

# *Atlanta Owners' Association*

*2020 - 2021*

*62nd Annual Bulletin*



# Atalanta Owners' Association

## 2020 - 2021 Bulletin

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## Message from the Commodore

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### Commodore's introduction

*(And he said something along the lines of "if you could manage to let me have something without mentioning the 'C' word.....")*

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2020 will go down in the Association's history for all the wrong reasons. My own recollections are mixed; on the one hand the year has been mired in postponements and disappointments; on the other hand, I have managed to navigate the Deben bar twice, been round 'Swallow' Island in the Walton Backwaters, been the subject of a photoshoot and taken part in two drugs runs. The year hasn't been boring.

Whilst many will not have been able to be afloat this year, a few have managed a limited season. For those stuck ashore (for whatever the reason) I do hope you managed to get to the boats and perform the ever-so-important regular maintenance. I'm sure we all know the inevitable outcome of insufficient maintenance. For those of you performing major works, please keep going! Your efforts will be worth it – especially to you, but also to the Association.

My thanks to all those who keep the Association going. It's looking fine!

Best wishes to you all.

Mike Dixon, A1 ATALANTA

## Message from the Editor

What a challenging sailing season we have just experienced! At the last AGM held at the Tamesis Club, Covid-19 was beginning to appear over the horizon. Now we are all surrounded by the pandemic and only have the prospect of a vaccination programme in the New Year to help us resume some of the social activities that we had been accustomed to.

Most owners pursued boat maintenance projects during the early months of enforced lockdown. A few, quartered on the East coast, also managed to launch their boats after lockdown restrictions were lifted at Boatyards and sailing clubs. They created social "bubbles" as advised and sallied forth to explore the East Coast Rivers.

Their exploits are more fully documented on the web site, but there is an extract of their adventures in this bulletin. Many thanks to them all for providing material for this edition of the Bulletin in challenging times. This Bulletin also documents the renovation of a Fairey Dinky dinghy, and has a humorous review of towing vehicles. The log of an earlier voyage in an Atalanta31 is included and, triggered by the rescue of A151 Deannie's parts, articles on sealing the keel-box slots. In the New Year there is also the prospect of publishing on the website a copy of the Atalanta Handbook, referred to by Greg Manning in the previous edition of the Bulletin.

Finally remember that there are awards for your technical articles, cruise logs and photographs which I shall be looking forward to receive for the next Bulletin preferably by the 1st of November please.

Bernard Marshall

## **Volunteer Archivists sought to join the Archive team**

The AOA now has a great many archive items. New documents and material is added every year by Members and the public, often through the website. All of this material is collated in an 'Online Archive'. To date the focus has been on collecting the objects (Bulletins, papers, photos and so on) and making them available to members as they were published. We are now seeking to improve the indexing and accessibility of the existing and new material. Part of this will be some better technology on the website but it would be great if there were volunteers willing to join the Archive / Curation team and help manage the index data. This team comprises your secretary Richard James and webmaster Nick Phillips.

The role is open to development and individuals do not have to sign up for everything. We need researchers, interviewers, writers, and readers as well as people comfortable with spreadsheets and databases.

An initial outline things that need doing are shown below, but this is not an exhaustive list and you may have ideas about additional items and priorities.

- Assisting indexing of existing material to support improved website 'Search' functions. This involves reviewing index records, website posts, photographs and forum topics and checking the tags assigned.
- Reviewing and updating the details for each boat in the register by reviewing every bulletin and matching content to the registers and other information. This would ideally include scanning photographs of the boats, particularly where there are currently none.
- Contributing to the design of new Website 'Search' functions to maximise their usefulness to members.
- Collating / writing further historical 'summaries' for the website based on available material e.g. history of the AOA, significant events and so on.
- Capturing the experience and knowledge of Members about sailing and maintaining boats through a programme of interviews.

If you are interested please contact Richard or Nick (details in the Yearbook).

## **Your Boat Details - What don't we know?**

Talking of the archive. We aim to keep a full history of all of the boats. We can't do this on our own - we rely on being told by owners, crew and anyone else who knows. Please:

- Tell Richard or Nick if you see information in the yearbook which is wrong or out of date
- Have a look at the register entries for your boat on the website and let us know of errors or any additional information you can supply
- If you have photos of your, or other, Atalantas consider letting us record them in the Archive,

# **The CA Victory Rally 2005 (& other peregrinations)**

**By Mike Dixon**

An account by one of the participant boats – A31/4 GELLIE

## **Introduction**

The Cruising Association (CA) decided that in 2005, they would hold a rally for members involving a circumnavigation of the UK. Two fleets would set off from the south coast of England, one clockwise the other anti-clockwise with the aim of both fleets meeting up in Stromness, Orkney Islands, on mid summer's day. The rally was called the Victory Rally commemorating the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar.

2005 was also the 50th anniversary of the Atalanta, with a major AOA event taking place at Hamble Point which I was determined to attend. Add to the mix the AOA's East Coast Race and the Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival and the logistics and crew changes became challenging! I quickly realised that I had to be part of the CA's anti-clockwise fleet. I decided against trekking south from Stonehaven to the start at the Isle of Wight merely to retrace my steps.

GELLIE was (and still is) the fourth Atalanta 31, recovered by me from west Wales in October 2001, refurbished extensively and re-launch in 2004 before undertaking a memorable voyage later that year – which nearly ended in tragedy.

GELLIE joined the Victory Rally as the participating boats came north past Stonehaven. In the end, she was away for just over three months.

## **Friday 3rd June**

The first day was north from Stonehaven to Peterhead. We were plagued by engine problems; the engine was newly installed which intermittently wouldn't start, and even when going, wouldn't stop. Nevertheless, we arrived at Peterhead without major drama and met up with the other participating boats. Because of the continuing problems with the engine, we declined to join in the merriment.

Next day, Graeme Mackay roared up from Aberdeen on his motor bike and worked his engineering magic such that we never had any more problems. Another drinks party (23 guests) on board one of the other CA boats. Only the second night of the rally and already the liver is complaining.

The next rendezvous port was Stromness, to give participants the option of cruising the Orkneys and possibly the Shetlands beforehand. We decided to head for the Orkneys initially and see what the long range weather forecasts were predicting before venturing further north. In the end, none of the boats got to Shetland.

## **Monday 6th June**

We made a break for it, but only got as far as Fraserburgh, but at least we had safely rounded the corner into the Moray Firth. Rattray Head always seems to manage to throw confused seas, or fog, or both, at us. Fraserburgh is a fishing port and whilst will gladly take you money (£20 for the night, with absolutely no facilities), I would caution against it for pleasure craft except in extremis. But it was blowing northerly force five and very uncomfortable out at sea.

However, the next morning was much better and after a walk round to peer over the sea wall to the north, we decided to go. Outside it was virtually flat calm and so it was for the remainder of the day as we chugged our way north to the Orkneys under engine. Purists may question why go all that way under engine when there were no time pressures. Fair point, but we had all done just about everywhere possible in the Moray Firth and had a desire to get to Orkney. And distances are significant and the weather very changeable often at short notice. So the decision was made, and we got to Orkney in 14 hours, 82 miles out from Fraserburgh.



*The Old Man of Hoy from GELLIE*

We anchored in Lamb Holm, in the lee of one of the Churchill barriers.

The next few days were spent pottering round the Orkneys, either at anchor or alongside. We decided against going further north as the weather was unsettled. Quite often our paths would cross other CA boats and on these occasions an impromptu party would be initiated.

In Lerwick, the night of 12th June was particularly wild, with northerly gales, heavy rain and violent motion. We had no less than 13 ends of mooring ropes out – one of those nights. The harbour master Charlie recorded a sustained 45 knots of wind for several hours. He also dropped in the local news item that Orcadians would be advised to slap on factor one sun screen.

We arrived in Stromness on the 16th June in time for the many planned celebrations. It seems quite a while ago now, but at the time, there were only two pontoon marinas in Orkney, one at Kirkwall and the other at Stromness. Both were there largely as a result of the persistent lobbying of old friends Barry and Lindsay – locals who had been true stalwarts at the Tall Ship's Race in Aberdeen. Good use was made of the time in Stromness. Lots of minor repairs and improvements to the boat; a photo shoot to the Old Man of Hoy sea stack; dinner at Barry and Lindsay's; visiting Ian Richardson at his boat building shed and of course an almost continuous round of parties on board several different CA Rally boats.



*Stromness Orkney. Midsummer's Day. Sunrise at 0340 hrs*

On mid summer's day, there was the official reception and dinner at the Stromness Hotel. An excellent evening complete with a local ceilidh band. The Orcadian Strip the Willow was even attempted though with somewhat limited success.



