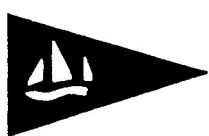


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"LOON" IS HOME!

editor Peter French

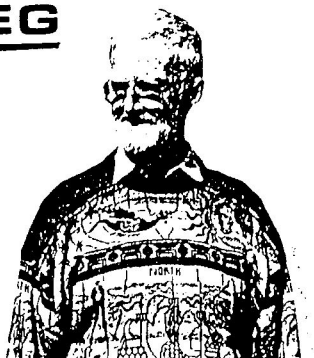
THE SEADOG OWNERS
ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

WANDERLUST

'LOON'

THE LAST LEG

by Pat Lawless



20th March 1996: - TOPOGO ISLANDS -
(PACIFIC) - 8 n.miles from PANAMA CANAL

"Had the fastest sail over to here today from Contadora Island than I've had in many moons. Stayed two nights at Contadora Casino Hotel and wallowed in luxury - baths - swimming pool - nude beaches, the lot. In all, at Contadora, I had seven days of most happy and restful living. Tomorrow I take the ferry to ease the transit of the Panama Canal, and view, from postcards I bought in Contadora, the beautiful city of Panama, full of history and very old with gems of Spanish architecture and design. I am at the moment at anchor, having arrived just as it was getting dark and after some tricky navigation".

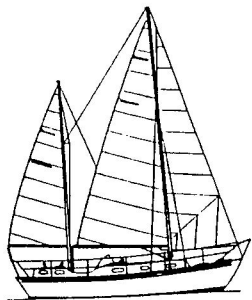
8th April 1996: Phone call from Nancy Lawless in Limerick:

"Pat arrived at Colon (the Atlantic end of the Panama Canal) today"

13th May 1996: - GEORGETOWN - GRAND CAYMAN ISLAND

"Sorry this looks like a business note, but now it is the only way I can cope with writing to so many good amigos. Still no paragraphs, a legacy of sea life where, as I said before, no shops, no mermaids, no signposts. But it is where I like to be and find I do best with my life.

I had very little time for anything on the leg from Colon to here (600 n.miles). I departed Colon at 08.00 on May the 6th and got little sleep by day or night because of the amount of shipping, and navigating through Channels and past Banks and Cays. One Channel was 60 n.miles long and 11 n.miles wide. Also only shook out one reef in the main I carried from Colon, with wind F5/6 and No 3 Jib until the last day when I got a break. But excellent progress, and LOON never went so fast for over 5 days before. Mostly in a Crows line. First two days was close hauled to northeasterlies, and the wind slowly veered to give me a reach for the last 160 n.miles, after clearing the shallows and banks. El Caribe is an eye-opener. Gentle breezes my ass! Mucho rain squalls with a whine in the rigging like 40 degrees south, though of short duration.



So I arrived last evening at 23.00 hours to this tropical paradise, much frequented by the rich of the world, who stash their cash and avoid taxes. Have not been ashore yet as I unwind and get LOON back to normal. I am anchored off, due to the islands being low, and with too many lights all merging at night.

This morning in pre-dawn light I saw electricity pylons even have red lights atop, as a busy airport is just behind the town. Shore line is beautiful, with white sand beaches fronting tree-lined estates, some with gazebos.

I can smell lucre in the offshore breeze. So manana I go ashore to case the joint and yacht club charges and make a withdrawal at the bank and collect my mail".

19th May 1996: - letter from GEORGETOWN - GRAND CAYMAN ISLAND

"Thank you for Fax'ing me news about problems for yachtsmen in Cuba, which I will bear in mind, tho' I intend stopping there only as a place of refuge. No Bermuda, unless as above, and no Intracoastal Waterway either. I sail on Tuesday, because tomorrow, Monday, is "Discovery Day" - (Columbus on his 4th voyage) - when Customs and the Immigration people will be on overtime.

I plan to stop at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, then continue with the Gulf Stream up the U.S. coast to Chesapeake Bay, where the current begins to flow northeast to Ireland. I may stop there; all depends upon my progress.

Prices here are astronomical but for all that, a lovely island with lovely people, and, after Panama, great freedom ashore. No hombres toting scatter guns, also many Irish here and Brit's, which is nice for me.

But time is flying, and I must show my stern to Grand Cayman Island which is what many U.S. boats are doing on Tuesday also, as the weather forecast is good then, as at present. But for the past few days we have had squally conditions and thunderstorms with the onset of the wet season".

4th June 1996: Telephone message from Nancy Lawless in Limerick:

"Pat arrived Fort Lauderdale today. He is coming home direct as he has run out of money".

3rd July 1996 - DAY 21 - NORTH ATLANTIC - Position 43 27N. 45 05W

"As you can see I am nearly half way across. Veered East by North at 28 degrees north after coming up the coast, and I am now heading northeast after clearing the southerly Ice Limit for June. "Hop on the bus, Gus" - I am in the Gulf-Stream since departing Fort Lauderdale on the 12th of June which is beginning to lose its high velocity now, tho' I did 10 nautical miles drifting in 5 hours while becalmed during the night.

So I am writing this on the Great Circle course to home, as I will get little time to myself in Kilrush Creek Marina upon arrival. I am getting better weather for this North Atlantic crossing than I did in 1987 when I got very strong winds for 21 days out of 28, and it was the same time of the year. High Pressure for the last 4 days and only once had I to lie ahull. Gave up carrying sail, even Storm Jib in very strong winds. Too damaging for them, too costly for me. I still think the Garmin G.P.S you got for me is magic. I bought another Garmin, secondhand, in Colon for \$250 U.S. as I don't think I would ever go back to the Sextant. So I will be having a lazarette sale when I get home"

24th July 1996 - Arrived KILRUSH MARINA - SHANNON - IRELAND

".....looking back I had an easy 39 day voyage from Fort Lauderdale in good conditions, and got out before the hurricane season, as while I still had transistor radio reception I got news of one that hit Virginia. I followed the Gulf Stream the whole way, and in its axis off the Florida coast I was getting an extra 70 n.miles per day due to the current.

In 1987, in my Folkboat, I was under jib only for 20 of the 28 days out of Newport Rhode Island, when the liner, the O.E.2. had £2 million of damage done to it while crossing at the same time.

It is not easy adjusting after three years of roving the oceans, and the lovely black eyed Susies, but already I am beginning to sprout a pot with all the good food again, and the odd evening with T.V."

FOOTNOTE

Ever since he learned to sail at the age of 16, Pat Lawless began reading books on single-handed voyages, and, inspired by Alain Gerbault's account of sailing around the world in the yacht 'FIRECREST' in the 1920's, he decided to emulate him. In earlier years Pat made other attempts, but set off on this epic voyage from Limerick in Seadog LOON on Sunday 18th of July 1993, and 3 years later created Seadog history by being the first to sail a Seadog single-handed round the world. (P.F.)

REMEDIES FOR SEASICKNESS

Charlotte, Piet Castenmiller's teenage daughter, is sometimes prone to disabling seasickness. Ordinary pills and tablets just don't work for her.

Shortly before leaving Ramsgate after the International Seadog Rally to sail home to Holland aboard ETOILE DE L'ESCAUT, Charlotte was offered a new, different type of seasickness remedy to try out. This takes the form of a patch designed to be applied to the skin behind the ear. The patch, which should be put in place some eight hours before sailing, has an effective life of 48 hours.

The active ingredient is hyoscine and it works on the inner ear. Made by Ciba Geigy and marketed under the name of 'Scopiderm' this product is currently not available in this country, only I believe on the Continent and in the U.S.A.

Afterwards, a happy Charlotte reported that the patch had been one hundred per cent successful in preventing her from feeling unwell, and it was the first and only remedy for seasickness ever to have worked for her.

ALTERNATIVE (HOMOEOPATHIC) REMEDY:

Recommended by Brian Jackson (ex MICHETTE): "TRAVELLA" Travel Sickness Tablets - (containing Cocculus and Tabacum) - are available by post from Nelson & Co., 73 Duke Street, London W1M 6PY. (Tel: 0171-495-2404).

by Ludwig Brandt

(continued)

"Since I last wrote we have moved TRIASID from Spain to the South of France, where, since August, we rented a small apartment with all comfort (bedroom, heating and a real bathroom) including a boat-berth directly behind our apartment house in Port Grimaud in the Gulf of St Tropez. The cruising possibilities from here are various, nice coastal cruises, 20 n.miles to the Iles de Levant with lots of anchorages, and only 80 n.miles to Corsica. Bad: In season (15th July to 30th August) impossibly overcrowded with jet set public, speedboats with noises like a tank, and various floating caravans of each size (up to more than 300 feet) with all the equipment that is new on the market and most expensive.

Put back to TRIASID. In 1994 only minor problems:

The grid COMPASS of our old Sharp Autopilot lost again his liquid. It was repaired with a new compass in the old housing by a compass builder in Barcelona because the old "kettle" (right word?) of the Heath 'Posun' compass was made of folded sheet metal and not tight anymore on various places.

Our old Lucas ALTERNATOR had to be replaced, but those people who run the Lucas shop in Figueres near Ampuriabrava gave my mechanic John one which is too small for our battery bank (3 x 100 Amp batteries). So we can't get the batteries a hundred per cent charged. I made researches here in Germany and found out to install for the future a new alternator with a 'smart regulator'. The type I intend to buy is a 'Powerline' 100 amp alternator with an 'Aqualine' regulator - an American product from HEHR International, 4616 Fairlane Avenue, Fort Worth, Texas 76119.

Costs on the German market - Alternator 300 DM and Regulator 500 DM. With this regulator one has three-step charging with bulk absorption and flat modes, turn-on delay, stepped voltage on turn-on. Put the price is high, and for the moment, thinking of our actual expenses, we will do this another year.

Moving to France: we hired the place in Port Grimaud from a German architect who is now in Trinidad. When the time came to move TRIASID from Spain to France, because we could not have one car in Ampuriabrava and the other in Port Grimaud, I went by train to Spain to sail the boat single-handed to France, and Jelke drove by car to Port Grimaud later.

I fully intended at first to cross the Lion Gulf directly, in one step - (less miles, but lots of traffic and unsafe weather conditions) - but later I got more sensible - (with the remarkable assistance of Jelke!) - and decided instead to take the shore line in various steps. Everyone who knows the Gulf of Lions knows that the most delicate passage is to pass Cap Bear, notorious for the strongest gales in the whole Mediterranean. The official German Pilot Book points out that Cap Bear has statistically in some months, more gales than Cape Horn! If you see this Cape it doesn't look very threatening, but thinking of the topographical situation, it's very clear that all the big winds of the Bay of Biscay will be pressed against the bottom of the Pyrenees and be deflected to have their exit in the Mediterranean just at Cap Bear, where it then blows like a funnel. This wind is called 'Iremontane', very violent. When the general Lion Gulf has winds of Force 6/7, it will be Force 9/10 at Cap Bear. The same phenomenon in the Rhone delta is called the 'Mistral'.

On July 4th I started from Ampuriabrava in nice conditions sailing along with the picturesque mountainous scenery on my port side to Llènca, a pleasant little fishing harbour with a small and sympathetic marina.

The weather forecast for the next day was a gale warning, so I waited, had a nice meal in a little restaurant, but no gales! That night, another gale warning, but nothing happened. I got angry. But the following morning forecast gave a Tramontana wind Force 4/5. That means for me that it will be on the nose. I set off prepared to return if necessary, because the dreaded Cap Peir was only two hours ahead. So I motor-sailed to get this Cape behind me.

Outside Collioure a French Customs boat, about 80 feet long with a gun on the foredeck came close, and its crew stared at a naked German sailor who was occupied changing over from the Spanish to the French courtesy flag. I jumped down into the cabin to find some pants when they called me up on the radio. They wanted to see my identification papers and the boat papers. I was just prepared to stop the engine when they told me to stay on course. They manoeuvred their boat dangerously close to me, then one man on the foredeck leaned across and shoved a 16 ft boat-hook with a little basket on the end right under my nose and told me to put the papers in that. I was afraid my important papers might be lost and I hesitated. But they insisted I do so. If they had lost the papers, at least they would have been officially lost! They kept the papers in their wheelhouse for at least half an hour, and eventually returned them in the same manner. They then left me alone. The man at the wheel did a good job, no damage (later I found out that my boat papers had been invalid since March, but maybe they did not notice that).

Meantime as I came close to Cap Peir, the wind decreased and I motorsailed round the Cape into the Gulf of Lions with its flat shores and sandy beaches. Two hours later the wind piped up and I could sail again, eventually I was sailing in a Force 7 with reefed mizzen and storm jib assisted by the engine. I entered Port Leucate in the evening in the same conditions. In French harbours no-one cares about you finding a berth or assists you to go into a berth, they don't even answer the VHF. So I went alongside a very short berth close to the Port Office, a little bit "unsmooth" but TRIASID forgave me - there was no damage.

For the next three days TRIASID was imprisoned by strong winds in Port Leucate. A Marina which I don't like very much; it's a holiday enclave with a long way for shopping, you need a car to get out to the next town, and the restaurants are very touristic, occupied in summer and the rest of the year dead. The next leg of the trip was 33 miles along to Cap d'Agde in Force 3/4 (later F5) north-westerly wind, unproblematic and fast. Cap d'Agde is also an artificial settlement with a big marina, but much more sympathetic than Leucate, nice restaurants and shops, a good place to stay also for people who come from the north through the canals, it being only 12 n. miles from Sete.

The following day just a 30 mile trip to Port Camargue. When planning this trip I failed to notice a prohibited zone about three miles offshore and found myself suddenly between lots of buoys all connected underwater with ropes. Luckily I found my way out without any propeller problems. Port Camargue is a huge marina, also with a long way to walk for food and drinks, but exceptionally nice planted areas like gardens or parks. The day after (July 11th) I had a little longer trip passing the Camargue and the Rhone Delta. Navigation was a bit irritating, the very low coastline and strong currents meant I had to correct my course many times. By sundown I had sailed 45 miles, and, having passed the mouth of the River Rhone, spent the night at the pleasant little anchorage of Carro, close to Cap Couronne. The weather was good and I spent a calm night at anchor which I prefer provided there is just a little bit of protection against wind and sea.

July 12th I started again and for the very first time saw the pretty coastline around Marseilles and the famous landscape east of Marseilles which comes into view after passing Cassis. Being fully occupied to look at the shore and all the nice places, and dreaming in the sun while the autopilot did his job, I was rudely interrupted by silence when the engine suddenly stopped. I had run out of fuel. I had forgotten to switch on the second tank! Nice job to bleed the engine, hot as it was, in all that heat, and I had no-one to shout at! That day I motor sailed to the Ile des Embiez (37 miles). This little island, only about three miles away from the mainland I like very much. It has a natural harbour in which Paul Ricard (the Pastis King) built a marina and a small village with nice gardens and a ferry goes each hour to the mainland. Because I had plenty of time in hand, I spent three days here, daily going out to a nearby anchorage for swimming, and in the evening buying prepared food in one of the stores for a nice meal on board, a good thing for a bad cook. I was there for the 14th of July Bastille Day Celebrations watching from "my" island the bright fireworks shooting up into the sky from all the towns and villages on the mainland.

Next day I sailed to Toulon, a big and dirty harbour where the French Marine (Navy) is at home. I went there to change the engine oil and bought a small electric pump which I found makes the mucky job of sucking oil out of the sump quicker, cleaner and leaves you with no blisters at thumb and forefinger. From Toulon it is only 13 miles to the Ile de Levant and I spent one day in an anchorage off Ile de Porquerolles. Very nice island with wonderful woods, and excellent clear water for swimming.

Sunday 17th. I found out at last that I am in France. A young lady came by dinghy and sold me a fresh baguette and croissants. I spent about a week, one day here, the other there, sailing between the Iles de Porquerolles, Port Cros and Ile de Levant. In between I went to la Lavandou on the mainland only five miles away, for food; it is a busy touristic village but with charm.

At last came the day when I sailed the 20 miles to Port Grimaud, passing the big Cap Camaret on the way. It is necessary to leave this part of the coastline well to port, 3-5 miles off, because of rocks, but the navigation is unproblematic and with so many buoys, signs and marks on the way, only a complete idiot could go wrong. Which means that every year several boats end up on the rocks. That also means that there are people (international people) who have the money but not the competence or know-how to own a boat.

Port Grimaud is a very expensive place, and its occupants are a mixture of "new rich" and sympathetic educated academics who earn good money. But the place is unique, so nice and in my opinion it is the most beautiful construction of all the marinas and artificial settlements I have ever seen in the Mediterranean.

Next winter TRIASID will be ashore here at Port Grimaud for drying out and for me to tackle the many jobs that accumulate during the summer.

P.S. About the worn-out rudder pintle, (the big pin which fits in the lower rudder bearing). We had this trouble on TRIASID some years ago, and my mechanic at the time, John, found a very simple method of curing it which has worked well until now. He took a cylindrical pill container, cut off the bottom and removed the lid, then pushed it firmly down over the rudder pin. This took up the play. He then reassembled the whole thing. I never expected this arrangement to work, but it has given good service for over two years when we have sailed more than 1,500 sea miles!"

ARDESMOR - "CHECK THOSE WEED TRAPS" - A warning from William Fisher:-

"How are your bolts which hold the butterfly nuts at the top of the weed trap? A foreign body came to call and lodged itself in the raw water inlet hull valve. So when screwed home it tightens and feels shut, but is not. Couple of days later - "pop" - one bolt at the head of the weed trap gasket sheered. Rate of flood about 200 gallons or one ton an hour.

By luck the problem was discovered when the water was only up to bunk level and the boat was only 3 to 4 inches down on her marks.

Two or three hours later could have been "masts only visible".

BIZZIE LIZZIE - "The Resurrection" by Roel & Wil Wijmans of Belgium:-

"In 1994, during the first really good summer for years, we decided to find our own yacht, already a dream since boyhood. First of all it had to be decided what kind of yacht, what length, what inventory and so on. All within the available budget of course. That summer was merely spent looking in numerous marinas, wharves and newspaper advertisements while sailing with a borrowed ship. That year we could not come to a decision, so the same scenario was repeated in 1995. Until that golden tip came with the simple question: "I know that the Huismans had a yacht, before their health problems, I wonder if they still have it?" To make a long story short, we became the proud owners of a Seadog by the end of October in that year.

BIZZIE LIZZIE was taken to a yard in Holland at the end of September 1982 (yes, you read it well) for deck repairs. Almost 13 years later we found her. Having served all these years as a bird pond and butterfly sanctuary (we still found live butterflies in February, despite a really cold winter), and being covered with a growth of brambles, we closed our eyes, rolled up our sleeves and got to work. We stripped her entire interior. Everything that could possibly be unscrewed or loosened we took home to be sandpapered and varnished; the fixed items like bunks we sandpapered and had to wait for the temperature to improve for painting. Meanwhile we had joined the Seadog Association (of course) and the numerous tips given by all the members and collected by Peter were looked into with great care. Although our main priority was to get her back into her element, the water.

We extended the rudder as suggested, as she still had the original small rudder. Despite the ingenious constructions found in the journals, which reminded us of the popular medical surgeries televised in every medical programme nowadays (and preferably just before dinner), using all those nuts and bolts, we just took a board of good plywood, shaped it, glued it in place with primer, and covered it all with some layers of GRP. Most probably thanks to modern technology this proved to be more than adequate (so far it survived even a Force 7 with frightening waves); she is only a bit heavy on the rudder under engine which might be caused by the rudder enlargement. A big advantage of this method however is that it can be easily re-shaped.

Finally the weather improved a little, but it was still far too cold to paint the hull, so we focused on the engine. The good old Perkins 4.107 undoubtedly had suffered from the water and we had no idea whether it had

been serviced correctly before lay-up. We cleaned the injectors and drained the oil. What a shock! First we pumped out 3 litres of fresh (fortunately) clean water, after which came the normal 4.5 litres of oil. We didn't bother with the alternator but replaced it, but we had the starter motor serviced. Then the engine was manually turned. Still the fear of a replacement of the engine was there - and way above the budget. We checked the wiring and again checked the entire engine (I'm in no way an expert, but I service my own car whenever possible).

And then, one morning I woke up and said to myself: "Oh, what the hell..., there is only one way to find out!" So on the way to the yard I bought a new battery, installed it, turned the key, and Gosh Almighty - she fired up almost immediately, after 13 years - would you believe it? That evening I celebrated and had a few too many.....

The original deadline was April 15th 1996, however it was still too cold to paint the hull and also the yard was behind schedule, so she could not be painted inside, which in the end saved us a few bob. When finally the weather improved the mosquitos came and by that time it was early June.

At last, on June 13th, after almost 14 years, Seadog PIZZIE LIZZIE was back into the water and we were anxious to test run the engine; we motored out of the port and had to come to a full stop, the engine was overheating. Inspection showed that part of the sea-water outlet was completely rusted. We found a blacksmith who made us a new one for less than £10 and the engine has never given us any trouble since. Again we celebrated. Meanwhile I had visited Olive and Peter in England who had given me good advice as to how to handle a Seadog under sail: after all we had never sailed a twin mast yacht.

Then on June 17, with PIZZIE LIZZIE now free and in her element, I motored her out of the port, hoisted the sails and turned the engine off. Almost seven months of hard labour were immediately forgotten. Once more a Seadog was saved!

Just one funny little story to finish. My brother took her on holidays and one day coming out of a lock, somebody started shouting at him - "Huisman! Huisman! hello!", while waving the Seadog Association Burgee at him. Most unfortunately my brother didn't (couldn't) react, but it might have been Piet Castermiller (ex NAUSIKAA) considering the area they were in at the time. Personally I have not come across any Seadog while sailing this summer".

BRANDANE - Alex van de Wiel of Ostende recently purchased her:-

"I have a special problem with my engine. After motoring for a few hours and it has got really hot, the engine stops and thereafter is impossible to restart until it is cold again. Unless I can find a cure quickly, I shall send the engine back to the same firm who claimed to have cleared up an identical problem some two years ago, and which clearly still has not been fixed. Perhaps you can publish this in the Seadog Journal - maybe other owners have had the same problem?".

PCRN FREE II - Now in southwest Ireland and owned by Joe Ashton:-

"It was quite an effort to work up PCRN FREE again, but well worth it. I thoroughly enjoyed sailing down channel again, introducing a new generation to the delights of cruising. My one constant companion on this trip was our ten year old, Matthew, a promising young seaman. In August we had some grand pottering on the West Coast with his mother, Fiona, and our three teenage daughters. We went up as far as Inishturk in the County Mayo, a healthily thriving community not yet over-run with tourists.

However, I must admit that I enjoyed the Autumn Wine Run to Brittany best, with my 21 year old son James and 18 year old daughter Anna. I wrote an account of it for a friend soon afterwards, and here it is:-

Having sailed down to Baltimore the previous weekend, we set off on Thursday evening, September 12th, hoping the northeasterly breeze would last long enough to take us to France. It soon fell light and started to veer easterly, so that night found us motor-sailing gently close-hauled, the engine just ticking over, in which mode Born Free slips along very nicely. So it was the next day, and that night the powerful lights on the Scillies were sweeping the sky to the south. The water was brilliantly phosphorescent, with balls and swirls of light welling up, brightening and fading. When the boat went through one of them, and I looked down into them from the bows, they resolved into shoals of fish, every one of them leaving its own jagged track of light.

In the morning we went into Newlyn to get the fishing gossip, show James the place, get a few goodies and a sniff of Plighty, and pass a foul tide. When in the afternoon it turned, we headed off again, finding, when we left harbour, a light breeze south by east straight from Roscoff where I wanted to go. By motor-sailing on the starboard tack we could just lay the Lizard, and thought of going to Falmouth. However, off the Lizard the wind backed again, and going about, we soon found we could just lay Roscoff on the port tack. So the next morning the tall granite light-house on the Ile de Batz appeared out of the haze ahead.

In contrast to the bold coasts I am used to, where great hills appear to have been chopped off by the Lord with rough unaccountable axe strokes, Brittany seems to struggle up out of the water somewhat in the manner of a drowned rat. A great litter of rock skirts the coast, gasping for breath between the tides which transform the scene by the hour. Between the rocks we went, and anchored off the Ile de Batz, finding the French somewhat frantically enjoying probably the last fine hot Sunday of the year. When the tide came in in the afternoon we went off to Roscoff, tying up right beside the centre of that fine old town.

Next morning I effected the most important business of the trip at a wine supermarket near the ferry terminal - a goodly supply of bottled French sunshine to help us through the winter! That afternoon we whistled down the French coast with a fresh easterly breeze behind us and a spring tide under us, as far as another huge light-house on the Ile Vierge and the rocky estuary of l'Aber-Wrach. Summer still lingered, though the crowds had gone, and the migrating birds were twittering about getting south before the autumn storms; but we had to make haste homewards while the wind held fair. We left next morning bound for Baltimore.

The sailing was idyllic, but the summer did seem to slip away astern with the coast as the easterly breeze hardened. There was a little consternation that evening when we picked up Falmouth Coastguard talking about easterly gales or strong gales, possibly reaching Storm Force 10. However, judging by the sky and the glass, I didn't think it would be that bad; and neither it was, though the next morning found us in a fine lump of a sea, with the tide pushing up against an easterly gale, about six miles south of the Bishop Rock Lighthouse at the southern point of the Scillies.

She rode the seas beautifully, and still made good progress with nothing but a bit of a jib set. So we went on all that day, poor Anna's seasickness being the only harm. It was lucky for me that I was able to remind her how she had been talking grandly of sailing round the world. But she wasn't too bad, and the morning after we were tramping along the coast of West Cork under full sail again.

We were blessed with ideal conditions for the rest of the spin home, the wind veering to the south exactly when we needed it to, for the last leg up from the Blesket Islands, to put our Anna back in humour with sailing and with me!

So that's it for now. This summer I'm heading south, at least to Galicia - though I've just heard that a nephew is to be married in Glasgow late in August, so it looks as though I shall have to try to take in Scotland too!".

CHIEN DE MER: - Douglas Perry reports from Devon:-

"So far this season we have made a couple of good cruises in great weather, but with the wind in the totally opposite direction to that forecast. Have seen three Seadogs but never their owners.

I also had occasion to repack the stern gland and remembering the warnings on not fitting graphite packing I went round Plymouth only to be offered graphited material. I finally found an engineering company who could supply the correct material - but only in 80 metre lengths at £44.00 a time! Quite by chance I found what I wanted at 'Yacht Parts' at Queen Anne's Pattery in a pre-pack in 18" lengths. The packs, marketed by Marine Pre-packs, Code No J022 are priced at £5.50 each".

(Graphited packings are mainly for steam joints. P.F.)

EX GLASS LADY - From Mexico John & Lisa de Candole send an update:-

"Christmas is coming and the goose may be getting fat, but here in Isla Mujeres there is no sign of Christmas coming and certainly there are no Christmas cards.

Isla Mujeres - the Island of Women - lies about 8 miles off the Mexican coast almost opposite Cuba. The weather is very pleasant, mid 80's with a constant breeze and crystal clear turquoise blue water. A complete contrast to the Rio Dulce where it was in the 90's, no breeze and very murky but fresh water. There are frequent northers at this time of the year when the wind blows strongly and at the moment there are many yachts waiting for a weather window to cross to Florida for Christmas. We will stay here till after Christmas and son Nicholas and a friend are arriving on Christmas Day for two weeks which is lovely for us.

We left North Carolina in mid March to travel the 2,000 miles to the Rio Dulce in Guatemala. The weather heading south along the coast was not very kind to us, so we sailed offshore whenever possible, but otherwise motored down the Intercoastal Waterway. We had lovely sailing along the Florida Keys - turquoise water behind the reef.

