

Atlanta Owners' Association

64th Annual Bulletin - 2022-2023



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From the Commodore

I would suggest that most members, and a fair few non-members as well, would agree with me that 2022 has been a pretty good year for the Association and for Atalantas. I fervently hope that these successes will be replicated in the years to come.

But there are challenges; there is an article in the bulletin which highlights the state of the boats. Whilst it is not all gloomy, there is cause for concern that the pool of good boats is becoming smaller by the day. I've said it before and I'll repeat it now; properly maintained, our boats will still be around for many many years to come. Poorly maintained boats or, even worse, abandoned boats, will rot away and be lost. Surely, we owe it to ourselves and to former owners to do whatever it takes to keep our boats alive. My plea is that all owners realistically assess the state of their boats – are they being actively sailed? – are they being actively restored? – do they fall into the 'I'll get round to it soon' category? – are they lying there unattended because 'I don't have the time/knowledge/skills/health/funds etc to do it up'? Or perhaps just the case that 'I'm no longer interested'. Whatever the reason, please please do get in touch before it becomes too late; we're not here to judge but to help.

The other significant challenge is the age of the membership. Nothing new in that I hear you say, and of course you're quite correct. But once again, it's not all gloom. A couple of recent boat ownership changes have seen a younger member taking on the responsibility of owning an Atalanta. Great to see and long may it continue.

The final challenge I suggest is the composition of the Officers and Committee. Please don't think for a moment that I am in any way criticising the work done by the Committee; far from it. We are, I'm sure, enormously grateful to the Committee members for their hard work – I know I am. This year has seen a couple of changes to the way in which the Committee operates. We now have quarterly zoom Committee meetings at which a range of issues are discussed and actioned – far better than the good old days when there was a rubber-stamping exercise at the Annual Committee Meeting just before the AGM! As a result of this change, it is heartening to see Committee members taking on new responsibilities on behalf of the Association.

One recent meeting focused on succession planning, an issue which to my knowledge has never been properly discussed before. The Association is there for its members, as expressed in the constitution. The day-to-day running of the Association is the responsibility of the Committee as voted for by the membership. All straightforward, but, and here's the rub, what happens if the Committee member a) has had enough, b) throws all their toys out, c) falls under the proverbial bus, etc. etc?? Up to now, there has been a bit of a scramble round to find someone willing to take up the role. Thankfully this approach has historically worked, but there have been some spectacular failures! Hopefully, as a result of the Committee meeting, we are, or will be, in a better position. Please don't forget, you have the opportunity of joining the Committee when it is elected at each AGM.

Thank you for your support this year; feedback suggests we're doing most things right. My thanks, again, to the Officers and Committee for all they do to make things tick. The fact that so much occurs as if by magic, just goes to show how much effort is put in behind the scenes to make it happen seamlessly.

Fair winds, favourable tides – and try to always be on starboard!

Aye Mike 11th Nov 2022

From the editor

This is my first foray into editorship, and I would firstly like to thank all the contributors for making my life easier by generating such easy-to-use articles. We have a range of articles in this year's Bulletin that reflect the association well; articles about times gone by and our sailing glory days, articles about keeping these unique vessels on the water, and several articles that clearly reflect the still, ever so slightly bonkers, adventures and adventurers that truly love the craft we are passionate about. Photos from these articles, where we have owners (and starring sailors) permission will be replicated on the website so you can truly see some of the amazing images in more detail. I hope that you find this edition a useful addition to your collection of interesting boating paraphernalia, as always, the words and opinions are the authors own and have been edited for grammar, spelling and layout only. The Bulletin is an important element of the association, and I would encourage you all to contribute and share your thoughts, experiences and pictures for next year as we all enjoy a diverse and interesting read.

Happy sailing and enjoy the read. Sarah

Memories of childhood sailing holidays on Chamois – Morag Ward (A147)

As we near the end of our years of sailing on Chamois – dad is approaching 85 and the work of keeping her in tip-top condition is becoming more onerous – I thought it would be worth submitting something to the association journal reflecting on what our years of family cruising on the West Coast of Scotland have meant to us.



We started sailing in Chamois in 1975, when I would have been 13, my sister Sue would have been 12 and our youngest sister Jill would have been 5. We used to spend 3 weeks of the school summer holidays sailing around the Inner, and occasionally Outer, Hebrides. Now dad and I go for 3 weeks per year with various other crew members along for the trip.

I had thought about writing an article myself but then my youngest sister started giving me her memories and dad told us that my sister Sue had sent her memories to him back in 2014 before we lost her to breast cancer in 2015. This article is so well put together that we have decided to submit her article instead.

“I remember a primary school class-mate sympathising with me on hearing I’d never been abroad. She just didn’t get it.

Oban will always provide me with a sense of anticipation- the gateway to another adventure.

For most of my childhood, this was the starting point of 3 weeks at sea on Chamois with Mum, Dad and two sisters. For a young child the use of every inch of space on a small sailing boat is magical, and the ingenious ways in which items are held in place when the weather is wild are fascinating.

Probably the most colourful of my memories is the tiny island of Ridire (just inside the bottom end of the Sound of Mull, almost opposite where the ferry arrives on Mull from Oban). Anchoring in the deep water there, we would wedge the rubber dinghy between Chamois and the shore. We children then had easy access to our very own treasure island. Small enough that we could never get lost, the tall bracken gave us a jungle to hide in. The wrecked puffer on the far side of the island ensured that pirates, hidden treasure and marooning on a desert island were all possible.

As a child interested in science there was a lot to intrigue me. Simple things like the large split pin suspended against a crude scale on the outside face of the main cabin, from which you could read the heeling angle. Complex concepts like anchors and chains- how can such a small object tether such a huge boat? I vividly remember asking Dad why the anchor was connected to the chain by such a small shackle? So, he explained the weakest link aspect of chains to me. Then of course there were vectors – tacking, sailing with and against tides.

One of the major advantages of an Atalanta was beautifully demonstrated on one memorable occasion when sailing into the Morar estuary (a white sandy river just south of Mallaig). Most craft have to wait until high tide, but on this particular occasion we very slowly made our way in, winding the keels up a bit whenever we felt the sandy bottom. It felt like cheating!

Looking back, a great part of sailing as a family was being trusted with important tasks such as sheeting in the jib, dropping the anchor, reading the echo-sounder, steering, making the dinghy fast or making the next round of coffee or cup-a-soups (which taste entirely different on-board ship!)

Freedom was a big part of my sailing experience. Being allowed to row around the anchorage by myself at a young age. My first view of an otter was rowing round the bay by myself, early in the morning in Puilladobhrain, (which my teacher was convinced I’d spelt wrongly!)

I think everyone should, at least once in their life, experience the absolute silence and remoteness

I've had in anchorages around the Scottish coast. With no wind and a flat sea, you listen for the faintest of sounds. It's a fantastic mind clearing environment.

I find that sailing can remind you of how small you are and how much space we have around the coast of Scotland. From a young age, at the times where we could see no land and no other vessels I was fascinated with the circular view, like you could see the curvature of the Earth. When in a remote location on a clear night away from "civilisation", the stars are awesome. I have particularly vivid memories of crewing for Dad on a moonlit summer evening sail from Barra to Coll.

Sailing holidays also provided me with other challenges. A memorable one is of catching a number of mackerel one evening and being told by Dad to gut them myself. I rose to the occasion and, grilled with butter, they tasted great!

Being storm bound is another experience everyone should have. No agenda other than waiting for the storm to pass provides the perfect excuse to do absolutely nothing for the day – which is undoubtedly a skill. The three of us in the aft cabin relaxed, entertaining ourselves and happily consuming any supplies passed in to us.

There are countless other memories: Our broch at Totaig (yes, I'm sure it's ours!). Seals and porpoises swimming around us. My first taste of fresh mussels, when, after picking minute pearls from between our teeth for days, we learnt not to harvest them from sandy beaches! A large bumblebee on the red ensign in the middle of the Sound of Mull, and lots of dragonflies well out to sea. Teaspoons and other items (including a hairbrush on one occasion) disappearing through the keel slots in the cockpit. The lovely photo of my feet when I dived off the afterdeck and the camera holder was too slow. And finally, there was the challenge of how long we could sail without stepping on the mainland.*

After 3 weeks on Chamois, the start of the road home always triggered utterings of "Daddy slow down" – at speeds of around 15mph!

Who would swap that for a crowded resort in Spain? I certainly wouldn't."

—
Morag Ward, with fond memories of sailing with my sister Sue.



In Biggar's Gut, Loch Sween

**Editors note: A broch is an Iron Age drystone hollow-walled structure found in Scotland*

A late summer cruise aboard A124 Helene
- or - The adventures of William B. Blister
(Master Mariner, ret.) – as told by himself and others

Crew list

- Nick Phillips (10 August – 4 September)
- Bobbie Sumberg (10 August – 21 August)
- Ted Baker (21 August – 23 August)
- Jonathon Stern (19 August)
- Billy Blister (permanent staff)
- Jim Sumberg (10 August – 4 September)

Wednesday, 10 August

Manningtree > Harwich

- Depart 1030 at HW
- A super sail down the mighty Stour, beating from bank-to-bank; cloudless, F4
- Marmalade cake
- Pick up a Harwich and Dovercourt Sailing Club mooring at 1300
- Bobbie: "Keep talking, it puts me to sleep"
- A1 and Atalanta Mary join us later
- 12 NM

Our Billy went to London town, to the boat show he did go,

He saw an Atalanta, and brought it home in tow.

With family, dog and others, a-sailing he did go,

Our Billy went to London, and the rest we'll too soon know.

*Normal is as normal does, except on an Atalanta,
Where being contrary is all the rage, and daring-do
the mantra.*



Thursday, 11 August

Harwich > Brightlingsea

- 0525 – sail off the mooring
- 0610 – engine on at Harwich Shelf: too much tide, too little wind
- 0713 – engine off, jib changed to genoa
- Excellent sail down the Wallet; another cloudless day
- 1130 – on the Heritage pontoon at Brightlingsea
- 21.2 NM; avg 3.4 knots
- Long hot walk along the eastern bank of the Colne
- Discussion of Atalanta ‘vulnerabilities’ over dinner at the Yachtsman pub

Billy’s mooring was off the hard, he rowed there with a Dinky.

The drawback was that at low tide, the mud was rather stinky.

Billy fancied himself a seaman, ready to sail the ocean blue,

He took epoxy in his coffee, and agba sawdust in his stew.

He bought himself a classic yacht, and never did look back,

But as for sailing his Atalanta, he hardly knew to tack.



Friday, 12 August

Brightlingsea > Ramsgate

- 0940 – depart pontoon
- Genoa set at harbour entrance
- Clear cloudless sky, good breeze, E with some N
- Plan to follow cross Thames via SW Sunk & Fisherman’s Gat
- 1230 – mid-Spitway waypoint
- 1920 – on pontoon at Ramsgate
- Wonderful sail
- Nick makes tomato-chorizo pasta sauce
- 37.3 NM, avg 4.4 knots
- Skipper: “How’s our track?” Crew: “Fine if you’re following the course.”
- Noisy pontoon grouching all night

Billy’s bum was rather thin, and it pained him when he sat.

*The answer, friend, came through the post, one large Impacto-Mat.**

[*Other brands are available]



Saturday 13 August

Ramsgate > Dover

- 0700 – off pontoon
- Main and genoa set at harbour entrance
- Clear blue sky, wind SE, F3
- 0930 – sails lowered in preparation for entry
- Border Force medical emergency delays entry into marina
- 1020 – on pontoon
- 16.4 NM, avg 4.8
- Bobbie swims in harbour; kedgeriee for dinner
- Foreign yacht crews swimming in the marina
- Heard on a Dover pavement: “You should let him carry it – that’s what men are for.”

With a water tank full of epoxy, and agba stored fore and aft,

Billy put staples in the carb-locker, Oh my god!, was he ever daft.

Sunday, 14 August

Dover > Eastbourne

- 0430 – off pontoon
- Sails raised before leaving western entrance; light NE breeze
- Engine to maintain 3 knots waiting for tide to turn
- Clear sky, dramatic sunrise
- 0900 – S of Dungeness
- Foul tide, stay right in toward Rye Bay
- Porpoises sighted
- 1600 – in Sovereign Harbour lock
- 1630 – on pontoon
- 44.5 NM; avg 4 knots
- Walk along the shore; spicy pesto for dinner

We like pot noodle well enough, so tasty and so cheap,

But when a-sailing on mighty Helene they hardly earn their keep.

Give us pasta, olives and cornered beef, they make a man a man.

No vegetables for us, bring us more plum duff,

Served with a dainty slice of Spam.



Monday, 15 August

Eastbourne > Brighton

- Off the pontoon at 1255; out of the lock at 1315
- We tenderly kiss the mud in the entrance to Brighton Marina because they have taken the buoy out for dredging!
- Former Atalanta sailor (A19 Valare) chats on the pontoons
- Bobbie makes 5* couscous for dinner
- 27 nm; avg 3.9

Betty was a lovely lass who never ate raw meat,

And then she met our Billy, who fed her pickled beet.

He said to her “Oh Betty, please, please marry me today,

I could show you my rear cabin and we could make some hay”.

“Oh Billy Boy, Oh Billy Boy I really love you true,

But you have an Atalanta, and hardly have a clew”

Billy took the smooth with the rough, but married life proved really tough,

For Betty didn't sail, or even cook plum duff.

Tuesday, 16 August

Brighton > Chichester

- No sign of Richard – he had said he would go ashore early, and we assumed he had. Turns out he was hiding in the aft cabin of Atalanta Mary, keeping a listening watch
- Off pontoon at 1050
- Another fine sailing day
- 1700 exit the Looe Channel
- Punch the tide into Chichester Harbour, a fool's errand, but we got there
- On pontoon at Sparks Marina at 2050
- Beautiful evening
- 37 NM; avg 3.7 knots

"Oh my Billy" his dear wife cried "Why do you come and go?"

"I own an Atalanta dear and sail it to and fro"

"It doesn't go so very fast", he felt he had to add,

"Another daft excuse" she said, "Why did I marry me such a cad?"

