded stock was different to those on the drawings for the welded alloy stock, and of course different to those on the wooden stock drawings!

Croatia: A Job Well Done

By Mandy and Chas Hammond

You are going to tow your 55 year old Atalanta 26ft sailing boat 1100 miles to Italy, launch her and then sail to Croatia, Why?

Well our friends Dinah and Trevor Thompson have done it (several times) and they say its o.k.

With no disrespect, *Walrus* is pretty old, what about all the leaks you complain about? The dodgy rigging, paper thin sails? Is your engine reliable? With the cost of getting her there, would it not be cheaper to charter a luxury yacht? (*No: chartering for 6 weeks would be much more expensive . Editor*)

So with the need to address these problems the winter was spent working on *Walrus* to get her ready for her 6 week cruise:

- New starter motor and solonoid
- 2 new batteries
- Engine full service.
- Replacement pulleys to take new vee belt.
- New sails(second hand) main and genoa.
- Rigging replaced
- Keel service.
- Rudder stock strengthened.
- Navigation lights improved, new depth sounder and chart plotter purchased,
- Leaks attacked with G4 and epoxy resin
- Trailer serviced(we carried spare bearings and light board and two spare wheels plus full tool kit and trolley jack)

We left Sussex on the 27/8 2013 en route for Dover. Arrived at Calais and drove through the night as far as Rheims. The next day we drove through France and crossed the Alps via the Mt Blanc tunnel, stopping for the night in Aosta, Italy. Another full days driving found us at our destination, North Italy, at the Marina San Giorgio di Nogaro, which has excellent facilities

Walrus approaching Mont Blanc

Veli Losinj

for launching, and safe storage for car and trailer.

Our night stops were made in motorway Aires, which we found excellent for convenience. *Walrus* meta-morphed into a splendid caravan!

Although expensive the French and Italian motorway systems made the journey easier than we had anticipated.

Vital Statistics

- 18 MPG average
- 1100 miles at an average speed of 45 MPH
- Total driving time (not including stops) 23 hours
- Fuel and tolls (we dont like to talk about it!!)
- Launch and recovery- 70 Euros x 2 car and trailer storage 5 Euros a day.

Lets Go Sailing

After a day getting Walrus ready for sea. mast up, fuelled up, watered up, provisioned up, and boozed up, we set sail.

We left the swampy, mosquito infested Laguna Di Marano via Porto Buso for Umag on the Croatian mainland, a 6 hour passage, in calm sunny weather.

We took a mooring buoy, dived into the warm clear water, had a beer and smugly congratulated ourselves on our achievements!!!

"What a mistake to maka" We should have cleared customs before taking a buoy. We were severely reprimanded, with threats of fines, and/or imprisonment for our misdemeanour's. Eventually British humour won

the day(“donta joka with croatia coppa”).

The Istrian Peninsula is beautiful, and we could have easily spent more time exploring the ancient towns and ports along this coastline, but we made the most of the good northerly breeze, which pushed Walrus along on flat seas at a steady 4 knots with the spinnaker filling most of the way.

We stopped at Rovinj, and Veruda covering approximately 45 NM before making our crossing to the outer north Adriatic island of Otok Unije, again making the most of the northerly breeze. Our intention was to spend a week exploring this amazing area on our return trip back to Italy.

They say Croatia is a land of 1000 Islands, including rocks and islets, although we did not count them all we decided to leave some for forthcoming visits!! Unije proved to be a magical first experience, dreams really can come true.

Unije

We took a buoy in Maracol bay on the north east shore, a well sheltered mooring exposed only to the east, a nautical paradise, particularly for those like us who enjoy solitude as there are no facilities what so ever, supplies can be found at the village of Unije, 30 min trek over a large hill. We found fantastic walking on well signposted trails, sometimes walking on top of ancient stone walls.

Uvala Maracol

The colour and clarity of the water is beyond description. We could have easily remained on this Island paradise, but had a rendezvous on Otok Losinj to meet Jane and Chris

(my sister) who had travelled there by camper van. They left their Road Maggot at Poljano camp-site and joined the Sea Gypsies on *Walrus* for 5 days, swapping luxury and comfort for bohemian living in a confined space!!

During the 5 day cruise,we visited the N. Adriatic islands of Losinj, Ilovic, Silba, Premuda, Skarda, Ist and Molat. The hallmark of these beautiful islands are the tranquil secluded bays, surrounded by a mass of green aromatic trees, olives and pines and shrubs. The interiors can be explored on well trodden tracks usually leading to a village bar and well stocked shop. At Krivica bay on O .Losinj there is also a track which climbs 250m to the top of the island, giving an amazing 360 degree panoramic view of the out lying Islands, which we were getting to know well. The boat man calls here to collect his dues, armed with bread, cheese, cake and fruit.

The weather remained hot and sunny, with beautiful blue skies. We spent our time swimming, snorkelling, eating and drinking playing cards, and cooking on drift wood fires. Mostly in our own company (just as well as we were enjoying the freedom of not wearing clothes!).

We sailed back to O. Losinj helped by a favourable southerly wind which was the first sign of unsettled weather, resulting in a fantastic thunderstorm and light show.

Luckily we were safely moored in the town marina awaiting the arrival of our next passengers, second daughter and her partner, to board the luxury cruise ship *Walrus*.

Unsettled Weather

It was only for two days, but we felt that poor Amy and Andy had drawn the short straw of wet and windy weather the previous year in South Brittany and felt they deserved some Mediterranean sunshine. They

Albert and Jenny in the aft cabin

arrived after flying into Trieste , North Italy (Ryan Air from Stansted £29) where they hired a car and drove to Brestova on the Istrian Peninsula to take a ferry to O Cres and eventfully to Mali Losinj(12 hours bed to boat). *Walrus* blotted her copy book slightly, resulting in soaked bedding and clothing!!!

