Atalanta

OWNERS ASSOCIATION BULLETIN 1969-70

photo: A.G. Parkes –Sherpa – A146

Contents

Zambra treads a well beaten path

and has some adventures on the way

Anthony Frais – ***Zambra*** – A31/10.

Skipper – Anthony Frais Crew – Ian – Barbara
Sine Qua Non

And who hasn't? .... Anyone who cruises in a yacht for three weeks and has not met with some unusual occurrences or been involved in some unexpected adventures will have had a very dull holiday indeed. Mind you, I am not saying that some of these adventures are not a little worrying at the time, but, in retrospect, they add to the value of the holiday and enrich one's store of experiences.

Take for instance our trip from St. Malo to Lesardrieux. We didn't get there! But were it not for the trouble we encountered on the way M. Belugou would not have called on us and presented us with two bottles of local wine, nor would he have taken us for a motor tour of the local Brittany creeks and harbours. We should not have spent so many pleasant hours in the company of François and Jacqueline who spoke less English than my own inadequate French! We should not have met up with the Brassingtons and the Kenchingtons (ex Atalanta owners) and would not have walked into a local hotel demanding a table for 20 for supper and I would not be sporting a new Avon Redcrest dinghy. In fact we probably would not have even seen Paimpol.

It was like this .... We were half way between Le Grand Lejon rocks and lighthouse and L'Horaine light, which is the leading mark for Lesardrieux, and were motoring into a foul tide nose into wind at a swanking speed of 7½ knots when suddenly the engine stopped and the boat seemed to lurch in its tracks. Ian, at the helm, declared that the rudder would not move. My immediate conclusion was that the propeller had slipped down the shaft and was jamming the rudder, and I would be in some considerable trouble.

A clamber over the dinghy and a look over the stern revealed, however, that I was snarled up in a 20 - 30 ft. long sheet of heavy gauge polythene such as builders use for covering up roadworks in inclement weather. I mumbled a few words about French builders then launched the dinghy and made an effort to remove the offending polythene. However the swell make this an impossible task and had I persevered I may well have cracked my skull or broken my arm or both. This was in the early afternoon and as I was several miles away from the Lejon rocks I reckoned that there was time to wait for help as there were a few local yachts around.

For my birthday Barbara had bought me one of the new plastic sealed-beam-search-lights which could at a pinch be used as a signal light and the makers claim a one-mile beam. Ah! thought I, here is an opportunity to use the magic lantern. So, after seeing a French yacht approaching and gesticulating like mad with my arms I started flashing the lamp. Eventually they closed on me and after much difficulty in making them understand my plight François and Jacqueline (engaged, and on holiday .... rather charming don't you think?) agreed to change their holiday plans and escort us to the nearest harbour which was Paimpol.

I should point out here that our rudder was practically inoperative, so Ian and I lashed it to weather as far as we could, and using the main sheet alone, making use of the weather helm, we managed (even with some tacking) to drop our pick in the approaches to Paimpol. Here, in due course, a fishing boat agreed to tow me to the outer harbour where I was placed on a platform normally used by the fishing boats at half tide for cleaning purposes, etc. With my keels and rudder up and up to my chest in the drink I managed to carve away the polythene.

The next trouble started when I tried to get off the platform before we were aground on what was a lee shore. I was frightened of starting my engine on the platform, I could not lower my rudder and every time we pushed off we found ourselves on again. Eventually, with a mighty heave from the local populace I got my stern off the platform, started the engine and, all in the same move, hauled down the rudder in an effort to steer off the platform. The rudder fell on the dinghy which went under my stern, the engine stopped suddenly once again and my voracious propeller had had another meal. That was the end of half an Avon Redcrest.

It had now become according to the local French jokers – ***'une demie canoe pneumatique'***. It took me an hour to carve this away from the propellor, and eventually with no further incidents we were tied up in the inner harbour at Paimpol where we spent three delightful days. Incidentally, over supper on board that night I said to François and Jacqueline (in French of course): "What did you think of my wonderful lamp", and Jacqueline replied in English, "**We** didn't see any lamp, we saw you waving your arms around like mad".

Ah well! It was a nice birthday present and it came in useful later on in Alderney when we could not hold the ground and had to keep shifting our anchorage in the early hours of darkness. This of course was later on in the holiday but I can confirm to those who may not know it and may only have read about it, that with a strong north west wind, which is supposed to be all right for the harbour, there is a tremendous swell. It takes away much of the pleasure of lying in the harbour at night, and the poor holding ground and the tendency for different yachts of different shapes to lie at different angles makes for an uncomfortable and anxious stay.

I think Alderney should be visited when the wind is in any of the southern quarters. But Alderney should be visited! The walks along the cliffs are so inspiring and the whole place is so unspoilt that we shall continue to make calls on Alderney whenever we get the opportunity.

* * *

Have you ever seen eleven boats tied together on a trot drift away en-bloc? One morning in St. Helier a local French yachtsman decided to leave No. 3 position and didn't worry very much about the other boats' lines. Suddenly we looked out to see all the rest of the trot drifting out to the middle of the harbour. It was some spectacle! And the speed with which they disentangled themselves just before they collided with a cargo steamer on the north bank was most intriguing.

We arranged to be in St. Helier at the half way mark of our holiday to rendezvous with two friends; one arriving from Poole and one from Portsmouth, and to our delight we all made the rendezvous and spent a couple of very pleasant days ashore in St. Helier. I think here I should mention that I cannot possibly recommend the harbour arrangements to anyone who is concerned about the welfare of their boat, and I would go on to suggest that Atlantas do not tie up on

From Alan Vines, President of the Atalanta Owners Association:

The efforts of the secretary supported by the members of the association has made it possible for the Bulletin to continue, and I would like to take the opportunity to thank Cyril Staal, on behalf of the members, who is responsible for the current issue.

From the Hon. Secretary:

I have had some inquiries from members wanting to buy Atalanta trailers, and will gladly put buyers and sellers in touch with one another if they write to me:

A.W. Wallbank,

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No. 5 quay but agree to accept a drying out berth. Isolated, yes .... but safe .... certainly.

From St. Helier we all sailed off for Sark. I cannot, adequately, describe the splendour and awe-inspiring experience of anchoring at Sark. We lay just off Creux harbour and the Burron rocks. The rocks and land are steep-to and seemed to tower above us, and we were only feet away from the shore. After enjoying some of the splendours of the island ashore we returned to our boats about 5.30 p.m. (which was low water) only to find that ***Zambra*** was just about all right but ***Samarai,*** our Poole friend's yacht, was in the middle of a fearsome rip. Only with the greatest effort could he reach his boat, and this was only by means of ropes between another yacht and himself.

He could not get his wife aboard. Our other friends in their Pioneer ***Zeebloem*** found it necessary to weigh anchor and move outsof the rip. By means of ropes we took my friend's wife on board ***Zambra*** and from there set off to St. Peter Port. It was a very rough 90 minutes. We had not realised how much the wind was increasing, for the sun had continued to shine so well and we were in the Lee of Sark, but that night there were three yachts in distress.

The Lifeboat went to help one, the steamer ***Caeserea*** stood by another and the third one arrived considerably damaged. With steady winds from the north west we were comfortable in St. Peter Port. The problem in that harbour arises when the wind changes and that very often calls for a 'General Post'. By next year the new Marina just north of St. Sampson's will be fully operative, and whilst I do not suppose it will be as charming at St. Peter Port it will certainly be a good haven en route to Brittany.

* * *

This account of one or two of our many adventures has probably left the reader in some doubt as to the actual course our holiday took and so I will set out here our actual route. During the 19 days of our cruise we sailed from Hamble to St. Helier, from there to St. Malo where we stayed 3 days in its very comfortable marina, then to Paimpol (via polythene). From Paimpol back to St. Helier, then to Sark and Guernsey. From Guersney to Alderney, and Alderney to Hamble. This latter journey was not one I choose to remember with relish, but I think I'll tell you about it so as to clear my conscience.

My holiday time had run out and though I was prepared to return late if necessary I came to the conclusion that the forecasts were getting worse — certainly no better — and that it would be wise to leave on the Saturday night, even though the winds were north west veering to north or north east and forecast at 4 — 5 with the sea slight to moderate. I reckoned it was better even to motor directly back to Hamble in about 8 — 9 hours than it would be to risk lying in Alderney in a fresh north-easter. In one respect we would be uncomfortable in Alderney, and in the other also uncomfortable but at least getting somewhere.

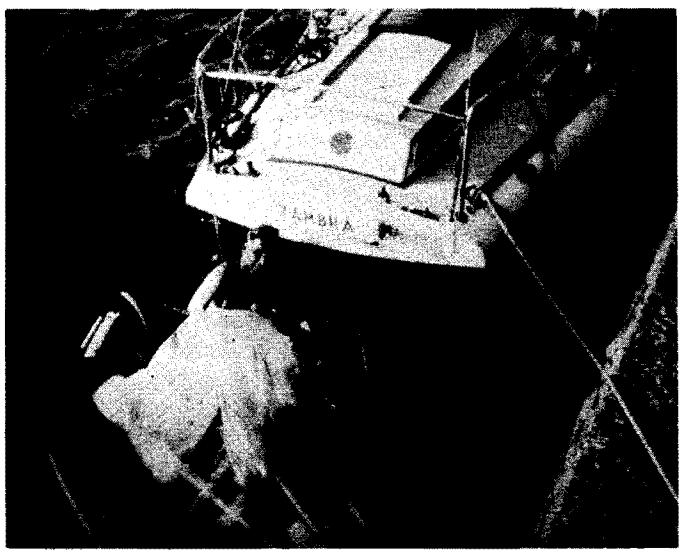
So after a too heavy meal we set off at 10.00 p.m. under reefed main and No. 2 jib. Within an hour I realised these were useless and we doused them both and set about motoring home. One Frenchman remarked that ***Zambra*** looked like a ***soumarin-a-voile,*** and he was quite near the mark. We didn't take spray we took green seas over the bow in such quantities that Barbara, who was nicely drama-minzed and tucked away in her bunk, was getting soaked via the Tannoy vents. Ian and I were being drenched in the cockpit in spite of our dodger.

I cannot remember such an uncomfortable chop nor has ***Zambra*** ever pounded before, and within two hours of leaving Alderney both of us were in the throes of acute mal-de-mer. I am afraid that under these circumstances one tends to lose a little interest in navigation, but I had set a course for the middle of Christchurch Bay and on such a short trip one could not possibly go wrong, could one? .... yes!!

I should mention that in the middle of the night my navigation lights went out: being drenched by the seas they had blown a fuse. I was flashed by passing boats, but I did not feel like moving except to respond by lighting up my vessel with the mast head light and occasionally the spreaders. Well before dawn we saw Portland light flashing away and that cheered us up a little and I knew all I had to see was St. Catherines Point and the worst of the journey would be over.

Still before dawn and on the port bow we picked up a light flashing regularly, and knowing that St. Catherine's Point was at 5 seconds I checked the timing of this light to find it rather longer — couldn't make it out. It seemed to me just over 7 seconds so I looked at the chart and thought perhaps it could be Anvil Point, but on consulting ***Reed's Almanac*** index no light was given for Anvil Point (had I looked in the South Coast section I would have found it). I concluded erroneously that we had sailed, due to bad helming and mal-de-mer, much to the east and instead of relying on my dead reckoning course I altered to the west to leave what I thought was St. Catherine's Point on my starboard bow. Dawn revealed what I thought was the cliffs on the south of the island and by 9 o'clock we recognised Lulworth Cove!!

Meanwhile Barbara had returned to the land of the living, the sun was shining, the sea was far calmer and with the wind on our quarter she took the helm for much of the 5 hours it took us to get back to the Needles against the tide. By the time we got back to Hamble Barbara had done a splendid job of tidying up the boat, and when we finally tied up on the pontoon you would think we'd had a sunny weekend and a short trip to Beaulieu. Everything was spic and span and we all came to the conclusion that we had thoroughly enjoyed 18/19ths of a splendid, sunny, delightful (if perhaps a little windless) holiday and suffered 1/19th that we could just put down to experience.



Depolyurethanisation

A Quiet Cruise for Achates - A60

By I.C. Humphreys

We neglected ***Achates*** most of the 1969 season owing to pre-occupation with a wedding in the family. After this had been solemnised and the last guest had departed, we needed a rest, so decided on a gentle cruise. The general idea was that I should sail ***Achates*** to St. Malo with some of my colleagues and that Joan would fly down to Dinard. Then a leisurely week up the River Rance, and home.

On the evening of Friday, 25th July, I met my first crew at the Yacht Harbour at Emsworth, Dicky Cox who sailed with us to the Scillies two years ago and Doctor Bird and his son, Andrew, who were coming as far as St. Malo and flying back. Our only other outing this year had been to Cherbourg at Whitsun, and a few things had shown up that needed attention to a new MD1 diesel installation, which took us until dark.