Wednesday, 17 August

Chichester > Cowes

- Rainy day. Walk around the 'village' ending up at lunchtime beating the doors down to café for hot drinks
- Good sailing day – beat up the Solent between the forts
- Spend far too long looking at the bows of a tanker going east
- Wet – all in oilskins for first time
- 13.9 NM; avg 4.2 knots

Betty bought a cookbook to help to build her skill,

She made epoxy pie with agba crust, and cooled it on the sill.

The guests all looked aghast, and thought it best to fast,

But Billy flashed a cunning smile, and run it up the mast.



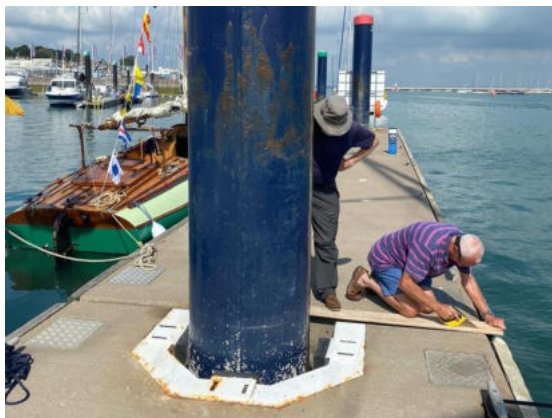
Thursday, 18 August

Cowes

- Spend morning dressing ship and carrying out running repairs
- Once sorted explore UF50 and register – messy register as they don't have online forms; view boats on The Parade and chat about Uffa
- A138 turns up and then we were 5
- Uffa@50 opening event

There were four have-yachts in a cockpit, white plastic and chrome galore.

With bimini set, no chance to get wet, their seamanship rating was poor.



Friday, 19 August

Cowes

- Uffa@50
- First race -- not a lot of wind
- We get over the start line but dying wind and strong tide requires anchoring and human anchor ball
- A1 and then A102 retire
- Eventually We also retire, leaving A100 still trying
- Drift in to the dinghy racing – loads of Fairey and other Uffa boats
- Classic Boat Museum visit

*The handsome Atalanta often draws a crowd,
But dropping it from aircraft never was allowed.*

We formed up on the Senior Line, for all the world to see,

Our Jono at the helm, as stern as Stearn could be.

With the canons all ablaze, and a scene so very fine,

We crossed the line, Hurrah! We crossed the line.

*The wind it did desert us, as we gently drifted back,
Despite our valiant efforts, all the sheets went very slack.*

We crossed the line, Hurrah! We crossed the line.

We slung our hook, such an effort it took, but at least she stemmed the tide,

Bobbing in the sweltering heat, we could only dream of Ryde.

We crossed the line, Hurrah! We crossed the line.

Even with a shortened course, we had to sit and wait,

As 'Mary Lunn' tacked back and forth, across the Solent straight.

We crossed the line, Hurrah! We crossed the line.

With disappointment all around, we finally did retire,

The journey back was very sad, but did thoughts of beer inspire.

We crossed the line, at least we crossed the line.





Saturday, 20 August

Cowes

- Uffa@50
- Second race – a lot more wind – looked like a great day ahead
- But equipment failure forces us to retire moments before the start
- Dinner at the club where we bump into to Sue Harris of Sujawiz

Billy Blista had a sista who swam in Dover Harba.

On the Isle of White she had a fright,

Coz she swam with Dicky, and the tides were tricky.

The day's fair breeze did not foretell of epic tragedy.

But with seconds to the cannon shot, a halyard block did part,

And Helene's race was over, as we retired before the start.

Sunday, 21 August

Cowes > Lymington

- Cruise-in-company
- Early start. Bobby leaves, Ted joins
- Lovely beat down to Lymington
- Motor up to Town Quay with the tide and very little wind, spotting all the boats, before returning to Haven
- 13.4 NM

Billy's view on coffee, was that it must percolate,

He eschewed the jars of instant, but this often made him late.

"Never mind" he said casting off his lines, "We'll get there in the end",

"La marée d'or will carry us right through that tidal gate"



Monday, 22 August

Lymington > Port Hamble

- Cruise-in-company
- Windy grey day. Great sail to Hamble. A100 up and down presenting others with lots of opportunities to take photos of them
- Safari Supper - Ted produces a wonderful lamb and tattie stew
- 13.7 NM; avg 2 knots

A banana a day keeps dry rot away, or so they told our Billy.

But being rather dumb, he ate only plum, and that proved really silly.

Our shipmate Ted had an extra shed, and bought an Atalanta.

He buffed it up, he buffed it down, till the blister shone just like a crown,

And one day soon he'll sail the thing, when springtime comes around.



Tuesday, 23 August

The Hamble > Gosport

- Cruise-in-company
- Drift up early on the tide to Swanwick for some more boat spotting.
- Return and others have left, so off we go
- Dinner at the pub in Gosport
- 13.9 NM

Once upon a midnight mooring, with the skipper deeply snoring,

A little fox became a vandal, jumped aboard and stole a sandal.

Wednesday, 24 August

Gosport > Bosham Hoe

- Ted leaves at Gosport
- 12.6 NM; avg 2.7 knots
- Duckling Worlds



*For navigation our Billy liked the Navionics app,
He found the only issue was to hold it on his lap.*

Billy Blister liked to reef with slab lines fore and aft,

A roller boom for him, oh no, he thought it only daft.

Thursday, 25 August

Bosham Hoe

- Duckling Worlds

Thinking our Billy just a little thick, the boys and girls would play a trick,

“Step upon the Duckling’s deck” they cried, and poor old Billy nearly died.

My name is Billy Blister and I like to have a go,

I bought an Atalanta but it’s really rather slow.

I tried some foils to no avail and a Merlin engine too,

And now I sail a Duckling, and have a lot less work to do.



Friday, 26 August

Bosham How > Newhaven

- Long trip
- Arrive in the dark, and wait for traffic to clear before we can enter
- Blinded by the lights
- Comical night with noisy sand barge unloading
- 47.7 NM; avg 3.7 knots

A shrimper is a thing of beauty, so lovely with its gaff,

But when you see a purple one, it’s really rather naff.

A Contessa may be fast and wet, a gaffer rather scary,

An Atalanta is a thing of beauty, designed and built by Fairey.

The port of Newhaven is a special place, and all the folks are really ace.

Not Clacton with its helter-skelter, nor Brighton with its pier,

Newhaven’s stumpy lighthouse always makes the entrance clear.

*But the sand barge growled on through the night,
only stopping with the dawn of light,*

*And how the ferries came and went, shaking the
boat to a most startling extent.*

*The port of Newhaven is a special place, Billy's
absolute favourite after Alderney Race.*

Saturday, 27 August

Newhaven > Eastbourne

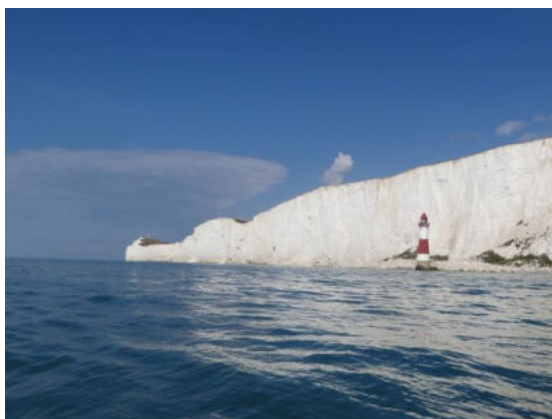
- No wind
- 13.5 NM; avg 3.7 knots

*Hey Ted, we're at Beachy Head but where are you
this mornin'?*

*You jumped ship, gave us the slip, now sailing's
much more bor'en.*

*As the golden tide sweeps Billy east, he sits in
contemplation,*

*The people ask Liz "Where's the beef?", but she
serves up faken-bacon.*



Sunday, 28 August

Eastbourne

- Weather bound
- Walking trip to town

*Billy's wife liked Eastbourne for her regular
summer jaunt,*

*After 12 months living with Billy she was really
rather gaunt.*

*"Where's Billy?" they would ask, and Betty would
reply,*

*"He's fixing the Atalanta with a heap of cheap old
ply".*

Monday, 29 August

Eastbourne

- Weather bound
- Walk to Pevensey

*At Eastbourne how the wind did blow, but from
which direction Billy could never know,*

*Wind over tide would be quite a ride, so straight to
Rye harbour he thought he'd go.*

Oh my Billy don't be silly, come into the bunk I say,

*For the cabin's cramped, there's rising damp, and
we're not even underway.*

Tuesday, 30 August

Eastbourne

- Weather bound
- Bus and trains to Rye
- We see A179 Emma Duck at Martello Marine
- Thai fish curry (with fish from the Rye Fishery)

*A Martello Tower with a moat,
Is no place for a sailing boat.*

*Emma Duck, down on her luck, was seen aside the
Rother.*

*To fix her up and make her sound would be a lot of
bother.*

*Nick climbed aboard, and looked around, and a
hole he did a-spy,*

*But pledged we both, right there and then, to save
her from the Guy.*

At Rye we tasted bread-based lasagne.

Could this be what killed Melania?

Rye Harbour is a lovely port,

But make your stay there very short.

*Some sailors think the River Rother is hardly worth
the bleeding bother.*

*The tide is strong the mud is deep, best stay in
Eastbourne and get some sleep!*

*I think that I shall never see a boat mast as lovely
as a tree.*

*But I tried to take a tree to sea, and that was the
bloody end of me.*

The Bosun's Bite was really tip top,

*But their bread-based lasagne was a god-awful
flop.*

*How much wood would the wood rot rot if the
wood rot could rot wood?*

*I don't know but I hope it's slow coz my blister's
getting thin.*

*I sanded hard for far too long and now can see
right through it*

*But have no fear coz Billy-dear will soon be round
to glue it.*

*[Betty in the galley, cooking up some stew, Billy
astride the blister with his fingers full of goo]*

*Stanley blade in hand, and with scraps of brown
veneer*

Billy had a plan but it wasn't very clear,

*The last staple he finally drove it home, but Betty
was a screaming*

*The bloody thing went into her head, and my God
she wasn't dreaming.*

*Please don't fret, my Betty-O, the staples are just
plastic*

*I'll sand them off and make things good with gobs
and gobs of mastic.*

*That's it for you now my Billy-boy, you've stapled
me in the head*

*So I'm heading off to Berwick town, to find that
fella Ted.*



Wednesday, 31 August

Eastbourne

- Weather bound
- Helped get A1's mast down after it was lifted onto its trailer

When cruising in the ice, some think that coal is nice.

But we are always dozy, under our blister cosy.



Thursday, 1 September

Eastbourne

- Weather bound
- Prepare the ship for sea
- Mock Antioquian cassava and bean soup

The Dobie Shack is quite the place, with suds and steam and more

Our Billy slid on down the hatch, and flailed along the floor

His dirties in a scran bag, and with a pork chop as a fan

He could only think of Betty, in the yacht of another man

Diesel bug may not kill you, but can make your cruising glum.

The only useful treatment, is a largish glass of rum.

An Atalanta owner doesn't need another yacht,

He only needs to get to work, on the one he's got.

Friday, 2 September

Eastbourne > Dover

- Long day, engine assisting for most of the passage
- 48.8 NM, avg 4.4 knots

'E lost is 'eart on the 'umber to a 'ealth and safety lass,

She was from France, she dropped 'er aitches, but she said 'e was too crass.

So dear reader, I must ask you, which of them is lacking nous,

After all, it isn't Billy, who wears is 'ard at in the 'ouse

Saturday, 3 September

Dover > Ramsgate

- Worked in the morning to identify fuel leak (failed washer on secondary fuel filter bleeder screw)
- 1455 – passed out of Eastern Entrance, Solent Rig and a strong tide, wind from S making 4.5 to 5 knots
- The water just at the entrance of Ramsgate Outer Harbour is very confused, and appeared to be boiling. An exciting couple of minutes. The skipper's hand had to be prised off the whipstaff
- 1745 – into Outer Harbour
- 1800 on pontoon
- 14NM; avg 4.7

Overheard on the VHF 74

- ⇒ Yacht Helene, Dover Port Control
- ⇒ Dover Port Control, yacht Helene
- ⇒ Yacht Helene, is the 4.5 knots you are currently making *really* your best speed?
- ⇒ Dover Port Control, yacht Helene, Yes Sir
- ⇒ Holy [inaudible]! Yacht Helene, Dover port Control, Please carry on toward the Eastern Entrance, continuing to make best speed, and clear directly toward the north. We are holding three ferries for you!

Some sailors prefer Musto, and others Henri Lloyd,

But Billy likes a bin bag, the rain for to avoid.



Sunday, 4 September

Ramsgate > Manningtree

- Depart pontoon 0345
- Engine, main and genoa, but little apparent wind around North Foreland
- 0815 exit Fisherman's Gat, better breeze, good speed, engine off
- 0915 across Little Sunk
- 1300 2 NM to Harwich Harbour breakwater
- Great sail up the Stour
- 1550 on mooring at Manningtree

- 50.5 NM; avg 4.2 knots; 12h07m

*Rice cakes are a culinary evil,
But so much better than biscuit and weevil.*

*Rice cake and Spam is like sourdough bread and
Serrano ham,
Only different.*

*Billy Blister went to Westminster, with intentions
pure and hearty.*

*But he discovered the perks, became one of the
jerks, and now leads the Conservative Party. (an
Atalanta Mary contribution)*



Shhhhh – Greg Manning (A142)

There are some subjects that are too sensitive to be spoken about openly. Whispers behind closed doors or brief messages under cupped hands are the norm. Those in the know have an air of superiority and feel members of an elite club, leaving the majority feeling outcasts who are unable to gain membership.

What am I talking about, Coppercoat of course! I am about to come out and reveal all the secrets of this magic substance!

My co-owner, Roy and I bought A142 in 2000. She had been jointly owned by a joiner, and a painter and decorator. Alas all that glistens was not gold and we soon found out that the rot in the aft keel box blocks would not have been out of place at the Mary Rose exhibition and that the hog leaked so much that we dare not venture to sea. Having

found these defects I felt it necessary to strip the whole of the underwater area to examine for any other potential faults that would trigger a one-way ticket to Davy Jones' Locker. I was very lucky in that Roy was happy to work away on his own day after day with a hot air gun to remove all the anti-fouling and paint below the water line. The subsequent inspection found numerous minor faults mainly from original brass screws having deteriorated leaving little potholes that needed to be filled. Feeling satisfied a coat of some proprietary primer was applied and then antifouling.