Just a little reminder that she is an old girl and needs constant attention, love and care. Luckily things improved, and the sun came out and the sky turned blue and all was well in the world.

Our cruising area was restricted by having to be back in Mali Losinj 4 days later, to meet our next guests.

Otok Losinj Archipelago
We sailed to the island of O. Susak 5.5 NM west of Losinj, where we took a buoy outside the harbour. This is an interesting place as it has sandy beaches, a rarity in Croatia.

The ferry "Premuda" calls twice daily and is met by slanders pushing their wheelbarrows to collect an array of goodies, building materials, pot plants, fridges and kitchen sinks. The ferries are the life blood of these island communities, as well as bringing valuable tourist customers to fill their accommodation, restaurants and bars.

Susak has its own variety of grape, which it makes into a unique wine, a very palatable rose. The old village sitting 100m above the harbour is a fascinating labyrinth of old buildings reminding you of a time past, when the population was nearly 2000 strong, before a mass exodus to America.

You can circumnavigate the island on foot (the only way) taking in the lighthouse, sandy bays, ancient vineyards and prominent graveyard and chapel. The harbour master and his lovely assistant were most

helpful, and showed Walrus the respect and adulation she deserved, and refused to take any fees for mooring.

From Susak we sailed to O.Unije via O. Srakane, where we were treated to a spectacular sunset from our vantage point of the local bar.
The next day we had a brisk sail around Rt Osor the northern tip of Losinj to the small town of Osor with its Roman ruins and modern day sculptures. Here a swing bridge over a small canal connects the islands of Cres and Losinj, opening twice daily.
We spent the night at Nerezine, a pretty little port on the east coast of Losinj. The following day we gently made our way down the east coast for a lunch stop and swim at Luka Sv. Martin. The coastal path is particularly pretty here with the pine trees hanging into the clear blue sea.

We tied up alongside the town quay at Veli Losinj, a stunningly beautiful old port and bought ice creams, before setting off for our night anchorage in the passage between the two islands of Ilovik and St Peter.
The barometer dropped, the wind went south and blew, and blew, and blew, making it an uncomfortable anchorage, forcing mass exodus from *Walrus*, to the peace and tranquillity of terra firma. It was a great island for beach combing on the exposed S/W facing coast. For the first time we were forced to eat out, indulging in a superb fish platter and copious amounts of beer.

The weather held us here for an extra night, forcing an early start in rough seas for our rendezvous with the 09.00 Pula/Zadar fast catamaran service calling at Mali Losinj, to collect our next cargo!!

All Seven At Sea
Jenny (third daughter) and her partner Adri-

an, with their 10 week old baby, Albert, arrived on time in Mali Losinj having flown into Pula from Stansted airport the previous day (£24 Ryan Air) and spent the night in a hostel near the ferry terminal in Pula.

Heavily laden with all the paraphernalia needed for travelling with a baby, they made their way down the gang plank to great cheers from the welcoming party. After a full English breakfast, a trip to the super market, watered up, fuelled up and boozed up! We set off for Susak, which from our previous visit we knew would be a suitable base for a baby and 6 adults on board. Like all great plans Sod is never far away to scupper them, this he did. A very choppy sea claimed its first victim with a bout of sea sickness. Closely followed by the engine coughing, and then stopping. Jenny and Albert were dispatched below, while Walrus' finely drilled crew leapt into action having the sails up and filling before you could say "how irresponsible can a skipper be". Skilfully we sailed onto a buoy, we are well practised at this manoeuvre. Everyone went swimming while the skipper (engineer, head bottle washer and all round smart arse) set about the problem which was resolved swiftly: air in the fuel line caused by a low fuel level in the tank, combined with the rough sea. From this point on we kept the tank full at all times and never had the problem again.

With only 4 berths on board, Amy and Andy pitched their tent on the sandy beach, and had a much more comfortable nights sleep than any onboard

(except Albert, who was rocked to sleep) in the heavy cross swell. The second night we went into the little harbour, and Amy and Andy took a room ashore. The days were filled with swimming, diving, fishing, sunning, walking, watching the tripper boats coming and going, and visiting the little bars. Reluctantly we set sail from Susak, a very special place, and headed for the equally wonderful Maracol bay on Unije, where Amy and Andy spent their last night with us, pitching their tent on the shore, ready for an early ferry back to Mali Losinj. It was very sad to see them go.

The Journey south to Zadar

We had no preconceived plans, so combined with Albert finding his sea legs and the weather being glorious, we headed south. Exploring the islands of Olib, Silba Molat, Sestrunj, Dugi Otok, Iz and Ugljan. We loved them all and could have continued our travels south, but for the fact our crew had a ferry to catch from Zadar. This was nearly not achieved, due to a reluctant engine starter motor. After a full strip down, the skipper (engineer and smart arse) resorted to the trusty hammer. And Bingo, it burst into life! Our last night together after ten special, unforgettable days was spent in Zadar marina in the centre of the city, chalk and cheese to what we had been doing previously. Zadar is a busy port with a number of museums and old buildings, and the incredible sea organ not to be missed. We waved goodbye and both Walrus and the ferry headed north to Pula, ferry five and a half hours, Walrus five and a half windy challenging days!

Bored of the Bora

The Bora is a strong cold north east dry wind, usually bringing incredible blue clear skies, which the locals told us can last 1 day, 3, 5, 7,or 9 days. We left Zadar in a good south westerly breeze, and made Olib by the evening, arriving in the dark. We took a mooring buoy in Luka Sv. Nikola.

At this point we have to thank Trevor and Dinah Thompson for their fantastic Adriatic pilot, we call it the Bible, and read it religiously! When the weather turned it was an invaluable source of information.