At 0700 on Saturday we had just enough water to motor out of the Marina. It was a glorious though windless morning and we felt lucky to be alive and free of ties.

A word about the engine set-up. It had required entirely new engine bearers and a larger propeller, the latter having obliged me to move the P bracket further aft and pack it up. The fuel arrangement consists of a 13 gallon main tank fed by a Mini petrol pump into a 3 gallon header. Transferring fuel every ten hours or so should be erring on the safe side. On this occasion the pump was feeling temperamental and as you can't hear it pumping if the engine is running we stopped the engine at 0955 to bully the pump and top up. At 1100 we were south of Dunnose point and roughly abeam of St Cat's when mist drifted over the land and in fifteen minutes all was blotted out. However, the forecast was moderate with local fog patches, so we doubled our jersey ration and pressed on, on course for Alderney.

At 1500 it was plain that we could not reach Braye before dark and we were in thick fog, so I altered course for Cherbourg. At 2015 a fix on Barfleur and Cherbourg Airport, using the Seafix, put us 12 miles north of Barfleur, but with a rather narrow angle. For a while the angle would improve as we neared our destination, but then deteriorate so we needed Cherbourg beacon, but it couldn't be found. Now we took regular fixes and I laid a course to pass between Cap Levi and Pierre Noire, which is quite safe for an Atalanta near high water. It seemed likely that we would catch a glimpse of one or other of these, but it was not to be. By the time it was definite that we had passed between these landmarks, it was getting dark. With three knots of tide and five of the engine things could happen pretty suddenly. Either the harbour beacon was not on or it was not using the call shown in Reeds' and I felt that the latter must be the truth, for by now it was as black as your hat. So I asked Dr. Bird, valiantly sitting on the foredeck in the fog away from the engine noise, to look for a likely beacon around the Cherbourg frequency. Having already noticed a strong signal he quickly found RG at about 302 kHz on the Seafix. A back bearing on this and our plotted position went straight through the West breakwater and it was very powerful. Though nothing like the details in Reeds', it had to be Cherbourg and I put doubts aside and homed on it, keeping the angle open of the rocks outside the Eastern entrance to Cherbourg. It was a surprise how much we were set into the bay. Once this set eased I was able to assume we were abeam to Cherbourg breakwater, for the beacons were now all in line and St Catherines too far away to be any use.

I had last pumped at 1600, but at 2345 the engine ran dry, owing to the sedimenter joints weeping. In the quiet that ensued we heard the West entrance fog signal loud and clear and in line with the radio beacon, which was some comfort. After pumping we had to air-vent the fuel system, but we got under way about midnight and homed on the beacon until we saw the lighthouse at about fifty yards. We circled the lighthouse and set off on compass course up the Grande Rade, passing a French yacht towing another and came to the entrance lights for the Petite Rade. Within the entrance all was as clear as day and the lights of the town twinkled away in the distance. We anchored where we were and went to bed.

Getting up to a misty morning at 0915 we motored into the marina and went ashore. The Douanery was closed and so was H. Ryst, so in disgust we went straight out again. Visibility was about five to seven miles when we set out, but by the time we had cleared Cap de la Hague there was no sign of Alderney. As a result we misjudged the Southerly set and had to fight the tide for an hour close to Quenard Pt. Two other boats had fought their way up the race, but we did better than they because we were able to go closer to the shore. In the end we got out of the foul tide, but as we dropped Quenard Point astern the fog came down again. We had to home on Alderney Airport, but were not quite sure where the beacon was.

In Braye we were fogbound for a day and gale-bound for another, which took up the slack in our timetable. So, on the 30th July, with a light wind we set off down the Swinge and were again obliged to motor-sail, making St Peter Port in four and a half hours.

Next day we left for Jersey at 1415 with about three miles visibility. When Jersey did not appear as expected, a radio fix put Corbière 4 miles W.S.W. and dead up wind, what there was of it. So on with the engine, but no thrust was obtained and we had to tack tediously along the South Coast of Jersey and finally skull about whilst a hydrofoil and a steamer entered. Inside the Harbour at St. Helier we found the engine would just give us steerage way. The harbour was unbelievably crowded with French boats and very uncomfortable. To our relief seaweed the size of a football accounted for our engine trouble.

From St Peter Port I had telegraphed Joan that we were on our way and a telegram waited for us at the Harbour office saying that the Mate preferred waiting to rocks, being somewhat uneasy about the approaches to St. Malo. She was due to change planes at Jersey next day. The sea was misty but Jersey Met said 'go', as tomorrow would be worse. Taking local advice we put to sea at 1530 and it was soon apparent that we were an hour late. So with engine and sails we made all speed clearing the N.W. Minquiers buoy at 1800 and the S.W. an hour later. Now the sky darkened dramatically and there were violent shifts of wind, so we had to take in three rolls in the main.

In this corner of the islands radio fixes are almost useless so our D.R. had to be taken with more than usual care. Thirteen miles to go to the next buoy and a cross tide. At 2040 it appeared just where hoped for but we lost it in the mist before finding Le Vieu Banc, one and a half miles further on. It was slowly getting thicker and at 2100 I recorded that we were groping However, we found the red 'Jardinière' lighthouse and I bade the crew watch for the beacon that also has to be cleared. Someone saw something so off we went, but

it was a conical buoy called Le Sou, which was not on the chart and nor is it on any chart!

At least I knew the red lighthouse was within fifty yards and roughly the direction, so after we had circled the buoy a dozen times I had the anchor got ready in case the fog persisted. I took a course back and the light reappeared. After that we opened up the engine to reduce the effect of cross tide, which I expected would be small by now and sailed on the compass. Perhaps another mile and the fog disappeared, but we never did see the leading lights. We had been in dense fog for less than an hour, but it had seemed longer and had been at the narrowest point on the approach. We motored into the lock at 2330 and had a welcome cup of tea.

Next day I hopped on a bus for Dinard but our passenger wasn't on her flight from Jersey. I left a message with a very helpful customs officer and returned to the boat. Fortunately one of the crew had heard a bit of the London traffic report on the BBC and learnt that Luton was fogbound.

The mate turned up at St. Malo at 2115, having been delayed seven hours at Luton.

At St. Malo we met ***Allouette de Mer,*** A7. Mr. Mourant has just retired and was completing a two months cruise which included the Villaine Canal.

On the 4th we locked out of St. Malo at 1200 and passed through the barrage into the Rance at 1400 exactly. We anchored off St Sulliac for the night. The tides in the Rance are now rather odd with the heights varying about fifteen feet, but always way above the old chart datum. The streams run fastest at the ends of the tides owing to the operation of the sluices. Upstream of the barrage they are at no time very strong.

The channel is buoyed where needed up to the bridge at Chatelier which is impassable with raised mast. We used the bridge parapet to put a new bulb into our masthead light. Generally the River Rance is reminiscent of Helford River, but on a larger scale. Our most persistent memory is one of intense heat, which made Joan feel quite ill.

Returning to St. Mal for stores, we got mixed up with the German Navy on a courtesy visit, a depot ship and eight mine-sweepers, and this delayed our entry for two hours. Whilst in St. Malo we took a bus trip to Mont St. Michael which was interesting, in a horrible sort of way. By now the tides were inconvenient and we locked out of St. Malo at 1700 on 9th August. ***Zambra*** was locking in, so we didn't really meet.

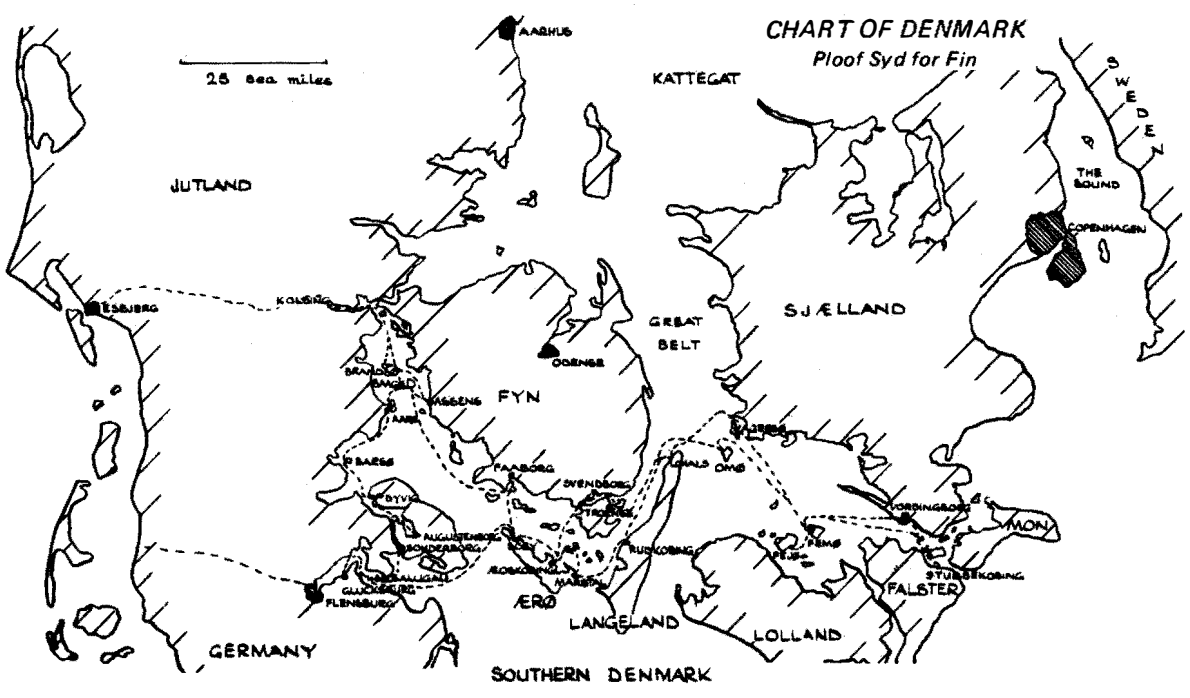
Visibility continued to be poor as we made our way to Chausey, and picked our way through the main channel looking for the orange mooring buoys that used to be there. In the dark we anchored in seven fathoms and had an uncomfortable night. In the morning we retraced our passage to open water and sailed round to Grande Ile where the anchorage was quite crowded, but there was enough room. This small island is ruled by a woman rather in the manner of the Dame of Sark. One end was crowded with campers living under most insanitary conditions. Further down we found ***Claudia,*** A114, up on the beach and patched with fibreglass, having been salvaged by a French gentleman after being severely damaged and abandoned. We were impressed by the progress he had made putting her to rights and invited him to join the Association.

Leaving for St. Helier next morning we got lost amongst the rocky islands, as they were now mostly covered and there was some mist. The most interesting feature was that La Corbière beacon was almost useless and we got our position from Jersey Airport and Roches Douvres. Again we got little help from the sails. In contrast the passage to St. Peter Port was uneventful and by sail.

Leaving St. Peter Port at noon I rechecked my tides as I normally do and discovered a ***'grande erreur',*** so we put about and upset the records in the Harbour office. We left again at 1807 bound for Alderney Race, not fancying the Swinge passage in the dark. With a fair wind we were almost abeam of Quenard Point by 2130, having had a brush with a small coaster who refused to give way and flashed a lamp at us, so we assumed that he was out of control and went about. We anchored at 2215, after having to move because a visiting French boat had left a fisherman anchor out astern of him as a danger to all late comers.

The Channel crossing was started at 0735 in a light wind and we kept the engine until 1555, apart from a short break at 1030 to tighten the engine holding-down bolts. By 1910 we were tied up in Yarmouth after a fast passage, and reasonable visibility for once.

The rest was plain sailing. We still have 6 gallons of the fuel we bought in Guernsey at 1/8½ in spite of trips to Poole, Cowes and Wootton. And, unlike petrol, it will still be fit to use next season.



Ploof Syd for Fyn

by A.W. Wallbank – ***Ploof*** – A178

On a sunny July afternoon, ***Ploof,*** hanging like a toy boat from a huge dockside crane was lowered gently into the waters of the Baltic. We had trailed her from Hamble to Harwich, taken the ***Winston Churchill*** to Esbjerg and then trailed across Jutland to the town of Kolding. Helped by the harbourmaster, some friendly Danes and two young British soldiers we soon raised the mast, parked car and trailer and made all ready for our holiday cruise.

Next morning, in a fresh westerly wind we cast off, ran rapidly down the beautiful fiord and out into the sunlit waters of the Little Belt. With the wind abeam, we reached southwards at a great rate between green wooded shores. Then across a wider stretch of water with every wave-top glistening in the sunshine, until ***Ploof*** could thread her way between the shoals and into the harbour of the tiny island of Baagø a full two hours earlier than we had anticipated.

This (by our standards) unusually fast sailing was to be one of the many unexpectedly good features of our cruise in Denmark. The reason is of course that, although the waters east of Denmark are non-tidal, they are shallow and a strong wind soon creates suprisingly fast currents, especially where a broad reach of sea funnels between the islands. The lack of tide allows trees and fields and delightful homesteads to stretch right to the water's edge. While the shallow water has enabled every town, every village and almost every island to build excellent harbours, so that wherever one happens to be sailing a sheltered haven is within easy reach.