*CA Rally at Stromness*

### **Wednesday 22nd June**

We had already decided to attend the Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival the next weekend and then go along to and through the Caledonian Canal to the next rendezvous. Other boats had already decided to have a go at rounding Cape Wrath.

Crossing the Pentland Firth can be daunting, but provided one follows the excellent instructions in the Clyde Cruising Club's pilot guide, the passage, whilst exciting, is pretty straightforward. We were ahead of ourselves and diverted briefly and went alongside Lyness for an hour. We were only in the Firth for an hour or so before rounding Duncansby Head and shaping a course for Wick but even so, managed to achieve a speed over the ground of 14.4 knots at one point. We berthed at Wick at 2224.

Portsoy harbour dries and so as to arrive there at high water, we had to leave Wick at 0330. The wind was foul and we motored the entire way across to Portsoy.

### **Saturday 25th June**

The festival weekend was its usual mix of weather, light hearted sailing, good banter and many reunions. GELLIE's log book records that we fed no fewer than eleven people on board on the Sunday night, followed by live music on board.



*Socialising Portsoy Festival*

On Monday we made our way along to Lossiemouth in the company of WINDSHIFT and the D'Arcy's. Next day was a leisurely passage along to Inverness and the Caledonian Canal.



## Sunday 3rd to Sunday 10th July

I went home this week. Meanwhile my stalwart crew David and three of his pals from Aberdeen sailed GELLIE round Mull to Dunstaffnage near Oban. David and I spent the next couple of days meandering generally southwards via Loch Spelve and Ardinamir to Craobh Haven – the next rendezvous on the CA Rally. We spent quite a few days in Craobh Haven, catching up news and gossip from the other boats. It was quite interesting the variety of routes followed by the different boats as they made their way from Stromness. Another reminder that Scotland's west coast really is vast and has plenty for everyone, though it is very advisable to be self-sufficient; England's south coast it certainly isn't. Whilst at Craobh, we were able to offer the use of our car for shopping trips to Tesco in Oban, and nearly all the crews availed themselves of the opportunity.



*Caledonian canal – Fort Augustus Locks*

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> was David's last day, so we agreed to host the drinks 'party' aboard GELLIE. I should point out that GELLIE was only one of two wooden boat taking part, but the oldest and the smallest. We managed to host 23 people on board, all undercover as it was bucketing down. Just as well there was a good cockpit cover. It seemed to go well and the one hour norm became two and a half hours.

## Monday 18th July

Time to leave for the next leg. We made our way down to Howth near Dublin, calling at Craighouse Jura, Gigha, Bangor, Portaferry and Ardglass.

I had three new crew for the next leg, but the weather at Howth was so dreadful, we went nowhere except a very brief trip to the fuel berth. This became known as the "Sandpaper Cruise" – alternative periods of wet and dry with various grades of grit.

I was single handing from Howth to Milford Haven, the next rendezvous, but as the weather

was forecast fine I wasn't concerned. In fact it was rather nice to have some peace and quiet for a couple of days. I stopped overnight in Arklow before making the long leg over to Milford Haven – brilliant blue skies for much of the time, excellent visibility, so a very relaxing 15 plus hours for the 84 miles.

Milford Haven turned out to be the last rendezvous for the CA Rally as we had to press on to Hamble for the AOA meeting.

### **Saturday 6th August**

To pick up a fair tide round Land's End meant an early departure. We moved from Milford Dock down to the pontoon at Dale the previous evening, ready for a quick departure. Disappointingly, there was little to no wind and the decision was made to make the trip under engine. 21 hours and 117 miles later, we moored in Newlyn, having rounded Land's End in poor visibility with the result that we saw hardly anything of this famous headland. Anyway, that was two corners of the circumnavigation safely rounded – only two more to go.



*Sunset - Studland Bay anchorage*

Then gentle progress up the Channel to Hamble, rounding the Lizard (the third 'corner' of the UK), calling at Falmouth so I could visit Phil Burgess at the Lizard Lifeboat station. Then on to Dartmouth, Studland Bay anchorage (where I believe you can no longer anchor) and finally to Hamble Point on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August.

The AOA weekend was excellent and despite my appalling race performance, thoroughly enjoyable. It was pleasing to see all the planning come together after the initial idea had been aired at Colin's months before hand. We even had an AGM and prize giving, following an unscheduled change of venue due to the lousy weather.

## **Monday 15th August**

The next date was the East Coast Race at West Mersea the following weekend. No peace for the wicked! The forecast for the next few days was favourable so we could take our time. We called at Eastbourne, Dover, Ramsgate and Bradwell, before mooring to the piles at West Mersea on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August.

## **Saturday 20th August**

My race instructions were (we later found out) on the door mat at home some 500 miles north, so it was with some consternation that we established that our start time was in 50 minutes. And we still didn't have the full crew. Nothing daunted, we sailed the course anyway without formally racing. That evening was the traditional fish and chip supper at East Mersea Village Hall followed by the firework display.

All that had to be done now was to get GELLIE and crew back north to Stonehaven. The east coast can be a bit of a slog and there are some long legs to cover. There were just the two of us – myself and Richard. We called at Shotley Point and then Lowestoft where we had to leave the boat whilst I went home by car to attend some urgent family business.

Two weeks later, the two of us returned to Lowestoft (near enough the fourth 'corner' of the UK) to resume the voyage home. This involved calling at Hartlepool, Blyth and Eyemouth before picking up the home mooring at Stonehaven on 12<sup>th</sup> September.

A very interesting and varied voyage which largely went without drama. Some of the long legs under engine were tedious but necessary. All the crew changes (apart from West Mersea!) went well and no-one had to find a B&B or muddy ditch in which to sleep the night unexpectedly. Total distance was 1972 miles with 382 hours under way. After the previous year's experiences it was a relief to have the plan come together without drama.

*(This account was written in 2020, long after I had sold GELLIE to new owners)*

## **Help the Aged; Be Kind To Your Mast and Boat By Greg Manning**

When Fairey advertised the Atalanta they stated that it could be used as a caravan. I do not think they were suggesting that Mum, Dad, Auntie Glad with two children and the family dog should set off on an alpine tour in their Rover P4 or Mk1 Landrover and using their boat as their accommodation. It is more likely that the intention was that the boat could be slept in while taking it to somewhere to launch. If this is the case there had to be some scheme to carry the mast as it could hardly be carried on the roof of that Rover P4. I can only assume that it was intended that the mast be carried with its heel on the mast step secured with the pin, and then supported with the horse in the raised position for those who bought this accessory. This cannot have been ideal as the mast would have a seven feet overhang at the stern.

When we collected A142 the mast was already laid over the pulpit and pushpit for the long drive from Hull to Aberdeen. The boat as manufactured didn't have a pulpit or pushpit so this cannot have been the designed method of carriage. It is a very unsatisfactory solution as unless the pulpit and pushpit have specifically been designed to take the load and associated forces it could not only damage the pulpit and pushpit but also their mounting. A142's toe rails were badly damaged as a result. Not only that, but a wooden mast is not

made to take stress at right angles to its length. The forces are the weight of the mast plus any downward force of any lashings. More importantly the dynamic forces caused by driving over an uneven surface will be many times greater than the weight. A142's mast was found to have its forward joint open which needed re-glueing and a cover piece made to fit the profile of the mast for its lower six feet.

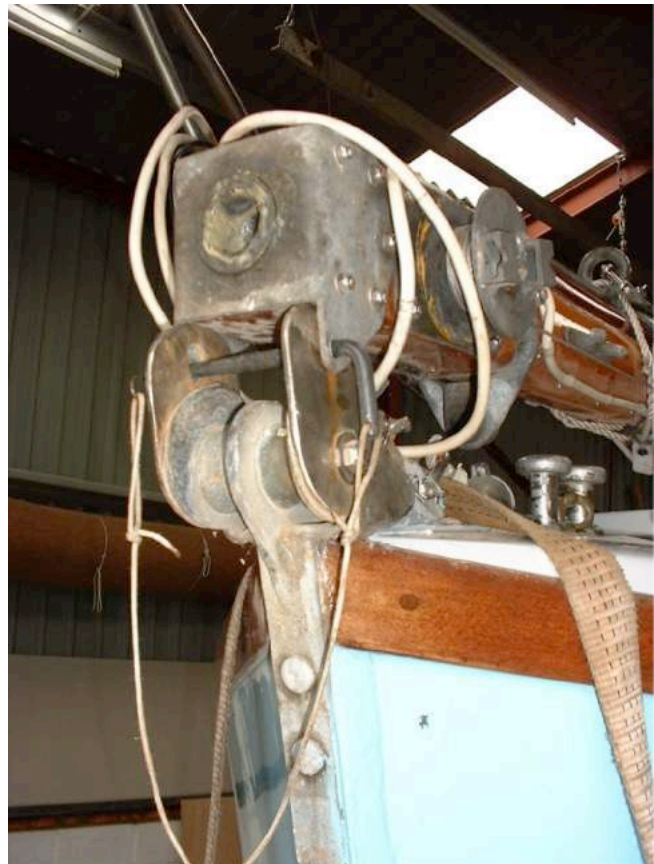
### **Mast heel on the bow fitting**

As A142 was to be kept on a swinging mooring one of the first modifications was the addition of two cheek pieces to the stem head rollers so that a keeper pin could be fitted to ensure the mooring bridle didn't jump out of the roller and cause localized damage.