We awoke the next morning to rain and cloud and a strong south east wind combined with a big sea. The forecast was marginal but we set off knowing we could take shelter at O. Silba, an Island close by. Walrus surfed her way north loving every wave, 9.2 knots was recorded, a bare knuckle ride, but exhilarating for the crew of two!! We made record time to Mali Losinj where we took refuge for three days sheltering from the Bora, which after many false alarms showed her true colours, an awesome wind.

The great thing was we had no time restraints on getting home, so really enjoyed our forced stay at Mali Losinj. It was definitely turning Autumnal (after all it was the first week in October), clear blue skies and a constant N/E wind night and day COULD become boring, but we filled our days

walking the wonderful walking tracks, and swimming in the sheltered S/W facing bays, the water still being warm. Our senses were being stimulated by the Bora.

Waiting for a window

Weather forecasts in Croatia are very good and when the Bora is blowing a typical one is—wind N/E 18 to 28, gusts to 55 which is quite a range. The wind eased enough for us to set sail for O. Unije, the nearest island to the safety of the Istrian peninsula. A very choppy passage made possible by our staying close to the lee shore of the island of Srakane.

Day three of the Bora found us tied up alongside the quay in Unije harbour, where we became well known to the port captain and locals having to move *Walrus* off the quay to allow the ferry "*Premuda*" to dock twice daily at 0.700 and 16.20. we spent two wonderful days here.

We hanked on the storm jib and fully reefed the main. This was going to test the new main sail and *Walrus* and her crew. Glad to say ship and crew came through with flying colours, just three big ones breaking into the cockpit!

These experience are meant to be character building. I'm not sure about that one, but it certainly sharpens you up! The skipper said half way across when the wind and waves were at their best "perhaps it is time for a newer larger yacht". The crew wouldn't hear of it, and accused him of disloyalty, and becoming a fair weather skipper. Once in the lee of the Istrian peninsula like magic everything was calm, although still very windy. The crew wondered what all the fuss was about.

Istria and home

As planned, we spent 4 days enjoying this coastline, spending two days in Pula, taking in all the sites and amazing architecture, the jewel in the crown being the impressive amphitheatre.

We set sail north towards the Brijuni Islands, sadly as disappointing from the east as they were on the way down viewed from the west. After a lovely day's sail hugging the coast line we arrived at the historic town and harbour of Rovinj, with its blend of sun shaded cafes hugging the cliffs and fishermen's nets. The highlight of Rovinj for us was climbing to the top of the bell tower in the imposing St. Euphemia's church, high on the hill dominating the Rovinj peninsula.

With a favourable wind *Walrus*

Luka Krivika

Uvala Maracol

creamed her way further north to our exit port Umag, a full day's sail. The next morning after customs clearing formalities in foul weather, drizzle and light wind, we motored back to the Italian coast entering the Laguna Di Marano at Porto Grado, having to be aware for the first time in nearly six weeks the depth of water under the keels.

This final leg proved fascinating, following a shallow well marked channel more reminiscent of the Norfolk Broads, a full ten miles passing sign posts for Venice and eventually arriving at San Giorgio Di Nogaro.

The End Game

The lift out went smoothly, as did lowering the mast, all completed in half a day, leaving us time to spend a day in Venice, an hour and a half away by train. Well worth the visit, we will return next time maybe in Walrus!

The journey home was smooth but not uneventful, having a bit of a run in with an Italian policeman who unluckily witnessed a traffic misdemeanour at a mini roundabout in Courmayeur resulting in an on the spot fine of 150euros and a third degree interrogation and a document and vehicular inspection. English humour failed "Donta messa wiva Italian coppa wive gunna".

Match Facts

- 46 days on board-on land and on sea
- 552 nM travelled on water
- 2220 Miles travelled on land
- babies on board -one
- Adults-guests- six
- Brushes with the law: two
- Engine breakdowns: two
- Rare birds – four tits, two willy war blers, and a pair of Griffin Vultures.

Forward Keel Box Repairs.

By Greg Manning A142

Note:- This paper should be read in conjunction with AOA Paper F Repair Manual Keel Assembly and Mounting Structure. Every effort has been made not to duplicate information.

Background

When we (that is Roy and I) bought A142 in 2001 we found that she was seriously incontinent and we traced the ingress of water to the rear and inboard sides of the keel boxes and the hog running from the "P" bracket to the middle of the engine compartment. The rear block of the keel boxes were replaced using guidance from the AOA repair scheme and the hog replaced. (I will write that up sometime but have no pictures). Substantial parts of the boxes were badly damaged by rot which we dug out and then filled the holes before resining over the repair. In places where the rot was extensive for security we glued a doubler on the inboard side. At the forward end around the keel metal work we dug out and filled areas and then resined over them. At the time we had no idea of what repairing this area would entail, and we wanted to get on the water rather than spend for ever on repairs. All the damage to the keel boxes was traced to the poor fitting of the outer capping which allowed water to migrate into the poor quality ply used in the initial construction through the lower raw edge. Over the next ten years signs of water ingress around the keel mounting plates diminished. Rusty weeping disappeared and we were happy with a dry boat. That is until last season. Whilst motoring all night up the Sound of Sleet against a choppy sea I was concerned for the security of the keels as it had been so long since we had repaired the area. For the remainder of the season we had a mystery ingress of water into the galley area and so we decided that it was time to inspect under the keel mounting brackets.

Every year we remove the keels but have always found difficulty in re-fitting the rubber seals as the shoulder of the keel bolts were almost flush with the end of the

The mechanism for loosening the keel mounting brackets.

tubes. With out giving it thought we put this down to wear on the various components. Last year one of the bolts was not "almost flush" it was flush and so sealing the bolts became difficult. This was another sure sign that action had to be taken.