Every year for the next twenty or so years a fresh coat of anti-fouling was applied. It was never a very satisfying task as however much preparation was carried out some of the old coat would lift when the new coat was applied. A142's bottom was about as smooth as an elephant's bum! A142 only spends three or four months on the water each year but I regularly found small amounts of water in the bilge. This water was definitely salty and with no easy explanation of how it got there I was feeling the need to once again examine her underwater area especially as I could not remember how durable the primer was that I had applied all those years ago.

With Covid lockdown and no chance to launch it was an ideal time to take on the task of once again removing multiple layers of anti-fouling and re-examine the area below the water line. Roy was no longer available, but I did have a friend Martin with time on his hands keen to be doing something constructive. Living on his own we were not breaking Covid regulations for him to be part of my bubble.

Before we started I had to decide how to remove the old anti-fouling and whatever coating I had applied as a primer. I had read an article about a chemical blanket method, so I contacted one of the companies supplying this. I was advised that after applying the chemical I would have to pressure wash the hull to remove all traces before applying another finish. The idea of saturating the wood did not appeal to me especially as I could not clean the whole area with Sugar Plum on her trailer. To work on her bottom I sling her from the roof clear of her trestles just leaving them in place as a safety precaution. Pressure washing indoors was not an option. I was also advised that the chemical might penetrate deep enough to affect

the bonding under the outer laminate. I did buy a sample to try on the stainless steel skeg. It was useless!

Plan B was the hot air gun and Martin and I set about the task. It was far too slow, so it was time to get serious. Martin produces his paraffin blow lamp, and we were in business.



We were in business

We tried a whole range of scrapers but the only the one with a tungsten carbide blade was effective.



The scraper that worked along with the long handled modified one for inside the keel boxes and the 4-inch sanding belt on a block.

We soon had a working routine with Martin on the blow lamp and me scraping once an area of anti-fouling was hot and soft. In most places we were back to bare wood in one scrape but in others the primer I had applied, whatever it was, was determined to stay on in places and I need not have been concerned for its durability.

At this stage I can hear the Health and Safety Police getting their red cards out. Let me remind readers of a law of physics, "Hot Air Rises" and so do fumes from anti-fouling heated with a blow

lamp. We carried out the work in a large shed with the main door open and I never had the slightest whiff of noxious fumes, nor have I grown a third ear!

With a supposed ten-year life span the benefits of Coppercoat were obvious as was the added bonus of a smooth bottom. I had read the details on the Coppercoat web site but was still a little unsure especially about how much it would cost. It was pleasing to have a constructive conversation on the phone with them.

Applying it to wood, stainless steel, cast iron and aluminium surfaces of Sugar Plum was not a problem. Following the coverage formula given by Coppercoat and adding the areas of the inside of the keel boxes, the keels and the rudder blade I placed the order. It included the Hemple primer they recommended for the metal surfaces and the rollers that were different from anything I had used or seen before.

The total cost was twice the price of ten years' worth of anti-fouling, but I consoled myself with the thought that the saving of time and hassle each year for ten years was worth the equivalent of an extra £50 a year!

Burning off the anti-fouling on the hull was not a problem but doing so inside the keel boxes required a different technique. Over the years following various repairs and filling the whole inside has been coated with SP106 resin. Martin welded up some long handles on a tungsten carbide scraper and a few happy hours were spent carefully scraping the inside of the boxes as was removing the last strip of antifouling that abutted the boot topping. The keels had been sand blasted at a local yard and some of the bigger casting faults filled.



The full arsenal of sanding machines was brought to bear.

The next task was to sand and fill all the minor faults in the hull. Only one very small inset of agba laminate was needed. To sand inside the keel boxes I made a thin wooden block that a four-inch sanding belt fitted round. I was a happy Atalanta owner.

The rather heavy box from Coppercoat had arrived and the first task was to prime the metal surfaces. These required three coats and then three weeks to dry, weeks that were used to recruit a team of Coppercoat fairies.



Three coats of primer on the keels and rudder blade.



The Coppercoat Fairies minus the author.

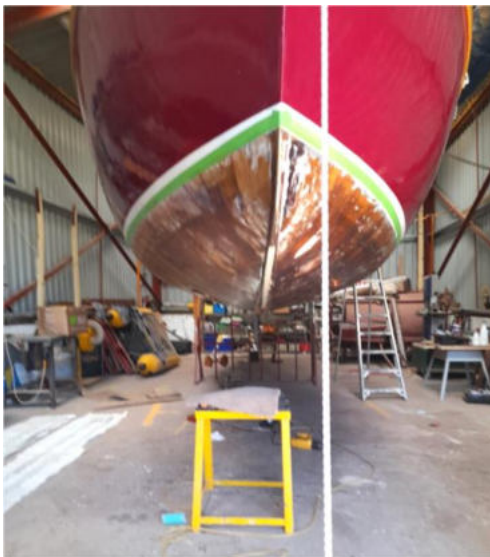
The day of action arrived, there was one coat of resin to apply then four coats of the same resin but with the powdered copper mixed in.



The day of action arrived.

For those who have used the West System or SP 106 the resin supplied by Coppercoat is totally different. It is water based and with no body. I had been advised that it would harden/dry so quickly that by the time one coat had been applied it would be time to mix and be ready to apply the next.

Team Sugar Plum was Martin and another volunteer helper, Stevie, on the seven-inch rollers to do the main area of the hull, Roy on the fiddly bits round the skeg and rudder stock and myself doing the keels and inside the keel boxes both using four-inch rollers and a brush where necessary.

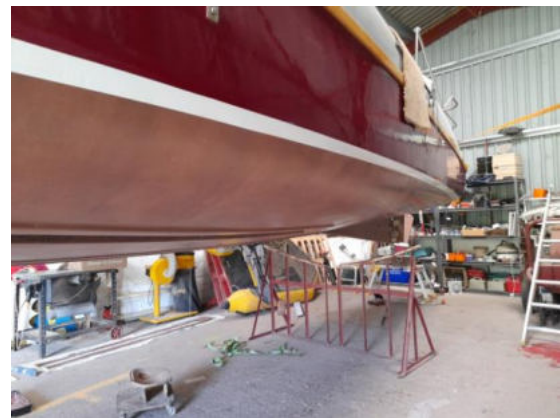


The first coat of resin with no copper

I had chosen a drying day in the summer for the work but the first coat just would not dry/harden; the hull just looked like someone had thrown a bucket of water over it! Clearly the advice from Mr Coppercoat was not for a porous wooded surface. Time went by, tea was drunk, war stories were

told, cake was eaten, and I was getting concerned that we would be working into the night with wives and loved ones distraught that I had hijacked their nearest and dearest!

By late afternoon the first coat was dry enough to apply the first of the coats that had the powdered copper included. Poo, it hardly covered the surface, no sign of any copper. Luckily the following coats could be applied one straight after the other, give or take a cup of tea. It was clear as we came to the last coat that I didn't quite have enough to finish the fourth coat so I didn't do the keels or keel boxes so that I could return another day on my own. Once the last coat was on it did look as if there was good coverage and a dubious team were satisfied that a good job had been done.



The team were satisfied that a good job had been done. Note the trestles in place clear of the hull.

Sugar Plum has now had two seasons in the water with no sign of any significant fouling and her bottom still looks smooth and clean. I hope that I am still the proud owner of Sugar Plum in eight years so I can report back on whether the Coppercoat has lasted the full ten years.

With having to buy another small batch of resin and copper the price did go up beyond the estimate but once I had paid off the credit card I was happy that I would not be crawling about applying a messy coat of anti-fouling every year. I am very pleased to be assured that below the water line Sugar Plum has no defect.

If anyone wishes to Coppercoat their boat I would strongly recommend buying all the products including the rollers etc from Coppercoat and following their advice to the letter. I do have some product left overlooking for a home!

Atalanta's summer cruise 2022 - Exploring some of the east coast rivers – Mike Dixon A1)

Nick Phillips and I managed to get away for a few days on the east coast. The trip had been postponed for a couple of years and the sailing area had been changed as well; we'd originally planned to be sailing Scotland's west coast.

Nick had persuaded me that the east coast rivers were just the place to be – lots of places to visit and acres of glorious mud into the bargain. Who could resist?

I drove across to Ipswich and the Orwell Yacht Club and moved A1 from her (drying) berth onto the waiting pontoon. Nick was busy locating his Yachting World dayboat Edith G down to Walton and Frinton Yacht Club, before joining me on A1 later in the afternoon.

After completing one or two essential tasks, we set off down the river Orwell under headsail alone. We only planned to go as far as Pin Mill. We picked up a vacant buoy, enjoyed a splendid supper and a nightcap in the evening sun.



Supper being prepared at Pin Mill

Thursday 9th June

Tides and weather conditions dictate all passage plans, no more so than in and out of the east coast rivers and the Thames estuary. Our overall plan was to make best progress to the south with the aim to make it to the north Kent coast and the Medway, before turning back north to be at the Walton and Frinton Yacht Club to join in the Old Gaffers Association (OGA) Swallows and Amazons weekend.

With this overall plan in mind, we dropped down from Pin Mill at noon, to be off the Naze when the

flood tide kicked in. The wind was southerly when we set off and slowly but steadily increased as the day wore on. The wind direction meant tacking down the Wallet, long port tacks and short starboard tacks, becoming more uncomfortable with the wind against tide conditions. Despite the best of intentions, we decided not to make for Burnham but instead divert into Brightlingsea, but in the end picked up a buoy in the eastern reaches of the Pyefleet channel. Despite going aground briefly on Mersea Stone Spit, we moored to the buoy at 1900.

Friday 10th June

Plan was to go to Burnham, but the forecast wasn't that good; certainly do-able but likely to be uncomfortable at times. We had to put some short tacks in to keep in the Colne channel but were able to free off a bit once out at the Colne Bar buoy. The wind was on the nose as we crossed the Spitway, but with the engine on to make progress, we were able to put a reef into the main whilst head to wind.

Once through the Spitway, we altered course, hard on the wind, to make our way up the Swallowtail channel. By now the flood tide had started to make, which helped progress in towards the Crouch, but at the same time created some rather tiresome wind over tide conditions. Occasional short tacks were necessary to keep in the channel. Another problem was the sun – right in our eyes – making buoy spotting somewhat of a problem.

At the western end of the Swallowtail channel, we tacked south into the Whittaker channel proper. The wind by now was almost right ahead. The Whittaker channel is wide enough to begin with, and by alternatively doing short and longer tacks, we were still making reasonably progress, though conditions were worsening with ever larger seas being kicked up by the wind over tide conditions.

The channel narrows significantly by Buxey No 1 buoy and by experimenting with the engine on to help us through the wind, we managed further progress. Eventually though, the overall conditions had become very unpleasant, and I decided to hand the sails and make our way up the channel under engine.

If the wind had been a couple of points freer, then we could have continued under sail; it would have been kinder all round. Once past Foulness, the

river widens out and conditions eased and progress up to Burnham Yacht Harbour became much easier. Despite trying to get in touch with the Harbour and failing (they all go home at 1700), we went in and moored in the first available vacant berth.

We had got to the Crouch, but I for one, was a bit battered and bruised! Also wet, having discovered that my waterproof jacket had failed and was no longer waterproof. And they were only 17 years old. A further quick decision saw us high tailing it up the pontoon to the on-site restaurant for supper and a well-earned pint.

Saturday 11th June

It didn't need a genius to realise that our plans for the Medway weren't going to be fulfilled. A shame really as it meant that we wouldn't be making our way out of the Roach through the Havengore Bridge to hare across the Maplin sands towards Queenborough before the water disappeared. But it did mean that we had plenty of time to make our way back up towards the Walton Backwaters.

The morning was spent doing some shopping (a new waterproof jacket being top of the list), having a leisurely coffee and croissants and similar vaguely indolent pastimes.

We motored from the berth at 1400 and made our way up to North Fambridge, mooring alongside the pontoon at 1600. Some very confusing instructions about payment and codes for various gates, but Nick eventually worked it out.



Alongside to pontoon at North Fambridge

That evening (a different) Nick regaled us with stories about taking A1 to Cannes regatta where we were assured of a rapturous welcome. Hmmm!

Sunday 12th June



North Fambridge

We sailed from North Fambridge at 1215, carrying both the ebb tide and the wind, all the way out of the Crouch, down the Whittaker channel to the Spitway. We had planned to be there at 1630; we were two minutes late. Although there was a flood tide to help us up the Blackwater towards Mersea, the wind had by now veered the north westerly and we could only make a course of due north. Engine on and motor the 10 miles or so up and into Salcott Creek where we picked up a buoy for the night.

Monday 13th June

Dropping the buoy at 0730, we took the last of the ebb down to the Nass beacon. Sails were up almost immediately, and we made our way up the river Blackwater, tacking as necessary as the wind had backed south westerly overnight. Once round to the south of Osea Island, the wind fell light and became fluky. Progress was slow. As we had arranged to make the Heybridge Basin lock by 1130, we resorted to the engine for the final half an hour. Through the lock and moored just inside on the south side of the canal. This was the Blackwater and Chelmer Navigation, one of the very few stretches of canal not connected to the UK's network.

After lunch Nick and I took the bank top path into Maldon, looking in at the various boatyards along the frontage. After shopping, back to the basin by taxi and eat ashore at the Jolly Sailor pub.

Tuesday 14th June

We locked out of Heybridge Basin at noon.



Ready to leave the lock basin at Heybridge

Sails up but light and fluky wind meant little progress downstream. Nick had proposed we went north of Osea Island, but we ran out of time to make the passage on the rapidly falling ebb tide. Once round Osea Island, the wind filled in nicely to a force 4 and despite the wind over tide, we made excellent progress down river. Possibly slightly over pressed with the larger headsail, but the boat handled it well.



Sailing down the Blackwater towards Bradwell

Sails were handed just off Bradwell Marina, and we made our way alongside. Not far, but a good day.

Wednesday 15th June

Essentially, plan to be at the Colne Bar buoy at HW and then carry the ebb tide up the Wallet and make our way into the Walton Backwaters.

We left the marina at Bradwell with about two hours or more to get to the Colne Bar buoy. This would have been fine, but regrettably the wind wasn't as favourable as we hoped and it became a beat out of the Blackwater and onwards to the buoy, not helped by the fact that the last of the flood tide was still making. Engine on and motor sail to make better progress.