We crossed to Cuba from Key West and spent a week in Marina Hemingway just west of Havana. Old Havana is a very beautiful city, but with many of the buildings in a very bad state of repair. We were told by a Cuban that everyone has good ideas what to do with the buildings, but no ideas on how to finance the project. People were very friendly, even the officials of whom there were plenty - six separate lots visited the boat to clear us in.

From Cuba we crossed the Yucatan Channel to Isla Mujeres spending two weeks here, and travelling inland to the amazing Mayan ruined city of Chichen Itza. The Mexican coast was an inhospitable place so we sailed direct to Belize and spent some time anchored in lovely little cays,

although the weather was not good for snorkelling during the time we were there. We made another trip inland to Tikal, an even more impressive Mayan city deep in the Guatemalan jungle, but easier to reach by bus from Belize.

By mid-June - the start of the hurricane season - we were in the Rio Dulce which flows through a steep-sided gorge whose sides are covered in jungle foliage. Pelicans and egrets fly over head and Mayan Indians peddle their dugout canoes along the edge to be out of the strong current - a very tranquil scene. The river flows into El Golfo and then into Lake Izabal. The boats are anchored and in marinas about 25 miles from the open sea, and here life is not so tranquil. The weather was very hot, wet and humid, so we left DAMARA in a marina run by a very efficient and friendly English couple and spent three months travelling inland and visiting Costa Rica where we stayed in brother Mark's magnificent house overlooking coffee plantations. From here we went on a three day package tour to Cartagena in Colombia, a beautiful old city full of the history of Drake, Hawkins and those other pirates who tried to ransack the city for its treasure.

Guatemala is a fascinating and colourful country and travel is very cheap if you use the local buses. These buses never leave until they are full with at least twice the number of passengers they were designed to carry, so travelling is not very comfortable. We visited the ancient capital of Antigua with its many fine old buildings, and Lake Atitlan, described by Aldous Huxley as the most beautiful lake in the world.

The weather was not very good whilst we were there, but on the last day we had a wonderful view of the lake in all its glory with the three volcanoes in the background. We visited several traditional Indian markets which are wonderfully colourful with the people in their traditional dress of beautifully hand woven clothes, each village with its own special design. John loved bargaining with the Indian ladies who were all so friendly and the boat is now full of handicrafts so we are well prepared for any fancy dress parties.

CROSSING THE FLORIDA PANHANDLE.

We sailed north from Isla Mujeres up to the Florida Keys in mid December - I had suddenly had enough of Mexico! In retrospect it was a poor decision because the weather here has been pretty foul since we arrived.

We were hoping to go to the Bahamas when our youngest son Nick visited us over Christmas, but heavy easterly winds prevented any move in that direction. We therefore went north up the west coast of Florida and crossed the Florida Panhandle via Lake Okeechobee which is huge - an interesting trip for us, with plenty of birdlife on the way.

We are now anchored in Lake Worth; rather poor holding and we have had winds of 50 knots plus from southeast to southwest. It's been three days now and we've not been off the boat - hopefully it will go down tomorrow. Just recently I bought a lightweight 'Fortress' anchor and have found it quite excellent. It has been looking after our 45lb CQR which pulls through the soft sand and mud in the strong gusts. Hitherto I have been using a heavy Danforth anchor in tandem with the CQR - but the Danforth always catches my fingers and is difficult to lay from the dinghy. I wonder whether the 'Fortress' anchor would be effective in the harsher, seaweedy, stony conditions we have in the English Channel and along the Brittany coast - I suspect not.

We plan to leave the United States east coast for Bermuda in mid May so have several months to fill in before we go - but, what with jobs on the boat, spending time in the Bahamas, and then visiting Disneyland and the Cape Canaveral Space Centre, we shall have plenty to do.

Well, that has brought you up to date with what we have been up to this year. All in all we have had a fascinating and interesting year and seen some amazing places in Central America. There is still an awful lot to see, but probably, on balance, it is time to head for home and collect our old age pension!

We hope to be back at Elizabeth Cottage, Keyhaven on the first of September 1998 - the cottage is let until then - so if we reach Falmouth by mid July - having spent time in the Azores - we will have time for a cruise to Ireland? Tho' it's more likely we'll opt for making a slow trip along the South Coast.

I am now thinking of making an excursion to the eastern Mediterranean, Turkey/Greece/Israel, Egypt etc. for 1999/2000 - we shall see!"

SEEHOND - Ken Willey sends news of jobs done and plans for 1998:-

We spent the sailing season making out a list of jobs to be done ashore during the winter. This year the list reached the grand total of 30, ranging from the fairly easy (restock the First Aid box) to the difficult-or-impossible.

One fairly straightforward but essential task was to look at the mizzen tabernacle bolts. Someone tipped me off that that was a prudent action and how right he was. The main thing holding the tabernacle to the bulkhead was varnish. If other owners have not checked, I advise them to do so.

Replacement of the Cutless bearing fell into the too difficult (for me) category, and I asked Gosport Boat Yard to do the job. Imagine my horror when I visited the boat one day and found that they had cut through the propeller shaft with a hacksaw as a simple method of removing the propeller.

They were then talking about lifting the engine to enable them to remove the stub of the shaft - not realising there are two joints between the propeller and the gearbox.

Plans for 1998: We hope to reach South West Scotland this year. It's a wonderful cruising area and we must try for it before I become too decrepit for such a long expedition. The installing of Hydrovane self-steering should help.

Being towed in a Seadog: Being towed in a Seadog by a Seadog is an experience we had last year on the Normandy coast. SEEHOND'S electrician died on me in Courseulles the day before Jess was to arrive in Quistreham. Luckily, Ray Claucherty of SEACANIS offered us a tow.

There was no real problem as the wind was light and Ray took things very gently. The only problem occurred off the entrance to Quistreham when the tow-rope broke. Ray ploughed on for a time, not noticing that we were unrolling sails at a rapid rate trying to take advantage of the almost non-existent wind. Luckily he looked back in the nick of time.

We were a week in Quistreham and SEEHOND now has an excellent, if expensive, French-designed electrical system.

GLYFADA - From the northwest comes news from Keith & Zlatka Stubbs:-

"We spotted the name GLYFADA in the 'Yachts for Sale' columns of the 'Practical Boat Owner' and made a quick telephone call to the vendor. Finding she was still for sale, a suitable viewing date was arranged.

She was lying in a grotty marina in Grimsby, 90 miles as the crow flies. The day we arrived was beautiful - the sort of day a vendor prays for - and we met Dick and Mignon Cathcart.

We'd viewed a few yachts previously, only to pinch our noses and reach up for the imaginary loo chain.

After a quick outside once-over we were taken below. Zlatka and I were gob-smacked. This was the yacht we'd been searching for.

The aft cabin and main saloon were totally refurbished, new seating and coverings in a warm material, all fire retardant. Woodwork as new and beautifully varnished. Curtains and cushions of the same material and a nice carpet. To cap it all, there was a brass paraffin lamp on the main bulkhead and antique framed pictures on the walls. In fact we were sitting in a miniature living room of some taste. The galley area was also superb with a new gimballed oven, two ring burner and grill. All cutlery and place settings for four were new. Pots, pans and a drawer full of kitchen utensils too, and hot and cold running water. What more could you want?

The main outer hull and brightwork was in excellent condition. Of course there were the usual scars that one would expect to find on a 26 year old yacht, but of no real consequence. All running rigging was in good shape and the sails were only, I'd guess, a season or two old. She also had a good mizzen staysail, which I've used a few times already and I'm impressed.

One unusual nicety not associated in the original design of a Seadog is a skilfully designed and constructed bowsprit/pulpit which takes the forestay 3ft. forward, increasing her ability to windward. The engine sounded good, like a sewing machine.

We all went on a test sail and during the trials I was very disappointed in her speed and handling both on engine and sail - she just would not go.

I talked to Peter French and two other Seadog owners who put my mind at ease with tales of 7 knots. There had to be a good and simple reason, they said, such as a badly fouled bottom.

So the deal was done and one November weekend Zlatka and I headed for Grimsby. At his end, Dick had arranged everything which went like clockwork. The masts were unstepped while GLYFADA was still in the water lying alongside the quay, and finally the yacht was hoisted out and placed on the low loader and there before our eyes was the reason for the poor performance. I've never seen barnacles of the size attached to the bottom of GLYFADA. Each barnacle measured 1/2" in diameter and 1" high. They covered the propeller, hence no speed under power, the keels and parts of the hull. This performance doubt was now lifted from my mind. Dick duly shook our hands and wished Zlatka and me good fortune sailing our new yacht and was saddened to see her go. His wife could not bear to be here on this day of parting.

Many hours later GLYFADA was craned off into our back garden in Lancashire - the only mistake was in leaving her bows down, because the foredeck filled with water. Later on I had to dig out the keel to make her level.

The bottom was cleaned off and prepared for the anti-fouling at a later date. The inside was not in need of attention, but there was a catalytic heater fitted to the main bulkhead which I replaced with a 'Taylor' paraffin stove. The catalytic heater did keep us warm but was a source of condensation, and of course all the time it was on we were breathing its fumes.

In the heads was a sea toilet and we tried but failed to fit a "Porta-Potty" alongside it. So the sea toilet had to go. Most of the west-coast harbours dry out, and when you gotta go - you gotta go. The Porta-Potty fits splendidly amidships of the chain locker held into place at the base with 4 mahogany pads, and at the front, a mahogany bar running from the portside dry-clothes locker and across to the starboard hanging locker. I had to raise the floor for the base of the loo so it would go right up against the chain locker.

Also the sleeping accomodation was not to our liking. There's nothing like snuggling up to one another on a cold night. Making an infill for the after cabin was also not on. We can't envisage moving out of a cosy main cabin and into a cold after cabin on a cold damp night (and the Lord knows we have lots of them up here in the North). No, something had to be done and we did it. It works beautifully. I manufactured an infill of three sections for the main cabin which stores perfectly on the top shelf on the starboard side of the foc'sle above the chain locker. (A full description and drawings are available). It affords a good-sized double bed with plenty of room and is more than comfortable. Lastly the stern gland was repacked and the antifouling applied.

The crane and low-loader arrived at six o'clock on a cold and frosty morning in November - I swept two inches of snow off the deck and GLYFADA was loaded in the dark. But by the time we arrived at Shell Island the day was like an Indian summer with no wind. After GLYFADA was offloaded into her new harbour the crane then loaded my ex yacht 'TATRANKA II' onto the new owners low loader for a trip which was to take it to Ipswich.

The tide started to make and soon GLYFADA was afloat. A quick check on the stern gland which was nipped up a little and then came the wind. By 19.00 it was up to gale force 9 and soon she was being blown against the harbour wall, beam on to the wind with a 30 degree heel. But with plenty of fenders down she weathered it all with no damage.

The following morning we awoke to a still, quiet world, for the wind had dropped. After breakfast we slipped the moorings and headed into the open sea. Here, if I had had any lingering doubts, they were soon cast aside. GLYFADA ploughed through the sea at 7 knots and manoeuvred like a ballet dancer. Boy! was I overjoyed. After playing around for some time we called it a day and motored back into the Pensarn side of the harbour and picked up our own mooring. She was HOME".

MELISSE - Jon Smurthwaite has made many modifications to his Seadog in the quest to make her effortless to handle:-

"The stern of MELISSE now looks like a metal factory. It has sprouted a Hydrovane, which has to be used with care in conjunction with the mizzen. The payoff for that is that the Hydrovane rudder can be used to ensure the 'dog' goes astern the way we want her to. The stern boarding ladder has been redesigned to allow for age (of the crew). There are also two hinged, crescent shaped widgets which hold the dinghy off the vane-gear when slung from the davits. The standing rigging has been renewed and all I have to do next winter is re-seat the toe rail".

MISSI: From Germany, singlehander Heinz Willman recommends the Baltic Sea as a cruising area:-

"last summer I sailed to the Baltic Sea. First, I singlehanded to Stockholm, where I was joined by a friend who accompanied me to Copenhagen and back to the Jade and Wilhelmshaven. In recent years I observe that more and more sailors from the Netherlands and some from Belgium, France and Great Britain come to the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic is a lovely sailing area, with clear water and no tides and without heavy winds, and because most of the wet clouds come from westerly directions, they lose their water on the high mountains in Norway, so that summer in the Baltic Sea normally is better than in the North Sea.

For anyone that is interested, there are 4 ways from England to the Baltic Sea. The most used way is through the Kiel Canal. First along the coast of the Netherlands or inner waterways, then along the islands of the German coast. This is the area where most of the action in the story "Riddle of the Sands" took place. The second way is from Heligoland over to the River Eider, along this river which the Vikings used a thousand years ago on their way from the Baltic Sea to the North Sea, and from there nearly to the middle of the Kiel Canal. The third way is crossing the North Sea and the sail up the Limfjord (in northwestern Denmark) to the Kattegat. Lastly the 4th and longest way which is north around the top of Denmark.

Then after you have arrived in the Baltic Sea you will find there are four lovely sailing areas to choose from. The most visited are the islands between Denmark and Sweden. In July and August there are plenty of boats. I myself prefer the islands on the east coast of Sweden around Stockholm where there are reputed to be thousands of them. The third area is more to the north, the Aalandsea between Sweden and Finland. It is nearly like the islands at Stockholm, which we call "scharen", but here there are only few boats. These islands belong to Finland, but the people there speak Swedish, and the area has its own ensign. Also there are the "scharen" on the west coast, from Goteborg right along to the border with Norway. ("Scharen" are skerries - P.F)..

How much time does one need? This summer, day sailing singlehanded from Wilhelmshaven to Stockholm, I needed three weeks. From England of course you need much more time, and it might be too far away. But this summer I met in Sweden some German sailors who left their boats for one or two winters in Sweden. I think that would be a possibility for British sailors too.

I am a member of the Wilhelmshavener Segelclub. The W.S.C. has two harbours, a small tidal harbour, the Nassauhafen in Wilhelmshaven, and one 10 miles north of it at Hooksiel with a lock. Since some years my boat MISSI has been stationed at Hooksiel.

If you or somebody else of the Seadog Association comes along he is heartily welcome, but I am seldom at home because I live alone. Last week I flew back from Lanzarote where I had been staying for some weeks".

Another letter - October 1997:

"I finished sailing early this year (September) because I have ordered the shipyard to do some work on MISSI. I changed the Decca for a GPS and had the rudder made larger and some other things.

When sailing this summer I was twice dogged by bad luck. In June while sailing along the east coast of Denmark near Arhus I got toothache!

So I hurried in two and a half days from there back to Wilhelmshaven and rushed home and had the tooth taken out. Some days ago I got a new one.

The second time was in August at Husum which is on the northeast coast of Germany. There, suddenly, my motor finished his work. There was always air in the diesel oil pipe. Because nobody could find what was the matter, I sailed back to my harbour near Wilhelmshaven. What had happened? You know that on the bottom of the starboard cockpit locker there are two three-way fuel cocks. They had become not airtight. Because I could not get here in Germany the right tightening material, I changed the cocks to German ones.

Now I will start with my car for a trip through Germany - Happy Sailing."

MISS MATE: - 4th January 1997 - from Australia a letter from Maina and Roland Svensson:-

"We are going to Europe to arrange the transport of MISS MATE out to Australia. No words can tell you how much we miss our "MISS" and what a terrible feeling it is to know that she is staying alongside day after day in St Malo in France. Even if we know that our friends keep an eye on her, it hurts deep down in our hearts to know that we haven't been able to sail her for more than one and a half years.

In August 1996 we were granted our Independent Residents Visa to Australia - (it took us almost three years to get it) - and I still remember the lady at the Passport Control saying "Welcome to Australia!" Roland had been offered a job as a Marine Surveyor so we went to Mackay in northern Queensland and met the 'highest' boss who turned to me and said "and how about you Maina?" We had fifteen minutes to decide if we could both start working as Marine Surveyors. The upshot was that within a week we had both signed a contract for a small house.

Roland then had to leave to complete a contract - I can assure you that the following three months were the toughest I have ever had.

Suddenly left alone in a new Continent, with a new house, a pool, and a garden to look after, plus a new job, and all in English! (Maina and Roland are Swedish). The three months just rushed by and Roland and I met in St Malo to start arranging for the removal of our belongings to Australia. Before we knew it we were on our way back to Australia and to work. Whatever happens we will stay in Australia and will bring MISS MATE over. It is perfectly all right to live aboard a yacht here and you have a lot of beautiful islands to discover. A Seadog must be a perfect boat here.

We have decided to have her shipped out as deck cargo - we know it will be extremely expensive, but we have made up our minds that MISS MATE is worth it as she is the only yacht we want. We have to pay transport, insurance, import tax and valuation. Anyway we'll see how to solve everything and hope that soon we can start working on our "baby" again."

NATUNA:- New owner NIGEL PRICE with news and views from the West Country:-

"I thought you might appreciate some brief details about this latest member of the clan Sea Dog! I've lived here in Cornwall for twenty-one years, although I originally came from Chichester. My wife Jacouie comes from Looe. I've always sailed since living down here, but not as a boy. I got my first boat, a Hurley 22, in 1980 and moved on to a Hurley 24 in 1985, which I bought from a chap in Southampton. That was a super boat and we had lots of happy times on it with our three children whom we used to pack like sardines into the forepeak.

Eventually we outgrew the Hurley 24 and, having recently benefitted from a legacy, decided to splash out on a Sadler 34 which I found in Lymington. When I sail NATUNA back to Falmouth it will be the third such delivery trip in a row. Obviously the Solent area is the place to go if you want to find a decent boat.

The Sadler was a good boat, but we soon found that although we had gone up in length by only 10 feet, the running costs were 10 times higher. In order to pay the bills we ended up chartering her with the EME Fleet out of Falmouth Marina. The money was good but we are not really 'marina' people so, after three seasons we decided to sell her.

This decision was also prompted by my needing to have a hip replacement operation. I sold the Sadler 34 in 1993 and apart from a half share in a twenty foot day boat at Truro, I've been without a boat since then. I have had plenty of sailing though, because a good friend owns a Super Sovereign ketch on which both Jackie and I have logged many sea miles.

I suppose I've been toying with the idea of getting another boat since the Autumn of last year, but I didn't know what I wanted - which means that you end up looking at everything.

It wasn't until I stepped onto NATUNA in February that I saw a boat that I knew I wanted to own. It's a lovely boat and I shall try hard to keep her up to standard. I trained as an engineer and normally do all my own maintenance. Also I'm sort of semi-retired now, so there is plenty of time. I haven't got many firm plans for NATUNA, except an entry in the Helford River to L'Aber Wrach pursuit race at the end of May, and perhaps a trip down the west coast of France next year.

NATUNA's delivery trip went pretty smoothly and she is now safely moored in Falmouth Harbour on the Flushing side. I left Emsworth on the 19th of April, closely following Harry Manners in SEASCAPE who kindly offered to guide me out. I'm glad he did because I could feel the keel scraping the bottom here and there at the top of the Channel.

When we reached Chichester bar I said goodbye to SEASCAPE as we set course for Solent West. The original plan was to head for Poole, but as we were away later than had been anticipated, and the weather was squally and quite cold, we decided to stop at Lymington where we tied up at the Town Quay. I calculated that from Lymington it would take between 9 & 10 hours to get to Portland Bill, at a cruising speed of five and a half knots which Dick advised was realistic for NATUNA. So next morning it was up with the shipping forecast and away in order to catch the tide window at Portland. We cast off only to find ourselves sharing the narrow channel with an incoming ferry, so tied up to a moored boat until it was clear, then we motored quietly out of Lymington on a lovely calm morning.

After passing Hurst Narrows we took the north passage and hugged the coast right round, first to Christchurch, then to Poole Pay. There was little or no wind. Off St Alban's head we experienced a few ripples from the race before I altered course for Portland Bill to take the inshore passage. I hadn't gone more than a mile before a range safety boat from Portland came over and advised, very politely, that a large buoy which seemed frighteningly close was shortly to be subject to a bombardment by her Majesty's ships. We readily agreed to alter course towards Weymouth. Once clear of the danger zone I diverted south again and with the strong tide under us, found ourselves rapidly approaching the Bill at our hoped for time of arrival, doing nearly 9 knots over the ground. In the distance we could see the race looking rather like Fistral Beach in the west country when it's a good day for surfers! When we reached the tip of Portland Bill I peeled off right from the stream and, keeping the recommended bisquit's toss from the land, we rounded the tip and with relief set course for Start Point and Falmouth.

There were several people on the tip of the Bill watching us go past and we were that close I swear that I could see the whites of their eyes. After that it was a straightforward motor-sail to Falmouth with the welcome benefit of a northeast wind which had been forecast and which blew steadily from 9 p.m. onwards. We were held up for 3 hours in a foul tide off Start Point, but then raced on with the strong spring tide now in our favour past Eddystone Light to arrive at Falmouth exactly at 9.00 am on 21st April. The passage, port to port was 26 hours at an average speed of 5.8 knots. Not bad for the first sail of the season in a new boat!"

NICHOLA JANE: - is now owned by Neal Beaumont & Joscelyn McInnes.

"We've done it! Seadog No 11, NICHOLA JANE is now ours. We took her for a brief discovery sail from her previous berth at Shotley Point marina on the River Orwell in Suffolk down to a mudberth at Battlesbridge (at the navigable limit of the River Crouch). I am delighted to report that all systems worked perfectly, and in a fairly fresh breeze, NICOLA JANE behaved in exactly the manner I had expected her to (she was solid, predictable and felt totally dependable). We plan to leave her at Battlesbridge for a month under the watchful eye of a sailing friend who lives right next to the river, and return in early May to sail her round to the Isle of Man where we live. We then hope to sail her up to the Scottish Highlands later in the summer."

POTHOS: From France, a letter from a long-lost Seadog:-

"My name is, (or rather was), "POTHOS" - I am a Seadog built in 1969, No. 74. My first owner was a Netherlands diplomat, Max Vegeli Van Cløerbergen, then a French teacher, Andre Perou, living at Prest in Brittany, took me over. Then in January 1991 I met Mr Loic Jezequel from St Quay-Portrieux in Brittany. I was for sale for many years. Mr Perou was too old to sail with me. Mr Jezequel fell in love with me; after one month of works I was ready to sail again. He changed a few things on board - fitted a shower, hot water, new security equipment, GPS and so on. My name too he changed and I have become "AR HAZ MOR" - (a Celtic name) - it means 'seacat'- funny name to give to a Seadog isn't it?

Loic and his girl friend Anne and their cat use me as a house. They first sailed me to Noirmoutier Island down in the Bay of Biscay then in the autumn sailed me down to the Mediterranean Sea, across Biscay Bay, past Spain and Portugal to Le Lavandou - (between St Tropez and Hyeres) where we arrived two and a half months later. What a beautiful trip!! My owner is a sailing instructor. Now he is in charge of a sailing school at Gruissan close to Narbonne, (not far from the French/Spanish border) and still living on board. I am sure my owner will be happy to know your Association and would like to join it! Sinceres salutations!"

PEA GREEN - Brian King - a light-hearted excerpt from one of his many long letters:

"We had a 'Flash Harry' in last night who made a rather spectacular exit shouting all the time at his wife. He picked up a rope around his prop. and managed to sail back into Brixham Marine. He donned a wetsuit and and removed the propeller to clear the rope. Placing the prop. on the pontoon, his wife tripped over it, sending it into the water and now he can't find it! Couldn't happen to a nicer person after what he called his wife!"

(Note: Brian King has had a stroke which has made it difficult for him to continue living aboard PFA GREEN - so he is now shore-based. A number of Seadog Owners have asked after his welfare and I am delighted to reveal that Brian telephoned a short time ago and, although he finds it difficult to talk, was able to give me his new address, and let you all know he is coping reasonably well. He still has his little dog Pixie. Address - 66 Chapelhay Heights, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8JL Tel: 01305-768317 - P.F.).

ROUSELLE - From North Devon comes an update from Brian Jones:-

"Last winter I added a bowsprit and a 100 sq.ft. rolling staysail which runs parallel with the new forestay. What a difference that sail makes! I can now sail at 40 degrees to the wind under genoa, staysail, main and mizzen at around 7 knots in a Force 4 wind. The total sail area is now 640 sq.ft. - that is the working rig. I have always wanted a cutter-headed ketch and I can say that the improvement in her sailing performance is phenomenal. I can leave most 30'-35' boats dead in their tracks, and the 'Wren' class sailing dinghy I had built has also proved to be a great asset. It will carry three full-sized persons with ease, and it sails like a dream. Aided by lifting tackle I can lift it off its chocks singlehanded and put it in the water in less than three minutes.

Last June we went to Ireland. We had a fantastic time, beautiful weather and the people are so, so friendly. We had a spot of trouble in that our engine fresh water pump packed up. Perkins engines are relatively unheard of in southern Ireland so we had to go to Perkins direct (via Ilfracombe Marine Services) and get a pump flown out to Dublin by Jersey Air. The cost was exceptional, but the engine was useless without it. Once fitted, we continued our journey. We met Stan Levis on DAGOTIA while in Kinsale. It was good to see him again since he moved to Kinsale from Swansea. Stan was having major surgery done on his Perkins whilst it was still in situ. It would appear that good engineers are thin on the ground over there.

On the 16th of June we celebrated ROUSELLE's birthday by sailing around the Fastnet Rock. How's that for a commemoration? We didn't get very far up the West Coast as we ran out of time. Another year perhaps. On our return we called in at Milford Haven where we met Terry and Heather James on CI-MOR. We often run into them and it's usually at Tenby or Lundy Island as we are both based in the Bristol Channel".

SEAFLEUR

"SEADOG HELPS SELL HOUSES"

Colin and Tisha Browne write: "SEAFLEUR is in the foreground of an attractive view of the River Medway and 16th century Upton College currently being used as the main illustration in a glossy brochure of a housing development being built next door to Chatham Dockyard, where Nelson's ship 'Victory' was built.

SEAFLEUR has appeared in national and local newspapers and on the backs of buses in the area. But the picture was "improved" by artistic licence in that several leafy branches frame this view from the houses. However, the developers have since cut down the majority of the trees bordering the riverside site. We have now framed the colour print, which is excellent, and hung it next to our other favourite Seadog picture, the one we bought from Monica Groves (AFARON) a year or two ago while at a Devil's Punchbowl Hotel weekend." (Colin and Tisha moved to Helston in Cornwall shortly before Christmas to live nearer their daughter).

SAINT - From James Lovell, news of an American Seadog, plus an appeal:-

"In May 1993 I was given the address of the Seadog Owners Association by George Taylor of the British "Practical Boat Owner" magazine. At the time my wife and I were contemplating the purchase of a Seadog here in the United States. We have since acquired SAINT IV (now shortened to SAINT) - (Pilge keel, Builder's number 6R), from a Mr Oscar Britton and with the purchase were given a few copies of early Seadog Owners Association Newsletters and Registers of Owners. Mr Britton purchased SAINT from Sam Fergusson-Musser in 1989 while the boat was hauled out and stored at a boatyard in Annapolis, Maryland. Shortly after this Mr Britton became so ill he was never able to sail her, nor even see her in the water.

When we assumed ownership in May 1993, SAINT had been ashore and in the dry for 5 years. We spent considerable effort in readying her for sailing, and are pleased to report that despite a long list of projects still to be done, SAINT is sailing again! Together with another sailing couple, my wife and I recently completed a 140 nautical mile round trip from our slip at Parrish Creek Marina in Shady Side, Maryland, via Chesapeake Bay to Indian Creek near Kilmarnock, Virginia, with an overnight stop at Tangier Island on the return. On a few occasions - (during a night sail) - we were able to get SAINT to sail at more than six knots, (according to the GPS reading) over the ground. Not bad, considering the sails are the original Ratsey and Lapthorne dated 1969! While there were no significant breakdowns, it was a great shakedown cruise and provided a considerable number of items to be added to my things-to-do list.