For us, the winds were quite fresh and rapidly created a sharp steep chop, but in the shallow water there was no heavy swell. ***Ploof*** revelled in the perfect Atalanta combination of strong steady breeze and lively sea, while her crew revelled equally in the endless hot sunshine. Indeed for weeks on end, and from dawn till dark, the sun shone from a cloudless sky. Swimming was almost Mediterranean in temperature, and when running before the wind we even had to resort to our old Mediterranean device of pouring buckets of water over helmsman and crew as we sailed along.

After these quite inadequate general remarks, I must return to our cruise. We sailed southwards from Baagø in another Force 4 - 5 westerly wind down the Little Belt until we could turn to the east between the main island of Fyn and the sand spits of Lyø. Here we hoisted our spinnaker and ran rapidly across the shallows until we could turn to the north and beat up to the old town of Faaborg on the main island of Fyn. From Faaborg we sailed southwards between a chain of islands and across the Farvandet Syd for Fyn to the north west coast of the island of Aerø, where a thatched windmill stands high above the pretty village and spacious harbour of Søby. This was followed by a spinnaker run to Aerøskoping, a truly Hans Anderson town of cobbled streets and tiny cottages; all different and all brightly painted, with carved doorways and lace-curtained windows packed with Victoriana. Here we met A150 ***Salizanda*** with General Odling aboard. He had reached Denmark after many adventures and was on his way back to Kiel.

Next morning, after waving goodbye to ***Salizanda,*** we explored the fascinating town and later, as the sun broke through the mist, we took dinghy and outboard to the nearby islands for a swim and sunbathe. It was on this day that the wind turned to the east and, thanks to an anticyclone that became established over Finland, continued to blow from this quarter in conjunction with cloudless skies for the remainder of our holiday.

With this fresh breeze abeam, we sailed northwards across the shoals and into the beautiful sound of Svendborg where we tied up to a jetty just outside the yacht harbour. After a morning shopping in the town, we continued our way through the sound to the delightful village of Troensee on the island of Taasinge. From Troensee, we tacked out of the sound and into the wider waters of the Great Belt, where the island of Langeland was like a huge breakwater to the east. A reach northwards brought us to the town of Lohals near the northern tip of the island. The harbour was very crowded but we contrived to find a snug berth in the inner-most corner.

Next morning we sailed out into the Great Belt to meet the full force of a strong easterly. Because of this we close-reached on starboard until we were in the lee of the main island of Sjaelland, and then went about to sail parallel with the coast until we could drop sails and squeeze through the narrow entrance of the harbour on the island of Agersø. It had been a fantastic sail in the bright sun and strong wind, with ***Ploof*** heeling on each tack until the lee windows of the cabin were under water.

We were now in the island-studded Smaalands Farvandet, which is a stretch of water bounded by the main island of Sjaelland to the north and by Møn, Falster and Lolland to the east and south. We sailed south-eastwards across this sea next day to the small island of Femø in a lighter wind, but by the following morning the forecast was S.E. Force 6 increasing to Force 7 later. By this time we had reached the stage of feeling that anything less than rounding Cape Horn was child's play to ***Ploof***, and so we set out for Vordingborg thinking that the S.E. wind would give us a fast reach before the wind strengthened.

However, when we had sailed round the north of Femø and came on the wind it was to find that the wind was E.N.E. blowing straight from Vordingborg. Exhilarated by the sun and flying spray, we made good progress at first under No. 2 main and jib but, as the morning drew on, the wind and waves strengthened until even when reefed to the battens ***Ploof*** was over-pressed. The sight of the waves pouring through the Storstrøm (our intended route) was awesome and so we held on towards the mainland hoping to find a lee. Here we short tacked for hour after hour as close as we dared to the shore.

There were no other craft of any kind in sight, but a patrol helicopter hovered around us for quite long periods and added his down-draught to the weight of the wind. Our progress towards the bridges of South Vordingborg was almost imperceptible, but at last we reached the comparative shelter of the channel and could drop sails to motor against the strong current while we waited for the bridge to open. Beyond the bridge, we had to fight our way eastwards for another two miles until we could turn and run under jib to the welcoming shelter of the yacht harbour. An eighteen-mile cruise had taken us nine hours.

Thus chastened we decided not to sail to Copenhagen, but to circumnavigate the island of Møno. With this in view we sailed towards the Gronsund, which is the channel between the islands of Falster and Møn. However, as we neared the narrows, the wind-blown current was so strong that with engine flat out and sails drawing we could barely make headway. Eventually we reached the town of Stubbekoping

and, when next morning the wind and current was as strong as ever, took the easier course and turned down wind. Swept along by the current ***Ploof*** raced back through the Grønsund and under the Storstrøm bridge at an incredible speed, and then a fast sail across the Smaalands Farvandet brought us back to Femø; thereby covering in one brief morning the distance that had previously taken two whole days. After lunch at Femø, we carefully navigated the shoals that lie off the neighbouring island of Fejø and felt our way into a tiny harbour which provided a perfect shelter from the roaring easterly outside.

A storm warning with Force 8 forecast kept us in harbour next day. The sun shone from the usual cloudless sky, but the wind blew incessantly like a strong Mistral and it was still at Force 6 - 7 on the following morning. However we sailed out of our shelter and turned to the north-west, bringing the wind on to the starboard quarter. In the fierce, short waves ***Ploof*** was almost impossible to hold on course, so I dropped the main while Robert used the spinnaker halyard to set two jibs on the forestay.

Under this trade wind rig ***Ploof*** was very easy on the helm, but she tried to surge on to a plane with every wave and felt as if at any moment she would be airborne. It was wildly exciting amongst the welter of waves and spray, but the size of the seas astern made me scared of what would happen as we approached the funnel-shaped entrance to the Omøsund. Therefore, as we neared the islands I took down one jib, much to Robert's chagrin. We raced safely through the sound and turned into the lee of the detergent island of Omø, where the harbour was crowded with craft sheltering from the wind.

At last the wind dropped and we had four days of comparatively quiet sailing under a scorching sun. We crossed the Great Belt and sailed southwards to Rudkoping in the island of Langeland, then threaded our way circuitously through the shoals to the old town of Marstal, and revisited Aeroskøping and Søby. On this last sail ***Ploof*** lay nearly motionless under a flapping spinnaker while we swam alongside – an incredible contrast to the winds in the Smaalands.

As we left Søby the wind returned in full strength and we had another magnificent sail at maximum hull speed to Flensburg Fiord, which is the large inlet dividing Jutland from the German province of Schleswig. The waves at the mouth of the fiord were quite fierce and confused, but we soon ran

into quieter water and moored in the German harbour of Lanballigau. We sailed next day in the inevitable strong easterly further up the fiord to the very pleasant German town of Glucksburg. Another long sail with the wind against us brought us back down the fiord and across the Sønderborg Bugt into the Danish town of Sønderborg. Here the bridge was lifted for us and the narrow Alssund beyond looked so delightful that we sailed on until the waters widened, and we could turn turn to starboard to beat up to the pleasant town of Augustenborg.

A short sail the next afternoon took us up the Alsfiord and into the fiord of Slesvig, at the end of which the channel narrowed to the width of a road between an ancient fortress and a farmyard. A very sharp 'S'-bend brought us into the wider waters of Dyvig gleaming in the evening sun with – of all things – a perfect replica of a Viking longship riding at anchor. That evening and next morning we spent exploring this intriguing spot and then sailed back through the narrows and out into the Little Belt, where we found a harbour all to ourselves on the tiny island of Barsø.

Here we were welcomed by the harbourmaster, who turned out to combine this job with that of the island policeman, customs officer and ferryman. He directed us to the island's one and only general store, where we found a very gay party of Danes and Germans sitting on beer crates in the middle of the road and singing to an accordion in the intervals between drinking Tuborg. They found three more crates for us and after a very beery and unintelligible singsong, during which the storekeeper had to be put to bed, they joined us on ***Ploof*** for a last drink in the moonlight before climbing aboard a motorboat and returning to the mainland.

During the next three days we carried on northwards through the Aarøsund and up the Little Belt calling at the islands of Aarø and Baagø, the town of Assens and the small island of Brandsø. On the final morning we had one last glorious sail, finishing with a fast run up Kolding fiord to the dockside where crane, car and trailer were waiting.

It was our sixth summer holiday in ***Ploof*** and in many ways the best. We were fortunate with the perfect weather, but our main memories will be of island-studded seas, of sounds and fiords, of pleasant harbours, of tiny cottages surrounded by hollyhocks and roses and, above all, of the Danish people who without exception showed a degree of kindness that would have been rare in any other country.

With One Hand Tied Behind My Back

By Alan G. Parkes – ***Sherpa*** – A.146

It has been said that sailing with a wife and young family is like sailing single-handed with one hand tied behind your back. In my case I feel that this is a little unfair but nevertheless on long cruises the children, Fiona, six years old and Richard, who is five, do require quite a lot of attention during the waking hours. I therefore decided to install a wind steering gear. I looked around at the Boat Show but nothing seemed very suitable, bearing in mind the peculiarities of an Atalanta with its lifting rudder and friction caused through cables to the tiller amidships. Some gears have been made to work on Atalantas, but I did note that one owner thought it too much trouble to put into operation even for a cruise to Brittany. I want to use mine from the Hamble Point Buoy onwards!

It seemed to me that the trim tab principle, where a small servo rudder on the back of the main rudder working the opposite way to the main rudder was rather inefficient as it worked the wrong way initially. I found that by inserting a pivot on a frame mounted round the stern of the rudder both servo tab and rudder would work the same way. This also had the advantage that if the wind were light and the friction of the steering cables and bearings from the tiller prevented the main rudder moving, the tiller could be lashed amidships and the servo rudder would actually steer the boat.

Another advantage is that the servo tab, being independent, could have its leading edge forward of its axis thereby making it balanced and little power being required from the vane to move it. It is also possible that if one lost the main rudder blade (a not unknown occurrence) one could use the servo tab to get back to port. I'm not going to try this unless I'm forced to. When going astern the link from the main rudder is detached and the servo tab can lay forward so as not to cause any strain on itself or its fittings. The vane itself is horizontally pivoted as this has much more power and also enables the vane to be unshipped very quickly and different areas of vane to be used for different wind forces.

Many beer-stained envelopes and cigarette packets were used in the formulation of these ideas, but at last we reached a point where we said 'let's make one and see if it works'. The midnight oil was burned on many occasions through the cold months and at last, in April, it was ready. We quietly bolted it onto ***Sherpa's*** transom and slipped out to sea. To our delight and relief it worked. The only adjustment that has been required is that the tab rudder had too much forward of its axis and did not balance properly. This was soon put right and it has worked satisfactorily ever since.

Our first cruise a week later gave it quite a test and also proved its worth. For the test I left the family at home and took two sailing friends, Chuck and David with me. We had a hairy beat down the Solent and anchored to the lee of Hurst Castle to wait for the tide. At midnight the wind went round from west to north west and eased to Force 4 so we went away on the first of the ebb down the Needles Channel like a bullet from a gun. Chuck was up on watch and I checked off the navigation until we had cleared the channel and then got my head down for a couple of hours. At 0400 I took over and Chuck retired below, very cold, after first having put a reef in the main. Of Chuck I heard only a few plaintive requests for a bucket during the next fourteen hours. David emerged looking rather green at 1500 hours so I had things rather to myself for about eleven hours.

Portland Bill was abeam as daylight came and with it more wind. It blew a steady force 6 and as we were close hauled more and more rolls came in on the main. We had left up the number two jib, which had been hanked on from the day before, very fortunately, as I did not fancy the thought of going up on the foredeck with all that water blowing over. On four occasions during the day great black squalls descended upon us and I completely lowered the main which by then was rolled down to the number anyway. The sea got up and long streaks of spindrift blew down wind from breaking wave to breaking wave. Even with the jib only, seas broke into the lee of the cockpit and great sheets of solid water blew in from the weather bow.

In the course of those eleven hours I had plenty of time to consider and I realised that if I had been compelled to steer the whole time, not only would I have become exhausted but I would have had great difficulty in reefing and been unable to eat or do even the crudest navigation. As it was I was wet through and fairly cold, but I could remain in the doghouse out of the wind and just poke my head out every so often to keep an eye outsfor shipping. From my vantage point below I could see the wind vane on its horizontal pivot creeping first one way then the other and the tiller slowly following it just one move behind.

During the first two squalls I thought that, with just the jib up, I should help the gear take some of the strain as the boat would be very unbalanced. But then, having got really cold, when the next one arrived I lowered the main and left her to get on with it. It would be interesting to see which part broke first - nothing did and ***Sherpa*** continued on her way more or less on course, perhaps going down wind a few degrees.