Warnings

1. If there is damage to the front of the keel boxes enough to allow water ingress it is likely that all the surrounding wood of the front box block, the keel box mounting blocks and the diagonal bulkhead is saturated Once any damaged wood is removed it will take a long time to dry out the surrounding areas. In planning for this it is suggested a seasons sailing will be lost.

2. Although no particular skill is required to carry out this task it does require a range of wood working and general engineering skill. Do not attempt this repair unless you

The damaged keel box side. Note the damage to the diagonal bulkhead

are confident you have the necessary skill/ experience for the job. If employing someone who is not familiar with an Atalanta the detail given in this paper may be of help to them.

3. Many of the tasks would be virtually impossible single handed. Be sure to have someone who can assist where necessary.

4. Do not rely on the original plans and your boat to be the same. We found significant discrepancies. i.e. The front of our boxes were only 3¼ inches wide internally, the keels instead of being 2 inches thick were 2 and 3/16th of an inches and nearly every measurement on one side of the boat was not the same as the other (we think the foreman made one side and the apprentice the other!) At every stage reconcile any plans against the boat you are repairing.

5. No estimate of man hours has been made but there is a considerable amount of work and it would be foolhardy to start this job if it is not possible to find the time for the completion of the work

Stages

So that readers may have a mental model of the task these are the stages of the work involved

1. Remove the metal work.
2. Remove the damaged keel box side as far back as the middle of the galley area.

The keel box side removed in the galley area. Note the capping strip on the top edge of the keel box has been replaced with a temporary stop piece to allow measurement and to locate the new side.

A mini-wrench being used to screw the new keel box side in place

3. Refurbish and remake the metal work as required.
4. Fabricate the new keel box side.
5. Fit the new keel box side with the keel mounting bracket secured to the diagonal bulkhead as a datum.
6. Repair and strengthen the diagonal bulkhead with the keel mounting bracket secured to the keel box as the datum.
7. Make the join between the new section of the keel box and the old.
8. Refit the metal work.
9. Make good all the other woodwork. i.e. the outside capping. (Not covered in this article.)

Removing the metal work

The first stage was to undo the countersunk bolts that secure the mounting bracket through the keel box side. After trying various methods the easiest was to heat the nuts with a blow torch, after which they all came undone using an Irwin nut extractor.

Marking the centres for drilling the tube holes.

Cutting the tube holes

Marking the bolt holes. Note the gap where a cork gasket fits.

Adjustments were made using a flapper wheel.

The bolts were then removed with a drift. To our amazement the backing plates inside the box came away in one, albeit very holey piece. The bolts through the diagonal bulkhead were then removed on one side only to facilitate the removal of the brackets.

There is an AOA paper on the removal of the brackets using a turnbuckle, but we decided to try to use items we had to hand and removed them using threaded rod which we managed to slide through all three of the keel bolt tubes (this may not always be possible without a join in the middle, all will become clear!). Short sections of 1" x 1" box section were fitted over the ends of the bolt tubes in the boxes and when tightened. This moved the mounting bracket enough for them to break loose with a little help from a pry bar. Once one side was loose it was re-bolted to the diagonal bulkhead and the procedure repeated on the other side.

Removing the damaged keel box sides

A vertical saw cut was made with a 45° bevel in the area approximately two thirds the way aft in the galley. Multiple other cuts made so the side to be broken away in sections. In is noteworthy that the section of the keel box side that overlaps the front mounting block sits on the block and is only sandwiched between the front block and the keel box mounting block for about an 1". This makes removal easier than it might seem.

Refurbishing the metalwork.

Once the metal work was removed a reconciliation was made between it and the original plans. It was found that the tubes for the keel bolts were only 4¼" long and not 4½" as shown on the drawings. Little wonder there was no room for the rubber seals. (Note:- if the tubes had been 4½" long it may have required some ingenuity to insert the threaded rode to loosen the mounting

The whole assembled off the boat as a

The new keel box side in position. Note the gap that needs a fillet and filler between it and the forward keel block.

brackets). The ends of the tubes that were inside the box were reworked to bring them up to their original length and new bolts and backing plates made. All the metalwork was then shot blasted and re-galvanized. It was found necessary to file away a lot of drips and ridges form the galvanizing, and unfortunately although the new backing plates had been made by a precision engineer some "adjustments" had to be made with a file to make them fit after they were galvanized.

Use a straight edge to avoid overfilling.

Use a straight edge to sand the filler true

Fabricating the new keel box sides

The capping piece was removed from part of the existing box and a stop piece fitted. The marking out and cutting of the new section is straight forward but it is advisable to do one side at a time so reference can be made to the existing structure. The rear edge of the new section was cut with a 45° bevel. Keep the off-cut section of ply from this bevel cut to make the fillet for when it comes to join the new section to the existing keel box side.

The new section was screwed temporarily to the keel box mounting block while it was marked for the tube and bolt holes to be cut.

Marking the tube holes was done by fitting the mounting bracket to the diagonal bulkhead but displaced inboard. A wooden guide was turned to fit into the smallest of the tubes (Note:- with wear they will all be slightly different), and a scribe was made from a screw screwed into the lathe centre mark. The centre for drilling the holes was then marked.

The tube holes, and bolt holes were drilled using a pillar drill to ensure that they were square, and adjustments made as necessary using a flapped wheel.

Once the tube holes were cut the new box side and mounting plates were reassembled and the bolt holes marked using a drill with a centre. The bolt holes were cut 1mm oversize so that then the bolts were inserted

they centred in the countersink of the backing plate and were not restricted by their position in the wood. Note that the countersunk heads of the 10mm bolts is deeper than the thickness of the backing plate and so these holes need to be countersunk to allow for this.

