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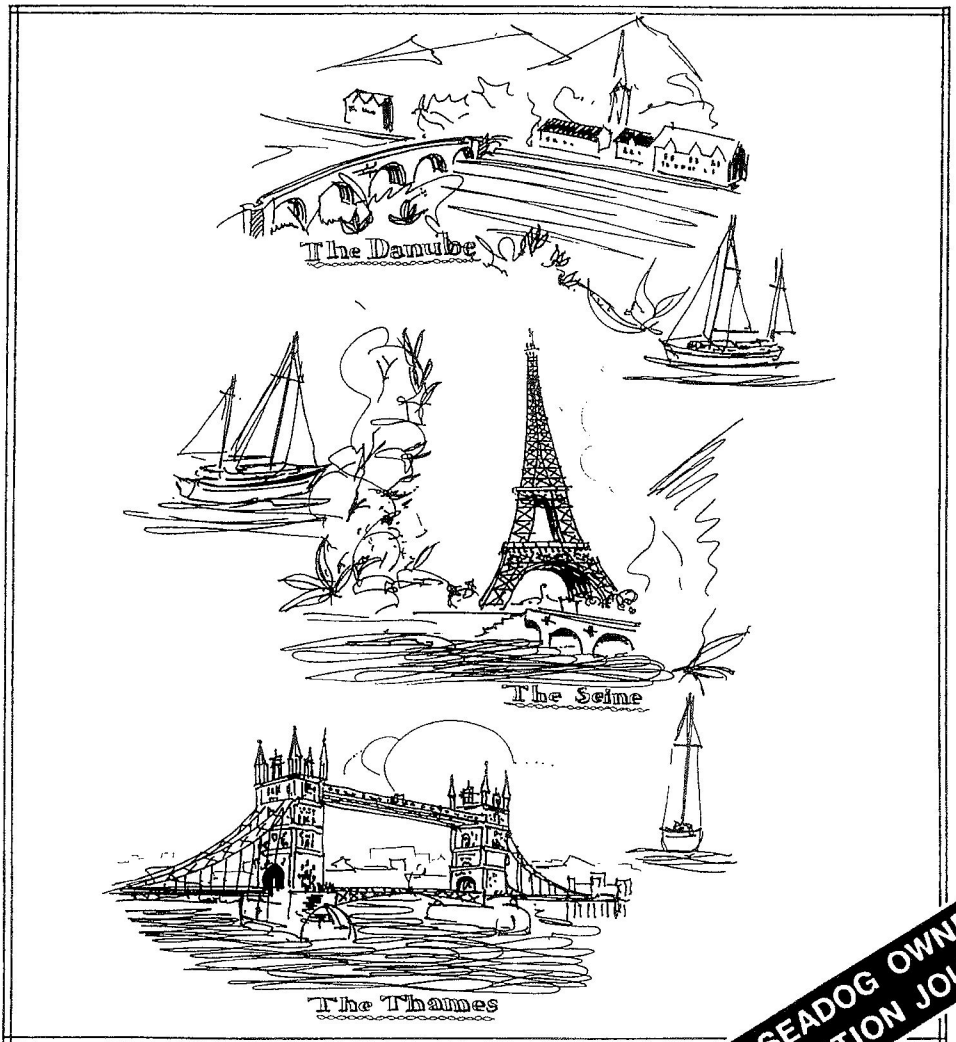
the SEADOG



editor Peter French

THE SEADOG OWNE
ASSOCIATION JOU

GLORY & STORM PETREL BACK IN EUROPE

BY SUSAN HUBER

HOUT BAY, CAPETOWN

To continue my story where I left off in the last Seadog Journal, the day we cleared South African Customs and Immigration in Cape Town was our last chance to visit the famous Table Mountain which we had planned to do for weeks. We were very lucky with clear weather and no sight of the 'table-cloth' which often covers the plateau at the top in thick clouds while Cape Town at sea level enjoys bright sunshine. It is a spectacular natural phenomenon when the foggy shreds tumble down and dissolve suddenly, but at the top the view is then down to zero!

At noon all the paperwork was finished and a bus took us to the lower station of the cable-car. It was a blisteringly hot day, and when we arrived we were staggered to see a huge queue. Quickly we decided to walk up, despite not being prepared for it at all - no hats, no sun protection, no water, the wrong type of shoes - just sandals - and the hottest part of the day. Fully aware of the situation we started walking, no wonder that we are safer out at sea than as landlubbers.

Fortunately we came across a little stream at about half way and we drank plenty and splashed ourselves with the cool water - we hoped it was not the drainage from the restaurant at the top! We were in the full heat of the sun for most of the way and eventually Tony put his shirt on his head and I invented a hat from the large envelope from the Customs for sun protection. We lost the way only once ... all seemed a bit hazardous. Close to the top it looked impossible to get over the final vertical cliff, but suddenly a crevasse opened up and the last part was very steep and strenuous for our tired sailors legs. After we had reached the plateau a bit out of breath (naturally Tony was way ahead) we felt great and the views were really breathtaking. We took the cable car down after all, and Lucky welcomed us back on board.

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

After a whirlwind of last minute preparations we left Hout Bay near Capetown, on March 18th 1998. Yet another sad good-bye to our friends on *GUSTE* and a - "see you in Europe" - to my parents after their visit. It was not easy to once again head out alone after all those months filled with the spirit of honeymoon and closeness interrupted with just a few days of coast hopping since Durban in November.

Tony and I were torn between the excitement and thrill of single-handing against the ever growing sadness of being apart for many weeks to come during a voyage. So heading out to sea had lost some of this wonderful feeling of freedom with the free spirit of a sail towards the open horizon when soon all ties with life ashore seem to fade and a new routine of life fully adapted to wind and weather in harmony with one's own body takes over.

It couldn't have been better weather to start the long sail up the full height of the Atlantic Ocean. A clear and warm day with a gentle breeze from the south-east, ready to take us out to sea and away from this friendly and so welcoming coast of South Africa.

Since leaving Western Australia already 6,000 nautical miles lie in the wake and it will be about the same distance until we reach our home waters in Europe.

We sailors don't like to tell much about our planned journeys – hardly any trip runs with exact schedule anyway. We are superstitious, will head out for an ocean trip preferably not on a Friday, won't scratch the masts and will offer Neptune a good sip from the rum bottle to smooth the seas ..... maybe because of that the god of the oceans blew us safely but roughly around the Cape of Storms. Now Cape of Good hope lies behind us and the South Atlantic is supposed to be the best part of a circumnavigation. Well, we will find out.

During the next few days Tony and and I will celebrate our first wedding anniversary, still on the honeymoon and still with perfect harmony; life can be so wonderful. But the longer we sail parallel courses, the more we want to live on our own boat. Everywhere people are shaking their heads in wonder when they hear about our curious single-handed story. Not being married, and sailing on one boat, seems much more common than being married and sailing on two boats.

Lucky is happy as well about the relationship. Now she is defending both boats against attacks from dolphins, seals and other monsters of the deep, and maybe even scares the odd burglar off – anyway she thought South Africa was great.

Both *Glory* and *Storm Petrel* are in good shape and have kept well with a little paint and varnish and glow once again in their original glory. The sails are a bit sloppy after hard-fought battles, and a few scars show on our skin, but we can't wait to be on our way again. On this leg, we shall cross our outward track made all those years ago at the start of our circumnavigations. Once more we might prove that our planet is *really* round – you only have to sail in one direction for long enough.

We had the last thrill of coastal danger during a short cut between the mainland and the reefs of Vulcan Rock near the entrance to Hout Bay. Independently we had both decided to take the little risk to save a few miles, but when I watched the breakers of the ocean swell thunder over those hidden rocks so near I had some doubts after all - way too many wrecks are scattered all along this coast already and during recent weeks we had learned well, why the Cape of Good Hope is also called the Cape of Storms. But soon deep water was reached safely, all sails were flying and the fantastic skyline of Cape Town was glowing in the afternoon sun. Table Mountain and the 'Twelve Apostles' seemed to wave a cheerful good-bye, and we spontaneously arranged a meeting on the VHF radio for a photo-session. A few shots of each other, last smiles and farewell waves before *Storm Petrel* slowly forged ahead into the sunset. Next morning *Glory* was alone and the long way to England had begun.

The trade winds kept a nice force 3-4 and soon the daily routine settled in. It was a bit like leaving West Australia half a year earlier when all the bright sunshine disappeared offshore and days of overcast weather followed. Other yachts had the same experience which we soon found out during daily contacts on the marine bands on the short wave radio. During the whole trip up to the remote island of St Helena I kept up the habit of drawing a little weather map into the logbook after listening to the forecasts repeated by Ham amateur radio stations. One cold front after the other marched east over the Southern Ocean coming straight from Cape Horn, but we were hardly affected and enjoyed mostly steady trade winds day and night. *Glory* made a nice average of 106 miles per day for 16 days.

ST HELENA

St Helena is called 'a barren rock in the South Atlantic', but only the rough cliffs at sea level are unfriendly. Inside and on top of the plateau we were stunned by rolling green hills and lush vegetation. During its long history the island was an important stop for ships as a welcome place for fresh provisions as well as being an important outpost of Great Britain with ancient forts and guns still in good condition today.

The anchorage at Jamestown is sometimes rather rolly and landing with the dinghy at the concrete pier can be adventurous in heavy swells. They even have heavy grab-ropes hanging down! During our stay of ten days, amazingly two cruise ships paid a visit (one of them was the QE2 which visits only once every two years) and the local people were heart-broken when it was too rough for the passengers to come ashore. Not only did they miss out on the rare occasion of seeing new faces in town and selling some souvenirs, but it also meant that the mail had to wait for the next ship to visit since there is no airport on the island. We bought souvenirs in the form of two lovely red buckets for swilling the decks.

St Helena is a friendly place with crime being almost non-existent and the people have a quaint Olde-English accent with a west-country burr. The place must be as Britain was over 100 years ago. We had hardly a chance of walking on the island because a car would stop soon to offer us a lift. We had a look at Napoleon's last home, way up in the green hills, where he died in unhappy circumstances, some say from a broken heart.

Have you ever climbed a steep open-air stairway in a straight line over 600 feet in height? We took the 699 steps of Jacob's Ladder in 15 minutes when going upwards, but rushed down in only just over four minutes another day. From the top we could see over the anchored boats and we saw the shadow of a manta ray swimming near our boats. A few days later I was swimming and checking our anchors when the ray came after me and curiously followed me back to *Storm Petrel*.

First I was stunned by the beauty and elegance of this huge animal flying with grace under-water, but when he started to follow me and come closer and closer I couldn't get back on board quickly enough! The wings had a width of a true four metres across, and the great round opening of the mouth looked as if it wanted to swallow me completely. Not until that evening did we read in a fish book that mantas are totally harmless and somebody told us that they are known to be especially curious in St Helena. The next day we were both snorkelling in the clear water and scrubbing the hulls when three mantas came around and circled us for about fifteen minutes, as interested in us as we were in them. One ray had two big sucker fish attached, above and below, and because the suction disk is on the back of their body, the top one was upside down, showing his white belly. I can well remember when a sucker fish insisted on attaching itself to my back in Fiji, and that was really no fun at all .....

TO THE AZORES

We had ten good days in St Helena in a rolly but protected anchorage, enjoyed the luxury of free showers and soon recognised the same familiar faces in town. When we left on the 13th of April we were circled by two helicopters out on a test flight from their mother-ship, *HMS Endurance*, a Naval patrol ship. Part two of our long sail had begun.

It was a trip through five climatic zones and across the equator (SE Trades, Doldrums, NE Trades, Horse latitudes, Westerlies). The first leg was the best sailing with still constant trade winds and enough sunshine this time to give Tony lots of chances for his celestial navigation. I kept using the GPS and only infrequently brought out the sextant to keep in practice. Ten days out we could watch the very rare sight of the planets Venus and Jupiter sitting right on top of the small and brilliantly glowing crescent of the moon.

Our transceivers kept on working beautifully so we could talk about all important, and of course the less relevant subjects several times a day. We had enough sunshine to keep our batteries charged up with plenty of extra

power from the solar panels, for chatting on the radio. The days passed and blended into each other, and we had spare time after watch keeping and handling the boats, for cooking nice meals, daydreaming and reading books. For weeks I saw no ships and if there had been no radio to keep in contact with Tony I would have lost track of reality outside the boat. Every now and then I received messages from friends of ours on other boats, or even made a ham-contact to Germany, but most yachts had Brazil as their destination, and Europe seemed still so far away .....

End of April, fifteen days out of St Helena, I crossed the equator at 25 degrees West with Tony about twenty five miles ahead. In one day we had gone from winter straight into summer.

Not until about five degrees North did the north-east Trades settle in, after we had sneaked quite easily through the doldrums. We experienced a few heavy showers, squalls and calms, but since we were in no hurry, a few extra days didn't really matter. Filling the water tanks was nice if not really necessary, but the fresh water shower came in handy after nearly three weeks out. Slowly *Lucky* and I switched more and more to tinned food since the fresh vegetables and delicious biltong slowly ran out. But fresh fish on the hook was a nice change for both of us.

Exactly four weeks under way was a day for celebrations. Both Tony and I were crossing our outward tracks on the same day, and the big circle round the world was closed. On the same day we sailed with the sun at its zenith, directly above us, and two-thirds of the miles we had to go were in our wake. I opened a bottle for the occasion, but also had once more to stitch a seam on the mainsail. This gave *Lucky* and me a break from beating into the north-east trade winds, and seemed like a holiday from sailing for a little while.

Although the trades had not hit too hard, with about 15-25 knot north-easterlies, there must have been some wear in the rigging. One morning I spotted a half-broken backstay and had quite mixed feelings about it.

Losing the main mast in this position in mid-ocean would almost certainly have meant sailing jury-rigged towards the Caribbean. I knew that with some effort I could replace the stay after climbing up the mast - much easier said than done! Having spare rigging wire and press terminals on board was good, and climbing the mast was made possible for me because of the mast steps I had fitted. It is quite a strange feeling to hang on to the mast in ocean swells, some tools in the mouth, with nothing but open horizon all round .....

LUCKY

On May the 22nd the world crashed in on me when *Lucky* died in my arms in the early morning. She must have had heart-failure and I just couldn't

believe what was happening. She was my faithful friend for all those years and shared so many experiences, sailed around the world with me, and was my only companion for a good part of my life. I am still convinced that she enjoyed living on board and that she was a salty dog by nature.

It was as if by magic that at this time *Storm Petrel* was just over the horizon and with a little engine help we met up the same day. It was calm enough for Tony to jump over to *Glory* and together we had to give *Lucky* a sea burial in the deep blue ocean. It should have been a joyous reunion after 39 days for both of us, but the mood was very sad!

Tony was very fond of *Lucky* and the three of us had many good times in the last couple of years. But we could tow *Storm Petrel* only for a short time until Tony had to get back on his boat.

Now really alone for the first time, I suddenly realised that I was not really single-handing until then. *Lucky* had been with me 24 hours every day; she was so much part of my life, and there is not a spot on *Glory* not reminding me of her .....

ON TO HORTA IN FAYAL, AZORES

We came back to reality all too soon when Tony crushed one of his fingers so badly when changing boats that it was soon heavily infected and he had to get serious medical treatment later in Horta.

At this time we had over 500 miles to go to the Azores, but we seemed to be glued to the spot in the horse latitudes. The ocean became calmer every day and soon the surface of the ocean was like a mirror. Tony and I stayed together and the next five days we made about 80 miles only, mostly with *Glory's* engine and towing *Storm Petrel*. Under sail we made distances of 4 and 8 miles in 24 hours.

Tony was aboard with me on three consecutive days, but jumping back to *Storm Petrel* with each zephyr of wind, trying to sail. During the totally becalmed hours we swam in the ocean and scraped the wild forest of goose-necked barnacles from the hulls, keeping a wary eye for sharks. Both our boats developed a family of cute looking striped pilot fish, and whenever our boats were close we could watch them quickly dash over to visit their neighbours.

There seemed to be not a trace of wind anywhere and the Azores High was resting very stably right above our position. Only long oily swells were slowly lifting the helplessly drifting boats with sails stowed away. Bright sunshine and the reflection of puffy cumulus clouds over a horizon melting into endless space. The last miles could have taken us anything between three days or three weeks .....

HORTA

Of course the wind eventually came, as it always does. With the contrariness of wind everywhere, when it did arrive, it was dead on the nose! Finally after 49 days, seven long weeks, we were at last in Horta after a 4,100 mile voyage.

We were relieved to get into port only two and a half hours apart. It was for both of us our longest passage and for me the longest time at sea. For Tony, his longest time at sea was 51 days when he sailed from Panama to the Marquesa Islands non–stop.

We liked the island of Fayal and its main town Horta. A peaceful time to soothe our broken hearts with the comfort of being together again.
Lucky's spirit was with us all the time and it would be very long before I would realise that she is not part of life on *Glory* any more.

Going ashore we collected a huge pile of mail and had great pleasure in reading our way through it. We did a bit of hiking and eventually even rented a scooter for one day. The tour of the island was very nice, a drive on quiet country roads lined with huge bushes of brightly blooming hydrangeas up to the old crater of the volcano with a long walk in the rain.

Later we rode back in the sunshine along the scenic coast and even had a spooky walk over lava ashes amongst buried houses and moon-like landscape at the eastern tip of Fayal.
After a brief stop on the island of Sao Jorge we finally left the Azores in the beginning of July bound for England.

ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND

I didn't realise how much we were now in "Seadog" terrain until we were given a great welcome from Seadog *Sirex*.

Glory is *Seadog no. 88* built in Southampton in 1971 and with the Owners Association acting like a big family, they have been following *Glory's* voyage with great interest for nine years. Peter French, the honorary secretary and guiding light of the Association, together with his wife aboard their Seadog *Dogmatic* spared no effort to make the home-coming very special.

Salcombe is a lovely place, but the horrendous harbour fees (for our boats £14 per day) drove us away earlier than planned. For the rest of the trip we searched for places to anchor away from crowded spots.

On the 15th of July 1998 we set off on what we hoped would be our last night as single-handers in cold, windy weather and pouring rain. Lots of shipping didn't improve the night, and neither did the fact that we were held nearly stationary off St Alban's Head (near Poole) for five long hours by a powerful foul Spring tide. I learned to know the strong tidal sets in these

tricky waters. The sail through the famous Needles Channel into the Solent at 8 knots under Genoa alone was breathtaking during the strong flood tide, and I couldn't believe how many boats could possibly be in such a small space - and it was only a weekday! Another stop in Newtown Creek showed the beauty of the Isle of Wight and we could even anchor one night outside the protected creek to avoid the mooring fees.

At last, in July, it was the time of the new moon and the extra-high spring tide that we needed and had been waiting for so that we could reach our final destination, Payne's Boatyard in the Thorney Channel in Chichester Harbour, by road not far from Emsworth. This little yard is a true spot of paradise without the fuss of modern marinas but with great people, each of whom is a character.
We were given a wonderful welcome party in the old mast-shed - arranged with great enthusiasm, team spirit and 'muscle' by a charming group of individualists who did all they could to make our homecoming welcoming and totally unforgettable.

My parents came especially for the occasion to England and were thrilled to see *Glory* and *Storm Petrel* sail into the yard.
Tony's family was also anxiously waiting for us, and I was really welcomed with open arms. Isn't it wonderful? Now I have three good-looking stepsons, each one two heads taller than me, a wonderful mother-in-law who even made the effort to take German lessons; and a new home in charming England!

We will stay here during the winter, then, in the summer of 1999, we hope to sail off in our very own boat into the sunset to begin a new chapter in our lives.

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G L O R Y' S

TRADEWIND ROUTE ROUND THE WORLD

(With diversions north & south)

(TURKEY TO ENGLAND VIA PANAMA CANAL - 45,800 N. MILES)

IN THE CARIBBEAN - to all the Windward and Leeward Islands, Venezuela, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. The Bahamas and the East Coast of the USA from Florida to Chesapeake Bay.

IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN - after the Panama Canal to the Galapagos Islands and the long sail to the Tuomotos and the islands between Tahiti and Moorea to Bora Bora. The remote atoll of Suvarov (Cook Islands), to the heart of the South Pacific in Samoa and a great sail to the Kingdom of Tonga. New Zealand rightly calls itself "God's own country" where I spent the cyclone season of 1995/1996.

From then on *Glory* and *Storm Petrel* sailed on parallel courses! We enjoyed together the clear waters of Fiji and Tuvalu, and spent the following cyclone season in the Solomon Islands. The remote islands of the Louisiades (Papua New Guinea) were a nice stop en-route to the Torres Straits between Australia and Indonesia.

IN THE INDIAN OCEAN - back to civilisation in Darwin in the Northern Territory of Australia and an unusual non-stop trip to West Australia with Shark Bay and several weeks in Geraldton. After the long sail across the Indian Ocean, a pleasant stop in Rodriguez Island and Mauritius where we arrived exactly 100 years after Joshua Slocum was there. South Africa gave us a very warm welcome, and we visited several nice places between Durban and Cape Town after rounding the Cape of Good Hope.

IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN - a visit to the very special historic island of St Helena and then the longest time offshore going all the way to the Azores. We were given a great home-coming in England, arriving in July 1998 after a sail with very mixed weather conditions on the last leg.

SUMMARY:-

I started the trip in Turkey in the Mediterranean in 1989 and crossed the Atlantic with good tradewinds - my first New Year's celebration at sea. I discovered the colourful Caribbean Islands, the clear waters of the Bahamas and the welcoming USA. The Intracoastal Waterway and Chesapeake Bay were well worth the visit. Then at Easter 1995, *Glory* passed through the Panama Canal.

The Pacific Ocean still offers the remote and lovely places that every sailor is dreaming of. When I met Tony Curphey in New Zealand, a wonderful romance started like a fairy tale. He had sailed his 25 foot Folkboat, also single-handed, all the way from England and we both had to sail to the opposite side of the world to find each other!

We spent the most wonderful time in the paradise of the South Seas and finally married in the Solomon Island in 1997. We kept on single-handing but spent every hour together in the world's most lovely anchorages. In port we always tied the two boats alongside but kept our own courses during the long ocean passages. Offshore we managed to keep in radio contact.