Once further out at the Knoll buoy, the engine was turned off and we made our way up the Wallet, long starboard tacks and short port tacks to weather the Naze. Wind over tide didn't become a problem and it was a delightful sail at 4 ½ to 5 knots.

Making our way up the Medusa channel to the Pye End buoy, we turned into the channel leading into the Backwaters and continued sailing until we handed sails at 2000 as we approached the cardinal mark. We picked up a vacant buoy just close by Jim on Helene at 2030. A good day.



Walton channel approaching sunset

Thursday 16th June

We had been in contact with Jim (he was on his own) and today we managed to persuade him that the two boats ought to try and sail round Horsey Island. The plan was to be at the western end of the Twizzle two hours before high water so that we still had a rising tide across the Wade and through to Kirby Creek on the western side of Horsey Island.

We wanted, if at all possible, to sail the whole way round and though the wind direction was theoretically good, we were unsure of tidal effects where it mattered.

Anyway, we set off with good intentions and sailed off the mooring buoy. However, we failed to gather enough way on and couldn't tack up the Walton channel. Engine on for the ten minutes or so, until we got to the Foundry Reach/Twizzle corner where we handed the main and made our way under headsail alone.

Crossing the Wade was no problem (the keels were only just out – probably about 3 ft draft), but we did run aground a couple of times, but the mud was/is so soft, that we ploughed our way through

with only a slight hesitation. The deeper water was elusive though we did follow (more-or-less) the dotted lines on the plotter. Once out into Kirby Creek, we hoisted the main again and made our way up into Hamford Water. The tide has turned by now and a strong ebb tide soon established itself. Fine in Hamford Water, but not so good when we wanted to get up the Walton channel through the tricky narrow entrance section. We tried tacking but failed to make sufficient headway, so engine back on and up to the mooring buoy by 1500. Jim nosed Helene alongside and Nick transferred to Helene to give Jim a hand in mooring to his chosen buoy.



Buoys at the Walton Chanel (Helene and Atalanta)

Friday 17th June

A somewhat hot and lazy day. All we had to do was move the two miles or so from our buoy to the Walton Yacht basin alongside the yacht club. The basin retains its water level by means of a retaining gate which is lowered to the creek bed when the water is 'on the level' and free flow. This only occurs about 45 minutes either side of high water. We needed to be there at 1445.

For our brief passage, we left the buoy at 1400 and slowly motored up Foundry Creek and into the pool to moor at one of the vacant pontoon berths.

Once we'd done the shopping, Nick, Jim and I made initial preparations on Edith G in readiness for tomorrow.

Saturday 18th June

The focus for the day was the OGA's Swallows and Amazons race for small boats round Horse Island. In other words, Edith G's and Nick's day!

The wind had picked up overnight and was a good force four from the northeast and forecast to become stronger. Before setting off, Nick quickly

decided to put in the first reef; without hesitation, the crew agreed.

The race officer was Pete (the knife) Ellington and he wisely predicted that conditions in Hamford Water were going to be rather extreme, and that the race would not be round the island but instead, would take place in the more sheltered waters to the east and south of the island.

It was a great turn out and everyone seemed to enjoy the event apart from a couple of boats with gear failure which resulted in 'rescue' and one boat which sank. Oh – and the committee boat ran aground.....

As far as Edith G was concerned, conditions were fine. Nick helmed and Jim and I were crew. The crew became alive as the race wore on, neither of them having experienced this sort of sailing in years. It was very wet but great fun.

That evening there was dinner and prize giving at the club.

Sunday 19th June

Both Helene and Atalanta had to clear the basin when the gate was lowered during the afternoon's high tide period at about 1530, so regrettably, we were unable to take part in racing Edith G during the afternoon.

We motored back down the channel and picked up one of the buoys again.

Monday 20th June

The plan was to leave the Backwaters on the ebb and carry the ebb up to Harwich and then carry the flood up the River Orwell to Ipswich and the Orwell Yacht Club. All went well and we sailed most of the way home. The only unplanned issue was that the change of tide took longer than expected and we had very slow progress to contend with in the lower reaches of the river Orwell until the flood tide kicked in.

There was no doubt that Nick's knowledge of these waters is encyclopaedic and during the course of the trip I learned (or re-learned) a lot. There were times when I elected to shove the engine on when Nick would have preferred to continue sailing, diverting to somewhere more attractive (i.e., downwind). As Nick elegantly put it – he's more of a potterer of creeks and rivers,

whereas I'm more of a voyager. Who's right? Probably both of us - each to their own – but at the same time recognising there's a balance to be struck.



Acres of mud

Atalanta A179 Emma Duck - Richard James

Atalanta A179 Emma Duck left Fairey Marine works on 15 May 1964, as hull no 184, with a ¾ rig and a Ford 100E side valve patrol engine. She was bought by Sir Richard Duckworth, 3rd Baronet of Calcutta, India and Newbury, Berkshire. In 1972 she was bought by Wing Commander H Mossman, of Crediton, Devon who sold her 3 years later to Mr Geoff May of Bristol.



In May 1976 she was bought by Mr Cort Williamson of Bromley, Kent and on 30 January 1978, he informed the AOA that he was about to set out on a world cruise. In preparation for the cruise, Cort fitted two open shelf cupboards to the rear of the aft cabin bunks. These plywood panels met floor, transom and underside of the aft deck, and added useful deck to hull stiffening. They also provided extra space for storage of bedding and clothing whilst at sea, to free up the main cabin. He also fitted a small locker system by fixing ply between the bunk insides and the hull, thus eliminating the hull curvature.



In the main cabin, Cort fitted two ¾ inch ply piano-hinged tables on the forward side of the main bulkhead which fold down supported by a loose leg on the bunk. He found these tables very useful for chart work, although he retained the nav table in the galley. Cort found deck space very limited, especially with a rigged dinghy aboard. Therefore, he fitted an aft platform with a strong pushpit which helped with 'stern to quay' mooring in the Mediterranean and was also used for fishing. This also provided protection for the rudder whilst going aft. Finally, to save foredeck clutter, he stowed the anchors in the engine compartment and the spinnaker pole up the mast front.



Cort Williamson reached Paris in January 1979, then visited Malta and the Mediterranean. He returned to the UK and in January 1981, placed A179 Emma Duck up for sale.



She was bought by Dr Stuart Grainger a Surgeon at QMC, Nottingham in 1982 who then moved to Grantham, then Rochester, Kent, where her home port was Upnor, Medway. This is when Martin Bennett first got involved with Emma Duck. Martin helped Dr Grainger fit new rigging after she was damaged in the 1987 hurricanes. Martin Bennett took her to Pin Mill and with Janet, and spent the whole summer replacing much of the decking. Her next owner was Martin Mitchell of Ipswich who bought her in March 1989. In the 1990 gales, she blew off her blocks and suffered two holes in her hull. Martin Bennet helped again by helping the owner fit new keel mechanisms, new keel bolts, new keel plates, all in stainless steel. She was fitted with a Volvo MD6B twin engine of 10 HP with a prop reduction of 1.9 – 1, using a 12 x 10 propeller. The cockpit was rebuilt in 1999 in varnished ply, the varnished coachroof was epoxy-glassed, and the varnished forehatch was re-veneered. She had stainless steel pulpit, pushpit and lifeline stanchions, with stainless steel backing plates below decks. Aircraft ply was used to rebuild the aft deck.

In February 2000 she was bought by Tom & Louise Lawton, who continued work on her and they were rewarded with the Etchells Trophy in 2001. This was probably the highlight of her time. Martin Bennett described her as “the best Atalanta he had ever seen”.



In 2006 she was put up for sale but remained unsold. In 2009 she sunk in Emsworth harbour and suffered extensive water damage. The accident was attributed to the rudder blade bridle wearing through, allowing the blade to drop on a falling tide. She was put on the hard by the Harbourmaster, where she remained for many years.



In 2019, A179 Emma Duck was sold to a new owner who moved her to Rye. She was left uncovered and deteriorated over the next 3 years.

In August 2022, whilst returning from the UF50 event on the IOW, AOA Committee members Jim Sumberg and Nick Phillips happened on A169 in Rye boatyard. They spoke to the boatyard manager, who used to own a Fairey Fisherman. Jim and Nick took dozens of photographs and completed the AOA boat survey, which provided a structured assessment of the condition of various parts of the boat. Emma Duck scored a total of 74 points out of 255. Such a low score suggested very strongly that Emma Duck would never realistically be restored

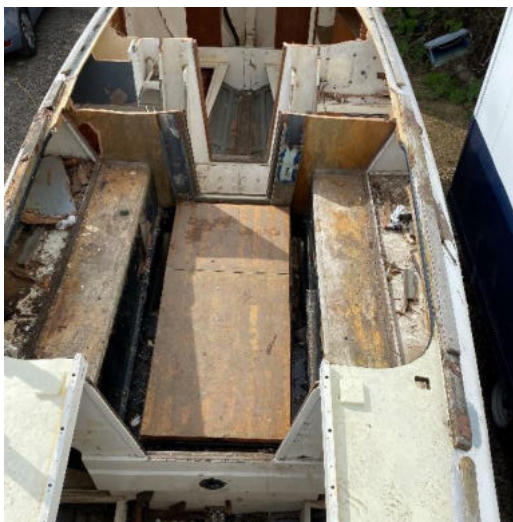
The photos and survey report were sent to other members of the AOA, who considered the evidence very carefully and confirmed that she was not worth restoring due to amount of

restoration required. If restoration was started it would take years to complete and could cost several thousands of pounds. The AOA spoke to the owner about their considerations and the fact that some of her parts could be used to save other Atalantas. The owner agreed and in late September 2022, Mike Dixon, Jim Sumberg, Nick Phillips and Richard James traveled to Rye in two vehicles and methodically stripped A179 Emma Duck of all valuable parts. The parts are for sale at low prices and on our website at:

<https://atalantaowners.org/boats4sale/parts-for-sale/>

The blister, which was in good condition, was also removed for a future project.

Whilst in Rye, we bought the hull from the previous owner for a nominal amount and as we left Rye, we sold the bare hull to the boatyard owner, for the same nominal amount, who in turn planned to sell it to a group in Rye.



Editors note: Emma Duck's remains were used to help raise money at the Rye annual bonfire. Whilst it is immensely sad that a once lovely boat has ended up in this way it was, when looked at by the committee, the only real option. It would be great to be able to prevent others achieving this same end by ensuring that the committee is aware of any boats that are starting to slip or in ownership which is struggling to keep up. There is no shame in saying "she's too much for me".



Atalanta to the south coast for the AOA's events 2022 – Mike Dixon (A1)

Introduction - why did we go all that way?

The idea for the trip south came about some three years ago during discussions about activities that could be organised for the AOA. I casually mentioned that 2022 would see the 50th anniversary of the death of Uffa Fox – the man credited with the design of the Atalanta. Whilst still a long way in the future, the idea grew legs. Nick Phillips and I put together a position paper and then sold our idea to the movers and shakers in Cowes. To cut a long story short, and after a delay of more than twelve months, the Royal London Yacht Club (RLYC) based in Cowes appointed Rodney Barton to make the event happen. Uffa Fox Fifty (or UF50) was the result.

Having got that off the ground, it only seemed sensible to add more events to the timetable to make the trip worthwhile for everyone. Richard James agreed to organise a south coast cruise in company, and Alistair Currey came up with the idea and hosted the inaugural Duckling World Championships at Lighters Field at Bosham Hoe.

In the end, three Atalantas from the east coast made the trip down, Atalanta, Atalanta Mary (affectionately known as Mary) and Helene.

Wednesday 10th August

It was to be a long day. I had to drive with the Duckling to Bosham, pick up Bernard Marshall and get back to Ipswich in time to get Atalanta off her drying mooring before 1530. It was touch and go and there was probably about three inches under keel clearance as we motored across to the waiting pontoon.

Bernard and I got the rest of the gear aboard, went shopping for last minute stores and generally sorted out both ourselves and the boat.

At 1700, we left Orwell Yacht Club and motored down to Harwich against the flood tide and picked up a buoy for the night. Close by, on other buoys were Mary (with Alistair on board) and Helene (with Jim, sister Bobbie and Nick on board).

With Felixstowe docks close by, it was a noisy and short night.



Outward bound – buoys at Harwich from Helene. Mary ahead, Atalanta to starboard

Thursday 11th August

Up early to take the last of the ebb tide out into Dovercourt Bay where we would pick up the flood tide down the Wallet and in to Brightlingsea. We sailed most of the way but had to use the engine to make adequate progress. The tide had made sufficiently to allow us to cut the corner across Colne Spit, which saved us a bit of time. The three boats rafted up on the Heritage pontoon by 1100 with Atalanta on the outside.

Most of the crews opted to go ashore, but I remained on board and achieved a number of niggling last-minute jobs. Everyone went ashore to eat that evening.

Friday 12th August

Jim had studied the Guide to Crossing the Thames Estuary and planned accordingly; it all made perfect sense! The plan was to depart Brightlingsea about 1030, make our way out to the Swin Spitway, cross the Sunk sands at the SW Sunk Swatchway, through the Fisherman's Gat channel and then southwards to the North Foreland and into Ramsgate.



Outward bound – Atalanta on the way to the Spitway

We left at 0935 and followed the plan, if not to the letter, then pretty close. We managed to sail most of the way with the steady north easterly wind, though did have to use the engine a couple of times to make progress to windward where it became a bit critical. The least depth through (the unmarked) SW Sunk Swatchway was a healthy six metres – another example of Jim's meticulous planning to arrive there just about on high water.

The only downside was that I managed to lose overboard the spinnaker pole whilst trying to goose wing the headsail. Although we turned about and went back, it was soon lost to view. Moral – don't fall overboard.

We got into Ramsgate and moored in the marina at 1910. Long day but very satisfied at having safely crossed the Thames estuary.



Outward bound – Atalanta, Helene & Mary at Ramsgate

Saturday 13th August

Our next destination was Dover. The port had been closed to leisure craft for several months whilst improvements were made, and the new marina made ready. We had been expecting to have to make the much longer passage missing out Dover, but a couple of weeks before we left, Nick heard that Dover was re-opening to leisure craft, but a booking system was in place.