The whole was then assembled off the boat to ensure that the alignment was correct and at this stage the cork gasket between the mounting plate and the new box side was included. It is necessary to make over large holes in this to ensure the bolts are not misaligned.

Marking out the forward bulkhead doubler

Fitting the new keel box sides.

The mounting brackets were secured to the diagonal bulkhead and the new keel box side to the bracket. The keel box side has to be fitted in this position so that when finally secured there is no stress induced into the structure. This left gaps on both sides that required a fillet and/or filling to ensure the final alignment. (There had been a fillet on the original structure).

If filler is used, build up layers to ensure the area is not over filled by using a straight edge. Sand off any excess and use a straight edge to ensure that the final finish is level and true.

Filling voids with resin.

Once all the faces that the new keel box sides will be located against are made up the mounting bracket is removed and the new side screwed and resined into place using the temporary screws to maintain its alignment. The top aft edge also needs to securely clamped to ensure it maintains its alignment.

At this stage it is necessary to make the forward part of the 1" x 1" fillet that fits on the top of the keel box mounting block against the new keel box side. This has to be shaped to fit under the mounting bracket and as shown be stopped short of the end of the new section.

The Forward bulkhead doubler in place. Note the locating blocks at the bottom corners.

Repair and strengthening the diagonal bulkhead

The water ingress through the keel box sides had seriously damaged the lower part of the diagonal bulkhead causing total de-lamination. As this bulkhead takes all the stresses from both the keels and the mast it was necessary to have a repair scheme to both stabilize the damaged area and strengthen the whole structure.

On the aft side some of the de-laminated ply was cut away and then the area filled. A doubler was made that fitted below the keel mounting bracket backing plates and onto the keel box mounting blocks, the hog, the stringers and the skin. It was temporarily fitted before the filling was done and blocks screwed to the keel box mounting blocks to locate it so that the area was not overfilled. Once filled flush the doubler was resined on and the locating blocks resined in place to secure the doubler to the keel box mounting block. This is shown in a later picture.

On the forward side of the bulkhead the ¾" ply spacer under the keel mounting brackets was removed and then the outer layer of the ply was removed and downward sloping holes were drilled right through the de-laminated ply and resin injected using a medial syringe. By massaging the loose laminates the resin was induced into the voids between the laminates. The same method was used in other areas were there were voids some unfilled at first manufacture.

Looking up the joint ready for the fillet to be fitted. Note the poor quality of ply used in the original construction compared to the replacement.

A new doubler was made that replaced the spacer under the mounting brackets and extended down in the same way as the doubler on the aft side.

The joint assembled dry. Note the clamp has been removed for this picture to be taken

The doubler screwed and resined in position whilst the alignment of the joint is maintained with clamps. Note: - The next section of the 1"x1" fillet will be recessed to bridge the doubler.

The forward bulkhead was then filled and smoothed in the same way as the one on the after side. The doubler was then bolted on whilst the resin cured, after which the floor board supports were made which made an additional bridge between the hog, the stringers, the skin and the keel box mounting blocks to add further strength.

Making the join on the keel box sides.
A scarf joint is not necessary as the sides are supported in the area of the join and anyway the original design required a stabilizing web in this area. Instead a double bevelled fillet was made backed by a doubler. The off cuts with their matching bevel cut from the new keel box sides were used to make the fillet. It was not possible to make a perfect 45° bevel cut down the original section of the box so careful measurements were made on the inside and outside of the bevel at the top and bottom so that as near perfect a cut could be made and then trimmed with a thumb plane until it fitted. The backing doubler was resined in place whilst the clamp was still in place from securing the new box side. Note that the doubler does not have to go the full height of the box side as there is an internal trim along the top face. Once the doubler was secured the fillet was resined in place.

Refitting the metal work
Care has to be taken in refitting the metal work so as not to stress either the keel box side or the diagonal bulkhead. Put a bead of Sikaflex mastic round the tube extensions against the cork gasket and also

Job done. Note the block below the backing plate that locates the doubler.

The lucky find of holes right through the bolt tubes

round the inside of the holes through the keel box side. Locate the brackets whilst trying not to wipe the mastic off the inside of the holes. Secure the bracket to the diagonal bulkhead and then slightly loosen the bolts so that then the bracket is bolted to the keel box side it is able to move into position. Press mastic into any space around the tube extensions from inside the box and then put a bead of mastic round the holes in the backing plate before fitting.

Fit and tighten all the countersunk bolts that secure the backing plate inside the box so that all the mastic around the tube ends is squeezed into any voids and that the plate and bracket are tightly in position. Then one at a time remove the countersunk bolts and apply mastic under their heads and retighten them. Then tighten all the bolts through the diagonal bulkhead. Mastic can then be applied around the outside of the backing plate and the tube extensions where they come through this plate. Finally after a couple of days retighten the countersunk bolts being careful so as not to allow the heads to turn and break the mastic seal. Then seal all the new joins within the box with Sikaflex.

What went wrong?
1. The new backing plates inside the keel box would not fit despite being to the original plans. Fortunately this was discovered while carrying out a check before the new

The keels milled down to the 2" as per the plans

sides were secured so it was easy to remove the sides to gain access to the forward block and bevel the edges to allow the plate to fit.
2. After the mounting brackets were returned from being galvanized it was noticed that holes had been drilled right through the bolt tubes presumably in a failed attempt to fit grease nipples. The heat of the galvanizing had pickled the filler that had been used. These holes had to be welded over which damaged the galvanizing. A lucky find as otherwise the first cruise could have been to Davy Jones's Locker!

3. The keels did not fit back in between the pressure plates which was hardly surprising as the boxes are narrower than the plans and the keels are thicker. The pressure plates were each 0.4mm thicker than the plans but that should have been accommodated with out a problem. It was not discovered that the boxes were narrower until after the tubes had been built up and refaced to the planned dimension. To regain space in the box the keels were milled down by 3mm on each face to bring them as near as possible to the 2" that the plans show. As yet they have not been refitted.