When it came to thinking about the carriage of the mast it was fortuitous that the lugs at the foot of the mast fitted over these cheek pieces albeit a very tight fit. The transit pin held it securely onto a part of the boat that was strong enough to ensure it could cause no damage. Being a tight fit, were it to be replicated, then the design would be altered accordingly.



*The cheek pieces on the stem head roller with the keeper pin.  
(How did that stainless steel go rusty?)  
Note:- to stop any chaffing the bridle is chain as it goes over the rollers, the shackle is wire locked and the bridle is moused onto the bollard.*



*The heel of the mast secure on the stem head*

### **Supporting the mast above the deck**

The next problem was how to mount the mast over the boat. Thought was given to making a crutch to fit the horse mountings but this still left a long section of the mast unsupported. As the mast would lie across the horse at an angle it could cause a rearwards force that, with the leverage of the height the crutch could over-stress the horse mountings. Instead a crutch was made that rested on the cockpit sole and which could be angled forward to meet the mast at nearer a right angle. The crutch was made to be taken apart but this has never needed to be done.



*The crutch made to take apart. A scrap of carpet is used as padding.*

Two "U" bolts were fitted on each of the fore and aft cockpit bulkheads to provide strong points for one inch ratchet straps to secure the crutch and mast and were also useful for other purposes. Job done, mast secure, a smiley face all round.

Wrong!

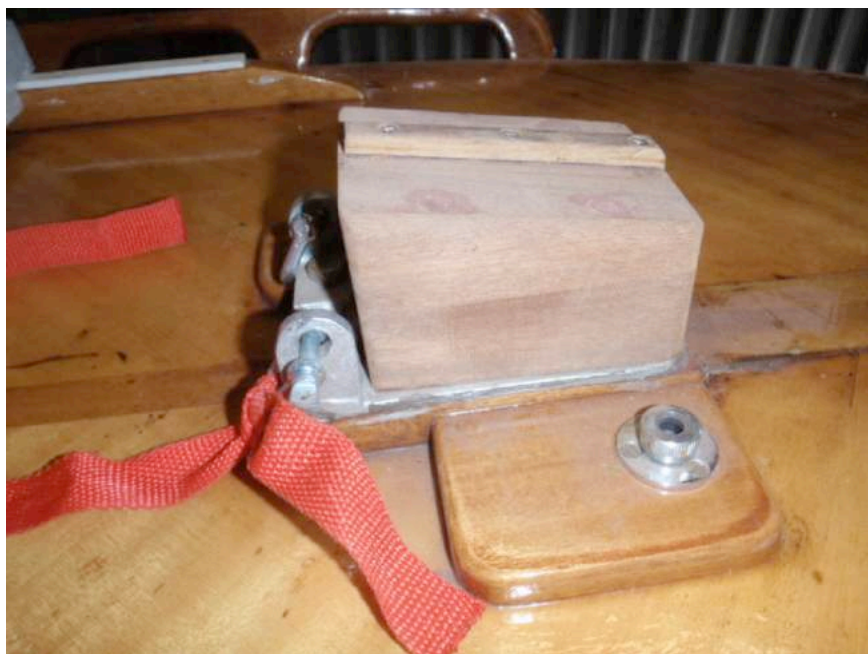
Alas in transit the feet of the crutch migrated aft and the localized weight of the crutch feet damaged the cockpit sole. The next modification was to make two load spreader boards that were self locating due to their fitting round the hatches and that had lugs to locate the feet of the crutch.

This worked fine for many years for journeys of over a hundred miles over highland roads but it was still possible to see the cross trees in the mirror moving around due to the mast flexing.



*The self locating load spreader boards with lugs to locate the feet of the crutch.*

## Support at the mast-step



The next addition was of a block on the mast step that was made to the angle of the mast in transit. This had a raised strip so as not to crush the mast track. Sugar Plum now has a mast carriage scheme that is kind to the mast and the boat in their old age!

*The mast step block angled to the lay on the mast in transit and the tie down strap.*



*The mast secured in three places to stop any whiplash in transit.*

### **In the future - crutch for lowered mast on the water**

The present custodian of A142 (does one own an Atalanta or keep it safe for a future generation?) is considering a trip though the Forth Clyde Canal. This will require not only a method of lowering and raising the mast but carrying it on board whilst keeping the cockpit clear of obstructions. The next plan will be to design and make a crutch that fits the horse mountings. This is made more difficult as the mast is only put into the transit position the day before departure for launch. No doubt a solution will be found.

### **Trailers must be kind too**

Whilst being kind to old boats it was lucky that when a new trailer was bought to collect A142 the manufacturer, RM Trailers of Alresford, had an original Fairey plan. The main cradle on this trailer has two recesses that the keels can be lowered onto, and take the weight of the keels centrally thus off loading all the weight of the keels from the hull. Hulls of vessels are made to take the weight evenly over the surface so localized stresses as occur when a boat is on a trailer need to be reduced as much as possible hence the benefit of the weight of the keels being taken off the hull. For any owner with a trailer that does not allow the keels to be lowered onto the frame of the trailer it would be a good idea to make some modification to do so.



*The main cradle of the trailer showing the recesses for the keels to be lowered into once the limit stop blocks have been removed.*

## 2020 East Coast Cruise in Company

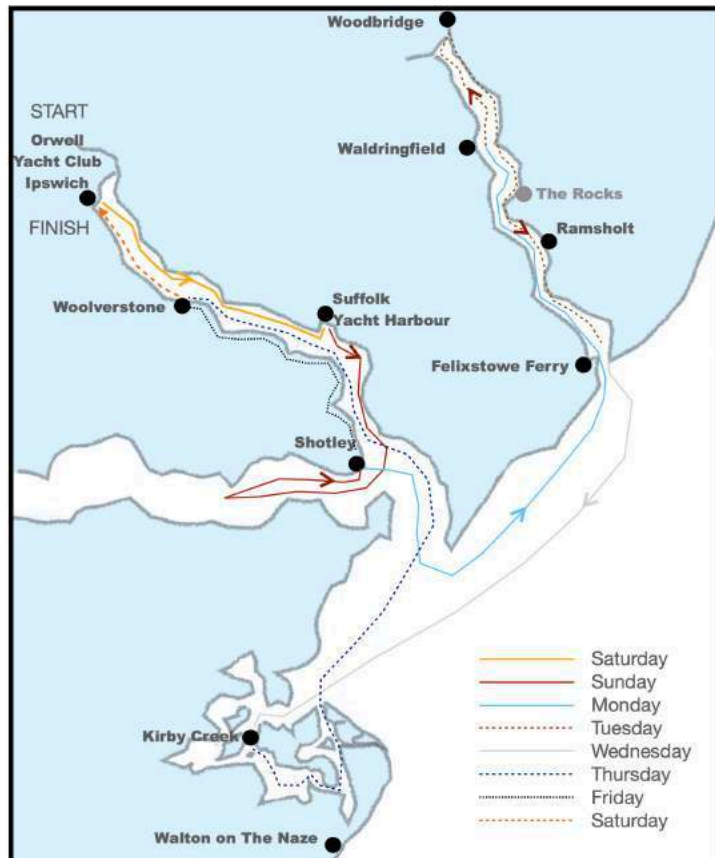
### By Nick Phillips

As with so many plans, Covid-19 created significant uncertainty in the weeks leading up to the scheduled East Coast cruise. Plans were made to limit crews to two per boat (a cabin each!) and hopeful participants asked to decide on taking part based on their own risk assessments. The uncertainty was increased in the last few days by forecasts of 50 knot winds towards the end of the week. In the end the cruise started with three of the four Atalantas based on the River Orwell: A1 Atalanta, A89 Colchide, and A124 Helene.

The cruise had been planned with thoughts of Maurice Griffiths, Jack Coote <sup>[1]</sup> and Ted Walker<sup>[2]</sup>. The focus was the enjoyment of creeks and mudbanks rather than passages. We scored no records for distance travelled, although perhaps a ratio of 6% for water to road miles was unusual? (There were a few crew swaps in the first few days.) However all agreed it was a very enjoyable week with a great mix of weathers, crews, depths, wildlife and scenery.