Alistair, very commendably wanted to pay his harbour dues at Ramsgate, so it wasn't until 0740 that we made our way out. There was little wind and Bernard and I decided to motor the whole way to Dover. Helped by the ebb tide, we managed 7 knots at times. A great morning with the bright sunshine reflected on the almost white cliffs.

Dover port control was its usual polite but business-like self. Rather surprisingly, we were directed to enter the eastern entrance and make our way across the inner harbour towards the Prince of Wales pier. The lock gates were open, and we moored in Granville dock at 1030.

It was a very hot day, and all three boats rigged some kind of awning to provide shade. Bernard and I elected not to cook on board and went along to Cullin's Yard for supper.

Sunday 14th August

This was to be our longest passage and no matter how it was approached, there was no doubt that at least some of the passage would be with a foul tide. The forecast was good, though little to no wind. Regrettable though it was, Bernard and I decided to motor the whole way to Eastbourne, some 45 miles from Dover. There are one or two possible stops in very settled weather, but essentially it pays to hunker down and go the entire way. Critically, it pays to be west of Dungeness before the tide turns and floods north eastwards. It also pays to be west of the Lydd firing range before the tide turns as well – though there was no live firing scheduled for when we were due to be in the vicinity.

The Granville dock gate was scheduled to be closed from 0500, which suited us well as we wanted to be outside the harbour to take full advantage of the ebbtide. We left the berth at 0435. Dawn was breaking and shortly afterwards we were treated to a splendid sunrise astern as we

made our way westwards down towards Dungeness.

It became mind numbingly boring – hot sun, no wind, and the noise of the engine. However, it needed to be done. The locks at Eastbourne Sovereign Harbour were efficient as usual and after a quick visit to the fuel dock we berthed at 1420. The other boats, Mary and Helene, came in not long afterwards.

Monday 15th August

Brighton Marina, our next stop, was only accepting pre-booking as they in the throes of an extensive dredging programme and many their permanent berths were out of action. We had booked and were assured of a berth.

Brighton is only 'round the corner' from Eastbourne, but the corner is Beachy Head, and it pays to have the tide with you. The wind was south westerly giving a wind over tide situation; not ideal.

We left the lock at Eastbourne at 1330 and motored the whole way to Brighton. Helene managed to sail the whole way, despite the conditions off Beachy Head and Mary motor sailed once round the corner past the Seven Sisters.

Conditions to the south of Beachy Head were turbulent as expected, but conditions were more favourable as we made further progress westwards.

Brighton marina is not the most attractive of places, even by marina standards generally, and the picture is not enhanced when the weather is dismal. Our berths were just inside, and Richard was on hand to take lines and see that we all moored without problems.



Outward bound – Atalanta at Brighton

The weather was decidedly un-seasonable with overnight rain forecast.

Tuesday 16th August

My passage plan was to leave Brighton at slack water at 1330, to carry the ebb tide to be off Selsey Bill just ahead of low tide and then carry the new flood tide into Chichester harbour. The others thought it best to leave earlier. I ought to have stuck to my guns.

All boats left Brighton at 1100 and not surprisingly found foul tide outside. The morning was dull and though we didn't get wet, the rain wasn't far away. Progress was slow under sail, and we soon had the engine on. Eventually, or so it seemed, the tide turned and became favourable, and progress improved. We all carried the tide through the Looe channel, but we were all well ahead of ourselves.

This resulted in us reducing speed to round about 1 ½ knots. Eventually we made our way up the Chichester channel against the ebb tide – still running at 3 knots or so. Having the engine at normal revs and just doing about 2 knots over the ground is not good. If only we'd all been patient and left Brighton a couple of hours later, we would have been entering Chichester harbour with the flood tide helping us in. Yes, later in the day, but so much kinder to both boats and crews.

We berthed at Sparkes marina at 2030. According to my original plan it would have been 2130.

Wednesday 17th August

Plan called for us to be off Hayling Island Sailing Club at high water and then carry the ebb down the channel and up Spithead to Cowes.

We motored until clear of the channel and then had the sails up. The section from the bar beacon to Horse Sand Fort was memorable because of the torrential downpour. Rain was bouncing 6" of the decks as well as us. Although flattening the seas, the wind remained steady throughout the downpour, and we made good progress. One round the south-eastern side of the Fort, we hardened up and made our way crabwise over to the Isle of Wight side to keep well clear of commercial traffic. Off Wooten Creek, the wind really came up and we had a tremendous beat for over an hour up towards Cowes. We entered the Medina under engine and moored alongside the

south arm at Shepard's marina, rafted outside of Helene. Despite the rain, a good day.

Ashore for a drink at the Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club and to the pub for supper. A full day earlier than planned, but we'd made it!

Thursday 18th August

For the first time this trip, we weren't going anywhere other than to our assigned berth – all of 50 metres.

The three east coast boats were joined by Jaunty (Derrick and Andrew Ardron) and Sweet Sue (Ryan Morley and Mick Le Maitre). UF50 had liaised with Shepard's and the AOA had fine berths assigned to them on the inside of the south arm, without having to raft up.

The day was spent yarning on the pontoon, welcoming other AOA members who had come down specifically for the UF50 event, as well as many interested passers-by. Great to see the enthusiasm and vaguely reminiscent of the Southampton Boat Show a year earlier. In between conversations, dressing overall flags were raised, as were the specially commissioned battle flags and the boat information boards. A great scene and whilst it would have been good to see more Atalantas, having five in one place was truly unique.

Opening the formal proceedings was the other Mike Dixon – he of Uffa Fox designs and great nephew of Uffa himself – who gave us a potted history talk all about Uffa Fox. Then onto Commodore's House (former home and workshop of Uffa Fox) for the opening reception.



UF50 Commodore's House, Cowes – opening reception

This was sponsored by the Dartmouth Gin Company. Whilst yours truly doesn't normally drink gin, an exception was made. After the reception, back to RLYC for a rather disappointing supper.

Friday 19th August

The plan was simple; go racing, follow the course, don't hit anything, return safely. Not being a racing person, this about summed up the (not) competitive spirit.

The race briefing was at 0930 in the drizzle.



UF50 RLYC's Principal Race Officer Peter Taylor



UF50 Shepard's Marina, Cowes – readying for the first race. Mary (Alastair & Dom), Jaunty (Derrick & Ian), Helene (Jim & Nick) & Atalanta (Greg & Bernard)

Not a good start and the wind wasn't much help either being very light. Never mind, out to the start line off the Royal Yacht Squadron no less, complete with cannons.

The wind was light and the foul tide on the start line strong. Which resulted in us failing to cross the line at all. After a frustrating 40 minutes or so, we (and several others) gave up and returned to Shepard's. A good afternoon though before the evening's activities.

These began with a reception at the Classic Boat Museum's Boat Shed in west Cowes; and excellent display and a good chance for some interesting discussions with the volunteers working on the various exhibits.



UF50 Classic Boat Museum – Alastair & Bernard

Following on from the reception, the Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club laid on a BBQ at their club.

Saturday 29th August

A much better-looking day with wind and a later foul tide at the start line.

This morning we managed to cross the start line off the Royal Yacht Squadron. Quite something and we felt a bit important!



UF50 – A1 about to cross the start line at the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes



UF50 – The cannons at the Royal Yacht Squadron Cowes



UF50 – Atalantas Saturday race start off the Royal Yacht Squadron (Sweet Sue, Mary, Atalanta & Jaunty)

A short beat to windward and then a series of reaches down to the east to finish down in Osbourne Bay. Greg helmed nearly all the race and despite some heavy weather helm (we had too much headsail up for the conditions) managed to hang on grimly until we crossed the finishing line.



UF50 – A1 racing off Cowes



UF50 – Helmed by Greg, A1 reaching towards the finishing line.

A1 was slowly catching up the other Atalantas but failed to make that vital difference. Regrettably, Helene had gear failure just before the start and failed to make the race.

Back to Shepard’s again in time for some late lunch and then the remainder of the afternoon spent yarning.



UF50 Atalantas at Shepard’s Marina, Cowes – Sweet Sue, Atalanta, Jaunty, Helene and the cockpit of Mary

The south coast cruise in company was starting the following day, and Richard held a briefing in the on-site pub.

Then up to the RLYC for a talk on the airborne lifeboat which was followed by the prize giving. I was asked to give a short speech of thanks to the RLYC and was given a prize in recognition of the AOA’s initial idea.



UF50 Royal London Yacht Club – Prize giving and Christopher Columbus themed thank you speech.

A good supper followed the prize giving.

Reflections of the Uffa Fox 50 event? From the original idea three years ago, it was very rewarding to see that our tentative idea had come to fruition. Recognising early on that the AOA lacked the knowledge of the Cowes sailing scene meant that we had to persuade the people in the know that the idea was worth pursuing. Mark McNeill of the Cowes Classic Boat Museum was able to take the idea and get the Royal London Yacht Club on board and as such was a vital link.

The RLYC asked Rodney Barton to take over the organisation and this he did with superb skill. At the prize giving, Rodney paid tribute to all the volunteers (some 50 of them) who had worked tirelessly to bring about the event. I'm not going to list the sponsors, but there were over 12 major sponsors, and all the participants were very grateful to them for their contribution.

Inevitably, some of our original, and to be frank, outrageous ideas didn't come to fruition. What did take place though was magic, very memorable and a privilege to be part of.

Sunday 21st to Wednesday 24th August

This was the four-day south coast cruise in company. I suppose it's inevitable when organising an event for four (and potentially six) boats that the cruise ends up going from one expensive marina to another. On your own, you can find some of these out-of-the-way places that still exist in the Solent; with four boats to accommodate, it's well-nigh impossible to find them.

During the UF50 event, lots of AOA members came and went, but the participating boats and crews settled down to Mary (Alistair and Richard),

Helene (Jim, Nick and Ted Baker), Jaunty (Derrick, Andrew and Ian Pollard) and Atalanta (Bernard and me).

Despite the rather formulaic cruise, we had a good time with lots of socialising in the marinas we visited. Places visited were – Cowes to Lymington, Lymington to Hamble, Hamble to Gosport and finally Gosport to Bosham. We enjoyed pub suppers two evenings and a sort of scratch safari supper one night.



South Coast Cruise in Company – Jaunty, Mary, Helene and Atalanta at Lymington



South Coast Cruise in Company – Atalanta, Helene, Mary and Jaunty at Hamble



South Coast Cruise in Company – impromptu (tea) party on Helene in Hamble (Nick, Bernard, Ted starboard, Mike and Jim port)

Wednesday 24th August

The purpose of finishing the cruise in company at Bosham was to be there and ready for the inaugural Duckling World Championships, to be held off Lighter's Field the following day, hosted by the AOA's Patron Alistair Currey.

(The Duckling was built by Fairey Marine along the same methodology as the Atalanta – layers of hot moulded Agba veneers. The result was a 9'6" long sailing dinghy rigged initially with a gunter rig, but also as a Bermudan rig. Alistair's parents, Charles and Bobbie Currey were instrumental in establishing and encouraging the Duckling's popularity)

We arrived off Lighter's Field and picked up a buoy at 0945, about an hour before high water. The other three Atalantas arrived shortly afterwards.



South Coast Cruise in Company – Helene and Atalanta off Lighter's Field, Bosham Hoe.

Bernard heads ashore to check in at his B&B and Richard legs it off home!

All ashore at 1630 to erect the huge gazebo. Several chiefs and fewer Indians. Anyone for a left-handed screwdriver?? Sarah arrives – another chief. All goes well and we all go up to the local Indian restaurant for supper.

Back on board in the pitch dark – ought to have left a riding light on. Hmmm.

Thursday 25th August

Overnight it rained – heavily. It started at 0230 with thunder and never really stopped until about 1030. Sarah, in the main cabin and me in the aft cabin, spent most of the morning passing plates and mugs back and forwards across the cockpit, getting soggy sleeves in the process. Calling Alistair

on the phone not only brought the news that the gazebo had blown over during the night, but also the cheery re-assurance that it would all blow though when the tide turned. Amazingly, it did – the rain that is.

Once the weather had settled down and promising to be much better with the very real possibility of sunshine, people emerged from all over and began rigging the Ducklings.



Duckling Worlds – preparing D1 (Bernard, Jim, Mike & Alistair Currey)



Duckling Worlds – launching before the first race (mike, Louisa Currey and Rosie Currey)

The enthusiasm was palpable – the very first Duckling World Championships were about to take place.

Alistair was the master of ceremonies, race officer and much else besides. There were four boats for the first race, Louisa, Rosie (both daughters of Alistair), Andrew and me. Not sure about the others, but I had never sailed a Duckling before – a novel experience.

The start was predicably chaotic, and it went slowly downhill from there. There were neither flags nor sound signals to indicate when things were starting – only a shout from Alistair in the committee boat of “BANG – you’re orf!” when all four boats were together (ish) in the vicinity of the start line. The course was round various moored boats. Not all participants were aware of the proper course and the race quickly became a sort of ‘follow the leader’ procession, with all boats hoping that the leader knew where they were going. Much advice was given to Rosie from father and sister, but regrettably didn’t seem to help – but then the advice was often conflicting; must be a family thing. It was only on the home straight towards the (hoped for) finishing line did competition began to surface. Steely eyed and lantern jawed only begins to describe the concentration. D1 (me) was leading right up to the end when Louisa sailed through to take line honours. Brilliant!



Duckling Worlds – D1 with Jaunty in the background



Duckling Worlds – Louisa and Mike both going for the buoy



Duckling Worlds – Mike, Louisa and Andrew must round the stern of Jaunty.

Back to the beach for a change of helm, this time with Jim taking D1 out for the race. I went out with Alistair in the committee boat (another rowing Duckling – no expense spared) to run the second race.



Duckling Worlds – the no-expense-spared committee boat

By now, the skippers more-or-less knew what to expect. And competition was fierce with skippers demanding to know “When’s the start?”. “In 30 seconds” was the response from the committee boat. I must admit that the 30 second prediction stretched to about 4 minutes until all four boats were on (or near) the start line. Andrew, in particular, seemed to take exception to this rather cavalier approach – clearly his competitive spirit had been dormant during the earlier race.

All four boats were off more or less together and went round the course. Jim had to be reminded (no outside interference of course – perish the thought) to shift his weight forward as the boat had only about 3 inches freeboard aft. It obviously worked as Jim won the race.