During discussions with previous owner Sam Musser, I learned that SAINT had been fitted with a new Perkins 4.107 engine in 1988 and that given the fact that the next owner, Mr Britton, had been unable to sail her, the engine could have no more than 100 hours on her. While I am not particularly interested in restoring SAINT to her original state so far as layout and equipment is concerned, I am intent on making her as seaworthy as possible and often find that it would be nice to know whether one is confronted with an original installation, or a subsequent modification made by one of the previous owners.

To this end, an original Owner's Manual would be priceless (sadly, no such thing existed. P.F.). With regard to previous owners, do you have any historical records which would indicate the name of the first owner of SAINT? I was told that an American diplomat with the U.S. Embassy in London bought her in 1969 and shipped her to the United States as part of his household effects. If this were true it would be of particular interest to me since I am a recently retired diplomat with the U.S. Foreign Service and may very well have served with the man at one time or another. Any historical information you or anyone else may have concerning this matter would be most appreciated".

TALIESIN - Eric Richardson and the 4th International Seadog Rally:-

"I enclose a photo of Bill Richard's NEWANDERER - (a deep Seadog) - taken on the trip down from Ramsgate to Dover. By heck, that boat can fly. I think it is the extra wetted-area of the bilge keels along with the aerofoil shape which slows you when sailing upright, although the aerofoil shapes certainly give lift when heeled, so, as the saying goes, "you pays your money and you takes your choice".

I had an interesting singlehanded trip sailing back home to Lowestoft after the Dover Rally. It was good sailing most of the way across the Thames Estuary up to the River Orwell, but real heavy going through the Black Deep. The deep water channel was too narrow to sail, so Mr Perkins had to push hard, but even then, with wind against tide, the waves were big enough to stop me, and it took four hours to do about ten miles.

They say there is a first time for everything - it's the first time I have driven into a breaking wave. It broke at the mast about two feet above the boom - I expected to lose the windscreen and hood, but it washed over the top, leaving a cockpit full of water. Fortunately both hatches were closed so only a small amount of water got in, most of it through the dorade ventilators which did allow some water to get under the bunks from behind the headlining.

Next day in Suffolk Yacht Harbour the sun shone, and to add insult to injury a canal narrow-boat left the marina bound for the River Thames via Brightlingsea. The boat had apparently been up as far as the Wash in north Norfolk, a trip they found to be perfectly normal, saying all they did was wait for a good forecast.

What have I been playing at all these years? So, setting course north to Lowestoft, and with nobody on board to complain, I headed straight up through the Orford Overfalls just for the hell of it, and thought - I would like to see a narrow boat do this!"

TONGAREVA - Carol and Michael Moss's delivery trip from Ardfern - (south of Oban on the Scottish west coast) - to Manningtree, Essex:

"Philip Eyre, the previous owner, met us at Ardfern on the 10th of May and helped us to get used to sailing a ketch. The following day he left and we spent the next week fitting out and sorting out a problem with the oil-pressure gauge. After setting off we visited Tayvallich and Loch Melford, but were holed up at Craobh Marina for a further week of wind and rain. After calling in at Tobermory for shopping, we braved Ardnamurchan and the splendid rock-strewn entrance to Arisaig where we were joined by friends from Cumbria.

Our son and daughter then came for a week, and we had fine weather the whole time. We stayed two nights in Loch Hourn -(off the sound of Sleat, and opposite the island of Skye) - here we made an early start one morning and managed to reach the summit of a Munro* by 07.00 hours.

Although we had charts for Orkney and Shetland we did not yet have sufficient confidence in TONGAREVA nor in ourselves to tackle this route home, so we slipped into the Caledonian Canal for an enjoyable five days when we climbed two more Munros. Good progress was made after Inverness, and we appreciated the performance of the 36 hp. Perkins after the small 10 hp engine we had in our previous boat.

Day sailing, we spent nights at Peterhead, Stonehaven - (diesel 26p/litre from a bowser at 08.00 hrs. on Friday mornings!) - Tayport and Berwick on Tweed where we remained for five nights with strong winds. The birdlife on the east coast of Scotland and England was prolific, Guillemots, Razor-bills, Gannets, Puffins and so on, and in the sea Dolphins abounded.

From Berwick we reached the River Stour in Essex in one long leg of 38 hours and TONGAREVA is now resting safely on the mud at Manningtree.

You will be pleased to hear that the Seadog is just our sort of boat, but the Mizzen and the Wheel are going to take some getting used to"

* - (A "Munro" is a mountain over 3,000 feet high. P.F)

ICPAZ - John Truscott from Cornwall:-

"We moved house in May, so not so much sailing as usual, but we enjoy the River Fæl and the Helford River from our base at Mylor near Falmouth. Went to the Scillies for Easter and had a wet cold and bumpy trip home, but it made a good early start to the season.

Susan and I enjoy ICPAZ and she has never let us down. She is every bit as good as Reg Freeman said she would be all those years ago when the prototype Seadog, GLASS LADY, was still just a drawing. Reg was then Commodore of the Cargreen Sailing Club near Saltash in Cornwall, and at the time I had sailed my 'Stella' over from Fowey on a Fowey Yacht Club Race.

We had a super evening in his company, and I fell in love with the Seadog there and then."

"MISS MATE" UPDATE

Maina Svensson writes from Eimeo, near Mackay, Queensland, Australia:-

"Out here in the tropics it's very hard to get peace of mind and time to sit down and write letters ... but just outside - by the pool somewhere - there is a frog barking and screaming! You know, one of those voices that goes through everything! Very disconcerting and irritating because as soon as you go out and try to move the frog, it gets silent and invisible.

Disappointingly, MISS MATE is still in St Malo and we are going to pay a company to help us with Customs, Clearance, Fumigation and Import Taxes, etc. because that seems to be the safest, quickest and most convenient way of bringing "her" into this country.

Our next move now is to await the reply from St. Malo. We have asked them to confirm the costs involved - insurances and other conditions - before we let go. Our friend - a chief engineer will help us to supervise the construction of a cover (half-container size) over MISS MATE'S deck area and masts. He will also take some photos when they lift her from where she is standing now on to the trailer for further transportation. This friend of ours is currently working at sea and will be home in St Malo at the beginning of May 1998. It is all very exciting and we are both anxious and worried as we cannot be there and keep an eye on the handling of MISS MATE for ourselves. It has taken us more than a month (which is all our spare time off at home), to write and translate (English and French) all of the lists for the Customs. 9 pages! (+ 9 in French + letters and other information).

Imagine all the things that you have on board - every single item - everything from spare parts to old clothes and kitchen tools - every bolt and screw - not only to mark their position on board - you also have to put a value on each item! I can tell you that it is extremely hard to find all the words and translations into French.

To make it all look professional Roland has written it on our computer and I have used my old typewriter. I refuse to use the computer because it is full of surprises and silly tricks and I just can't stand it when I get stuck on something I don't really understand. The computer came from Norway and it worked all right in Europe, but since it came here it hasn't behaved well at all!

As soon as we have something more to tell - when things start to happen - really happen - we'll get back to you - now I really have to go out and find that screaming frog!"

GLORY IS MY FREEDOM

by Susan Huber

PAGO-PAGO (American Samoa) to TONGA

"To continue my story from where I left off in the last Seadog Journal, I busied myself readying GLORY for the long sail to Tonga and on to New Zealand to escape the coming Cyclone season which would soon be affecting this area of the Pacific. It was during the first part of this voyage - Samoa to Tonga - in the middle of September 1995 that I experienced some of the finest sailing in all my time in the Pacific, all 10,000 nautical miles of it. For days on end the trade winds blew a steady F4 to F5 and GLORY dashed with full speed towards the Kingdom of Tonga, while my faithful selfsteering worked night and day to hold me on course.

I had first planned to leave Pago-Pago so as to arrive at the International Date Line on Friday 13 of September, a date I intended to cut out of my life completely. Only those who have not slept through their geography lessons will remember that you will lose one full day when crossing this Date Line in an east-west direction. Put I was tempted to stay on at Pago Pago for just a few more days to celebrate the festivities of 'White Sunday' with lots of singing and dancing culminating in a dramatic race of dugout canoes. So in the end it was Monday 16th September 1995 that never existed in my calendar! For us sailing folks, it is one of the highlights of navigation to sail across the 180 degree Meridian and from then on, count the degrees of longitude backwards towards Greenwich. It just adds to the general confusion that though Tonga is actually positioned on western longitude, it has already switched the day to "tomorrow". So the slogan "TONGA, where time begins" is just too true, and nearly every yachting will secretly check the date of his calendar after arrival.

I had about one month to explore this delightful cruising area and to see something of the country and its friendly people. Mainly day-sailing I slowly headed for the capital city on TONGATAPU in the south. In the island group of VAVAU everybody talks of numbers only when speaking about the different anchorages. A yacht charter company was responsible for starting this unromantic but very practical custom. So in case someone asks: "How was the snorkelling in number 13" or "Do you know Joanna in number 30?" - then it is easy to hit back saying "the Tongan Feast in number 10 was excellent with the piglet in the earth oven and delicious fish, lobster and vegetables all served on banana leaves" - or you could answer: "the cave in number 16 is really worthwhile to visit".

This particular cave demands courageous visitors. The only entrance is located under the surface of the water, and to enter you have to dive about 60 feet into the darkness. So take a deep breath, collect all your bravery, and then enjoy the inside, flooded with blue coloured light, with all your senses. There is a spectacular phenomenon when the swell of the ocean is compressing the trapped air. You can feel the increased pressure, and for a few seconds there is clearly visible fog in the air of the cave. Soon all seemed to be a strange mirage only. Under water, tropical fish and wonderful coral, but above the surface, the cave goes foggy like November in Germany - but here, it is with warm temperatures and for seconds only - much more to my taste.

At the end of November it was quite late to leave the tropics and each day of delay increased the risk of Cyclones, for the season had already begun.

TONGA to WHANGEREI (North Island, New Zealand)

At last I made up my mind to sail towards New Zealand, despite the fact I knew that when I arrived I should have trouble bringing my doggy friend 'Lucky' into the country. For over 6 years my Spanish terrier 'Lucky' has been travelling with me, and we would have to fight the harsh quarantine rules together. About 1,000 nautical miles lay ahead, the "deep south" of the high latitudes and the "most beautiful end of the world". The route to and from New Zealand has no good reputation. South of the tropics the weather can be quite surprising, and stormy days in the ocean are common if a low-pressure system is passing through. The so called "Queen's Birthday Storm" two years ago is typical of the sort of weather you might expect. At the time several crews had to be rescued, yachts capsized in huge seas, and one yacht, including the crew, was lost at sea.

I finally set off on November the 23rd 1995 and the first week of my trip was very pleasant with gentle trade winds. Then a stationery high pressure system settled over New Zealand bringing light airs, and soon dead calm conditions for me. The Kiwi's got their first warm weather in the beginning of their summer, but for me the daily miles got less and less. Each day I ran the engine for some hours to move on just a little bit, and once again I would not break any records for speed.

Normally I would have enjoyed the calm of the trip, but all of a sudden one day my otherwise very reliable Perkins diesel engine failed to start, leaving me drifting helplessly close to the shipping lanes, and making GLORY a sitting target for the many commercial ships in the area. For three days I got hardly any sleep for whenever I was just about to doze off, I jumped up to see a cargo ship on collision course - I was nearly driven crazy! 20 miles a day are not a tragedy, but what should I do if that horror situation might occur? So I got everything ready to use: VHF, bright searchlight and flares, as well as lifejacket, EPIRB and liferaft. During all my years of singlehanded I never before had to endure such a painfully stressful situation, and most likely the memory of that terrible accident of the yacht MELINDA LEE also contributed to my psycho trip! You might have heard that this American yacht immediately sank after a collision when only the mother survived - the two small kids and the father lost their lives. And all this happened just days earlier quite close to my position. It is even worse when one thinks that such a fate should, logically, happen to single handers!. In desperation I tried once more to bleed the fuel lines. Then the miracle happened. With the help of a good breath of ether spray into the air intake and lots of bad language the engine suddenly burst into life again - all quite a mystery. During the next 20 hours of motoring, needless to say without sleep, GLORY was steered by the small Autohelm 800 which was hooked on to the tiller of the Windpilot windvane. For the last 100 miles the motor purred without a break, and when the coastline of New Zealand came into sight after 2 weeks offshore it made a beautiful picture. With still no wind at all I motored the last 12 miles up river towards Whangerei while the rolling landscape with bright green grassy slopes, reminiscent of my home in Bavaria slid past on either hand.

Like any other foreign yacht, GLORY had to pass tight inspections on entering the country. Especially the quarantine rules for 'Lucky' turned out to be a battle of papers. A yacht carrying a dog aboard is not really welcome in New Zealand, but nevertheless all went quite well, officials being friendly, correct and quick.

After signing lots of papers I got rid of my little gerbage bag, and with some hesitation, also my valuable anti-fouling - all part of the rules. Finally I was allowed to tie up at a berth in the Town Basin at Whangerei which would be my home for the following five months, for which I was charged 125 NZ\$ per month.

The first shopping expedition to the huge supermarket was a real pleasure. Mountains of fresh food and a real orgy of the senses. Fruits and vegetables fresh from the farm and really juicy and crunchy - crisp bread, cheeses in enormous variety, fresh meat without flies or maggots at all, yoghurt and last but not least, that delicious fresh, creamy chilled milk. Only those who have spent long times in the tropics will understand the excitement of the first shopping.

Our-Trans Ocean Club members Elke and Uwe gave me a warm welcome and soon I was given that long missed pile of mail. As always it is a real day of celebration when finally letters find their way halfway around the world, and already now I can hardly wait to get my next mail...In Whangerei I met again many friends on other boats after not seeing each other since Panama. New faces soon looked familiar, and it was not long till a tight little community formed in the Marina. I especially valued the good friendship of Dagmar and Gunter when they were tied up alongside for months. Soon Lucky was treated with extra goodies, and, not very politely, showed a thank-you with a nice pile on Guste's foredeck. Whoever can stand that dog and me needs strong nerves!

I started work on countless projects on GLORY for she much needed this attention. First of all I gave some extra-special attention to Mr Perkins. Valves readjusted, all injectors cleaned and rebuilt in a special shop, and finally the ultimate check-up of a compression test. Luckily all 4 cylinders were about even with a pressure of 210 lbs PSI, which equals 15 BAR, and the mechanic gave me the OK for many more happy years for Mr Perkins. So far the 25 year old 4.107 engine has 5,000 hours on the clock. Later I was to discover the cause of the engine failing to start. The trouble was a loose fuel line connection!

Each day I busied myself doing varnishing and boatwork and spent far too much money for boat equipment, but things like the new dinghy or the big solar panel are really fun to have! Between the work on the boat there was always time enough to enjoy life, and there were lots of occasions to celebrate, anyway. Christmas and New year in a relaxed atmosphere with cruising sailors, and for my birthday a great barbeque in Meyers Park. With a little help from Guste, I soon found the best pubs in town, and there was hardly any "Happy hour" we didn't join together. Dagmar and Gunter also took me along several times to day trips on the North Island, so, even tied down as I was with Lucky in quarantine, I had the chance to see at least a little of New Zealand's beauty.

One day, Dagmar said in privacy to me "The real nice Tony has finally returned from England. You must meet him soon!" Tony and I took to each other from the first moment and it didn't take us long to realise that our characters were on exactly the right wavelength. We have similar ideas about life and we also discovered soon that this would not be just a brief flirtation. Tony had been sailing his 25' Folkboat "STORM PETREL" from England to New Zealand in an adventurous journey and I am convinced that for us to finally meet in Whangerei, both our guardian angels had to work overtime!

In the middle of May all crews started to make ready for the trip back to the tropics. As the days passed quickly, my list of things to do seemed to get longer instead of shorter, and some chilly nights were a reminder of the winter soon to come. Here in New Zealand there is still lots of discussion about the notorious "Section 21 - the Safety Inspection for Foreign Yachts".

Some of it does not make much sense, like, I am required to have 4 buckets - how should that be any good with only one person aboard? Also, the required EPIRB is forbidden by German law on German boats. Soon other countries may do the same and it will get more difficult to travel on small boats. Maybe the King of Tonga thinks it necessary for us to carry 50 coconuts soon? But besides all that, it's the fee of 75 NZ\$ that bothers us the most!

With lots of turbulent emotions and not too much glory I made it through the infamous 'safety check for foreign yachts' and finally made a date with Tony - "see you in Suva, Fiji Islands" about 2,000 km north of here.

May 21st 1996: PACIFIC OCEAN - 24 degrees South / 177 degrees East.

I am writing this during the trip from Whangerei, North Island, New Zealand to the Fiji Islands and am well offshore at the moment with about 350 nautical miles to go to Suva Harbour. Total distance from Whangerei is about 1,100 n.m. The routes to and from New Zealand always seem to be good for a surprise, and not without good reason many cruising sailors feel a little nervous about this trip. At the moment the weather is really flat calm, but with a quite huge swell running from the East that makes GLORY roll uncomfortably. Put as the engine is running I thought I might as well use the extra power and write about the last days before leaving New Zealand. Winter is getting closer down here "down under" and it was not too soon to leave Whangerei - some of the nights during the last weeks showed temperatures below zero degrees centigrade, but my Taylor Diesel Heater kept me cosy and warm. The weather systems approaching one after the other from the West over the Tasman Sea get more vicious, and the danger of Cyclones in the tropics is reducing, so everywhere around, all the "world cruisers" are starting to get ready for the trip back to sunshine and palm trees.

I had GLORY well prepared during my time in New Zealand, engine checked, windows recaulked, new dodgers, new stainless steel frame for the spray hood, a second-hand 65lb COR anchor, the old anchors regalvanized, new batteries (2 x 75 Amp Hrs deep cycle), two new electric bilge pumps, welding on the mastfoot of the mainmast, new stainless bolts on the mizzen-tabernacle. The old head in the fore'sle overhauled with two new pumps and all new hoses, a new dinghy, and, to my great satisfaction, a 75 Watt Solarcell which I mounted on top of the after cabin on two stainless steel 1" bars.

Many photocopies of sea charts for the coming cruising areas and guide-books for the same areas. I bought new rope so I could replace the still original halyards if they ever get too bad ... just amazing how long some things can last on a boat! I built a new skylight myself, did some woodcarving for friends on other boats, and last but not least, "went on the grid" where I replaced some corroded bolts on a seacock, raised the old water-line by 6 inches, and then applied new anti-fouling. In between, I took the cooking stove apart and replaced the screen on the toaster which was nearly all rusted away.

Things got quite busy during the last days, provisioning of canned, dry and fresh food (those wonderful apples and kiwifruits) - sometimes I thought I might be crazy, and eventually be scared badly of starving to death one day when I yet again came back from the supermarket with the bicycle loaded with bags and bags of food. But things in the islands are much more expensive and of poor quality and eventually not available at all. Finally I set a date of departure, suffered the boat security check (the Section 21) and cleared Customs and Immigration. I paid the last bill in the Marina office, and for the Quarantine Inspections for 'Lucky' to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

WHANGEREI TO FIJI

Many boats had left already in the last few weeks, and when I finally set sail from the Town Basin at Whangerei on May 10th, 1996, many horns were blowing on the remaining yachts - so many friends wishing me good-bye all around and it felt like leaving from a family, for I had had a wonderful time since December last year in New Zealand. I anchored for the night at the mouth of the river some 12 nautical miles down from town, got the last night of good sleep and packed away odds and ends. Last not least, it was a Friday - nobody is superstitious - but never leave on a Friday....

The weather forecast was quite good, southerly winds around 15 knots after the last cold front had passed towards the East. It felt really good to have open ocean around after all those months being tied up, the disappearing coastline looked wonderful, and soon I left the offlying islands in my wake. The Southerlies kept up for about two days, then came changing winds, and even light headwinds for two days. But it was calm, got a little warmer with each day and I soon found myself back in my rhythm of offshore sailing. Speed was only medium and with being about 50 degrees off-course, Fiji didn't get closer quickly. After one week and about 600 nautical miles out, the weather turned nasty after all. Surprisingly, a low-pressure system approached from the north, and soon the easterly winds picked up force. Step by step I changed from big to small genoas down to working jib and finally even storm jib, reefing the mainsail in between as well. The winds got stronger and stronger, and on the second day with it blowing 40 knots the seas had built up quite high. When the first heavy breakers showed up I could no longer continue to head north, so altered course toward the northwest with wind and seas on a beam reach. GLORY did well, but now even a twice-reefed mainsail was too much; not knowing what yet another night might bring, I hoisted that brand-new storm trysail which I just by chance bought second-hand only one week before departure. This tiny sail really helped a lot, kept the boat stabilised and with a controlled speed of about 4.5 knots. The mainsail with two reefs in it is 8.4 sq.metres, but the little trysail is only a handkerchief of 3.8 sq.metres. The Windpilot self-steering managed everything without problems, but on the evening of the second day with a gust of over 40 knots, I got heartily sick of the bad conditions. More and more frequently a wave washed into the cockpit, and about a total of 20 times the cockpit was filled completely! Over recent years I tried again and again to stop water leaking into the engine compartment, but under these conditions it is not possible - and quite wet for "Mr Perkins" ...

During all this time I managed twice daily radio chats with friends on two other boats about 100 miles away and also gave my position to the Roll Call on the Pacific MM Net on the 20 metre Ham Band. 'Lucky', my salty-dog slept most of it away in the cabin and was well secured with a harness during his brief visits on deck. So we spent hours of lying snugly together on the lee bunk waiting for the seas to get better - but then things got worse. Each day I started the engine to charge batteries and to make sure all was running fine - it is quite comforting to hear the smooth sound of the diesel engine after yet another stormy night - no water got in through the exhaust and no problems starting up either! But on the afternoon of the third day, even the trysail was too much. I lashed it tightly to the boom, changed course as much downwind as possible to get less force from those frightening breaking seas. Around 2 a.m. on Monday the 20th of May 1996 the cold front passed over me with just enormous gusts and huge seas. GLORY raced along at nearly 5 knots under the tiny Storm-jib only, and more and more frequently a wave roared by with thundering force. Things had finally reached their peak and after 5 days with overcast weather, bright stars showed during that dark, new moon night.

Having no wind instruments, it was hard to guess the windspeed - not until the next day - when other boats reported gusts of 72 knots! My Windpilot self-steering just managed to keep course while rushing down those steep mountains of water, but then it had to work - there being no crew here on board to steer by hand. I wonder anyway whether that would have been possible at all. Seems like the rudder of the self-steering has so much more power and immediate force compared with the main rudder at the wheel. After a time, during the second part of this horrible night, conditions calmed down somewhat and I even dared to heave-to so I didn't continue to race any longer in the wrong direction. Luckily all this happened well offshore, with no islands and frightening coral reefs around. The boat took the waves quite well and the turbulence of the keels kept the worst of the breaking seas at a distance. Interesting to find that under these conditions a Seadog will heave-to under storm jib only. By morning all had calmed down to a mere 25 knot breeze but with a huge swell running, so I turned back on course with the mainsail up and Fiji still waiting for me.

Now the interesting, and also scary part of the story:

1. Once, with a wave filling the cockpit, the sliding door of the after cabin was unlocked by the weight and force of the rushing water! The locking board at the bottom of the companionway was pushed in, and then the whole door slid down into the slot! Not a nice thing to happen at this moment, and sure enough I got a good dollop of salt water on my bed. By pressing an old rag between the cockpit locker and the covering board, I was able to avoid this happening a second time.
2. Good to have watertight windows, but less good to have water pressing into the rim of the skylight. But by stuffing towels all around that was not too much of a problem.
3. Using a big jubilee clip, I fixed a piece of heavy duty black rubber hose on the outside of the exhaust on the transom. The hose is about 12 inches long, fits over the outside diameter of the exhaust pipe and is shaped in the form of an "L". I did that just days before departure in New Zealand hoping that a wave hitting the stern might bend the strong rubber and so prevent water from being driven up the exhaust pipe and into the engine. I don't know whether it is really necessary, but it made me feel much better. Not one drop of sea water discoloured the oil of the engine!
4. Finally, the worst thing; During the last week of the passage I was down to only 20 litres of fresh water kept in a jerrycan. The water in both bilge keels was way too salty for drinking! This happened when the cockpit was filled by waves, and I heard the gurgling noise of seawater rushing into the air vents of the water tanks. Trying to seal the vents, -(especially on the leeward side) - with rubber compound - (looks like black chewing gum) - helped only partly, and obviously was too late. This was a major concern for me, and I am just glad that this is a passage with hopefully, only a few more days underway. I don't even want to think about the consequences if this had happened at the start of my 33 day passage from the Galapagos to French Polynesia last year!

Generally speaking, the boat held up just wonderfully, no other serious problems at all. During all that time, as always, I had the strong feeling that the boat is taking care of me, and is much stronger than me anyway. The hull is very strong, hardly any bad noises in the fibreglass when a wave hits the side like thunder.

Yesterday, after all was over, I badly squeezed my middle finger while unreefing. Watching the fingernail turn purple, I realise how easily things can go wrong, especially when your mind is somewhere else - the concentration I had during the storm was all gone and I should never have hurt myself that badly. Anyway, today the finger looks horrible, but hurts much less, and no problems working on the sail - I can even write and type again!

FIJI

But despite all our battles through that rough autumn weather in which my new storm sail got its salty but successful baptism earlier than expected, both GLORY and STORM PETREL more or less kept up with each other, and at Fiji the two singlehandlers finally hugged each other again. From now on we had not a single doubt any more - we want to stay together. We both changed our plans and our routes and started the honeymoon right away in Fiji.

AT TUVALU - (in the one-time Ellice Islands)

It was Tony's old dream to sail to Tuvalu and here a dream-like time for both of us came true. Today we celebrate our engagement in the lagoon of Funafuti. Anchored off the small and uninhabited palm covered 'motu' of Funangongo we will make the plans for our life from now on together. Just imagine a dreamlike time on your own boat in the South Pacific, crazy in love and thoroughly happy, your partner a real angel. Crystal clear water under tropical sun and idyllic anchorages with palm beaches it really isn't necessary to continue any more writing as my life couldn't be any better!

July 1997 - LETTER FROM GERALDTON (Western Australia)

After leaving Tuvalu in September 1996 we were looking for a quiet and nice place to spend the dangerous cyclone season from November until April in safety. The Solomon Islands seemed to be ideal, lying well off the beaten track of yachts and tourism, but close enough to the equator to be protected from the storms. We intended to spend the time peacefully at isolated anchorages, to do all those little jobs on both our boats, and to enjoy every minute together in tropical lifestyle.

NUKUFETAU TO HONIARA - SOLOMON ISLANDS

During the two weeks offshore sailing from Nukufetau to Honiara, capital of the Solomon Islands, we experienced mixed weather conditions like many times before in the Pacific. Some days with wonderful hours of fresh southeast tradewinds and roaring speeds on a reach, the next day light and variable winds, and in between, the well known 'gusty squalls' with heavy downpours, but overall the light wind conditions prevailed. Since STORM PETREL was sailing about half a knot faster, in this kind of weather it was easy to understand that Tony arrived two days ahead of me.

I might have caught up a little with running GLORY's engine during the calms, but unfortunately my faithful diesel engine was on strike. The fresh water pump proclaimed the end of its life with heartbreaking screams. So when leaving Nukufetau I had to rely on sails only when heading across the lagoon and through the pass of the ringreef ... a real test of nerves ... but the current was in our favour, the visibility of the coral reef excellent at high noon, and soon after came the comforting safety of deep and wide ocean with an open horizon to welcome us.