#### Saturday 15th August - Rendezvous

Atalanta and Helene loaded stores at their base in Orwell Yacht Club. This included a cockpit-variant of 'Swingball' called 'Cockpit-ball' to guard against boredom should we be storm bound. The two boats made their way downriver on the ebb to Suffolk Yacht Harbour at Levington ready to join Colchide the next morning. In light airs Helene managed to sail the whole way and carry out a few rehearsals of their 'going aground' procedures in preparation for the week; Atalanta sensibly maintained progress with the motor in the flat calm reaches.



#### Sunday 16th August - Drug Drop

Sunday was quiet and dull. The opportunity presented itself for A1 to complete another drug deal (see page 29 for activities in July). Shotley Point Marina was chosen as the location for the handover and the three boats left Suffolk Yacht Harbour mid morning. Helene and Colchide ghosted up the Stour against the tide as decoys, often stationary over the ground, whilst A1 locked-in to the marina to meet the delivery crew.

Once Sheila had handed over Mike's medicines, which he had left on the kitchen table, Colchide returned to Levington and Helene locked-in to join Mike and Atalanta. (Coincidentally, Helene had been hailed whilst in the lock by by a stranger who is now her Owner-Elect.) They arrived just in time for an evening of very heavy rain which both crews passed under Atalanta's new cockpit tent with beer and nibbles.





*Beer tent, Shotley Marina*

### **Monday 17th August - No Moaning at the bar**



*Helene lets the side down*

The previous evening's rain had evaporated and appeared to hang in the air the next morning. With a tide to catch on the Deben bar Helene and Atalanta locked out in the mist and calm at 0700. At this point Helene, or rather Nick, committed a heinous crime and shamed the AOA, for all (actually, just Colchide and Atalanta) to see: fenders out on both sides whilst they motored with Atalanta to join up with Colchide off Harwich. The others were unexpectedly magnanimous in not referring to the crime again.



*Looming through the mist*

The fog hid the Harwich and Felixstowe shores as the three boats buoy hopped in line down the western side of the big ship channel. At least one crew was reminded of the Goblin's accidental passage in fog on the same waters some 83 years before(2). The deep, reverberating

blast of a foghorn alerted us to an unseen vessel nearby. Eerily the first sight was of containers and bow in the clouds before the hull and attendant tugs loomed at sea level. The inbound flotilla passed safely to port and we were over-taken to starboard by two wind-farm support vessels. The fog cleared before we had left the river and we crossed the ship channel at Landguard Point to head North East by 0800.

The wind soon followed allowing sails and quiet to replace the whirl and gurgle of the engines. In sunshine the three Atalantas broad-reached up the coast against the flood tide making the Woodbridge Haven bar slightly ahead of schedule.

With only one and a half hours or so of flood left the bar was nowhere to be seen and we sailed into the river. The most excitement was created as we tried to pass the correct side of the Felixstowe Ferry port hand mark - the tide had other ideas!

Safely in the river we sailed up to Ramsholt where Atalanta picked up a buoy and the others rafted each side of her. The three boats took the opportunity for elevenses and some



*Atalanta reaching up the coast with The Naze in the background*

photographs, until the tide turned and they rode up over the buoy. The wind had freshened considerably with the tide change. Helene reefed and ‘played’ for a while, tacking back downriver followed by Atalanta before both turned back towards Waldringfield. Colchide had unrolled her genoa and was blowing peacefully to Waldringfield. Richard had organised three visitors buoys with the boatyard there, each complete with tender and oars! Richard and Simon retired to the Maybush Inn whilst the others made their way up river.



*Ramsholt for elevenses - Cochide, Atalanta and Helene (left to right)*

Helene arrived last having found the call of ‘The Rocks’, a delightful and sheltered anchorage, too strong to resist. Anchoring close in they had walked ashore, gathered samphire for the evening’s risotto and the crew had swum. The three boats’ crews met ashore at the Maybush Inn for a drink before dinner back onboard. We worked hard to maintain social distancing in the bar and pub garden despite others apparent carelessness.



*Looking down river to The Rocks anchorage*

## Tuesday 18th August - Fleshpots and Ferries

Colchide had planned a crew change back at Suffolk Yacht Harbour and was away at 0630 the next morning. Sadly, although with us in spirit, this was the last time we saw Colchide that week due to crew commitments and the worsening forecast. A little later Helene and Atalanta sailed up river to Woodbridge, having to motor briefly in the dog leg reach that is aptly named as the Troublesome Reach. Nick had already phoned ahead and found out that the Tide Mill marina Covid-19 response meant they were not available for short stop-overs unless staying overnight. Although this meant no showers in some ways this was a blessing as the empty buoys picked up off Everson's Boatyard provided a more interesting view of the Tide Mill and riverside. Atalanta's crew went ashore for stores using the boatyard pontoon - £3 in the 'tea fund' at the boatyard. After lunch it was motors on to return to Felixstowe Ferry at the mouth, ready for a quick get away the next day. Despite the twists and turns in the channel, the freshening wind always seemed to be just about right ahead. At the Ferry the Harbourmaster allocated two of the buoys nearest the sea, just out of the main tide. We were in good company with Touchstone, Mike Peyton's last ferro-cement yacht, on an adjacent buoy.



*Pointing out to sea at Felixstowe Ferry*




With just an hour of ebb remaining Helene's crew rowed ashore for a walk along the beach to see the bar and entrance channels. They were suitably impressed, particularly with the vertical shingle cliff that could be seen just a few metres to the channel side of the Mid Knoll starboard hand buoy

## Wednesday 19th August - Ataball and Whacka-Seal

Exit from the Deben is recommended on the flood, to avoid embarrassment if you touch. By starting from Felixstowe Ferry we had minimised our time punching out against the strong

tide in the narrows. Helene had time for another quick jaunt ashore, this time exploring the ramshackle collection of houseboats held by the mud on the Felixstowe shore.

Both boats left under motor at 0930, just after half-tide, mainsails up. After half an hour's slow progress we were clear. With one tack away from the shore we were then able to hold port tack for the ten miles into the Walton Backwaters. Progress was fast with the tide beneath us. Both boats handed sails on the southerly, windward, side of Hamford Water just as the heavens opened. The boats motored into Kirby Creek to anchor off Ambrose point around 1230.

<b>SwingBall Derivatives for Atalantas</b>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cock-a-ball</b></p> <p>Swingball variant for use in Atalanta cockpit. Reduced string length, bat and ball size from the original which was found to tangle too frequently with winches, tiller and boom. Very effective up to F4.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>At-a-ball</b></p> <p>Modification for winds &gt; F4 or when the cockpit is not comfortable e.g. rain. Requires a vertical post in the cabin. Many Atalantas already have these as deck strengtheners and removable versions easily created. Balance of string length to crew agility required.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mast-ball</b></p> <p>A new concept particularly suited to those with slower reactions. Requires three boats, or two boats and a convenient quay. To compensate for the slow speed of the ball players should wear cloudy glasses (not included). Lifejackets recommended.</p>

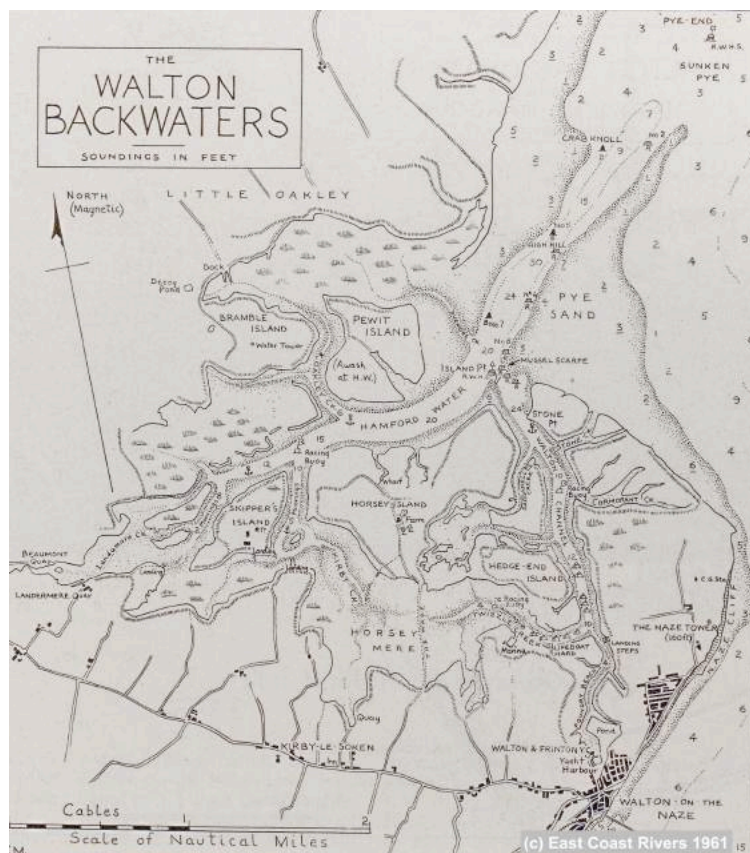
We had planned to socialise after lunch, suitably distanced in Helene's cockpit. The rain had other ideas. Nick decided to investigate the channel behind Horsey Island, where they planned to go the following day, by dinghy. It was surprising to find how deep the channel was despite the acres of mud. Coming round a corner there was commotion of seals who had been basking on the edge of the water. Around ten or eleven seals entered the water and proceeded to surround the dinghy. At any one time only a handful of heads would be seen above the water. A head would surface for a few seconds and then disappear to be replaced by another one in a different place, always staring at the dinghy. Just like a perverse game of 'whack-a-seal'. However they were obviously seriously annoyed about something and continued to see-off the dinghy in this manner for around half a mile. Three of the seals had