Sailing in the Pacific was fun despite the not always 'pacific' conditions. The Indian Ocean gave us mostly chilly, windy and overcast weather, and rounding the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa was a challenge for our small boats.

The route in the Atlantic back to Europe was ruled by the dominant weather systems. First the south-east tradewinds, next the doldrums near the equator. Then came the fresh north-east tradewinds and the nerve-

wracking calms of the horse-latitudes until finally the ever-changing weather of the North Atlantic.

We are both convinced that even a small boat can bring you safely around the world and the SEADOG has proven her quality and seaworthiness in an excellent way.

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Calmest sail	: being becalmed for one week in the horse latitudes of the North Atlantic.
Windiest sail	: storm in Mediterranean with strong Mistral of Force 10 between Sicily and North Africa.
Shortest sail	: Daytrip aboard Tony's boat *Storm Petrel* inside the lagoon of an atoll in Tuvalu (former Gilbert Islands.)
Longest sail	: St Helena in the South Atlantic to the Azores with 49 days underway.
Coldest sail	: Winter in August 1997 on the coast of West Australia with near freezing temperatures.
Hottest sail	: Summer during cyclone season in the Solomon Isles around Christmas 1996 with very high humidity and daily temperatures around 37 degrees Centigrade.
Most shallow water	: Over the Bahama Banks with only a few feet of crystal clear water under the keel.
Deepest water	: Over the Tonga Trench in the South Pacific near Tonga with a depth of over 30,000 feet.
Happiest day	: When I met Tony in Whangerei, New Zealand.
Saddest day	: When my sweet dog *Lucky* died in the Atlantic. She was my companion for nine years and was one of the very few salty dogs who have circumnavigated the globe on a yacht.
Lost day	: September the 15th 1995 was non-existent in my life because of crossing the International Date Line in an east-west direction between Samoa and Tonga.
Best place	: Some secret atolls in the Pacific where time goes slower, water is clearer, coral is brighter, coconut palm trees are greener .....
Slowest sail	: Distance of 4 miles in 24 hours with a speed of 0.2 knots - becalmed in the Horse Latitudes of the North Atlantic Ocean.
Fastest sail	: Distance of 139 miles in 24 hours at an average speed of 5.8 knots in May 1995 between the Galapagos and the Marquesas Islands.
Most Southern Point	: North Island, New Zealand at 36 degrees South.
Most Northerly Point	: South Coast of England at 51 degrees North.

Zero Point : Crossing the Equator in two places - 89 degrees West Longitude in the Pacific Ocean, and then at 25 degrees West Longitude in the Atlantic Ocean.

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Retiring to the Med with "Triasid"

By Ludwig Brandt

"Because my memory is now not the best (and even worse getting older) I don't remember when I wrote last time, but in short terms:

Since one year we have moved completely to Cavalaire in the south of France, leaving only a very small rented apartment in Germany. Luckily I am also retired and Jelke and I enjoy the climate, and especially our little house and garden with a little pool, which is nicely situated on a hill just above the harbour.

I don't want to be a millionaire, I only like to live like one! With *Triasid* down in the Marina, less than ten minutes walk away, I am beginning to think that I do.

You know well that with a house, garden and a boat, one is always busy. Even though we live so close to *Triasid*, I haven't sailed her much – far less in fact than before, when we could only get to the boat on our longer holidays. Jelka unfortunately does not sail any more. She has had a hip operation and feels she is getting too old to go aboard.

So I sail alone, mostly day sailing around the local area. Cavalaire is the first port to the west from the Gulf of St Tropez and only eight nautical miles from the most easterly of the Porquerolle islands. This gives me lots of very nice and close anchorages to sail to.

Triasid is in good condition since the major repair in 1996. But last autumn our old Sharp autopilot gave up his mind (the electronic part with the leading compass). Researches over the whole winter with a competent guy here didn't help any. Finally we had to replace the unit with a new Autohelm 4000S including a fluxgate compass. Only the driving part and mechanical gear of the old pilot could be used. The new equipment is very sophisticated – using only press buttons. But sometimes the marriage of the old and the new parts means that they do not always work in harmony together, but I hope to find a solution with the various set ups which are possible – I will let you know".

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SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS

By Eric Richardson

That really is a slight exaggeration, but it's how it felt when we took two of our Granddaughters to the Norfolk Broads for a holiday afloat in *Taliesin*.

We left Sheffield on a dull and miserable day, wondering how we would cope with Anna & Jenny, 11 & 10 respectively, if it rained all week. After about 50 miles, the sun came out and we had a good run down to the boat – it's about 175 miles and it always seems to take for ever.

On arrival we showed the girls around the boat, and they were delighted with the after-cabin which instantly became their little home - from-home as they filled the shelves and made a neat stow.

Monday morning we took them for a walk into Oulton Broad to show them where we were going to lock through, then went back to the boat and motored round to the rail bridge which promptly opened as did the road bridge and lock gates. The girls were stationed at bow and stern, each with a line to throw to the lock staff. Avril helped the youngest to hold the boat in to the side as we rose the few inches. It was a good start, with the sun shining brightly and two useful crew ready to tackle anything the River Waveney could throw at us, and, with the hire boats that can be anything.

We motored out of Oulton Broad and set mainsail and genoa to sail up-river with a fluky breeze coming through the trees, but I left the engine on in readiness for any problem. The breeze allowed us to sail for an hour or so, and we covered about two miles which was most enjoyable, then motored slowly up to the bridge at Beccles, (which is as far as you can get with the mast standing), and there made fast to the bankside where we had lunch in the cockpit, the hood shading us from the burning sun. Lunch over, we walked into Beccles and generally did nothing much except to show the girls how to tie a bowline. This was more fun than it can ever sound, for, during the next few hours I was shown at least 100 variations; but in the days to come they became quite good at it, even being able to tie the knot behind their backs, with long and short bights

Tuesday dawned miserably, with heavy rain and poor visibility, so our plan for walking into Beccles to hire a lug-sail dinghy was called off. After discussion it was decided the answer was to get really wet, and go swimming. We had seen the leisure centre at Borough St Peter on

the way up the river, so we cast off and headed back. The trip back was fun, with the girls taking it in turn to helm and check course and speed using Decca against the ship's compass and a hand-bearing compass. You can get wonderful deviation when the two compasses are held in close proximity and the readings compared 10 seconds apart as the boat goes round a bend. It does take some explaining as at the same time you try to avoid a hire boat on its usual zig-zag course, with its crew still sorting out port from starboard.

When we arrived at the leisure centre we went into the Marina which was free until 5.30 p.m. However, our draught put us aground. With lots of power, and clouds of mud, we got the bows in to the side to await the last few inches of tide, and then moored up properly.

Then when we did get to the swimming pool, I promptly got in bother by diving in! Well, without my glasses (and I do not swim in them) I could not see the notice, so there we are – wrong again. We knew the girls could swim, but I had not expected to be shown up by such a margin. They were like fishes, doing every stroke I suggested, including racing turns, and on one occasion a fast length one way on the crawl, and back underwater to show they were not short of breath. It was only then they told me that the previous week they had had to do 30 lengths in pyjamas as part of a survival course.

Back on the boat afterwards, we were having tea when the harbour master arrived and asked me if I would mind moving, as he had two 40 ft. motor cruisers that wanted to moor rafted together, and ours was the only spot that he could fit them in. I remarked on the shallowness of the water, but he said they only drew 2ft 6in. So I agreed to move to a spot where he assured me there was plenty of water, at least 3ft and very soft mud. So here we go again, ploughing furrows in the mud.

Avril and the girls walked round to catch my warps, having pushed to help me out of the mud, and all went to plan. It usually does with the sun shining and nobody watching. We were now moored behind a 50ft motor cruiser, which had just been demonstrating how hard it is to manoeuvre with no wind or current, when all you have is twin screws and a bow thruster. The owner was later telling me that he has twin 500hp Caterpillar Diesel engines and is just getting used to the extra power, as his previous boat had only twin 350hp engines – it must be tough at times!

Wednesday started fine, so we decided to head back to Beccles for lunch, then take a picnic in the dinghy, and go as far upriver as possible. The scenery was lovely, and after pausing under a bridge to dodge a passing shower, we finally made it to Geldeston and had our picnic. Food sure tastes good when you are drifting slowly along in an

old rubber dinghy! On the way back the outboard was started up and the girls took it in turn to steer a course back to Beccles, watching the river change as it opened out from between the hedges. The girls then spent the evening practicing rowing between the road bridge and the Sailing Club.

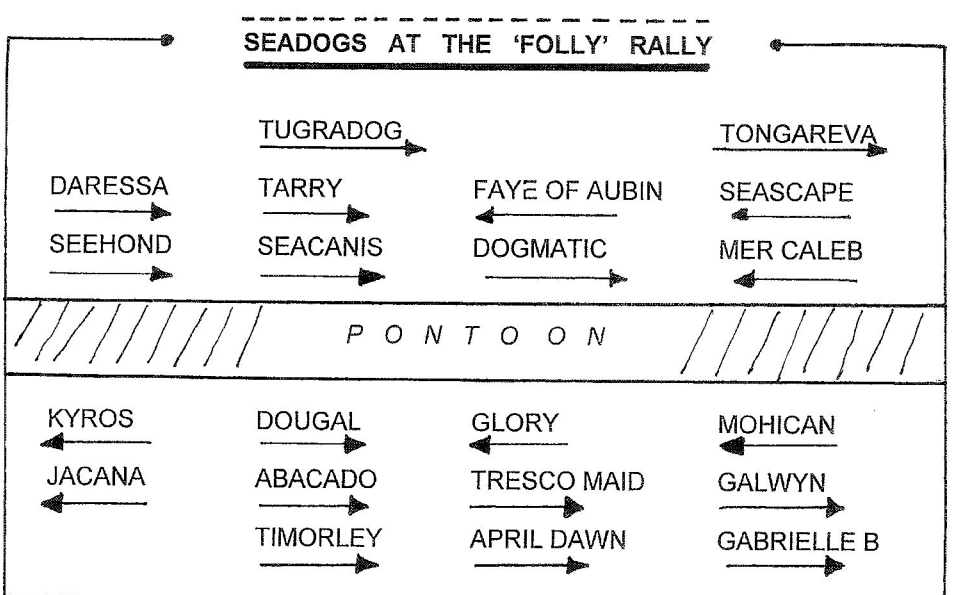
Thursday morning we walked into Beccles and came back via the supermarket well loaded with shopping. After lunch in the cockpit we set off back to Oulton Broad. The game today was that we would tow the girls in the dinghy with many variations in tow-line length due to them pulling the line in, then letting it go again.

In the evening, we moored up at the yacht station in Oulton Broad and watched the power-boat racing from a ring-side seat. They thought that was terrific. Friday started well, with the sun shining, and we locked back through to Lake Lothing on to our moorings, where the big tidy-up commenced ready for our trip home in the evening.

Without a doubt, the whole event had gone well – even the weather had been good. Anna and Jenny saying "when can we come again? Can we go to sea next time? Avril is not too sure about that, but I think the girls will win.

So not quite Swallows and Amazons, but definitely fun and sun.

OooOOOooO



Rally at the Folly Inn

MEDINA RIVER, ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Our South Coast Autumn Rally was held over the weekend of the 3rd & 4th of October 1998 at the Folly Inn, which is on the west bank of the Medina River, about halfway between Cowes and Newport.

Our star attractions, Susanne Huber, and her new husband, Tony Curphey had promised to attend the function in ***Glory***, so we expected lots of our members to come and meet them. But in the event Susanne and Tony very nearly didn't make it. ***Glory*** is berthed at Payne's Boatyard, which is at the top of the Thorney Channel in Chichester Harbour. The problem there is that the only time you can get a boat in or out, is at the top of High Water Spring Tides, which happen only once a fortnight. Unfortunately it turned out that on the day they had to leave, the height of tide at top of the Springs, was not quite enough to allow ***Glory*** to float clear of the bottom, and left her with her keels still well embedded in the mud. Determined not to give up, they took two strong lines ashore and brought them back to the sheet winches. Then, by dint of tremendously hard work, gradually managed to winch ***Glory***, an inch at a time, through the clinging mud of the little pool in which she was berthed, out into the deeper water of the slipway. (Several days after the Rally was over, I drove to Payne's Boat Yard and at low water, saw with my own eyes, the three great furrows which had been left behind by the keels as they were dragged through the mud!).

Typically, the weather outlook for the next few days was poor, with rain and strong winds forecast. Despite this, Olive and I made up our minds to sail over to the Island on the Thursday and have a day or so of relaxation before the fun began. We stayed Wednesday night aboard ***Dogmatic*** down at Crableck Boatyard, and next day set off around mid-morning for the Island.

It was windy, the sea was rough, and we had a bumpy ride as well as being drenched by some extremely heavy showers. On arrival at the Folly Inn around mid-day, we were delighted to find that Ray Claucherty aboard ***Seacanis*** had beaten us to it and was already tied up. We spent the rest of the day with Ray, talking and drinking, doing odd jobs, and enjoying the tasty meals that Olive set before us!

Next day there was a great improvement in the weather, with sunny spells developing during the afternoon. By nightfall 6 more Seadogs

had joined us. These were, ***Glory, Seehond, Tarry, Daressa, Faye of Aubin*** *and* ***Dougal.***

I note that in my diary I have written– "This has been a simply wonderful day – never to be forgotten". And it was!

Then the miracle happened. Saturday morning dawned bright, sunny and warm with not a lot of wind - it couldn't have been better weather for any Rally. Then once again, one after the other, more Seadogs came streaming upstream, and by dusk our numbers had swelled to 19, plus ***Avacado,*** a Colvic sailed by the parents of Ian & Maxine of ***Timorley.***

While Seadog crews busied themselves dressing their boats overall, Susanne flew the courtesy flags of all the countries she had visited during her 9 year circumnavigation of the world. As they fluttered in the gentle wind, many of us spent ages trying to identify the colourful emblems of those far-flung places. It really was an incredible sight. Especially when Susanne climbed effortlessly to the top of ***Glory's*** mainmast, camera at the ready, to take pictures of the scene.

Naturally everyone wanted to go aboard ***Glory*** to meet Susanne and Tony, also a single-handed round-the-world sailor. In spite of the fact that ***Glory*** had sailed 54,000 nautical miles in the last nine years, she appeared to be in pristine condition. And Susanne is not only the most practical and multi-talented person you are ever likely to meet, she also possesses an extra-ordinary capacity for being agreeable.

The only disappointment that day was that severe weather had prevented ***Tongareva*** from setting off from Harwich to join us. Her new owner, Ian Campbell, having just returned to the U.K. after many years in Hong Kong. had previously said he would appreciate some help to bring her round from the East Coast to her new home on the River Dart in Devon. Cy Blackwell (ex ***Dogboat)*** had agreed to take on the job. Many will remember that Cy used to run the P & Q Sailing School at Woolverstone on the River Orwell in Suffolk, during which time a number of Seadog owners and potential Seadog owners attended his courses.

Sixty people sat down to dinner that night at the Folly Inn, and we were delighted to welcome members who lived too far away to sail to the Rally, and had come by car and ferry in order to join in the festivities.

Dinner had hardly started when I was called to the telephone. It was Cy Blackwell aboard ***Tongareva***. All was well, they had the Nab

Tower (to the east of the Isle of Wight) in their sights, and would I procure some bottles of wine and tins of lager so they could celebrate on arrival?

Some time later, towards the end of the meal, Susanne was presented with a Tee Shirt which we had had specially printed with her favourite Seadog emblem (the one she had painted on her windvane), and Tony was welcomed into the Seadog clan with the gift of a bottle of West Indian Rum.

Around 10.30 pm I collected the hooch from the bar, returned by ferry to ***Dogmatic*** and called ***Tongareva*** on the R/T to ask – "where are you now?" "Just passing the gas-works at Cowes" came the reply. Quickly rummaging out a powerful signalling lamp and a 60 watt inspection lamp to illuminate the scene, I climbed over the guard rails onto ***Faye of Aubin***, the outermost boat on the trot, and stationed myself on the after deck. Presently a lone steaming light came into view. It was ***Tongareva***, and guided by the light of the inspection, lamp, she eventually came to a standstill alongside ***Seascape*** at 11.20 p.m., after voyaging non-stop all the way from Harwich in less than ideal conditions.

Willing hands assisted with the mooring up, and the boxes of hooch were speedily passed across.

Sunday morning – another beautiful day – there were the usual gatherings on the various Seadogs as people caught up with the news and renewed old friendships, and Graham Matthews - (***Dougal***) - *gave* one of his popular demonstrations on how to use the Internet. Then one by one the Seadogs set off back to their home ports, and ***Tongareva*** headed west on the final leg of her voyage to Dartmouth; we heard later that they had arrived safely after yet another non-stop passage.

Susanne and Tony in ***Glory***, Ray Claucherty in ***Seacanis***, and Olive and I in ***Dogmatic*** stayed on for a further night. But next morning, when the 3 day forecast threatened more rotten weather, we decided to call it a day, and so ended one of the best Seadog Rallies we have ever held.

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BOATS & CREWS ATTENDING THE 'FOLLY' RALLY

1.	APRIL DAWN	Peter Hepsworth & Gary Bentley
2.	DARESSA	John Ross & Ralph McClure
3.	DOGMATIC	Peter & Olive French
4.	DOUGAL	Gaye, Graham, Emily & Eleanor Matthews
5.	FAYE OF AUBIN	Alastair & Betty Buchan
6.	GABRIELLE B	Andrew & Mary Wilson & Jane Dalgleish
7.	GALWYN	Stephen & Christine Axon
8.	GLORY	Susanne & Tony Huber-Curphey
9.	JACANA OF PYRFORD	Stewart McLennan, Clare & Brian Cox, & Lynn Mason
10.	KYROS	Tony & Annette Spinks
11.	MER CALEB	John & Jan Whitney
12.	MOHICAN	John Tattum & Andrew Begbie
13.	SEACANIS	Ray Claucherty
14.	SEASCAPE	Harry & Caroline Manners & Susie Bancroft
15.	SEEHOND	Jess & Ken Willey
16.	TARRY	Martyn & Hilary Waitt & David & Val Wells
17.	TIMORLEY	Maxine, Ian & Sebastian Round & their huge Newfoundland dog, 'WINSTON'
18.	TONGAREVA	Ian Campbell, Cy Blackwell, Barry Johnson & Russell Coxon
19.	TRESCO MAID	Bob Forrest & David & Jeanette Bigby
20.	TUGRADOG	David & Nikki Woodbridge & Peter & Carol Banks

REPRESENTED BY THEIR OWNERS:

1.	GUNDOG	Beryl & Aubrey Allso
2.	SALIA	Peter & Val Bruguier
3.	SIREX	Brian & Jennifer Stephens
4.	TALIESIN	Eric & Avril Richardson
5.	WAGTAIL	Nigel & Gill Packman

N.S.D. MEMBERS — Barry & Laura Yaldren (ex BORN FREE II)

LAST, BUT NOT LEAST — Mike & Brenda Wood, who arrived in ABACADO, their Colvic motor-sailer

"GOOD JOB WE HAD THE OUTBOARD WITH US!"

By Ron Ryan - *"Offenbach"*

One fine summer's morning a few years ago we left Cherbourg in a light easterly wind and goose-winged our way towards the island of Alderney. On sighting the harbour, I dropped the mainsail and continued under jib alone to the visitors mooring buoys where I started the engine.

Then I got the shock of my life. There was no drive to the propeller. Moving slowly past a moored boat, I called out to the owner who was on deck something like "I've got no steerage, can you hold on to this?", and threw him my mooring rope. This 'fellow traveller of the sea' immediately threw it back, shouting "You're not coming alongside me!".

An emergency call on the radio to Mainbrace Marine quickly brought one of their shore dinghies racing to meet us. We were taken in tow and secured to a vacant buoy where it did not take me long to discover that the propeller shaft had snapped in two just aft of the flange that connects the shaft to the gearbox. Mainbrace Marine was not in the least interested in rendering any help. Don't blame them – they could earn more money running that expensive shore-taxi of theirs. It used to cost over a pound per person one way, but I haven't been back to Alderney in recent times, so goodness knows what it is today!.

A couple of days later we dried out against a wall in the inner harbour to inspect the propeller end of the boat for damage. Apart from a couple of marks on the rudder and hull, we found none. Having decided to sail back to Brighton we lashed the propeller hard forward to prevent it from sliding back and fouling the rudder, and at high water got a tow back to the buoy. The next morning Roland from Mainbrace delivered our pint of fresh milk then manoeuvred his dinghy behind our stern and pushed us out of the harbour – what a way for a Seadog to leave!

Thirty minutes later the light south-westerly wind died away leaving us drifting helplessly with the tide about to turn. I had visions of ending up in Guernsey. Something needed to be done pretty smartly, so I pumped up the dinghy and lashed it to the starboard quarter and fitted the trusty 4 horse power Mariner outboard. With the sea being fairly calm we were able to take it in turns in the dinghy to keep Offenbach away from the shore line and heading eastwards in the general direction of Brighton. Believe it or not, but that little outboard motor gave us about 4 knots, and ninety minutes later we were far enough away from the Alderney Race for it not to affect us.
So I heaved the dinghy and outboard motor up on deck and carried on under sail. On the occasions when the wind picked up a little we

made better progress, but nothing to get excited about. All through the day the wind continued its cycle of picking up and then dying away again.

By nightfall we were becalmed and drifting slowly towards the lighthouse at the tip of St Catherine's Point on the south coast of the Isle of Wight. Now directly in the path of the big ships heading for and coming out of the shipping lanes, I sent out a general radio call to explain we were not under power. Next I contacted the Coastguard to let them know that while we were in no immediate danger, lack of wind and strong currents meant we might very well find ourselves in trouble if our drift towards the Isle of Wight continued. We carry around 5 gallons of petrol aboard, but a 4 horse power outboard motor pushing along a Seadog does drink a lot of fuel. We had about two gallons left, but I intended keeping those for use when we got closer to a harbour.

The Coastguard were very good, and throughout the night they maintained contact and kept us updated with weather reports which indicated that the wind was expected to pick up later that morning.