Under the lee of Start Point the wind eased and by the time we made Salcombe it was dark and almost calm.

Two days later we sailed quietly on to Plymouth and then another quiet sail later on to St. Peter Port, Guernsey. That afternoon's sail was so quiet in fact that the wind died completely in mid-channel so we lowered all sail, had afternoon tea and played a few games of chess. A racing pigeon took refuge for about half an hour and then took off looking rather like Lindberg and weaved an uncertain course towards England. After four hours calm a pleasant little breeze sprang up and took us by the following morning to Guernsey. Except for a rough half an hour through the Alderney Race the rest of the holiday was most pleasant sailing.

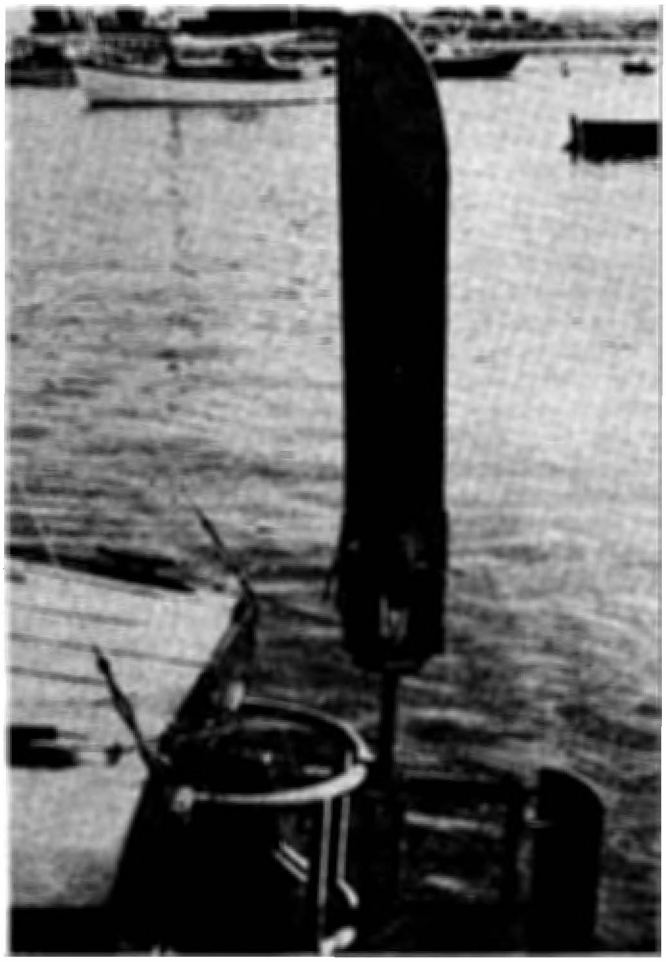
A few months later ***Sherpa*** set out again. This time I had for crew my wife Hazel and the two children. We beat out of the Solent in the middle of the night to the Needles but could not lay a course for Alderney as the wind was in the south west, so I decided to make a bit of westing as we could just lay Studland. It was pretty fresh, force 5 - 6 and I reefed down as we were getting wet. The 0200 shipping forecast next morning offered us the promise of a lighter, more westerly wind, so without more ado we up anchored and sailed out of Studland Bay. I worked out a course for Alderney allowing about two and a half tides and set the steering gear, now christened 'Ginger' by the family, to work. The morning was clear but at mid-day it became foggy and it gradually became very thick.

We could just lay our course under full sail with winds about force 2 - 3. Towards mid-afternoon I realised that the fog

was going to stay with us, so I did a series of D.F. fixes, using a Seafix, which I find quite accurate at reasonably short range. I got bearings of the Casquets and Alderney Airport and announced to a doubtful crew that we were on course three miles off the island.

Then two miles, one mile, half a mile. No sign of land.

The sea suddenly flattened out and the wind slowly eased. Swirls appeared in the water. If we did not get it dead right, I told the crew, it would mean turning round and going out to sea, round the west of everything to perhaps Guernsey in the morning.



Quarter of a mile. Everyone strained their eyes forward into the murk. Then a rock appeared about 100 yards ahead. Go about quick, don't lose it. Go about again. Another rock abeam. That's not a rock. I've seen that before, it's the end of the breakwater. Relief all round. Drop the sails and motor gently in. 1800 hours. We anchored in the pool just below the Harbourmaster's little white house, and then that disappeared in the fog too.

The interesting thing is that the vane gear had been working all the way across and until we sighted that first rock we had not altered course once.

After a couple of days in Alderney we motored down the Swinge in lovely sunshine to St. Peter Port in a clear flat calm. The snag about motoring is that you have to steer!

A quick flip over to Shell Bay on Herm and then we were off at 0200 hours to Tréguier in Brittany. Fortunately the weather had cleared somewhat, as this part of the Brittany coast scares me stiff with its five-mile-wide fringe of fang-like rocks. The one thing I will credit the French with is their buoyage system. In fact we were disappointed on arriving in Tréguier to find a long wall along the river's edge and only two other yachts lying to their anchors. With such large stone pillars as leading lines, looking very impressive in the evening sunshine, we expected to find a harbour at least as busy as Yarmouth or Lymington.

However, we soon fell under the spell of the charm of Tréguier and went out next day to enjoy a wonderful meal, which turned out to be so expensive that I had to leave my wife as hostage while I returned to the boat for more funds. It was so expensive in fact that at one stage I thought of leaving my wife and keeping the money!

The fog descended once again and kept us effectively prisoners behind the guarding rocks. We did try to escape once but gave up on sighting the blackest looking clouds my wife had seen, and as Les Héaux Lighthouse was somewhere in the middle of them we returned to anchor just inside the river. The next morning however it cleared sufficiently for us to pick up the leading marks behind us to enable us to slide through the Passe de la Gaine and then into Lézardrieux. We then had a force 9 gale by which time we were happily tied up to the largest buoy in the middle of the harbour. Most of the other buoys were laid much too close together, and many of the crews had to spend their time fending off other yachts to prevent damage being done.

The wind dropped overnight and at 0200 hours we set off down the river guided by two magnificent sets of leading marks. Bodic, right on the top of the hill, we could still see about 11.00 when we were twenty miles out to sea. A tricky bit of full sail and full power to avoid being swept out of the channel by a fierce tide just outside the Pontrieux river and then a steady sail to Jersey in the bright sunshine.

We tied up in St. Helier just before dark and in the morning went ashore. This was the day of the Battle of the Flowers and there was a great press of people. Having lost one child for a while and my wife straining her ankle we decided we had had enough, so at 1200 we sailed again.

A lovely warm hazy day with a light south breeze. We realised that we would not get through the Alderney Race in a tide, so decided to go around the west of Guernsey and outside everything. Halfway between Jersey and Guernsey the wind dropped completely and the sails started to bang about. We were in no hurry so we waited for the breeze. First we heard the breaking of wavelets, then a more continuous noise. Here it comes, I can see it on the water, quite clearly a good breeze. But there it stayed about quarter of a mile away while we wallowed in a flat calm. After half an hour I decided that this was ridiculous, and feeling like Mohammed going to the mountain I started the engine and we motored over to our wind and quite a good breeze it was too, east about force 3 - 4.

We spent a long time getting round the south of Guernsey meeting an enormous swell. Another yacht of about 8 tons, inshore of us, would disappear altogether right up to her masthead from time to time.

Once clear of Guernsey, as night closed in, we set course, north, for home. The wind freshened during the night to force 5 - 6, and I pulled in a couple of reefs and hoisted a smaller jib. In those conditions the steering gear really proves its worth for not only can one keep a good lookout from the comfort of the main hatch, check navigation and brew the odd cup of coffee but the course steered is far more accurate and the motion far more comfortable as she seems to wriggle her way through the waves.

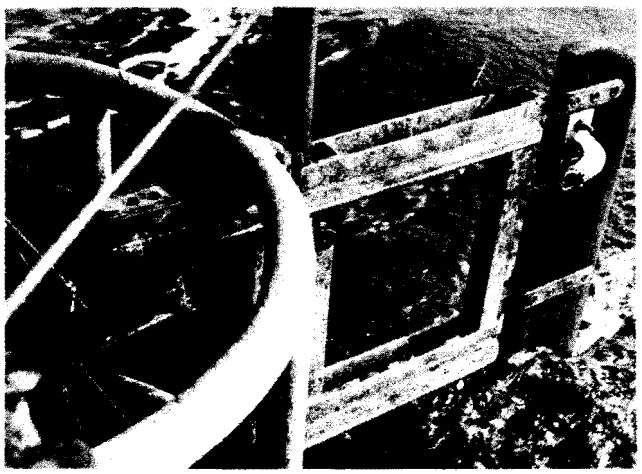
It was foggy yet again so we did not even see the Casquets light as we passed by just after midnight. In fact the next thing we did see was St. Albans Head sixty miles on, looming up about quarter of a mile away eighteen hours later. The tide was setting us to the west so we slipped into Chapman's Pool, to the west of St. Albans, and anchored for a couple of hours to await the full tide. The wind was still east but had dropped to force 2. We had a meal of steak and chips and decided, as we wished to make the Isle of Wight as soon as possible, to motor straight into the wind, for if we tried to beat we could easily miss the channel altogether

and in those murky conditions be set onto the cliffs off the Needles.

We motored out of Chapman's Pool at 2000 hours in the gathering dusk. We couldn't even see the top of St. Albans Head. Then the light on Anvil Point showed up weakly for a time and was lost astern. After about an hour flashes showed up in the sky ahead, which at first we thought could be the Needles Lighthouse. After trying hard to count the flashes to identify it we realised it must be lightning, although we could hear no thunder. We picked up the lights of the buoys marking the channel, then the light-house, which was a task not made any easier by this continuous lightning. By the time we had got through the Bridge and had the Island on our beam the fog had cleared and we were amidst the most almighty thunderstorm.

There were great thunder claps and lightning was striking into the sea about us. A large passenger liner passed quite close, eerily ablaze from stem to stern, looking like a fairy ship. The tide quickly took us past Hurst Castle and we slipped into Yarmouth Harbour, picking our way slowly through the lines of moorings by the light from the flashes which lit the scene as if it were day. Then it rained in a great deluge and it took quite a while to get properly moored. By 0100 we were sitting down to breakfast, thirty six hours from Jersey.

All in all both trips were a great success from the point of view of 'Ginger'. It made a fantastic difference and I would never again own a boat without a steering vane. If anyone is interested in acquiring such a gear I can put them in touch with someone who could possibly help them.



The Round-the-Island Race, 1969

A.W. Wallbank – ***Ploof*** – A178

The first gun for the Atalanta division this year was at the unearthly hour of 05.20, and for those of us who had come down to the Hamble on Friday evening it meant reveille at 4 o'clock. However, we survived the ordeal and arrived at the W. Bramble just as Cowes Roads were filling with the sails of boats coming out of the Medina. It was overcast but pleasant, with a Force 2 Westerly breeze and 2 - 3 knots of west-going tidal stream; which made the timing of the start a problem in higher mathematics complicated by the usual confusion of craft milling around the starting line.

However, the 5.30 maroon saw all the J.O.G.'s and Atalantas safely away on a long starboard tack towards the Island shore with all the Solent in which to manoeuvre. Behind us the main fleet formed a solid wall of white sails as they jockeyed for position for their own start, but all was confusion as a tanker and another sizable ship chose that moment to carve their way through the mass of yachts. As we approached Yarmouth the leaders of the main divisions were surging past, and through Hurst narrows and up the channel beyond it became quite hair-raising on port-tack.

Ploof was well down the Atalanta fleet as we rounded Palm buoy and came under the influence of fair wind and adverse tide. Most of the yachts ahead had turned inshore to cheat this tide and so we raised our spinnaker and took the direct route to St. Catherine's. It was an exciting run as we raced along having individual battles with particular Atalantas. The wind was light and fickle and usually, just as we were over-taking or being overtaken, a larger boat astern would take the wind of one of us and completely alter the relative positions.

Off St. Catherine's the wind failed and we tumbled about for a time in the race, but from there to Bembridge Ledge we seemed to hold our own particular wind and drew away from the Atalantas with which we had been battling previously. We even passed ***Fille d'Honneur*** which had been a white dot on the horizon ahead of us all morning, but John Kenyon gybed and was close on our transom as we rounded Bembridge Ledge. Here I made my greatest mistake of 1969. At that point I believed that we were first, the wind was steady and it seemed obvious to take the direct route between the forts against the urgent advice of Robert who was demanding that I should harden up and keep in-shore to avoid the tide. All went well until I realised too late that ahead of us was a group of becalmed yachts, and, before I could avoid them, ***Ploof*** was in the same situation. We then had the maddening experience of drifting slowly eastwards while the rest of the Atalanta fleet crept past us on the course that Robert had recommended. Eventually we got out of this hole in the wind, tacked inshore, passed the N. Sturbridge and eventually crossed the finishing line in time to squeeze into the overcrowded trots at Cowes.

