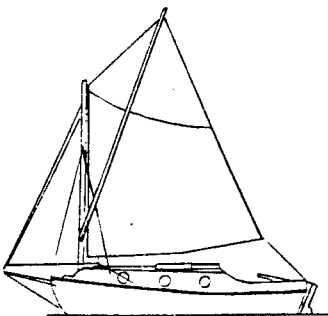
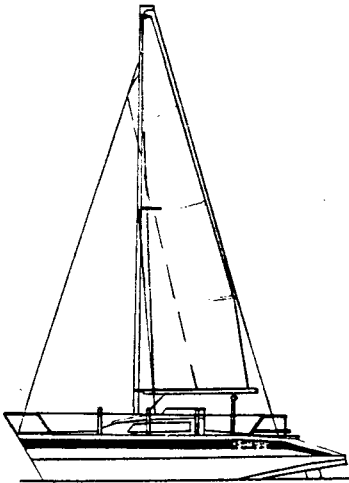
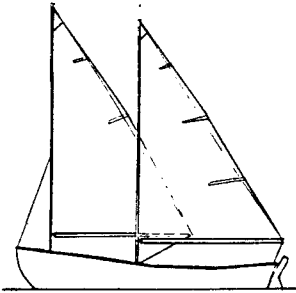
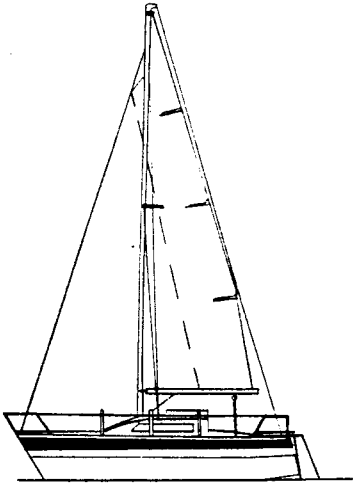


# SWIFT

## NEWSLETTER

NL 36 SEPTEMBER 1991



1. ED'S COLUMN
2. ADMIN NOTES
3. REGIONAL ROUNDUP
4. TECHNICAL TOPICS
5. CRUISING CHATTER
6. POST BAG

**Owners Association**

## 1. ED'S COLUMN

"I'm on the sea! I'm on the sea!  
I am where I would ever be,  
With the blue above and the blue below  
And silence whereso'er I go."

Somehow, I don't think Bryan Waller Procter (1787 - 1874) would have penned these lines if he'd had the opportunity to cross the Solent on a blustery Sunday in July in the late 20th century. However, this is fatuous and hardly relevant.

Well, the 1991 season is starting to weigh heavy with barnacles, algae and lichen and it won't be long before we must beach her. It's a pity that no-one has invented an anti-fouling treatment for Time. Looking back, there seems to have been more action on dry land than on the water if the amount of logs and cruising chatter received is anything to go by. Thank goodness the same handful of members who usually contribute to the newsletter have helped out again.

Poor sailing conditions early in the season left us all a bit frustrated but the last couple of months have given us glorious sailing conditions. Even as I write this (mid-september), I'm sitting in the garden enjoying the sunshine. Nevertheless, this time of year always reminds me of my MFI dining room table - the leaves fall off every autumn.

On dry land, it is heartening to record an increase in Association membership. We are almost at the 100 boats mark at the last count. As a further recruitment drive, I have sent out a couple of press releases about the Association to the yachting magazines so with luck, that should bring in a few more. If you know any Swift owners that are not members - give them a nudge. Alternatively, let me have their details and I'll give them a nudge.

As some of you know, Swift Boats Ltd went into voluntary liquidation. The Association is keeping an eye on developments, with particular attention towards the interests of members, the availability of spares and the continued and future success of the marque. My thanks go to Chris O'Brien for keeping me informed, and a special big thank-you to Roger Marsh who not only provides information, advice and guidance on the situation, but who is working tirelessly to ensure a good future for the Swift.

On a personal note, my thanks for the good wishes and support which I received after publishing my last "Ed's Column". For those of you who are interested, my boat "GIULIA" went to a good home and I'm happy to see that her new owner, Mike Crook, has joined the Association. Thank you also to Roger and Carina Pigden (SO 134) who made sure that my season was not without a taste of salt water.

## 2. ADMIN NOTES

### REPRESENTATIVES

Volunteers are still required to represent the following areas:

SCOTLAND  
LAKES AND NORTH WEST  
MIDLANDS  
SOUTH WEST  
EAST COAST  
WALES

Very little effort is required to fulfill these duties. Maybe a short report for the newsletter, and perhaps to organise a rally or a regional laying up supper if possible. I'm sure there must be someone willing to spend a few minutes to help out. If anyone is interested please contact me.

Ed.

### MEMBERSHIP LIST

Several weeks ago it came to our attention that the membership list was being used for the purposes of commercial canvassing without permission. As soon as this was realised, steps were taken to stop the situation. Apologies have been received.

### EXCLUSIVE OFFER

Complete your ship's inventory with a S18 burgee. You'll be the envy of the marina as you glide up to your berth flying the distinctive flag that sets you apart from the rest. You'll know which way the wind blows with a S18 burgee. Only £5.40 incl postage.

Gentlemen, here's what you've been waiting for. The promotion at work that has passed you by so often is now yours for the taking. That cute little blonde you've been eyeing up will melt in your arms and your seat in the Admirals Marquee at Cowes Week will be assured when you are seen wearing the Swift Association Tie. That blend of rich navy blue with distinctive gold strips and fashionable S18 logo can adorn your neck for just £4.00 incl postage.