4. Despite being aware of the need to maintain the alignment of the mounting plates throughout, and every effort made to do so, on one box the heads of the keel bolts now foul the access holes in the outer box side.

As these heads are bound to protrude into this hole, the hole needs to be enlarged not only to allow the bolt to be fitted but also provide a clearance so when under stress there is no chance of the head fouling the ply. This could damage the inside of the hole which would allow water to penetrate the ply.

Costs and Materials
It is not possible to give an accurate breakdown of all the costs and materials as many items were left over from previous repairs, in particular all the wood other than the ply.

1 of 2550 x 1220 x 18mm 13ply Burmarine Deluxe Sapelli	£380
Resin, fixing, fastenings, filler and consumables	£356
Gasket	£30
Milling of Keels	£80
Building up and refacing the bolt tubes and manufacturing of new keel bolts and inner backing plates	£600
Galvanizing	£88
Total	£1,534

Notes
1. Including the bulkhead doublers it was necessary to buy a whole sheet of ply.

2. Had it been known that the gasket was cork it could have been made instead of paying a gasket manufacturer?

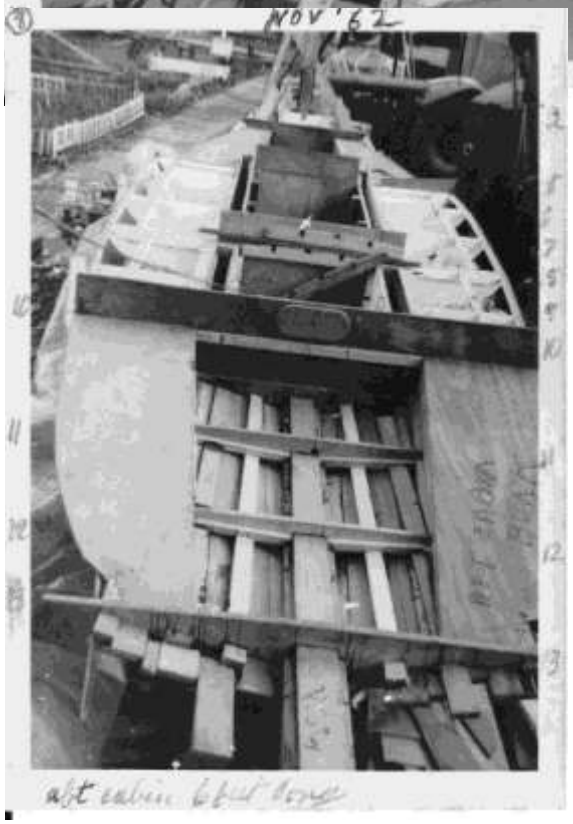
3. It was not possible to source all the ½" galvanized bolts that secure the mounting plates to the diagonal bulkhead and some had to be of metric diameter.

4. The countersunk bolts that secure the inner backing plate could only be sourced as 10mm A4 stainless. This might cause a corrosion problem but they are separated from the galvanized plate by Sikalfex where they are exposed to sea water.

A most unusual Atalanta
by John Ingleby A105

It's 1961. You've fallen in love with the Atalanta design, but can't afford the price of a hull. What do you do?

The answer for Jack Ellis, a former RAF engineer was: build one. The boat which he built from Atalanta plans is named Ahamkara and she is still moored at Benfleet, where Jack's daughter Maree has been returning from Australia each summer to spend time with her father, now in a retirement home. This article outlines how Jack went about building Ahamkara, based on his notes and photos which Maree very kindly supplied.



Anyone who has made a model boat or aircraft out of wood will be familiar with Ahamkara's basic construction. The first step consisted of laying out 13 “stations” or bulkheads along the hull, 0 being the bow and no. 13 being the transom. The underwater sections were then mounted upside down 2 feet apart and aligned along the waterline using an ingenious system of water-filled transparent tubes. With the stations joined together with long strips of mahogany and spruce, the hog was next built up from 6 in. wide strips of mahogany laminated with Aerodux 500 Recorcinal resin. In order to keep the resin at the correct temperature while the weather outside fell below freezing, an electric heater element was unwound and laid in asbestos tape along the length of the hog to maintain it at 40 deg. F.

Next, the underwater hull was shaped with 1 1/2 inch wide iroko planks laid side by side, screwed and glued in place, and then the whole turned over to start building upwards, by first adding the top components of each station. The rest of the hull was then slowly built up from edge glued planks. Clamps exerting half a ton of pressure were needed to bend the planks in place at the bow, although the final result

became extremely strong once the planks were seasoned into shape.

This photo of Jack was taken in September 1963 on Eel Pie Island, some two years after work started. He described how on one occasion he tried bending a plank in place at the bow without cutting it down the middle.

"I tightened the last clamp in place and stood back to admire my work. There was a crack like a cannon immediately followed by smaller cracks as a clamp

went smashing though the branches of the tree tops. Several people dashed out to see ... luckily all the bits missed me ... I haven't found the clamp yet"

The next two photos show hull construction approaching the rubbing strake, which must have been sometime in 1964:

By this stage, you can just see some cascover sheathing has been applied to the hull below the waterline.

Late summer 1965: the decking is being added using 1 inch wide Burma teak planks. On the left, the lower plank has been released after being held in place over winter, it has seasoned into the hull shape

and now only needs to be glued back.

By 1966 the skeg and rudder post had been added. Two keel boxes were built in keeping with the Atalanta design using Atalanta metal keel mounting structures, but without keel bolt tubes. The keels weigh 440 lbs each and were assembled from iron plates sandwiched between marine ply and the whole covered in cascover sheathing with several coats of resin. The keels are raised and lowered by a system of pulleys with no pivot bolt, and they are prevented from moving sideways by thick rubber spacers at their top ends.