One always wishes one could re-sail a particular race, but the lessons learnt one year never apply next year because the variety of wind and tide conditions make every race round the Island completely different from all the others. One unusual feature of this race was that the majority of the Atalanta fleet were in sight of one another the whole time, and this helped to make the 1969 race interesting and at times quite exciting.

Our thanks are due to the Island Sailing Club for its customary meticulous organisation, and to Dick Hornidge who organised the entries for our Division.

For results see p. 20.

Two Trips to the Iles Chausey

Cyril Staal – *Claudia* – A114 – *Ereina* – A9

I preface my contribution by apologising for its length. However, my justification for it is the possibility that in one respect at least the story is unique and, therefore, not without interest. Few, if any, owners can have had the opportunity of reporting their voyages in TWO Atalantas during the course of a single season.

CLAUDIA

Claudia left Plymouth on Tuesday, 1st July with a crew consisting of Pat Challis, navigator, 'Paddy' Hunter, general factotum, and her owner, deputy-general factotum. Anchor was weighed at 19.30 hours, when the wind was Force 1, the sea calm and visibility excellent. With the Breakwater abeam at 19.50, the Sumlog was set at 0, and 35 minutes later, at the Mewstone, the engine was cut-out and with main and genoa set a course of 126° was steered.

Log entries record as follows:

24.00 Bolt Head abeam, course altered 104°. 10.3 m.

01.00 Prawle abeam, course altered to 140°. 13.7 m.

Discipline appears to have slackened, as no records were kept for several hours. We did watches of two hours at the helm, which meant that each member of the crew could have an unbroken spell of four hours on his bunk. In practice, this came to rather less, as there was always at least a quarter-hour of discussion before and after a changeover. Log entries were duly resumed:

06.30 Wind WNW 1, sea choppy. 26.0 m.

06.55 Calm, started engine

08.00 30.0 m.

09.00 33.0 m.

By two hours later we had covered forty miles, and at midday a radio fix suggested an alteration of course to 130°. Steadily ploughing forward at from 3.0 to 3½ knots the dial showed 53.7 m at 15.00 hours, when a further spell with the Sea-Fix indicated a course change to 140°.

A brief entry at 16.10 hrs recorded a third radio fix giving 160° for Le Hanois lighthouse, current 130°, and distance off at ten miles. Half an hour later there is a triumphant note:

16.40 Hanois l/h sighted. Dead on course. 59.4 m.

This is followed by the relief of –

19.30 Arrived and moored St. Peter Port. 68 m.

It meant the completion of a voyage of 68 miles with a duration of exactly 24 hours. Hardly a speed-record and certainly rather tiring, but with everything going to plan and no memorable ghastly incidents.

We stayed at St Peter Port and stocked the locker. Then on Friday, 4th July, after planning to make St. Malo changed our minds because of fog and set off for St. Helier. The fog was occasionally broken, but not sufficiently to see land for several hours and we relied on the Sea-Fix for our course.

We left our mooring at 0.600 hrs and plodding cautiously along with the aid of the engine had a brief sight of La Corbière at 14.11. A couple of hours later we were off Noirmont Point, and thenceforward visibility was good. At 17.15 we entered St. Helier Harbour and were relieved to switch off the engine, which had been running continually for 11¼ hours.

We still wanted to visit St. Malo, but our neighbour, a Frenchman, advised us that the Isles Chausey (of which I had to confess I had hitherto been ignorant) would prove infinitely more interesting. He was joined during our conversation by an English-speaking resident of Jersey, who not only agreed with his advice (and clarified it for me in my own tongue) but kindly offered the loan of a chart. His gesture was welcomed as all shops had shut by then, and we duly pored over the sheet which was peppered with rocks and was annoyingly without the usual compass rose. English charts rather spoil us in this respect, and the lack of a helpful indicator was disconcerting at first but soon overcome.

The following morning we were away early and had an uneventful sail to Chausey, entering the Sound from the South and anchoring in the early afternoon about half-a-mile upstream from the vedette landing-stage. While I have a clear recollection of the journey from St Helier, the hourly details were noted on scrap-paper, did not get transferred to the permanent log and were lost in the occurrence later.

We had lunch, and then it came on to rain heavily, so we battened down, those who smoked lit-up and we made ourselves comfortable. After supper a general inspection was made to ensure that all was well with the boat, and as the wind had started to increase in force no one was against the idea of getting back inside. We turned in at about 10.30.

I seemed to have just got off to sleep when I was awakened by the noise of the wind, motion of the boat and an ominious noise of grating. Pat, who shared the forward cabin with me, jumped out of his bunk and we both scrambled to the cockpit, to be joined there by Paddy; all three in our pyjamas and any odd jacket that could be grabbed in a hurry.

In the open, the wind was really howling and in the dark it was possible to see that the water around was what can best be described as 'boiling'. I was in the hatchway between cabin and cockpit and in the electric light there noticed that the keel indicators were rising and falling behind their perspex windows; this explained the noise that had awakened us, and meant we were bumping on something solid. Worse still, I could see tins of food floating in the port-side store in the galley. Not only were we intermittently aground, but it seemed probable we were holed as there was no other explanation for the presence of this water.

Subsequent to the event I have often been asked 'What was it like?', but all I have been able to remember is that it was so noisy in the howling gale that it was difficult to think with any clarity. However, we found that we were still moving slowly, and soon came alongisde a group of rocks. It seemed prudent to abandon ship, as there were no signs whatsoever of the gale abating and there was an ever-present danger that ***Claudia*** and crew might be swept down the Sound and into the Channel.

Although we had armed ourselves with torches, they are of limited use in lashing rain and a wind of about hurricane force; in fact, the gale was so strong that we could not stand upright, and although the rocks were above sea-level they were wet and slippery and we could move only with great care. Stumbling up and down all kinds of obstacles, including a quantity of crab-pots, we at length came to a lighted door. Knocking on it resulted in the occupants of the house coming to an adjoining window and directing us to the back; they did not dare open the front door because of the storm.

Monsieur and Madame ..... (we never knew their name) were terribly kind, and provided hot coffee, cognac, and armfuls of dry clothing that made us feel warm and look rather odd. After a rest, Monsieur told us of a hotel a short distance away, and led us out through the wind and rain so that we could get a night's rest.

The small hotel, which is the only one on the island, was lighted and full of activity. The proprietess, Madam Blondeau was directing her staff in a series of mopping-up operations and our entry, dressed in an assortment of ill-fitting and inappropriate clothing, excited no comment under the circumstances. More coffee and more cognac were produced, and after an interval Madame conducted us up to the only spare bedrooms. They were two in number, so I shared one with Paddy, and Pat had the luxury of one to himself.

Early next morning, 7th July, Paddy and I went down to the shore to see whether ***Claudia*** remained where we had left her, and in what condition. It was still rather windy, but dry, and we picked our way carefully over the rocks we had scrambled up a few hours before. The boat lay, as far as we could tell, exactly as at midnight, except that the sea had now retreated and was innocently flowing gently along the Sound.

I was very tired and a little puzzled to know what to do, as this was as completely a new situation for me as it would be for many others. However, English-speaking assistance came forward in the form of the well-known naval architect, Alan Buchanan, who had sailed across from Jersey for the week-end and had stayed at the hotel over-night. He advised me to remove everything portable from the hull, and in the meantime helped to organise the local fishermen and interested bystanders in patching the holes and making everything as watertight as possible.

Madam Blondeau provided some very large-sized cartons and we laboured for most of the day in packing up anything in the boat that could be packed, and carrying it up to outside the hotel. There was a considerable amount of stuff, but we got it all boxed. I was recommended to one of the fisherman (***'très honnête, il ne boit pas'***: but are these two qualities related?), who had storage space. Paddy and I borrowed one of the indispensable one-wheel trolleys used on the isle and slowly trundled everything up to René's place, where it was stowed away in a large dry cavern.

Monday night was again spent in the Hotel, and the following morning Pat, who was rather shaken by the whole episode, elected to travel back to Jersey with Mrs Buchanan. They took the vedette to Granville, and then flew on to Jersey, Alan Buchanan, Paddy and I did a little more clearing-up, and took things quietly, concluding the day with a superb

dinner which seemed even better than it was in contrast to the rather tatty surroundings of the Hotel bar-cum-dining room.

The weather by Tuesday was definitely becoming settled, with a wind of 2-3 and the sea reasonable. After a quick breakfast we embarked in a Chausey dory for Buchanan's yacht, ***Mary Poppins,*** a gleaming 35-feet of fibreglass. Paddy and I had jumped at the idea of crewing her back to St Helier, for it would not only be an opportunity to sail in such a craft but would help erase recent events from our minds.

We had an exhilarating trip with no undue events, but in spite of Alan's persuasive words in favour of fibreglass construction I was not deflected from my allegiance to the hot-moulded Atalanta! This is probably a combination of prejudice in favour of the 'devil you know' and a lack of the amount of money needed to buy a ***Mary Poppins.***

Pat met us at the quay and we all three spent the night under the hospitable roof of the Buchanan's. At 9 o'clock sharp on Wednesday we rang the local agency and were lucky enough to get seats on a morning plane for Exeter, where we arrived at about lunch-time and were met by members of our various families to be taken by car for the remainder of this prematurely-terminated cruise.

Back in England in glorious weather without a boat was frustrating enough, but there was the added uncertainty of when and how salvage of ***Claudia*** could be effected. I informed my insurers of what had occurred, and while expressing sympathy they could, of course, give no indication of how the matter would go. The situation was complicated by the fact that the boat lay in French waters, and a surveyor would have to be sent from somewhere nearby in France. I would be told the result of his report, but until it had been received and considered I could only exercise patience – not one of my foremost virtues.

After a week or two in attempting to settle down and enjoying the active sport of gardening, I heard a rumour that an Atalanta was for sale in Plymouth, just twelve miles away from where I live. There was little I could do about it, because although I was doubtful whether ***Claudia*** could be salvaged and repaired I had to await a firm verdict

or risk owning two boats. My enthusiasm was not so great as to want to emulate Samuel Cunard, even on a smaller scale.

Then, my hand was forced. The local daily newspaper, ***The Western Morning News,*** carried an advertisement under the heading of 'Yachts and Boats' which read:

RARE OPPORTUNITY – ATALANTA
26ft, 20 HP Ford Aux; sumlog;
cockpit cover; canopy; two suits sails,
some new; moored Millbay Dock ....
Telephone Truro ....., 7-9 p.m.

This was a mixture of the Hand of Providence and the Temptation of the Devil, and in the words of Oscar Wilde, I can resist anything but temptation. At 7 o'clock sharp I was on the phone, and between then and 9 o'clock the earpiece consistently gave No reply. Next morning, I did get through to the advertiser, who explained that he had been caught in a traffic jam, and arranged to meet him at Millbay to inspect the boat.

The visit to Plymouth produced the information that the Atalanta had been purchased in December 1968 and brought from Sussex, and she had since lain unused in the Dock. This explained the tired appearance of the varnish and paintwork, but in contrast the interior was in excellent order and there was a very full inventory. Finally, and not by any means of little importance, the price was within reason. On returning home I phoned my insurance broker and asked him to do what he could to expedite a settlement over ***Claudia.*** This was on Friday, 1st August and the new craft, ***Ereina*** –A9– was being reserved for me over the week-end, although this was no more than a tentative agreement and I was sure that if another buyer appeared he would become the owner.

As it was, on Monday (the 5th, just a month after the event) at 3.30 my broker rang from London to say he had just had a message from the insurers to say that the surveyor's verdict was against repairing ***Claudia,*** and they would therefore settle my claim. The decision was not dictated entirely by the amount of damage, but the unorthodox construction of an Atalanta severely limited the number of yards able to effect satisfactory repairs. Obviously Hamble was the ideal answer, but the difficulty and cost of transporting the hull there was added to the complication that it lay on French soil.

Immediately I heard the news I put through a call to Truro and bought ***Ereina,*** following this action by requesting my broker to arrange insurance. This rather took him by surprise, as my two conversations with him were separated by no more than half an hour.

Once again the owner of an Atalanta and with fabulously hot summer weather which seemed to be endless, immediate plans were laid to put to sea. Paddy was game for a further essay, and John Couch, who had had many years experience in all kinds of boats, volunteered. However, movement had to await such irritating details as getting the battery charged; it had not been used since December, was completely flat and possibly useless.

Inevitably delays arose, and when the engine was eventually started, it proved insufficiently reliable to attempt risking a passage with it. Local efforts dragged out during the ensuing week, and at long last the 'All Clear' was given. On Friday 15th August at 04.30 we set off for Guernsey, but when the engine was required, after nearing Start Point and some hours of sailing, it failed to start, and I was loath to chance going ahead. Reluctantly we turned for home.

More work by 1970-type mechanics and the purchase of a new battery resulted at long last in getting under way at 18.00 hrs. The weather was still superb, but even though wind was less than ideal it was warm and settled.