Ladies. Tired of the same old wardrobe but can't afford Bond Street prices? Here's the answer to your clothing crisis. The Swift Association Neck Scarf will have the boys whistling and the men obeying. From the boardroom to the nightclub you'll be noticed in that haunting dark blue square with the pure white border and that tantalising S18 designer label. The possibilities are endless with its amazing versatility - and it folds up small enough to pop in your pocket. The Swift Association Neck Scarf can be yours for only £4.00 incl postage.

Go on - don't follow fashion. Set it!

Apply to Chris O'Brien for details.

## TREASURERS BIT

You haven't heard from me for a while because in the early part of the year membership renewals were rather sluggish and I thought that were were going to have our worst year ever.

O ye of little faith! Past owners have done a sterling job in recommending the Association to new buyers so that, even though eight members did not renew their subscription and seventeen boats changed hands to our knowledge, we now have similar numbers to last year.

This underlies that importance to the Association of members passing on information to the buyers of their boats and to the Association. If we can keep track of the names and addresses of owners, even if they do not become members immediately, at least we have a chance. There are so many boats now that we have completely lost track of that I doubt we will ever be able to build a complete picture again.

So, a belated thanks to past owners who have helped us keep our membership up to 36% of all boats built!

Chris O'Brien  
Treasurer

## THE BUILDING OF SWIFTS

Many of you will now be aware that Swift Boats Ltd has gone bust. Unfortunately a large number of people, including some members, have lost money as a result of this collapse.

Now that Swift Boats Ltd has failed, the mould tools and production rights are up for sale again. The Association is keeping in touch with events so that good relations may be forged with the eventual buyer(s) of the moulds. Once the present recession is over, the consensus of opinion seems to be that there is still a lot of life left in the Swift 18 and 20, and the Swift 23 has a bright future. In the hands of a financially sound and established company I am sure that this is true. Whatever develops we will keep members informed.

In the meantime, if you have a problem with spare parts, I suggest that you contact either myself or Doug Brodie. Likewise, if any members have found a good source of supply of parts, please let us know.

Chris O'Brien SO 23/001

### 3. REGIONAL ROUNDUP

#### NEWS FROM RUTLAND WATER

As September dawns, beautiful and breezy, Swifts at Rutland water are "waiting for the tide" so to speak. The water level has, and is continuing, to drop at an alarming rate. We are still managing to launch and recover our Swifts but it would be nice to be able to open the flood gates and fill the reservoir. However, this is the price we pay for nice dry summers.

The season at Rutland started late with a cold spring but since early July we have had some good weather, good sailing and a lot of fun.

Last month, it was the Cruiser Fleet barbeque with four Swifts being present: QUADRILLE, APERITIF, DUET and CHAOS. This proved a good day all round.

There are now 15 Swifts on Rutland. Ten are dry-sailed, three are on permanent moorings and one with a difference! This is HAPPY DOG. This Swift was built for an extraordinary voyage with a fixed fin keel needing a draught of 5 feet. Quite a remarkable boat, now sitting on a trailer about 8 feet from the ground.

I have had enquiries from people who are looking to buy a secondhand Swift with concerns about the indent below the chine, about 1/3 from the bow on the port or starboard side of the boat. Many Swifts have this indent, some more pronounced than others. It is not a fault or a weakness and in no way should this cause concern. If this is a worry to the owner it can easily be remedied.

Pat & Charles Frisby (SO 218 CHAOS)

There are a few Swifts at Rutland who are not members of the Association (including QUADRILLE). How about some canvassing, Charles. - Ed

#### A QUICK RECOVERY

Members who sail out of Bucklers Hard on the Beaulieu River have the opportunity of using our short wheel base, 4 wheel drive Land Rover. This offers superbly easy launching and recovery - particularly at awkward times of the tide. We have used it at high tide (when ordinary car wheels won't grip on the stones) and at low tide (when the trailer is over the edge of the slipway) and the Land Rover didn't even flinch! If anyone is interested in joining our pool of users please contact me.

Roger Pigden (SO 134 CHARISMA)

#### LAYING UP SUPPERS

A Southern laying up supper has been organised for the 2nd November at The Queen Inn in Dummer, near Basingstoke. Anyone who is interested in going along, and has not already received information, please contact me right away.

I would be interested to hear from members wishing to organise other laying up suppers in other parts of the Country. The Association is prepared to contribute financially to the evening. -Ed

#### 4. TECHNICAL TOPICS

Enclosed are a couple of ideas that make life a little easier on board Kittiwake. The first is a waterproof storage box, the second prevents the rubber rollers on the trailer from marking the hull. I have also included a longer article on some improvements I have made to Kittiwake; electrics, electronics and a mast head VHF aerial.

##### Waterproof Storage Box

My father-in-law first showed me this idea a few years ago, which is for a strong and reasonably waterproof storage box for use on smaller vessels.

It is made from three plastic washing up bowls. Cut a hole in the bottom of one, leaving a lip to help hold items in the box. (Many bowls have a ridge in the bottom, cutting inside this retains the strength of the bowl.) Then place this bowl up side down over the second one and fasten the two together around the outside rim. This can be done with screws or with pop rivets. Before finally fastening the two together, coat the rim of one bowl with a sealant to prevent water getting in. Once the two are fastened together the box is made. The lid is the third bowl placed up side down over the bowl with a hole! It is essential that the bowls are all the same or a they won't fit together properly. A line can be attached to the lid from the 'box' to prevent it floating away, or it can be left loose.

The box is fairly strong and water tight, but light. On Kittiwake we use it for keeping all the galley items such as large knives, cutlery, plates etc., and have a separate one as the 'bosons locker' with all the bits and pieces that I can't sail without!