remained ashore and it is assumed that one of them was in someway incapacitated and the others were protecting them. Although concerned for his safety Nick eventually turned and 'ran the gauntlet' again to return to Helene for some calming tea.

After tea Helene's crew were showing signs of cabin-fever. Cock-a-ball was out of the question given the rain. An hour or so of brainstorming, prototyping and construction resulted in At-a-ball which kept the crew amused for the rest of the day. See panel.

## Thursday 20th August - In search of Mastodon

Thursday's plan had been much anticipated: following in the wake of 'Wizard' in Secret Water and crossing the 'Red Sea' - actually Horsey Mere - and the causeway known as 'The Wade'. This whole area dries to mud with a few deeper channels.



*Jack Coote's 1960s chartlet of 'Secret Water'*

The two boats left their anchorage and continued up Kirby Creek just before half-tide so as to be able to see the channels and mudbanks. It was a glorious morning marred only by the south easterly wind which obviated use of the sails given the narrow channels. This was a real shame as crossing West to East had been predicated partly upon the hope of sailing with the prevailing south westerly winds.

The water ran out a quarter of mile to the West of the causeway which we could see clearly breaking the water. Out went the anchors and on went the kettles! After an hour or so we deemed there to be enough water and set off, Atalanta

leading with her new fangled plotter-thingy showing the way. Atalanta crossed the causeway without touching, but Helene just touched and then both boats were in the deeper water of the Twizzle creek off Titchmarsh Marina.

Mission accomplished. With no signs of Roger's posts or Mastodons. And next time we plan to do it under sail.

Original plans had included an overnight stop at the marina for showers and a meal ashore. However the forecast of 40knot winds for Friday established a desire to get back into the Orwell before they arrived. No-one felt like finishing the cruise early so moorings were booked in the marina at Woolverstone, just short of the boats' home moorings.



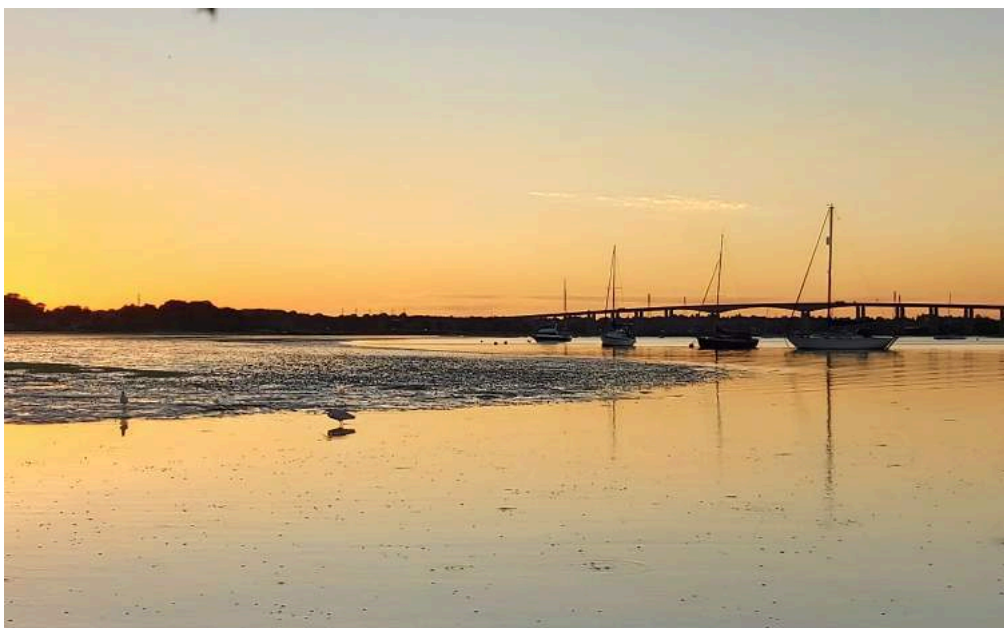
*Threading our way up Kirby Creek*



*A lot of mud!*

In The Twizzle, Helene moored for a dinghy trip ashore for milk, whilst Atalanta continued down the Walton Channel, hoisting sails as soon as possible. The tide was still flooding and the wind light, so it was slow progress. The wind filled in a little by the time Atalanta made Harwich, just in time to meet the first of the ebb coming out of the Orwell. Helene caught up just north of the container terminal in the Orwell. The growing breeze gave reasonable progress as the boats ran over the ebbing tide, improved by keeping in the shallows on the southern side of the river. It was more or less a dead run and Atalanta wasn't doing very well until the spinnaker pole was deployed to pole out the foresail. The spinnaker pole had always looked too long and as a consequence never been tried. It proved to be spot on and made a huge difference to forward progress.

The wind continued to increase as both boats moored up at the north end of the marina, in the lee of the delightful wooded shore. Beers, showers and dinner aboard soon passed the evening. It had been a great day.



*Sunset over the Orwell Bridge, from Woolverstone Marina*

## Friday 21st August - Airborne lunches

In the morning the forecast winds - Force 6 with stronger gusts - had arrived. Although there was cloud it was a bright, dry and often sunny day. Plans were hatched for a passage to Shotley on foot, returning by bus. There is a very good footpath running the length of the river and conveniently passing the Butt and Oyster pub on the hard at Pin Mill. It would have been rude not to stop for refreshments. Covid-friendly ordering procedures (queue up and order through the pub window) soon delivered beer and later lunches served in polystyrene boxes. Sadly these proved to sail very well and two lunches went 'overboard' in a particularly strong gust.

Beyond Pin Mill the footpath travels through National Trust woodland perched on 'cliffs' with beautiful views over the houseboats and river. It then follows the river wall all the way to Shotley Marina. The cafe at Shotley was open so tea and cake were ordered whilst bus timetables were confirmed. At this point it became clear that the hourly bus service previously looked up became two hourly about 15 minutes before we arrived. There followed a comical fifteen minute phone call to a local taxi firm who didn't understand where we were, or where we wanted to go. They also pointed out that Covid-rules were a maximum of three passengers. We were four so Nick chose to walk back. As an end-of-cruise treat, we all ate ashore at the Marina's restaurant that evening.

## Saturday 22nd August - Cruise Review

The wind had dropped a little in the morning as Atalanta and Helene motored the final two and a half miles to Orwell Yacht Club, arriving just before 1100. It had been a splendid few days. Maurice Griffiths and Jack Coote would have approved although I suspect that Ted Walker would have frowned at the use of an engine to cross The Wade. Next year.....

Day	Cruise Leg	Distance Travelled		
		By Boat	By Car	On Foot
Saturday	Rendezvous	6	169	
Sunday	Drug Drop	9	472	
Monday	No Moaning At Either Bar	14	70	2
Tuesday	Fleshpots and Ferries	10	140	1
Wednesday	Attaball and Whacka-Seal	11	0	
Thursday	In Search of Mastodons	12	0	
Friday	Airborne lunches		0	6
Saturday	Post Cruise Blues		169	
		62	974	9

*Mileage Table - don't tell Greta!*

### References

[1] Jack Coote, author of eighteen editions of *East Coast Rivers* over fifty-years

[2] Ted Walker, 'Daddy' in *Secret Water* and the rest of Arthur Ransome's children's books)

[3] *We didn't mean to go to sea*, by Arthur Ransome



## Website - What's Gone On This Year?

A busy year on the website - thanks to all who have contributed. It has attracted a lot of interest from outside of the Association which is a big part of its purpose. The following gives you a taster for what Members have posted about their boats, and some of the enhancements and changes that have been made. You will need to access the website to see the detail. If you haven't already, please do give it a try and contribute to the conversations.