Duckling Worlds – Jim has his (very successful) turn in D1

Back ashore and lunch for all. The afternoon was spent lazing around, chatting with everyone, and generally enjoying the Curreys' hospitality. Sarah's friend Mags arrived and was taken out to A1. Mags, a keen sailor, was impressed with the boat and particularly liked the secure midships cockpit. Louise and Rosie also came on board.

Later that afternoon, two more Ducklings arrived from Emsworth with Mark and Liz Rushal and Annie Goodman. Naturally, another race had to be organised. Five Ducklings took part.

The Curreys hosted a fine BBQ which was followed by a prize giving and a general matter before the evening got a bit chilly. Sarah and I rowed back out to A1 before it got too dark.



Duckling Worlds – dinner at Lighter's Field

What an absolutely splendid day.

Friday 26th August

This was to be a long day. The tides dictated the overall timing leaving Chichester harbour on the ebb and carrying the flood tide as far as possible to the east. At least the wind was westerly. There are few harbours and next to no anchorages on this bit of coastline and we had already established that Brighton was closed to us. The only remaining possibility west of Beachy Head was Newhaven.

We dropped the buoy off Lighter's Field at 1400 and motored down to the bar. We picked up large quantities of weed on the propellor which hindered progress. I was just able to reach the propellor from hanging over the transom and managed to clear most of the offending weed.

Once out of the channel and freed off towards the south-east we had the sails up and enjoyed a few hours of good sailing through the Looe channel off Selsey Bill and then eastwards. We had the tide with us, but even so, the wind fell light and we were only making about 3 knots over the ground. We persevered, but at sunset, handed the sails and carried on under engine. We still had a good way to go towards Newhaven.

Newhaven is a commercial port, and it came as no surprise that we had to jill around off the entrance before being allowed in. We had to wait over an hour, and it wasn't until 0100 that we could make our way into the rather ramshackle marina, berthing at 0115.

Saturday 27th August

It was a very disturbed night. On the other side of the river from the marina, a coaster was loading scrap metal. Not only was the cargo being dropped into the hold from the grab crane, clearly some of the scrap was too large and had to be cut to size – all of which produced a horrendous cacophony of noise. The few hours we had in our bunks were not restful in the slightest.

The marina facilities were basic in the extreme. The staff decidedly off hand.

The cross-channel ferry was due to leave at 1000. To avoid further delay (and we'd had quite enough of Newhaven) we quickly made our escape. It was flat calm outside and we motored gently down past the Seven Sister cliffs towards Beachy Head.



Homeward bound – Beachy Head stretching westwards and the Seven Sisters.

Once round the other side, the wind picked up, but we carried on motoring up to Sovereign Harbour at Eastbourne. We managed to get in relatively unscathed. A couple of locks later was largely full of the boat flotilla which had been out to the Royal Sovereign Light Tower. The Tower is about to be demolished and they were all out there saying their farewells.

That evening, we ate at the yacht club which turned out to be very busy as they were celebrating their 25th anniversary. We managed to beat a hasty retreat when a (male) Tina Turner tribute act (or so it seemed) appeared, loudly, on stage.

Sunday 28th August

A rather difficult day for everyone. We had been aware of the longer-range weather forecast for a few days, but by now, reality had reared its head. For the next few days – right through to Friday at least – the forecast was for north easterly winds with anything up to force 6. More-or-less right on the nose, this was not good for anyone trying to get eastwards up the channel, let alone for three small elderly Atalantas. Discussions over options (one even included the suggestion of reaching over to France and then back again – but no-one had their passports!) raged back and forth for most of the day. In the end of course, the three boats reached different decisions. To aid with the decision process, the lifeboat was called out to rescue a yacht with engine failure, drifting rapidly in the direction of Beachy Head. Concentrated the minds a bit.

Helene (Jim and Nick) decided to sit put in Eastbourne and wait for more favourable conditions.

Mary (Alistair) had some flexibility in work arrangements and opted to go home there and then, go to work for the rest of the week, and return with Bernard the following weekend.

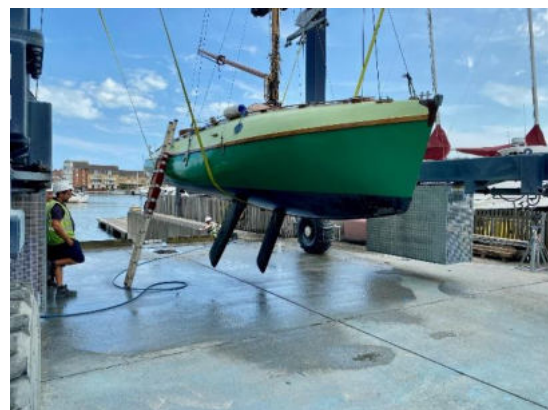
As for Atalanta, I was minded to wait it out, but Sarah had to be back at work the following Monday and we still had the best part of three good days ahead of us before we got home to Ipswich. So, we decided to go home by train, return with the boat trailer and have A1 lifted out at Eastbourne ready for the trip home by road. Having made the decision, it meant that our trip to Cowes and back ended there. In many ways disappointing, but that's sailing for you.

Monday 29th August to Thursday 1st September

Monday saw us making arrangements for the boat to be lifted out. After sorting out the boat we caught the train back to Huntingdon and home to Alconbury.

On Tuesday we went over to the Orwell Yacht Club at Ipswich to pick up the Isuzu and return home.

Wednesday was a long day. We drove with the empty trailer down to Ipswich via the Dartford crossing. At the boatyard, A1 was successfully lifted from the harbour onto the trailer.



Homeward bound – Atalanta gets lifted out at Eastbourne.

With Nick's and Jim's help, the mast was lowered, and the boat readied for towing.

On Thursday, Sarah and I towed to boat home to Alconbury and safely ensconced her in the barn for the winter – slightly earlier than planned.

Reflections on the trip

Highlights

- ❖ Undoubtedly the Uffa Fox 50 event – for me –
 - Having five Atalantas there – about 25% of the known boats in sailing condition and about 50% of the Atalantas that realistically could have been there
 - Having about 25% of the AOA’s membership there at some or all of the time
 - Having dedicated moorings at Shepard’s Marina
 - Battle flags, badged polo shirts, information boards
 - Starting races on the Royal Yacht Squadron’s line – with actual (large) canons!
- ❖ And equally so the Ducking Worlds – what a brilliant, bonkers, and fun day.
- ❖ Crossing the Thames Estuary
- ❖ Sunrise off Dover
- ❖ Beachy Head up close and personal
- ❖ Observing Birling Gap from seawards some 70 years after building a raft on the beach there. (It broke up, I got very wet, and Mother wasn’t best pleased).
- ❖ The camaraderie – often manifested in the WhatsApp contributions

Low points

- ❖ Too much motoring. Having said that, from the outset, I was quite clear that I had no hesitation in turning on the engine to maintain progress and keep to the schedule.
- ❖ Very rarely, the camaraderie broke down. Nothing serious but given that there were three different boats with three different skippers, it was almost guaranteed that there would be tensions at times.

Summary

Sailing	88 miles	26.4 hours
Motoring	235 miles	52.5 hours
Total	323 miles	78.9 hours

Love your Mast – Greg Manning (A142)

A mast is made to take a compression load. Lateral loads are taken by the standing rigging which is

designed by some brainiac with a slide rule, log tables or an abacus. Subjecting a mast, especially a wooden one, to forces and stresses that it was not designed to take will make it a very unhappy mast. When I bought A142 in 2001 the mast was already loaded for my five-hour drive home with the heel on the pulpit and the head on the pushpit. As I became familiar with the Atalanta I straight way realized that some other scheme for carrying the mast had to be devised if I were not to face the challenge of making another. It is noteworthy that the toe rail had collapsed where the rear strut of the pulpit was mounted, no doubt exacerbated by the extra load of the mast.

Before her next journey I devised Plan A. I think that some of this has appeared in the bulletin before but here it is again. Step one was to fit cheek pieces to the stem fitting so that the heel of the mast was secure with the weight taken on a strong point.



Cheek pieces supporting the heel of the mast.

The next part of Plan A was to make a crutch positioned near the rear of the cockpit to take the mast itself. Four strong points were fitted to the fore and aft bulkhead for the lashing straps and load spreaders made to distribute the load on the cockpit sole. The bonus was that the strong points doubled up for securing safety harnesses.



The mast in its crutch with the lashings showing. Sceptical duty dog looks on.

This plan should have worked but when driving I could still see in my mirror the cross trees bouncing about. Even though I had fitted load spreaders there appeared to be some cracks in the joint between the cockpit sole and the sides. The down force on the crutch was not only the weight of the mast but also the tension of the lashing straps and the dynamic forces caused by the vertical movement of the trailer when going over anything but a smooth surface.

After a few years, I had a mini panic when I found the joint at the forward edge of the mast had opened up and there was water inside. I laid it horizontally with the joint downwards and opened the crack with a thin wedge until it was dry. Resin was introduced into the crack with a hypodermic needle and a capping strip resined over the joint. Clearly carrying the mast was still an issue causing damage.

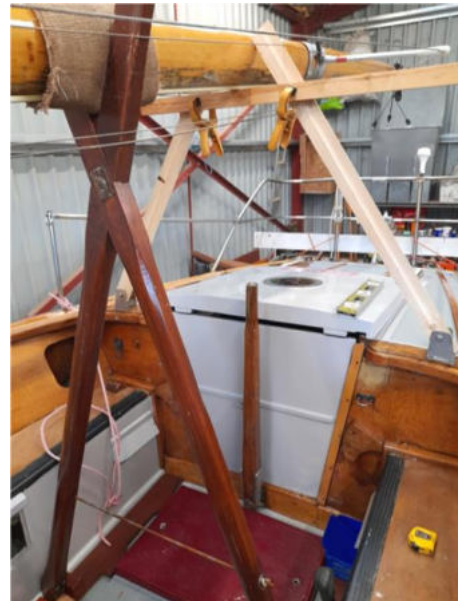
Plan A1 was conceived to try to stop any whiplashing of the mast. This involved the fitting of a block on the mast step with a raised strip to fit inside the mast track and then the mast strapped down.



Plan A 1

Despite Plan A1 I could still see the crosstrees moving as I drove and knew that there was too much of an overhang aft of the crutch. Perhaps I should be identifying a Spruce Tree in my woodland to fell and set aside for a new mast one day. Plan B was derived. This entailed replacing the crutch with a frame secured into the horse mountings.

The frame was to be made from 45mm x 45mm aluminium box section with 3mm wall thickness but first a temporary structure was made from scrap wood to get the measurements.



The temporary frame to obtain the measurements and angles. Note the load spreaders for the original crutch.

The next task was easy, cut the aluminium to size and at the correct angles and sit back and watch my friend Martin weld up the joints. At this stage the bottom of the frame was allowed to rest on the base of the horse mountings.

In order to remove any fore and aft stresses on the horse mountings the frame had to meet the mast at right angles. This required the frame to cant forward about fifteen degrees. A gusset was cut out of the frame just above the horse mounting and the frame bent forward and the joint welded. What the master planner of this project had failed to realize was that as the frame was bent forward the lower part would twist through the same angle. By a stroke of luck there was space in the horse mounting to accommodate this. Sigh of relief all round.



A gusset was cut out of the frame.

A rough profile of the mast was marked onto a piece of thin, scrap ply and then an accurate outline spiled. It is noteworthy that as well as having to allow space for the masthead cables the two sides were not the same. An accurate outline then allowed two half inch ply pieces to be made and a solid hardwood block completed the cradle for the mast.



An accurate line was spiled on to scrap ply.

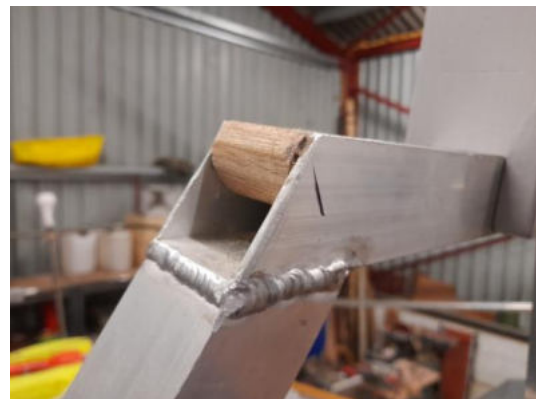
After painting, padding was glued onto the cradle and the cradle bolted to the frame.



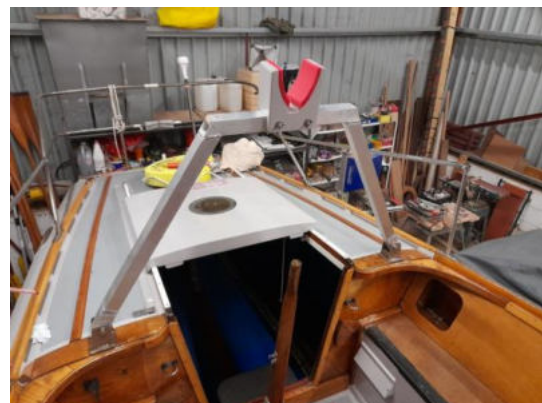
The finished cradle.

Up to this stage the frame was resting on the bottom of the horse mountings and the delicate task of raising it to correctly take the weight of the mast was done by trial and error using little wedges. Once the mast was happy in its alignment, holes were drilled to take the bolts through the horse mounting.

The mast would be held down with a ratchet strap through the upper horizontal box section so to reduce abrasion of the strap a wooden insert was made and fitted into the box section.



A wooden insert into the upper box section. This picture before final finishing.



The finished frame

This year Sugar Plum was driven the six hours from Aberdeenshire to Arisaig and the six hours back. The mast showed no signs of movement and is held safely. The Master of Sugar Plum is very happy that the mast is now safe in transit however large the potholes on highland roads. The same Master has a dream to launch into the Firth of Forth and then transit the Forth Clyde Canal, this can now be done with the cockpit clear of obstructions and the mast carried aboard. In the meantime, the only other benefit is that on long journeys a tea break can be taken in a layby with the crew sitting in luxury in the now uncluttered cockpit.

The environmentally conscious reader can also be satisfied that a spruce tree has been saved for a few years yet.