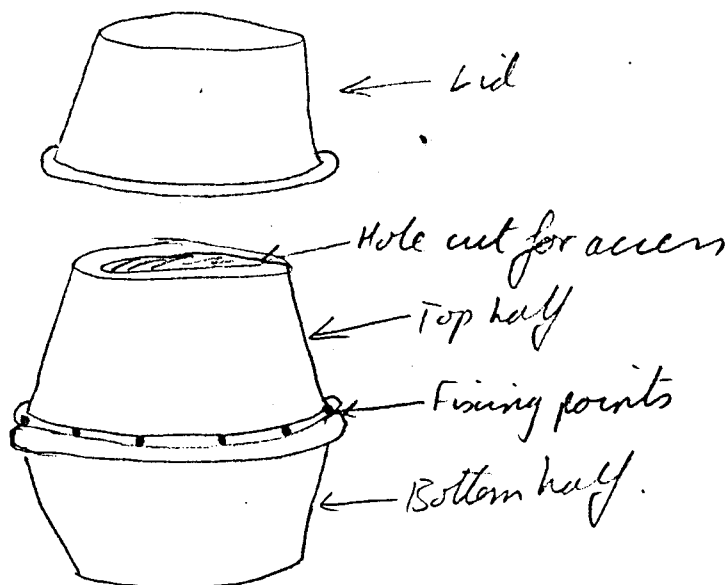
##### Rubber rub stoppers

This idea is even simpler. The rubber rollers on the docking arms of the SBS trailer tend to mark the sides of the hull, particularly when retrieving in a cross tide. To stop this I have stitched a piece of carpet round the rollers so that the hull can still slide against the arms, but there is no rubber to mark the hull. This also covers the split pins at the top of the docking arm so that it can't scratch anything like legs, arms or more importantly, the hull!

All I used was a piece of carpet large enough to go round the roller and be sown with whipping cord on the 'outside'. I stitched the top and bottom as well as the side so that it can't slide off.

Hopefully this will reduce the amount of elbow grease needed to keep the hull clean!

## Diagram of 'waterproof' Box



Rob & Hilary Elvy SO155  
Kittiwake

## ADVERTISEMENT

# MARLIN

MARLIN INTERNATIONAL LTD. CHARTWOOD HOUSE BREAMORE HAMPSHIRE SP6 2EF ENGLAND TEL: 0725 22472

## THINKING OF SELLING?

Even the most dedicated Swiftie may one day need a change!

If that day has come for you, you may be interested to know that Marlin runs a successful brokerage service for good used Swifts - 18's, 20's, 23's or Explorers.

We advertise every month, run a regular newsletter to circulate the boats' details, and have a 4-figure customer database to work on, having been selling and marketing Swifts for 5 years now. Some of you will have originally bought your boats - new or used - from us. Others may even have one of our own Marlin-built 400-Series Swift 18's or 20's. We are in an excellent position to get a fair price for your Swift within a reasonable period of time, as many satisfied users of our service will testify.

Should you be interested in purchasing one of the larger craft, sail or power, for which we are dealers, we can most likely even take your existing Swift in part-exchange.

Do give Roger Marsh of Marlin a call, without obligation, of course, if you think we can be of help - we shall be more than glad to discuss the details with you.

### Installing an Echo Sounder and Log

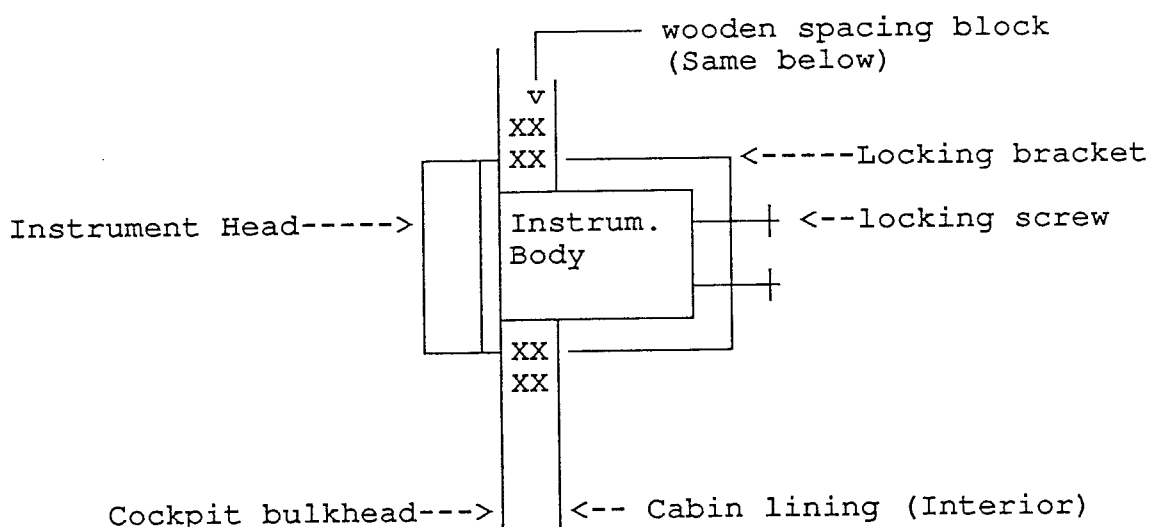
In the two years that Hilary and I have had Kittiwake, I have been mumbling about getting an echo sounder and log for her. This came to a head when I heard that a member of our sailing club who runs a marine electronics business firm had the Stowe Navsounder and Navigator 1 at very reasonable prices.

Now I only had to install them! The job broke down into four stages; install the instrument head, install the sensors (transducer and paddle wheel), wire the instrument heads to the 12V supply and run the sensor cables through.