### Keeping up to date

There are new ways to keep up to date without having to search through all the pages. You can be sent email notifications of updates, or simply view everything that has changed since you last logged in. See panel.

**Access the Website**  
**Address: [atalantaowners.org](http://atalantaowners.org)**  
 Or search 'Atalanta Owners' in Google or another search engine.  
*You will need to use your username and password to get access to the full Members' only archive of information. Login or register a new account using the 'Login' menu option at the top right of the home page.*  
*If you have any issues please contact Nick, details in the Yearbook.*

<b>Get the most from the Website</b> <b>Links on the Homepage to keep you up to date</b>	
<b>Get an email notifying new content</b>	<b>Search for new content since you last logged in</b>
Register an email address using the ' <b>Subscribe to Updates</b> ' link on the right and you will receive an email highlighting updates as they are made. (No updates=no email.)	Once you are logged in, click on the blue box above the 'Latest Website Contributions' on the website homepage to see all content added since you last logged in.
	

### Boat Blogs and Events - summary of what's been happening

A major theme through the year has been regular updates on the restorations of **A5 Diaphony**, **A71 Blue Jackaroo**, and **A183 Bluster** - all with lots of photos. Jonathan Stearn's Bluster entries are providing a particularly detailed pictorial reference of the work being done which will be invaluable to restorers following in his wake.

Below are other highlights from the 'Boat Blog' and 'Events' pages of the website. Use either the Register or 'Blogs&Forum' pages to see these updates by boat sail number. (Best seen when logged in.)

**December 2019 A35 Scherzo** - Ex-owner Bernard Blavier contributes memories and enquires where she is. **A113 Aku** - James Wharram about Atalantas and A113's aborted circumnavigation in 1960. **A175 Inyoniamanzi** - enquiry from son of ex-owner in Switzerland. **A1 Atalanta** - restoration is complete and she's commissioned.

**January 2020 A89 Colchide** - discussion about remedies for rudder delamination.

**February 2020 F14 Noggin** for sale again in fine condition. A166 Hullabaloo

**March 2020 A65 Joann** sold to Laurence Wettern in Bridport after ten years in a farm yard. Covid-19 First of a series of notices about impact of the pandemic. 2020 AGM photos and write up.

**April 2020 A76 Inshallah** and **A98 Beki** scrapped by the family of the deceased owner despite efforts of the AOA. **A126 Apple** ex-owner provides photos and some history. Atalanta Lifting strops - Photos and detail. **A30 Trio** John Dixon, son of ex-owners, supplies: information about his parents' involvement in early Fairey PR, delightful AGM Dinner menu cards from 1960-67 (see 'Annual Dinner' under 'AOA menu') and details of **A70 Catalina** as the prize in the Daily Express Boat Show Competition in 1958.

**May 2020 Atalanta 31** early idea drawings, signed by Uffa, added to the A31 'Designs' page. In practice the 31 was designed by Alan Burnard. **A89 Colchide** shows off her new foils. **AOA Video library extended:** 1) Fairey Marine promotional videos and 2) David Clover posted an excellent video of a holiday on **A160 Moyra** when she was owned by the 'London Sailing Project' - now Rona Trust. Virtual Windermere Rally - First virtual AOA meet held 'in Windermere', with visit to Windermere Boat Museum.

**June 2020 A55 Sue** sells from her barn home of 15+ years via eBay. Covid-19 update.

**July 2020 T4 Brother Jack** scrapped as insurance write-off after being hit earlier in the year. Many parts saved by Member Simon West - available on the AOA Parts page under 'For Sale'.

**August 2020 East Coast Cruise** - lots of photos in addition to those in this bulletin.

**September 2020 A115 Mara** for sale mid restoration. Post links to account of historic Atlantic crossing in 1975 by then owner Eric Stallard. Historic. F3 Dunsheen, part completed restoration, added to 'For Sale'.

**October 2020 T1 Nuru Albahar** Jim Nixon provides a photo from the 1980s when his parents owned her. **A1 Atalanta** history and restoration features in Classic Boat magazine. Virtual Laying Up Social held via Zoom with David and Michelle Walworth joining from the US Virgin Isles again. **A154 Deannie** is scrapped. Parts rescued by AOA are now available through the '**Parts for Sale**' page under the 'For Sale' menu.

## **Website Forum Activity This Year**

The website Forum has also been quite active this year with over forty new topics posted and one hundred and fifty replies. Topics have included engine choices, trailing (including trailer maintenance and insurance), mast raising, cockpit tents, and the Atalanta as a motor cruiser. There have also celebrations of **A146 Bluff's** transatlantic crossing in the 1976 OSTAR and links to obituary for Brian Black, yachtsman and journalist who used to own **A78 Marianda**. Access the Forums under the 'Blogs&Forum' menu.

## **Website Improvements Planned - Suggestions Wanted**

Over the 2020-21 winter it is hoped to enhance significantly the website searching facilities. A number of people have already made suggestions for this and we are always delighted to hear comments on ideas on what **you** want from the website. Contact Nick or use the feedback form available from the footer of the website pages.

## Lockdown restoration of a Dinky

By Mike Dixon

At the end of 2019, I obtained examples of a Dinky and a Duckling, both of them fortuitously, at very reasonable cost. The Dinky was destined to become a tender for A1 ATALANTA, and the Duckling a later project to restore her to her former glory as a fun sailing dinghy. The imposition of the lock-down restrictions provided the ideal opportunity to get to grips with the Dinky. She's number 446.



*Before work started*

The dinghy came painted with white household paint on the outside and what was left of the varnish inside, but largely intact and certainly worth a bit of effort. She fitted nicely in the garage and simply constructed trestles brought her up to a comfortable height for working. With no idea just how long the lock-down was going to be, time was not critical. First job was to strip the entire boat back to bare wood and at the same time remove all fittings.

Closer investigation on stripping back the paint and varnish revealed –

- Wasted and rotten external keel strip and suspect skeg
- Dagger board slot and transom pintle and gudgeon where she had been set up for sailing
- Extensive woodworm (dead) in the oak gunwhale and inwhale
- Section of the gunwhale and inwhale missing
- Majority of fixings de-zincified and powdery
- Towing/painter eye bolt of the stem largely wasted away
- The main transom and the transom flap held together with a large doubling piece
- Rigged for sailing with an alloy mast and a Topper sail, and most worryingly
- The hull to transom joint 'apart at the seams'



*After all the effort*



With the boat upside down on the trestles, repair work to the bottom could begin. The skeg came away literally in my hands but apart from some scuffs was in good condition and cleaned up well.

*The keel fell off!*



The keel strip, 3" wide and  $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep (75 x 20 mm) had to come off as it was largely rotten along its entire length. Pieces of Sapele were laminated in place using epoxy and then faired off. At the same time the dagger board slot was filled in.

*New Sapele strips for the keel*

That was pretty much all the work necessary on the bottom.



With the boat turned right way up, work could continue on the transom and the inside. The transom to hull joint was hanging apart over much of its width and exercised the mind somewhat.

*Transom Gaps*



*Hull to transom joint clamping arrangement*

All the old glue (and quite a bit of dubious filler) was cleaned from the joint. A rope was passed round the hull about 6" for'd of the transom and made tight. This almost brought the hull back in contact with the transom, but didn't quite manage to lift the hull for a truly snug fit. This was resolved by clamping a length of angle to the top of the transom and then using clamps beneath the gunwhales to lift the hull that final half an inch or so.



*Reinforcing strip of Agba veneer*

I now had a method. The set up was de-tensioned and liberal amounts of epoxy applied to the surfaces before re-tensioning took place. I'm pleased to say that the joint held well. Ever mindful of the belt-and-braces school of thought, the hull to transom joint was further strengthened by laying up four 1" wide agba veneers in the internal corner of the joint



*Transom plugged ready for coating*

Whilst this was going on, I permanently glued the two bits of transom back together and faired in a strip of Sapele across the top to tidy it up. All the holes on the transom were plugged with mahogany dowels.

## Inwhales and Gunwhales and dry feet

I decided to live with the woodworm holes, though they were filled with epoxy before varnishing. The missing sections of gunwhale and inwhale were replaced with suitable pieces of oak.

I wasn't too happy with the bottom boards, sitting as they did on the inside of the hull and held down with turnbuckles and under a fair bit of tension. In the end, I made four floors and screwed and glued them to the inside of the hull, with their top edges level. The refurbished bottom boards sit nicely on top of them.

The other advantage of this means that any water lying in the bottom of the boat doesn't slop over the top of the bottom boards – dry feet!

The final improvement was to fit a vertical batten underneath the thwarts down to the keelson. I felt that the thwarts were just a bit too springy for my liking.