We plugged along with engine and sail, and then tried the spinnaker; a novelty because ***Claudia*** had had no such refinement. With John's experience it was quickly in action and a most useful knot gained, but as the breeze was very variable constant vigilance was needed. After a steady run we dropped anchor once again in St Peter Port at 17.30 on 16 August; exactly 23½ hours after leaving Plymouth.

We made a short stay and then on to St Helier and Chausey, which we entered by the north of the Sound and tied up to one of the orange buoys provided by (I think) the Granville Yacht Club. Ashore, a visit was paid to the Hotel, where Madam Blondeau effusively introduced me to the assembly as the 'gagneur de la coupe Blondeau': an award she presented annually to the winner of a race from St Helier to the island.

Shyly I explained the true position, and made it clear that far from winning anything I had achieved very much the opposite.

Apart from the opportunity it presented for getting familiar with ***Ereina*** and getting to sea once more, the objective of the trip was to recover the contents of ***Claudia.*** A visit to R., the fisherman left in charge of the boxes, proved almost fruitless by producing only a small carton of crockery and cutlery and a Japanese rubber dinghy that had been carried as a potential life-raft. Queries about the rest of the gear produced a confusion of answers that left me no wiser, but in the interests of the ***Entente Cordiale*** I felt it judicious not to persist.

One question that did gain a clear reply was regarding the present whereabouts of ***Claudia,*** and at this juncture R. indicated his two boys who would, he said, be glad to lead me to the site where she now lay. So, with the youngsters bicycling ahead, Paddy, John and I traversed the island in procession to a small inlet where ***Claudia,*** whose mast-top we had seen in the distance, was beached.

The boys brought to meet us the new owner of the hull, Monsieur van Tenten, who lived at Fougères, a town a few miles inland from Mont St Michel and capital of the ***département*** (district) of Ile-et-Vilaine. M. van Tenten, an engineer, kept a boat at Chausey, on which he and members of his family spent as much of the summer as they could manage. On the present occasion, the time was being used to good effect, for he had already filled-in with fibre-glass the holes in ***Claudia's*** side and was proposing to enclose the entire hull in the same material.

He was most pleased to meet us and we went to his own (beached) craft for coffee and cognac and to discuss points concerning his acquisition. He was keen to have details of ***Claudia's*** engine, a Coventry 16, and I promised to give him the maker's handbook. From R. he had obtained almost all the original equipment of the boat, but again I thought it better to leave international relations undisturbed. Before we parted he insisted that the three of us should be his guests at dinner at the hotel on the next evening, and we invited him to a pre-dinner drink on ***Ereina.***

The dinner was a very good and lengthy one, and we were joined towards the end by Madame Blondeau in person, followed by a bottle of iced champagne – her invariable drink. It was altogether exhausting, as I was the only member of my party who spoke French, and none of the French could speak English. All conversation was directed at me from both sides, as it were, and as the time passed and the alcohol flowed my knowledge of the language, which is very far from being profound, was taxed to the utmost.

We spent the next day, Tuesday (19 August) at Chausey, bathing and sun-bathing in the very hot sun, and then planning to leave on the morrow. As John had to get back, we thought

it worthwhile to sail to Plymouth in one leg, although this would mean a passage of something in the region of 30 hours. However, with a strict system of watches it could be done.

In the event, we weighed anchor at 09.45, in sunny and somewhat cloudy weather, but by 14.00 hours had handed the genoa in favour of No. 1 jib and had put three rolls in the main. The sea was growing heavier as the wind increased in force and as we approached Guernsey it was gusting 5. A unanimous decision was that it would be foolhardy as well as uncomfortable to continue, so we turned north at St Martin's Point for St Peter Port.

Short of the harbour entrance I attempted in vain to start the engine, so we sailed in at 21.30 hrs., as light was rapidly failing, and moored ***à la française.*** In actual fact it wasn't quite as good as that. Although we did moor in a single try, the unsettled water quickly had us drifting dangerously close to other boats. The arduous business of kedging was resorted to, and on the second attempt was successful in getting ***Ereina*** positioned where we and our neighbours could all sleep soundly.

The weather remained dull and unsettled, and the wind positioned itself in the north-east, so there was little inducement but to stay where we were. I was concerned to get the engine (again) put right, and the local engineers, Moitie, agreed to do this. They sent an inspecting party first, who pronounced that the starter-motor was causing much of the trouble and the belt between engine and dynamo accounted for a lack of volts in the battery. The latter was quickly corrected, but the starter would have to be removed for probable replacement and this would mean removing the engine to get at it. Finally, the job could not be done immediately, but would be put in hand 'as soon as possible'.

The weather remained cool, dull and windy, so there was no particular inducement to put to sea. ***Zambra*** was moored 200 yards away from us, and we made the acquaintance of Barbara and Tony Frais. They asked us over for a drink and a visit of inspection of the immaculate and sumptuous 31-footer, and it was a revelation to see what that extra five feet of length had provided. It was the first time I had been on a yacht that boasted not only a heads, but a tails. On the next day Tony moved off to Braye and then home, John got a plane to Exeter and Paddy and I took things quietly.

Moitie removed the engine and found the starter pinion with only two teeth remaining; no wonder it had continually jammed. He did a few other small vital jobs at the same time, and twenty-four hours later all was back in place. However, the weather was unchanged, and as there were only the two of us to make the 70-mile trip we were determined to await calmer conditions.

On Friday 29th August things seemed better, and forecasts were acceptable. The wind was veering between NE and NW, not much use to us, but at least we now had a reliable engine. At 10.30 hours we were ready, I stood by the starter-button, and Paddy was at the bows ready to haul in the anchor. I did my bit, and unbent to see a horror-stricken Paddy holding on to the chain while it slipped through his hands. We were in reverse, and before I could correct this, the end of the chain splashed overboard.

Within seconds we were entangled in the mooring of one of the Herm ferries, and the engine stopped.

Ereina was fitted with a feathering propellor, a device to which I was a stranger. It had got out of adjustment, so that it was not only difficult to locate forward and reverse, but when in use it had the un-nerving habit of snatching itself with a crash from one to the other. In addition, neutral was so awkward to find as to be virtually non-existent. Neither at Plymouth nor Guernsey would engineers touch it — each gave a different reason — so I had to learn to live with it until I could find someone with the knowledge to set it correctly.

Thus our gyrations in St Peter Port harbour were no surprise to us, although onlookers were taken off their guard. Fortunately there were some, and a couple in a Fairey Fulmar moored close to where we had been rowed across and promised to collect our lost gear and get in touch with me. I digress here to report that they kindly did so, and I drove to Dorchester to collect it during September.

After some energetic and agonising moments we got clear of our unwanted mooring and at 10.55 reported to the harbour-master, just as if nothing untoward had occurred, that we were bound for Plymouth. The tide was with us up the Little Russel and with a Force 3 wind we made excellent progress. A few hours later, with Guernsey only just visible in the distance, the wind had become firmly NW and dropped in strength. There was no alternative to motoring.

I should explain at this point that we were unwittingly extra well provided with safety equipment. ***Claudia*** had had a Fairy standard dinghy as part of her gear, and in July rather than drag this all the way to where the other things were stored, I had left it in the garden of the kind couple who had first sheltered us. On the present occasion we had collected it and it was now strapped on the after deck of ***Ereina.*** Within was the small rubber dinghy recovered from R., and also an Avon Redstart I had bought for the trip across the Channel.

During the afternoon, when we were some twelve miles off Platte Fougère , Paddy spotted a drifting dinghy, empty except for a pair of paddles. A chance to do some tricky boat-handling with a prize at the end was not to be eschewed, so we put about, grabbed its painter and took it in tow. It gave us a grand total of four dinghies; enough to satisfy the most fastidious inspector of nervous passenger.

We ploughed on steadily, clocking up between 5 and 6 knots for some hours. I won't dwell on the facts that the Sumlog jammed and its propellor vanished (a former owner had rigged it on a hinged board in the cockpit), and the Seafix did not work because the battery was flat. In spite of these drawbacks we were safely in Plymouth Sound at 06.40 hrs on 30th August, ready for Customs clearance and with a smooth passage of 19½ hours behind us.

The dinghy we had found was reported to H.M. Coastguards, who were able to trace the owner as he had painted his boat's name and his club initials on it. He was most surprised to learn where it had been picked up, for he had lost it off Berry Head in foul weather some three days before we recovered it.

Round Trip

J. P. B. Mourant — *Alouette de Mer* — A7

I so much enjoyed my 1967 holiday that I decided to go again this year, but return from the Bay of Biscay via the coast. We started from Poole early on Sunday morning the 8th of June, and at 06.40 had a fair tide past Swanage.

Conditions were variable; for a short time fog closed down, some carrier pigeons circled round us and one landed on the diamond stay spreader where he remained until the sun was visible again. However the wind was often around force 4 and we made good progress, reaching Braye harbour just before dark. This is the first time I have managed the Channel crossing in daylight. Unfortunately the wind started to blow from the N.E., but the holding ground is good and we rode reasonably safely but not comfortably to two anchors.

On Monday the wind was force 7 from the same quarter so we stayed put. We could have gone into the inner harbour, but I wanted to be free to leave as soon as conditions changed. On Tuesday the wind showed signs of easing, so we prepared to leave on Wednesday.

On Wednesday morning we left early and took the slack tide through the Swinge. As we left the island the wind came in gusts from the N.E. I dropped the foresail and we ran fast till we were east of Sark, when the foresail was re-hoisted to a moderating wind.

As we rounded the Corbieres the wind increased, but as it was off the land we had smooth water. We reefed, hoisted the small foresail and had a fast sail close to the shore, going right into St Aubin's Bay. Subsequently my crew saw a weather report saying 'today's weather force 6 gusting to 8'.

We spent the night in St Helier and left for St Malo when the tide suited at midday. As usual I took the eastern route past Iles Chausey.

I usually enter St Malo via the eastern entrance, but this time we were just too late and failing light made it necessary to go round by the lit channel. We anchored in the outer harbour for the night.

On Friday morning we passed through the lock and found room at the excellent Marina. Here my crew left for England and I was to be single-handed for the next fortnight. On Saturday I left St Malo, went through the Barrage and continued up the Rance to St Suliac. Here I anchored and took down my mast and then, as before, secured it horizontally on two pairs of scissors 6 ft above the cockpit sole.

During the next few days I negotiated the 65 locks on my way to the estuary of the Vilaine, reaching the last lock at Bellions on Friday the 20th.

Next morning I started to raise the mast, but the lock keeper told me that the swing bridge further down was no longer swinging as it was under repair. So I left immediately, the tide suiting, and continued under engine to Roche Bernard, which I reached about midday. During the afternoon and evening I raised the mast. I had hoped to get some help, but there wasn't anyone about so I managed alone.

On Sunday morning I set off at 0800. Near the mouth of the river, various obstructions, which I had seen on my previous visit, looked larger and more complicated. I then saw an opening road bridge in the open position and a lock with both gates open. I made towards it. A passing fisherman confirmed that this was now the way to go and I sailed through. The sides of the lock blanketed my sails, but the rushing tide left me no time to deviate from my course.

By 1600 hours I was off Penerf, so I hove to and had a cup of tea before negotiating the entrance. I found a quiet and secure anchorage above Penerf on the western side.

On Monday morning I set out for the Morbihan. The BBC forecast for the day, and for many days following, foretold easterly winds which would have been favourable on this portion of coast, but the wind was contrary and remained in the West. Conditions deteriorated; I turned back and ran before a heavy rain squall with little visibility, but it passed in time for me to pick out the Penerf marks.

On Tuesday conditions were no better so I remained in my quiet anchorage above Penerf. On the following day the weather was much better; though in spite of the forecast the wind was still in the West. As I tacked along the coast I estimated that I must be entering Morbihan by 13.50 if I was to avoid the first of the outgoing tide, which runs at 8 knots at Springs.

By 13.50 I was still two miles from the entrance and I could see yachts and barges starting to come out. I now had a favourable slant and a good breeze, so I came racing in through the entrance before the tide could stop me. I anchored up the Auray river in ideal surroundings.

On Thursday I sailed towards the entrance and then with the turning tide made my way towards Vannes. On Friday I anchored just beyond Ile Conleau preparatory to meeting my crew next day at Vannes. On Saturday my daughter Philippa and a medical student, Charles, joined as crew.

On Sunday in fine sunshine we sailed to Belle Isle. The crew bathed on the way and we caught mackerel. We formed the habit of catching and eating mackerel every other day. On Monday we sailed to Port Tudy on the Ile de Groix.

Next day we sailed on to Loctudy. As we attempted the entrance we were opposed by a strong tide of more than 5½ knots, so we anchored right in the middle of the entrance and had supper. By the time we had finished supper a nice beam wind had got up. With engine and sail together we beat the tide.

On Wednesday we sailed round le pointe de Penmarch to Audierne. At this Cape the tides divide; from then on the flood tide flowed either north or west following the trend of the coast.