#### Installing the Instrument Heads

The first task was to get hold of the right sized hole cutter. This is essential. Since there were a number of people in the club who had bought instruments a 4" hole cutter had been acquired on short term loan. I marked up where I wanted the instrument heads to be and cut the holes into the cockpit bulkhead high and to port of the hatchway. This revealed the known gap between the bulkhead and the cabin liner - about 9mm. The top hole had cut through part of the spacer block that the liner mounting screw screwed into - and therefore a spacer was needed for the lower mounting bracket for the top instrument. Then the bracket needed to be trimmed down by about 9mm. Once fitted permanently the instrument head will need to be bedded in silicon sealant, but not until the very end of the installation.

Diagram 1; Instrument Head Fitting

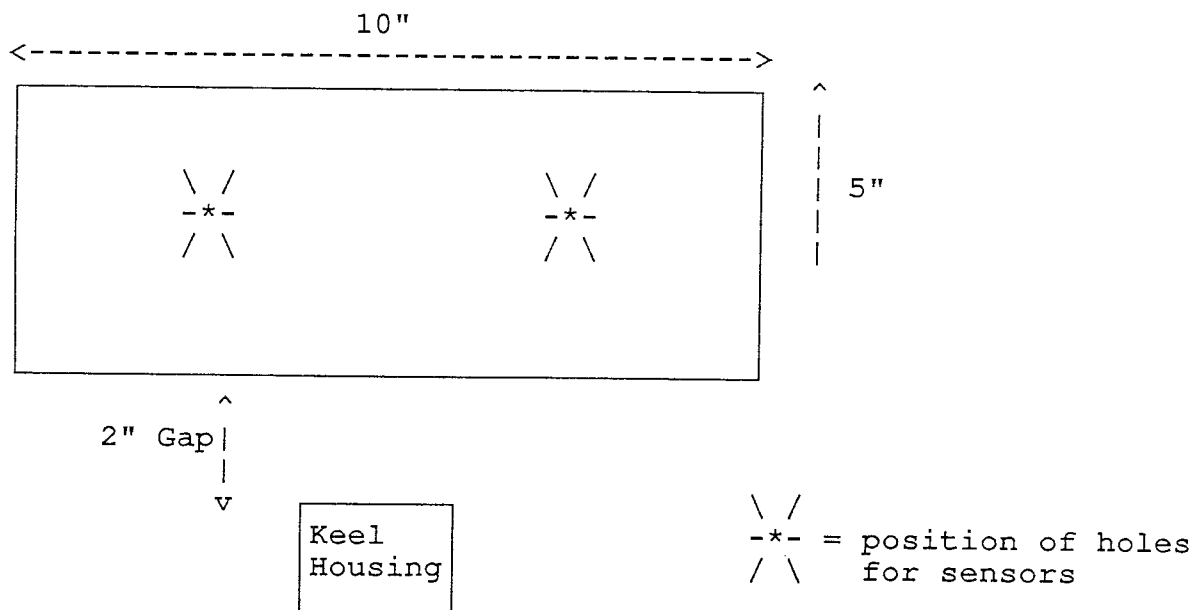


#### Installing the Sensors

This was the most frightening job I have ever done on a boat. I had decided after consulting a number of other Swift owners and the supplier of the instruments that the best place to fit the sensors was in front of the keel on the centre line. This involves cutting away the inner skin and removing some of the foam sandwich.

I marked up the cabin sole as per diagram 2 and prepared to cut.

Diagram 2



I drilled a hole in the centre of where I planned to put one of the sensors. This was to get some idea of how thick the inner skin was and how deep the gap between the two skins was. By drilling where I intended to go all the way through, it wouldn't matter if I did by accident. The drill gave a double kick as I went through. I couldn't see daylight, so I measured the depth using a thin pencil and set the depth control on the drill to just less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ " and drilled out one of the corners.

My original idea was to use an electric jig saw to complete the cut, but the depth was not enough to let the saw blade in, so I started to cut it with a keyhole saw by hand. This was taking for ever, so with the depth control firmly set I perforated the perimeter lines with the electric drill then cut the rest with the keyhole saw. This got the job done much more quickly. Having cut all the way round I used a broad bladed screw driver to lever out the 'waste' piece of cabin sole. This was very firmly held in place by the foam.

Now I was left with a mess of foam in a jagged hole. The edges were filed smooth with a file, and I used a sanding disk on the drill to get the last of the foam out and the inner skin as smooth as possible. The inner skin is very rough, presumably to get a good bond with the foam.

Once it was smooth I cleaned out all the dust and bonded the inner and outer skins together using fibreglass mat and epoxy resin. This means that when (not if!) any water leaks in during the removal of the log impeller, it won't get in between the two skins. I cut mat to fit each side and extra mat to bond over the corners to give complete cover. This was then given an extra coat of epoxy once half cured, just in case! I left it all to fully cure over night.

The next day I used a  $1 \frac{3}{4}$ " hole cutter to cut two holes side by side for the sensor units. The hull is about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " to  $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick here and all fibreglass rather than a balsa sandwich like the inner skin. Rather than fit both the sensors directly on

the centre line I wanted them side by side. This was both to reduce the amount of space taken up in the cabin and to reduce the turbulence between the two sensors. Once the holes were cut I sanded them down and inserted the skin fittings, with thick coats of silicon sealant both inside and out. These were then left to cure fully.

### Wire up 12 Volt Supply

The fuse/switch panel on Kittiwake is on the port side, as far away as possible from the gas lines (paranoia prevents panic!). I had bought a length of rubber sheathed 6-core cable primarily because the cable could get wet and the rubber would protect it better. The Stowe instruments only use 3 wires for power. I ran the cable behind the cabin lining so that it surfaced between the two instruments, protecting it as much as possible. From here it ran down the back, over the wooden mounting for the screw holding in the lining and across to the switch panel above and to port of the port hand bunk. (It was for this job that I had put off permanently fitting the instrument heads - the two holes were useful for getting my hand behind the lining without removing it completely. The same applies for fitting the sensor cables.) The cable was connected to one instrument and a short jump cable ran between the two, as per the Stowe instructions. At the other end I had debated using separate switches for the echo sounder and log, to enable me to preserve power. This started to get complicated, particularly since I didn't have enough switches, so they were both connected to the same switches. The Stoves use a common ground with separate positive connections for the main power and the lighting power.