It was during one of those contacts that I told them we were still drifting. I was asked if I would like a tow. At first I thought, "What a stout fellow he is", then up popped the cautious streak in my nature. "What is it going to cost me?" I said. There was a short pause, then "I'll phone and ask and call you back" he replied. A little later the cost was relayed - £600! "Thank you" – I said to the Coastguard – "but we'll keep drifting. Right now I'm not in an emergency situation, but should I find myself drifting close to the shore then I would be in peril. In which case the tow would be free. Wouldn't it?" There was no reply.

As predicted, later that morning the wind increased to a modest westerly 4/5. We set all the sails – did a long tack out into the Channel then made a second tack back again that laid Brighton Harbour right on the nose. On nearing the entrance I lowered the sails, lashed the dinghy once more to the starboard quarter, and carried on the rest of the way using the outboard.

The whole journey took some 30 hours plus, and it was not enjoyable. But memories get dim, and when the story is retold after the passage of years, I cannot help but enjoy a wry smile at the thought of all we went through on that awful trip home.

(When eventually we did get back to Brighton, a local engineer said that he found that one of the engine mountings had broken, and that the rope-stripper looked as though it had taken a bite out of something!)

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"BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!"

By Barry Johnson

Tongareva had been purchased the previous week by her new owner, Ian Campbell, and awaited a delivery crew to sail her from Woolverstone on the River Orwell in Suffolk, to her new home on the River Dart in Devon. Ian had previously arranged with Cy Blackwell, one time owner of the P & Q Sailing School at Woolverstone, to deliver the boat to Totnes in Devon. The delivery crew were: Cy, Barry Johnson, an experienced sailing instructor, who had previously worked for Cy Blackwell at the Sailing School, and Russell Coxon, a 19 year old undergraduate student at Oxford. We all assembled at Woolverstone on Monday 28th of September ready to set off the next day to make the 175 nautical mile voyage to Cowes on the Isle of Wight. The plan was to make a number of day-sails south from Harwich into the English Channel and rendezvous with the Seadog Rally which was to be held at the Folly Inn on the River Medina near Cowes on the following Saturday evening. The new owner of *Tongareva,* Ian Campbell would then benefit from meeting other Seadog Owners and Cy Blackwell would be able to meet old friends. The intention then was to day-sail westwards to Dartmouth and the River Dart where *Tongareva* was to be craned ashore for the winter at Baltic Wharf, Totnes.

But weather patterns change fast, and it soon became apparent that our passage plan would have to be revised. A deep low, the tail end of Hurricane Carl, was whistling towards the western approaches, and gales were forecast for Thames, Dover, Wight, Portland and Plymouth. So we decided to spend Tuesday doing a mini shake-down cruise to get the crew and the boat used to each other, and then return that night to Woolverstone to await developments. Ian went back to London, Russell to Nottingham, while Cy and I stayed with the boat. That evening Cy rang Peter French, the Seadog Owners Association Secretary, and told him that we would be unable to get to the Rally that weekend. In retrospect, we all considered that the sail on Tuesday was most productive, as half the crew had not met each other, and we were all sailing on a strange boat. Cy and I were already familiar with Seadogs, but to Ian and Russell it was a new experience, and helped weld us together as a good crew. The gales developed as predicted on the Wednesday and Thursday, but the forecast for Friday for the Thames area was for winds NE4/5, decreasing to F2/3 overnight. We decided to go: destination the Solent - non-stop – E.T.A. Cowes – Sunday morning. Ian and Russell were hastily recalled to Woolverstone, and *Tongareva* was made ready to depart some time Friday afternoon.

On Friday evening the initial passage from Harwich east towards the Black Deep was more difficult than anticipated. The sea was rough and progress was slow. With the north-easterly wind being at its full fetch across the North Sea, it was bitterly cold, creating confused sea conditions, particularly in the shoal waters off Harwich. And though the crew on deck were cold and uncomfortable, nobody was seasick. We did two hour stints, with two people on watch on deck, with the off-watch crew resting below. Motor-sailing under a well reefed furling jib and furling mainsail, the boat seemed very sturdy and safe, and the benefits of the efficient Eberspacher Heating System fitted to *Tongareva* were much appreciated by all. We reached the Sunk Head Tower north cardinal buoy at 20.50 and turned south down the Black Deep, with the tide now running north. The foul tide slowed our progress, but the sea state in the Black Deep, protected as it is by the Long Sand Shoal to seaward, was much calmer.

At midnight, when we arrived at the Fishermans Gat, we changed over to a four-hour system of watch keeping. It was vital for us to arrive off Dover at around 04.00 so we could catch the first of the west-going tide which would give us a fair passage westward into the English Channel. We achieved this on time and started making excellent progress. The wind gradually decreased to a NE3/4, and being offshore, the sea-state became moderate. Apart from the spectacular cliffs as a backdrop to the Beachy Head Lighthouse, this part of the passage passed routinely, and seemed an anti-climax after the activity of the previous night. But we were not complaining. We had a full English breakfast, lunch and dinner, all cooked under way, and in between times caught up on our lack of sleep. Selsey Bill came into view during the late afternoon, and towards dusk, the Nab Tower light appeared ahead. We entered the Eastern Solent around 19.00 hours. There was a brief flurry of excitement when the ferry, the *Pride of Bilbao* en route to the Continent, swept up the channel, passing ahead of us, and then up our port side at full speed. From first sighting, near Horse Sand Fort, off Portsmouth, to her passing within a quarter of a mile of us, near the Nab End Buoy, was less than five minutes.

It was at this point that we realised we could make Cowes before midnight, so Cy rang the Folly Inn where the Rally was held and spoke to Peter French. Would it still be possible to link in with the Seadog Rally after the meal, even if it was late? Peter said this would not be a problem. They would keep a look-out for us on the river. We reached Cowes at about 23.00 and motored up the Medina River towards the Folly Inn and about 30 minutes later were welcomed alongside the 20 other assembled Seadogs by a cheering crowd of

people who were obviously in good spirits after having had an enjoyable meal and a few drinks. This was a very emotional for Cy, particularly as he had thought right up to the last moment, that he would be unable to make the Rally. To be able to get there in this way – what an unexpected bonus! It was obviously one of the great moments in his long association with Seadogs and their owners. That night and the following morning he was in his element meeting his old friends. By the time we left after lunch of Sunday, it was obvious to the rest of us how much affection and respect the other owners had for Cy.

We stopped to take on diesel, fresh water and victuals at Cowes Yacht Haven and got a bite to eat at the "Y-not" Restaurant nearby before setting off westwards to buck a foul tide down to the Needles. The wind was now NE4/5, visibility good, weather dry and sea-state smooth to moderate. We passed the Needles at about 20.00, just as the tide was turning in our favour. This was the second tidal gate we had managed to get right. We set course to go straight to Dartmouth, passing Portland Bill at a respectable distance so as to avoid the notorious tidal race. This was preferable, as the weather was still unpredictable for later that week, and we thought we would take advantage of the window of opportunity. We settled down for the night with a four hour watch system. Russell had been navigating throughout the cruise, but with this long straight leg, he was able to use the Decca more. This gave splendid service, and we never moved more than 2 cables off track during the whole passage of about 90 miles. We also had GPS on board, but found this less satisfactory, largely due to the poor display of information. We could read the Decca, which was mounted above the navigation table, from the cockpit, but the GPS read-out was not visible. On passing Portland Bill we were assisted no end by the tidal race. And when we registered a speed of 10 knots over the ground, a cheer broke out in the cockpit, awakening the dormant watch below. As we approached Dartmouth across Lyme Bay in the early hours of Monday, the wind strengthened to about F6, and with the long fetch across Lyme Bay, the sea became rough again. At one point the lee rail became submerged as *Tongareva* heeled in a strong gust, and the Windex Indicator at the masthead blew off and disappeared downwind into the sea. Seadogs can cope with worse conditions than this, so the crew off-watch slept on unaware of the excitement on deck.

Tongareva arrived at the entrance to the River Dart around 07.00 and tied up at the town quay at 08.00. We took the first of the flood tide up the river during the afternoon, spending an hour (to kill time) on a visitors mooring near Dittisham, where we had tea and biscuits, and

finally arrived at Totnes around 18.00 Early next morning *Tongareva* was craned out for her winter dry-berth at Baltic Wharf, and the crew dispersed to their various homes.

Ian had had as splendid an introduction to his new boat, *Tongareva* as he could possibly have had in so short a space of time. Over 270 miles of vigorous sailing was covered over 3 days, 55 hours of actual sea-time, including 25 night hours, freezing cold north-easterly winds up to Force 6, with rough sea conditions at times, as well as making a memorable rendezvous with the other Seadog owners at the Isle of Wight Rally. *Tongareva* and her crew took it all in their stride, and Ian says he cannot wait to get her afloat again next year.

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THAMES YACHT RACE

(Saturday, 18th of September, 1993)

By Peter French

This light hearted open handicap race for cruising yachts is staged annually by the Gravesend Sailing Club, the first prize being the "Gravesham Thames Trophy." Sailed over a course of about 23 miles, from Gravesend to Tower Bridge, the handicapping is based on the 'Portsmouth Yardstick'.

Olive and I had been invited by Bill Richards to crew for him, so mid-morning on the day before the race, we set off from Sarisbury Green, and after battling our way round the M25, arrived at Bill's house at Welling in Kent a little after mid-day. When the last of the gear had been put in the cars, we drove to Gravesend Harbour and stowed it all away aboard **Newanderer.** By the time we had finished, it was well past High Water, and much too late for us to be able to lock out. The next high water was due at 02.50 a.m. (Access into and out of the harbour at Gravesend is limited by the lock-opening times, which are from one and a half hours before High Water, to High Water).

We set the alarm clock and turned in early. Promptly at 02.00 a.m. we rose from our bunks and locked out into the River Thames, where, in the warm, velvety darkness of the night, we motored for a mile or so downstream and anchored close inshore, just off the Maritime College, to while away the hours to the start of the race.

According to the Instructions, the time of start of the Race was - "Not before 10.00 a.m.", with High Water that day at London Bridge being at 16.07. But what with one delay after the other, plus a misunderstanding of one of the rules, we were, unhappily, still quite a long way downstream when the 5 minute gun was fired, and had to stop our engine. We ended up by crossing the starting-line a full 20 minutes behind the rest of the fleet.

But we were fortunate in that our earlier worry, that the exceptionally high tide that day – (the highest equinoctial tide for two years) – might force closure of the Flood Barrier at Woolwich, proved groundless, and the powerful flood tide which swept us up-river, went a long way towards compensating for the mostly light winds. In every other respect the weather was perfect, being dry and very warm, with blue skies and unbroken sunshine.

From the start we determined to do our best to sail competitively – and it paid off. Gradually as our speed built up we began to overtake the laggards trailing at the back of the fleet, while Bill kept up a light hearted running

commentary on the passing scene, telling endless tales of interest about the people and the history of the various places we passed on our way up to London.

The Thames Barrier came and went at 13.30 and finally, at 14.30, amidst a gaggle of other boats, we crossed the finishing line. At the end of the race we circled around a few times to take photos of Tower Bridge, where the bascules were obligingly raised, and for some moments hovered over the feasibility of nipping through for a few minutes to take pictures of the Tower of London.

But the thought of being caught the wrong side of the bridge by it being suddenly closed behind us, was too great a deterrent. Next we photographed the entrances to the marinas at St Katharine's Dock and Limehouse Basin, before eventually arriving at South Dock on the west bank of the river at 15.45, where the tide was so high, that we actually locked down about 4 feet! That evening we enjoyed a drink or two before sitting down to a substantial buffet meal aboard the South Bank Yacht Club ship. The presentation of prizes followed later and turned out to be quite a jolly affair.

We had to leave early next morning, well before half-tide, just to be on the safe side, in order to avoid being trapped inside the marina for a further six hours until the water rose again. Promptly at 5 a.m., an hour or so before sunrise, we locked out into the Thames, set off down river and passed through the Thames Barrier just as dawn was breaking. With hours to kill before we would be able to lock into Gravesend Harbour, we decided to spend the intervening time cruising down towards Southend on Sea in the Thames estuary.

Approaching Tilbury Docks we had a busy few minutes dodging a number of tugs and salvage barges loaded with great baulks of timber which were being recovered from the water. Once clear of the commercial traffic, we resumed our peaceful passage downriver and visited Hole Haven before sailing close to Canvey Island, where we marvelled at the extensive sea defences and wondered how much longer they would remain effective. Then, when at length Southend Pier hove into view, we headed back towards Gravesend Harbour.

Having locked in, we were busily engaged in unloading our gear, when, to our huge surprise and delight, we bumped into Colin and Tisha Browne (whom we had never met) and who had just bought **Seafleur.**

This was my second race in a Seadog, my first having taken place some years earlier, when Fred Murley - (past secretary) - and I took part in the Thames Yacht Club's "Round the Island Double" in his Seadog **Tresco Maid.** (The story was written up in full by Fred Murley and appeared in Newsletter No 15).

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TRESCO MAID GETS RADAR

By Bob Forrest

David and I had stopped overnight in Newtown Creek, hoping to set off early next morning for Weymouth. At 6 a.m., however, it was very foggy, with visibility down to twenty yards. Hoping for better things out of the harbour, we groped our way out into the Solent, but we were out of luck there as well.

I thought there would be no alternative to waiting another day in Newtown before going on, but then David turned on his radar, and this transformed the whole situation. By its aid we could "see" Hamstead Ledge to the west, Hamstead Ledge Buoy, and where we were in relation to them, and there appeared to be no shipping about.

With the radar visibility to help us, we could now set a course for Yarmouth and the Needles passage, identifying buoys and marks as we passed them. Fortunately the mist lifted a bit once we got past the Needles and turned towards Weymouth, but it was fascinating and very reassuring, nevertheless, to see ships emerging out of the mist at precisely the points indicated by their radar "blips".

The value of having radar in these conditions was enough to suggest to me that its installation in *Tresco Maid* was a must, if it could be afforded. But what sort? Fortunately the June 1997 Yachting Monthly magazine included a review of seven radars, and this was invaluable to anybody as electronically challenged as I was. It described the background to radar and all the technical terms, the two basic types, with cathode ray tube (CRT) or liquid crystal (LCD) displays. The former, David's type, gave a much brighter and better defined image that the latter, but cost around £1400 compared with £700 for the LCD type.

Because the LCD type gave poorer definition, it was thought its main use was in avoiding collisions in open waters. The CRT type, in contrast, was also suitable for navigating in congested waters in limited visibility, as well as for general collision avoidance. Of the seven sets tested, the Koden MD 340 (CRT) radar was thought to be the best buy, as it gave the most well-defined images and was very simple to operate, so this was my choice. On the down side, it also used the most current, (3.4 amps) when actually scanning. Being all for belt and braces, I would probably have my engine on and charging the battery when there was restricted visibility, especially when crossing shipping lanes.

There is a "standby mode" of operation which not only reduces the current consumption to 1.4 amps, but also allows the user to set up "Guard zones" to give audible warning when a ship enters the zone, even though the display and the scanner are turned off.

As regards cost, the radar was £1,300 and the Scanstrut bracket for mounting the radome (antenna) was another £100.

FITTING

This took two of us four working days of six hours each. The work itself was not too difficult. The worst part was the pop-rivetting of the radome bracket on to the mainmast above the cross-trees.

If you are buying radar, do check how much cable the maker provides. We found that for fitting on the mainmast 15 metres was ample to link the display and the antenna, but 10 metres would not have been enough.

We had next to decide whether or not to break the cable to ease raising and lowering the mast. Unlike lighting cables which have only two or three wires, we found that the cable for the radar contained 24 wires. This would not only make jointing it back together again a major operation, but also introduce a potential reliability problem. I decided not to break the cable.

The next question was, which end of the cable could be passed through the deck and bulkheads most conveniently, given that none of the plugs fitted to the ends of the cable could be removed. There was a single large plug at the display end, but at the radome end we found there were four separate smaller rectangular plugs. This was very lucky, for we found we could tape these together, one behind the other, with their long sides along the axis of the cable. This then formed a "cable" that could pass through a narrower, 33mm hole, rather than one of 50 mm in diameter.

The radar screen was mounted on a bracket formed from Dexion angle and secured to the back wall behind the chart table. I am not happy about this, as it is hard to see the screen from the cockpit, and it looks crude. Perhaps a swivelling T.V. bracket might be the answer.

From the display unit, the cable was routed through the back panel behind the display unit, then fed into the space behind the starboard shelf in the saloon and so through the forward bulkhead. From there we took it over the drinks locker and vertically up and out through the bottom of the small shelf above the hanging locker. (This involved some fishing about with a galvanized wire messenger).

We then took the cable up to the heads ceiling and across and out through the deck forward of the coach roof. Watertightness was ensured by the use of an Index Marine SS2 cable gland.

I wanted to avoid making further holes in the mast, particularly just above the crosstrees, so we took the cable up the outside of the mast, on the starboard side. Wherever the cable ran straight, we protected it by using one inch by one half inch section plastic trunking with a clip-on front covering panel.

Now came the worst part, riveting the radome mounting bracket to the mast. This involved putting three pop-rivets into each of the four feet of the bracket to secure it to the mast. We made this operation much harder for ourselves by trying to use a ladder to the cross-trees. As a result we were able to operate the riveter only with the greatest difficulty, as the ladder brought you so close to the mast that your arms were behind your head when you were trying to close the long levers of the riveter.
Eventually we got to using a bosun's chair which allowed you to sit back with feet against the mast and use your arms in a more normal manner on the riveter.

USE AND VALUE OF CRT RADARS

We found no problem in using our radar straight away, admittedly in a rather elementary way. For example, it was easily possible to find the distance from *Tresco Maid* to buoys, the coastline and other boats and ships. Distance could be measured approximately by selecting the appropriate range scale out of a choice of nine, ranging from one eighth to twentyfour nautical miles.

Another function, the 'Electronic Beam Line' is used like a handbearing compass to see whether you are on a converging course with another vessel, with the difference that it will still work in darkness, fog, or mist.

During last summer's trip to Guernsey, the radar proved its worth in many ways. Crossing the Channel, mostly on the motor, and a lot of the time in darkness, drizzle or rain, we could keep up five knots without worry.

The facility was particularly useful in misty conditions in the Channel, especially when crossing a seemingly endless stream of ships in the west-going separation lane. The radar showed us when the last ship was about to come out of the mist, so that we were able to close up on it and scuttle across behind its transom, confident that it was the last of the line.

We found two other uses for the radar – first, spotting a harbour entrance against a dazzling low sun. A second, more valuable use occurred when our GPS packed up one misty, rapidly darkening evening six miles out from Cherbourg and we had forgotten to plot our last hours run. At that moment we were reassured to see a large ferry, obviously heading for Cherbourg, but, within minutes it had disappeared into the mist.

We were able to follow its course until it merged with the general coastline, and that same course took us to Cherbourg's eastern entrance, and a good billet for the night.

We were glad that we had fitted radar, and recommend it to anyone lucky enough to have a small windfall at the right time!

OooOOOooO

SEADOG PRODUCTION LINE

By Len Callaway

When we first acquired Seadog number 67 (*"Neeron"* as she was then), some of our more humorous friends would comment that the name probably implied that we were near-on broke after we had bought her.

At the risk of telling you what you already know, I must comment on the manner in which *Neeron,* (and no doubt all the other Seadogs), were built and handed over, the impression given to a new owner, and, as a Civil Engineer, my praise of the organisation at that time.

Reg Freeman's premises at White's Shipyard on the River Itchen in Southampton, consisted of a fairly large shed where the boats were built. Inside the shed, in a "U" form, was a raised floor.

Outside, one could see a couple of bare hulls as they had been received from the moulders which were on trolleys that made them mobile. Inside the shed, around the "U" form were, if I remember correctly, six stations with one hull at each. The height of the raised floor being at boat-deck level for easy direct access.

At station 1, the team, working from the raised level, performed the first tasks on the boat. At station 2, the boat was brought to the next stage and so on to station 6 when the boat was finished off. After station 6, the boat on its trolley was moved outside for launching. As one boat was taken outside, all the others were moved forward one station, and a fresh hull brought in to the shed. At each station was employed a specialist team which concentrated on a specific aspect of the work, so they all made a good job.

When we arrived on the Saturday morning to take delivery, *Neeron* was in the water, with what appeared to be swarms of men on her, putting the finishing touches – she looked grubby and not too attractive.

Suddenly they all finished what they were doing and came ashore. The boat was then thoroughly washed down and all the teak cockpit seats and floorboards were removed, and out from the workshop came brand-new ones, which were then fitted into place, together with all the upholstery.

Neeron was instantly transformed into a really beautiful craft, and we were the first feet to tread on the new teak, and the first bums to sit on the upholstery. It was really most impressive and satisfying to a new owner.