Next day we had to pass through the notorious Raz de Seine. In the morning we set off, tacking along the coast and aiming to arrive at the race at slack water just before the north-going tide started. With a little judgement and a lot of luck we succeeded very precisely. As we sailed out towards the two lighthouses the tide was still running to the south helping us away from the rocks. Yet when we had got beyond the light-houses and tacked to the north, we found the tide had turned in our favour.

Under these conditions the sea was calm and we had a very pleasant sail on to Camaret.

The next day we remained at Camaret preparatory to tackling the Chenal du Four inside Ushant. One of the harbour walls has been extended recently and the harbour is now well protected.

On Saturday the north-going tide was not until the afternoon so we sailed across the estuary, had lunch while anchored in a bay, and then took the last of the outgoing tide from Brest to bring us to the entrance of the Four channel as the tide turned north. There was only just enough wind to make sailing possible, but the tide made the sea very lumpy; far rougher than the Raz de Seine although the wind was less.

As the tide was now high enough we decided to go into l'Aberildut, which we found very calm and peaceful. Although we left at 0630 on Sunday morning there was already a number of enthusiastic fishermen in their outboard dinghies more than a mile from the shore.

Visibility was rather short and it started to rain steadily, we were accordingly pleased to make our next port at 1400 hours. Just as we sailed past the lifeboat station at l'Aberwrac'h the lifeboat was launched. It returned about an hour later towing a large motor boat, presumably with engine trouble.

Then at 1600 we were suddenly struck by the strongest wind I have ever met. Although the wind was blowing across a river no more than a ¼-mile wide yet the waves were 2 ft. high. The spray was so thick that we could hardly see the next yacht. We dragged a bit, but a second anchor and added scope on the first soon brought us to rest. The yacht next to us dragged, touched and lay over, but the rising tide righted her. The small lifeboat came and took the crew ashore.

To my surprise the wind continued virtually unabated all night. We were lying head to wind and slept reasonably well, in spite of the noise. The wind was later reported as force 10. I couldn't help thinking of the fishermen in their dinghies, which we had seen early that morning. A Customs official subsequently told me that 'beaucoup sont mort'.

As the wind eased next day we went further up river to a more sheltered spot and on Tuesday we continued our way eastward. As the tide was high enough we passed through the somewhat intricate channel between Ile de Batz and the mainland. We picked up a visitor's buoy off Roscoff, did some shopping, and then continued up the Penzée river to a wonderfully quiet and peaceful anchorage. The Penzée river has the advantage over Morlaix that one does not have to go so far to get shelter.

Wednesday brought yet another day of fair winds and fine weather. We came to Perros and as the tides were neap we anchored off the lifeboat station where we could remain afloat. As the wind was off the land it appeared a good anchorage, but a swell came round the corner and made us roll.

Thursday brought us to the Trieux river, past Ile de Bréhat and up to Lézardrieux; which is an area I know from an earlier visit. We again spent some days sailing round and about, visiting Ile de Bréhat and other anchorages. Philippa left on Sunday and we were now all set for the sail to St Malo, but fog combined with easterly winds kept us to local sailing for two more days.

At dawn on Tuesday morning we set off. The wind was still in the East but it had sufficient North in it to enable us to lay our course. Visibility was about 1 mile. We duly picked up Cap Frehel, and with the tide in our favour soon made the entrance to St Malo. We picked up a mooring near to the dam on the west side at about 2000 hours.

On Wednesday we went through the dam locks and explored the Rance estuary. We decided we had time for an expedition to Iles Chausey. Accordingly next morning we passed back through the dam and sailed across. We had a brisk beam wind and took only two hours from the Rochefort beacon to the islands.

Most of the many free moorings provided for visitors were occupied, but we found one to our liking at the northern end of the anchorage. The wind was now blowing force 6 straight down the channel: i.e., NNW, the worst direction. However by 1½ hrs after high water the anchorage became comfortable again.

On Friday we returned to the Rance. On Sunday we went into the basin at St Malo, and Charles left. My wife and Monica joined on Tuesday, and we spent a quiet but pleasant fortnight in the Rance estuary.

We found that St Suliac was a favourite anchorage, except that we used to cross to the opposite side for the night if the wind might blow from the NW. The chart shows that this anchorage, near le Minihic, dries 4 ft. but as the level is now kept at 4 metres (13 ft.) above datum there was always plenty of water. We rode out a gale in comfort here. The shops are more distant than at St Suliac.

On the 6th August I took on a new crew and sailed back to Poole, stopping at Jersey and Guernsey on the way. At Guernsey we visited the new Marina at the N.E. corner of the island. We considered it well worth the 8/6d per day charged for a yacht of our size. There is always plenty of water inside, and although the entrance dries at low water, one can enter well before half tide. The approach needs care as there are plenty of rocks, but doubtless more marks will be provided for next season.

We reached Poole on 14th August after a pleasant crossing via Alderney race and thus ended another memorable Summer holiday. I shall be very pleased to give any help I can to anyone contemplating a similar holiday.

Modifications to Achates for 1969

I.C. Humphreys A.60

These were all concerned with the change of engine.

The stern-gear was standard 16 h.p. Coventry Victor, though I had a Stuart 8. To line up with the shaft the Volvo Penta MDI has to sit rather high and makes a big hump in the cockpit, but this makes a handy galley table in port and for pouring out soup when at sea, having fiddles at either side. I replaced the cockpit floor completely so that I can take up the centre section when I want to. The control panel is high up on the starboard side of the main bulkhead in the cockpit.

The dynastart, apart from starting the engine every time with a single pressure of the button charges a 12-volt car battery, interchangeable with the one in my car for convenience. This runs an 8 watt fluorescent in the cabin and a 6 watt lamp in the galley, shielded from the cockpit. I have 18 watt navigation lights and 6 watts stern. On a separate circuit I have 18 watts each, red over green high up the mast and a white masthead alternative. As the red over green is reserved for the shipping lanes the consumption is immaterial and we have never run short of electricity. The cabin lamp is a great convenience, and the tilley pressure-lamp is now kept for occasions when we need a little warmth as well. For next season I am adding a binnacle light and a light in the after cabin.

The propeller space is a little cramped, but we get a little over 5 knots at four hours to the gallon, which gives us a range of about 350 miles at trifling cost, so we no longer have to conserve fuel or buy it at French prices. There is vibration in spite of the flexible mountings, but noise and vibration are much as we had with the Stuart and I haven't yet tried to deaden it. The engine weighs 285 lbs, but some of this is compensated by the distance to weight improvement in the fuel, a factor of 4 to 1 compared with the old set-up. We are all delighted with the conversion.

Gadgetry - Salizanda II A150

Major-General W. Odling, C.B., O.B.E., M.C.

1. **Focsle Hatch Tent**

   This, which was illustrated last year, is a splendid idea. It not only produces controlled ventilation when at anchor but, more important, gives some privacy with comfort for those using the heads when tied up to a quay. Ours is made of blue canvas which gives a restful light.

2. **Copper Sheeting in Bows**

   We found the anchor chain seldom remained in its guiding pulley and badly scored the hull in consequence.

   We have tacked on sheet copper between the pulpit and the rubbing strake from the stem aft for about a foot. This is most effective.

3. **Cabin Table – Security**

   In the canals in Holland we carried our table on deck with the mast and the boom and everything else. It disappeared overboard unseen. The new table has holes in it for a security line. Incidentally the table is home-made and has no tiresome fiddles as it could hardly be used when at sea.

4. **Foot Supports in Cockpit**

   We found the cockpit seat extensions tiresome and fragile. Instead, on the deck of the cockpit on the after trap door we have fitted two parallel blocks about 18" x 3" x 3" These make excellent foot supports for the helmsman, make a fairly secure temporary central housing for the tiller and a secure mounting for the binnacle.

5. **Polythene Cover**

   We have a polythene cover for use at anchor. It is supported by, and is nearly the length of, the boom and is secured on each side, outside the railings to the gunwale strake. It is far more effective than canvas, translucent and also, cheaper.

6. **The Rudder**

   We often run aground exploring our East Coast creeks and find that the ship sets back on the rudder, which then will not come up using its gear. I have drilled a 1½ diameter hole about half-way along the upper (trailing) edge of the rudder into which with some fishing I can get the boathook when this happens. This is a comfort.

   We also have a rough-an-ready pole with metal socket to act as a means of positive steering should the wire gear break down. I do not suggest it would ever break, but a collision might damage the hull where a pulley is affixed.

7. **Backstay**

   We have a little strop at the junction of the twin backstays, to which the boom can be fixed, to save erecting the horse.

8. **Topping Lift**

   So many people seem to think this an original and bright idea that I mention it, though it applies no more to Atalanta than to other boats. We affix the end of the topping lift down-hand permanently to the cleat on the mast, with plenty of slack. To raise the boom, all that is necessary is to wind the slack around the cleat. To lower the boom unwind one or two turns.

9. **Lee Canvas**

   When at sea the watch below always sleep in our forward cabin and we have made simple canvas 'lee-boards' to hold them in their berths. These are 3 ft. long and about 10 ins. high when erected. They are screwed to the berth (under the mattress) and are sewn to a rope along their top sides. This rope is tied to brass 'D's on the forward and after bulkheads of the cabin. The whole thing stows comfortably under the mattress.

When You Sail You Must Eat

Aubrey Sussens – ***Pumula*** – A42

The marriage of bacon and eggs, hallowed Anglo-saxon tradition, has, no matter how you look at it, become a dull and unromantic affair when performed in the work-a-day rush of a breakfast kitchen. But on the cool, early-morning sands of a deserted bay in Inhaca, under the direction of Carmen Stauch, now that is a very different matter. Pans are for frying, and they are very useful, but beside the still blue waters of the island, Carmen, with a sense of the fitness of things, has other plans. She is interesting to watch, this gastronomic cleric.

The air is still and crisp, sunshine just beginning to filter through the brush atop the hill behind us. We have had a good night's sleep aboard the yacht which, tethered to its anchor chain, stands in the tiny bay like a quiet white horse dozing in the early sunshine. Carmen rows ashore in the fat little duckling of a dinghy, laden with a bag of oranges, a plastic bucket containing 60 eggs packed in mealie meal, large fresh Portuguese bread rolls and coffee apparatus. I am already ashore and have made, on Carmen's instruction, a driftwood fire. Carmen, slim and smooth-skinned, sits cross-legged on the sand and between slightly sacreligious prayers of thanks for the magnificence of the day, removes the oranges from the bag. She tops each one like a boiled egg and with quick expert strokes slices the flesh inside like a breakfast grapefruit.

Helmut Stauch comes ashore in the dinghy, but Bernard Rolfes, unable to resist the temptation, elects to swim; long, lazy strokes that manufacture ripples on the flat water.

When he emerges Carmen hands him and us each an orange, which we eat and greatly enjoy. The oranges have been kept in Heb Coolers on the yacht and are firm and sweet. We have instructions to return the hollowed-out skins, but Rolfes, perhaps too hungry, eats too far into his and throws it away. He must eat another one because Carmen needs the skins.

Now the ceremony begins. There is a touch of religion in the air and we all look solemn and a little pious. Carmen places the empty oranges in a row in the sand and lines the inside of each with slices of bacon. Holding an egg in her beautifully manicured hands, she cracks the shell and drops the contents into the first orange. Soon there is an egg in each orange, and each egg fills just half of the orange.

Carmen then replaces the tops (which she has hoarded) and using two spoons, sets each orange down in the embers of the driftwood. There is silence while we watch her, and everyone breathes again when the last one is in place. As the eggs cook they swell, filling the oranges and lifting the tops just enough to reveal what is inside. The orange flavour comes strongly through the smell of bacon and eggs and together they mingle with the aroma of coffee from the saucepan at the other end of the fire.

The Portuguese bread rolls are toasting on the coals, and fresh yellow butter, home-made from Carmen's farm, stands in the wide-mouthed Thermos flask. This is an emotional moment. Carmen asks Stauch, 'How many eggs for you?' This is a polite question. It is asked daily at countless breakfast tables. Some people like one egg, others two. Stauch eats eight. I had six and Rolfes, finishing his fourth, sticks. Carmen grumbles: 'This cousin of mine. He eats so little.' How many did Carmen have? I don't know. It is rude to count.

I am trying to remember the sequence of events that followed breakfast that morning. This was my first trip after becoming a part owner of ***Pumula.*** Sailing among the islands off Lourenço Marques creates a spiritual detachment that makes it difficult to recall afterwards what part of it was real-life living, what part dreamy paradise; or indeed whether it was not perhaps all of the latter.

We arrived in Lourenço Marques before noon on Thursday and drove to the Club Navale to stow our food and luggage, check the water and petrol and air the cabins. Then to the Coimbra in town where we ate prawns and drank beer. After lunch we returned to the Club Navale and ferried supplementary provisions to ***Pumula*** – a dozen bottles of rosé, two dozen cans of Casal Garcia, four dozen cans of beer. Three Heb Coolers filled with ice and brought from Johannesburg in the boot of my car were to keep this vital supply, together with bacon, butter and sundry foodstuffs, crisp and ice-cold for four days.