In this photo, the two lines drawn on the hull nearest the centre indicate the main watertight bulkheads inside the boat. (There appears to be some kind of support near the bow). These divide the boat into: 1. Forward cabin for storage, good sitting headroom; 2. Centre cabin or doghouse for sleeping, eating, navigation and controlling the boat. In the doghouse there is standing headroom and all round vision. With this layout it was possible to have meals, navigate, or steer in comfort whilst keeping warm and dry, or with windows out, airy and shaded from the sun.

By May 1966 the whole craft had been sheathed in nylon cloth and covered in recorcinol resin. In the black and white photo the doghouse roof is ½ inch plywood with white plastic on the underside, glued and screwed down onto the beams shown in the photo. The windows are made to come out and the roof can be lowered flush with the decks if required.

However, it appears this design was changed at some point, as can be seen in the colour photo, where something rather dramatic

seems to have happened !

Motive power is provided by a Mariner 22hp long shaft 2-stroke outboard, mounted inboard above a "well" in the aft cabin.

In 1985 Maree and Jack set off from Dover in Ahamkara to sail across the Channel and through the French canals to the Mediterranean. Their ultimate goal was Australia, however they were overtaken by various delays until reaching Avignon, at which point it was decided to return to England.

Overall, Ahamkara has many qualities of the factory-produced Atalantas, although she is obviously heavier and lacks the open self-draining cockpit. She is certainly very robust, having been looked after carefully

for many years on her mooring at Benfleet where she is currently for sale today (see Boats for Sale on the website).

(Photos taken by Jack Ellis and reproduced here by kind permission of Maree Ellis)

The East Coast Race –a daughter's perspective

By Rebecca Pollard (Age 12)

I am definitely used to my everyday luxuries – being on my dad's boat has taught me that (if not anything else) - however I 'like' sailing too. I find it awesome how you can go so fast without using anything apart from two sails. My dad's boat isn't the best boat ever, but it works (kind of). The tiller broke once, the rudder and the engine did as well. But the holiday was fun nevertheless.

The first thing we did was wake up early. I don't like waking up early. But my dad's landrover has electric moving seats so I could sleep on the way. I have to admit the fact that the boat was trailing behind us was quite daunting, but I dealt with it.

When we got to the marina at Levington my dad spent AGES talking to the marina guy. Also he sorted out some things and bought me an ice lolly along the way!! I have to say that my dad definitely couldn't have done it without me. Helping my dad put the mast up was extremely challenging as I'm so small and the mast is so big!! Putting the boat in the water was quite funny (for me) but was successful in the end. (well worth the bribe of a chicken nugget and chips and a J2O). The engine wouldn't start at first and the tiller wire also needed repairing. Dad decided to make a temporary repair to save time –tides and all that – big mistake as the rope stretched 2 miles from the next marina at Titchmarsh.

We ended up setting off the next day. The wind was scarce, but not the miserable rain, so we ended up having the engine on the whole way, therefore we went really slowly! Several things happened on the second half of the journey. The first thing that happened was that we saw some SEALS!!!! It was a shame that the engine

Preparing to launch at Suffolk Yacht Harbour

Seals!

was on because I think that the seals were scared of us. We were extremely surprised as it was a boring journey and seeing the seals at Stone Point definitely brightened it up. Also we got stuck. Probably one of the only good things about having a really old boat – the lifting keels. Also dad had to sit at the back of the boat and literally pull the rudder whereabouts he wanted to go.

The next marina was epic!!! It had a self playing piano!!! It completely mesmerised me!! Also we had a pizza. It was so yummy and because it was cold in the boat, we ate the pizza in the laundrette. I slept really well after that. Then dad had a chat with another guy next to us with an even OLDER boat than us!!

We woke up extremely early the next morning in order to catch the tide. I started off sailing in my onesie. It was fantastic!! Once we were out of the creek and we had picked up some wind, we were speeding across the water. It was cool, calm, relaxed and fun. Once, I was sucking a mint and the gps on memory maps said we were going at 8knts and I swallowed my mint – I was that excited!! The best thing was… the only thing you could hear was the gentle splash of the sea. Towards the end of the six hour trip I did get a bit agitated – the tiller broke when we were trying to put the sails down. Also the engine broke. But we were at the wrong marina!!

At the (wrong) Brightlingsea marina I went crabbing. I caught a MASSIVE crab, but got scared and let it go. I caught loads of tiny ones though. While we were crabbing, the main sail got stuck and even with ladders Dad couldn't pull it down – all because of a little brass screw, and was flapping all night. Then I went to

Crabbing

meet my mum and sister and had a shower in the b&b they were staying at. I'm not joking, but while I was in the shower, I kept thinking that I was rocking!

The next morning we got up really early (again) to travel to the race. We had the engine on full blast until…….. it stopped and loads of smoke escalated from it ,the new exhaust had come off . In total we were an hour late and therefore missed the start of the race and the start buoys as it was misty. We sailed round and got to grips with it anyway.

We learnt quickly and although I lost the race map with the buoys on – it blew away in the good bit of wind we had . We nearly caught up the other two Atalantas ,but we all ran out of time. Just when it couldn't get any better the engine choked and stopped just at the entrance to West Mersea –just like clockwork the heavens opened as we thought we were safe holding on to a mooring buoy. Dad couldn't resist the offer of a tow, the 200 metres to these funny mooring piles and the other moored up Atalantas. The festival looked like a good event ,but everyone were sheltering from the torrential rain and flooding. Luckily mum had a change of clothes and a warm car and I missed out on a good supper ,but I was very tired and missed my bed.