After every landfall the first hours are most exciting. The welcome from Tony in Honiara was delicious and we had lots to talk about and catch up with affections. Soon GLORY was tied up beside STORM PETREL with an anchor on the bow and a rope to the shore. Later we explored the local fruit market, a meeting point of bubbling, colourful life. The gentle facial features of the Polynesian people had changed to the harsher lines of dark or even black-skinned Melanesian people. It seems to me that especially after days at sea, my senses are easily inspired - so, full of euphoria, we bought wonderfully fresh vegetables and delicious fruits. There was one strange looking fruit we had never seen before, so we got instructions. The helpful salesperson cracked the inner nut with a strong bite then handed one piece to us. In a strange Pidgin English he explained that you have to eat these green leaves and the odd-looking white powder at the same time. Everything tasted so nasty that we didn't dare to swallow. Not until our teeth turned to a reddish colour did we realise that this had been the famous betel nut. All around people seemed to enjoy chewing and spitting the red liquid all around them - we were spitting with them as well, and were quickly cured of our first betel nut experience.

It seemed that the betel nut had an enormous soothing influence on me: I was all relaxed and ordered a second beer in the Yacht Club even when I could see the masts of the yachts in port start to rock in a rapidly strengthening westerly breeze. When we finally rowed back to our boats, the swell was running surprisingly high into this open harbour, and not until then did I sober up from my betel intoxication. Our boats were just about jumping on each other, and only a few minutes later a neighbouring yacht's anchor chain broke and in no time the boat was hitting the huge breakwater while two other yachts were dragging their anchors. Time for quick action! Of all the crews, only Tony proved to have good nerves, listened to the local fisherman's advice, and stayed where he was tied up. Even with the sloppy bearings in the fresh water pump, GLORY's engine was still working and I anchored a safe distance away, but in over 60 feet of water. Some yachts moved towards to other side of town where they were robbed by thieves as well as the harbourmaster with his enormous port fees - what an exciting first day in the country!

Thanks to the fantastic help of a radio-amateur friend in New Zealand, a brand new water pump was already waiting for me in town, and I wasn't even charged any shipping costs. Soon Mr Perkins was purring again with gentle power and I was most relieved.

We spent a wonderful time in Florida - no, not in the USA, but in the Florida Group of islands near Honiara on the other side of Iron Bottom Sound. It got its name because the bottom of the ocean there is littered with World War II wrecks of ships and aircraft. Half a century ago the most cruel battles happened off the island of Guadalcanal. The wild and screaming parrots were flying round the rigging in Hanesavo, some red and green and whitish-yellow kinds. After discovering the first pretty china-like Cowrie shells we became practically addicted to snorkelling trips. No wonder, since the variety of fish and coral was fantastic and brightly coloured, the water real bathtub temperature and naturally crystal clear with visibility to a depth of well over 60 feet!

We drifted peacefully through the following weeks, staying preferably on lonesome anchorages and explored the surrounding coral reefs. Sometimes we found especially interesting diving spots and all in all we dawdled through those happy days. The wind had finally left us completely while the temperature steadily climbed and the humidity stayed around a sticky 90 per cent. One time we made a record passage of two days at sea for 70 miles tied together, the Seadog and the Folkboat making an outrigger with two sails, three masts, 4 keels, and the crew in total harmony.

The life of most people in the Solomon Islands is quite simple and unspoiled. The small villages have grass houses in traditional style close to the shoreline, the dense jungle is cleared only for the area of the little gardens, and life is mainly oriented towards the sea. There are hardly any roads or paths since all transport is done in the wooden dugout canoes and even the small children are paddling around in tiny boats. People seem to be very poor, but as long as western civilisation has not hit, they are truly happy, always have plenty of food and their own hut to live in. The tight and caring village community will take care of everything.

Every visiting foreign yacht is a big attraction. If possible we tried to stay in places at some distance from the villages, but even then, soon canoes were all around us with dozens of children looking amazed and with huge eyes at our strange home. But the grown-ups were at least as curious and most of the time we ended up doing small trading business: giving coloured pencils, balloons or a few coins in exchange for fruit from the jungle garden. So in most places in the Solomons we had vegetables delivered direct to the boat. We were laughing and joking with the children, showed lots of patience when the visits of our guests were a little too long, as time was obviously unlimited for them. We never had trouble, even though other yachts told stories about children who pressed their noses in innocent curiosity at the windows of their boat, watching every movement on board. We were spared such a test of nerves as 'Lucky' made sure nobody came too close. Everybody was scared of our little black dog, not knowing that she might eventually even lick a stranger's hand.

One time we invited a group of young girls on board; they admired the interior; every single item, especially in the galley, was inspected carefully. I demonstrated the fresh water pump to them and then each girl proudly filled one glass of water from the tank - what a technical wonder for them. Finally they all squeezed into the small cockpit and sang religious chorals with easy lyrics in Pidgin English in a moving harmony - time seemed to keep still on this side of the earth. But on one occasion we were spotted naked on the boat, and the next day a delegation from the village enlightened us. Obviously quite embarrassed, one smart young man explained to us - "Tony, never forget the main thing: put on your trousers!" The influence of the missionaries of old seemed to be just as strong as in yesteryear when those stalwarts who survived the cooking pot and the head hunting ruled these islands with a rod of iron.

Originally we had intended to sail towards Papua New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago to visit the large islands of 'New Britain' and 'New Ireland', both of which were former German colonies named 'Neupommern' and 'Neubrandenburg' and promised unspoilt areas where the word 'tourism' is unknown. But we heard plenty of bad news about crime in the country and trouble on the island of Bougainville was increasing. Other cruising sailors warned us of recent brutal attacks on yachts on even the small islands, and when the government in Port Moresby declared a nation-wide curfew in October 1996 we finally changed plans. We might as well spend the cyclone season in the Solomons with equal safety and where we knew we would be openly welcome and the people to be honest, welcoming and always friendly.

We spent Christmas in Mbasroko on New Georgia Island in an uninhabited bay. The entrance was guarded by a wreck of the war days, this time a Japanese destroyer, rusty and half sunk. Ashore we found an abandoned agriculture station surrounded as usual with the dense growth of the tropical rain forest.

We had true holiday weather. Pouring rain and heavy gusts for more than a week, while south of us 'Fergus', the first cyclone of the season was roaring and later brought storms all the way towards New Zealand. But our cosy bay was well protected. We picked tropical flowers as a rare boat decoration, and a young coconut palm tree, decorated as a Christmas tree, looked really cute. In between the showers we had walks in the bush and picked papayas and coconuts fresh from the trees. In the beginning of January, cyclone 'Drena' was howling in the Coral Sea with over 90 knots of wind, the barometer dropping 30 millibars in only one day, and the pressure in the centre reached an incredible low of 940 millibars - that's lower than most instruments will show. The weather forecast from Townsville (Australia) warned of "phenomenal seas!" Back at Gizo, our base at this time, I had the terrible news from Germany of the death of my uncle, and I was told to come home immediately - it was not easy to manage!

So instead of getting married on my birthday we were fighting to organise the travel details; it would be impossible for both of us to fly to Europe, not even thinking of what to do with 'Lucky'. I could make the trip only if Tony would guard our boats and 'Lucky', a hard job in the middle of the cyclone season! Booking the flight was quite an adventure, but after several hurdles I finally had the ticket.

Then followed a trip by canoe to the local dirt runway where I took the 6 seater passenger plane to Honiara, then the super-jet via Port Moresby, Singapore and Frankfurt to Munich - 26 hours in the air and half way round the world. Germany was collapsing on me in all its glory, is that surprising? From timeless 'dolce vita' in the Pacific with loving, dreaming and sweating weeks, in contrast to perfection, hectic rush of civilization and bitterly cold weather!

The flight back turned out to be even more complicated. The plane out of Port Moresby was four hours late with nobody knowing the reason. I missed the connecting flight and had to wait a third night. But then finally, the island hopper landed in Gizo and at last I found myself back in Tony's arms.

By this time it was very clear for both of us not to wait until South Africa. No, right now, and right here, we wanted to be married, despite the trouble in getting it organized. Naturally there was no jewellery shop far and wide, but Tony found the perfect solution. He filed two very pretty washers down to ring size. I will save you from any further details, but briefly: - the magistrate was out of town; then we had an embarrassing lack of witnesses; finally, the stamp-pad was bone-dry. Yet the important ceremony turned out quite solemn despite the fact that we nearly dropped through some missing floor boards.

Should we marry all in privacy or with a little celebration? We had not decided until the actual day of the wedding. At a small pub with a view over the anchorage, pretty palm roof and open walls, we made reservations for a light meal. Then we quickly invited all yachts at anchor to have a celebration with us. But, unbelievably, because of the above mentioned problems, we found we couldn't get married that day after all, so it turned out to be a perfect 'Polterabend' - that's a wedding-eve, not a poltergeist! Nearly all yachts had colourfully dressed ship for the occasion and nobody wanted to miss the party, so it turned out to become a really memorable evening. Tony made a touching speech, there was music (accordion, guitar and disco music) and dancing, and despite the short notice our guests produced wonderful presents for us. An English-German flag sewn together and signed with "NEVER TO BE PARTED", a brand new rope for keeping us, as well as the boats, together, plus traditional ceremony a la New Caledonia with over and over again the very best wishes for our future. Well, what about the dress code? Naturally in true Pacific style with nonchalant pareo around the hips.

But next morning it all worked out right, and we finally exchanged our vows. Once more our friends had a surprise for us; right in front of the tumble-down office they formed an archway with crossed oars - how charming and fitting for us! Tied to the dinghy we found huge red balloons in the shape of hearts dancing in the breeze, and naturally the outboard motor chose this moment to stop working. Perfect timing! But help in the form of a tow was there in no time, and fog horns were tooting everywhere as all of Gizo joined in our happiness.

The following write-up of our wedding appeared later in a German cruising magazine:

"SINGLE-HANDERS RAFT UP FOR LIFE

Gizo, Solomon Islands, 11th March 1997

Ten sailing vessels are bobbing at anchor in Gizo harbour in the Solomon Islands. Dozens of colourful courtesy flags and signal flags dress up stays and halyards to celebrate the wedding between the two single-handers Susanne Huber of Germany and Tony Curphey of England. Their sailing vessels GLORY and STORM PETREL could be seen rafted in Gizo harbour during these past two months while the two skippers struggled with bureaucratic hurdles to their union. In fact, when the entire yachting community partied last night at the wedding reception, the lovely couple had just returned from another unsuccessful trip to the travelling magistrate - one more trip to town finally brought the happy ending this morning. Unwilling to cancel the planned party, the "almost married" couple hosted us yachties at the PTIO9 Bar with food and beer, and dancing into the night. Nine nationalities were present and Jim noted several times that he had trouble finding a conversation in English. John was off talking French, I enjoyed myself in German, soon I saw Jim bending Jerry's ear (the only other American around). Soon, the newlyweds will be off to continue their voyage around the world and many of us wonder where we will again see the happy raft of GLORY and STORM PETREL".

(Written by Merita of US yacht 'Wunschtraum').

One week later, cyclone 'Justin' roared in the Coral Sea, moved back and forth for two weeks and brought us windy days. GLORY and STORM PETREL were still tied together however, using the heavy 65 lb. COR anchor and 50 metres of chain. It takes more than strong winds to end our eternal honeymoon - but I was very relieved to be back from Germany in time. Finally 'Justin' moved on and hit Cairns in Australia with quite a bang. It was about time to start the new sailing season and soon our adventurous wedding guests were disappearing off in all directions.

Our witnesses, Olivia and Jerry on 'Tortuga', started their trip towards the Philippines but were hit by the outskirts of cyclone 'Justin' - ending in a broken mast and a tow from a fishing boat back to Honiara. Ingrid and Jurgen on 'Josi' were stuck in coral reefs for a week but suffered no damage to their strong steel boat. Then they fought their way east against the tradewinds to Vanuatu and have reached Brisbane by now. Both the charming girls on the Swedish yacht 'Kulla II' were badly hit by malaria, but all the crew is now healthy again and in Papua New Guinea en route to Darwin. The long distance British yacht, 'Sara of Hamble' wanted to discover a way north of New Guinea towards Indonesia and Singapore. 'Wunschtraum' from the USA reached their destination Brisbane according to plan - they were the ones who described our marriage under the heading 'Single-handers raft up for life'.

'Fou Man Chou' from New Caledonia applied for an Australian visa in Honiara as they wanted to extend their cruising area. The pretty girl from Vanuatu and the quiet rally driver on Canadian yacht 'Wunway' wanted to bring their baby into this world in Cairns, and Patrick from France, the individualistic single hander with a rastefarian look, always dressed in a pareo only - who knows towards what shores his winds will take him?. Will any of our paths cross again someday? Goodbyes are a sad part of our travelling.

We had had a good time in the Solomon Islands, experienced a country with still harmonic changes. Not the danger of Malaria nor the heat spoilt our stay, and apart from ear infections and tropical ulcers (described by the author Jack London as "Solomon sores") we did reasonably well. The Pacific Pilot Book is not totally right with its description of the Solomon Islands as being 'hot, humid and unhealthy' - at least if you are crazy in love, happy as can be, and on top of all, have a little ventilator mounted above your bunk.

SOLOMON ISLANDS TO LOUISIAD ARCHIPELAGO

At the end of April we left as well, course southwest towards the islands of the Louisiade Archipelago off the coast of Papua New Guinea. At last back on open waters, again fresh trade winds in the sails and finally blue ocean under the keel. Life in those offlying islands was even more untouched. No outboard engines at all, the outrigger canoes with ever more patched sails, (they were even worse than ours), setting off on challenging journeys. Of course no electricity or even telephone in the small villages. The last cyclone did lots of damage, and instead of trading fresh vegetables they begged from us in a friendly way. The next harvest in those little, dry gardens was still months away, and the government, with that promised help from Port Moresby, is far, far away. A last walk on lonely beaches with Lucky, a last barking hunt for coconuts and fish in shallow water. Soon quarantine laws would restrict my crew's freedom in the land of the kangaroos!

LOUISIAD ARCHIPELAGO TO DARWIN, AUSTRALIA.

Two weeks later we shared the last cans and onions, the leftover dried beans and rice, the final flour and milk powder between our two boats. We hardly remembered precious things like fresh lettuce or even sweets. We were ready for Australian Civilisation. The fresh winds blew us to the end of the Pacific Ocean to where the infamous Torres Strait lay waiting to receive us. During two days of overcast weather I was quite worried about Tony. He is dependent on the visibility of objects in the sky since he is doing his navigation the traditional way only. Just sextant, tables and chronometer without any modern electronics. But the Torres Strait is littered with reefs and is well known for its strong currents which might make you end up in the Fly River. I was rounding Bramble Cay at night, once again during a heavy rain squall, and found my worries were unfounded because we reached Rennel Island nearly at the same time and anchored in the lee of the tiny cay.

Soon Australian spotter planes discovered our boats. This coast is controlled with a sharp lookout from above - too many illegal persons and too much drug dealing is happening in these waters between Indonesia and Australia. They gave us a warm welcome anyway, and without question we were allowed to take a break at anchor. STORM PETREL was limping a bit as a wave had nearly washed away Tony's self steering system - just one last bolt saved him from losing this, for single-handers, such an incredibly important mechanism. After hand steering for two days, Tony had a well deserved restful night in the bunk.

The first of May brought sailing in perfection, passing gigantic wrecks on the coral reefs, in zigzag courses around shoals and all the time in sight of STORM PETREL. Blue skies and glowing turquoise water with whitecaps in the fresh trade winds, with a reef in the sails and roaring speed. With currents partly with or against us we got the occasional little splash on deck, but all the time it was sailing to fall in love with. On Sue Island we discovered a small new harbour, and even though the wind was whistling in the rigging with 30 knots (Force 7) we were all protected, the coral reef close enough for us to spit on it! Once again a good wind from eastern made us fly across the Arafura Sea, and for one week exactly the course was west and with never more than 30 metres of water under our keels. We kept a distance of ten miles from the main shipping lane and saw our big brothers every now and again passing along the sky line. At Cape Don I turned to the left, crossed the Van Diemen Gulf and shortly reached our next meeting point in the lee of Cape Hotham. This time Tony arrived first and like always we tied up alongside. We wanted to spend the weekend there so as to arrive at Darwin during office hours on Monday morning.

Wide and open country with little vegetation and mangrove shores, bushfires with huge smoke clouds on the horizon, an intensely blue sky and the most impressive sunsets - those were my first impressions of Australia. We didn't jump into the water for the refreshing swim - the currents were strong and Tony spotted a huge saltwater crocodile closeby - swimming? - no thanks! On the radio I asked a big fishing boat for information about the passage of Clarence Strait and the captain was shocked. With a breath-taking manoeuvre on the open seas, they threw a copy of a sea chart towards me. Well, I admit that you really cannot sail everywhere with the scale of an ocean chart which is one to one million. Anyway I said a really nice thank-you and managed to throw back their rope while steering at the same time. Unfortunately I got much too close in the lee of the ship and we bumped hard in the swell; fortunately no damage happened that was dangerous. The tough-looking guys on the deck of the ship watched me closely and I got quite annoyed with myself for taking such a risk.

I first suspected that something was wrong with my tidal calculations for Clarence Strait when I realised that despite surging along at top speed through the water with all our sails set, we just weren't getting anywhere. Ultimately we sailed for three long hours on one spot, and at one time we were even going backwards! But everything has an ending. First a glowing sunset, later a romantic moonset until finally the tide changed. Another cup of coffee to keep awake, steering for the loom of Darwin's lights and with perfect timing, tying up in Cullen Bay Marina in Darwin Harbour.

Officials from Quarantine and Customs came aboard, had a brief look around and admired 'Lucky's' elegant passport - including a picture! It was more like a casual chat than a harsh search, but we were nearly out of food anyway. A little paperwork and we were welcome in Australia - no trouble with 'Lucky'. I asked a veterinarian to visit so she could get the rabies vaccination updated - no problem. Now we were ready to relax at the anchorage at Darwin Sailing Club.

The enormous tides of up to 7 metres forced me to anchor far from the shore. Tony came perfectly alongside under sail, his outboard engine running fine, but unfortunately there was no drive to the propeller. Just then GLORY'S dinghy motor also finally gave up working after 22 happy years so we had to row ashore - 20 minutes as a nice daily fitness programme for me. There was mail waiting for us in the yacht club and we declared the day a private holiday.

Now finally back together, those three weeks in Darwin flew by. Lots of jobs for the boats, shopping trips and last but not least we treated ourselves to all available luxuries. The first hot showers since New Zealand over one year ago. At Spring tide we dried out on the sandy beach to paint on new antifouling, with STORM PETREL leaning against GLODY, which was, even in a place like Darwin, a rare sight. We enjoyed a few evenings with really cold beers on the patio of the yacht club, sitting under palms with a view over the Indian Ocean sparkling in the sunset. We returned from the supermarket with full bags and got rather carried away with all that fresh food ... they even had apples, fresh yoghurt or ice cream, and of course some bars of chocolate found their way into our shopping baskets as well. On the other hand we realised how annoying the noise of the city was: traffic noise, screaming children, loud music - all quite normal, but our ears had forgotten and we searched for shelter back on board.

3rd June 1997: - DARWIN to GERALDTON

We left Darwin on the 3rd of June in the ever present bright sunshine, and this time it was "Goodbye - see you at Geraldton", which is 200 miles north of Fremantle on Australia's west coast, a trip of about 1,600 nautical miles.

We had light winds for one week with daily distances of less than 50 miles. First we kept VHF contact and we did some heavy flirting via the radio - it's a good thing that not everybody knows our secret hints.

After 7 days out a spotter plane zoomed overhead for three days in a row at noon time; once they even surprised me when I had no clothes on while taking a shower on deck! Over the radio I asked them about STORM PETREL and I was told she was nearly in sight of the pilot, only 12 miles away. My joy was tremendous. Next day I told the pilot that we got married only three months earlier and this is the way we spend our honeymoon. His casual remark was: "No comment, but the gentleman you are chasing is 8 miles away towards the west". That pilot and I soon started to become good friends, but I am sure he was convinced that Tony and I are completely nuts.

After ten days out Tony managed to meet me on the open ocean - what a lovely sight when I watched STORM PETREL take shape on the horizon. Tony knows my location most of the time because I tell him a good-night story every evening on the short wave radio including my position. Most of the time he can hear me clearly, but since he cannot transmit back, I stay uncertain in the dark - I surely will not tell you 'our' frequency!

From then on it got quite windy, four days with 25-30 knots, fortunately from the east and perfect for our southwest course. So we were blown round the dominating Northwest Cape, passing oil rigs which were lit like Christmas trees at night. It became more chilly every day, and the days grew shorter as we headed south directly into winter. The days of seawater showers on deck were gone and I was already digging in the lockers for those warm but a trifle smelly clothes.

When we got to the latitude of Shark Bay the weather forecaster announced the imminent arrival of a cold front with strong southwest winds up to 40 knots. After some indecision I changed course for Carnarvon to wait for the weather to improve, hoping to meet Tony there eventually. There was rain washing the salt off the deck, chilly nights that I slept through like a log, but Tony never arrived. I left in a restless mood two days later in a chilling 15 C and fog.

Our destination Geraldton was now dead upwind, and I had the aggravation of having to tack against the fresh southwest wind after all. With a 12 hourly zigzag off the coast and a frustrating tacking angle under reefed sails I pushed on. Then would come a sudden calm, then the wind would pipe up again, and it wasn't until the 25th of June that I reached Geraldton. Tony answered the VHF after my first call and soon everybody gave me a cheerful welcome while entering the small yacht harbour. There had been a general look-out for me and the "Sea Rescue" organization had been alerted. Tony had arrived three days earlier after weathering the front at sea. Until I changed course, we were never more than 10 miles apart - unbelievable over such a long distance. Now in port, the hours of uncertainty, yearning and unfavourable winds are soon forgotten. Once again we enjoy every minute together.

Geraldton is a nice little place, its people are very helpful and being foreign yachts, we are a rarity in port. Our self-steering systems draw attention and there are a few sailors in the basin who were encouraged by our sailing euphoria. They would like to sail towards the sunset in a few week's time as well.

Part of Tony's family emigrated to Australia over 30 years ago, and we will meet them a few days from now. This was the reason for our coming to this unusual destination in the southwestern corner of Australia. They have been expecting us for a long time, want to see our small boats, and naturally want to inspect Anthony's new wife. Will I, I wonder, pass the test?

Last night the temperature dropped to 3°C, a record low for the area and cold enough for me to start the heater and dream of the tropics. But we enjoy the change in latitude, the days are sunny and warm, and the winter storms haven't been too nasty ... yet. Mid-August we will start the voyage across the Indian Ocean, from here to Rodrigues and Mauritius, the longest offshore trip so far

August 12th 1997: GERALDTON to RODRIGUEZ ISLAND

With a huge supply of fresh food aboard we left Australia on August the 12, just three weeks before our Australian Visa ran out, and ran straight into one of the nasty cold fronts. One day calms, then headwinds, and after that lots of fresh south easterlies for the next few weeks. We were hoping for gentle trade wind sailing and rushed north to reach Latitude 20 south, but it was still mostly overcast and rather chilly until we arrived at Rodriguez Island after 32 days. Most fascinating about this trip was the fact that STORM PETREL had a transceiver with a home-made antenna installed and therefore Tony and I had radio contact three times daily - hurray for electronics! We talk mostly on a 'private and secret' frequency since we are still on our honeymoon, and not all talk is purely technical and fit for everybody's ears ...

We both made landfall only a few hours apart and saw each other for the first time after 31 days. We had to heave-to part of the last night and sailed into Port Mathurin, Rodrigues Island, together, nearly exactly 100 years after Joshua Slocum did in 1897.

The overall speed of the Folkboat and the Seadog is surprisingly similar - we proved that over and over again all the way from New Zealand. Both heavily overloaded boats, with old sails and with never a racing attitude. Of course, here aboard GLORY, 'Lucky' reminds me to reef early!

We had a pleasant one month stay on Rodriguez, this island thankfully not suffering the tourist-rush experienced on the nearby island of Mauritius. We caught up with being a married couple, relaxed between lovely walks on the island interspersed with lots of work on our boats.

RODRIGUEZ TO MAURITIUS

The 350 miles to Mauritius turned out to be one of the best sails ever - a steady 20 knot tradewind on a reach gave us some satisfying sailing and an average speed for the voyage of 5 knots. We arrived in Port Louis one day earlier than expected, but the main shipping route kept us awake with only very brief naps under way. Never have I talked to so many passing ships in such short time on the VHF - with many of them not monitoring their radar nor even answering calls on Channel 16 - bad news for singlehanders!

Here the "Expo '98 Rally-Round-the-World" caught up with us and not all of it was pleasant. Normal cruising boats like us were chased away from the fancy new pier at a tourist place and we had to tie up at a rotten part of the harbour at an old granary. The Mauritians have a reputation of making a fuss about the paperwork, but all turned out much less of a problem than expected. We had a few relaxing weeks in Grand Bay while we had some dental work done by a pretty Chinese woman dentist and finally had a chance to celebrate with old friends on boats we had not seen since the Pacific.

MAURITIUS TO DURBAN

At the beginning of November it was time for us to leave these dangerous latitudes because of the imminent approach of the cyclone season, and we hoisted sails for South Africa. Weather conditions were quite mixed, with trades blowing strongly in the beginning, followed by calms south of Madagascar and three days spent mostly hove-to during south westerly gales off the coast. The fastest Expo 98-boat from Rodriguez Island arrived after one week - whereas it had taken us a casual 17 days ... some of the yachts I met offshore were rushing by ... in the old days, 100 miles a day was a good sail!

We arrived at Durban at almost the same time. I could spot STORM PETREL's sails ahead of me on the horizon and soon the check-in procedure was finished with the words: "Welcome to South Africa, have a good time, and stay as long as you want!"

By midnight we were tied up at the International Pier where all foreign yachts are warmly welcome. Free berthing for one month and guest membership in the fancy Point Yacht Club with a nice bar/restaurant and hot showers for us, the first since months. Durban is a shock when coming from the open ocean. For us the rush and noise and smell of a city was a little too much, with its always present danger of crime. But we managed to do important boat work, and STORM PETREL, with much help from local sailors, got a brand-new stainless steel self-steering gear. We were at the good-bye party of a blind sailor who headed out single-handed for Fremantle - just one more wild story of the ocean - I'm sure he will arrive safely and will give hope and confidence to many people!

That sail south along one of the most dangerous coasts in the world turned out to be a race against the fast approaching cold fronts. The last thing you want is to be caught in a south westerly gale in the Agulhas Current which itself runs south at up to 6 knots! On all legs we made it into port just in time before the wind changed 180 degrees, often in only minutes. It was yet another great challenge for Tony who was navigating without GPS!

In EAST LONDON, South Africa's only true river port, we could tie up alongside a nice wooden pier where hot showers were waiting to wash off the salt after a record breaking sail of up to 10 knots in the current with a following northeasterly gale. We flew into port under jib only. In PORT ELIZABETH we spent Christmas at a free berth in the new marina, again welcome, while we waited for a change in the weather.

In route to KNYSNA we were surprised by a sudden blow right on the nose and while we were running back 12 miles to find shelter behind Cape St Francis it was gusting Force 8. Even right in the lee, the bay was full of whitecaps and STORM PETREL was bravely tacking toward the anchorage.