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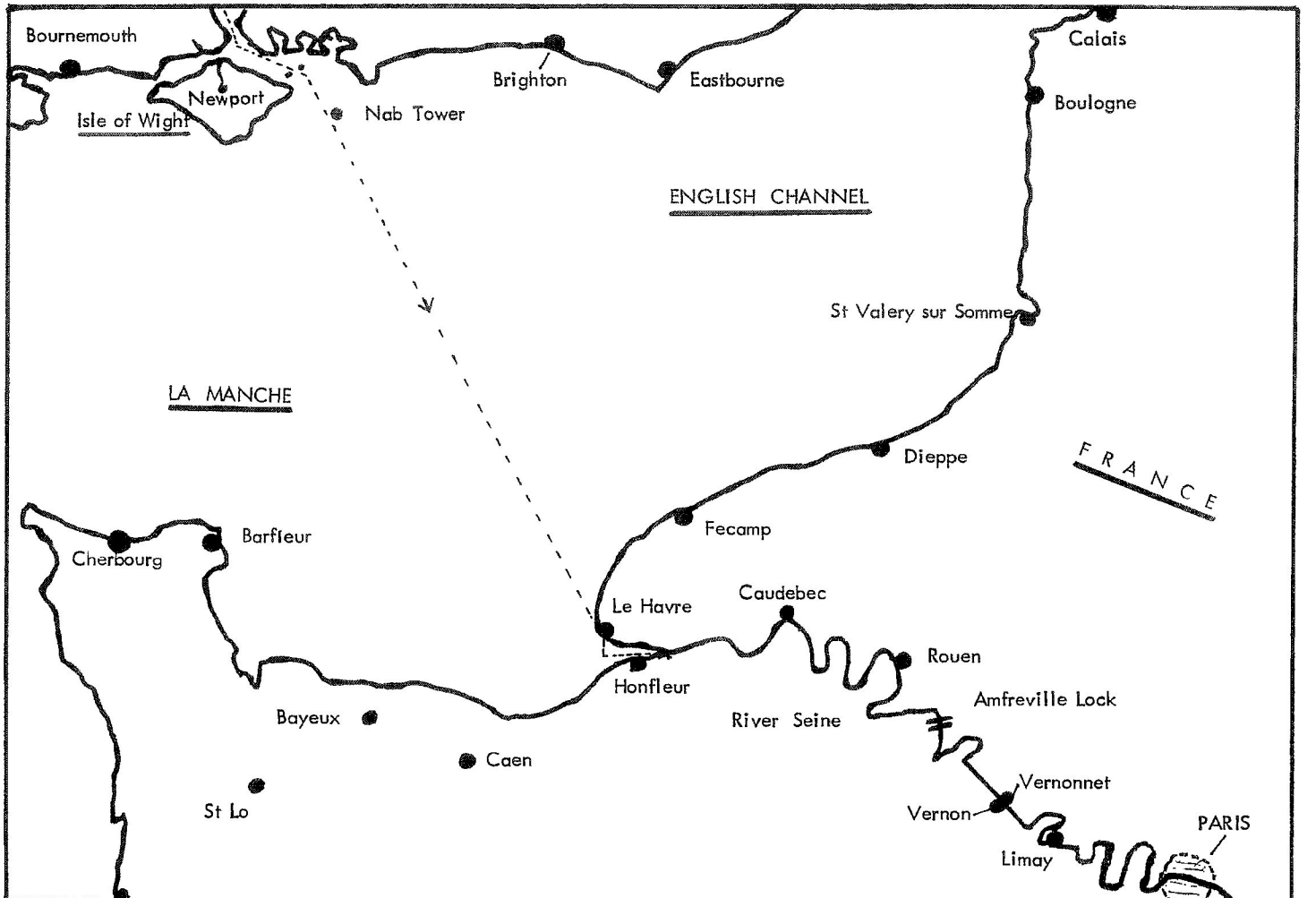
(*Neeron*, hull number 67, has since been renamed *Brandane*, and is now in Belgium)


Bournemouth
Newport
Isle of Wight
Nab Tower
Brighton
Eastbourne
Calais
Boulogne
ENGLISH CHANNEL
St Valery sur Somme
LA MANCHE
Dieppe
FRANCE
Fecamp
Barfleur
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Caudebec
Rouen
Honfleur
Amfreville Lock
River Seine
Bayeux
Caen
St Lo
Vernonnet
Vernon
PARIS
Limay

DOGMATIC'S SUMMER CRUISE TO PARIS

By Peter French

The following account of our cruise to Paris has been written in more detail than usual in the hope that it might help, and perhaps encourage, other Seadog owners to explore the Seine.

The River Seine in history

In 100 B.C. the Seine formed the boundary between Belgium and the Celts. The Romans named it 'Sequana', supposedly from the old Celtic word 'squan', meaning to curve or bend, the river, with its many bends, being likened to a winding serpent.

And Napoleon is supposed to have said - "Le Havre, Rouen and Paris are but a single town, of which the Seine is the main street."

The Seine was then a difficult street to cross, and an even more difficult river to navigate, with either too much water or too little. That has since been largely corrected. Training walls, which now flank the first 25 miles of the river, have all but eliminated the once lethal tidal bore known as the 'Mascaret' which takes place around low water at spring tides.

> When navigating the Seine from Le Havre to Rouen, by far and away the most important thing to get right, is the timing. Basically it all boils down to arriving at Rouen around local high water and in daylight. Night navigation by yachts is prohibited.

Fast vessels have no problem. Fortunately for slower vessels, the long hours of daylight in summer allow the passage to be completed non-stop, provided the tides are favourable, and a minimum speed of 5½ – 6 knots is maintained. Favourable tides exist for 6 or 7 days in every fortnight. Fundamentally, it means making an early start from Le Havre at about an hour or so before low water.

The stand of tide, speed of the current, and the fact that high water at Rouen is 4 to 5 hours after high water Le Havre, all combine to make it possible to cover the 133 kilometres from Le Havre to Rouen non-stop.

To get the very best out of this experience, do not be in a hurry
Have no deadlines

AND TAKE A GOOD FRENCH ROAD MAP WITH YOU

" THE LOWER SEINE AND THE CANALS OF PARIS"

(*Dogmatic's* 25th birthday trip to France)

by Peter French

Some years ago Olive suggested we change from the usual French coast – Channel Islands cruise, and take *Dogmatic* to Paris. Time passed, but it was not until friend and neighbour, Philip Lockwood, reminded us that his tour of duty in Paris as Assistant Naval Attache would shortly be ended, that we finally made up our minds to go.

We did try to interest other Seadog Owners in accompanying us, but there were no takers – the multiple cautions enshrined in Pilot Books on the Seine are enough to put anyone off. Fortunately for us, we speedily learned to distinguish fact from horror story, thanks to the advice of Vic and Esme Holloway, who had sailed *Weatherdog* to Paris some years earlier.

Thanks are due also to Philip Lockwood, who gave us much practical help and encouragement, plus the benefit of his long experience as organizer of the annual visits to Paris of flotillas of Naval training craft.

Galvanised by their enthusiastic support, we went ahead with our plans, confident at last that we were in for the holiday of a lifetime. In ultimately achieving this, we were helped immeasurably by the presence of those two happy souls, John and Audrey Lansdell, who came with us.

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The sun shone, the water sparkled and *Dogmatic* lay ready for sea. Aboard were Olive and I, and John and Audrey Lansdell. Early one summer afternoon we slipped away down the Hamble River into the Solent, and arrived at the Nab Tower, some miles east of the Isle of Wight, at around low water. As night began to darken the eastern sky, we sailed onwards under a rising moon towards the coast of France, while in the quiet of the cockpit, the autopilot chirped its cheerful song as it held us on course for Le Havre. Then, in the early hours, fog descended.

Minutes before dawn we had a hair raising escape from running straight into the side of a huge ship which loomed silently from out of the fog ahead, square across our bows. Blazoned across her stern was the name, "Bonnie of Nassau". She was stationary, but sounded no fog signals. The chart indicated the vessel to be in a "designated anchorage and waiting zone for vessels in excess of 100,000 tons" – and this was some 16 nautical miles offshore.

Then the Decca Navigator began to play up, by indicating that our waypoint, the Le Havre Lanby buoy, was constantly varying its position. It was only by executing a square search in the fog that we were able to track it down. Later, while checking messages on the Navtex, I discovered that the buoy had indeed been moved to a new position (44.31.44.N / 00.09.78W) earlier that very day, the 4th of July 1993. To complicate matters further, Navtex also revealed that spurious transmissions from another radio station had caused the Decca Navigator to broadcast false positions. To cap it all, upon arrival at Le Havre we found that the local yacht club had just withdrawn facilities for unstepping the masts of visiting yachts. This meant we should have to go on to Rouen to have our masts lifted out.

Passage up the Seine.

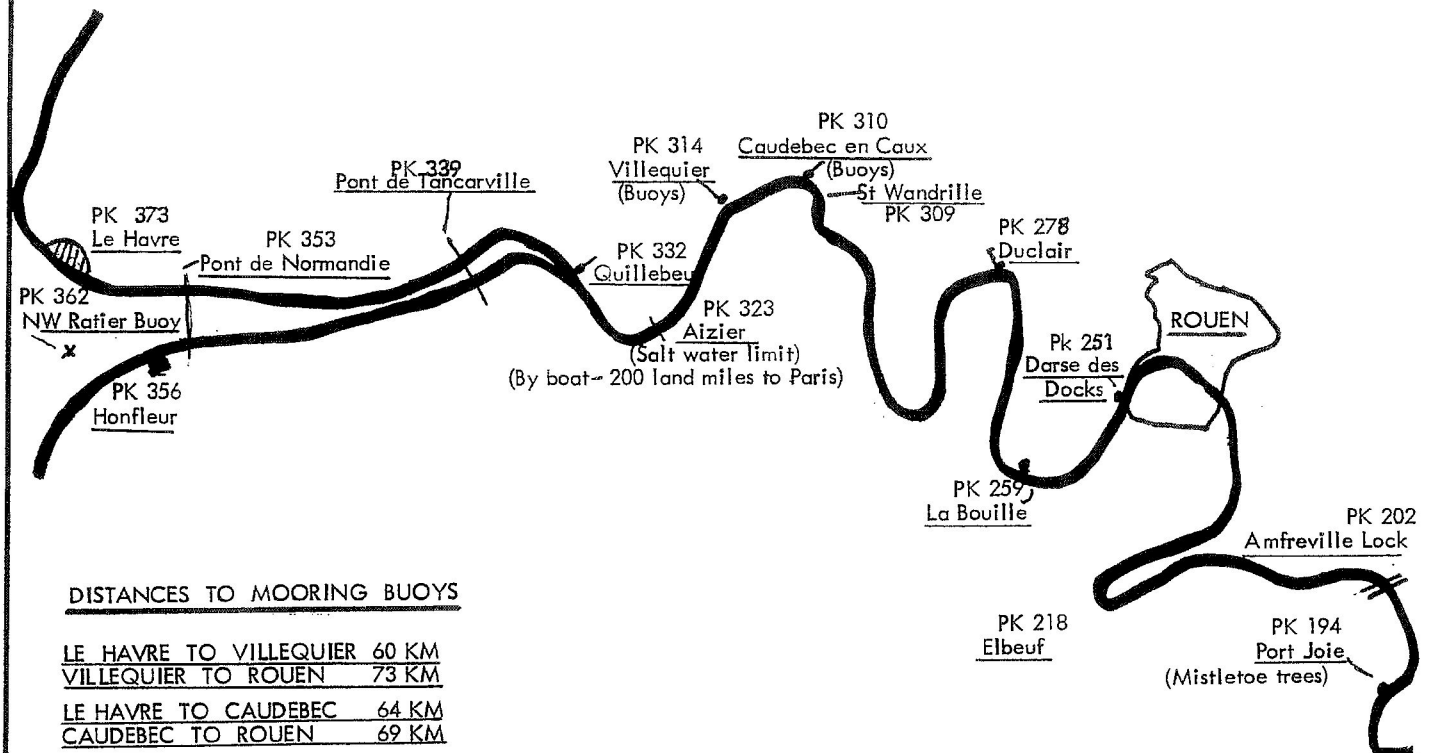
"The fastest passage up the Seine will be made leaving Le Havre in time to reach the main Seine channel as the flood begins" says one Pilot book. So we arranged to be off Honfleur around low water, thus avoiding the Mascaret, which, as the book says, "is at its most vigorous and impressive upstream of Caudebec at low water – 45 kilometres away".

We departed Le Havre just after dawn and carried the last of the ebb-tide down to the Northwest Ratier Buoy at the start of the Rouen Channel, where the strong current still pouring out of the Seine swiftly put the brakes on our headlong rush. It was while we ploughed steadily onwards towards Honfleur, that Olive went below to prepare breakfast. Presently, muffled wails proclaimed that all was not well on the catering front. Somehow, the electric lead to the cold box had been plugged in with the wrong polarity, and our entire stock of bacon had been cooked. We were still happily munching our way through bacon sandwiches when we arrived off Honfleur.

The French 'Navicarte' strip chart of the Seine soon proved to be worth its weight in gold, and made the process of navigating the river quite simple. All one had to do was to tick off the positions of the numbered

FROM LE HAVRE TO ROUEN AND AMFREVILLE LOCK

(171 KM)



DISTANCES TO MOORING BUOYS

LE HAVRE TO VILLEQUIER	60 KM
VILLEQUIER TO ROUEN	73 KM
LE HAVRE TO CAUDEBEC	64 KM
CAUDEBEC TO ROUEN	69 KM

posts which began to appear at one kilometre intervals along the river banks.

Shortly after passing Honfleur, we came upon two gigantic concrete columns which straddled the river and soared hundreds of feet into the air. Each was swarming with workmen. These structures, destined to be the principal supports for a new bridge, the Pont de Normandie, already dwarfed the old Tancarville Bridge, once the largest in Europe, which we passed a few kilometres further on.

At length we began travelling through beautiful countryside, wooded and rolling. With the tide now demonstrably in our favour, we sped on, past the former Viking hide-out of Quillebeuf - (at kilometre post PK332), and Vieux Port, where thatched cottages among the apple orchards made a pretty picture. Long years ago the ship 'Telemaque', carrying the French Crown Jewels sank near here. They were never recovered.

The town of Aizier marks the tidal limit, where the river water gradually changes from salt to fresh. It is worth noting that the distance from Aizier to Paris, by boat along the Seine, is about 200 land miles; yet as the crow flies, it is only about 60 miles.

Next we came to Villequier (PK315), a small town which nestles in a near unrivalled setting at the foot of a wooded hill. It was here, only six months after their wedding day, that the author Victor Hugo's daughter and her husband were drowned when their small boat was overwhelmed by the tidal bore, the Mascaret. Villequier is one of only two places where we saw mooring buoys for the use of yachts on passage. The other being Caudebec, (PK310), a picturesque timber-built town laid out in the form of an amphitheatre facing the Seine. This is a popular place to view the Mascaret.

At St Wandrille (PK309), a little further on, the outline of a seaplane carved into the cliffs remains as a memorial to an ill-fated attempt in 1928 by explorer Amundsen to rescue the crew of the Italian airship 'Italia' which had crashed on an ice-flow in the Arctic.

Duclair (PK278) – Looks a great place to stop, but do not be tempted. We were strongly advised by professionals who use the river on a daily basis, never to tie up to the landing stage because it can dry out. The bottom is foul with broken concrete, and the wash of sea-going vessels of anything up to 60,000 tons passing at 12 knots can precipitate a sudden drop in the water level.

Dogmatic was now covering the ground at the rate of just over 9.3 knots, 17 kilometres per hour – (we counted the posts and timed them).

The castle to starboard just before PK269, is known locally as 'La Corsage Rouge'. Some thirty-odd years ago Edward Delmar Morgan recounted the story. It seems that when the Lord of the Manor was away fighting in the Crusades, his wife would hang her corsets out of her bedroom window as a sign to a monk living on the other side of the river at St Martin de Boscherville, that the coast was clear. One day her husband returned home unexpectedly. In a fearful rage, he is said to have slain the monk with his sword, dipped his wife's corsets in the blood, and draped them from her bedroom window for all to see.

La Boille (PK260), the next small town, was once a favourite with the painter Monet, and is still a popular tourist haunt. Here on the left bank is the 'Colonne Napoleon', which marks the spot where the body of Napoleon was laid to rest for a while during its long journey from St Helena to Paris. Then all too soon it seemed, we found ourselves passing through the industrialised outskirts of Rouen where tankers and ocean-going container ships lay alongside the quays.

Darse des Docks, Rouen (PK251)

We finally arrived at the entrance to Darse des Docks a little after 4 pm, having covered approximately 133 kilometres - (83 land miles – 73 nautical miles) - in just over 10.5 hours.

'Lozai Maintenance', the company which handles the craning of masts, is located at the far end of the dock near a pier against which is moored a large metal barge where we tied up for the night. At 8 a.m. sharp next morning, we arranged for our masts to be lifted out and stored ashore for an indefinite period. Charges then were: lifting out both masts – 300FF; storage – 300FF; re-stepping – 300FF. When we had prepared the rigging as instructed, a job that took several hours, the masts were lifted out, lashed to a 'chariot', then wheeled away to the main building for storage under cover.

The blisteringly hot weather that had accompanied us from England continued unabated. As temperatures rose, streams of bubbles began to appear on the surface of the water all around us, and in the quiet of the night, the sound of these gurgling and burbling their way round our hull made strange music. And there were eels. The water was alive with them. Early one morning I lifted the lid of the Lavac loo to find two small ones racing each other round the bowl.

ROUEN TOWN CENTRE

Next morning we paid a brief visit to the Bassin St Gervais to see what it had to offer visiting yachtsmen. Apart from there being one small pontoon and a hand-cranked crane for lifting out masts, there was nothing further. A time limit is set on how long one may stay here, but this is hardly a place in which anyone would wish to linger.

Rouen marina, near the centre of town, consists of a number of pontoons moored in line astern along the east bank of an island situated in the middle of the river where the current runs hard. This channel, the Bras du Pre au Loup, is strictly one-way, with navigation being always into the current. Ignore the rules at your peril!

Close by the entrance to the marina are several small shops, with the town centre being within walking distance (via a bridge and an underpass). Rouen is captivating, and the Cathedral, with its 600 ton cast iron spire truly magnificent. So dissimilar from the ultra-modern church dedicated to the memory of St Joan of Arc, who was burned alive in 15th century Rouen, her ashes being thrown into the Seine.

Preparations for ascending the non-tidal Seine.

Dogmatic, already appearing strange without her masts, began to look more outlandish as we decked her out for the long voyage ahead. First, sheets of heavy transparent plastic fifteen feet long were tied fore and aft amidships on either side of the hull. Next, plastic covered motor-tyres (given to us by a kindly French yachtsman), were suspended each side of the hull from main and mizzen chain plates. To rest upon the tyres we slung two sturdy planks some ten feet long and ten inches wide, which we had brought with us.

Our defences were completed by the addition of a large fender at bow and stern on each side. Next an emergency VHF aerial was fitted to the top of a wooden boat hook which was lashed to the mizzen tabernacle. Lastly a large French courtesy flag was flown from a jury staff secured to the mainmast tabernacle. All that was left to do was last minute shopping at the super-market, where we bought some wonderfully stinky cheese named 'Livarot'. Made with sour milk, it is delicious, despite its somewhat formidable odour.

AMFREVILLE – LOCK NO 1 (PK 202)

Next day we set off at crack of dawn and carried the flood tide to Amfreville, 25 miles away. Once clear of Rouen, the river became peaceful and quiet once more. Trees and pretty houses lined the banks, and herons stood like sentinels in the shadows. That was the

start of the herons. After that we saw lots of them. Kilometre posts became fewer, sometimes alternating with yellow-painted numbered squares.

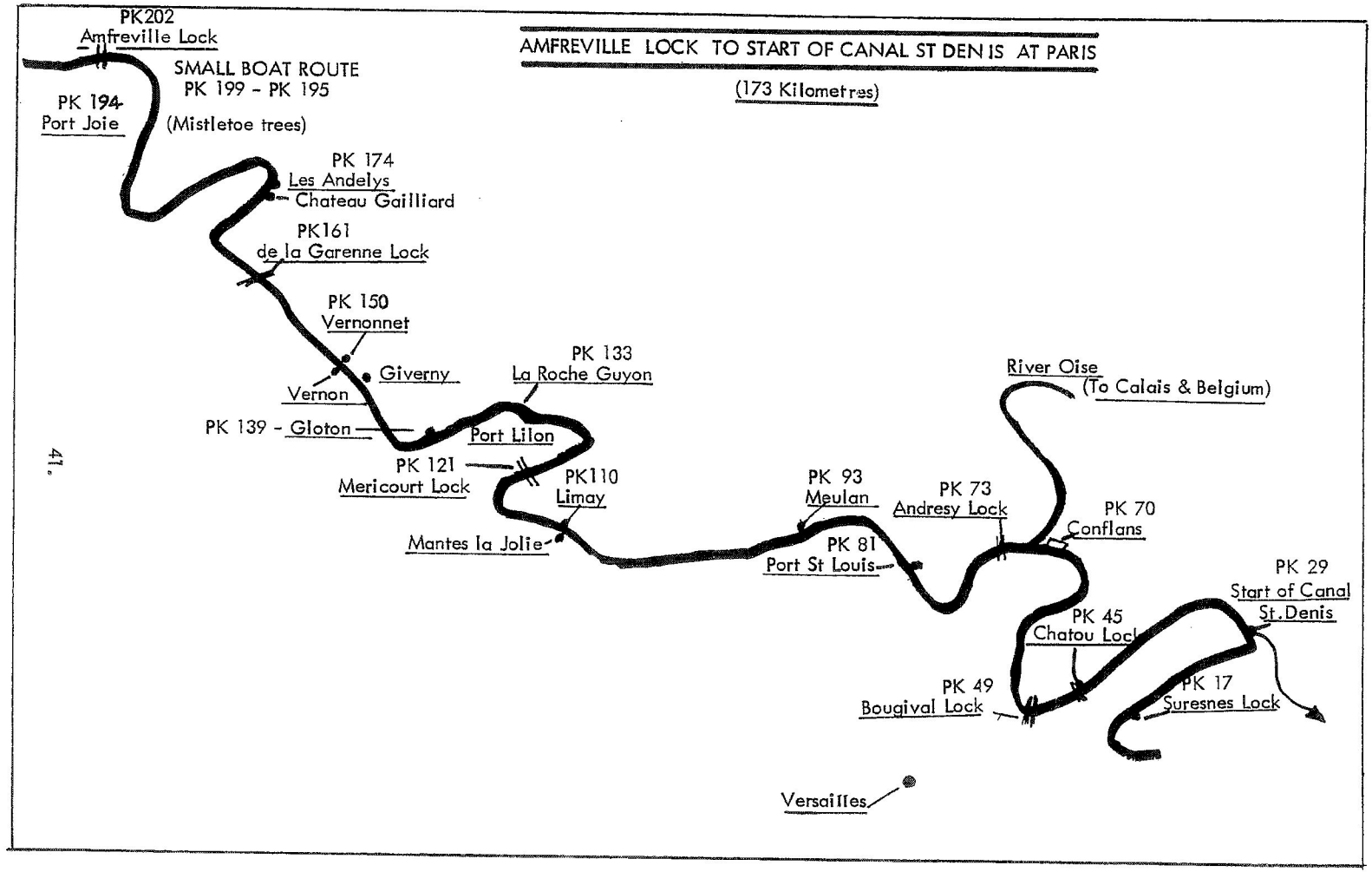
Our first sight of the Amfreville lock was somewhat daunting. To starboard, under a canopy of spray, water thundered over the Poses Dam like a miniature Niagara Falls, while to port, the gates of the giant lock, (700 feet long and 50 feet wide), were closed. After an interminably long wait, the dimmest of green lights appeared, then the gates began to creep open. As we made our way cautiously towards the vast acreage of water which lay behind the open gates of the lock, we began to wonder what lay ahead for us. But it happened that this was our lucky day. There were no other vessels, and little *Dogmatic* had to whole of that vast lock to herself.