Hot moulded hulls: a view after six decades - Jim Sumberg and Nick Phillips

The marketing materials for the Fairey Atalanta consistently stressed the advantages of its hot moulded construction. The basic argument was laid-out in the 1956 brochure: 'The hull and decks are hot moulded by methods developed by Fairey Marine Ltd., thus ensuring a sound, waterproof hull of great strength. Thousands of boats built by these methods have been in service for long periods in all parts of the world'.

In the years that followed, these and other advantages were highlighted: 'The hot-moulded shell, deck and coach roof form a light, strong, homogeneous and entirely watertight hull' (1957, 1958 and 1961); and 'her hull, constructed of four laminations of mahogany, is impervious to the normal ills which affect boats built from other materials' (1960).

In 1959 Fairey issued a document¹ explaining in greater detail its choice of the hot-moulded construction method, already anticipating questions about advantages and disadvantages relative to GRP. The document states that hot moulding 'produces hulls that are stronger and

stiffer, and just as durable as, those of comparable weight built of glass fibre or any other plastic material', and that 'hot-moulded wooded hulls sprayed with polyester paint require no more maintenance than a glass fibre boat'.

There is also the well-rehearsed story of the buried hot moulded hull, which although relating to a Fairey racing dinghy, also became part of the story of the Atalanta. As told by Dougal Henshaw², the hot moulded construction 'was expected to be robust, but one of the early [dinghy] hulls would still be put to the test. The bare wood was sealed with varnish, before being taken out to the creek that used to act as the northern boundary to the factory site, and there the hull was buried in the soft mud. After being untouched for a full twelve months, it was taken out, hosed off and was found to still be 'as new' [...].'

This is all powerful stuff, but with six decades of accumulated experience, what can we conclude about hot moulded construction? How have the claims made in the Atalanta marketing materials stood up to the environmental and 'management' challenges inherent to amateur yachting?

To the best of our knowledge, as of 2022, around a fifth of the 186 Atalantas built are either sailing (20 boats) or restoring (24 boats).³

Information in the Boat Register, the Annual Bulletin and the AOA website suggests that many of these surviving boats have previously required restoration – some quite extensively (e.g., A1, A5, A17, A31, A71, A86, A87, A90, A105, A124, A50, A179), and some several times (e.g., A124, A168). In most cases rebuilding and restoration involved at least some work on the hot moulded components including the blister, deck, side rolls, with some of the most commonly encountered problems including delamination of the veneers and increasing flex in the decks. Often, extensive areas of the deck, side rolls and/or blister have required repair, replacement and/or strengthening (e.g., A1, A124, A169, A189). The hull has generally fared better although rot around the rubbing

¹ 'Why is Atalanta Hot Moulded from Wood Veneers?' (<https://atalantaowners.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/A26-1959-Why-is-Atalanta-Hot-Moulded.pdf>)

² 'Hot Wood - Dougal Henshaw charts the success of Fairey Marine's moulded dinghies', *Sail-World.com*, 13 November

2020 (<https://atalantaowners.org/hot-wood-dougal-henshaw-writes-on-fairey-marine-hot-moulding/>)

³ *When the Titanias, Fulmars, 31s and Fishermen are all included, from a total of 280 boats built, 29 are thought to be sailing and 27 restoring.*

strake has been common when glue or mastic has failed.

These observations suggest that Fairey's hot moulded construction method may not have yielded such robust and resilient yachts after all, particularly above the rubbing strake. So, how might we explain the apparent gap between the initial claims and the long-term realities?

Before proceeding we should be clear that we are not concerned with damage or repairs arising from, for example, accidents, collisions and the like. Nor are we focused on routine maintenance, but rather on significant structural damage and its repair (although we will return to important role of maintenance later).

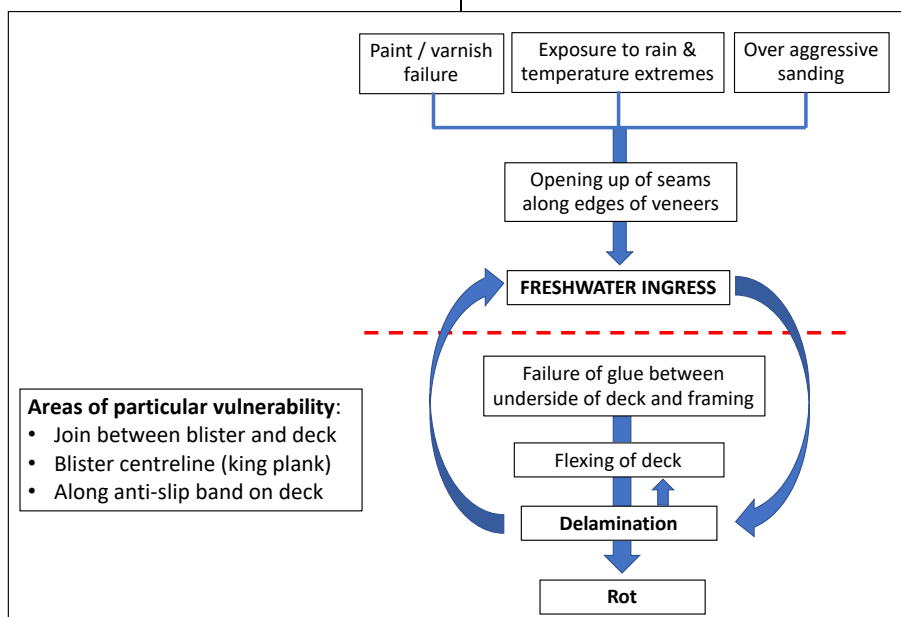
We posit that the ultimate (or distant) causes of structural damage to an Atalanta's hot moulded components are rooted in either (1) design failure, (2) materials failure or (3) management failure, or some interaction among these.

As with almost any boat built of wood, if it is not addressed quickly, freshwater ingress can result in significant damage. This is certainly the case with the Atalanta, and particularly so for the deck and blister.

We outline our theory in the figure below. At least as far as the deck, side rolls and blister are concerned, the proximate (near or immediate) causes of freshwater ingress are all associated with management failure. Specifically, continued

exposure to extremes of temperature and to rainfall, breakdown of the protective (i.e., waterproof) paint or varnish barrier, and removal of excessive amounts of laminated material due to over aggressive sanding, will accelerate the opening up of seams between the outer veneer strips. This then allows the dynamic of degradation – **ingress > delamination > rot** – depicted in the lower half of the figure to take hold.

There is another closely associated aspect of this dynamic of degradation that deserves attention, but here the ultimate cause is material failure. Atalantas were lightly built, with the idea that the design and construction of the hot moulded hull and deck would approximate the characteristics of a monocoque (i.e., where loads and stresses are supported by a 'structural skin'). Nevertheless, the light internal framing plays an important role – for example in providing the deck with extra stiffness. The join between the underside of the deck and the internal frames and stringers was originally secured with both glue (believed to be Cascamite or a similar single part resin) and screws. Over time, however, it seems that in some boats the glue has failed leading to flexing of the decks (indeed, 50-60 years may have already far exceeded any reasonable expectation of the glue's longevity). Such flexing can then interact with and accelerate on-going processes of freshwater ingress and delamination (as in the lower half of the figure).



So, what can we conclude from this little exercise?

First, we suggest that in at least one important way the basis of Fairey's original claim about the robustness and suitability of hot moulding for yacht construction was flawed. Fairey repeatedly pointed to the fact that thousands of hot moulded dinghies had been produced and had 'been in service for long periods in all parts of the world'. Fair enough, but how these dinghies were used and stored differed dramatically from what might be expected for a 26-foot yacht. Specifically, the vast majority of the dinghies were dry-sailed, and when ashore, they were probably covered. In other words, they did not have anything like the same exposure to changing temperature and to freshwater as a typical cruiser kept on a mooring or in a marina.

It is also interesting to reflect again on the story of that buried, hot moulded dinghy hull. At face value the results of this 'test' were quite dramatic, but what was really being tested? The hull was varnished before being buried. The immediate environment would have been saline and would likely have been oxygen limiting. If the varnish was good quality and applied well, is it really surprising that there was no sign of degradation of the dinghy hull after (only) 12 months?

Our second and most important conclusion is that after 50-60 years, the hulls and decks of the 50 or so remaining Atalantas should be acknowledged to be delicate and vulnerable, as opposed to robust and resilient. To some degree they have all suffered (or continue to suffer) from poor management, and key materials like glue and fasteners are increasingly likely to fail.

We suggest four simple steps that will stop the dynamic of degradation and greatly extend the working lives of these unique boats: (1) being religious about winter storage under waterproof cover (and some kind of summer cover if at all possible); (2) dealing immediately with any cracks in the deck, blister or around the quadrant by raking out and filling with epoxy or cutting out and re-veneering; (3) maintaining an impervious paint / varnish layer on the deck, blister and side rolls; and (4) stiffening of the decks at the very first sign of flex (if not before!).

Here's to another 60 years of Atalanta sailing.



A124 Helene, deck degradation, 2008



A124 Helene, relamination of aft deck, 2008

News from our Public Front Door

Operating the website accounts for about one-fifth of our subscription income. Below you can read some of the crude statistics from the website and read about activity online over the last year, but what do they mean? Do they demonstrate value for the Association? This is a question the AOA Committee consider in governing our finances. Members may have their own thoughts and we would welcome your comments and suggestions.

Crude statistics for 2022

- Visitors per month average around 300 of which approximately half explore more than the first page they view
- The average time of each visit is around three and a half minutes
- The most popular pages (apart from the Home page) are, in decreasing order of popularity: For Sale, Join the AOA, Blogs and Forum, Design Overview, Design Atalanta 26, Register Atalanta 26, Register overview and photos.
- Around half of the visitors arrive via a search or a link, the other half come direct by typing the address or using a personal bookmark
- More than half of the user 'sessions' in the year are first-time visitors

What happened on the website in 2022?

Quite a lot, actually. As I looked back through the year I realised there had been more activity than I remembered. As well as updates on restorations and events there was an increased level of humour creeping in and some thought-provoking contributions including a review of the Atalanta's place in yachting history. We hope that more of you will access the site regularly to keep up with it all and help persuade others of the benefits of owning an Atalanta.

Adding to our history and some reflections

Throughout the year website, readers have filled in gaps and added colour to our history. Notable amongst these were contributions from Mark Whittle who sent in memories and photos of A19 Valare from the 1970s.



A19 (© Mark Whittle)

The Atalantas travelling West to Cowes met Mark in Brighton Marina. We also heard from the nephew of an ex-owner owner of A137 Baby Seal. Howard Warrington was able to provide not only stories and photos from his Uncle's ownership in the 1980s but also photos from the 1970s.



A137 at Fairey Marine (© Howard Warrington)

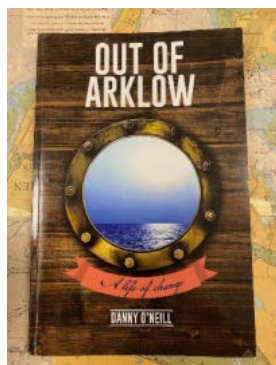
Even better, he posted a photo of A3 Andana moored near Baby Seal, adding the first colour photograph of the early Atalanta A3 to our archive.



A003 1978 Anada (© Howard Warrington)

Demonstrating the power of a website presence the ex-owner of A85 Kicky Wicky in the US provided a fascinating insight to the 'American Section' in the 1970s with stories and photos of their cruising. If you missed these contributions

just search any of these boat names on the website using the magnifying glass icon in the top right corner of the screen.



“Out of Arklow” front cover

We were able to add two books to our Archive. In ‘Out of Arklow’ Danny O’Neill devotes a couple of chapters to his cruising in A78 Marianda in Ireland. The account of his journey around the coast, drying out most nights, is fascinating; that of his attempted cruise on the Grand Canal out of Dublin illustrates the Corinthian attitudes Danny cruised with. In ‘The War that never was’ the Atalanta content is rather less - just one page. On that page, Duff Hart-David tells how Sir Dermot Boyle had the RAF fly his Atalanta, A21 Chuff, to Aden in the 1960s for his son to use.

Perhaps the largest contribution to our history was initiated by recent member Jim Sumberg owner of A124 Helene. Fascinated by the Atalanta design he had the idea of analysing the design’s origins and influences and the degree to which it lives up to the Fairey Marine ‘hype’ in the marketing literature. We worked together (Jim doing most of the work) to create the paper ‘Atalanta - more than the sum of her parts’ which is recommended reading.



Buttercup preparing for transatlantic at Kirkby-le-Soken
(©Simon Hipkin)

There is an amusing anecdote related to the paper. Whilst at a sailing event dinner we were talking Atalantas with a larger than life (and slightly inebriated) club member who was adamant there was a famous, Atlantic-crossing Atalanta in a barn nearby. Much of the rest of his evening was spent trying to remember the name, to no avail. The next day the mystery was solved when the boatbuilder who owned the boat turned up and explained that the boat was Buttercup, designed in 1937 by Robert Rucker. This boat had featured prominently in our analysis in the paper as she bears some remarkable similarities to the Atalanta. We were more than delighted to hear that the boatbuilder is restoring her and would show us the boat. (We visited the boat and were shown the thick file of history for Buttercup and plan to present a feature on the website in the future).

[Register Changes - births, deaths and marriages](#)

2022 was a busy year for the register which has had many updates. In fact there were not any births, although two restorations are reaching ‘term’ and announcements are likely in the new year. We are hoping to see at least A169 Elle and a A31-10 Zambra sailing next year for the first time in some years. Sadly there have been some losses confirmed this year. A155 Miranda on the Isle of Man is in the process of being scrapped. A179 Emma Duck was burnt this year after over a decade languishing in boat yards and deteriorating. She was beyond restoration, but the Association were able to salvage a lot of her gear (see later). Also burnt, but this time by an accidental barn fire, were Atalanta 31s number 1 and 7 and the never completed number 13. On a happier note, the year has also seen some marriages between Atalantas and new owners. A15 Artemis II, A115 Mara (now returned to the name Sabrina of Croyde) and A161 Amber Ellen all have new owners who hope to see afloat and online.