Next morning all was sunny and calm again and a strong easterly wind gave us a nice run to Knysna. Again our boats were flying along with the help of a 2 knot current in our favour, and we had to slow down, and later heave to so as not to arrive too early. Will we never learn about the vagaries of weather along this coast? It all changes so quickly here, with strong winds alternating with sudden calms, and even fog.

We were very relieved when we finally made it into the lagoon of Knysna, since the entrance through the "Heads" is at times very dangerous with a huge ocean swell breaking over the bars at the entrance. Some boats have to wait for many days to either enter or leave. The closest places to wait for good conditions are either a bay, to the east some 20 miles away which is open to southeast winds, or the town of Mossel Bay about 45 miles to the west. But we were very lucky both ways, and with the help of 'Knysna Base' we were guided safely through the spectacular Heads on the VHF. Gunter Sommer, the local Trans Ocean representative who has lived here for many years came out in his yacht to guide us to the yacht club where, once again we find we are welcome guests, have a free berth in the brand-new marina and finally have time to catch up with our mail which has been accumulating since we left Australia.

The yacht club, which is situated in a beautiful spot in this pretty lagoon offered us the enjoyment of showers, bread drinks, especially at 'happy hour', meeting the local sailors, and, for my birthday, we had a delicious lunch in the club (the prices are very affordable by European standards). For less than £10 we had cocktails, a great meal, delicious desserts and a bottle of good wine.

We found time between working on our boats to see some of the area. We rented two mountain bikes one day, and gave our weak sailors' legs some harsh exercise on the surrounding hills which are very scenic. Another day we took a ride on an historic steam train. The beautiful landscape of inland lakes, the spectacular coastline and the ridges of the Outeniqua Mountains offered a perfect view as we chugged along and enjoyed a chilled glass (or two...) of good Cape wine during the ride. Gunter treated us with car rides to the forest and showed us the coast to the east. We even saw wild baboons and hepped to see bungee jumping off one of those terrific bridges along the coastal road to Port Elizabeth. The wild flowers along the side roads were really nice at this time of the year. Tony and I are not very good tourists, but we quite enjoyed to see some of South Africa's stunning views.

We scrubbed the bottom of our boats while drying out in the lagoon at spring tides, with STORM PETREL leaning against GLORY, just like we did it in Darwin in Australia. At the second stop, the current must have washed the sand away too much under STORM PETREL's keel, and she was leaning dangerously against GLORY at an angle of about 45 degrees until our rigging started to touch ... you can imagine the relief we felt when the tide came in again and both boats floated upright once more.

KNYSNA TO HOUT BAY, CAPETOWN

After a very pleasant stay of five weeks we were ready to leave and the weather treated us to a good 'window' of strong easterly winds exactly on time! A suddenly predicted westerly gale made us stay in Mossel Bay after a calm day sail, so we had the chance to see the replica of Bartholomeu Diaz's ship in the Maritime Museum which sailed from Portugal to Mossel Bay ten years ago to celebrate the 500 year Anniversary.

But next day fresh southeasterly winds were expected so we lifted the anchor for the exciting trip round the famous Cape. A quick diversion to 'Seal Island' in the bay proved to be well worthwhile; we saw hundreds of seals on the barren rocks and swimming in the water around the tiny island. Navigating GLORY as close as possible towards the harsh rocks in the big swell was a challenge but rewarded us with a great view of the seal colony. The water temperature has dropped dramatically since the tropics and by now is far too cold for swimming - Tony is preparing me for the English conditions ...

The sail towards Cape Agulhas started with a fair breeze (genoa and even mizzen staysail) but ended with blowing a gale and storm jib only. The 'Cape of Storms' really lived up to its name and even right now the gusts are howling through the rigging in port. But the most exciting part of the trip was the final entrance into Hout Bay, where tremendous gusts were bursting down the steep hills.

I ripped my mainsail right across while tacking with two reefs down and a storm jib, so I started the engine but made very slow progress with the bows dipping under in the steep, short waves just a few hundred metres from the shoreline. Tony was extremely brave, approaching the harbour under sails only, and I watched him sail through the steaming cloud of tremendous gusts where the water was lifted right off the surface. Never before have any of the foreign yachtsmen here experienced gusts like this. Tony told me later that he had not only the lee rail, but even the window under the water. No wonder the cabin was a mess afterwards, in addition to a couple of knockdowns earlier!

But once in port you tend to forget it all, but we learned the lesson of this part of the world.

I found an easy solution for sealing the cockpit air vents of the water tanks. I mentioned I had salty water in the tanks after waves filled the cockpit several times on my trip from New Zealand to Fiji two years ago. This was just annoying happening as it did only a few days from my destination Suva, but had it happened on a long ocean passage it could become a real emergency. Now all I do whenever the sailing gets rough is to wrap a strip of self-sealing tape round the vents so the two little holes are securely closed. And I have started to fit covers on the dorade vents in case a sea will wash solid water into them and naturally into the cabin (right over the electronics of the chart table...) I have also fitted a piece of canvas over the sliding washboard of the after cabin which prevents spray from entering through the ventilation slots as well as preventing a wave from pressing against the bottom board and opening the cabin completely, which is a nightmare in heavy weather. And a roll-up curtain of clear PVC material from the overhead of the chart table prevents salt spray or rain from reaching the charts and electronics in strong winds from behind. Well, these were some of the preparations for the Cape of Storms, now it should be hopefully a good sail in the South Atlantic, some beating north of the equator against the northeast tradewinds and hopefully a calm sail on the final leg to England.

We intend to wait here for the visit of my father and Brigitte and in the meantime get the boats ready for the long trip to Europe - many weeks offshore again! In mid-March we plan to set sail for the island of St Helena, then continue on to the Azores before turning eastwards to visit Ireland. See you at the end-of-season '98 Rally at the Folly Inn!"

REGARDING SINGLE HANDING

by Alec Matthews

("EMRA")

"It is some time since I made any significant passage, but apart from several trips to the Solent from Wareham and local cruising, I have made single-handed passages to Cherbourg from Poole and to Praye Harbour in Alderney (and back to Wareham).

Generally, the only problems with single-handing occur in, or close to port, or when rock-hopping coast-wise. Providing you have a good reefing system, there is little trouble reducing sail when offshore. Good passage planning is, of course, essential, for even in mid-Channel one does not want to spend too much time below, poring over charts.

Even although EMRA is well equipped with modern navigational aids, I almost invariably make a detailed passage plan in advance of embarking on any offshore passage, with particular reference to tidal streams. (I say 'almost' invariably because I was once caught out and had to depart Praye Harbour early in the wee small hours when a stiff northeasterly blew up, driving a big swell into the harbour).

Regarding handling the boat, life has been made much easier since I replaced my sails with fully battened mainsail and mizzen, with lazy jacks, slab reefing and 'packaway' system from Kemp Sails. To simplify Genoa handling I have replaced the old Gibb sheet winches with Lewmar self-tailers. These are a dream to use. The Genoa not being as large in the Seadog as, say a sloop of the same length, I find that the Lewmar ST16's are adequate, though if expense were no object, I would go for the heavier ST30.

When setting off on a single-handed passage it pays to take time squaring up and securing loose gear whilst still in the shelter of the harbour; you cannot be sure of sea conditions once you get outside. Put at the same time you must give consideration to your requirements on arrival at the other end.

When alone you cannot sing out "get the fenders out and then pour me a large gin and tonic please, Dear". I find a safe and easy stowage for the fenders is to hitch them with a clove hitch over the pushpit rails, with their bottoms just inside the taffrail. This leaves them fairly easily accessible for arrival. Before making the final approach to the berth they are hitched to the guard rails while lying on the side decks, allowing sufficient length of line so that they will hang in the correct position when kicked over the side at the last minute.

Werps are more of a problem. Unless you are sure of your berth and the situation you will find upon your arrival, it will generally be necessary to prepare, in advance, springs upon both sides, and either head and stern lines on both sides, or a line secured to the central mooring posts which can be passed ashore on either side. (I have recently obtained a moveable mooring cleat, manufactured by Bartons, which slides onto the Genoa track on either side). It is useful for securing a single spring, which can be looped over a convenient post ashore to hold the ship alongside while one motors gently ahead or astern into position. I intend to get a second one soon to obviate the necessity of shifting the cleat from side to side".

THE "SPEEDSEAL" SEAWATER PUMP COVER

by Alec Matthews
(EMRA)

Any gadget which saves time or effort can be a boon to the single-hander. One of the chores which one encounters when laying up or re-commissioning the engine, or, indeed in emergency failure of the water pump impeller at sea, is the removal of the water pump cover.

There is so little space forward of the engine and, in EMRA, I have opted not to cut an access hole in the bulkhead beneath the galley sink. As, with age, the midriff spreads and the fingers become more stiff and inflexible, I find fumbling with the Mate's nail file, while adopting an amorous posture with the engine, less and less convenient.

I have recently purchased a "SPEEDSEAL" made by TRUE MARINE which employs four easily handled thumbscrews in lieu of the six tiny machine screws, and an "O" ring in place of the paper gasket. (In EMRA'S chart drawer there are to be found many old charts with holes in them; the missing bits are just slightly larger than the water-pump cover!).

I have yet to assess the value of this small piece of equipment under operational conditions, but the machining and general appearance is impressive, and a trial fitting proved both quick and simple. I'll report further at the end of the forthcoming season".

NOTE:

Ken Willey (SEEHOND) and I have also fitted this clever gadget which makes changing or inspecting water pump impellers a much quicker and simpler job - no modifications are needed and installation is easy.

The strong 5mm thick cover has a machined recess for a special rubber "O" ring and is kept in place with three or four knurled thumb screws depending on the pump. Two of the flange holes are slotted, so that only one or two of the remaining thumb screws need to be taken out when replacing the impeller. A smear of waterproof grease keeps the "O" ring in place.

Removing the impeller cover can be done literally blindfold, and without using a screwdriver. (P.F.)



TRUE MARINE, the company which makes these handy items has agreed to offer our members a special discount of £5. Any owner wishing to take advantage of the offer or obtain more information should call Alex Parker on 01372-451992, and quote the name of their Seadog. Please note that the offer closes on the 31st of July 1998.

REFITTING TALIESIN

by Eric Richardson

TALIESIN was lifted out at Lowestoft and towed home where I rigged a scaffold-pole derrick and took out the engine and both fuel tanks.

After a brief search I obtained a very second-hand Perkins 4.10P engine as I intended to make a few changes to the cooling system and did not want to interfere with my existing 4.107 engine which I had previously overhauled and was running well. On stripping the newly acquired engine it was obvious that a major overhaul was needed, which included a rebore, all new bearings and seals, along with a full service for the injectors, fuel pump, plus a new lift pump along with valves and springs.

I decided to strip and examine the Borg Warner gearbox at the same time. This was virtually as new - even the clutch plates were hardly marked. I found this to be so surprising that I rang the agents quoting the model number and asked for details of its rating. They stated that its rating was 120 h.p. at 3,000 r.p.m., so that answers it.

ENGINE MODIFICATIONS.

1. The flywheel is drilled and tapped to accept 1/4" diameter cap screws for the drive plate, but having read of failure with these, I have increased their size to 5/16" and fitted a new drive-plate suitably modified. The old plate was badly worn on the splines, so I coated the new plate and gearbox output-shaft with a dry MOLY spray.

2. Engine cooling: I have always been concerned about the seawater pump access, even though I have the hole in the bulkhead, so I have fitted a Jabsco belt-driven pump mounted above the alternator and driven by a "B" series vee belt from a separate pulley on the front of the crankshaft. This was tested on my first trip out going from Hull to Lowestoft when I picked up an obstruction to the cooling water inlet at night and burnt out the pump impeller. It took me less than 15 minutes to change. I also carry a complete spare pump fitted with pulley, and this can be changed in the same amount of time.

3. Cooling manifold: I have fitted a Powmen side-mounted combined heat exchanger and exhaust manifold which has given better access to the front of the engine. It does, however, make fuel pump adjustments more difficult, so it is swings and roundabouts.

4. Gearbox oil cooler: I pressure tested this to 60 pounds per square inch and found that oil was seeping out at the oil inlet fitting. I was tempted to repair it, but decided to renew it instead. I'm now glad that I did.

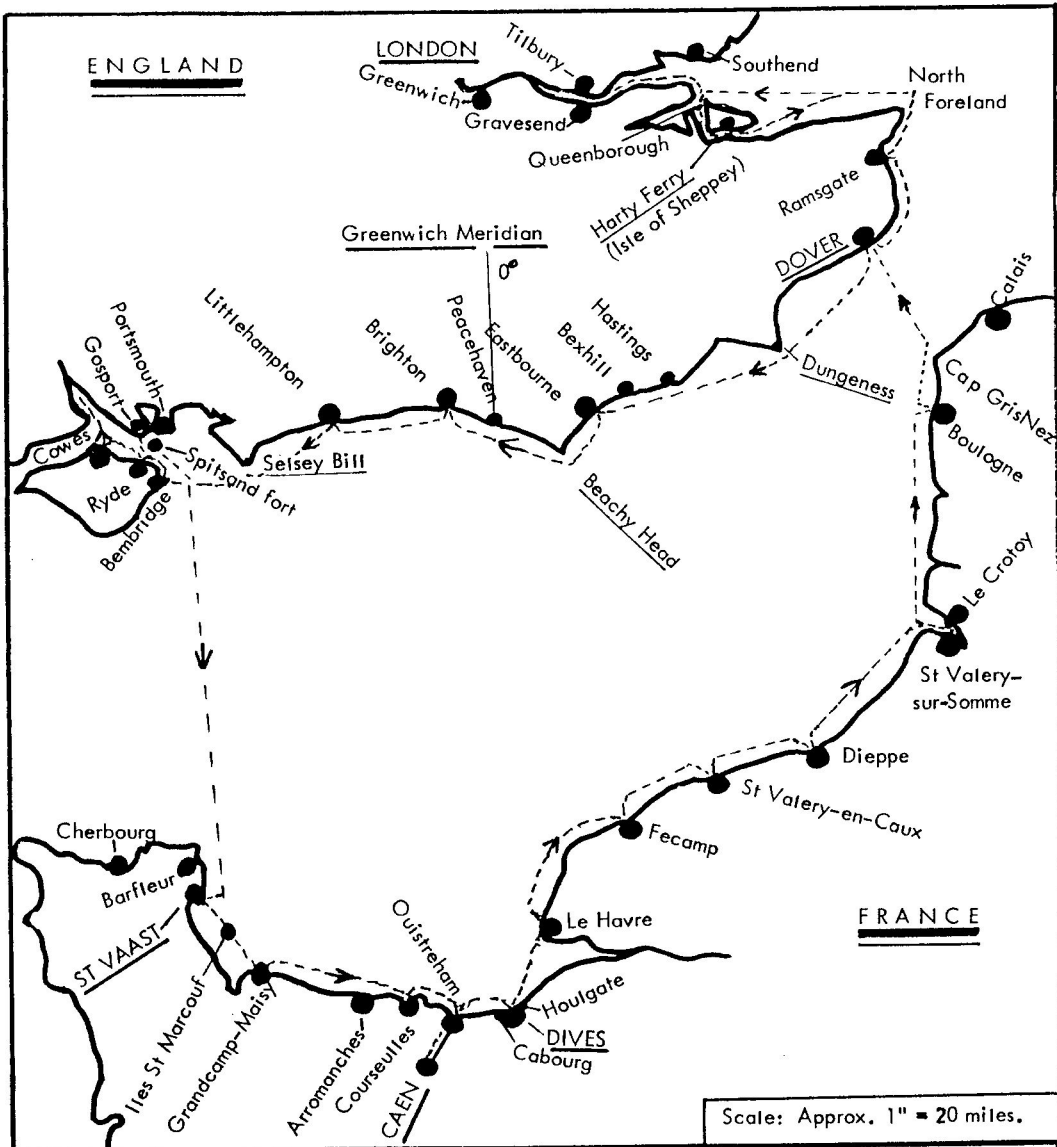
5. Fuel tanks: The starboard tank was original and not in bad condition. I had made a temporary port tank in 1987 just to last the season; this was still O.K., but as both tanks were of mild steel, and I wanted to fit and forget, I decided to make two new ones in stainless steel. The cost of plate and fittings came to £63. New valves etc. cost a further £13. A good friend sheared and folded the plate for me, so it only took half a day at home to weld and test the tanks. I painted them white with smooth Hammerite to help lighten the engine space. I also painted the bilge and engine compartment white.

OTHER WORK.

6. The cockpit edge capping-strip had delaminated. This was removed and cleaned and then glued and clamped in place to set. After trimming back to shape it was refitted and now looks much better.

7. Cockpit lockers: the lids were removed. The edging strips were reglued, sanded down and re-oiled. They now look good.
 8. Standing rigging: this was examined and found to be generally good, but in view of insurance company attitudes, all the lower shrouds were replaced along with the mizzen cap-shrouds. The main cap-shrouds had been replaced a short while ago. The backstay is not very old, but I have wondered about replacing it with a split arrangement. That is to say, fit two separate backstays and see if this improves the clearance to walk along the side deck aft. If anyone has done this I would appreciate their views. And would this create problems in other directions, namely in setting the mizzen staysail?
 9. Cabin heater: I have fitted a Webasto Heater under the port berth in the after cabin, the heat being ducted to the forward end of the main cabin. This works well, but took a bit of sorting out, as the heater is a 24 volt model. I have fitted two separate batteries in a box in the port locker, along with suitable switches to allow them to be either connected in series or in parallel, but never in both. With this system I can charge them off the engine as normal, and use the extra capacity for general duties, or switch them in series to operate the heater. I would have preferred 12 volt, but that's how it goes when you cannot buy new.
 10. Keel bolts: wasted my time again, thank goodness. Removed two keel bolts from each side; they were like new, so replaced and glassed over.
 11. Stern gland: old packing removed and repacked - no problems - PTFE packing used.
 12. Rudder stock: gland inspected for security; found to be secure with no sign of movement.
 13. Bilge pump: the Henderson bilge pump was removed and a new seal kit fitted, along with new suction hose; the old hose had gone hard and had cracked.
 14. Electric bilge pump: again, new suction hose fitted.
 15. Heads: a new toilet seat was fitted and a seal-kit fitted to the Henderson pump along with all new hoses. I nearly made the mistake of fitting clear hose until I was told the story about trains standing in stations. This only need apply to the discharge hose.
 16. Hull: the hull above the waterline was given a coat of white paint to improve the looks; one side worked well, but the other side proved more difficult. The heat of the sun dried the paint so fast that it was impossible to keep a wet edge, so the finish is poor.
- As time was fast running out I decided that I had gone as far as possible and prepared the boat for towing to Hull. She was trailed to Hull and craned into the water at Hull Marina and the masts stepped. We locked out near midnight, but as I had been unable to obtain a recent Humber chart, the journey downriver was somewhat hair-raising. In spite of following deeper draught vessels we managed to touch the bottom near Spurn, being aground for about 10 minutes. From there to Lowestoft we had a nice trip.

P.S. The Perkins 4.107 engine which I removed from TALIESIN is in good running order. I have used the alloy sump, back plate, flywheel and gearbox to fit my 4.108. To protect the 4.107 engine I have fitted a steel automotive sump. The cooling system is complete. I intend to keep the CAV pump and injectors. Anyone wishing to have the engine can collect in return for a donation to the Seadog Owners Association.



SEADOGS WHOSE OWNERS SAILED SINGLEHANDED TO DOVER

FAYE OF AURIN
NATUNA
SEACANIS
TALTESIN

ALASTAIR BUCHAN
NIGEL PRICE
RAY CHAUCHERTY
ERIC RICHARDSON

- from POOLE
 - from FALMOUTH
 - from GOSPORT
 - from LOWESTOFT

SEADOGS ON PONTOON AT DOVER.

ETOILE DE
L'ESCAUT

SEEHOND

FAYE OF AUBIN

SEASCAPE

WAGTAIL

MOHICAN

TONGAREVA

DOGMATIC

OFFENPACH

SUEBRE

TARRY

SEACANIS

BONA

TALIESIN

PALAFOX

DARESSA

DOUGAL

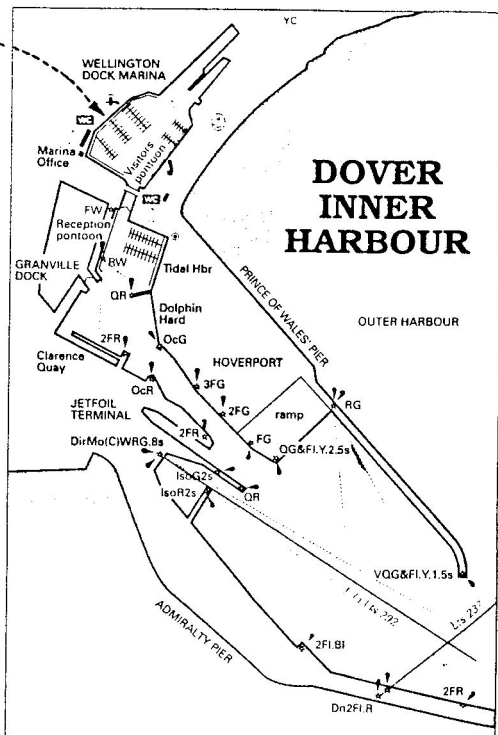
NATUNA

SARA OF WYRE

(PIPEDREAM)

NEWANDERER

SIREX



DOGMATIC'S SUMMER CRUISE AND

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL SEADOG RALLY

DOVER - 1/2/3rd AUGUST 1997

INTRODUCTION

Dover was chosen to host the 1997 International Seadog Rally for two reasons: (a) its position is convenient for owners arriving from the Continent and the south and east coast of England and (b) because the official attitude towards yachtsmen has now changed into becoming benign and welcoming.

Ken Willey (SEEHOND) expressed the hope that those with time to spare might join in a leisurely cruise in company across the Channel to St Vaast (south of Barfleur on the Cherbourg Peninsular) and then continue by stages to Boulogne and Dover. The chief advantage of cruising upchannel is that it will be at or near high water on arrival, an important consideration when many of the ports of northern France are accessible only at or near high water. It was agreed that anyone who wished to participate should be at Spit Sand Fort (which is a little over one nautical mile south of Portsmouth) at 19.00 on Wednesday the 9th of July.

THE CHANNEL CROSSING. Mid afternoon on the 9th of July, a warm and sunny day, we cast off from our mooring at Crabbleck Postyard on the Hemble River and set off in DOGMATIC at the beginning of our long voyage, via France, to Dover. On board were Olive and I, and that great supporter of the Seadog Association, Ralph McClure from Chichester. With Alastair Puchan single-handing in FAYE OF AUPIN, we made our way downriver into the Solent, past familiar buoys and landmarks to just beyond Galkicker Point where we could see in the distance, a pair of Seadogs making for Spit Sand Fort. These were SEEHOND with Ken Willey and his crew John, and SEACANIS with Ray Claucherty single-handing. After comparing courses and times we set sail towards Pembroke Ledge buoy off the east coast of the Isle of Wight, and settled down to enjoy the trip. As time went on the wind backed to the north east and increased to become Force 5 to 6 and soon built up an uncomfortable sea on the port quarter.

Later in the night the lights of the other Seadogs dimmed then vanished altogether in thickening mist, but a fleeting improvement in visibility just after dawn gave us a brief glimpse of the other boats which, happily, were not too far away. On arrival at our waypoint off St Vaast, we found the coast invisible, so in company with FAYE OF AUPIN we felt our way in through the mist towards St Vaast, until at length the island of Tatihou materialised and we were able to turn towards the lock at the marina where shortly afterwards we were joined by SEACANIS and SEEHOND.

ST VAAST LA POUQUE is one of Normandy's most popular destinations for yachtsmen, and we spent two enjoyable days at this picturesque fishing port where the shops and restaurants are good and the oysters superb. One day we travelled in an odd-looking four-wheeled amphibian to nearby Ile Tatihou to visit the Maritime Museum, the Fort and the Oyster Exhibition where there was a free tasting.

GRANDCAMP-MAISY: Olive joined Ken and John aboard SEEHOND next day to visit the Iles St Marcouf (which are about halfway to Grandcamp) where Ken anchored for a while so that Olive and John could explore the Ile du Large where, in 1988 Ken and I stopped on our way back from the 1st International Seadog Rally at Middelburg and Ken enjoyed a leisurely swim. Meanwhile, aboard DOGMATIC, Ralph and I spent some time experimenting with a recently fitted secondhand Windpilot ATLANTIK windvane before setting off to collect Olive who was sunning herself on the beach when we arrived.

At Grandcamp we had expected to moor bows-to with a buoy at our stern, so it was a pleasant surprise to find, contrary to information we had been given, the marina was now equipped with alongside pontoons. Attractions here are few - a fishy smell from the big market place - a fair in town - but the highlight for us was a lively cider party, held that evening aboard a sizeable open barge style of boat, whose generous owner it appeared was proprietress of some cider orchards.

COURSEULLES-SUR-MER: We sailed next day the twenty four miles to Courseulles to find the marina crowded with yachts which had arrived for the Bastille Day celebrations. As might be expected on a such a special occasion, the evening ended with a spectacular bang, thanks to a stunning firework display held on the beach. Towards dusk the golden sands filled with people carrying bags of fireworks which they detonated in their hundreds while small groups of mischievous youngsters mingled with the crowds and surreptitiously dropped lighted crackers close behind unsuspecting onlookers.

The next morning we were a bit surprised to find SEEHOND, which had spent the previous night at anchor among the wreckage of the wartime Mulberry Harbour off Arromanches, moored to a pontoon outside the lock gates and unable to start her engine.

Bad news for Ken, because next day he was due to meet his wife Jess when she arrived at Quistreham. Help was not far away. Ray Claucherty (SEACANIS) offered to tow SEEHOND from Courseulles to Quistreham in good time for Ken to meet the ferry.

TO QUISTREHAM MARINA: It was dark and an hour before dawn on the 15th of July when Ray went to collect SEEHOND and we in DOGMATIC and FAYE OF AUBIN set off for Quistreham where, once through the lock we tied up in the pleasant little marina and obtained clearance from Port Control for our coming passage along the Caen Canal. Meantime, unknown to us, Ray's tow rope had broken at a critical moment when approaching the entrance channel to Quistreham. In Ken Willey's words "By the inexorable operation of Sod's Law, the ferry 'Duc de Normandie' was coming out at a rate of knots. Seeing our tugboat disappearing in the distance, we immediately hoisted sails at a rapid rate, trying to take advantage of the almost non-existent wind. Luckily Ray looked back in the nick of time".

When some time later SEACANIS and SEEHOND appeared, now strapped together side by side, FAYE and DOGMATIC vacated their berth in the marina and Ray carefully manoeuvred the two Seadogs down the narrow entrance channel to the visitors pontoon where he slowly rotated them in a boat's length through 180 degrees and planted SEEHOND smoothly into the berth we had left for them. It was an enlightening performance and a pleasure to watch.

TO CAEN: - SEACANIS then accompanied us for the short journey along the Caen canal to the (replica) of the famous 'Pegasus Bridge', where we tied up for a while to a crumbling concrete wall on the port bank to await the time for the evening convoy to Caen. We had seen what remains of the original Pegasus Bridge lying dumped in a field on our port side. In the afternoon we visited the small Museum, looked at the many exhibits on display, then watched an interesting audio-visual presentation.

Minutes before the bridge opened at 18.45 p.m., boats joining us at speed from Quistreham provoked some jockeying for position, but ere long an unspoken pecking order prevailed; little is to be gained by racing from bridge to bridge because the operators wait for the slowest boats in the convoy to catch up.