I scratched my head at where to draw the waterline and spent many happy (?) hours searching the internet and consulting with fellow members. I think it looks about right, but only when she's fully laden. The paint and varnish job looks a treat, though she has suffered superficial bangs and scuffs acting as the tender during the somewhat curtailed season. She tows and rows really well.

Now, there's just that sailing Duckling to sort out.....



*Gunwale and inwhale pieces glued in place*



*New floors and bottom boards*



*Thwart support*

## Strange Behaviour on the River Orwell - July 2020

By Anon

There was some strange behaviour involving Atalanta A1 on the River Orwell in July 2020. An eye witness stated that he saw two “strange looking” yachts meeting on the river at about 7.45am. One yacht was green and one was blue. A middle aged man was seen entering a tender from the blue boat carrying a number of packages, then chasing the green boat which had A1 on its sails. He started shouting repeatedly at the boat, which woke up many people along the river. As another boat passed, the dodgy man in the tender removed his glasses, to hide his identity. One eye witness thought the man in the tender looked like “a dodgy drug dealer” and took the following photographs. The captions are what was heard, apparently.



*“Hello Commie, I’ve got the stuff”.*

*“Oh no, he’s back again and he’s filming us.”*



*“Quick, make a run for it, he’s lost his glasses, and cannot see us”*

One of the eye witnesses stated that he was suspicious of their behaviour so followed them to Harwich’s Halfpenny Pier. The two men were seen drinking beer on the green boat at 11.30 am, then a large brown envelope was exchanged from the older man to the younger man. The eye witness then followed them “wandering aimlessly around Harwich town,

looking lost, but spending money”. At mid-afternoon, the green boat made a run for it, towards the open sea, whilst the dodgy looking man joined another dodgy looking man in the blue boat with A89 on its sails. The blue boat carried out a decoy operation up the River Stour.

### ***Just to clarify what actually happened.***

- *Mike, Nick & Richard had arranged to meet to carry out a photo shoot for Classic Yacht Magazine, who had specified: a good backdrop, blue sky, bright light and high water.*
- *Nick did transfer to a tender to take the photos, carrying his camera.*
- *Nick did shout at A1 with photo positioning instructions.*
- *Nick then got back on A89 Colchide and both boats went to Harwich.*
- *We did have a beer at around noon.*
- *We did walk aimlessly around Harwich town.*
- *We did spend some money in a Fish & Chip shop.*
- *Mike did give Nick a brown envelope, but it contained some yachting magazines.*
- *A1 did go out to the open sea, whilst A89 did sail up the River Stour.*

If you have been affected by this story.... please keep it to yourself.

## **Atalanta 26 Keel Slot Sealing Boards**

### **By Richard James**

The open keelbox design has led to many different modifications over the years. There are two distinct issues:

1. Water squirting up the keelbox into the cockpit, making you wet.
2. Drag caused by water flowing and circulating into the empty keel boxes when the keels are down.

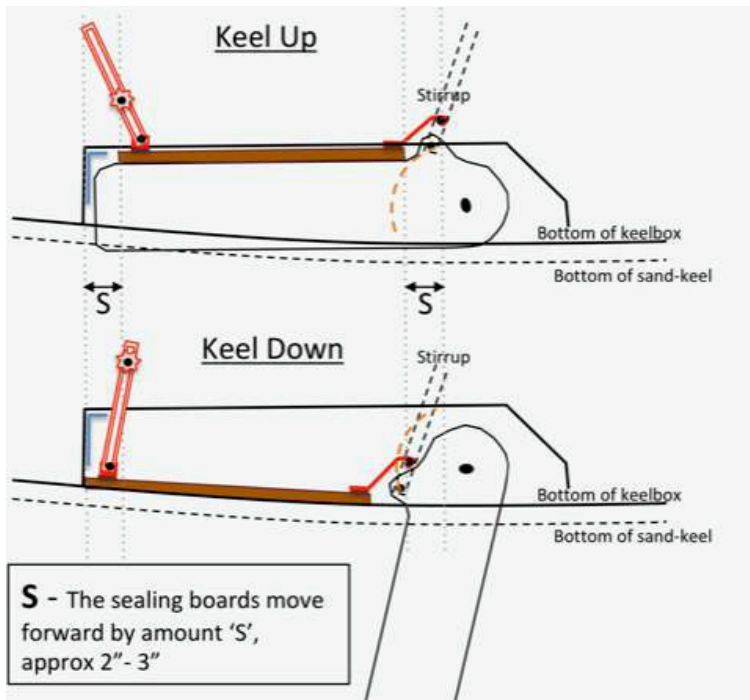
Some boats use these sealing boards, some use soft slot flushers, some use pipe lagging, some use inflatable tubes or inflatable tyres, and some just leave their keel boxes open, accept the drag and cover the upper keelbox to stop water spurting into the cockpit. Not all of these solutions address both issues, which the original Fairey sealing boards do. Fairey's alternative solution for the later boats, was to drill 52 holes into the hull doublers, and fit soft slot-rubbers as in a dinghy. A popular solution in the 21st century is to seal partially the top of the keel boxes and fit 3 or 4 drain holes to provide to allow the cockpit to drain. Some boats actually have household kitchen sink drains fitted to the keel box cappings.

This paper will describe the sealing boards. The relevant Fairey drawings are:

- A24419 – Arrangement of keel case retractable sealing board aft end
- C24451 – Bracket for sealing board forward end
- C24824 – Sealing board
- D24468 – Hand nut keel case sealing assembly (aft end)
- D24590 – Bracket for keel case sealing board aft end

The mounting and operation of the boards is described below.





*Schematic showing boards in raised and lowered positions*

## Measurements

Sealing boards and fittings were found with A154 Deannie in October 2020. The boards were offered up to the hulls of A16 and A89 in late October 2020, which confirmed their longitudinal and lateral profiles were about right.

The main drawing, C24824 states:

- Mahogany length of 4ft 2 5/8 inches x 3 1/4, x 2 1/4 .
- The board should be hard up against the aft end of the inside of the keelbox and should be at the correct height up in the keelbox to obtain the measurements given on the ends of the inboard side, then the excess material should be marked.

Vertical dimensions should be copied carefully and checked against the boat to which the boards are being fitted. The sealing board must not fill the gap between keel and keel box top-plate or the board will try to lift the top plate as the keel is fully raised. (Alistair Rodgers had this trouble in the Med).



Drawing C24824 suggests taking a rectangular block and offering it up to the open keel boxes, Draw the curvature of the hull longitudinally and laterally, then remove the excess material. This gives a sealing board with a slight bow, or banana shape lengthwise (convex to the water) and a trapezium shaped end section (blue).

The lateral curvature of the hull is estimated at 15 degrees. This agrees with the master drawing. The upper

surface of the sealing board MUST be horizontal as in the blue block to allow correct fitting of both brackets.

The keels have a chord length of 15 1/4 inches. They sit at 76 degrees to the waterline, 14 degrees swept aft of vertical, fully down.

The keel box openings are stated by Faireys to be 6ft 5 inches long & 3 1/2 inches wide. However, there is variation between boats and often between sides of the same boat. Both height and width must be checked and re-checked against the drawings AND the boat to make sure they don't foul the keelbox capping.

## Mounting the boards



*Forward mounting*

The sealing board is hung on the keel raising stirrup just above the connection with the keel, on the bolt which holds the two sides of the stirrup together. The 'hanger' is a curved plate with some 'spring' in it. As the keel is raised or lowered the front edge of the board is pulled up / pushed down in the keel box. Note that the keel connection point moves in an arc, and not straight up and straight down so the sealing boards move up, down, forwards and backwards in the box. Martin Bennett reports that with keels fully up there is a 2-3 inch gap to aft, half down keels show a ½ inch gap and fully down a gap of 2-3 inches. Raising the keels from fully down first moves the sealing board aft slightly before then pulling them forward, hence the need for 'spring' in the forward bracket.



*Aft mounting*

The aft end of the sealing board is connected via a hoist fitting (blue) attached with a nut, bolt and sleeve to allow for angular movement to a sliding bracket which allows the fore and aft movement of the sealing board. The bracket is clamped with a large knurled nut to keep the sealing board at the required depth. This clamp has to be tight enough to hold the board down against its buoyancy and the force of water, but not so tight that the board cannot lift if the keels hit an object or go aground.

If this bracket is too tight and the keels hit something and move, it has been known for the square bracket behind the knurled knob to rip the sides of the quarter berth, as this is the weakest point.



*Sealing board found near A154 Deannie in October 2020*

## Alternative aft mountings

The two photos below show Martin Bennett's Mark 2 modification. The aft clamp is replaced with a stainless steel rod guided by an eye. Thick shock cord is attached to the aft cockpit wall, outboard of the whip staff. The shock cord is attached to wire which runs under a roller and to the top of the rod, forcing the keel sealing board down, but allowing it to flutter.