Having selected a convenient ladder half way along on the starboard hand, we secured bow and stern lines, and waited. With no word spoken, the gates shut, and in surged the water. As we rose ever higher, Olive and Audrey transferred the ropes smartly from rung to rung, until at last, we reached the top, where we entered a new and tide-less world.

As sole occupants of the lock, we were fortunate in not having to contend with propeller wash from other craft, but as the days passed, and our experience and confidence grew, we came to realise that, provided a few simple precautions are observed, problems are likely to be few. By the time we reached Paris, having passed through a dozen or more locks large and small, we had worked out a simple system – so simple in fact, that on the way back, Olive and I happily managed the locks unaided.

Leaving Amfreville lock behind, we motored in tranquil waters past tall stands of poplar trees, their branches heavy with mistletoe, to Port Joie (PK194), and beyond to Bernieres-sur-Seine where the scenery began to change, and outcrops of white cliffs started to appear. At noon we arrived at historic Les Andelys (PK174) where we shoe-horned ourselves into a berth in the diminutive marina and had lunch in the cockpit.

Before long we were approached by a harassed Englishman who asked our aid to man-handle his boat to an inner mooring. He explained he had to return immediately to England to purchase new clothes. It transpired that before leaving the U.K., he had re-routed the exhaust pipe of his engine through a wardrobe, with the general idea of keeping the contents dry. The exhaust pipe had ultimately fractured,


AMFREVILLE LOCK TO START OF CANAL ST DENIS AT PARIS
(173 Kilometres)
PK202
Amfreville Lock
SMALL BOAT ROUTE
PK 199 - PK 195
PK 194
Port Joie
(Mistletoe trees)
PK 174
Les Andelys
Chateau Gailliard
PK161
de la Garenne Lock
PK 150
Vernonnet
Giverny
Vernon
PK 133
La Roche Guyon
PK 139 - Gloton
Port Lilon
PK 121
Mericourt Lock
PK110
Limay
Mantes la Jolie
PK 93
Meulan
PK 81
Port St Louis
PK 73
Andresy Lock
River Oise
(To Calais & Belgium)
PK 70
Conflans
PK 29
Start of Canal
St. Denis
PK 45
Chatou Lock
PK 49
Bougival Lock
PK 17
Suresnes Lock
Versailles

with the result that all his clothes had become coated with a layer of evil-smelling soot.

The area around Les Andelys is one of natural beauty. For Britons there is the added interest of the ruins of Gaillard Castle, King Richard the Lionheart's cliff-top fortress, which is perched in a commanding position high above the Seine, where the views are striking and quite make up for the effort of slogging up the steep approach road. Les Andelys may possess few shops, but we found it quiet and peaceful, and a fine stop-over for the night. We were sorry to move on next day, but by then we were really looking forward to facing the challenge of the locks ahead and what the next day might bring.

NOTRE DAME DE LA GARENNE – LOCK NO 2 – (PK161)
Soon after leaving this lock we began to notice there were many small pieces of what appeared to be shredded plastic, fluttering in the shrubs and lower branches of trees lining the banks. Much of this material was eight feet or more above the current water level, a clear indication that the Seine in winter is not the languid and beguiling river of hot and sunny summer days.

The Halte at Vernonnet (PK150)
Care must be taken when approaching this place to avoid an invisible offlying shallow patch which has claimed many a visiting yacht. The shoal is indicated by a metal post in the water and is clearly marked on charts. Club officials strongly recommend the use of nylon ropes when mooring, and that they be kept tight to ensure the vessel is held firmly against the pontoon to counteract the wash of barges passing on the far side of the river. We did as advised and had no trouble.

The pontoon itself is pleasantly located alongside the river bank in the grounds of an old country house, now a sailing school. Mooring fees are reasonable and the more frequent your visits, the cheaper they become. Some toilets are of the traditional pattern, but the showers more than compensate for that, with cascades of steaming hot water. The Yacht club, a converted peniche, with entrance in the bows, is sparsely but imaginatively fitted out, with a bar and a lounge area with a wrought-iron log fire suspended on chains from the deck head.

Basic foodstuffs are available in Vernonnet, while at Vernon, a much larger town just across the bridge, there are supermarkets and rail and bus stations – a good place to change crews. Folk at Vernon yacht club told us they are proud of their connection with England and the Vernon family, the most controversial of whom, Admiral Vernon, nicknamed 'Old Grog', notoriously ordered that the British Navy's rum

ration be watered down. Visitors from Britain are sometimes offered a copy of the Vernon family tree by the kindly club secretary – it is an interesting document.

While at Vernonnet we took the opportunity to visit Monet's house and garden at Giverny, where this famous Impressionist painter lived with his second wife, Alice (an ex-model), from 1882 until his death in 1926.

Monet was fascinated by water and the sea, and once asked that when he died, his body be laid to rest sealed inside a navigation buoy, so that he could spend all eternity surrounded by the sea, the element he loved.

We found Monet's house well worth the visit, with many reproductions of the painter's works being on display, plus a large collection of Japanese prints of which he was fond. The décor is more or less as it was in Monet's day, and in the kitchen, glittering copper saucepans provided a handsome contrast to beautiful blue and white tiles which acted as a backcloth to an old black cooking range.

The gardens have now been replanted to conform with Monet's original designs, with the flowers being changed according to the seasons to ensure a regular display of colour. We wandered down the paths to a little tunnel which led us into the Japanese inspired water garden with its lily pond, graceful curving bridge and weeping willows, and had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

At the end of our visit we were standing at the head of a long queue waiting for the bus, when suddenly it swished up beside us and screeched to a halt. At that moment the heavens opened. As one man, the crowd surged forward, and in an instant we were swept up the steps and far down into the interior of the bus. In seconds it was crammed to the point of suffocation, with three wedged into the space for one. And still those outside tried to push and heave their way on.

The driver stood clear of the human avalanche and let it all happen. At length, the bus, designed to carry 35 passengers, now crammed tightly with around a hundred wet and dripping bodies of all nationalities, started on its way back to Vernon. Ultimately we succeeded in passing a message down the bus to ask the driver to let us off near the bridge into Vernon.

Minutes later the bus ground to a halt mid-way round a roundabout where nearly half the passengers got out into the road to allow us to

alight. Then, amid much cheerful waving and shouts of "au revoir", it trundled away out of sight.

LOCK NO 3 – MERICOURT (PK121)

We said goodbye to Vernnonet next morning and set off en route for the Halte at Limay. Soon after passing Bonnieres sur Seine the river began to wind its way through unusually beautiful countryside, with cliffs on one side and forest on the other. About half way round one of the sweeping bends we came to the village of La Roche Guyon (PK133) where there is a large chateau close by the ruins of an ancient fortress. This chateau, home of the aristocratic Rochefoucald family, is where the most famous of them, the Marquis de la Rochefoucald, wrote his well known book of epigrams, "Maximes" in 1680. Then in 1944, the chateau became the headquarters of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. Five kilometres further on, we passed the village of Vetheuil, where Claude Monet lived with his first wife, Camille, until her death in 1879.

On arrival at Mericourt we found the lock gates were shut. Expecting there to be only a brief delay, we secured *Dogmatic* precariously to rickety steel piles driven into the river bed some 30 yards from the bank. It was an uncomfortable berth, and required the constant attention of two people to hold the boat in position. Having waited for some considerable time with no response to our calls on the radio, Olive suggested that "Perhaps someone could climb to the top of this steel staging and maybe find a way of getting to the lock to ask why the delay".

Finding no volunteers, Olive swung herself outboard across to a vertical steel ladder and shinned to the top, with Audrey bravely in pursuit. They were gone for quite a long time, then two little faces appeared on the gantry high above with news that the delay had been caused by the late arrival of two barges, which happily came into view a little later. We followed them into the lock and were quickly on our way again.

Once clear of the lock, I turned hard to port round the end of the Ile de Sabloniere, and made for the narrow channel leading to Port Lilon. Gliding in near silence among the trees, we followed the channel round to port and passed under a small bridge to find ourselves in a large and shallow expanse of water where an extraordinary collection of pleasure craft in various states of repair was moored to two long pontoons. The general air of neglect about the place was such that it reminded me of

an old-time film set which depicted derelict ships trapped for eternity in the weed of the Sargasso Sea.

I read later that during the rebuilding and reconstruction of Paris in the 19th century, all the sand used came from vast sandpits dredged either side of the river Seine and taken to Paris by horse-drawn barges. This left a trail of huge private lakes, of which Port Lilon is one.

Port Lilon may not have been all that we had hoped it to be, but the weather was lovely – the sun shone, and there were more herons than people. Although we saw but few boats that day, there was always something of interest to look at. French yachtsmen to whom we spoke told us that while they regularly spent their summer holidays cruising on the Seine, they never went beyond Andressy and the River Oise, gateway to the canals of northern France, because Paris had no appeal for them as a holiday destination.

LIMAY (PK109.5) Here the Halte Nautique was moored in a sheltered backwater, alongside the river bank in a small public park. Conditions were idyllic, the moorings were good, and we had a quiet night.

With the dawn came another beautiful day, the surrounding hills reflected in the misty mirror-like surface of the river. While Olive and Audrey visited nearby shops, I took pictures of the historic stone-built 'Porters Lodge', subject of the picture "Mantes Bridge" painted by Corot. Shopping done, we cast off, squeezed under the stone bridge, motored along the backwater, and re-joined the main channel at PK107, just beyond Mantes la Jolie.

It was here at Mantes in 1087 that William the Conqueror sent in his army to burn the town in revenge for raids made by its inhabitants on his territory. When afterwards King William rode in to view the smoking ruins, his horse stumbled and threw him to the ground, inflicting injuries from which he died.

A few kilometres ahead, at Les Mureaux (PK93), we made a brief detour to reconnoitre the Halte at Meulan which, as expected, much resembled that at Limay. Once more we departed the main channel, this time to visit Port St Louis (PK81). Alas, it proved to be far from being the smart marina we had imagined, and the water was quite shallow.

In general, we found the water to be at its shallowest in the wider stretches of the river, with the deep channel often to be found far from the shore. It is unwise to motor along near river banks or islands.

Should a loaded barge come close, the suction, combined with the wash caused by its passage, will quickly drop the water-level to such an extent, that you might very well hit the bottom with a bang.

In this respect, be especially careful to stay well clear of the southern tip of the Ile Ste.Louis (PK77), and always keep an eye peeled for arrows indicating the direction and distance from the bank to the deep water, as well as for barges coming up from behind! Loaded barges have little freeboard and are not always easy to spot.

LOCK NO4 and ANDRESSY (PK73). Here we found the pontoon conveniently sited in yet another sheltered backwater, with shops and an open air market all within walking distance.

For some days, signs along the river had warned that all locks would be closed on July 14th for Bastille Day celebrations. Other notices advertised firework displays to be held on either the 13th or 14th of July. For Andressy, the event was to be held that very night, and aboard *Dogmatic* we had a good view of much that went on.

The Grand Parade began at dusk, with a Firemens' Band leading a procession of local dignitaries, just as one sees in films of rural France. Following on behind was a great host of children, and the not so young, each of whom carried a multi-coloured paper lantern with a lighted candle inside. Duly clutching our lanterns, we joined in the cavalcade as it wound its way along the river bank to the accompaniment of lively martial music. The evening concluded with a display of fireworks, and it was not until the wee small hours, after a long and happy day that we tumbled into bed.

Next morning Olive and Audrey went off bright and early to buy croissants for breakfast. Some time later they returned, with beaming smiles upon their faces. Had John and I known, that in celebration of Bastille Day, the market traders had been handing out glasses of wine for free, we would have joined them. Yes, we did like Andressy.

CONFLANS ST HONORINE – (PK70)
Later that day, we strolled beside the river to the bridge over the River Oise, then walked on to Conflans St Honorine. Conflans, at the confluence – (distorted to Conflans) – of the rivers Oise and Seine, is the barge centre of France. The St Honorine part of the name dates from the 9th Century. Until that time, the bones of a 3rd century martyr, St Honorine rested at Graveil near Le Havre. But when the Vikings invaded in 847, the villagers fled, taking their holy relics with them.

Each town they stopped at took on the name of the Saint, and their wanderings ended at Conflans.

Nowadays at Conflans, there are a great many barges permanently moored beside the river bank – most of them having been converted into retirement homes for barge folk.

Among them, conspicuous in white paint, is the floating chapel, "Je Sers". Much visited by bargees from all over France, it is highly popular for weddings, and open to the public.

LOCK NO 5 – BOUGIVAL

Next day we stopped to fill up our tanks at a fuel barge moored on the starboard side of the river, just a little upstream of the railway bridge. Credit cards were accepted and food and drink was obtainable. Then, as we drew nearer the outskirts of Paris the scene changed. Far from being a rural area as it was in Monet's day, it became predominantly industrial, with docks and factories lining the banks.

It was time to investigate a more interesting route.

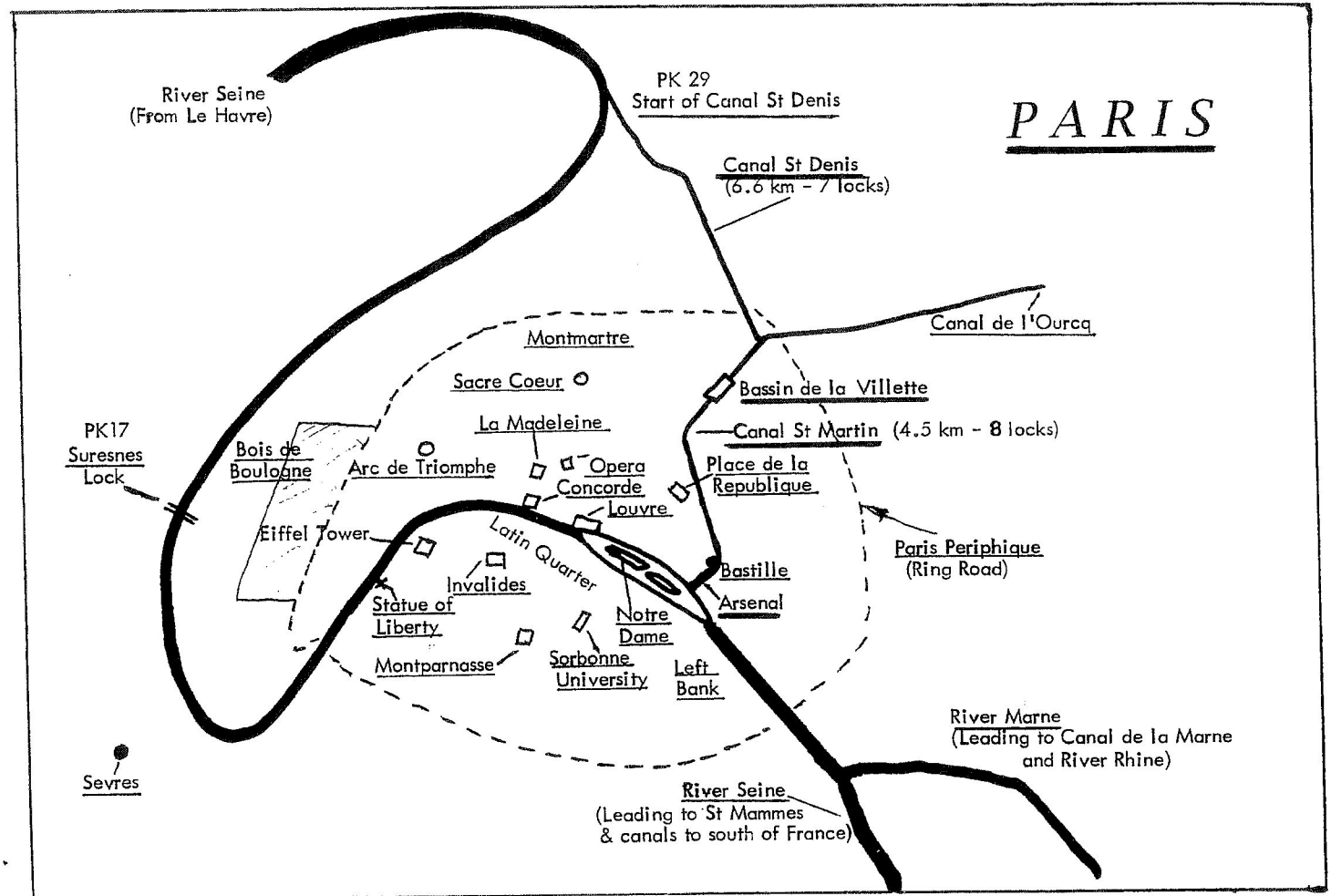
ST DENIS CANAL (PK29) – the back door into Paris.

Some 25 kilometres further on we entered the St Denis Canal at the de la Briche lock, (rising bollards to port), where I obtained a five-day carnet to give us the freedom of a network of small Paris Canals – the St Denis, the St Martin and the Canal de l'Ourq.

In the course of the next six and a half kilometres, we negotiated seven locks, rising all the time. Little by little the industrial suburbs gave way to the pleasant waterside Parc de la Villette, recognizable from a distance by its large silver dome. Here at the Museum of Technology one may pilot an Airbus, dive deep beneath the sea, and even travel in an Ariane space rocket.

By comparison with earlier locks, the final lock on the Canal St Denis, the Ecluse du Pont de Flandre, ("La Grande Ecluse"), was a massive structure, and quite at variance with the futuristic buildings of the Museum of Technology nearby. The entrance was deep in a gloomy cut, and as we passed under a brooding archway of stone, a great iron gate clanged shut and in cascaded the water.

In semi-darkness we were raised more than thirty feet towards a distant rectangle of light. Minutes later, blinking in bright sunshine, we


PARIS
River Seine
(From Le Havre)
PK 29
Start of Canal St Denis
Canal St Denis
(6.6 km - 7 locks)
Canal de l'Ourcq
Montmartre
Sacre Coeur
Bassin de la Villette
La Madeleine
Canal St Martin (4.5 km - 8 locks)
PK17
Suresnes
Lock
Bois de
Boulogne
Arc de Triomphe
Opera
Concorde
Place de la
Republique
Louvre
Eiffel Tower
Latin Quarter
Paris Periphique
(Ring Road)
Invalides
Bastille
Statue of
Liberty
Arsenal
Notre
Dame
Montparnasse
Sorbonne
University
Left
Bank
River Marne
(Leading to Canal de la Marne
and River Rhine)
Sevres
River Seine
(Leading to St Mammes
& canals to south of France)

were astonished to find ourselves looking down upon the traffic in the streets below. From there it was little more than a stone's throw to the junction of the Canal St Denis and the Canal de l'Ourcq where we turned right, to be brought up short by the very low Pont de Crimee, a remarkable antique road bridge which was built in 1885 and, like the Kingsferry bridge over the River Swale in Kent, it rises horizontally.

The process is triggered whenever a light beam is broken by a vessel, and is automatic. The system worked well, albeit slowly, and eventually we were free to make our way into a large expanse of water known as the Bassin de la Villette. Apart from a few sight-seeing boats moored in one corner, we were the only occupants. That evening we had dinner in the cockpit and basked in the warm evening sunshine, happy to have arrived safely in Paris. Overnight we had our ensign stolen, but I blame myself for having neglected to bring it in at sunset.

Thereafter we left nothing moveable on deck. By next afternoon we began to think that perhaps La Villette may not be the most salubrious place to stay in Paris. Nearby was a large D.H.S.S. office, and all around we could see many unemployed immigrants filling their days by sitting on walls and benches, smoking, staring, watching, waiting.

When John and Audrey returned from sight-seeing that evening, we decided to move immediately to the security of the Paris 'Arsenal' Marina at the far end of the Canal St. Martin.

CANAL ST MARTIN.

This canal, dug at the beginning of the 19th century to link the Canal de l'Ourq with the Seine, is four and a half kilometres long, has eight locks (four pairs of two), and goes downhill to a tunnel roughly two kilometres long.

The initial problem at our first lock, the Ecluse Jaures, was that the water level was extraordinarily high, and we had to lower our heavy motor-tyres part-way into the water to prevent the hull from scraping on the concrete edge. The second difficulty was the strong flow of water which carried us into the lock and cascaded in torrents over the top of the gates at the far end, but a stern line applied in good time quickly checked our forward momentum.

Once through the lock the scene began to change, and soon, much to our delight, we found ourselves motoring along a marine highway through the heart of Paris, with busy tree-lined streets with shops and restaurants on either side. This was a sensational experience. The locks, the quaint footbridges made of iron, the shade trees, open air

cafes, and the tourists all combined to bring something of a touch of Amsterdam to the scene.

Two kilometres later the canal flowed underground into a gloomy tunnel, lit only by whatever feeble light could filter through from ventilation holes in the boulevard above. While in Paris, we heard that the tabloid press had once run an extraordinary scare story about a gang of cannibals supposedly living in the darkness of the tunnel. It was of course a hoax.

However, the tunnel did provide us with one surprise. We were feeling our way round a right-hand bend in almost total darkness, when, suddenly, curious lights appeared ahead, with ghostly shapes cavorting in the shadows nearby. It was a bit of an anti-climax to find that the mysterious figures were simply film actors in mediaeval costume gesturing impatiently for us to clear the scene. As a matter of interest, footpaths along either side of the canal have now been blocked off to prevent muggers from preying on pedestrians foolhardy enough to take the risk of walking through.