After passing the Pegasus and Calix bridges and the swing bridge at La Fonderie we entered the port de plaisance in the centre of Caen which is itself a major tourist attraction, with many top Pistros and a 2 hour express rail service to Paris. One of the first things we did was to take the tour on the "Petit Train" which carried us to the main sights, chief of which were the Abbaye aux Hommes (stark), the Abbaye aux Dames (beautiful), the ruins of the Chateau (good views over the town), the Hotel de Ville and the Vauqueux, the old part of Caen which escaped the bombing and is now the restaurant quarter.

The story behind the building of the two Abbeys is that in 1049, William the Conqueror (as he became) wanted to marry Mathilde of Flanders. The Pope opposed the marriage because they were distant cousins, and because he was afraid their union would create a political bond between Flanders and Normandy. The wedding eventually took place without the Pope's consent, and to placate him, William sent a message to Rome promising that, for forgiveness, he would build, in the then new town of Caen, two new Benedictine Abbeys, one for men and one for women.

RETURN TO QUISTREHAM: 18-7-97 - Early on the fourth day we slipped our moorings and joined the first downstream convoy. Pegasus Bridge opened dead on time at 9.15. and by 9.50 we were safely tied up at Quistreham. That morning we visited the 'Normandy Wine Warehouse' which is not far from the lock, and during the afternoon walked to the resort of Riva Bella which has miles of wonderful beaches.

Here we spent some time watching sand yachts being raced at perilously high speeds around a challenging triangular course. Returning to the marina we paid a visit to the 98 feet tall red and white lighthouse and climbed the 180 steps to the top where we admired the view and took photographs of the approach channel.

ON TO DIVES: 19-7-98 - While SEEPCND stayed at Cuistreham to have repairs completed DOGMATIC, SEACANIS and FAYE locked out of Caen Canal and had a bumpy passage in a brisk north-easterly wind to the entrance of the Dives River where there was a big swell with waves breaking on sandbanks on either side. Following the channel directly shorewards, we came to within a few yards of the beach (literally) before it changed direction and turned sharply to starboard towards the lock at Port Guillaume Marina.

Here in 1066, William the Conqueror assembled his invasion fleet prior to invading England, and nearby in the small town of Dives there is a replica Norman village built as it would have been in William's day, complete with courtyard of half timbered houses where nearby is a large mediaeval wooden barn which houses the local market.

Cabourg, a mile or so along the seafront to the north-west, is a small seaside town which was developed a century ago as an upmarket beach resort to rival Deauville. Marcel Proust, the famous French writer, spent his summers here and wrote a story around the Grand Hotel and Casino (still prospering) in his series of books entitled "In Memory of Things Past". Our next walk took us to Houlgate in the opposite direction, where we strolled along the promenade watching groups of people on the beach flying a number of extraordinary looking kites. A great hobby it seems in France.

ON TO LE HAVRE: 21-7-97 - We made a perilous exit. The manner of our departure from Dives was as unusual as it was unexpected. Although the lock gates had opened as normal, I was at first mystified by the fact that a group of sailing yachts gathered close to the lock made no attempt to leave. Some minutes after several large motor cruisers had powered their way out through the lock, we were beckoned forward by the waiting yachtsmen. So I motored down towards the lock and entered, only to be brought quickly to a standstill, with DOGMATIC bucking and rolling in the hollow of a standing wave, while ahead there was a wall of living water boiling up over the sill and boring down towards us. Quickly I opened the throttle. With speed slowly building, DOGMATIC broke out of the standing wave, powered through the surging water-barrier at the entrance to the lock and out into the River Dives, where in a moment the fierce current took hold and swept her, like a piece of matchwood, from side to side of the channel in a wild chicane that for several sweating minutes had me struggling to retain control. Gradually the channel widened, the current lessened, and our heartbeats returned to normal.

LE HAVRE: After the initial excitement we had a relatively quiet passage to Le Havre where we tied up just after 1 p.m. There followed the inevitable shopping trips - a fair hike in Le Havre - and in the long balmy evening came drinks and a wonderful dinner seated round the table in the cockpit.

FECCAMP: 22-7-97 - We left Le Havre just after breakfast on yet another lovely warm summer's morning, navigated our way round the approaches to Port d'Antifer and arrived at Fecamp just before 2 p.m. Here once lived that genius of the short story, Guy de Maupassant; here too is made the liqueur Benedictine, which is reputed to have been invented in 1510 by a monk who first thought of using aromatic plants growing on nearby cliffs to flavour the alcohol. The Distillery and Museum is well worth a visit and there is an excellent selection of items to buy as presents to take home. Back at the marina, a tally of Seadogs showed that SEEHOND, SIREX and OFFENBACH had now arrived.

TO ST VALERY-EN-CAUX:. The entrance to St Valery-en-Caux is curiously similar to that at Ponifacio in the south of Corsica, being a none-too-easily-visible gap in a line of white cliffs. At Ponifacio all was revealed when we saw the ferry to Sardinia steam out from the face of a seemingly solid cliff. Our stay in St Valery-en-Caux was brief but we did walk around to explore and found the quaint Rue de Penitents in the old part of the town and views to be had from the top of the cliffs well worth the effort of getting up there; given the choice we could have spent more time here.

TO DIEPPE: 24-7-97 - The following afternoon, in sunny intervals, and on the flood, we enjoyed a lovely sail to Dieppe to find the marina absolutely packed. It really does pay at popular places like this to arrive early. Dieppe, in its heyday a century earlier, became renowned for its food, and attracted a great number of artists and writers. This is the oldest French seaside town, and it has the nearest beach to Paris. It was once home to the Parmentier brothers, adventurers and near pirates who, in 1529, are reputed to have first performed the joke baptism on crossing the equator that is still practiced on ships today. Another local privateer, after whom the Verrazano Narrows bridge is named, discovered the site of New York in April 1524.

While waiting for the strong north east wind to abate we occupied our time by walking round the town where we visited the Cathedral, the mammoth street market, window shopped, looked at a couple of churches, discovered Olivier's the high class food and wine shop, rescued a water-logged seagull and took a bus out to the Canadian War Cemetery.

By the third day, the strong winds and high seas had moderated sufficiently for us to set off in confidence, just before lunch, to sail the 22 miles to the big AI-50 landfall buoy which marks the mouth of the five mile wide estuary of the River Somme.

ST VALERY-SUR-SOMME: 27-7-97 - Somewhere I have read that if you are not happy about going into harbours like Sandwich, Pembroke, Christchurch, or even rivers like the Exe, you should give places like St Valery-sur-Somme a miss, for here the approach dries out for 5/6 miles and is dangerous in strong onshore winds. It is a little over 9 miles to steer from the landfall buoy to the marina via the navigable channel which, being moveable by nature, meanders considerably, and shifts on an almost daily basis. Tides at Springs are fierce, and the water for many miles around shallow. Because of its tendency to frequent change, there are no charts to be had which indicate the buoyed channel.

We arrived at the landfall buoy just after 17.00 and all pairs of eyes scanned towards the flat and featureless coastline for a sight of the vital pair of small buoys which mark the start of the buoyed channel. Minutes later Ray, aboard SEACANIS, called to say he had them in view, and soon five Seadogs were wending their way in line astern along the well buoyed channel leading to the marina.

St Valery-sur-Somme, once an ancient Roman Port, is attractive, clean and well cared for and occupies a photogenic setting overlooking the peaceful countryside of the Somme Bay. It consists of the older upper town and a lower town beside the port which has a long esplanade shaded by plane and lime trees with lovely views over to Le Crotoy and Le Hourdel; we could happily have spent a week here. There are good walks to be had and a steam train runs on certain days from the quay through 14 kilometres of lovely countryside to Le Crotoy and in the opposite direction, to the headland at Le Hourdel. St Valery hosts an artists colony, some of whose work we saw at an exhibition where the paintings were expensive but remarkably good - Olive would have bought several had she the money. Sadly for us this was to be the last of the really interesting French ports we had time to visit.

The early morning mist was thick on the 29th of July when we left St Valéry-sur-Somme and groped our way gingerly from buoy to buoy along the twisting channel to the sea, but after about three-quarters of an hour the visibility began gradually to improve. Although the faithful Perkins engine worked hard to push us against the strong incoming tide, it took the better part of two hours for us to reach the landfall buoy and the open sea.

POULOGNE: - We arrived at the huge outer harbour at Poulogne - (which covers more than four square miles) - just after 3 p.m. and quickly secured berths in the marina just moments before a spate of visiting yachts poured in - chaos!

Little appears to have changed here over the years, and the overcrowding at this unattractive marina is as bad as ever. Poulogne was once a Roman city and the town, like St Valéry-sur-Somme, is divided into an upper town (but here enclosed within ramparts) and a lower town and maritime area which was rebuilt after the war. Of the good things that can be said about Boulogne, the beach is of fine white sand and, to quote others - "the place has a rough but appealing look."

I lived here for a short while pre-war and recall warm memories of summer evenings when day-trippers from Folkestone were taken back to the ferry boats in wheelbarrows, blind drunk. Another indelible memory is the parting remark of my French host when I told him I was returning to England to join the Royal Air Force. He said, as he took his leave "Vous mort bientôt". Looking back, I think that many, who at that time lived on the Continent, were far more aware than we, of what the future was to bring.

THE CHANNEL CROSSING: - On the 30th of July we left Poulogne in bright sunshine, the wind westerly force 4, and carried the tide up to Cap Gris Nez and the ZD2 buoy where I altered course to cross the shipping lanes at 90 degrees. The powerful current carried us swiftly across the narrow Dover Straits, past the Varne Bank Light towards the high cliffs ahead, and I had to take particular care while steering to prevent DOGMATIC from being set down and swept past our destination. Put in the event we had a fast crossing and arrived at Dover at 12.30 having taken just four and a half hours to cover the 29 miles.

DOVER: - After re-filling our practically empty fuel tanks we entered Wellington Dock to find that MOHICAN, TONGAREVA and OFFENBACH were already in residence. Three more Seadogs arrived that evening; they were DOUGAL, NATUNA and from Holland, SARA OF WYRE. Added to the Seadogs from France, namely SEEHOND, SEACANIS, SIREX, FAYE OF AUPIN and DOGMATIC, there were now eleven Seadogs at Dover.

Over the next couple of days we did our best to make it possible for all Seadogs to berth together on one pontoon, so while Seadog crews on the waiting pontoon outside the lock were being briefed, inside the marina other crews stood by to wave the new arrivals into vacant spaces. It was a little like a Commando operation, but all carried out in a spirit of fun and great good humour.

Next to arrive were NEWANDERER, PALAFOX, CARESSA, SEASCAPE, TALIESIN, and the Standfast ETOILE DE L'ESCAUT from Holland with Piet Castenmiller (ex NAUSIKAA) and his whole family aboard. As many members may remember, it was Piet who, in 1988, first proposed the idea of holding an International Seadog Rally. We all gathered at the Royal Cinoué Ports Yacht Club that evening to have a jug, catch up on the news and renew old friendships.

We had a surprise the following morning when Willy de Crom's Seadog, EONA came in through the lock. She is now owned by Kiek Oudewortel, who, with his son Marc, brought her across the North Sea from Holland, neither of whom had ever sailed before upon the sea!

TARRY and WAGTAIL arrived next, as did SUEPRE, whose crew had suffered shock and worry when their steering wheel fell apart in rough weather. Fortunately they were strongly crewed and quickly brought the emergency tiller in the after cabin into use, the helmsman being directed by hand signals from the cockpit. By some happy stroke of fate, Clive Stovell, ex owner of SUEPRE cycled over to join us just then, and being an engineer, was able to suggest to Suzy Powen, present owner of SUEPRE, the best way to repair the broken wheel. Clive was later offered a passage aboard FAYE OF AUPIN back to his home town of Poole when the Rally ended.

Our days in Dover were enjoyable and carefree with much fine dry and warm weather, lots of historic places to visit and scenic walks to enjoy. One such walk started just across the road from the marina in a cave known as the Grand Shaft from where there is a spiral staircase which leads to the cliff top high above.

Saturday dawned sunny and warm, the Seadogs were dressed overall, and in the morning Carol Moss (TONGAREVA) took a large party to visit Dover's Old Town Gaol. The highlight of the day was our visit the Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club where we had dinner in the big upstairs dining room which looks out to sea, after which many of us congregated downstairs to enjoy a nightcap in the pleasant conservatory.

Ray Cloucherty hosted a popular drinks party on the pontoon next morning, the socializing well lubricated by endless glasses of his commendable home-made wine. This was a merry occasion and much enjoyed, to judge by the happy smiles on all the faces of those in the group photograph taken shortly afterwards. Next, after lunch we all travelled by double-decker bus to visit the Secret Wartime Tunnels and Control Rooms at Dover Castle which are buried deep in the bowels of the chalk cliffs.

TO RAMSGATE: It was a windy day when, on the 4th of August, most Seadogs sailed for home, but others, DOGMATIC included, went on to Ramsgate. With the forecast wind being north-easterly Force 4/5 increasing to F7 later, we took the slightly more sheltered inshore passage and had not been long on our way when we heard a Mayday call. Shortly after we arrived at Ramsgate we saw the lifeboat enter harbour with a Dutch yacht in tow which had not only suffered engine failure, but also the clew torn out of the jib.

At Ramsgate to greet us was Piet Castenmiller, who had earlier set off for Holland aboard ETCILE DE L'ESCAUT but found conditions so rough he decided to return to harbour. Ferry sailings were cancelled that day, and by evening seven Seadogs were sheltering in Ramsgate: they were SUEPRE, DOGMATIC, SEACANIS, BCNA, TALIESIN, NEWANDERER and PALAFOX.

ON THE WAY TO QUEENBOROUGH: The 6th of August was another day when we had a north-easterly wind F4/6 on the nose, but we knew that once we had rounded North Foreland and turned to the west we should have both wind and tide in our favour. An hour and a half after leaving Ramsgate, with North Foreland now behind us, we romped past Longnose, Hook, Spaniard and Spile buoys to Sheerness and turned into the River Medway where we picked up a vacant buoy at Queenborough, within a stone's toss of the old red painted 'Ross Revenge', better known at one time as "Radio Caroline".

UP THE LONDON RIVER: It was already warm at eight o'clock next morning on the 7th of August when, accompanied by SEACANIS, we took the last of the ebbtide down the River Medway, round Grain Spit and on through the Nore Swathway to get the full benefit of the spring flood up to Tower Bridge. We motor-sailed mostly, maintaining a speed through the water of about five to five and a half knots, and as the morning wore on it became uncomfortably hot, so I rigged our Pimini style sun canopy (designed by Susan Huber of GLORY) and we went on to enjoy a fast and comfortable trip upriver.

When approaching the Thames Barrier, we were intercepted by a fast rigid inflatable boat crewed by what appeared to be four skin heads in wet suits. These were Customs Officers who wanted to know our movements. But what appeared to interest them more was the fact that we knew of Nigel Price and NAFUNA.

Nigel told us later, that when this crew hailed him and demanded to put a man aboard, he, who was singlehanded, asked them for proof of identity. Unable to provide such proof, the officers were then obliged to call Headquarters to have their credentials established. We, fortunately had no great hassle with them and were allowed to continue our way upriver, past the site of the Millenium Exhibition, Canary Wharf and finally to Tower Bridge where I was interested to see that the flooding tide was still strong.

LIMEHOUSE DOCK: 7-8-97 - We berthed happily for the next seven days at Limehouse Dock and that evening had dinner in the Cruising Association Club where I received an urgent message to ring Thames Coastguard. It transpired that Clive Stovell (ex SUEBRE) who, it will be remembered, had been offered a lift to Poole aboard FAYE OF AUBIN, decided on arrival at Brighton, to continue his journey by cycle rather than spend days there waiting for favourable weather. He had not gone far on his way when he was knocked from his cycle at a roundabout and taken to Brighton Hospital. When I phoned him that evening I was sorry to hear of his considerable injuries and that he was likely to remain in hospital for several more weeks.

On Friday the 8th of August, NEWANDERER with Bill Richards and Shirley came up from Ramsgate to join us; Ralph went off to Chichester so he and Margeret could celebrate their Silver Wedding; Olive went for a couple of days to attend the 100th birthday party of an aunt; and at Limehouse it was Festival Week. Canal narrow boats from all parts converged on the dock; there was a concert, a funfair, a jazz band, and fireworks display.

The concert held that evening in nearby St Mary's Church was given by a group of accomplished Russian musicians who performed works from fifteen different composers. All in all it was a delight to listen to, and a superb evening's entertainment.

Next morning we quickly realised that temperatures were likely to be heading up into the 90's, so Ray and I took the day off, travelled by Docklands Light Railway to Tower Gateway station and walked to St Katherine's Dock where we were invited aboard FLAMANT ROSE, a large and elegant motor yacht (utterly feminine below) once owned by the French singer, the late Edith Piaf. This, her 'love boat', she had kept moored in quiet seclusion on a French waterway. Next, we took the guided tour of Tower Bridge which is well worth doing as it gives access to the upper bridge which, for most of this century, has been barred to the public on account of the number of people who ended their days by leaping from it.

Temperatures were once more soaring into the 90's on the Monday when we decided to escape the heat of central London. Together with Bill and Shirley Richards and Ray we took one of the frequent trains on the Docklands Light Railway to Island Gardens station, and walked the short distance to the pedestrian tunnel under the River Thames. It was shivery cool in that damp tunnel under the river, and a welcome relief from the heat above. When we reached the opposite bank, Bill and Shirley left us and we followed signs up to Greenwich Observatory, the Planetarium and Greenwich Meridian, where Japanese tourists queued to have their picture taken while posing legs astride the Meridian Line. We picnicked later in a shady spot near the Time Ball building and watched the Ball drop to signal noon, after which Ray went to see the famous tea clipper the "Cutty Sark" while Olive and I visited the Queen's House and the Cadets Mess Hall with its rows and rows of gleaming silver candelabra.

At Limehouse we found shopping for food quite painless, almost a pleasure in fact. The local shops being a fair walk away, we found the solution was to take one of the frequent trains to Canary Wharf Station, cross the platform and walk through glass doors into the new-style Tesco 'Metro' store which specializes in a wide range of delicious ready prepared meals to cater for the large population of flat dwellers living in that area.

Our final day at Limehouse was a full one - John Tattum (MOHICAN) paid a surprise visit; Ralph returned from Chichester, and Seadogs were readied for sea. That evening, courtesy of Ralph, we celebrated our successes so far with glasses of champagne in the cockpit, then Ray took us all for dinner at the Club happy days!

DOWNSTREAM TO THE MEDWAY: Two hours before high water on the 14th of August, our three Seadogs, NEWANDERER, SEACANIS and DOGMATIC locked out from Limehouse Dock and set off to cover the forty odd miles downstream to the Medway before the tide turned foul on us.

On we motored, grateful for the precious shade of our sun canopy, past Canary Wharf, through the Thames Barrier, past smart looking green and yellow sewage boats and a miscellany of river traffic, down to the entrance of the River Medway where we turned into the River Swale with the intention of pressing on to Hartly Ferry where we hoped to anchor for the night. But Ray called up to say there was a smell of burning coming from his engine, so once again we moored to the vacant buoys close by our old friend 'Radio Caroline'. Ray traced the burning smell to a chewed up fan belt, and a replacement soon cured the problem.

Next morning we set off down the River Swale and thirty minutes later came to the Kingsferry combined road and rail bridge. This lifting bridge, with its twin towers and cross piece at the top resembles the central part of Tower Bridge in London, but it is unusual in that the combined road and rail section rises horizontally and in one piece. Bill Richards told me some time later that two days after we had passed through, two yachts waiting for the bridge to rise, were stemming the current by using reverse gear, when without warning the engine of the rearmost yacht failed, and, impelled by the current, it collided with the boat ahead, and the pair, out of control, struck the bridge and both lost their masts.

With NEWANDERER leading, we followed the twists and turns of this shallow, quiet and peaceful river to Hartly Ferry, which is on the Isle of Sheppey, opposite Faversham Creek, and a good place to anchor for the night. We continued to the Colombine Buoy off Whitstable where Bill and Shirley aboard NEWANDERER said goodbye and sailed off for Gravesend, while we continued following the well buoyed channels along the north coast of Kent to Margate where the normally golden sands were black with pebble.

From past bad experience I knew the good times would shortly come to an end; no sooner did we arrive off North Foreland than the sea there became its usual rough and nasty self, then later on, just when Dover Harbour came into view, a dense cliff of fog moved silently towards us and smothered everything from sight. Seconds before we reached the eastern entrance, by great good fortune there was short lived chink in the fog which quickly closed around us the moment we were inside. Being told by Harbour Control to wait by the North Cardinal buoy which was a kilometre away by the Western entrance, I set course through the mist and shortly afterwards was rewarded by seeing the buoy loom up ahead. There we waited for what seemed to be ages for the arrival of a hovercraft which could be heard long before its ill-defined, nightmarish shape burst through the mist obscuring the western entrance and thundered past in a cloud of spray. Moments later meroons exploded to call out the lifeboat crew.

When at long last we were given permission to make our way to the waiting pontoon I set off smartly, but had not gone far before I was disturbed to hear a great roar burst from the four engines of one of the two giant hovercraft which lay stationary on a ramp closeby. Moments later this rubbery monster heaved into life, reeled drunkenly down the ramp and with a tremendous explosion of spray flopped into the water and headed straight at us. Instinctively I opened the throttle to put as much distance as possible between us, but in the event it passed at a safe distance. A little later the lifeboat came into port towing "Priscilla", a large motor cruiser.

With continuing fog forecast for next day we stayed on and made the best of things. It was not difficult. All day long the sun shone out of a cloudless sky and it was hot - we had breakfast in the cockpit - and after washing down the decks Olive went into town and bought a sun hat! Put it was pleasantly cool under our sun canopy and that evening we had dinner in the cockpit.

Thankfully though, the weather forecast for next day was good, so an hour or two before midnight we locked out of the marina and moored to the waiting pontoon until just after 2 a.m., when we cast off, and with a full moon sailing high overhead, set course down channel for Dungeness and Eastbourne. It was a lovely clear night with the sky full of stars, the wind south to southeast Force 4, and a slight swell.

As we ploughed westwards the lights of SEACANIS burned steadily on our starboard quarter, and low on the horizon distant flashes guided us towards Dungeness. Slowly the moon sank in the west, the eastern horizon began to lighten and then glow with golden rays and soon another hot day had dawned.

Once more the sun blazed out of a cloudless sky and again we rigged our sun canopy over the cockpit and sat patiently watching as Hastings, then Bexhill, slid slowly past till at last we reached Pevensey Bay, home to Eastbourne's Sovereign Yacht Harbour.

EASTBOURNE: 17-8-97 - A cluster of yachts racing round a triangular course close to the entrance channel temporarily complicated our arrival, as did the fact that I could get no reply to my calls to port control. (Calling channels allocated to Sovereign Yacht Harbour, 15 and 17, are restricted to one watt output only and not the usual 25).

Sovereign Yacht Harbour is quite a way out of town, but within walking distance is a complex which includes, among other things, a large Asda supermarket and a Cinema. There are fairly frequent buses from here to the town centre. The surroundings of the marina are still a bit bleak and have an air of being incomplete, but this is a pleasant enough place to spend a few days.

We stayed three nights at Eastbourne but our time passed quickly - we were entertained by two of our oldest friends and were taken on a drive to Beachy Head. It was a beautiful evening, the setting sun over the sea a picture, and it was hard to appreciate just then, that this place has also a darker side, being where some people choose to end it all by jumping over the cliffs.

It was yet another screeching hot day when on the 20th of August we motor-sailed the twenty miles to Brighton. Two friends had come to see us off and after we had locked out they drove to Beachy Head to wave a last farewell as we hastened past the lighthouse at more than eight knots.

Later, when nearing Peacehaven, I remembered that many years ago I had flown low above these cliffs and my eye had been caught by a narrow strip of white concrete which went north and south nearly to the edge of the cliff - the Meridian Line. As we passed by we saw there is now a monument on the cliffs at Peacehaven to mark the Greenwich Meridian.

BRIGHTON: 20-8-97 - We reached Brighton late afternoon and took a taxi to visit Clive Stovell (ex SUEPRE) who was recovering from his injuries in a ward on the 10th floor of the local skyscraper of a hospital. He was delighted to see us and had for some time been keeping a near 24 hour watch for our arrival at the marina from his eyrie high in the sky. Clive was in very good spirits and grateful to be alive.

The tide was extra low next morning and several yachts ran aground while attempting to leave harbour, but the shoal draft of the good old Seadog gave us the edge and we were soon past them and on our way out to sea.

LITTLEHAMPTON: 21-8-97 - A misty day, the sea calm, little wind and with an exceptionally high spring tide against us (range 6.6 metres), we ended up motoring most of the way. The River Arun at Littlehampton is one of the fastest flowing navigable rivers in England, which can make the approach channel quite rough on the ebb. Of the flood, the Pilot Book observes "the effect of the tide is very fierce up the narrow harbour entrance". It was. Part way down the entrance channel we ran into a flood of water cascading like a river in spate over the low eastern training wall. The effect was as though an after-burner had been switched on. In a flurry of foam, we were swept willy nilly down the last of the channel and into the harbour where strong cross currents made mooring up to the town quay an interesting experience.

On the quayside waiting to welcome us was Ralph's wife Margaret who had driven over from their home in nearby Chichester to collect him. We were going to miss his sunny presence, for he had been a happy and tolerant crew member throughout our long voyage.

That night we were invited by Hilary Waitt (TARRY) to a smashing barbeque party at her home at Ferring on Sea, Martyn being at Paimpol enjoying the Festival of Sea Shanties! With us went Ray Claucherty and John and Jean Ross (DARESSA) who very kindly drove us there and back. Next morning John and Jean dropped us off in Arundel where we visited the Wetlands Wildlife Sanctuary, which is much like Sir Peter Scott's place at Slimbridge in Somerset.

We stayed on at Littlehampton until the 24th of August, then took the inshore passage around Selsey Bill to the charming but now expensive harbour of Pembroke, at the east end of the Isle of Wight. A strong headwind gave us a bumpy ride when rounding Selsey Bill and the tide was so high there was not a lot of the Mixon Beacon above water, but after we had left the Street and Boulder Buoys behind we had a fair passage across to Pembroke harbour where we were hailed by Martyn & Hilary Waitt of TARRY who were over on a hiking weekend.

GOSPORT: On the 25th of August, a windy, rainy day, we sailed in company with SEACANIS the seven or so miles to Gosport where we said goodbye to Ray who had been with us from the start, and said hello to Bill and Dot Tomlinson who had recently sailed GABRIELLE B back to the U.K. from their base at Gruissan in the Mediterranean. They had intended coming to the Dover Rally, but lost time here and there and never quite made it.

RYDE: 26-8-97 - We spent a final few days at the drying harbour of Ryde on the Isle of Wight. It was Ryde Carnival Week with processions and fireworks, we visited Quarr Abbey, bought Rover tickets and went by bus and train to explore more of the Island, had meals out, walked along the beach to our yacht club at Fishbourne, and hiked over Tennyson Down with its splendid views over the Solent on one side, and on the other, the English Channel.

We also had the pleasure of visiting Peter & Val Bruguier (SALIA) at their attractive home at Newport where over dinner we caught up with Island news. On another occasion Barry and Anna Matthey (MER CALEB) came aboard DOGMATIC for the evening and we heard their vineyard is now doing very well. We can recommend their quality wines - they are superb!

Sunday 31.8.97 - Most unexpectedly I woke early, and while listening quietly to the World Service at 5 a.m. heard the news about Princess Diana's car crash. Everywhere there was a change of mood. It seemed to us that now was the time to think about returning home.