A brief test was carried out by running the sensor cables across the cabin and then powering up the instruments. This was partly to test that the wiring worked, and partly to satisfy my desire to see something working since it was now Sunday night and nothing else would happen until the next weekend! Everything lit up as it should and I was informed that we were going nowhere with no water underneath us - not bad for sitting on the trailer in the pound!

### Installing and connecting the sensor cables

The original idea was to run the cables from the centre line, through a stainless steel pipe to the under-sink well, up the inside and up to the port side cabin wall, then aft to the bulkhead lining and across to the instrument heads. This came unstuck when the Stowe installation instructions said that the two cables should not run side by side but should be separated by at least a ½" gap.

Discussion in the club bar with Nigel Rennie provided the idea of running the cables aft, one each side of the keel house. I boxed in the sensors with 9mm ply, held in place by fibreglass and resin, with two holes drilled in the aft wall for the sensor cables to run through. These were lined with some of the rubber sheathing from the 6-core cable, to allow the length of cable inside the box to be adjusted. The cables were then led inside the keel housing, held in place by loosening the screws

holding the cover, pushing the cable gently up the gap, and tightening the screws up again.

Aft of the keel housing I used two short lengths of hose pipe to protect the cables, and guide them to the cabin lining. here I coiled the excess cable (the instructions say don't cut them!), tied the coils up with cable ties, and ran the end up the inside of the lining to two holes by the instrument heads. At no point do the cables get closer than 1" to each other.

Now that the wiring was complete, I put a ring of silicon sealant round the outside of the holes cut for the instrument heads, and finally fixed them in position.

I hope this helps someone else in modifying their Swift. If you want to talk it over some time I would be happy to do so, either in a pub, at the Association gatherings or by 'phone.

Happy Swifting,

Rob & Hilary Elvy  
SO 155 Solent Area  
(Tel; 0703-861946)

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# **THIS NEWSLETTER EATS LOGS**

**IT ALSO NIBBLES ON IDEAS, STORIES,  
NEWS, TECHNICAL HINTS,  
AMUSING TALES AND LETTERS**

# **PLEASE FEED IT WELL**

**SEND YOUR TASTY MORSELS TO THE EDITOR**

## PROBLEMS WITH THE KEEL LIFTING MECHANISM

The keel winding gear must be one of the most written about items of the Swift 18, due to a variety of problems and different solutions. On my Swift "CHARISMA" (SO 134) I have had a number of different problems but the solutions were straightforward:

Problem 1: This appeared soon after I bought my boat. The stainless steel plate, which sits on top of the keel box through which the keel winding mechanism passes, started to bend and bow downwards when the keel was lifted.

Solution 1: I reinforced the keel box with some extra fibre-glass, straightened the stainless steel plate and re-sealed the plate to the keel box with silicone sealant. I then welded two pieces of angle iron together to form a channel and cut a hole in the centre through which the keel lifting gear passes. This channel then fits snugly over the stainless steel plate and keel box with a rubber gasket between the plate and the new channel. The rubber gasket prevents any water seepage and also acts as a cushioning device. To compensate for the increase in the height of the lifting mechanism I cut about 1/8" off the top of the nylon block.

Problem 2: The lifting gear suddenly failed to raise the keel. After some difficulty in recovering the boat onto its trailer it was discovered that the thread in the bronze bush through which the stainless steel screw spindle passes had stripped.

Solution 2: Thanks to Brian Hombrey and his article in Newsletter No 24 (March 1988), I had a new winding mechanism manufactured to his design. After 3 years extensive use I can confirm that the design is sound and still working well.

Problem 3: My Swift was made in 1984 and is one of the earlier boats with no thrust race used in the keel lifting gear. This has always caused stiffness due to friction between the socket in which you place the winding handle and the nylon block. This problem applied to both the original lifting mechanism and the new Hombrey design. Also the friction heated up the stainless steel winding socket to such an extent that if touched immediately after winding it could burn.