Eventually loud rumbles above our heads signalled we were passing under the Paris Metro Station at the Bastille, and shortly afterwards we emerged from the gloom of the tunnel into the bright sunshine of the Arsenal Marina where we tied up alongside the visitor's pontoon at the Capitainerie down by the lock to the Seine. The following day being John and Audrey's last in Paris, we spent a few happy hours together that evening having dinner at a Tunisian restaurant close by in the Place de la Bastille.

For the next two weeks Olive and I immersed ourselves in the magic and sights and sounds of Paris and had a lot of fun. Our friends Philip and Micky Lockwood took in all our washing and returned it to us dried and ironed, and entertained us at their luxury penthouse apartment at the Madeleine, with its antiques and spectacular views over the rooftops of Paris.

One lovely evening we were invited to a dinner party held at a chic restaurant tucked away on the Left Bank, where the food, the wine and the company left us with memories we treasure still. It was well past midnight on that warm and balmy night when we set off in the bright moonlight to stroll slowly back to the Madeleine through narrow streets where, even at that hour, people thronged the restaurants and where bars were still packed with customers.

That night our hosts, Micky and Philip, invited us to stay with them, and later as I lay in bed going over the events of the evening, I gazed enthralled through wide windows over the top of the Madeleine Church, across a darkened Paris, spellbound at the panoramic views and the beauty of the Cathedral of Sacre Coeur standing high upon the skyline above Montmartre, iridescent and aglow in the soft moonlight. It was much later that I sank into sleep, for I was reluctant to close my eyes upon that scene from fairyland.

On other days we explored Paris by Metro and on foot, from Fauchon's fabled foodshop at the Madeleine, to the Galleries Lafayette in the Champs Elysees and the huge Samaritaine department store down by the Seine at Pont Neuf, where one of the finest views of Paris may be had for free from its rooftop garden. And we found that the best rates for changing sterling notes into French currency were to be had at the Banque Rivaud in the arcaded Rue de Rivoli.

The Musee D'Orsay, with its extensive collection of Impressionist paintings, was a great attraction, as was Montmartre where we climbed endless flights of steps to reach the Sacre Coeur Cathedral, though there is a funicular which will take you up for a few francs. Among other places visited were the Glass Pyramid at the Louvre, Victor Hugo's museum in the Place de Vosges, and the old Paris Opera House, which inspired the story of the 'Phantom of the Opera'.

On the Ile de la Cite we visited La Conciergerie where Marie Antoinette was imprisoned before being taken to the guillotine, and the Sainte Chapelle, famed for its stained glass windows; later we strolled round the great Cathedral of Notre Dame and lit a candle for a friend before going to the Memorial to the Deportees, one of the most moving of all monuments.

Whilst on the subject, within walking distance of the Arsenal Marina is the vast Pere Lachaise cemetery which was opened in 1804. Here lie the singers Edith Piaf and Maria Callas, as do composers Rossini, Bizet, and Chopin, plus writers Oscar Wilde and Marcel Proust and many others once famous.

In one corner of the cemetery is the 'Federalist's Wall', where, in May 1871, the last 147 insurgents of the Paris Commune's final stand were lined up and shot. They were buried where they fell in a communal grave. Two million visitors a year from all over the world visit this huge cemetery which has about 70,000 graves and covers 44 hectares, equivalent to 110 acres.

On a more cheery note, while out shopping for breakfast croissants one morning, I spotted the name of a road, the Boulevard Henri IV. Long forgotten memories came flooding back of a time before World War 2, when my family lived in the tiny seaside town of Hythe in Kent It was there one summer, while on leave from the Royal Air Force, that I met Solange Vanneste, a young French student. After her return home we kept in touch by letter, but our correspondence ceased with the fall of France in the Spring of 1940.

With the coming of peace, I flew to Paris and landed at Orly aerodrome from where I telephoned Solange's parents at their apartment in the Boulevard Henri IV. After they had recovered from the shock of hearing my voice, I was invited round to dinner. Wearing my smartest uniform, I arrived that evening quite unprepared for what was to follow. Anticipating my questions, Solange's mother took me gently by the arm and led me to a grand piano upon which there stood a large silver framed photograph of a young couple with a small child. Waving her forefinger slowly from side to side, she looked me full in the face and said "I shall never tell her you have been here".

Late one afternoon we arrived back at the marina to find that a mock-up of an underground train had been positioned on the quay opposite to where *Dogmatic* was lying. Close beside the carriages was a canopied dais, while all around, guarded by armed men in black uniforms, milled a smart and fashionably dressed crowd. Aboard *Dogmatic* we had a grandstand view of the ceremony as Government Ministers 'Baptised', as they put it, the start of construction of the new 'Meteor' Underground Line. At a cost of sixty million pounds sterling, it was due to be opened in 1997.

The night before we left Paris, a young English couple on passage to England in a small motor cruiser, thinking we were on our way to the Mediterranean, came to ask if we would sell them our charts of the lower Seine. Unfortunately we still required them, so they borrowed our book of strip-charts to make notes of the principal dangers. When they realised quite how many of these there were, the couple decided not to risk sailing without proper charts, and asked if they might follow us.

LEAVING PARIS

In contrast to the weeks of mainly fine and sunny weather we had enjoyed up till then, the morning of our departure dawned cloudy and dull. Philip and Micky, our friends from the Embassy, came early to accompany us on the passage downstream from the Arsenal Marina to

Port de la Concorde. We entered the lock shortly after 8 a.m. followed closely by the young couple in the motor cruiser. Down and down we went, the gates creaked open, and in moments we had exchanged the relative peace of the marina for the rush and bustle of the Seine.

Dead on time at 8.35, the traffic lights on the Pont de Sully changed from red to green, and we set off downstream following the one-way system, passing between the Ile St Louis and Ile de la Cite, to the Pont-au-Change bridge, where similar traffic lights control vessels heading upstream. When going downstream, the one-way section must be completed in 15 minutes at a mandatory minimum speed of 8 kilometres per hour. (Starting at 35 minutes past the hour, there is one fifteen minute flow of traffic downstream from the lights at the Pont de Sully, and one flow upstream for 20 minutes, starting on the hour from the Pont au Change bridge).

By the time we had arrived at Port de la Concorde, (just downstream of the elegant Pont Alexandre III bridge), the wash churned up by fast moving tourist boats had made the water decidedly choppy. Choosing a quiet moment, I eased *Dogmatic* past the Touring Club de France's floating club-house and squeezed in alongside *Willy*, a robust motor vessel. As Olive and I hung on, Micky and Philip scrambled aboard her and made their way ashore; then we manhandled *Dogmatic* backwards and rejoined the couple with the motor boat.

Together we continued downstream, past the Eiffel Tower and the small replica of the Statue of Liberty and made it to the lock at Suresnes (PK17) just before noon. Twenty minutes later we were on our way again, heading for the Port de Plaisance at Chatou, the approach to which is dominated by an 8 kilometre long island, the Ile du Chatou which divides the Seine into two separate channels.

An hour or so later, it dawned on me that the Port de Plaisance at Chatou, where we had planned to stop for the night, was on the far side of the island. Being by then well past the point where I should have switched channels, rather than retrace our steps and disappoint the couple in the motor boat, I decided to continue on to Andressy.

We arrived at the lock at Chatou (PK44) around 3 p.m., and half an hour later were on our way downstream once more. We finally reached Andressy just before 7 p.m., after a long and exhausting day, with a total journey time of just over nine hours. The trip was interesting enough, but I have regrets to this day for having pushed on like that.

We rafted to a heavily built steel motor-catamaran ingeniously adapted by its French owner, with ramps and other devices, to provide

wheelchair access for their handsome teenaged son. Next morning the motor boat departed early for the River Oise and Calais, and the owner of the French catamaran presented us with a superb bottle of Chateau-bottled red wine, and suggested we keep it a year or so before drinking. A delightful gesture, and I have the bottle still.

The trip down-river entered the realms of enchantment when at length we turned into one of the backwaters. *Dogmatic* made scarcely a ripple in the smooth green water as we glided along in absolute peace and quiet, past gracious houses and colourful gardens, with wildlife in abundance. But like all good things, this backwater eventually came to an end, and once again we found ourselves back in the main channel where our next stop was the Halte at Meulan.

At Les Mureau we turned to starboard into the narrow Bras St Come. Then, in quick time, we passed under two small bridges, took a hairpin bend to starboard under the second span of the second bridge, into the Bras de Meulan, where we found the 10 metre long pontoon ahead and to port in a backwater in the grounds of a small park. Close to the town of Meulan with its shops and open air market, this was yet another enjoyable stopover.

Next morning I motored *Dogmatic* through one of the arches of the stone bridge while Olive took a photo, then we retraced our steps and rejoined the main channel via the Bras de Mezy, a six kilometre long backwater which runs from PK93 to PK99.

It was so hot that day, (the temperature in the saloon was 86 degrees!) that when we arrived at the lock at Mericourt (PK121) and heard there would be a three hour wait, we moored alongside the river bank to stakes hammered into the hard baked earth – then took a siesta. By far and away our longest wait ever, this delay was caused by the sheer volume of barge traffic.

Giant rafts, (consisting of barges chained together) appeared one after the other. It took only one of these monsters to fill an entire lock from one end to the other. In addition to the regular barge-trains, there were other enormous craft, resembling floating car parks, which carried what appeared to be hundreds of Renault motor cars lined up upon their multiple decks. Despite all the activity on the water, ashore it was quiet and peaceful, and time passed quickly.

At length it came our turn to enter the lock, and soon we were on our way again. The heat of the day was by now intense, and the sun beat so fiercely upon our backs that Olive rummaged out an old black

umbrella to protect us from its burning rays. We made several detours that afternoon to explore places marked on the chart as "Haltes". Without exception they proved a disappointment. We even visited the inappropriately named "Port St Nicholas" at PK139, only to discover that it consisted solely of two short pontoons packed tightly with small boats. Even had the pontoons been unoccupied, they looked scarcely substantial enough to take a Seadog.

And at nearby Gloton, the 'Halte' proved to be nothing better than a derelict concrete pontoon minus bollards and cleats, half sunken and aground near a caravan park concealed among the trees. Today it is difficult to appreciate that only one hundred years ago Gloton was a beautiful and remote spot, accessible only by ancient chain ferry, where those who came, it is said, found a paradise on earth. This, too, was the place where, all those years ago, Monet painted one of the most famous of all his pictures, "The River".

BACK TO VERNONNET (PK150)

We arrived in the early evening, after a long, hot and tiring day, but cold showers and a good meal soon put new life in us. It was bucketing with rain when we awoke next morning so, with cockpit hood erected, we went to inspect more backwaters – from PK153 to PK158 and PK194 to PK199. Happily, the rain soon ceased, the sun appeared, and the river became once more like glass. The lock at Notre Dame de la Garenne came and went without incident, and by late afternoon we found ourselves near Mesnil de Poses (PK201), where we motored around for a while in search of a peaceful spot in which to spend the night.

We found the ideal location on the west bank of a backwater about one kilometre upstream of the Amfreville lock, where two wooded islands protected us from the wash of barge traffic passing along the main channel. There, in front of an elegant country house, we tied up to a couple of trees, a bench seat, and a land anchor, and while birds sang, and herons watched the twinkling waters, we sat back in the cockpit and relaxed over pre-dinner drinks.

In the cool of evening we took a walk beside the river and presently came upon a man who was wrestling with a smoking chimney on the roof of his barge, *Crusader II*. Down below we could see a log fire blazing brightly. Seeing our interest, he stopped work to explain that he was busy converting the internal layout of his barge into self-catering accommodation, hopeful of attracting holiday makers

interested in cruising the Seine between Rouen and Paris. We were invited aboard to view the work and sample his favourite liqueur Rum.

We spent a stimulating hour or so in the company of this charming and entertaining man, and as we were about to leave, he offered to give us a note of introduction to his old friend, the jazz musician Django Reinhardt, who ran his own restaurant in the pretty riverside town of Samois-sur-Seine, in the Forest of Fontainbleu. Alas, we were headed in the opposite direction.

Next morning we rose early, and in the pale light that follows dawn, set off towards the lock via a gap between two islands. Suddenly there came loud shouts from behind.

Startled, I looked back from the wheel, and in the semi-darkness could just make out two figures on the towpath gesticulating violently. There was no mistaking their meaning. I swung the wheel hard to port – for some seconds the propeller kicked up a swirl of muddy water, but thanks be to whoever it was on the towpath at that unearthly hour of the morning, we escaped running aground by a hair's breadth.

After an ignominious beginning, everything else that day went right. The lights changed to green as we approached the lock, and in we went, all alone, as we had on that memorable day, now so long ago, when first we entered it. For the last time for us, the lock gates closed and *Dogmatic* was lowered gently back to the tidal Seine where we sped downstream some 25 kilometres to the marina in Rouen town centre, and arrived in time for elevenses.

We cleaned the boat, stocked up with food and wine, and at 5 am the next morning, cast off at the turn of the tide, and whistled the brief distance downstream to Darse de Docks. Restepping the masts was done with minimal fuss and *Dogmatic* slowly resumed her normal appearance. By nightfall both masts and all the standing rigging was in place. Next day was spent making fine adjustments, bending on sails and maintenance of the engine, which had done such sterling work over the past few weeks.

BACK TO LE HAVRE

We rose in near darkness, and at the recommended departure time of 2 hours before high water Rouen, set off downstream. Initially we made such fast progress that I decided not to stop for the night on a buoy at Caudebec as planned, but go instead straight to Honfleur. When the tide went foul, I increased engine speed, but not nearly enough, for when we reached Honfleur we found the lock gates closed.

We finally got to Le Havre at 5.30 p.m. After more than 12 hours of fast motoring in the heat, our ears stayed ringing and our feet throbbing through to the next day. In retrospect, making the voyage downriver non-stop, did make the exercise a bit of a marathon. It might have been wiser to have spent the night on a buoy at either Villequier or Caudebec, as originally planned.

That evening, having enjoyed a leisurely meal and a night-cap, we decided to go to bed early. But things rarely work out as planned. Just as we were about to turn in, we were paid a visit by a friendly Dutchman who said he loved Seadogs and that he knew Ad Beaufort who sails *Sara of Wyre*, and it was quite late when at last we climbed into our bunks, tired, relaxed and happy.

The following day we stowed the 10' long fender boards, the motor tyres and the plastic sheets, and generally prepared our little ship for sea. I then worked out the navigation for the passage home and we did some last minute shopping. It blew hard that day. The sea was rough, and the rare yacht that did venture out was later to be seen scurrying back to the shelter of the harbour.

But forecasts from Radio Solent and on Navtex suggested there would be a short-lived window in the weather pattern some time later next day, likely to last long enough for us to fit in a night crossing of the Channel before the next series of strong northwesterly winds set in. During the evening I phoned John Lansdell who had kindly agreed to come with us for the voyage back to England. That night gale force winds lashed the harbour, and in the early hours boat owners appeared in their pyjamas, scuttling about fixing extra mooring lines to their yachts. We had a rough night – not a good portent for our sail next day across the Channel.

CHANNEL CROSSING

After the night's activity we were deeply asleep when suddenly, at 6.30 a.m., there came a brisk rat-a-tat-tat on the cabin roof. I leapt out of the bunk and slid down the hatch. Greatly to my amazement there stood John. "What time is breakfast?" he said. On receiving my message he had travelled like the wind by car from Bristol to Portsmouth where, with only minutes to spare, he had caught the night ferry to Le Havre. Asked if the crossing had been rough, he replied "not a bit – the Channel was like a sheet of glass". Our gale, which was very real, must have been a local one.

We departed Le Havre as planned at 1930 hours, by which time there was little wind and the sea was calm. Our voyage home to England was untroubled, with a bright moon to guide us, and a light south-westerly wind which steadily increased as the night wore on. By 9 am we could see the white cliffs at Culver on the Isle of Wight, blazing like a beacon in the early morning sunshine. But it was to be a further five hours before we brought them abeam. The wind by then had become decidedly fresh, and we had a cracking sail right up to the two forts which mark the eastern entrance to the Solent. From there we made steady progress westwards, through vast fleets of racing yachts to Cowes, where we hoped to find a berth for the night.

Olive and I never have relished the prospect of returning straight to our mooring on the Hamble River on the very day we return from a cruise, and much prefer to wind down somewhere quiet over on the Isle of Wight. But I had forgotten about it being Cowes Week. We found the place swarming with people and jam-packed with yachts. A kindly berthing master at Cowes East Marina shepherded us into an impossibly small space and we were grateful, in spite of the fact that the place was heaving with bodies ashore and afloat.

Grassy areas were covered with tents of all sizes and descriptions; there were marquees, cars and caravans. People sat round playing musical instruments – the scene resembled the aftermath of a Pop Festival. In the midst of all this we sat in the cockpit and had dinner, revelling in all the activity which surrounded us, happy to be part of the scene. Later we strolled into Cowes town centre to watch the last of the festivities.

Next morning we slipped our moorings and headed down the Medina River towards the Solent. Gone now were the long stretches of placid water, the herons and the peaceful backwaters. Instead we found ourselves for the second time in two days among the colourful sails of hundreds of yachts, and saw, distinct among them, the sails of a Seadog. This was *Natuna*, the first Seadog we had seen since setting off for Paris at the beginning of July.

It was not long before we were back once more at Crableck Marina, a tiny haven of peace tucked into a bend of the Hamble River, close to woods and fields with their horses, goats, donkeys and geese; nearby there is even a trout lake. A happy place to return to. But still we could not face the idea of slotting straight back into the rat-race, so we walked home, collected the pile of mail which sat waiting for us, and returned to *Dogmatic.* There, we had dinner and spent a blissful hour or two sitting in the cockpit with a Brandy and Lovage, reading our mail,

surrounded by the sounds of evening, the cry of the curlews, and the swans asking for their late-night suppers, while high above stars began to appear in the deepening blue sky.

Tomorrow would come soon enough, with all its pressures, but for now we were happy to reflect on what had been the trip of a lifetime. Our visit had been all we had hoped, and the Seine had been the fascinating pathway that had led us to the fulfilment of a dream.

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SeaDog Website

By Graham Matthews (*Dougal)*

Many of you will know we have our own SeaDog website. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you how to find it and what it contains.

On the site you will find information about the history of SeaDogs, voyages undertaken, modifications made by owners and lots of photographs, some of them taken at recent rallies. We have lots of spare space at the moment, so if you have any stories, information, photographs, etc. that you think may be of interest to other SeaDog owners and other Internet users, please let me know. All photographs can be returned if required, or if you have the technology, just send me an electronic image by email.

To visit the website you will need to type: www.seadog.org.uk
To send me an email, just type: graham.matthews@btinternet.com
You may also like to know that our Honorary Secretary is now able to send and receive emails. To contact him, type: honsec@seadog.org.uk

One of the most recent additions to the SeaDog website is the possibility of buying books via the well-established Internet bookshop, Amazon.co.uk For full details visit the website and you should be aware that most books are available at a worthwhile discount from the RRP and for every purchase a commission will be paid to the SeaDog Owners Association. The process of purchasing through the SOA can be a little confusing at first so if you are unsure about how to do it, give me a shout, either by email or by phone. (Telephone 01256-471830)

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BIZZIE LIZZIE MAKES IT TO FÉCAMP

By Roel Wijmans

The good old Perkins 4.107 engine finally gave up on me last October and was ready for the scrap-yard when a piston, apparently needing some fresh air, came right through the block. All winter I was on the search for a replacement and eventually got my hands on a 4.108 Perkins. Using parts from the original engine, I refitted it to *Bizzie Lizzie*, only to find out it was consuming more oil than fuel. As it was still under guarantee, I complained to the vendor who, after taking a trip with me aboard *Bizzie Lizzie*, agreed that this was unacceptable and offered to carry out a complete reconditioning of the engine immediately. It turned out that all its life the engine had been used ashore to power a hydraulic pump, so it never really had to work. Because I had planned a trip to Normandy at the beginning July, I decided to postpone the work on the engine till later. I bought 10 gallons of old, used engine oil from our local car dealer for £3.50. After all, what's the use of putting in good and expensive oil that comes out almost as quickly as you put it in – it only needs to lubricate the moving parts, which it does perfectly. So, at the end of the season, out came the engine, with the hope that it will come back fully repaired, with a long time to stay.

DESTINATION FÉCAMP

On July 3rd I left our berth with a friend (who had crewed with me last year), and sailed to Ostend where I picked up two more 'crew', of which one, I knew, would be a passenger. Whilst the other claimed to have sailing experience, alas, in the event, he too, turned out to be a passenger. Anyway, Monday the 26th of July at 02.00 hours, we left Ostend for Calais where, after a good day's sailing we arrived in the evening to be welcomed by three French Customs men wanting to know and see everything. We sailed next to Le Touquet on one of the few beautiful days of summer and arrived two hours before high water to enter the river. As it had been a long tiring day we were a bit too eager to enter, and promptly ran aground following another yacht which we thought to be local – but wrongly so. It took less than 20 minutes with the strong flood tide under us to reach the marina at Etaples, and as long to dock with my 'sailors' As a footnote for future visitors – berth at the very first jetty, where you will stay afloat; all the others dry out completely, and the bottom is not too flat! The harbour master was more interested in football than in visiting yachts, but he more than compensated for that by saying that a Seadog is 'only 22 feet' long. (Another tip: wait for H.W. plus 1-2 hours, which gets you out to sea

comfortably and quickly) And watch out for low-flying Custom's helicopters.

Next stop Dieppe. However, at the end of the afternoon the wind freshened to S-SW 5-6, so we motored for around five hours to get into Dieppe at 2 am.. Just before reaching the coast, the port fuel tank clogged up for unknown reason, and to bleed a hot engine, in the dark, in shallow waters in a Force 6 with a passenger at the helm is a sick-making experience. Any cure(s)?. So my crew had won their first award, of not becoming sea-sick. After this first rough day we decided to stay on for an extra day in Dieppe. Restaurants are plentiful and reasonable (but enquire first at the yacht club, otherwise you might end up in a tourist trap). With the weather forecast little changed, we decided to go on to St Valery-en-Caux, another tidal harbour. I must admit that you do feel pretty safe in a bilge-keel boat in this kind of harbour. However this is where the first disaster struck. While entering the channel slowly I had to reverse, only to find that I had no power, tho' the engine was ticking over smoothly. The only thing left was to let her drift on, into the Avant Port, which is very uncomfortable in an incoming tide. All hands were called on deck to keep her from scraping the wall. Fortunately we had plenty of rope on board and managed to secure her while waiting for help to come.