So next day we sailed to Cowes where we took on nearly 50 gallons of diesel, then headed north across the Bramble shallows towards the Hamble River and home. The end of a two month cruise that had in turn been stimulating, challenging, and wholly pleasurable, especially the adrenalin drenched, nail-biting moments which helped to keep us on our toes.

BOATS & CREWS ARRIVING AT DOVER INTERNATIONAL SEADOG RALLY

- AUGUST 1997 -

1. BONA	- Kiek en Marc Oudewortel	- from PAARL, HOLLAND
2. DARESSA	- John Ross, John & Audrey Lansdell	- from LITTLEHAMPTON
3. DOGMATIC	- Peter & Olive French Ralph McClure	- from HAMBLE RIVER
4. DOUGAL	- Graham & Gaye Matthews	- from GOSPORT
5. FAYE OF AUPIN	- Alastair Buchan - (Solo)	- from POOLE
6. MOHICAN	- John & Tina Tattum Mary & John Hummerston	- from SOUTHAMPTON
7. NATUNA	- Nigel Price - (Solo)	- from FALMOUTH
8. NEWANDERER	- Pill Richards & Shirley	- from GRAVESEND
9. OFFENBACH	- Ron Ryan	- from BRIGHTON
10. PALAFOX	- Jack & Bobby Phillips	- from STH.PENFLEET
11. SARA OF WYRE	- Ad en Françoise en Corine Beaufort	- from GOES, HOLLAND
12. SEACANTIS	- Ray Claucherty - (Solo)	- from GOSPORT
13. SEASCAPE	- Herry & Caroline Manners	- from EMSWORTH
14. SEEHOND	- Ken & Jess Willey John Richardson	- from GOSPORT
15. SIREX	- Brian & Jennifer Stephens & Wendy & Ian Williams	- from SALCOMPE
16. SUEBRE	- Susie Powen & Nigel, & John, Florence & Theodore	- from HARWICH
17. TALIESIN	- Eric Richardson - (Solo)	- from LOWESTOFT
18. TARRY	- Martyn & Hilary Weitt Dave & Val Wells & Carol Clapham.	- from CHICHESTER
19. TONGAREVA	- Carol & Mike Moss	- from MANNINGTREE
20. WAGTAIL	- Nigel, Gill, Hannah and James Packman	- from RIVER MEDWAY

NON-SEADOG MEMBER:

ETOILE DE L'ESCAUT (EX -NAUSIKAA)	- Piet en Henneke Castenmiller en Joost, Port en Charlotte.	- from MIDDELBURG, HOLLAND
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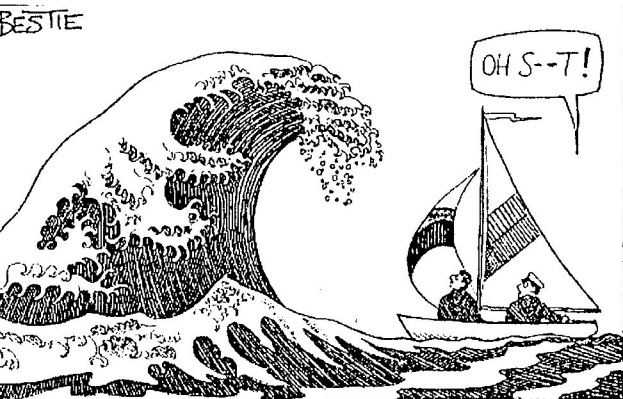
SEADOGS REPRESENTED BY THEIR OWNERS

1. GALWYN	- Stephen & Christine Axon	- from POOLE
2. SALVADOR	- Mike & Renate Hufton	- from MENAI STRAITS
3. SEAFLEUR	- Colin & Tisha Prowne	- from ROCHESTER

THAT 'WALL-OF-WATER' AT THE LOCK AT DIVES MARINA

by Peter French

A good many years ago something similar happened to me when motoring a heavy old boat up the River Ouse and I became unexpectedly embroiled in a standing wave which had developed in fast running water under a road bridge. Despite my best efforts, lack of engine power prevented me from freeing the grip exerted on the boat by the standing wave. Beginning to imagine that I might be trapped under that bridge until my fuel was exhausted, I began experimenting and found that by careful manipulation of the throttle, I was able, very slowly, to back out, much to the relief of my passenger, a young French girl who was over in England on holiday. But it took all the concentration I possessed to prevent the bows from swinging off and the boat from turning broadside on, a situation which would have been disastrous for the pair of us.



Looking back upon our experience at Dives, tides that day were extremely high, with a tidal range of 7.3 metres. At the time of happening, the water level outside the lock was rising at a rate of about 6 feet per hour, or 18" every fifteen minutes. It was a very different story inside the marina. The narrowness of the lock held back the free flow of incoming water, which soon caused a difference in height to develop between

Peter French was a keen yachtsman and knew all the appropriate nautical terms ...

the incoming water and that in the marina. With time, this difference eventually became so great as to create a wall of water at the entrance to the lock. I expect the locals had much pleasure in watching the cavortings of the three Seadogs as they successively ran the gauntlet of the current!

From the experience we had here and at other marinas in some parts of Normandy, I would suggest for safety's sake that at Spring Tides one should avoid entering or leaving a lock within 30 minutes of first opening to give time for the initial rush of incoming water to moderate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

FRONT COVER

I am greatly indebted to David Eddington (ex TIMORLEY) for his striking interpretation of a theme in recognition and in honour of the efforts of our two wonderful single-handed round-the-world-seilers, Pat Lawless (LOON) and Susan Huber (GLORY). (P.F).

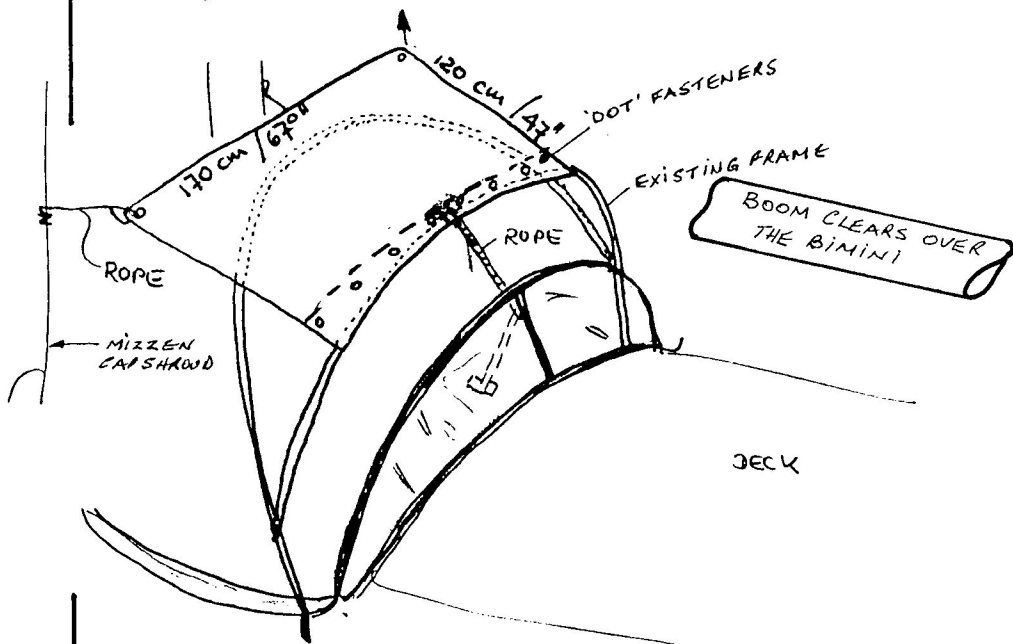
SUN CANOPY FOR A SEADOG

by Susanne Huber
(GLORY)

"The Sun Canopy itself is a rectangular piece of heavy material, finished size 170 cm X 120cm, with a slot at the centre of the forward edge which is folded over the front bar of the frame and fitted with 'Dot' fasteners. I have sewn in a few folds to bring the forward edge to shape nicely round the front bar of the frame. The after edge is tied backwards with strong cords from the corners to the mizzen cap shrouds and the centre to the mizzen cleat. The sketch will give you the general idea.

This awning is just big enough for you to find a place in the shade while sailing, and still lets a refreshing breeze to blow into the cockpit area.

I used heavy material (like "Sunbrella") fitted over the existing frame of the sprayhood. The sprayhood itself is taken off, leaving the hoops bare. I don't use the spacing bar to the front against the windscreen but have a rope attached between the main frame and the support bar of the windscreen. The two round bows of the frame are propped apart in the normal way".



(I had one of these effective canopies made from 9.25 ounce Aquamarine coloured "Sunbrella" fabric (colour number 6023) which is specially manufactured to withstand bright sunshine and strong winds and has a five year guarantee. I increased the number the number of 'Dot' fasteners fitted along the front edge to fourteen. Should you be thinking of making one, it would pay first to use some cheap throw-away material to make a mock-up to be sure of getting the right shape to the curve along the front edge. Barry King of K & H Fabrics (01489-583115) can supply "Sunbrella" fabric which comes in a variety of colours. Alternatively he would be pleased to make your canopy for you. P.F.)

by Ray Claucherty
(SEACANIS)

I set off really early (before 5 a.m.) to pick up SEEHOND which was moored to a pontoon outside the lock to the marina.

As the distance between Courseulles to Quistreham was relatively short, being only eleven to twelve miles and the sea reasonably calm, we attached the mooring line to our respective sampson posts. After leaving the harbour the tow line was adjusted in length to suit the wave pattern. The morning was pleasant, the sun, even at that hour warm, and the visibility excellent. Frequently I glanced astern to assure myself that the tow was alright. We had a favourable tide under us and were making about 3 knots through the water.

As we drew near the buoys marking the start of the Quistreham channel, I could see that the Portsmouth ferry was coming out of the harbour at a fair old rate, but I judged that it would pass about 25 yards from us, at about which time we should be lined up for a straight run in to the harbour.

Suddenly there was a great shout from SEEHOND. The towrope had broken! As luck would have it they had a sail up in no time and turned away from the ferry. Soon we had retrieved the broken line and had bent on a new one and carried on towards the harbour.

As we drew nearer I could see that there were two locks for the canal, so which one did I use? I was in a bit of a quandary as I had never been there before, but it soon became quite clear, as only one of the locks had a light on it, and that was red. Having already decided that rafting up would give me a better chance of controlling the boats when we entered the lock, I thought that now we were waiting for it to open, this would be a good time to do it.

Once rafted up - (two breast ropes and two springs pulled up tight) - and well fendered all round, we headed towards the waiting pontoon and tied up. John, SEEHOND'S crew, who went ashore to check on the delay, soon returned with the news that we should not have long to wait.

A little later a ship emerged, the light changed to green which was our signal to move into the lock where I put SEEHOND alongside the wall and Ken and John secured the boats with help from the lock-keepers, the top of the lock then being about 15 feet above us. As the lock filled there was a great surge of water and I had to use the engine to help steady the boats. At last we came out of the lock into the Caen Canal and turned to port toward the Marina. As we approached I saw DOGMATIC and FAYE OF AUBIN cast off from the visitors pontoon at the far end of the entrance channel. The immediate problems of manoeuvring SEEHOND into the empty space on the pontoon were that the entrance channel was rather on the narrow side for two boats abreast, and it was extremely shallow on either side so I had to take great care to stay in the centre. Luckily there was no wind, which made life a lot easier, and as I reached the pontoon, I put the helm hard over to starboard and with engine revolutions set at 800 ahead, the boats just turned around in their own lengths through 180 degrees, and when we were lined up for the berth I put the rudder amidships and glided into it.

When SEEHOND was safely moored up I cast off and joined DOGMATIC and FAYE OF AUBIN and together we all set off up the canal to the Pegasus Bridge, where I knew we were to wait until the evening convoy. It is possible to go to Caen not in convoy and at different times, but then you have to pay.

SINGLEHANDING - COMING ALONGSIDE A PONTOON

By Alastair Puchan

("FAYE OF AUPIN")

"When your boat has only bow and stern cleats you can get over the problem by making up a permanent three-legged mooring rope from 14 or 16mm three-strand nylon rope. Nylon should be used as it will stretch when it takes up the forward momentum of the boat.

The widest part of a Seadog is between the second and third main cabin windows, and this is where, if fitted, a midship cleat should be.

One end of each of the three pieces of your rope should meet at this point. On "Faye" I have achieved this by attaching each of these ends with a hard eye onto a stainless steel ring. The longest section (20' long) is led forward inboard of the guard rails to the forward fairlead where it passes outboard and comes back to be made up around the forward cleat.

The next longest piece (13' long) is led aft and made up on the genoa winch. The length of these two sections should be such that the ring is positioned between the two cabin windows when the rope going round the winch is drawn tight.

The third leg, (the overall length of which should be about 8 feet), should have a large soft eye, approximately 15 inches long, spiced into the outer end of it.

PREPARING TO ENTER HARBOUR AND COME ALONGSIDE:

When I have been out on my own, I usually start my preparations about 30 minutes before coming alongside. If the sails are used, I head into the wind, furl the genoa, take down the mainsail, and lastly the mizzen sail. I will then set course for the harbour entrance with the Pinta autopilot engaged. I then lay out head and stern ropes with two springs coiled on the cabin tops ready for use. I then rig my three legged spring on the side I expect to be coming alongside on. If I do not know which side-to I shall be berthing, I have a second made-up spring (which was my prototype) ready to rig on the other side. Having prepared the ropes I then place fenders down both sides but keep them inboard until the start of the final approach.

At the start of the final approach I hang out the fenders and lead the eye of the short spring rope outboard under the guard rail and back over the top to hang into the cockpit.

Approach the pontoon as slow as you can while still maintaining steerage way. Angle the bow so that you are heading about three-quarters the way up the space you are going into at an angle of about 30 degrees or such that you can lean over the side and drop the eye of the rope hanging in the cockpit over the outboard cleat on the pontoon. As soon as the eye is on the cleat, turn the wheel hard over and lock it if you can, to push the stern into the pontoon. Adjust your engine speed so that the boat will lay parallel with the pontoon. You can now leave the cockpit and in slow time rig the remaining mooring ropes before switching off the engine. Remember to return the wheel to the midship position so that the boat does not get pushed around by any tidal or current changes that may occur".

REMOVEABLE BACKSTAY FOR MIZZEN MAST

by Jack Phillips

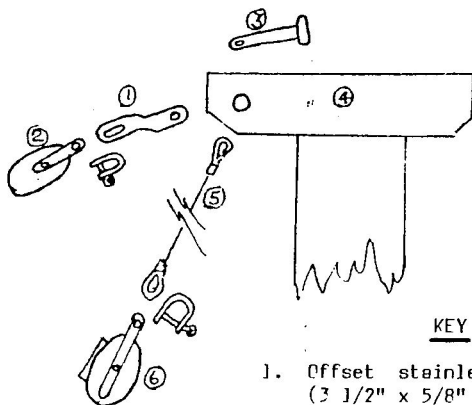
(PALAFOX)

"Having purchased a mizzen staysail for PALAFOX some time ago, I found that when it was set, considerable tension was required to ensure a taut luff to give it better pointing ability. This tension placed considerable strain at the top of the mizzen mast which only has the rear hounds to prevent the mast being pulled forward.

This prompted the fitting of a removeable backstay which is snap-shackled to a 'U' bolt fitted through the transom under the capping piece.

When not in use, the backstay is fastened to the port side of the topping lift block.

Since fitting the backstay, tighter luffs are possible, and at the same time greater peace of mind is obtained knowing that the mizzen is more secure".



KEY

1. Offset stainless steel strip - (3 1/2" x 5/8" x 1/8").
2. Topping lift block.
3. Clevis pin for backstay & topping lift.
4. Mizzen-mast crane.
5. Wire backstay.
6. Double block with becket & jammer.
7. Single block with becket & snapshackle.
8. 'U' bolt for transom.

NOTES

- (i) Offset strip allows clearance between topping lift & backstay.
- (ii) Items 6 & 7 comprise a 4 part downhaul tackle, the rope being omitted for clarity.
- (iii) Wire backstay, approx 22 ft. long (399 rig).

by Alec Matthews (EMRA)

"As owners, we all know the Seadog ketch as an attractive vessel in which her designer Reg Freeman, while embodying some innovative ideas, used conventional lines to appeal to the traditionalist. He gave her a comprehensive sail plan which is, at the same time, practical, easy to handle, and, it must be said, very pleasing to the eye of the beholder. A glance at the sail plan will show that the owner who is fortunate enough to possess the full suit, is ready to face virtually any weather conditions he might encounter.

Given a furling Genoa, the number of headsails which need to be carried can be considerably reduced; though it is generally held that, in adverse conditions, a storm jib is safer and more efficient than a rolled down Genoa.

The ketch rig lends itself to various combinations and, in certain conditions, an effective way of reducing sail area is to stow the main and sail under jib and mizzen. A light following wind and sea will often produce conditions in which the main will tend to flap, and the boom, unless prevented, will bang from side to side.

This is where the combination of Genoa, mizzen sail and mizzen staysail (with main stowed), comes into its own. The drawing mizzen staysail sheet holds the mizzen boom out to leeward, effectively helping the mizzen sail itself to fill, and the extra drive achieved downwind is considerable, and, in these conditions, often greater than if the mainsail were set.

It might be appropriate here for the benefit of the uninitiated, to describe how the mizzen staysail is set, and what permanent and movable fittings are required.

Obviously the sail will require its own halyard; in EMRA the mizzen mast has only one built-in halyard sheave at the masthead, so the mizzen staysail halyard is rove through a block shackled to an eye fitted on the forward side of the mizzen masthead. The two parts of the halyard are led down either side of the triatic stay, for, it must be remembered, the staysail will be set to leeward of this stay. So the head of the staysail is shackled or hitched to the appropriate end of the halyard. (It goes without saying that the staysail must be lowered and reset for each tack). The tack of the mizzen staysail is shackled to a strop about 12 inches long which is attached to a stainless eye mounted on the coachroof some 3 feet forward of the windscreen. (My strop is made of plaited Ierylene with an eye at each end. When at sea it is normally left permanently in place for convenience. A rope strop is preferred to a wire strop - less noisy, among other things!) The mizzen staysail sheet is rove through a snatch-block, and snap shackled to the outboard end of the mizzen boom on the lee side; the hauling part is led to a convenient cleat in the cockpit.

Thus, the procedure for setting the mizzen staysail when, say, on a reach with Genoa and mizzen set is this:

1. Shackle TACK to rope strop on coachroof.
2. Attach sheet to CLEW, and reeve, slackly, through snatch block.
3. Take leeward end of halyard, shackle to HEAD of sail. Haul on weather part, hoisting sail until luff reasonably tight.
4. Take up slack on staysail sheet, also adjust sheet of mizzen sail as necessary. (Note: fine adjustment of both mizzen and mizzen staysail can be controlled with the mizzen sheet).

Naturally the staysail can be set without the mizzen sail itself being set, and under certain conditions this is advantageous, as the staysail will get clear air, unhindered by the mizzen. When thus set, the staysail can be easily trimmed by manipulation of the mizzen sheet. But of course, best of all is when, on a broad reach, full sail can be set: Genoa, mainsail, mizzen and mizzen staysail.

To state the obvious, the mizzen staysail is set inside, that is, to weather of the mainsail. Clearly then, the mizzen staysail will be the last of your sails to be set. An accidental gybe could prove rather problematical, and as stated earlier, the mizzen staysail has to be lowered and the sheet released from the mizzen boom before changing tack or gybe.

I consider my mizzen staysail to be a fair weather sail, Force 4 and below, and generally would only use it in open waters where I expect to be broad reaching on the same tack for some time. Under these conditions it can be sheer joy, and the extra drive is substantial.

I well remember an occasion, while reaching home to Poole in a southeasterly wind Force 4, when EMRA kept pace with a Moody 31 which was setting a spinnaker in addition to her mainsail and Genoa".

WIND-VANES AS SAFETY EQUIPMENT?

By Peter French

From the earliest days I have followed the development of windvanes, but it was not until many years later the notion that a windvane might be a piece of safety equipment entered my head.

The idea came after reading endless harrowing stories of crews and yachts coming to grief because of seasickness of the crew, overtiredness, or the need to tend an injured crew member.

Run-of-the-mill electric auto-pilots of the type fitted to small yachts are mostly incapable of controlling a yacht in very rough weather and depend upon a good battery. When this goes flat you are finished.

But a true windvane like the rugged old Windpilot Atlantik will take you safely through hell and high water, and the stronger the wind blows, the better the vane works.

Last summer I fitted a second-hand Windpilot Atlantik to DOGMATIC, and although we did not go very far with it in operation as we were mainly port-hopping, it worked very well and its smooth and silent performance gave me immense confidence. After that trial, I knew, that if, for any reason, the helm had to be left for long periods, the windvane would keep us safely on course.

To be specific about the safety aspects of the Atlantik windvane, there are two. First, the windvane will steer the boat and look after you should you or your crew be flaked out or otherwise unable to steer. There are no worries about batteries going flat.

Second, should you fall overboard it is possible, using the rudder of the windvane as a step, to pull yourself back aboard without assistance.

To give an idea of the degree of confidence a windvane can instill in some people, Susan Huber (GLORY) wrote that last year in Durban South Africa, a blind sailor with a windvane on his yacht set off to sail single-handed some 4,000 miles across the Indian Ocean to Fremantle in Australia. In a later letter Susan wrote that he had arrived safely.

by Terry James (CI-MOR)

"Because early Seadogs were somewhat under-canvassed, the higher aspect rig was introduced after vessel number 100. Despite the increase in sail area, the Seadog still needs plenty of drive in low windspeeds because her underwater hull line and keels (so important to her sea-kindly abilities) are a considerable drag on performance.

In light weather, the use of spinnakers or large light headsails greatly improves performance. However, few cruising yachtsmen like handling spinnakers. One of the greatest benefits of the ketch rig is the ability to set a sail between the two masts. Despite the lack of an actual stay (which would foul the mainsail), this sail is called a 'mizzen staysail'. We first purchased ours in 1985, and were immediately impressed with the difference. In light airs, with the wind on the beam, the sail can improve speed by as much as two knots. Ours is made of very light rip-stop nylon, and has a wire stay rather than one of rope. If we were ordering a new one today I would not specify wire, since the actual tension of the luff is not that critical. The dimensions were taken from the Seadog sail plan.

The sail can be hoisted from within the cockpit, although one has to see to the fixing of the tack and clew, of course. The tack is attached to a short strop (about 2 feet long) fixed to the U-bolt which passes through the main cabin roof in front of the windscreen. Alternatively tie the strop to the windward cabin roof grab-rail, which can allow the sail to be used with the wind slightly forward of the beam. The sail is hoisted on a block on the forward part of the truck of the mizzen mast, and the clew is sheeted to a block on the after-end of the mizzen boom.

I will not try to describe how the halyard and sheets are set, this is self evident: however remember the sheet has to pass around the OUTSIDE of the mizzen shrouds, and the sail is hoisted to WINDWARD of the mainsail and main-sheet. Inevitably the backstays get in the way, so don't try your first hoist in full view of other yachts! We keep a spare block permanently rigged on the end of the mizzen boom for sheeting the mizzen staysail. When set, the sheet is led back to the cockpit and cleated on the mizzen tabernacle (if you can find room). The staysail's trim has to be balanced between the set of the main and mizzen sails. The art is to set the sail so that it is drawing without touching the mainsail on the one hand, but not causing turbulence to the mizzen on the other. The balancing of the set of the mizzen sheet and the mizzen staysail is a further complication, since they are both sheeted on the end of the same spar. The mizzen sheet alters both the mizzen sail and mizzen staysail, but the mizzen staysail sheet does not affect the mizzen quite as much!

The mizzen staysail is limited to winds on the beam and will be headed once the wind is forward of the beam. You can tweak it so that it still draws with the wind a little forward of the beam, but the dynamics of the windward slot soon gets upset. On long passages in lightish airs it can save having to turn on the iron genny. However, since the force of the sail is applied abaft the centre of lateral effort, it can soon induce weather helm (too much sail at the after end of the vessel, so levering the stern around and pushing the head into the wind) - that's when you think about fitting a bowsprit which we did in 1990!

Perhaps all this seems too complicated, but for us aboard CI-MOR, when conditions are right, then up it goes. What a splendid sight, and what a powerful addition to the sailing performance of a Seadog!"

WHERE TO TACK-DOWN THE MIZZEN STAYSAIL

by Paul Priest (TAWNY OWL)

"The sails are the engine to a yacht. I am surprised by the number of builders who advertise yachts without giving sail areas to allow prospective buyer comparison. One certainly would not consider buying a Jaguar with a Mini engine. Most of the driving force comes from the luff of sails when beating, which on a ketch, are the mainsail plus mizzen and jib. If you include a staysail, you have over 100 ft of luff - equivalent to at least a 40 ft. sloop; however a ketch has the advantage of a low centre of effort, enabling a much larger sail area to be carried in stronger winds.

The working sail area of a Deep Seadog is stated as being 444 sq.ft (jib, main & mizzen) but if you use Genoa, mainsail, Mizzen Staysail and mizzen you have 676 sq.ft. giving an increase of 50 percent. (I assume that "working sail" means when constantly tacking to windward). The mizzen staysail is often overlooked as a working sail, yet it is so simple to use.

When I first purchased TAWNY OWL I asked the previous owner where he attached the tack of the staysail, he replied: "Anywhere convenient". I took him at his word, and tried all positions; I have even set it on the lee rail outside the genoa.

TO HOIST THE SAIL: Firstly, to the TACK attach a tackle comprising 2 x single blocks fitted with snap-shackles at either end. Then attach a sheet to the CLEW and take it outside all standing rigging to one or other of the blocks fitted on the stern quarters and bring back the hauling part to a cleat near the cockpit. Shackle leeward end of halyard to HEAD of sail and hoist until luff is reasonably taut.

POSITIONING OF THE TACK

CLOSE-HAULED: I have found I can increase my speed by 1 to 2 knots in Force 4 with the tack sheeted to the foot of the mainmast. I always put a vang on the mainboom to hold it against the suction of the staysail, and by holding a constant course and careful tuning of genoa, main, staysail and mizzen in that order, I get the best effect.

REACHING: I move tack across to the base of the guard rail stanchion (the one level with the 'D' ring mounted on the cabin top) which opens the slot and gets a better air flow.

WIND ABAFT THE BEAM: I move tack back aft to the next stanchion base (the one more or less in line with the cockpit), which now sets the staysail as good as a boomed-out genoa. It is surprising to note how little interference there is on the mainsail, which is probably due to the low profile of the mizzen.

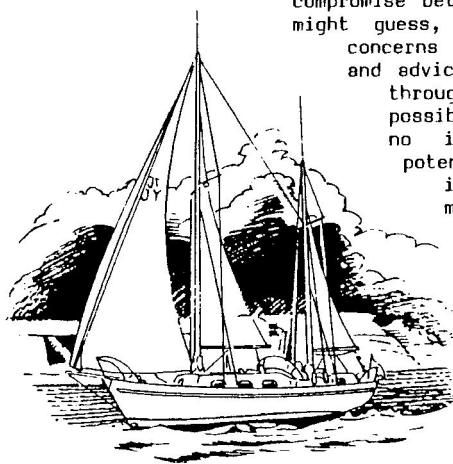
RUNNING: In anything less than a Force 4 I usually set the spinnaker and sheet-in the mizzen slightly to spill wind into the staysail, and with my wife Barbara on the helm calling out the speed, and me trimming sheets and wistfully thinking how to set more sail, or perhaps a 3rd mast, my maximum recorded speed through the water under this rig is 7 knots".

by David Eddington

"Many of you will remember Roy and Jane Croft of Dawlish and their well travelled boat TIMORLEY. (Seadog magazine No 26, 1992). During the spring of 1994 we took charge of her; she was just what we were looking for and the largest boat we had owned so far. During the first season we worked her quite hard, enjoying many trips along the coast, at day's end entering ports such as Dartmouth and Salcombe and other South Devon estuaries.