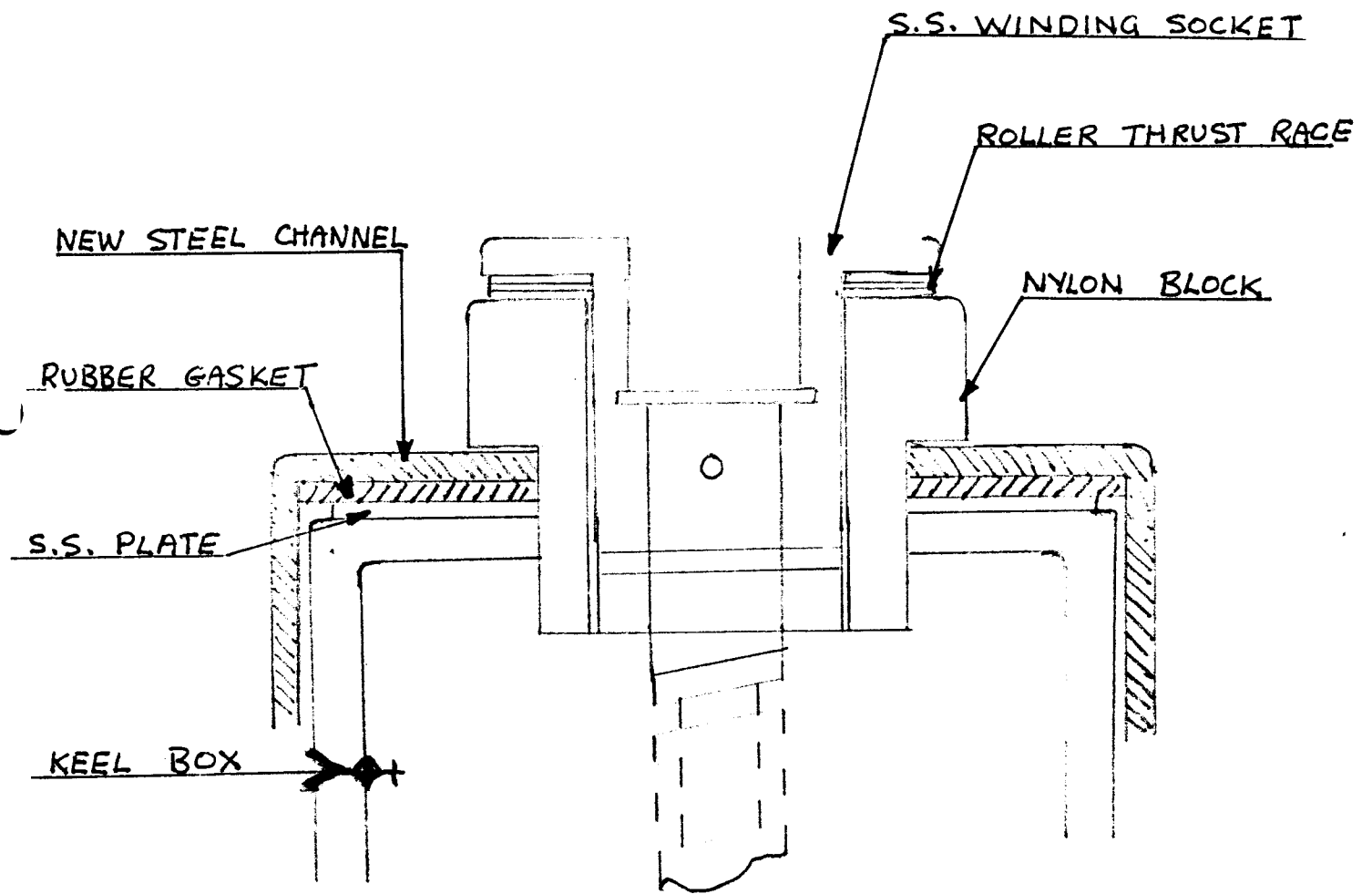
Solution 3: This proved to be one of the most simple yet effective modifications of any I have undertaken on my Swift. From a bearing distributor I bought a roller thrust race. This is designed to cope with very heavy loads, and the total thickness of the thrust race is only about 3mm. No modifications or machinery are required to fit it. It is simply placed between the stainless steel winding socket and the nylon block. The thrust race is made up of three components; two Face-plates and a Roller-cage. The part numbers and sizes of the components are:

Torrington (USA) NTA 2031 (Face-plates)  
TRA 2031 (Roller-cage)  
1.250" inside diameter x 1.937" outside diameter

If anybody wishes to buy this thrust race and has difficulty in obtaining it, I can supply them. The cost is £15 including VAT and postage. Thanks to this improvement I can now easily wind up the keel using only one hand and without taking a rest, or more important, I can send the crew below (i.e. the wife) to wind up the keel.

ROGER PIGDEN (SO 134)

MODIFICATIONS TO SWIFT 18 KEEL LIFTING  
GEAR AND KEEL BOX REINFORCEMENT.



## 5. CRUISING CHATTER

### CONTINENTAL CRUISING

"Tiger Lily" has just completed her sixth continental cruise and so perhaps now is the time to describe our general experiences and draw some comparisons between the various countries visited over the last few years.

Year	Country	Sailing Area	Newsletter-Page
1986	France	- R. Vilaine, Quiberon, Morbihan	19-12
1987	Yugoslavia	- Zadar to Hvar, Trogir	22-7
1988	Spain	- Costa Brava	26-4
1989	Italy	- Island of Elba	29-16
1990	Netherlands	- Friesland canals and lakes	32-13
1991	Denmark	- Limfjord	to be published

These holidays have ranged from 2 weeks in the Netherlands and Denmark to 4 weeks in Yugoslavia. Our two daughters accompanied us on our first four holidays, but as they are now adults, Tiger Lily's crew has been reduced to just my wife and I.

Our holiday ideas have usually been triggered by reading various articles in Practical Boat Owner, other magazines, the newsletters and elsewhere. Any area which seems to be suitable for the small boat sailor is put onto our list of future possibilities. There are dozens of places scattered throughout Europe which are accessible to the trailer sailor.

We usually start our planning in the previous autumn, examining our list and selecting one or two sailing areas to suit our current circumstances. During the last two years we have been limited to a 2 week holiday and this has restricted the number of possibilities available.

Having selected a sailing holiday area, we then start to research it in more detail, re-reading the relevant articles and obtaining guide and pilot books from the local library. These provide good general information concerning the climate and facilities. Other sources of information are the tourist offices in London. A letter or visit to the appropriate Tourist Office usually results in plenty of information, only a fraction of which is directly relevant to the trailer sailor. However, the Yugoslav, Spanish and Danish offices did provide lists of marinas for the area concerned.

The next, and probably most difficult problem is to select the harbour or marina in which to launch the boat. The word 'slipway' conveys all sorts of meanings and is never defined adequately in the reference material. It may mean anything from a loose gravel slope disappearing into gooey mud or it may be a good gradually sloping concrete ramp with at least 1m of water over it. Mediterranean slipways often disappear in a vertical

drop when they are 2 inches below the water level and are therefore totally unusable. Sometimes the information available just says that there is either a slipway or a crane - you cannot determine which.