Meanwhile, inspection showed that the two bolts connecting the propeller-shaft to the engine had vanished, despite the fact that I had used Locktite to secure them. So, unfortunately, there was no one else to blame. The only thing was to wait for the tide to go out at 3 am, then get some sleep before searching for a shop selling these bolts. At the third attempt I managed to get the right size, but could find nothing wherewith to lock the nuts, not even washers, so a bit of sewing thread and some glue had to suffice until I could fix it properly. Meanwhile almost the whole village came out to see us, and only after the repair did the Port Director come to enquire if we required any assistance. "Disaster Tourism" also exists in St Valery, and they were all waiting eagerly. As soon as we had water under her belly (11.40 am), I started the engine, waved at the crowd, and we disappeared round the corner, destination Fecamp.

Outside it was still blowing F5-6, and we arrived at Fecamp in a F7, to be welcomed by the crew of the old Dutch lifeboat 'Neeltje Jacoba', well known in the 50's and 60's for some heroic rescues. We stayed an extra day to watch the World Cup '98 final France-Brazil, and the owner of the restaurant where we had had a meal the previous day gave us VIP treatment with the best seats, and drinks on the house. All good things come to an end, and the next day we set off back to

Dieppe, a fairly easy trip, as we had meanwhile got used to the wind. Another night in Dieppe, gorgeous seafood, and early to sleep as we wanted to sail for Boulogne at 7 am, three hours before high water, when the tide would turn in our favour.

The forecast wind was southwest F4, increasing 5 to 6, (no mizzen, as that was pushing too hard on the rudder), and we did a comfortable five to six knots. At 3pm, nearing Boulogne, and now doing 7.5 knots, we decided to press on and celebrate Bastille Day, July 14th at Calais. We got to the harbour entrance at 6.10 pm only to find we had to wait for half an hour for the ferry traffic to clear. By then I was dog-tired, as I had had to hand-steer all the way because my good old servant Mr Pinta couldn't cope with the combination of wind and course. The Log indicated 71 nautical miles sailed in 11 hours and 10 minutes, my absolute personal record. Is that why *Bizzie Lizzie* was classified 100A1 in Lloyds register?

Again we didn't bother to lock in to the harbour but took the dinghy ashore to join in the 14th July celebrations. No Customs men this time. Next day a quick check on the two bolts on the propeller shaft found them still in place, so at noon, when tidal currents turned in our favour, we set sail, under number two Genoa only, for Nieuwpoort in Belgium. Here one of my 'crew' disembarked after a good meal and the forgotten taste of a few real Belgian beers. The following morning we motored all the way to Ostende as, believe it or not, there was no wind!

While berthing at slow speed I wanted to reverse but couldn't – and yes, once again the bolts on the transmission shaft had fallen out. To find a place that sold bolts at five o'clock in the afternoon was no easy job. However, I managed to find the right ones this time, and a 20 minute job fixed it once and for all (I hope). My other passenger disembarked to the safety of his family, and after a delicious steak, I decided to have one for the road in the clubhouse, as I wanted to leave early to make the tide to Zierikzee on my own. At the club I met Alex van de Wiel, new owner of Seadog *Brandane*. Gone was the early night, and I sailed at 7 am in a Force 5 wind under Genoa to arrive at Zierikzee nine hours later (lock included), another fast passage. I could have gone on to my home port of Oude Tonge, which would have been another four to five hours, but then I like Zierikzee, and Oude Tonge was for the next day.

All in all, an adventurous trip, with a few scratches on the hull as a souvenir, a port tank needing attention, a man-overboard exercise on the high seas to recover our dinghy (my own fault as I should have checked), compensated by delicious seafood, a bonus in having a crew not getting seasick, and a brief meeting with another Seadog owner.

I think we all know that our Seadogs perform best in a Force 5-6 wind, with no need to reef, and only to douse the mizzen as a next step.

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AUTUMN IN BAVARIA

AND THE NEW MAIN – DANUBE CANAL

By Peter French

When Frans Huber, the father of Susanne – (who sailed Seadog ***Glory*** round the world single-handed) – invited Olive and me to visit him for a holiday, we were delighted. Frans lives at Ingolstadt, a delightful mediaeval town on the banks of the River Danube in Bavaria in Southern Germany.

To cut a long story short, we took the ferry from Dover to Ostende and from there took the night train to Munich. Early next morning we caught the local train from Munich to Ingolstadt and arrived around breakfast time to find Frans waiting for us.

Later we explored the old city of Ingolstadt, a place with a character distinctly its own. This came about over centuries of domination by the military, who invariably got their way in face of opposition from the various mayors of the time, so that economic innovation and development was stifled right up to the mid 20th century. The result today is that, while not a city of palatial buildings, Ingolstadt is unique.

In 1472 the first Bavarian State University was founded here, where much experimental work was carried out at the Anatomical Institute, including some of the earliest post-mortems. "Frankenstein", the fictional monster, created in a novel by the English author Mary Shelley in 1818, first saw the light of day here.

The next day we went to Berching to see the newly opened ship canal which runs from Bamberg to Kelheim and links the Rivers Main and Danube to create an inland waterway 2,180 miles long, stretching from the North Sea to the Black Sea. We arrived just in time to catch the boat for a trip to Reidenfurt and back, and were much impressed to discover that our first lock was 17 metres deep (nearly 56 feet!), and that was not the deepest one. Then at Essing, between Reidenburg and Kelheim, we saw an extraordinary-looking wooden foot-bridge which swooped up and down over the canal like a swallow in flight.

To complete our tour for the day, Frans took us on a scenic ride through the Altmuhl Valley – the glorious colours of the trees covering the hills, such lovely old and attractive villages and towns. This was a drive we shall always remember with wonder.

Dinner was cooked that evening by Robert, Frans's younger son, who stir-fried small pieces of turkey and baby mushrooms in a tomato puree, paprika and cream and rice. With the special Oktoberfest beer, it was simply delicious. Later on Frans' elder son, Klaus, called in to see us, and Susanne phoned from Beaufort, in North Carolina, USA where she was busy refitting ***Glory***.

Next day we went to the lock at Kelheim to learn something about the construction of the new canal and its history.

It seems that in 1837, King Ludwig 1st of Bavaria engaged the services of an English engineer, James Brindley, (who designed many of the narrow canals of England), to build him a canal along approximately the same route as today's canal. Large parts of the old canal, and some of the locks are still in existence today. We went to look, and found that the canal was a replica of a typical English narrow canal of the period. (Other countries in Europe quickly learned the lesson and built their canals much wider).

Then around the 1960's it was decided to build a new canal capable of taking vessels carrying up to 3,000 tons and more.

THE NEW CANAL
Cost 4 billion Marks, and took 30 years to build.
Runs from Bamberg on the River Main to Kelheim on the River Danube, a distance of 107 miles (170 km)
Locks: 16. These range from being 12 – 25 metres wide, and from 190 to 230 metres in length. Near the summit there are water-saving locks which have a number of pounds nearby into which the water is pumped in and out as required.
Lift: Varies from lock to lock from 4 metres to 25 metres.
Height at summit – 406 metres
Total ascent from Bamberg: 243 metres.
The new canal, which has been designed to blend in with the landscape, looks more like a river as it flows along in a series of gentle "S" bends.
Bridges: All are different and interesting. A competition, open to all, was run to find the best and most unusual designs.
There are no canal charges for use by yachts.

We lunched at nearby Regensburg, on local Bratwurst and Sauerkraut. Regensburg has been described as being the only large perfectly preserved mediaeval town left in Germany. Among the many items of interest is the historic 12th Century stone bridge, the Steinerne Bruche,

which spans the River Danube in a series of seven arches Near here we ran into the crew of a large British motor cruiser who told us they had just come down from Calais. It had taken them 8 days out of the 3 to 4 weeks they had allowed themselves for the trip down to the Black Sea. They reported a smooth transit of the canal so far, and no problems.

We spoiled ourselves that afternoon indulging in a coffee and cakes binge at Germany's first coffee house, the Prinzess Restaurant, which opened in 1686. Here they sell a range of the most mouth-watering hand-made chocolates you could hope to find anywhere.

Next day, after saying 'aufweidersehen' to Klaus and his family, we drove to the Kloster Weltenburg, a large monastery sited beside the Danube close to a spectacular gorge which was created when the river broke through the rocks many thousands of years ago. There we took a trip in a large wooden rowing boat skippered by a sturdy young woman who manned the oars and took us downstream to see the gorge. As the river grew narrower the current became stronger, and eventually the young lady had to fire up her big outboard motor to get us back to where we started.

Later on we drove to Bad Wiessie, a spa town in the Bavarian Alps, about 60 km south of Munich, where we spent a few happy days with Brigitte, Frans partner.

Sunday was "Ganse Tag" – (goose day) – a special day in Bavaria when the consecration of churches is celebrated. After breakfast we all went to the Church where Brigitte sings in the choir and waited with the rest for the arrival of a procession of clerics and a delegation from Paris. As soon as the French guests and members of the band had been conducted to their seats, there was a rush for the remainder. Frans spoke to one of the Church officials, who arranged for Olive and me to be seated right up in the choir stalls, close to the altar, so we had an excellent view of everything that went on, a vicar's view in fact, right down the church. The service was conducted in two languages – French and German – and there was a Mozart Mass.

After the service had ended we went for lunch to the "Frei Hotel", which is up in the foothills. The meal was traditional, with 'Ganse' being the principal item on the menu. And it was superb! That night we watched a video film of Susanne's crossing of the Atlantic in ***Glory.***

Monday brought a chilly wind and low cloud which veiled the mountains – not a good day for exploring, so instead we went to the pretty town of

Bad Tolz where we had lunch. On the way there we were surprised to see block after block of empty flats left behind when the American Forces departed the area.

The following morning began with a scenic drive round beautiful Lake Tergensee with its backdrop of mountains, then we went on to Munich and visited its famous Museum which has a world class display of exhibits, including a vast collection of motor-cycles from all over. When the museum closed we went to deposit our luggage at the railway station, but the sight of large numbers of refugees from eastern Europe loitering about the place, put us off. Instead we went to the Eden Hotel Wolff which was right opposite the station, had a good meal, then sat around till our train was due in. (I was interested to see that the mens' toilets in the hotel were fitted with a special light beam which switched on a flow of water whenever a man stood in front of one of the urinals!). Shortly after 9.30 pm we made our way to the platform and boarded the train for Ostende which left dead on time at 10.10 pm.

On arrival at Ostende we found ferry departure times did not fit in with train arrival times, so, rather than wait for hours, we paid extra to come back on the Jet Foil. An exhilarating experience, travelling at 50 miles an hour at near low water with mile after mile of sandbanks rushing past on either side. At one time there was so much sand all round that it looked almost possible to walk back to England. The journey time was only 90 minutes, so very quick. At Dover, it was into a waiting train and straight up to Victoria. Then by train direct to our local station at Swanwick, and a taxi home. It was then only 5 pm. It had been an effortless journey, both ways.

We cannot thank Frans and Brigitte enough for giving us such a wonderful holiday, for showing us around areas of great beauty, for all the good food – but most of all, for their company.

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POSTSCRIPT

Now the Balkan war is ended I expect that the bridges over the Danube will be rebuilt, once again making it possible for a yacht to travel unimpeded from the North Sea to the Black Sea, and from there via the Bosphorus into the Sea of Marmora and thence into the eastern Mediterranean via the Dardenelles – (maybe then on through the Med. & back to England via various routes through the French canals – or down the Red Sea to Mombasa, and then, who knows?). For anyone not in a hurry, this has to be the adventure of a lifetime – the travelling being the best bit, not the arrival.

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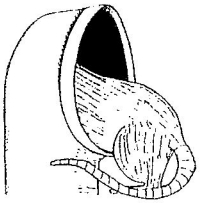
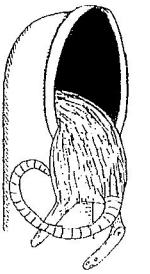


1998 – THE DIARY OF A RAT AND A DOG

by Graham Matthews

("DOUGAL")



Monday 13th of July

"Well, I have survived another winter in this hole in the corner of Clarence Yard. I wish I could have been here in the days my ancestors talk about. My great-great-great-great grandfather told me yesterday, that the year before last, when he was a young rat, that men used to live and work here.

Life was difficult then because of the cats, traps and guns, but close by were great food warehouses stacked full of tasty treats. A rat could live like a king in those days. Now we have to survive on what the yachtsmen leave lying around the nearby boat clubs, and most of that is in those big wheely - bin things".

Monday 10th August

"The weather hasn't improved a lot since my last diary entry. The elders say that summer should have started by now, but I think they must have got it wrong. I did go foraging down the pontoons this morning, but many of the boats were missing. I can't believe they are out sailing in weather this bad".

Monday 14th September

"Well, I don't know what the elder rats were getting so exited about, all that talk of a long hot summer, with rich pickings from barbecues and picnics. We did have two hot weeks, then the wind and rain started again".

Monday 12th October

"Already the bins are running out of food and I will need to find some other way to eat. Today I went down the pontoon, but the light-weight plastic boats were bobbing around so much they didn't look safe to jump on to".

Monday 9th November

"Really hungry today, so went down the pontoons again. Weather not too windy, so hopped aboard some of the yachts. I tried nibbling some ropes, but the nylon didn't taste too good. Couldn't get down below through the tiny mushroom air vents, so continued along the pontoon and after boarding a dozen or so boats, I spotted two magnificent vessels, clearly a cut above the rest. Ketch rigged, with solid, graceful lines, they were *Dougal* and *Seehond*, and best of all, they had proper dorade vents.

As soon as I scrambled across the fenders I knew I was on a superior vessel. This one didn't dip down when my weight was applied. Quickly I made my way across to a dorade vent from which wafted the

delicious smell of rotting bananas. As quick as a rat up a drainpipe I was down inside that vent. What a wonderful design they are. Water can't get in, but they make a perfect doorway for me and my friends. A quick glance down through the vent showed there was a bunk below, but I could see that the distance was far too great for me ever to have jumped out again.

The next vent I explored was over the navigation area where I could see the drop to the chart table would be easy, and I would be able to scramble out again by climbing onto a radio mounted on the bulkhead close by. I decided to go for it.

Following my nose I soon found the banana which was in a plastic basket on the bookshelf behind the starboard settee berth. I thought about taking it back and sharing it with the others, but it was irresistible, so I scoffed the lot and dozed off to sleep. Waking later and feeling a bit guilty, I searched around for something to take back to the lads, but all I could find was some pot noodles. Though tasty, they are difficult for a rat to transport, so after checking I could get the tops open, I thought I would go back and fetch the family aboard.

At this point things started to go wrong. Although I could easily jump from the navigation table onto the radio, I was unable to jump up high enough to reach the slippery aluminium ring of the ventilator which marked my exit. Time and time again I leapt upwards towards the vent, until at last I was so tired I began to drop droppings onto the table. Thinking I might try again next day after a good nights rest, I made my way to the portside bunk where I found a cosy sleeping bag and curled up to wait for morning".

Tuesday 10th November.
"Spent all day trying to get to the inside of the dorade vent. Getting a bit thirsty; no water found yet".

Wednesday 11th November.
"More of the same – still no water".

Thursday 12th November.
"After three exhausting days I have given up on the dorade vent. Quite a pile of droppings on the chart table now, and I have started to gnaw my way out. The cabin door has lots of louvres, but none big enough for me to squeeze through. I made some progress on the bottom flap, but the teak is making me ever thirstier".

Friday 13th November
"Finding myself completely unable to get out through the cabin door I am now getting really frightened. Tried to find water by gnawing away at a small hole in the galley floor. After a time I managed to squeeze through and into a dry tunnel that ran along the boat toward the stern.

I could smell water mixed with oil and diesel, but even if it had smelled good, I doubt if I could have enlarged the hole in the bulkhead to get through to it. It is over an inch thick!
Eventually I went up the other way and found myself under a hole similar to the one I had used to get into the tunnel. Working away at it with my teeth I soon found myself in the forepeak. Exhausted, I collapsed into a deep sleep".

Saturday 14th November
"I was awoken this morning by one of the owners coming on board. I was amazed to notice that even with the huge size and weight of him the boat moved only slightly when he stepped aboard. Luckily he didn't come into the heads compartment, so didn't find me, though he must have seen my droppings on the chart table. It was only after he had gone, that it occurred to me I could have rushed out through the cabin door while it was open; perhaps he will be back tomorrow".

Sunday 15th November.
"Got up early this morning and moved back into the main cabin. Passed the time enlarging one of the hand-hold shaped ventilators behind the port-side bunk. Saw the owner arrive again, but he did not come aboard. He was dressed strangely too, heavy walking boots and a hat with ear flaps. He then measured the fenders and walked away".

Monday 16th November
"I think this will be my last day on *Dougal*. This morning I went back down the tunnel to the heads compartment with a new plan. I had seen a small shelf on the starboard side high up near the door. I thought if I could get up to it and work my way above the headlining through to the main cabin I might be able to get to one of the dorade vents. Unfortunately, despite spending hours on the job, and producing a sizeable pile of sawdust and a lot more droppings, I could not get through the bulkhead. In despair, I went back through to the main cabin and curled up under the sleeping bag".

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Graham:
The following weekend, and with no little trepidation, Gaye and I went to visit *Dougal*. On an earlier visit I had seen some damage to the tops of the Pot Noodles, and some small black bits that looked like seeds, but at the time convinced myself that all was well. Then as I thought about it during the week, I realised we had been visited by one or more rodents. Rats were often seen around the bins in the corner of our boat club, and it was generally thought that they were coming through from the former Naval Victualling Yard. The following day while on my way to the Gosport Boat

Jumble, I had paid a brief visit to measure the fenders, but didn't stop to check on board, because I wanted to be at the jumble early so as not to miss any bargains.

As soon as we opened the door into the cabin, we knew for certain that a rat or rats had been aboard. Everywhere there were droppings. Noodle pots and their foil tops were spread all around, and we could see several places where the joinery had been damaged. After a short while, with several pauses for silence, we were fairly happy that there was nothing running around. Convinced that whatever had done the damage must have come in through the dorade vent above the navigation table, I went off in search of something that would make the vents rat-proof, but allow air to flow through, leaving Gaye to make a start on clearing up the mess. I wasn't thinking too clearly that morning, because I had only got half-way to the hardware shop, when I realised I had left all my money on boat. By the time I got back to Gaye, she had already found the remains of 'Ratty' under my sleeping bag.

There was little permanent damage - a couple of sleeping bags had been nibbled and some woodwork still bears the scars. Though none of the cupboards or lockers appeared to have been penetrated, we decided to take all the food and crockery home. In a local 'bargain' shop we bought six stainless steel fittings designed to fit in the drain hole of a sink. They are a good fit in the dorade vents and will prevent further rodent access without restricting the airflow too much.

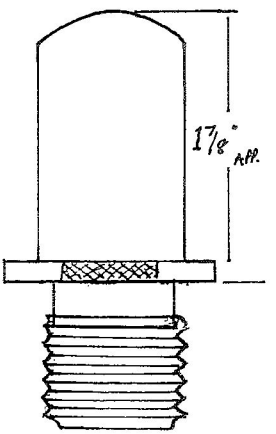
Much to our relief, subsequent visits have proved that our visitor was indeed solitary – we hope that the fact that escape proved impossible was passed back to the shore-party!

THIS IS WHAT

THE LOWER RUDDER PINTLE

ON YOUR SEADOG

LOOKS LIKE



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"IT STARTED WITH AN OIL LEAK"

A true story by Peter French

It was wartime, and all around the world momentous events were changing the course of history. I was then an experienced pilot in the Royal Air Force (having entered the Service a year or so before the outbreak of hostilities), and was stationed at an aerodrome on the wintry Vale of York in the bleak northeast of England.

On 16 January 1944, I prepared to make a routine flight to carry passengers to St Eval in Cornwall, some 300 miles away.

Our aircraft, an elderly Airspeed Oxford, was a versatile, twin-engined training-cum-transport monoplane of medium size. Built largely of wood, it was noisy, and a pig to fly on one engine, but reliable and fairly fast. Significantly, she was also fitted with Lorenz Blind Approach Radio to facilitate landing in conditions of poor visibility.

The day of departure dawned fine, with unbroken sunshine which soon burned off the last remains of the overnight fog. By mid-morning conditions were as near perfect as could be for the flight.

Then, just minutes before take-off, the port engine began to leak oil. This was a serious set-back, made worse by the fact there was no standby aircraft, and we had to wait for our machine to be repaired. As precious minutes ticked away, my impatience mounted, for I knew that any delay in take-off would have serious consequences, for the fog was sure to return later that day.

The telephone rang. St Eval was now fog-bound. I was advised to fly to Weston-Super-Mare, some twenty miles to the southwest of Bristol, instead.

While hurrying to chase up the repair, I caught sight of another Airspeed Oxford. This was the personal aircraft of the Air Officer Commanding, the most senior of our officers. Nodding towards the immaculate aircraft I said, half jokingly, to the Sergeant in charge of the ground crew, "How about if I took that one instead?" Back came an equally jocular "Why not? He's away on leave – he'll never know!" By now consumed with impatience to be on my way, I rashly decided to chance it.

The sacred aircraft was wheeled out of the hangar, engines were started, run up and tested, and I signed the Serviceability Certificate, making me solely responsible for the aircraft, its passengers, and my own neck.

I picked up my passengers. Then, heedless of the consequences, I opened the throttles and roared off down the runway.

We made a fast flight, with no trace of the forecast fog, and landed at Weston-Super-Mare aerodrome in warm sunshine. I had planned an immediate return to Yorkshire, but the summer-like weather, together with the fact that I now felt quite hungry, overcame my better judgement. I left the aircraft in the care of a ground party and went for lunch.

My second mistake of the day.