With a mooring near our home on the River Exe, TIMORLEY was readily available for evenings afloat or to dry out on a sandbank by Exmouth between tides, while our two girls played in the sand. We appreciate our good fortune living and working in a great boating area. TIMORLEY was quite ideal; as time passed though, she was seen more objectively. The woodwork along her traditional lines now showed a history, as did the original blue sails now patched and repaired and no longer adopting the shapes I would have liked: she was, not surprisingly, showing her age. A major refit was not envisaged, for I still enjoyed many of her attributes which had attracted me, and many others, to the Seadog. I like to think I understood her strengths and limitations, but I considered that without too much effort she could be 'brought together' and at the same time be encouraged to sail a little more freely.

I began talking with fellow Seadoggers and other sailing friends; everyone agreed that a cruising boat is by definition a compromise between many obvious factors. As you might guess, Peter French was tolerant of my concerns and provided an extensive inventory and advice to allow Seadog No. 57 to proceed through the water as efficiently as possible. I would again say that I have no illusions about TIMORLEY's racing potential, but in the hope it will interest some I will outline the modifications she underwent.



Be assured that I haven't stuck on speed stripes or clipped on endless gadgetry in the cockpit. No, being a purist, any modern technology is discreetly hidden from sight: I am unwilling to alter her 'period' feel. The basic uncluttered 60's style instrument panel and stainless ship's wheel have not been changed for rustic replicas or marred by new dials or switches.

The galley, light fittings and original colour of the GRP also remains intact.

Starting with the hull. There was an assortment of bulges and holes which were either redundant or had become so during my updating of various navigation aids. Along with the removal of ample layers of antifoul the bottom was faired: my contribution to reducing the wetted area. The Cutless bearing was replaced, my first job as a new owner, but a year later it was again showing signs of wear. I think the rapid deterioration was in part due to rigid stern gear while the engine is on flexible mounts, the engine movement causing premature wear.

A new stern-gear assembly was fabricated, partly from the original fitting, which was cut just before the inboard bearing, and a new bearing fitted linked to the original section on a flexible extension. With a new stern length of propeller shaft the job was completed. The new grease point is now correctly located - the original greaser lubricated the tube and not the forward bearing.

The Perkins 4-107 engine had been rebuilt not long before I took ownership, but the head gasket was blowing. Inspection showed it was distorted and required skimming and an overhaul, after which the unit has performed perfectly. New battery boxes were constructed at a lower level to house the new, very generous, trawler batteries.

The electrical modifications continued with a total rethink of the system - it was quite a maze of wires. Surprising how few electrical cables are in the engine compartment now. Also installed: a business-like fuel supply system, with an extra water separator mounted conveniently high at the side of the starboard fuel tank, and secured to a panel by two large wingnuts for ease of maintenance.

Originally the unused fuel from the engine was returned to the system via the second filter. This has now been re-routed to the tanks, via a self-bleeding valve on the engine block final filter, to the filler pipes of each tank, since there had been no facility to feed the return fuel directly into the tanks. What prompted me to modify the system was that I discovered, during a routine filter change, that air had been building in the filter to the extent that when I removed the element it contained precious little fuel - waiting for just the right moment to starve the engine!

Below decks: Rebuilt the bulkhead behind the mizzen tabernacle, an overkill job with endless glass matting and epoxy, the tabernacle then secured with stainless studding and finished with a panel of teak veneer retained by stainless cups and screws.

In the saloon: The port berth now converts to a double, the extra base panel being stowed under the port seat cushion.

The Pinta autopilot: always reliable, now has its control box lower down on the bulkhead to accommodate the new sleeping arrangements.

The chart area was also relined, with pale teak veneer ply, finished with clear matt varnish.

The Sailor Radio was retained for its great reception and the other instrumentation rationalized: a Garmin GPS fitted - amazing thing! It could prove addictive. Also another very useful aid, a Fishfinder, on which one may spot fish, but more importantly it's an invaluable way of checking the seabed prior to taking the bottom.

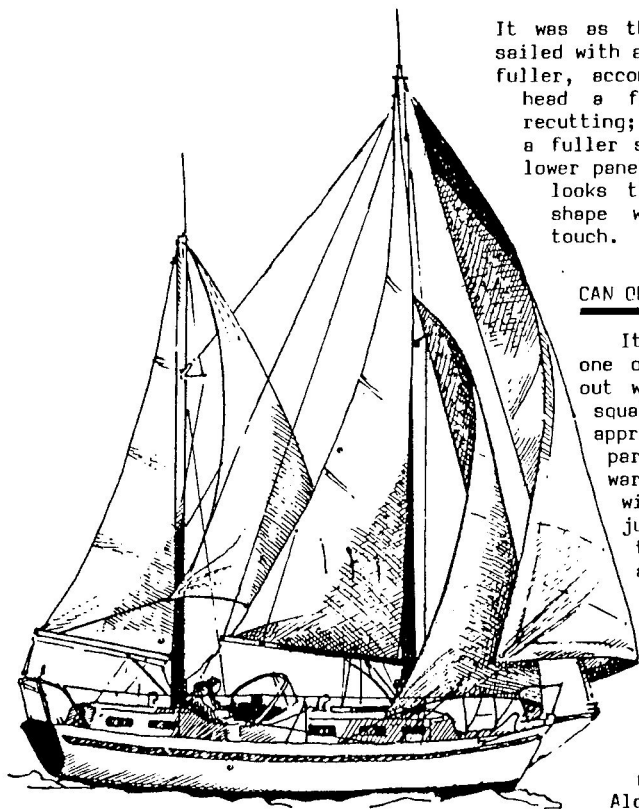
But to return to our boat seeming to be the slowest around. Perhaps a little prematurely I ordered new mizzen and mainsails and had the genoa overhauled.

BOWSPRIT: The following season I fitted a bowsprit to take the roller-reefing gear, a vang for the mizzen, and an extra forward stay to facilitate double headsails for running - altogether a great system producing acres of sail area.

Another inner stay runs from near the steaming light to the inboard end of the bowsprit which, when not operative can be secured down to the mast foot. This stay is for either a storm jib or to sail the boat cutter rig. On certain headings and wind conditions the deck scraper forestaysail catches the wind which would be lost under the genoa. Along with the extra slot, it provides definite improvement in speed and handling. I had been hesitant to make too long a bowsprit, but my concerns were unfounded. She retains her weatherhelm, slightly reduced, while the mizzen kicking strap also helps her balance.

Along with other boats in friendly competition, trying different configurations and comparing speeds, I have as carefully as possible assessed the merit of the cutter rig. To make the necessary comparisons the sails have gone up and down more times than I would like to count - I wonder what those sailing nearby must think!

At this point I considered she sailed about as well as she might, then, in the spring of '96 I met Michael McNamara, Exmouth's well known racing sailmaker. Casting his expert eye over the sails he declared my still newish mainsail not in the best of shapes, nor was the genoa, and he offered to take them back with him for remodelling. Pending on the good looking mainsail two weeks later was an exciting moment; it completely filled the mast from the head, hard up at the top, to the boom, now perilously low and full to the last inch with the outhaul working.



It was as though I had previously sailed with a reef in! The luff is fuller, accomplished by moving the head a foot or so down then recutting; the sail is generally a fuller shape especially in the lower panels. The genoa too now looks the part and holds its shape well when reefed-in a touch.

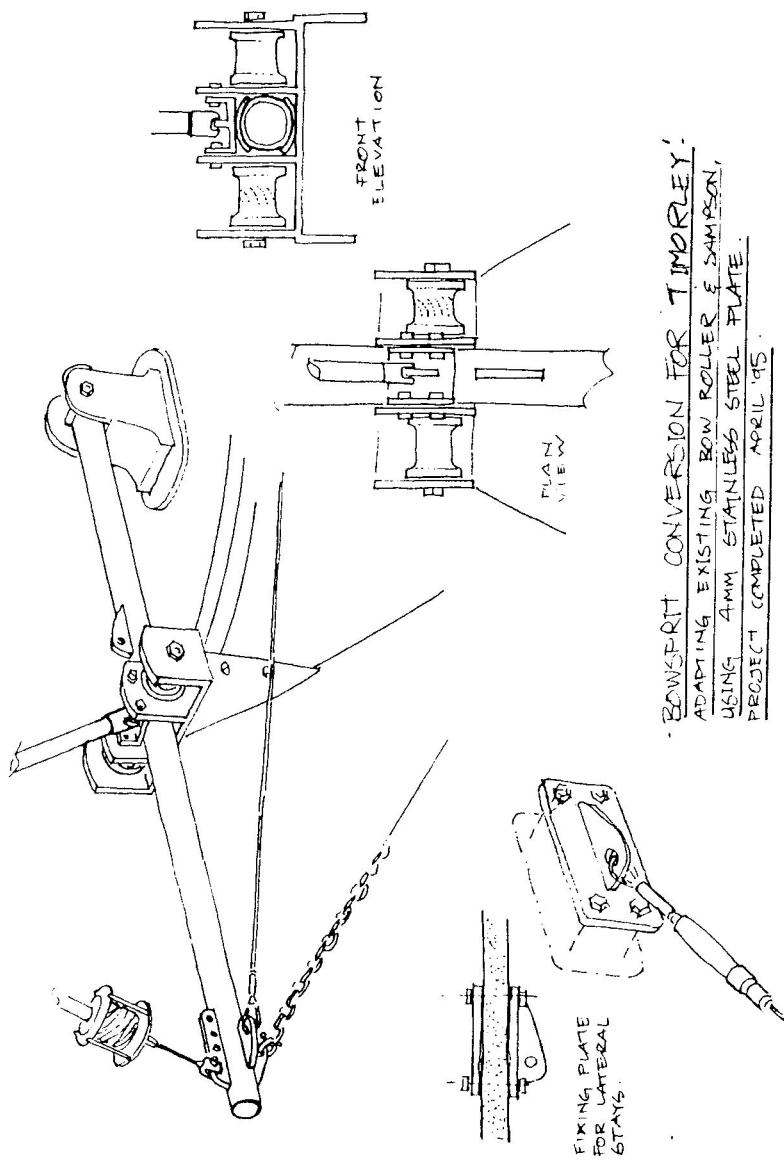
CAN ONE OVERCANVAS A SEADOG?

It doesn't seem so. On one occasion we were caught out with five sails up; a squall was clearly approaching but a perverse part of me ignored the warning signs; however, with all this sail she just heeled a little more than I would have liked, at which point I let some ropes go and dropped the mizzen staysail.

So with TIMORLEY updated and looking devastating we left the Exe in mid July, making a good passage to Alderney and onwards, to enjoy a fabulous five week cruise around the Channel Islands and along the

Brittany coast. We avoided marinas where-ever possible, anchoring in quiet bays and rivers to make the best of our surroundings.

It was pronounced by all to be the best family holiday ever!



- BOWPORT CONVERSION FOR TIMORLEY:-
 ADAPTING EXISTING BOW ROLLER & SAMPSON,
 USING 4MM STAINLESS STEEL PLATE.
 PROJECT COMPLETED APRIL '95.

by William Fisher

(ARDESMOR)

"Up the creek in the total silence of a still autumn evening - nobody there but the curlew and a large snowy white wader (it's not in my book) - even the tern have departed - bliss. Our boats are getting older and so are we. If the weather is good, don't wait for others, begone on your own. The Seadog must be one of the kindest boats to sail solo as there are few reasons to leave the cockpit. However there are some points to think about.

SAFETY

1. Keep your lifeline jackstays rigged at all times. If they are wire, snub them back to the bottom of the mainmast cap shroud to keep them quiet and remove the 'banana skin' hazard.
2. Lifeslings, lifebuoys etc. are all useless as there will be no-one to throw them. Rig a drop rope-ladder (Plastimo do one) at the base of the mizzen shrouds on both sides so that you have some way of getting on board from the water.
3. It is pretty difficult to fall out of a Seadog cockpit, but easy enough from elsewhere. Wear a manual (not automatic) life jacket at all times underway or on deck at anchor in a tideway.
4. Clip yourself on to weather shrouds or jackstay (never the guardrail) whenever you leave the cockpit. If you are clipped on to weather, then, should you slip, the likelihood is that the majority of your anatomy will remain inboard even if a little bruised. Use a three-clip safety line.
5. Do everything very slowly with forethought and from the cockpit if possible.
6. Do not forget that the most hazardous times for injury or inadvertent swimming are: dinghy work, anchor work, mucking about in crowded areas, carrying too much sail, and generally being in a hurry, or dropping your guard when nearly home.

PRE-SAIL CHECKLIST

1. "George", the automatic pilot, will be your right arm and on watch permanently - spare belt, fuses etc.
2. Once under way, "George" may steer, but a good lookout is essential. From your mooring it could be an hour or more to open water when you may be able to get below for a moment - there is no-one else to rummage for forgotten gizmos. Get them all out and in sea stowage before slipping.

Life jacket & safety Lines
Winch Handle
Engine checks OK
Secured for sea below
Instruments checked OK
Torch
Charts/Pilot etc.
Anchor stowed but ready
Sail covers off
Rope ladders rigged

Foul Weather Gear
Purgee/Ensign
Battery checks OK
Nav lights checked OK
"George" rigged & tested OK
Flares
Chart Table 'stateboard'
Kedge & cable ready handy
Halyard preventers off
First Coffee made

LOCKOUT

You will be 'watch on - stop on' until in open water. Even then, you may be clear of shipping lanes, but ships do not stay in lanes, and small fishing boats or yachts can remain hidden in swells until fairly close. White sails and white boats can be difficult to see in certain conditions. Your horizon is only 3 miles away.

In the best of visibility, combined closing speeds with 20 knot monsters or 12 knot coasters will give you not more than 25 minutes maximum from upperwork sighting to crunch time. Allowing time for evasive action, lurking fishermen/yachts, second-rate visibility etc., a good all-round look every 10-12 minutes is the absolute maximum interval in open southern UK waters.

THINGS TO WORK OUT

1. HOW TO PICK UP A BUOY IN A VARIETY OF CONDITIONS:

- a) Hong Kong Hook (detachable hook & line delivered by boathook).
- b) Lasso
- c) Straight boathook mooring recovery.

2. HOW TO BREAK-OUT & HAUL YOUR ANCHOR TO THE STEMHEAD FROM THE COCKPIT

In a confined tideway the boat must be under control from the moment the anchor breaks out. You could wait for slack water, but that could be half a day away if you ground at low water. Consider a stouter tripping line than usual, which, when the anchor is shortened in, can be brought over the bow roller (nicer if you have a second one) to the cockpit winch for the breakout and haul home. You will have a bight of chain hanging from the bows, so take it easy - the anchor will be crown up and thus not so liable to bang about. Stow once clear. With a light kedje (Fortress or similar) and maybe no chain but lots of scope, the warp can be led from the cockpit over the bow roller, outside everything and back to the anchor in the cockpit whence it is 'launched'. Recovery is controlled from the cockpit except for the final stowage which could require your presence forward in due course.

3. HOW TO ENTER A MARINA BERTH

Practice a single line moor - very simple and most effective. Rig a line out at deck level between the mizzen cap and fore shroud - the outboard end needs scope to be delivered to a pontoon cleat, the inboard end will be taken to the cockpit winch. Stop the boat about three feet clear of the marina finger so that the end cleat is opposite the cockpit, and you can lasso or hook your mooring line onto it. Bring the inboard end to the winch, hold, and go ahead dead slow - use the rudder to keep the boat parallel with the finger and she will gently come alongside. Play the mooring line round the winch to position the boat along the finger pontoon, but be careful not to allow fenders to ride up (mat fenders are best if you can find them).

Should the bows be blown or pay off, a little more power will bring her in. The leverage of a single-line moor is considerable and will allow the boat to be controlled against a Force 3 wind on the beam.

Once positioned in the berth, secure the mooring line, KEEP POWER ON, step ashore and secure normal breasts and springs.

It is worth having two lines ready to moor (Hook and Lasso) in case you miss the cleat with the first, and perhaps, being blown off, do not have time to re-rig.

Use a **STOUT LINE** - should your single-line moor part, you will consider a crew might have been a cheaper alternative after all.

4. COMING ALONGSIDE ANOTHER BOAT

In this case the single-line moor is not an option as you do not know how the other is secured and, should she be on a buoy or at anchor, the pair of you will wait all over the place.

The prudent approach will be up tide/wind. To have your boat secure you only need a fairly loose forward breast and a back spring to take the weight - your boat will then lie slightly bows out and away from the other boat. Other lines can be rigged in slow time.

Your breast-rope/spring is a 40 foot (plus) line secured forward, outside everything and brought back to the cockpit. A heaving line secured to the warp with a rolling hitch about 12 feet back from the bows can be sent across to the other boat from the cockpit. Persuade your reception committee (hopefully) to secure your forward line ON THE RIGHT to create your loose breast, with the bitter-end coming back to you in the cockpit where you can take the weight on your winch with what has now become your back-spring.

There is a lot of fun to be had playing about on your own, but take it all very slowly. Beware of eager helpers - they probably do not understand what you are trying to do and are quite likely to foul things up!"

SEADOG ASSOCIATION NOW ON THE INTERNET

Thanks to our Webmaster, Graham Matthews of DOUGAL, we now have a site on the Internet with, to begin, ten or so A4 pages of information, including colour photographs of interest to the crews of *DARESSA *FAYE OF AUBIN *SEASCAPE *MOHICAN *SARA OF WYRE and *NATUNA (all of whom who attended the Dover Rally).

The Seadog Email address is:-

Seadog@BTInternet.com

Graham writes:

"The web site can be accessed by anyone with access to the Internet, including public access terminals, by using the URL - (uniform resource locator):-

<http://www.btinternet.com/~seadog>

(The character ~ is usually above the # sign on most keyboards).

Should you have any difficulty please ring me on 01256-471830, or send Email to me at -

Graham.Matthews@BTInternet.com

- with questions or comments about this web site.


Now that the site is there and on view to a potential audience of millions, it will be comparatively simple to change and update with additional or new information, in particular I would like to vary the colour photographs displayed".


(NOTE: As a direct result of our involvement with the Internet I have received a number of telephone calls from people, some of whom have joined the Association with a view to purchasing a Seadog at some time in the future. For sample Internet entry please see following page. (P.F.)


SeaDog Owners Association



 **Activities**

 **Membership**

 **Modifications**

 **Maintenance**

This website is dedicated to the remarkable motor-sailer the SeaDog. Of 140 Seadogs built between 1967 and 1974 almost all are still sailing and most owners are members of the owners association.

Seadog Philosophy

Perhaps it is something about the SeaDog that makes it attract some of the most sociable and helpful people you are ever likely to meet. This site is intended to help spread this philosophy and give access to information for SeaDog fans throughout the world.

The Seadog Owners Association

The Seadog Owners Association is ably run by the Honorary Secretary Peter French and his wife Olive from their home near the Hamble River and from their Seadog 'Dogmatic'

Contact Information

For information about the Seadog or the Association please contact the Honorary Secretary using the phone number or address below.

Telephone

01489 573436

Postal address

Peter French, Cresta, 27 Chapel Road, Sarisbury Green,
Southampton, Hampshire, SO31 7FB

Electronic mail

Seadog@BTInternet.com

000015

[Activities] [Membership] [Modifications] [Maintenance]

Send mail to Graham.Matthews@BTInternet.com with questions or comments about this web site.

by Peter French

After the news packed journal of 1996 I promised that this year I would include those interesting stories which had had to be carried over because of lack of space. Reading them, I never cease to be amazed at some of your adventures and the ingenuity shewn in solving problems.

So what happened for us in '97? Well, the 1997 Seadog News Journal did not get written when it should have been. The reason being that early on I was a front seat passenger in a big Volvo Estate car which crashed head on into another car on a blind bend just outside Pottle, near Hastings. Both cars were write-offs. The Paramedics who saved my life and gave me oxygen and a drip, and the firemen who got us out told me that in a smaller car they would have been carrying out body-bags. It was dramatic all right. Fire engine, four ambulances, helicopter, we had it all. Pity about the hospital though. The treatment we received at the Conquest Hospital at Hastings was abysmal. After that things could only get better.

And it did. I received wonderful support and care from Olive and Ray Cloucherty and Ralph McClure who worked so very hard to help get DOGMATIC ready to take part in the Dover International Rally, and I shall forever be in their debt. Events leading up to the Rally and those afterwards were a great adventure and the Rally itself was hugely successful.

Then later in the year we planned to take a short Christmas and New Year Cruise to the Canary Islands to celebrate our Golden Wedding on the 2nd of January. But our cruise ship the SAGA ROSE caught fire in drydock at Southampton at the end of a £15 million refit. The cruise was finally cancelled a day or so before we were due to embark and much too late for us to arrange anything for our Golden Wedding. We had a very happy Christmas and New Year at home, and a lunch on our golden wedding day with our daughter and family at Osborne View Hotel at Hillhead. That night our neighbours up and down the road put on a wonderful party for us. They provided all the food, cutlery, crockery, glasses and champagne - and they took everything away afterwards, so we didn't have to wash even as much as a teaspoon, only enjoy ourselves. As the party started at 7 pm and finished at 3 am you can bet we did just that. We consider ourselves to be so very fortunate to live in such a happy road.

As reported on the next page, our Golden Wedding celebrations went on until Easter! We now know that Judy Barralet (SHIELWATER) suggested to Hilary Waitt (TARRY) that the Association should do something to mark our Golden Wedding. With her usual efficiency, Hilary then got to work and wrote to every member listed in the Owners List.

We are absolutely amazed that this wonderful surprise had been arranged and that the secret had been kept so well. We have written to thank everyone who contributed and have put the money towards another car, which we badly needed.

As always we thank the many Seadoggers who have so generously supported the Association - for their very welcome visits to our home and all the letters, phone calls and help we have received in so many ways.

Now the sailing season is getting nearer and there is a lot that needs to be done - do the lists ever get shorter?

We look forward to meeting you here at home, whilst out sailing, or at the end of Season Rally, so, until then, Olive and I wish you a year of happy and trouble free sailing.



A GOLDEN WEDDING SURPRISE FOR OUR SECRETARY AND HIS LADY

On Easter Sunday we took 'Tarry' to Crableck Boat Yard on the River Hamble. The purpose was to invite Peter and Olive to dinner so that we could present them with a cheque for £ - this was the amount that you Seadoggers sent to Hilary for their Golden Wedding Anniversary. A large card was also given to them with your message stickers inside plus a list of all who contributed to their gift. They were both overwhelmed by the gift and just couldn't believe it had happened to them. Both Hilary and myself are sure it will be put to good use by them.

Finally thank-you for supporting this worthwhile effort for two lovely people who do so much for the Seadog Owners Association.

Hilary and Martyn Waitt - 'Tarry'

'TARRY' ROUND BRITAIN AND SOME OF IRELAND IN 1999

Next year I am 60 yrs old and intend to retire on the 1st April. Hilary doesn't want me hanging around the house doing repairs, gardening and painting and has insisted that I go sailing! It is, therefore my intention to sail around Britain.

Dave Wells, the Ships Carpenter, and who has attended several rallies with me, will be my crew and it is our intention to do a bit of exploration, climb a few mountains (particularly in Scotland and Ireland), attend the International Rally in Ireland and we also hope to visit as many Seadogs on the way as we can.

So if you keep your Seadog on route or you live by the sea and if you receive a letter with 'Tarry' on it either go on holiday or be prepared for the worst. Seriously we hope to meet a lot of you on the way.

Martyn Waitt - 'Tarry'

===== CONSIDERATIONS =====

FOR SOMEONE PLANNING TO SAIL AWAY TO WHERE THE WEATHER IS WARMER

Harbours are expensive and you are going to need a lot of money.

So do not spend all of your savings on buying a big boat.

Don't fit out your yacht like a Christmas tree loaded with presents to yourself.

Instead put the money towards extra months or years of sailing.

Keep things simple.

Think it out before hand - understand what you want.

Take care in your choice of vessel.

Be aware that the sea will not respect your life if you sail in a boat that won't look after you. (P.F.)

PLASTIC HINGES FOR COCKPIT HATCHES:-

ACC PLASTICS, Unit A, Peacock View, Fenton Industrial Estate, Stoke on Trent, ST 4 2XJ. Mr Chris Kelly (Tel: 01782-201601 - FAX NO: 201782).

RUBBER SEALS:- Alex Comrie, Unit 8, Second Avenue Business Park, Millbrook Road, Southampton SO15 0LP. (Tel: 01703-702911).

RUBBER RUBBING STRAKES: 70mm x 40mm, Part no. 5003, & 100mm x 30 mm Part no. 5004, are obtainable from "PLASTICO", P.O. Box 37, DK-4300, DENMARK. (Tel: Denmark 53.43.42.80.)

BOG WARNER GEARBOXES:- For overhauls, contact Cougar Ltd., Stone Pier Yard, Shore Road, Warsash, Hants SO31 9FR. (Tel: 01489-583332).

PINTA AUTOPILOTS:- Pinta Pilots, Unit 1, 8 John Street, Shoreham by Sea, West Sussex BN43 5DN. Mr Barber (Tel: 01273-441051).

PROPELLERS:- Hamble Propellers, 28 Brunel Way, Segensworth East, Near Park Gate, Hampshire. PO15 5SD. (Tel: 01489-574284).

REPLACEMENT WINDSCREENS:- J P Declery, Spring Cottage, Hadlow, Tonbridge, (& RUBBER SEALS.) Kent TN11 0DZ. (Tel: 01732-851309)

BOLTS FOR UNIVERSAL COUPLINGS:- These are 7/16" UNF 2 1/2" high tensile, to be used with heavy duty plain edged washers and UNF "Nyloc" nuts to prevent them vibrating loose.

CABIN DOOR LOCKS:- Union Cylinder Deadlock No 4147.

STEERING BOX:- Thanks to John Lansdell we now have a sectional drawing of this item - copies available from me.

EPOXYING THE HULL:- AREA TO BE COATED - (P/K Seadog):- 21.5sq.metres.
(5 COATS) COVERAGE: (Epoxy Tar) - 12 sq.metres per litre.

ANTIFOULING:- COVERAGE: (VC Offshore Extra) - 2 litres per coat.

UNLADEN WEIGHT OF SEADOG:- Eric Richardson, (who weighed TALIESIN), says that the unladen weight/displacement of a Seadog is 5.7 tons.

VENTILATORS ON THE DORADE BOXES:- Brian Stephens (SIREX) has a source of supply of glass-fibre reproductions which look remarkably like the original thing. For more information please ring Brian on 01548-85-2689.

PORTSMOUTH YARDSTICK NUMBERS FOR SEADOGS:

The YARDSTICK NUMBER allocated to a deep-keel Seadog on a "Gravesend to Tower Bridge Race" was 118, while the Yardstick number allocated to a bilge-keel Seadog on a "Round the Isle of Wight Race" was 120.

After making enquiries, I found there appears to be no agreed Portsmouth Yardstick Number for a standard unmodified Seadog. Having taken part in both of the above races, I now feel strongly there is a case for raising the number above 120. As an example, the fin keel MIRAGE 28, which can be made to go like the wind, currently has a Yardstick Number of 124.

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<p>Honorary Secretary: SEADOG OWNERS ASSOCIATION Tel: 01489-573436 Peter French, 'Cresta', 27 Chapel Road, Sarisbury Green Near Southampton, Hampshire. SO31 7FB</p>	