[Tales from our Events](#)

Although narrative accounts of our events are generally saved for appearance in the Bulletin the website is an ideal place to create a photographic record, without the limitations of the printed page. 2022 was a busy year for events as witnessed by nearly four hundred photographs. The majority of this covered the Uffa Fox 50 event including the passage of some from the East Coast to Cowes, the event itself and the subsequent cruise in company and Ducking World Championships. It was great to have five

Atalantas in one place again and the Duckling Worlds were a quacking (sic) success.

There are also photos of the shore-based social in Dundee, organised by Greg Manning. This took in the RSS Discovery, The V&A Dundee and the fantastically situated (for the moment at least) Royal Tay Yacht Club.

[Gossip - The Forum](#)

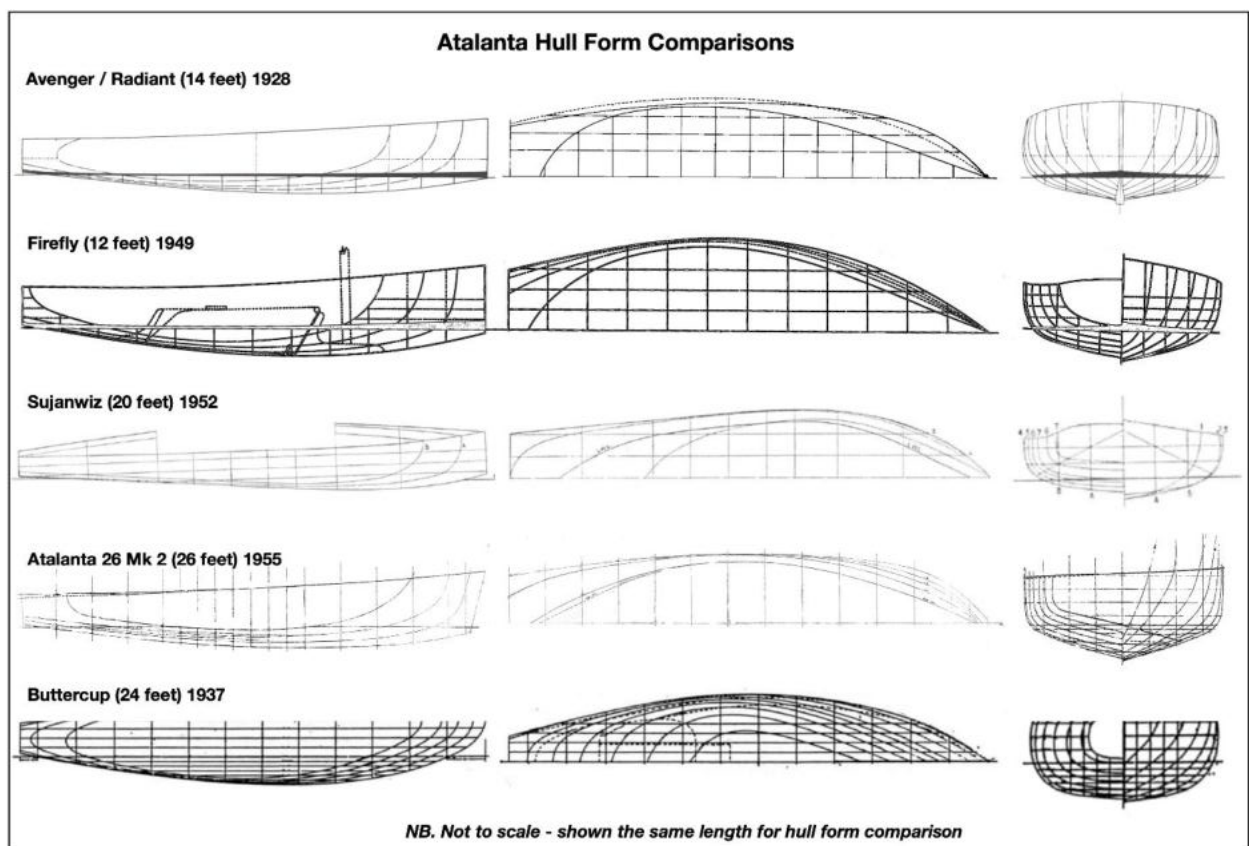
The Forum, where members and non-members can share views and raise queries, attracted a wide variety of contributions. These included a post about finding historical coins built into an Atalanta, dealing with iron sickness, leaky keel bolts and a problematic join between the lister and deck. There were also posts alerting us to the work of the reformed Fairey Marine and the new website of the Fairey Owners Club. Fairey Marine is now producing Fairey motorboats again including a new design of tender which probably wasn't intended for an Atalanta.

The most recent post, as I write this, was a journey into the future. Jim Sumberg put the design specification for the Atalanta through an Artificial

Intelligence visualisation process on the 'Stable Diffusion' website to come up with the Atalanta for the 21st Century.



AI rendering of a "modern" Atalanta (©Stable Diffusion)



The weather probably has a lot to answer for; locking two or more active minds in the confines of a small boat in one port gives time for all sorts of nonsense to be imagined. Our island climate only aggravates this phenomenon. Returning from the UF50 celebrations in August we were weather-bound in Eastbourne for a few days. Nonsensical imagining ranged far and wide to our, and occasionally others', amusement. But, as it turns out, not all imaginings were nonsense - among others we imagined a 'Fleet Review', refreshing memories of our exceptional fleet and applying some fresh thinking to how we assess the boats in order to best maintain them.

[A critical eye](#)

We eventually came around to challenging our established way of classifying the 'Condition' of boats in the registers. The argument was that with ever-decreasing boat numbers we need to have a clearer assessment system. This would enable us to better focus AOA resources in support of owners and the remaining boats. Previous Year Books have classified boat conditions as one of: Sailing, Restoring, Potential, Derelict, Unknown, Presumed Lost, Wrecked, or Destroyed. Reflecting in Eastbourne we imagined some changes:

- **Separate 'Status' from 'Condition'**
The historical 'Conditions' actually represent a boat's current status, or situation, and not its condition; for example, of the boats classified as 'Sailing', some are in good condition whilst others are not. We need to capture both 'Status' and 'Condition' separately.
- **'Storing' or 'Restoring'?**
Many boats are being actively restored. For other boats a restoration is paused or not yet started. And there are some boats which are in 'sail-able' condition but have been 'moth-balled'. Historically all of these boats were given the same 'Restoring' label. We want to record the difference between boats which are being stored, for whatever reason, and active restorations.
- **'Condition' Trends**
For the Association to have the most influence on the preservation of The Fleet, we felt it is important to understand the likely trend over time in a boat's condition. For example, a stored boat left uncovered in the open air deteriorates quickly but if under a cover or in a shed the condition will be maintained. (See the Article '*Hot Moulded Hulls - a view after sixty years*' elsewhere in this Bulletin.)
- **Supporting Boat Owners**
We also noted that the Association's ability to help owners maintain boats was entirely dependent on our ability to talk with them. Therefore, we should note how engaged we are with them.

In light of these reflections, the Boat Register team have reworked the Boat Classification scheme as outlined in Figure 1 below. The **Boat Status** will be shared with the public via the online register. The more subjective aspects of the classification – Boat Condition, Condition Trend and Engagement with Owner – will be private to Members and used to focus AOA support to owners.

[Talking to Owners](#)

We spoke to a few owners earlier in the year, and this Autumn Committee members undertook a telephone and email survey of boats with their owners. We focused on owners with whom we have had contact in recent years. This survey had a delightful secondary impact of reconnecting with old friends and hearing their personal news. We were able to contact owners of boats in North America: yes, of the thirty-five boats exported there we are still in contact with five and are hopeful that half a dozen more still exist.

In the UK we made contact for the first time in many years with A155 Miranda, which is being stored but is sadly beyond sensible restoration. In the Summer we reconnected with A169 Emma Duck. She too was in a poor state and after discussion with the owner her parts were salvaged and the boat destroyed (read about her elsewhere in the Bulletin). We have also had reports of Scallywag in Fife, a boat with which we lost

contact ten years ago, and we are now following up. At least two other boats have changed hands in the last year: A15 Artemis, with her raised rear cabin, and A127 Grace.

The survey yielded news of other changes. A115 Mara/Sabrina of Croyde and A161 Amber Ellen have been sold to new owners who have joined the Association. In Ireland, A144 Cyn also has new owners, but we are yet to make contact with them. And in Holland, A31 Ambras (was Dolfjin) is now for sale.

We have welcomed the Fisherman class to the Association for many years, and it was great to make contact with the owners of all three of our Fisherman members. In particular, we welcomed a new Member who is restoring Fisherman sail number 38 in France, and we look forward to seeing photographs of her sailing in the future.

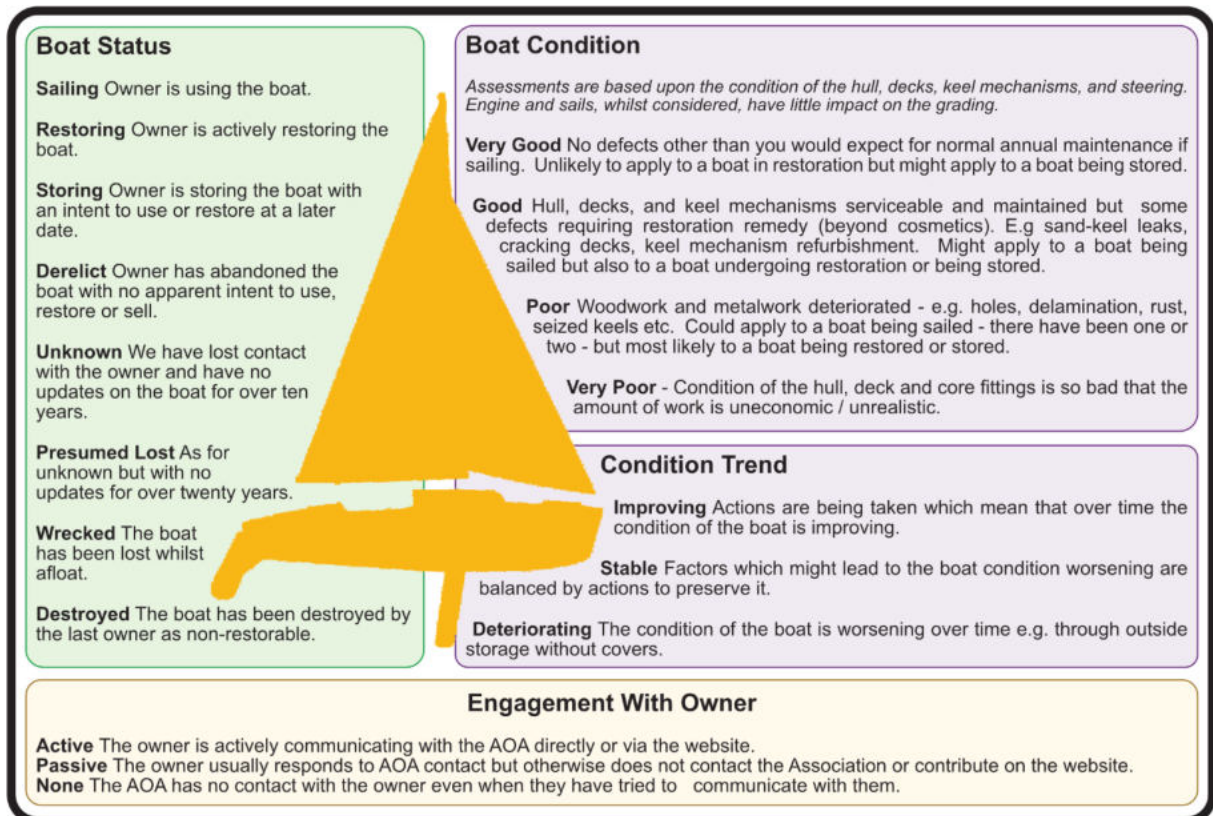


Figure 1 AOA Re-imagined Boat Classifications

The Review

Figure 2 below show the results of our Atalanta Fleet Review using the new classifications. The assessments were based on our knowledge of the boats and discussion with owners. The charts exclude boats which we know have been scrapped or wrecked and those which we have presumed are lost. We mark boats as presumed lost when we have not heard about them for over fifteen years.

From the analysis we conclude:

- There are 24 of the remaining 103 boats for which ‘Status’ and ‘Condition’ are marked as ‘Unknown’ because we have had no updates for more than five years;
- Approximately half of the other 79 boats are in ‘Good’ or better condition;
- 25 boats were in commission this year, and another 22 are being actively restored;
- A further 26 boats are being stored by owners pending restoration and of these the majority require significant work to get them sailing again



Figure 2 Conditions and Status of Remaining Boats

The single biggest action which comes out of the review is the urgent need to track down the 'Unknown' boats. These are:

England

- A108 Solvendo - Rutland Water (McCutcheon)
- A132 Aeglin - Leeds (Unknown)
- A137 Baby Seal - NE England (Burn)
- A151 Mistura - Liverpool (Barker)
- A165 Sloeberry - Birdham, West Sussex (Syrett)
- T2 Hyskier III - Helston, Cornwall (Goulson)
- F26 Driftwood - (Dumbleton)
- F49 Merlin Ann - Isle of Wight (Unknown)
- A80 Talanta - South Wales (Jarvie)
- A128 Echo - South Wales (Purvis)

Scotland

- F1 Tangaroa Tu - Peterhead (O'Hara)
- F100 Caritas - Ayrshire, Scotland (Nicholls)
- A133 Scallywag - Dysart, Scotland (Finlay)

Netherlands

- A81 Windjammer (Bonnen)

Croatia

- A119 Walrus - Mali Lisini (Bacinic)

North America

- A51 Bacardi - Canada (Unknown)
- A62 Coco - Canada (Raymond)
- A85 Kicky-Wicky - Rockland, USA (Ogden)
- A88 Tenga - Canada (O'Rorke)
- A91 Yarina - California, USA (Boblet)
- A107 Xapu - Oregon, USA (Baldwin)
- A158 Jane Duck - Seattle, USA (Unknown)

If anyone has any information concerning the whereabouts or condition of these boats please do get in touch with Richard, Jim or Nick. Contact details in the Yearbook.

Of course, all of this is based on our assessment of the individual boats which is recorded in the Yearbook. We would welcome discussions with owners to validate and improve the accuracy.

Future Developments

More imaginings may be aired in the future: a simple, one-page, objective condition assessment; knitted blister-cosies for the cooler months; sponsored boat restorations



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