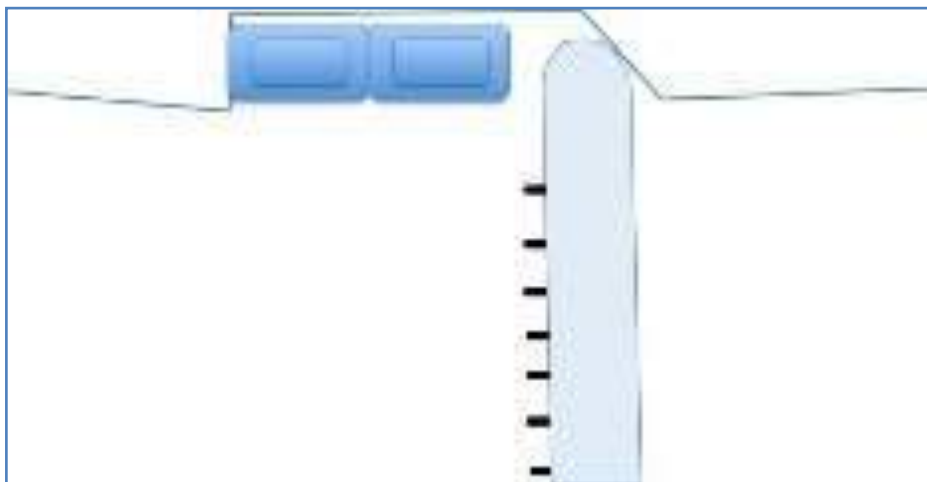
Martin Bennett's Mark 3 modification will incorporate an additional roller to aft and additional shock cord to give more downward force on the sealing board. Martin also advises that the 3 inch x 3 inch gap at the rear of the sealing board allows big waves to drain quickly out of the cockpit using the "jetpump" or low pressure/venturi principal.



*Alternative aft mounting on A16 Dervorguilla*

## Alternative solution posted to the website

And finally, the following idea was sent to the AOA on 1st April this year:



The anonymous sender suggest spikes are epoxied to the trailing edge of the keels. Large strong inflation bags are fitted into the keel boxes, totally flush with the hull. If a keel strikes ground.....

## Reflections on sealing keel slots

By Martin Bennett

This has been a problem since A2!! If it was easy it would have had solution(s) 50years ago! The fundamental design of the boat with a huge cockpit relies on its self draining cockpit, and I am one who respects this and therefore seriously restricting this, for serious use, by closing top of floor is NOT an option.

Dervorguilla, A16 and hull No 12, has the short blister and the cockpit bulkhead much closer to the angled bulkhead. Therefore the case openings in the cockpit are about 16" longer than the later boats - wet feet, and spray is well magnified. Having had the boat since 1978 this is the one problem I have so far not had above 70% success in curing!!



I have tried various PVC and Nitrile rubber seals, both single, double, screwed direct and between stainless 6mm square frames, but with very poor results. I have always had to return to 'swash boards' in one form or another.

When I first acquired Dervorguilla she was fitted with plates, and the clamping strips were slotted teak boards, about

4" x 3/4" x 18", open slot in the middle, reinforced by 1/16" brass sheet either side riveted through the wood. Locking plates bolted through the sides of the 1/4 berths 3/8" ply with 4 x OBA brass/bronze bolts. I did notice that the starboard side had a reinforcing plate fastened on the inside of the berth, but did not think anything further of it.

On our first ever trip out on her, in July 1979, we went to an Atalanta meet at Hamford water from Ramsholt, and anchored overnight. About 05.00 I realised we were aground, with keels and rudder fully down. Panicking I raised rudder, and raised keels. There was a crunching bang and the clamp, complete with bolts and 6" of 1/4 berth plywood tore out of the boat from the 1/4 berth, uncomfortably close to waterline! I panicked and lowered the keel, the swashplate dropped down and I tried to raise keel only to find that the clamping plate complete with gubbins was hanging from the end of the swash plate, port side, extending it by a foot, preventing me raising the keel significantly without seriously damaging the hull. Having had to dive under the boat, fold the clamp on top of the plate, and reach down the keel slot as Janet wound up the keel was not fun, and I was only 32 years old then!! I carried some wood on the boat and screwed a plate over the hole and tied the swash plate up. Something had to be done!!! 40 years later I am still wrestling with the problem.

With keel up there is a 6" gap between the back of the plate and the keelbox, and with the keel and swashplate fully down about 3" This, in up to force 4' is perfect. In a heavy sea the shock cord is not strong enough and the boards move up and down about 8" , but cockpit stays mainly dry, and any ingress is rapidly sucked out. Next move is to lengthen shockcord.

If you, like me, have ever had a wave over the side fill the cockpit with water to the seat level, watch the boiling water disappear, open the cockpit washboard to the rear cabin and find it dry, look in the top and open galley washboard and find main cabin dry and less than 6" in the galley floor, has cause to thank the design of the cockpit draining system, we should not forget the huge size of the cockpit and it's position.

## AOA - Towing Vehicles and Trailers

By Richard James



Fairey Marine tractor manoeuvring boats at the Hamble boat Park, probably in the early 1960s. Note the specially made frame for the tractor and simple low-slung trailer.



*Land Rover advert from 1958*

Left: The Series II Land Rover was introduced in April 1958, exactly 10 years after the Series 1. It had a much more powerful 2286cc OHV fourcylinder petrol engine, or a 2052cc diesel engine. It is unclear if Land Rover sought permission for, or paid Faireys for this advert, which is clearly an Atalanta.

Below: And in America, where there was a growing fleet of Atalantas, Norris D Hoyt was trailing A10 F.O.B. all over the US and Canada.



*“Once across the George Washington Bridge, we were measured for the Jersey Turnpike. We made it by inches.” Norris D Hoyt, 1958*



The first recorded long-distance trail was in 1961, when A92 - Sea Major was trailed to the South of France via 2 nights in Paris. The owners then sailed across the Mediterranean to Alassio in Italy, then back to Cannes, before trailing back to the UK, using A92 as a caravan all the way. On the left is a much later photo of A92 in 2017.



Richard Slater worked for Land Rover in the 70s and 80s and used a prototype V8 for towing trials. He chose to conduct some trials with an Atalanta although the V8 looks a little tail heavy in this photo.



A146 – Le Bateau Ivre being towed in 2013, by a 1967 Series IIA 109 diesel Land Rover. David Walworth is towing her from his old apartment to a new house higher up on Blue Mountain, St. Croix, US Virgin Islands.

A146 has an interesting history.



She was sailed solo across the Atlantic Ocean by Rod White in 1976, then sold to Jon Coile, who sold it to Bill Mitchel in 1982, then to the current owner David Walworth in September 1984. David and Michelle honeymooned on the boat. David has moved her all over the USA and moved her most recently to the US Virgin Islands in 1997.



In 1981 A60 Achates was trailed from Wolverhampton to Brindisi in Italy for a 6 month cruise of the Greek Islands - a 5000 km return journey.

This is a much later photo of A60 taken in 2017.



Mike Dixon used his Land Rover Freelander to extricate A1 Atalanta from her resting place of 25 years, in Jaywick, Essex.

Much later the same day - 17 August 2016 - Mike & Sheila Dixon towing A1 home along the A14, using A89 Colchide's trailer.



A90 Mourne Goblin, being towed by Dominic Dobson's Mitsubishi L200 2.5 diesel which had a 2.5ton towing capacity. Before towing, Dom takes as much weight out of boat as possible - anchor, sails, tools, dinghy etc - and transfers it to the pickup truck. He also drained the fresh water tank. Dominic recommends having the maximum allowable trailer nose weight possible (usually 120-150 kg) and to take it very steady downhill. Dom got 19 MPG when towing the rig above on a long run, compared with about 28 MPG without towing.





Above: A89 Colchide was towed back from Switzerland in 2013 by Bob Ellin of Fenland Boat Transport using a Toyota Landcruiser Colorado Diesel, which is still going strong with over 210,000 miles on the clock.

Below: The following year, Bob Ellin brought A102 Atalanta Mary back from Le Lavendou on the Mediterranean to UK, using a Mitsubishi Shogun.



A33 Sirius being towed by Michel Lapierre in Canada on a low-loader. Due to the height of the trailer and frame, the rudder was left fully extended.



A124 Helene being towed by Nick Phillip's Discovery Mark 2 in 2015. And below by his VW Touareg 2.5Tdi in 2018.



A150 Salizanda II being towed to an Austrian lake by Peter Snowdon and tractor





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