Before departing I checked the latest weather report – thick fog was now forecast for the entire country. I took off in haste and set course for Yorkshire. By the time I had reached the Midlands, barely midway to my destination, mile upon mile of dense fog blanketed the ground, glowing pink in the light of the setting sun. Not even the sight of this dented my confidence in my ability to handle the situation – with the comforting thought that the Lorenz Radio Beam would keep me out of trouble - I flew on.

It was not until I drew near my home aerodrome that I became conscious that all was not well with the Lorenz. The signals in my earphones grew weaker and weaker, then faded into mind-numbing silence. Cockpit instruments revealed no reason for the failure. Dumbfounded at the loss of my lifeline, I sent out a call to base – there was no reply.

I was now in serious trouble – thousands of feet above the fog-covered Yorkshire Wolds, late on a winter's day, aboard an aircraft with no working radio aids, less than an hour of daylight left, and not a lot of fuel in the tanks. Only a madman would have attempted to land in that fog. It seemed there was no alternative – I should have to bale-out.

Simple in theory – fly towards the coast, point the aircraft out to sea, engage auto-pilot, then jump – and possibly end up in the fog beneath being impaled on a church spire, incinerated among electricity cables,

or maybe drowned in a river. My mind searched desperately for some other way to escape the dangers now before me.

Thick fog, no wind, and no gaps in the fog. Lessons in meteorology learned long ago flickered through my mind. Then sprang the germ of an idea. Might it be possible that air currents generated by the difference in temperature between the cold land and the relatively warmer sea, could have created holes in the surface of the fog? Perhaps if I were to fly immediately to the nearest coastline, some 60 miles away, I might be fortunate enough find such a hole. I glanced at my watch, checked the fuel gauges and looked at the sun, now low in the sky. There was just time to test my theory before approaching darkness drew the final curtain. The sun was still shining brightly at the height at which I was flying, but I knew that down at ground level it would soon be dusk. Grimly aware that my fate would be decided within the hour, I altered course and set off with all speed for the coast.

The sun was just scraping the western horizon when some miles ahead I saw, staining the white quilt of fog that covered the ground, a darker patch with a ragged outline. With rising hope, I dived headlong towards the middle of the dark patch and peered downwards – and there, to my immense relief, I saw the black waters of the North Sea.

There was no turning back. I screwed up my courage, put the aircraft into a steep bank, spiralled tightly downwards through the tiny gap in the fog, and flattened out just above the waves. Then I saw I was flying straight towards an unbroken wall of towering white cliffs.

Adrenalin kicked in - I heaved back on the control column – seconds later the Oxford swooped up the face of those monstrous cliffs, and by the grace of God, skimmed over the top with only feet to spare. I had not thought things out too well.

It was much darker over the land, and while my eyes adjusted to the fading light, and my heartbeats returned to near-normal, I flew just above the tree-tops, half in and half out of the cloud base, searching for somewhere to put down. The first big field I came to had been newly ploughed, but another nearby was grass covered, and at first sight looked promising. But when I flew nearer, I noticed that its surface was studded with concrete anti-glider-invasion posts.

As I circled in the deepening twilight to ponder my next move, I glimpsed the distant lights of vehicles heading in my direction.

While a wheels-up landing on the ploughed field would have been relatively safe, the resulting Court of Inquiry into the cause of the damage would have led to a court-martial for me, for having taken the aircraft without permission.

The alternative – to attempt a landing with the wheels down, in the near dark, in a field stiff with concrete posts, would be a tremendous gamble, if not an act of lunacy.

With no time for second thoughts, and convinced that I might get away with it, if only I could get the aircraft back on the ground in one piece, I decided to gamble my chances on the field with the concrete posts.

With undercarriage down, then flaps down, as slowly as I dared, I brought her, hanging on the propellers, low over the hedge. I chopped the throttles and she dropped like a stone to the ground. Then using brakes and engines alternately in a life-or-death chicane, zigzagged violently the length of the field in the wildest ride of my life and by some miracle escaped crashing into the posts. My heart raced as the aircraft bucked and skidded its way to a standstill. Then, quite unable to believe my good fortune, I sat dazed for a while with the engines ticking over.

My next thought was, where to leave the aircraft in safety? Nearby was the dark silhouette of a haystack. My hand was poised ready to blast the port throttle wide open to swing the aircraft towards it, when I spotted, only feet away, another of those concrete posts. One moment more, and I should have smashed straight into it. That shook me more than all that had gone before – I could have thrown it all away in one simple act of carelessness just when I thought the job was done.

Sick at the realisation, I taxied the aircraft past the post to the lee of the haystack and switched off the engines. Scarcely had I finished fitting safety locks to the flying controls when a stream of Army vehicles swept into the field and in seconds I was encircled by soldiers.

The young officer-in-charge treated me with courtesy, despite having some idea, so I learned later, that I might be a spy. After brief interrogation, I was placed under close arrest.

An armed guard was mounted over my aircraft, and I was taken under escort to the Headquarters of the Searchlight Battery at the village of Grindale, from which the soldiers had come. Having just flown in from the North Sea in wartime, unannounced, and in near darkness late on a

foggy winter's day, I was not overly surprised at being treated with suspicion by the Army. There was a curious twist to events that night, for when the Army Officer telephoned to check my story, the R.A.F authorities told him that a pilot resembling the man he described had been reported killed that afternoon while flying an Airspeed Oxford in fog over the Yorkshire Moors. Orders were given that I was to remain in custody until identified.

My overnight stay at the Army Searchlight Battery was memorable. The kindness shown to me, and the generous hospitality with which they welcomed me into their Mess, was exceptional. As the evening wore on and the drinks flowed, I discovered that the cliffs over which I had flown were at Flamborough Head, and rise nearly four hundred feet above sea-level.

Next morning, an officer from my base arrived, and after identification, I returned with him, wondering what sort of reception awaited me. Much to my surprise, no disciplinary action was taken – neither then, nor later. Perhaps there was a feeling that I had already paid the price for my foolhardiness.

Of course, the Oxford had to be returned to base. Flying it out appeared to be the obvious thing to do, so men with tractors ripped out all the concrete posts and smoothed over the holes.

Then, because the Royal Air Force has a regulation which bans pilots who have made a forced landing from flying their aircraft out again, another pilot was delegated to do the job. He took one look at the field and declared that he was not prepared to chance such a risky take-off. A second pilot was sent. He too refused to fly the aircraft out. In the end, I was summoned to the Flight Commander's office and told "You put it in – you get it out!" – which was, I suppose, a kind of poetic justice.

But getting the Oxford out was not to be a simple matter. Experience had taught me that landing an aircraft in a small field was easier than flying it out again. To succeed, everything had to be exactly right, but here, the odds were all against me.

I flew to Lissett aerodrome just south of Bridlington, then went by car to the farm at Grindale where my aircraft lay waiting. One look at the take-off run told me why other pilots had refused to take on the job. It was short, shorter than I had remembered. This meant that I should have to await the arrival of strong winds to help lift the aircraft into the

air. When the next weather system bringing strong winds set in some three days later, I returned to the farm.

After engine and airframe checks had been carried out, and the aircraft partly refuelled, I taxied into position for take-off, opened the throttles and hoped for the best. Full of promise, the Oxford charged forwards over the tufty grass, but speed built slowly. Soon it became apparent that I had not a hope of getting her airborne before reaching the end of the field. I whipped back the throttles, smacked on the brakes, and brought the aircraft to a standstill. Nor was the second attempt any more successful – the drag of the landing wheels sinking into the soft ground slowed the aircraft as surely as if the brakes had been applied, and I was forced to abandon that run also.

Determined not to give up without some sort of a fight, I decided, as a last resort, to try a tactic I'd used with great success some years earlier, during experiments towing giant tank-carrying gliders with equally huge four-engined heavy bombers. So I taxied to the downwind boundary, swung the aircraft round to face into the strong wind, then locked on the brakes as hard as they would go.

Next, I lowered the flaps a little, opened the throttles to their widest, and rammed the control column hard forward. Slowly the tail lifted. When, everything was thundering and juddering fit to burst, I suddenly released the brakes.

The Oxford leapt forward, and as she hurtled over the bumpy grass, I hung on, and with all my might willed her desperately into the air.

The boundary hedge was fast approaching when it dawned on me with sickening certainty that I was not going to make it this time either.

In a now-or-never reaction, I jerked back on the control column to lift the landing wheels momentarily from the ground, then quickly shoved it forward again to bounce the aircraft back into the air. Twice more I repeated the manoeuvre, and with each bounce the aircraft picked up a little more speed. Then, with a last giant leap into space, she sailed clear over the hedge, taking me with her.

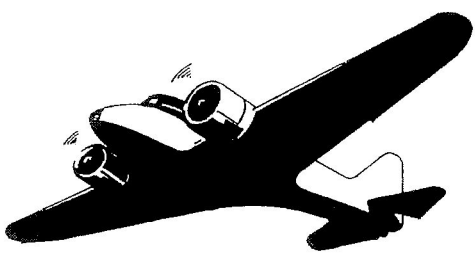
Back at base, I heard, from the officer who had been on duty the evening of my forced landing, that I had been expected back by mid-afternoon at the latest. When I had not arrived by nightfall – (about the time they calculated I should have run out of fuel) – it was automatically

assumed that I had crashed in some remote spot while attempting to descend through the fog.

The electrician who inspected the Oxford after I had landed at Grindale also told me that one of the electrical generators had been switched off. Because of this, the battery had gone flat, and this explained the failure of the Lorenz signals and of my radio transmitter. This was probably done while the aircraft was on the ground at Weston-Super-Mare.

Whether or not that is the explanation will never be known. What I do know is that someone came very close to switching off my life when they turned off that switch.

OooOOOooO



MISSIE – Heinz Willman, from Oldenburg in Germany, writes:

"Thank you for your postcard from the Isle of Wight and the Seadog Rally at Newport. Glad to hear that you and Olive are well – I am OK too. We old warriors don't die!

This year I put Missie in the water at Wilhelmshaven on the 6th of April and two days later arrived at the island of Helgoland, some fifty miles offshore. Then at the end of May I sailed off to the Baltic Sea, mainly through Danish waters. But because of the bad summer there I returned home at the beginning of July.

In the last 10 years I have put much money into Missie and think that my boat is now about the best around. Last week I took the bus for a few days to the Italian Riviera, near Monte Carlo. The season there is finished – only few boats and still fewer German tourists. Now we have to wait until next season. By the way, my Pinta autopilot is as good as new since I fitted the two photo-cells!"

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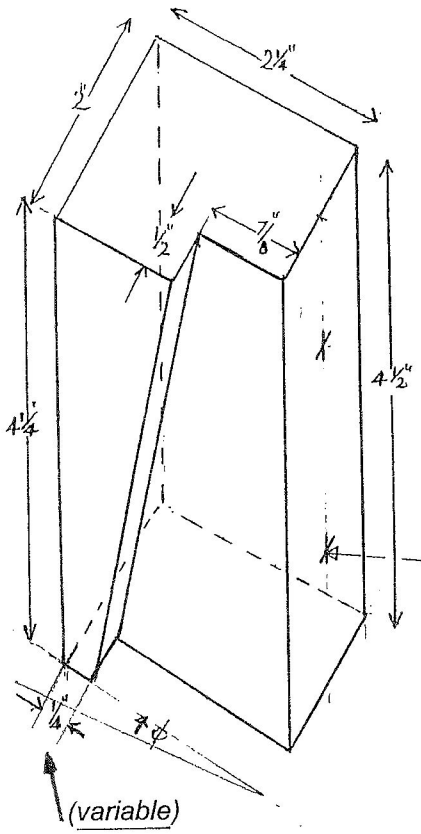
Anti-burglar
Sliding-hatch retention blocks

By Peter Bragg – *(Palafox II)*

"When Peter our 'sec' came aboard recently he noticed the blocks installed on the companion way hatches. These are designed to prevent an unbolted flap from being forced towards the cabin and ripping out the hinges, and as such go a long way to improving the security of the boat. My blocks were made by a local pattern maker cum Cornish Gig builder.

Normal plans of the awkward shape are difficult to interpret, so I have prepared an isometric projection of the starboard side main cabin item. The port side will be the reverse. Those fitted on Palafox II are of matching wood and blend in to a degree that they are forgotten about. They form no obstruction to passing crew or stores".



Drawing of one of a pair of blocks which stop the retention flap from over-hingeing. (ISOMETRIC PROJECTION).

All corner edges, except the fixing face, are sand paper rounded to give a smooth feel to the block.

Centre of 2 fixing screws

NOTE: The bottom inclines up to match the frame to which it is attached.

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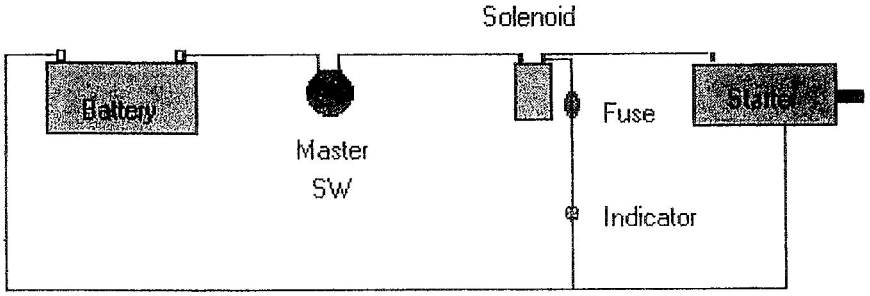
STARTER MOTOR PROTECTION

By Allan Gray
(LILLIBET II)

A friend recently had an expensive mishap when his starter-motor failed to disengage after starting the engine. The first he knew of the problem was a smell of burning when the electrical loom began to cook. He shut it down, but only after the damage was done.

This is a problem that any one of us can expect sooner or later. However, I am an avionics engineer, and there is a simple modification that we install on piston-engine aircraft which will adapt easily to Seadog starter circuits. I have installed this modification into *Lillibet II* which has a 4.107 engine, but the 4.108 start circuit is the same.

The modification entails monitoring the starter input terminals for a voltage. This is accomplished by fitting an indicator lamp on the starter panel and wiring it via an in-line fuse, (max one amp), as close to the solenoid/starter as possible. Wire to be a minimum of 1.5 mm for strength around the engine.



Should the indicator lamp – (I chose blue) – light up at any time other than when you are cranking the engine, you should immediately stop the engine and switch off the batteries.

There are at least four problems that this light can help diagnose:
1) If it remains alight after you have finished starting the engine, then the solenoid or starter switch could be stuck closed.
2) Or the starter Bendix may not have disengaged. (A driven starter-motor will act like a dynamo and generate power to light the light).
3) If you try to start the engine and the light comes on but the engine does not turn, then you may suspect a faulty starter motor (brushes and the like).
4) When you try to start the engine, if neither the starter turns nor the light comes on, you may suspect faulty wiring, assuming your battery is good.

Remember that this light should come on only when you are turning the engine on the starter motor. If it comes on at any other time it is telling you that you have a problem and that you should immediately stop the engine and switch off the battery.

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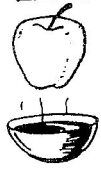
HOW TO AVOID JET-LAG

1. **DETERMINE BREAKFAST TIME** at destination on day of arrival.
2. **FEAST-FAST-FEAST-FAST** on home time. Start three days before departure day. On day one, FEAST; eat heartily with high-protein breakfast and lunch and a high-carbohydrate dinner. No coffee except between 3 and 5 p.m. On day two, FAST on light meals of salads, light soups, fruits and juices. Again, no coffee except between 3 and 5 p.m. On day three, FEAST again. On day four, departure day, FAST; if you drink caffeinated beverages, take them in morning when traveling west, or between 6 and 11 p.m. when traveling east. Going west, you may fast only half day.
3. **BREAK FINAL FAST** at destination breakfast time. No alcohol on plane. If flight is long enough, sleep until normal breakfast time at destination, *but no later.* Wake up and FEAST on high-protein breakfast. Stay awake, active. Continue day's meals according to meal times at destination.

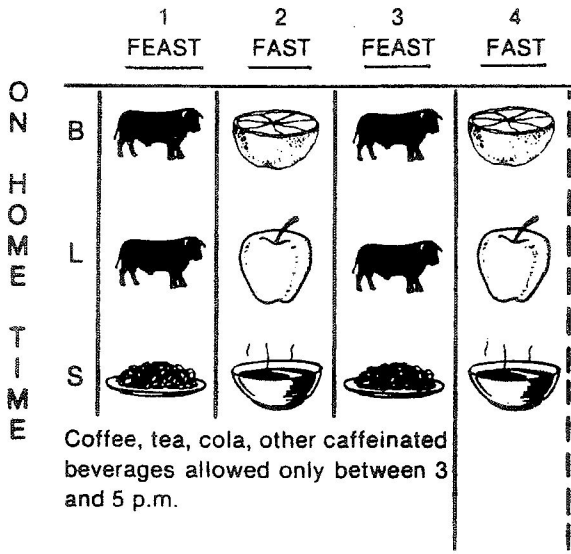
FEAST on high protein breakfasts and lunches to stimulate the body's active cycle. Suitable meals include steak, eggs, hamburgers, high-protein cereals, green beans.

FEAST on high-carbohydrate suppers to stimulate sleep. They include spaghetti and other pastas (but no meatballs), crepes (but no meat filling), potatoes, other starchy vegetables, and sweet desserts.

FAST days help deplete the liver's store of carbohydrates and prepare the body's clock for resetting. Suitable foods include fruit, light soups, broths, skimpy salads, unbuttered toast, half pieces of bread. Keep calories and carbohydrates to a minimum.



COUNTDOWN



ARGONNE NATIONAL LABORATORY

ANTI-JET-LAG DIET

The Argonne Anti-Jet-Lag Diet is helping travelers quickly adjust their bodies' internal clocks to new time zones. It is also being used to speed the adjustment of shiftworkers, such as power plant operators, to periodically rotating work hours. The diet was developed by Dr. Charles F. Ehret of Argonne's Division of Biological and Medical Research as an application of his fundamental studies of the daily biological rhythms of animals. Argonne National Laboratory is one of the U. S. Department of Energy's major centers of research in energy and the fundamental sciences. Argonne National Laboratory, 9700 South Cass Avenue, Argonne, Illinois 60439

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Secretary's Page

You've been a long while waiting for this new Journal, but a series of events got in the way, making it impossible to produce it any earlier. The first of the problems came when my ancient Data Recall 'Diamond' word processor with 8" floppy discs burst into flames after many years of faithful service, taking ninety per cent of our Newsmag with it, and I was unable to retrieve the material. Peter Bruguier (*Salia)* very kindly helped out by giving me an old Amstrad word processor which I used for a time. Then Graham Matthews (*Dougal)* came to the rescue by loaning me a more modern lap-top computer with all the bits that went with it. For a while things went well.

I had to call a halt to get *Dogmatic* prepared for the cruise to Ireland, during which we were absent from home for three months. Upon our return there was the usual panic of gardening, hedge trimming and Christmas Cards. On top of this, Olive developed hip problems due to a bad fall she'd had 25 years ago. She chose to have a radically new hip-resurfacing which, at the time, was done in only one hospital in the world, the Birmingham Nuffield. So on the 7th of December I drove her to the hospital. We were there a week, and she came home a new (bionic) woman!

We spent Christmas with our daughter and family in Bournemouth, and Christmas afternoon Olive walked 2 miles along the seafront. Then on the 16th of January, to celebrate my special birthday, she, our daughter and grandson took me on a surprise 5 day visit to Paris. A wonderful time for me, starting off with a champagne lunch aboard the Eurostar and a superb hotel near the Arc de Triomphe. We walked for miles each day all over Paris – a wonderful tribute to the surgeon who fixed Olive's hip!

When we returned home, I carried on with the Newsmag, then the printer died on me. After long discussion, Graham and I arrived at the same conclusion – a new computer was needed, so I bought a Hewlett Packard 'Pavilion". I shall always be deeply indebted to Graham for his patience, help and willingness to share his expert knowledge. Without it, I should never have got my new toy under some semblance of control so quickly.

This Newsmag covers a lot of things that I've been meaning to include in previous issues, but were squeezed out because of lack of space. Reading through the stories brought back so many memories for me of the wonderful times we had sailing up the 'Three Rivers'. The Thames, the Seine and the Danube. The Rallies were full of interest and enjoyment for so many people, and we feel that these social gatherings are among the things which make the club so worth while.

We've managed to miss all the floods in this area – hope that none of you have had any problems with the rain. We hope too, that 2001 will bring for all of us sunny days and fair winds!

Pete.

F O R S A L E

SEADOG 'GASH' BINS & DECK COWL VENTILATORS
(Made in resin/glass)
For prices and delivery phone Brian Stephens (SIREX)
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SEADOG MAINSAIL – ALMOST NEW – USED 2 DAYS ONLY
This sail is white with 2 reefing points and is a bargain.
Phone Eric Richardson (TALIESIN) on
0114–2692454

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Acknowledgement and grateful thanks to

Ken Dewar for his kindness in creating the design on the front cover of this Newsmag, together with the silhouette drawing of the Airspeed Oxford on page 77. Ken, a commercial artist, lives with his wife Joan in the Esterel Mountains in the south of France, not far from Cannes.

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STOP PRESS

Email message just received from Jerry English (***Leonora***) :–

"I have just been head hunted and am moving back out to the Far East again as the Chief Training Captain for East Asia Airlines and HeliHong Kong,

I will be based in Macao and work half the time in Hong Kong. I hope to get a house on the island of Coloane, which is about 3 miles by 1 mile wide, very unspoilt and green with good beaches and a sailing club. ***Leonora*** is going into long-term storage in Pembrokeshire until I come back after 3 years and settle back to a normal sort of life (?).

The move is part of a career strategy – designed so that I can eventually live in Pembrokeshire and sail ***Leonora*** for more than a few weekends a year, and get to ALL the Seadog rallies!

I will be flying out to China west-about, via a simulator course in Florida where I will try and avoid being elected as the next President of the U.S.A".

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Hon. Sec: SEADOG OWNERS ASSOCIATION Tel. 01489–573436
Peter French, 'Cresta', 27 Chapel Road, Sarisbury Green,