We left our moorings at about six that evening and headed out of the yacht basin on the auxiliary motor. Outside, we hoisted the sails and cut the engine. Helmut had decided to make for Inhaca, 25 miles away across the bay. Given a good wind ***Pumula*** can do the distance in about four hours, but this was no racing night. The brisk little breeze that cooled the evening, though it was enough to start that most beautiful of all sailing sounds, the gentle whoosh of water gliding and chuckling past our bows, promised no quick crossing.

The sun went down and the sky filled with bright, warm stars. The beer was cold and Rolfes and I drank it straight from the cans. Helmut has a preference for aperitifs and called for Noilly Pratt. 'On the rocks, plenty of ice and with a slice of lemon,' he told Carmen, who was busy in the galley with black olives, sliced gherkins, salami and smoked oysters. The placing of the galley gives Carmen deep satisfaction, for a woman working in it can take full part in the conversation of the men drinking their sundowners in the cockpit.

We sailed all night, our wake bubbling brightly with phosphorescence and the staunch little duckling throwing up its own tiny little bow wave at the end of its painter. At about 3.30 a.m. we anchored off Elefantos, near Incaha, and almost before the anchor had bitten and held, Carmen was passing up hot soup from the galley.

We heard flying fish skipping on the water and caught them easily in the beam of a torch. Further out the light flashed briefly on the smooth backs of a pair of playing porpoises, and as we scanned the light to shore we saw two turtles swimming in the water. The tide was coming in and as the water moved strongly past the anchor chain it set up tiny phosphorescent bubbles, so that it was possible to see the line curving deeply into the water like a ghostly beam of light. Next morning after cups of hot coffee we found a wind that blew us swiftly to the anchorage at the hotel in Inhaca.

The Bay at Lourenço Marques has many shallows. It is possible at times to go overboard 15 miles from land and stand waist deep in water. With ***Pumula's*** keels retracted, Helmut guided us from the hotel anchorage through the shallows to Santa Maria at the southern tip of the island. When we arrived there at lunch time it had become very hot. We threw out the anchor and put a deck awning over the cockpit. While Rolfes drank cold beer and Helmut and Carmen had Casal Garcia with their salami and smoked oysters, I floated in the water in the shadow of the boat, lazily, dreamily, not wanting to go back to civilisation.

We remained anchored in the bay all day and that evening Carmen rowed ashore with two chickens that she had boiled at home and then deep-frozen, potatoes, spices, the many parts of a salad and loaves of Portuguese bread. I followed with a few bottles of Casal Garcia, frosty from the ice in the Heb Coolers. Then I had to row back again because Helmut likes rosé with his chicken. Dinner – three or four plates each – was around the camp fire, and when we returned to the boat it was to lie in our bunks with the cabin hatches open to the sky in a state of euphoria which swiftly changed to deep sleep.

The beach at Lourenço Marques is perhaps the worst in Southern Africa and consequently few visitors there realise what a wealth of golden sand lies on the beaches of bays and coves not far off shore. For some reason the local Portuguese, though they like to race about in motor cruisers, pay almost no attention to the beautiful bays and beaches available to them. Thus we had what seemed like the whole world to ourselves. On Saturday night we anchored in a deep, narrow little bay just 200 yards from the hotel at the Costa del Sol and went ashore for platters of grilled prawns in per peri.

Just after lunch we were back in the yacht basin. When I went ashore and opened the door of my car the familiar leather smell of the inside hit me like a blow. I had forgotten all about civilisation. Rolfes and the Stauchs went on an errand in the town. I returned to the Club's reed-covered verandah overlooking the little harbour to drink three bottles of beer, slowly, over a period of two hours, to give myself a chance to emerge from the state of euphoria and once again enter the world.

Local Activities of "Joann" A65.

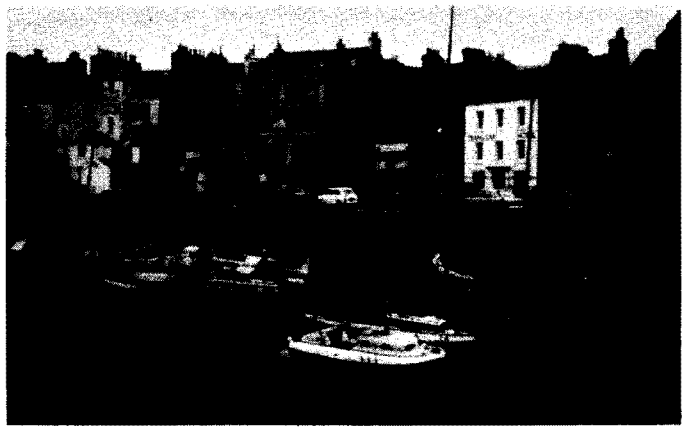
Caroline Boss

It has been a good season here in the North West and we have had some success in local offshore racing. We made our annual visit to the Isle of Man at Whitsun, along with the numerous yachts which congregate in Ramsey harbour each year after having raced from Scotland and Ireland as well as the North Wales and Lancashire coasts. As usual we found several other Atalantas in the harbour. Over the holiday many of these yachts take part in a 'Round the Island' race, which is one of the most popular events of the calendar.

This year we returned from the Isle of Man by way of the Cumberland coast where we spent a night at Ravenglass. This is a charming spot but has a tricky shallow entrance surrounded by sand dunes. However, with keels up we managed to find our way in and spent the night dried out on the sand alongside the bird sanctuary.

A most convenient day trip is from Fleetwood across Morecambe Bay to Piel Island. This small island has the attraction of a castle, and a pub which reputedly never closes! On one visit this year we found ourselves in company with A148 *(Skimbees II)* which we believe had sailed from Glasson, another local sailing centre.

I think the event we shall all remember best was the party held on *Joann* for our son's eighth birthday. We had eleven aboard, including three adults, and after motoring in the estuary and football on the sands we all had a marvellous tea, candles and all. Afterwards we were able to anchor and swim in a natural pool, which is left at low water at the base of the Wyre light, a tower about two miles offshore marking the entrance to the Fleetwood channel. Needless to say a good time was had by all.



Joann in Ramsey, I.O.Man

Joann followed by *Skimbees II*

"One Man's Meat...."

By Mrs. F. Martin – ***Sea Major*** – A.92

Or in my case, "One man's good sailing breeze is another woman's gale". This remark was heard when we visited Llandudno in June. There was very little wind when we left Bangor for our annual visit to Puffin Island, at the eastern end of the Menai Straits, but when we left the island about three hours later, there was a good breeze blowing. We laid our course for Llandudno, and as we were running, we did not notice that the breeze was gradually hardening, although we did notice the long swell building up. Once in the lee of the Great Orme and Llandudno Pier we spent a peaceful night, apart from the occasional howl of an extra loud gust through the rigging.

The following morning my husband suggested that we should set a course for Moelfre on the north east tip of Anglesey, rather than return to Puffin Island and then hug the coast up to Moelfre. When I enquired which jib to put up, he suggested the genoa, but allowed me to put up No. 1 jib. The children (Sheila, 10, Kenneth, 8, Michael, 6 and Alan, 4) were delighted with the idea of going up the east coast of Anglesey, so we weighed anchor and set sail for Moelfre.

All went well until we came out from the shelter of the Great Orme and the full force of the westerly hit us. Had I known what was in store for us, I would have voted to return to Llandudno at once, but thinking that it was only a passing gust, and relying on the weather forecast ("moderate winds") we ploughed on. The wind gradually strengthened and before we reached the Orme lighthouse we realised that we would have to take in a reef. This was easier said than done and of course ***Sea Major*** got broadside on while my husband was doing it.

In spite of all I could do hauling at the tiller, she lay broadside on for a couple of waves, and each time I wondered if we would be rolled over. Except for my husband yelling at me to keep her head to the wind, and my answering shouts of "I can't – she won't answer the helm" there was no talking on board. The children are always quick to sense our tension, and had become absolutely silent. They did not resume their normal running commentary until we were again under way and heeling less. (We realised later that if we had used the jib, instead of letting it fly, it might have given us steerage way – but I was frightened of the bows "digging in" too much – she was already taking in enough water over her bows.

With the reef in, we had a drier sail, but even so, one out of every four or five waves broke over the bows and soaked us all in the cockpit. I suggested that the children should go into the forward cabin. Sheila and Kenneth were enjoying themselves counting the waves which broke over us and did not want to go, but Michael agreed because he felt cold. He returned pretty quickly, but not before he had been sick, poor lad.

By this time we had long since abandoned the idea of going to Moelfre – my only concern was to reach the comparative safety of the Straits and get home to some warm, dry clothes. We passed a few fishing boats going out from Conway, a reassuring sight when we hadn't seen another boat for hours. We must have looked a strange crew, Sheila and Kenneth at the side of the main hatch taking the worst of the spray and waves, myself behind them trying to protect Alan and Michael with my body, while Father sat at the back of the cockpit steering. Alan insisted on holding one of my hands, so I managed to keep one of his warm, but the other soon became numb with holding onto the cockpit side and being constantly wet. Michael suffered in the same way, and insisted on holding one of his father's hands.

We arrived in the shelter of the Straits just as the tide turned against us and then of course the wind dropped! Father was all for going to Moelfre, but the children and I had had enough. We were all soaked to the skin and shivering constantly, except for Father, who was the only one wearing oilskins, so we motored back to Bangor. Surprisingly enough, none of us had colds after this, but we have decided that we must all have oilskins next year.

We estimated that the wind strength was only force 5 to 6, but it seemed much stronger to me at the time.

All our other sails this season have been quiet and peaceful in comparison with this one, even another when the wind strength was the same but we were in the shelter of the Straits all the time. One very amusing cruise took place during the Menai Straits Fortnight. The race scheduled for the afternoon was from Beaumaris to Caernarvon through the Straits. The classes set off at five minute intervals, so we thought that this would be an admirable opportunity to take some colour slides of different classes of boats to add to our collection. We tacked towards Beaumaris and I was able to photograph the leading boats complete with their spinnakers. By the time a few more classes had passed the wind had veered from east to south, and by the time we reached Beaumaris about an hour later and the last class had started, it had gone right round to the west, so we had to tack all the way back again!

Kenneth is now becoming quite a handy sailor, and provided the wind is not too strong, can be given the tiller and told what course to steer. Of course, when we get amongst the boats near Bangor Pier, we have to keep an eye on him, but he usually knows what to do before we tell him.

Sheila, too, enjoys a turn at the tiller, but isn't as keen as Kenneth. She has made reading the echo sounder her job. (This is an instrument which although only fitted last winter has already proved extremely useful, especially when tacking in the Straits, as it means that we can make much longer tacks without risking going aground). Kenneth has started looking at charts and working out how far it is to Ireland, and keeps asking when we are going there. He is disappointed that we are not going this season!

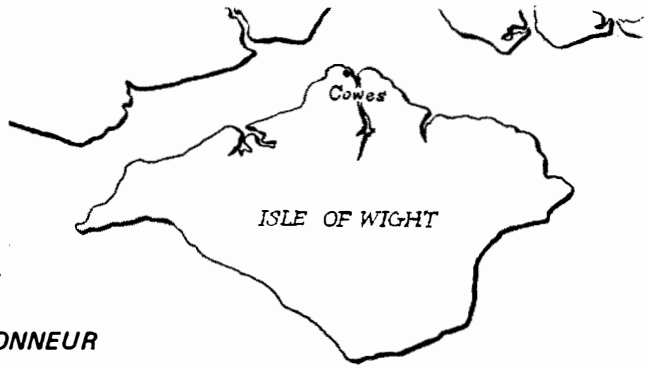
We paid our annual visit to Aber Menai, the lovely quiet and sheltered bay opposite Caernarvon, on the weekend following the Llandudno cruise, and we all enjoyed the delightfully lazy sail and back. The children spent their time swimming from the boat both on the Saturday evening and the

Sunday morning, and Sheila and Kenneth between them did most of the helming. Father was heard to remark (not for the first time) that this was an ideal state of affairs — gloriously sunny weather, a good breeze and his children to sail his boat and bring him cups of tea.

ROUND THE ISLAND RACE 1969 (See p.9.)

RESULTS

1	A39	*EPENETA*	9	A161	*PEGASUS*
2	A122	*JELLICLE*	10	A181	*CIRDAN*
3	A146	*SHERPA*	11	A120	*JEVI II*
4	A179	*EMMA DUCK*	12	A183	*BLUSTER*
5	A174	*CORDYL*	13	A133	*ANN GREY*
6	A169	*KERRY PIPER*	14	A11	*TOMBOY*
7	A178	*PLOOF*	15	A132	*FILLE D'HONNEUR*
8	A147	*CHAMOIS*	16	A160	*MOYRA*



There were 19 starters.