Ironically I was lucky as my Dad returned later that night to a very wet ,sinking boat – water up to the front cabin beds – apparently the seal on the propeller shaft needed greasing. Luckily the crew of Zambra came to Dad's aid spending the early hours pumping and bailing. The next day Dad sailed solo with his dodgy mast and sail back to the Walton Backwaters which is another story of dragging anchors in Kirkby Creek, bashing a hole in the side on the rusty bits of metal in Walton on the Naze marina and lots of other little mishaps no doubt on the journey back 3 days later. I

I do like steering the boat

do like sailing ,but not as much as my warm comfy bed…

Better luck next year?

Final Sail of the Season

By Trevor Thompson T10

November 2013 was a continuation of the windy tail end of October. Each successive plan to squeeze in a final weeks cruise was abandoned as the deep lows raced relentlessly over a rain soaked Wales.

The last chance for even a few days away was grabbed firmly by Pete and me.

We loaded up the 16 ft dinghy we use to get out to the mooring on Sunday afternoon, and managed to get ourselves and a pile of kit onto Calista before it started to rain (again).

We motored down the haven in the growing gloom, hoping to get to the outer reaches and perhaps Angle Dale or Sandyhaven for the night. It was soon dark and of course raining, but we were sheltered by Calista's Bimini which converts into a spray hood by attaching a front panel. We

were fully togged up in our oulskins and boots, but they were more to keep warm while we sheltered in the cockpit.

As we passed the entrance to Milford Docks we were approached by the pilot boat. The wall of bright decklights was moving – not attached to a terminal as we had first thought. We kept to the north of the channel as we slowly worked out way west, and were finally able to duck out from behind the oil terminal to head west again.

Safely past the terminals we headed north towards the leading light on a headland close to Sandyhaven. There was just enough light to make out the water and the land, and even the occasional light in a window ashore. We closed the dark mass of headland slowly, scanning the water for buoys with a big torch, until we finally found the outer yacht moorings and were able to make our way into the channel which leads into the most sheltered drying anchorage in Wales. A 90 degree turn to starboard and we were approaching the footbridge which carries the Pembrokeshire coastal footpath over the channel at low water.

an hour before high water on a spring tide so we crossed the bridge with 3.0 metres between its deck and our raised keels. A 90 degree turn to port and carefully past some more moorings and we were inside. A few hundred yards north on the incoming tide and we dropped the anchor over a flat stretch of sand.

Of course the eberspacher had been going for most of the trip to make sure the boat was warm and dry, so we were soon stripping off the layers and settling down for the night. The initial plan to walk the 2 miles to the local pub seemed like a daft idea when we were warm and dry – and we were sure to come back soaked. So we ended up cooking pasta and sauce, followed by Dinah's pumpkin cake and of course a rather nice bottle of red wine. Monday morning dawned, and we were up before it, to see that the rain had stopped and it looked set to be a fair day with lighter winds. Perhaps the first day in weeks with less than force 6!

We retraced out path over the bridge and picked up a waiting mooring near the entrance to Sandyhaven to wash and breakfast. Of course now we were out we were in less of a hurry – with the whole day before us. The swell was getting noticeable bigger and looking into the cockpit provided an explanation. The tide was dropping, and the sandy beach some hundreds of yards to the NW was getting nearer and nearer and the swell breaking on it was rising where we were lying in 2.5metres of water.

We were on our way fairly quickly, hoisting full main and genoa for a close reach towards Dale. We went right into Dale bay, remarking on how different it looked with all the moored yachts gone, and the pontoon lifted out for the winter. We sailed off towards the entrance looking out to sea at the lumps which were the swell slowly crossing the horizon.

It seemed like a day to remain inside the haven, so with the sun shining and a gentle

The sailing was quite boisterous at times

breeze we made our way against the tide now pouring out of the haven. It was good sailing and Calista was going well even if the bottom was a bit dirty and the log impeller was fouled by weed. We continued up the haven past Milford town, Neyland and Pembroke Dock, under the bridge, and past our mooring (with a quick check on how much water was in the dinghy on the mooring).

The wind was too light to make progress against the tide so the engine went on and we worked our way past Llangwm, and landshipping into the Western Cleddeiu which leads up to Haverfordwest, but only as far as the village of Hook. Here we anchored, in a pool in the riverbead, where we calculated (or at least the iphone did) that there would be 0.7 metres under the keel at low water. It seemed appropriate to anchor at Hook! We settled down to a second evening on board, with a stir fry, pancakes, and mince pies, and of course more red wine.

We had intended a lie in the next morning but were both awake at 0500 with a strong tide against a strong wind and the boat rolling and bouncing around in the dark, and the rain bouncing off the decks . We were both dressed by 0530 drinking tea and waiting for the light to strengthen. We were off as soon as it was light enough to see the land properly, and back on the mooring by 0830, having breakfast properly.

Cereals and toast, (we have discovered how to make the toast in a non-stick frying pan). We were ashore, loading the dinghy onto its trailer and back at the cottage before Dinah left for work at 0900.

Before the daylight finally faded Calista's trailer was in the yard, the dinghy was towing behind, and we were motoring against a strong flood tide down to East Llanion boatyard. Dinah recovered the dinghy trailer and drove down to await my arrival.

The tide was so strong, and the dinghy so heavy that we were only making 2knots over the ground. The bottom also needed a scrub of course. By the time we had reached the pill leading to the yard, secured lines and fenders, and gently motored up the channel, it was a relief to see the torch shining out from the end of the pontoon which marks the end of the slipway.

We soon had boat and dinghy tied up, and left Calista, with keels and rudder fully raised ,to settle into the mud overnight.

Needless to say she was on her trailer before 0900, and home in the garden before dark, even though it drizzled all day, thanks to Pete's and Dinah's assistance.

On her way home for the winter