The true traditions of trailer sailing call for a DIY slipway launch, but on four occasions we have succumbed to expediency by resorting to a crane launch. We justify this by saying that the trailer is essential for the 1000 miles trail home and it would be best not to get it wet. Our launches by crane have always been very successful even though there is usually a language problem with the crane operator. Mediterranean marinas are highly geared to the needs of the trailer sailor and crane launches are a matter of course. In Spain, for example, trailable boats were arriving at the crane every few minutes and were placed into the water almost immediately. We had Tiger Lily afloat, within 15 minutes of arriving at the marina. It is just like being on a conveyor belt, you pay your money, wait in the queue to be launched and then motor over to the allocated pontoon berth.

The larger Mediterranean marinas also have good facilities for parking the car and storing the trailer. In Yugoslavia they were guarded by a man and a dog; this was probably to ensure that you did not take them away without paying the parking fee ! In order to ascertain information about parking and crane charges we usually write direct to one or two of the marinas in the sailing area. This helps to establish if English is spoken by any of the personnel and if we receive a reply in English then that marina gets extra credit points in our selection procedure. For our Friesland holiday we did not do this as our information indicated that there were at least 6 marinas and slipways in the town of Lemmer. We took a chance on that occasion. On arrival at Lemmer we uncoupled the boat in order to drive round and inspect the marinas before choosing the most suitable one.

Once the launch site has been decided the rest of our holiday plan falls into place fairly easily. We choose the date according to circumstances, perhaps modified by the climate information we have available. The route overland needs to be examined in more detail and the distance estimated. We like to use motorways as this makes for easier driving, but remember that in France, Italy and Yugoslavia the tolls can be expensive. For a single driver who is limiting the speed to 50 miles per hour, we find that a good rule of thumb for a daily distance is between 400 and 500 miles. This produces an estimate of the number of days needed for the trail and hence how many days afloat can be fitted into the holiday.

By examining a chart of the sailing area, a sailing plan can be formulated - we have found it wise to do the longer passages early in the holiday and reserve a contingency day near the end to cope with bad weather. We try to plan on having two short

passages in the last two days, so if bad weather is forecast, they can be condensed into one. However, special care needs to be taken in Yugoslavia, southern France and the Costa Brava as bad weather (Force 6 or more) can arrive within a few minutes

The cross channel brochures are published by the ferry companies in November and by Christmas time we have sorted out most details of our holiday. P&O offer a concessionary fare scheme whereby shareholders who hold 600 5.5% dividend shares can obtain a 50% reduction on the cross channel fare. To take advantage of this scheme you need to be a registered shareholder by the preceding December 31st.

In January we book our crossing and then sit back to dream about the sailing holiday. A month or two before departure date it is time to think about getting detailed road maps, charts, pilot books, courtesy flag, insurance for car, boat, medical expenses and so on. The boat should already have an SSR number and you need a Helmsman's Certificate of Competence from the RYA. We have never been asked for these papers, except by UK customs who usually want to see the SSR on the return.

You might decide to tackle the language problem by taking a course in Holiday French, German, Spanish or Italian at your local Adult Education Centre. For our Italian holiday we bought the BBC 'Get by in Italian' tapes and after leaving the ferry at Le Havre, put them in the car cassette player. We then had 2 days to learn Italian whilst driving along the motorway - it helps to relieve the boredom of the road journey !

A week or two before departure date it is time to obtain currency and travellers cheques. On holiday, we tend to use a variety of methods for paying, Eurocheques and credit cards usually work well. It is also time to give the trailer and car a thorough service. The trailer is the most vital piece of equipment for a long trail and it is imperative to examine the wheel bearings, check everything and re-adjust the brakes.

Departure day arrives, the boat is packed with provisions and water for the journey and then the trail begins. It is usually cheaper to cross the Channel during the night, so we try to get some sleep on the ferry if we can. The aim is to get the boat to the launch site without incident and as quickly and safely as possible. To us this means travelling at 50 mph in the nearside lane of the motorway. Continental motorways have frequent parking places and this makes long distance trailing very easy and convenient. We stop every couple of hours for a break, food or to sleep.

It is difficult to get lost on a 1000 mile motorway, but the probability of doing so increases greatly within a few miles of the destination. Good local maps and a sharp lookout for signposts help to avoid this problem, but we often manage to make a wrong turning at this stage of the trail !

On arriving at the marina or harbour, the first problem is to find someone who speaks English, normally this has not been a problem and, as yet, we have had no difficulty in getting the boat launched quickly. Sometimes, as in Yugoslavia and Italy, the money needs to be paid first. Usually the harbour master will allocate you a pontoon berth and indicate where to park the car and trailer.

Before sailing can start, it is necessary to obtain more local currency from a bank, buy provisions, petrol and perhaps a local sailing chart. In Punta Ala, Italy, petrol could not be obtained by walking round to the quayside pump with a can; the boat had to be motored over to the fuel quay. This can be a problem if, for safety reasons, you have trailed the boat empty of petrol. Food is not usually a problem. We tend to spend equal amounts on buying provisions for cooking aboard and on eating out in local restaurants. In Yugoslavia, the variety of food was limited whilst in other countries it was excellent. In Friesland we were tempted by the 'Appelgebak' and on most days in Denmark by the delicious pastries. In Spain our daughters were delighted to find Heinz baked beans. We also have fond memories of French galettes and Italian pizzas.

We always find that sailing out of harbour on the first leg of our foreign cruises is exhilarating - it is like venturing out into the unknown; you are leaving harbour to explore a fresh sailing area. There are new sights and navigation marks to learn and I always find this a most exciting experience.

Mooring practices are often not the same as in the UK and you need to learn the different techniques. In the Mediterranean it is customary to moor either bow-to or stern-to the quay. With Tiger Lily we always moor bow-to by dropping a stern anchor about 4 boat lengths away from the quay and then secure the bow about 1 foot from the wall or pontoon. In Friesland and the Limfjord they use 'box' moorings in which the stern is secured to 2 piles and the bow tied to the quay. Here it is wise to use floating rope so as to reduce the risk of getting rope caught in the propeller.

Obtaining weather forecast information can be a problem for the yachtsmen cruising in foreign waters. We have used a variety of sources ranging from good English language forecasts in Yugoslavia and Italy to trying to decode foreign forecasts as in Spain. A technique we use is to record the foreign language weather forecast on a small tape recorder and then play it back repeatedly until we can translate it. If we fail to do this, then a friendly local can often be found to help out. We used this method in Spain and Denmark. In the Netherlands, Brittany and Denmark we were able to receive the BBC shipping forecast on 198 Khz. We also discovered that 'BBC for Europe' provide a general land forecast for northern Europe on 648 Khz at 6:59 and 7:59 local time every day. Other sources are the Coastal

Radio Stations and the National radio broadcasts. Sometimes, as in Spain, the marinas or harbourmasters post printed weather information on their office doors.

We like to reserve at least one day of our holiday to take a shorebased excursion. This gives us a chance to dry out, perhaps take a bus ride and play at being tourists for a day. In Yugoslavia we used one day to move the car and trailer 80 miles so that we could recover Tiger Lily at Trogir rather than sail back to Zadar. This technique makes it possible to do a '1-way' sail and so extend the sailing area covered.

Recovery of the boat is always a sad time for us. We have no more time left and realise that there are still many places we have not explored or visited. Once the boat is out of the water we have the chore of scrubbing the bottom. Tiger Lily does not have any anti-fouling and therefore tends to be a bit grubby after a couple of weeks afloat. At Trogir the marina staff obliged by performing this chore with a high pressure hose.

The journey home always seems to take longer than the outward journey. However, I suspect that this is just our imagination; we do not look forward to going home with quite the same enthusiasm as the trail out.

It is difficult to compare the costs of our holidays because each country offers something different. In trying to compare them with an equivalent charter boat based holiday we find that trailing is extremely cost effective. The cost of boat charter and travel should be compared with the sum of our fixed costs (between £200 and £250 for ferry, insurance, charts and launching) and the cost of car petrol (say £100). Sailing expenses tend to be a small part of the total and the cost of food is mainly dependent on the number of meals eaten in restaurants.

After six very enjoyable continental sailing holidays in our own boat, we can highly recommend the trailer sailer as being a good way to do it. If you want to try long distance trailing, then our only words of advice are to do your planning, keep the plan flexible and allow for contingencies, particularly for weather, breakdowns and unforeseen circumstances. In general the holiday is very cheap if you compare it with a flotilla or bareboat charter and so you can always justify expenditure on extra treats.

Alan Murphy - TIGER LILY, S217

HELP WANTED HELP WANTED HELP WANTED HELP WANTED HELP WANTED HELP

I urgently require a road trailer for my S18. If anyone is able to lend or sell me one, please contact me on 0892 547523.

Peter Swallow SO 150

6. POST BAG

Dear Douglas,

I think I mentioned to you on the phone recently that "Kippatoo" was out of action with centre-board trouble, and I think it may be useful to you to fill you in and bring the saga up to date.

The problem arose late in July in a violent thunderstorm coming out of the Beaulieu River, when the boat went on to a lee shore and the pounding bent the worm screw pin, making it impossible to wind up. We had her lifted out in Cowes next day; there they jacked up the keel, and after a good deal of banging and sawing (I still have not worked out what the chap was sawing!) they announced that it was straight enough to wind up. So we sailed her back to our drying mooring at Keyhaven, wound it up with immense effort, and left her there.

Next time I tried to wind it down; there was a bang after the second turn and the whole thing came loose. So we lifted her out again, and a stripped thread was diagnosed. Then the fun began. I got the number of Swift Boats from the yellow pages, but it was only after many unanswered phone calls that their demise emerged. Honnor Marine, once we got past their answerphone, said they no longer carried spares. Where to turn? The Swift Association seemed the best bet, but all I had ready to hand was a very old newsletter which gave me the name of Lawrence Peacock; he, I recalled, had moved on to something bigger.

In spite of his translation, he could not have been more helpful. He put me on to Brian Hornbrey in Cleveland; Brian has now retired and no longer makes up sets of his "Rolls-Royce" version of the gear, but he told me where to find the drawings of it (inevitably in the newsletter published just before I joined) and Lawrence lent me his copy of it. So a set on those lines is now being made up down on the coast, and if all goes well we should be afloat again for the bank holiday weekend.

Several points arise. First, Lawrence also gave me a second-hand set from his former Swift, which he had replaced when it got bent, and subsequently straightened out. I would guess that after that treatment there may be an increased risk of stripping, but the set might be of value to some other owner in a similar predicament. Would you like to hold it, or perhaps it should be at Bucklers Hard which seems to be the biggest colony of Swifts?

Secondly, one of the puzzling things is that the centre-board apparently never kicked up as I would have expected it to do. When I saw it after the event, the nylon ring at the top of it appeared to have jammed in the hole in the outer casing of the box. Has anyone else experienced this? Presumably the cure is to enlarge the hole by, say, 4mm all round.

Third and less seriously, Lawrence also lent me the entire file of newsletters, and it was the first chance I have had to take a leisurely overview of the history of the Association and of the class and the many boat-builders associated with it in its relatively short life. I was fascinated; who owns the TV rights? I'm sure the tale would beat "Howards Way" into a cocked hat!

And lastly, my gratitude to the Association in general and to Lawrence and Brian in particular. Everyone has been most helpful in an awkward situation.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Norman Donaldson

Norman Donaldson (SO 332)