

SWIFT

The journal of the Swift Association



Newsletter 48 :: February 1995

Secretary's Log

LET ME START BY WISHING YOU ALL A HAPPY NEW YEAR. This is the second Log that I have written for the 'current' Newsletter. Regrettably the first piece I wrote back in October is now out of date. You will have noticed that there was no Autumn edition. This is entirely due to the fact that Steve was unable to produce a meaningful Newsletter because of lack of copy!

I know I have said this before - as have Secretaries before me - but at the risk of becoming a pain I must say that the Association relies totally on the participation of its membership. We have over 90 members but only about a dozen seem to want to get involved. **PLEASE PLEASE** put pen to paper and let us know what you are up to.

- ◆ Where have you sailed?
- ◆ What modifications have you fitted?
- ◆ What disasters have befallen you?
- ◆ What do you cook on board?
- ◆ Where have you trailed?
- ◆ How do you think the Association can be improved?
- ◆ How should we use the money generated from our subscriptions?

With the AGM coming up soon if you have any questions, queries or complaints then now is the time to write to me and I will raise these at the meeting if you are unable to attend in person. All our Honorary Officers would like to step down, but with the exception of our Newsletter Editor nobody appears to want to pick up the reins. None of these positions is terribly time consuming and it would be nice for some fresh impetus.

I will now climb down from my soap box and wish you all a happy sailing season and I hope to see as many of you as possible at the upcoming A.G.M. ●

The Swift Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

●
This year's A.G.M. will be held at
WARSASH SAILING CLUB
on **SUNDAY, 5th MARCH, 1995.**
The meeting will commence at 4 p.m.
and finish no later than 7 p.m.

●
**Warsash Sailing Club, Shore House,
Warsash, Southampton SO3 9FS**

● *This issue's cover picture is Doug Angus' 'Cir Mhor' negotiating Neptune's Staircase in the Caledonian Canal.*

Careless Conduct

HAVING BEEN CAUGHT in an embarrassing situation during the May Bank Holiday Swift Rally, I was blackmailed to recount the tale. Well here goes - perhaps they won't print the picture but somehow I doubt that!

We had spent the night at East Cowes marina where Lou does a great breakfast and decided to make a leisurely sail to Keyhaven for the Swift barbecue. As we had plenty of time, it seemed opportune to anchor just outside Newtown Creek and await the other boats coming out from Bucklers Hard. As is usual when I am not too sure of the bottom, I buoy the anchor with a small float. This is because I once had great difficulty with a fouled anchor at Calshot.

At about 2 p.m. I gave Windsong a call on the radio in order to be sure that the fleet were on their way. We decided to weigh anchor and proceed onto towards Keyhaven. There were no other vessels close by or any dangerous shore, so I thought we might as well sail off the anchorage. With mainsail raised, I hauled on the anchor and carelessly let the anchor buoy float round the back of the boat. Heather did point this out to me. "Never mind" I thought, we did not have the engine going and it should be easy enough to pull in the buoy. This was not to be - the buoy somehow got caught under Tiger Lily and proved impossible to retrieve. Well after much messing about with the rope and raising and lowering of the centreboard it was no better.

We motored into Keyhaven, anchored, inflated the Bombard to see if the anchor buoy could be seen from outside the boat. No it could not be seen! There was nothing else for it, but to put on the wetsuit, find the mask and snorkel and go under the boat. Well the other boats started to arrive by this time and they were very puzzled to find Tiger Lily being motored off to a shallow part of the spit (to make it a bit easier). Under the boat, I found that the anchor buoy was tightly wedged up into the centreboard cavity. It took a great deal of pulling with feet firmly placed upward under the bottom of the hull. Eventually the buoy was tugged free and after getting my breath back we motored back to a more suitable anchorage amongst the other boats.

The moral of this story is that if you use an anchor buoy, then retrieve it when you pull in the anchor and do not let it float about thinking you will get it later. Murphy's Law states that if it can float into the centreboard cavity, then it will!

Alan Murphy :: Tiger Lily S217



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'Owaar' '94: solo round Skye

Dear Ed: The Association is 'asking for' more articles, so . . . here is the log, story and 40 fairly representative pics. to choose from of one of my 1994 voyages. It is 'long' - but it was a log way too! Perhaps two 'sequel' episodes? Or, if you have finally roused the 'other' 300 or so members from slumber, perhaps you won't want more than just the log, chart or pics - your choice. - Keith Jacques.

• *I'm sure that no-one who read Keith's inspiring account of his 1993 single-handed trip round the Isle of Mull would want me to cut a single word from his Skye log - which runs to over 12 handwritten pages of text, a Map and a summary log! To do it justice therefore I'm proposing to run it in two or three 'episodes' over the coming issues. - Steve Hart.*

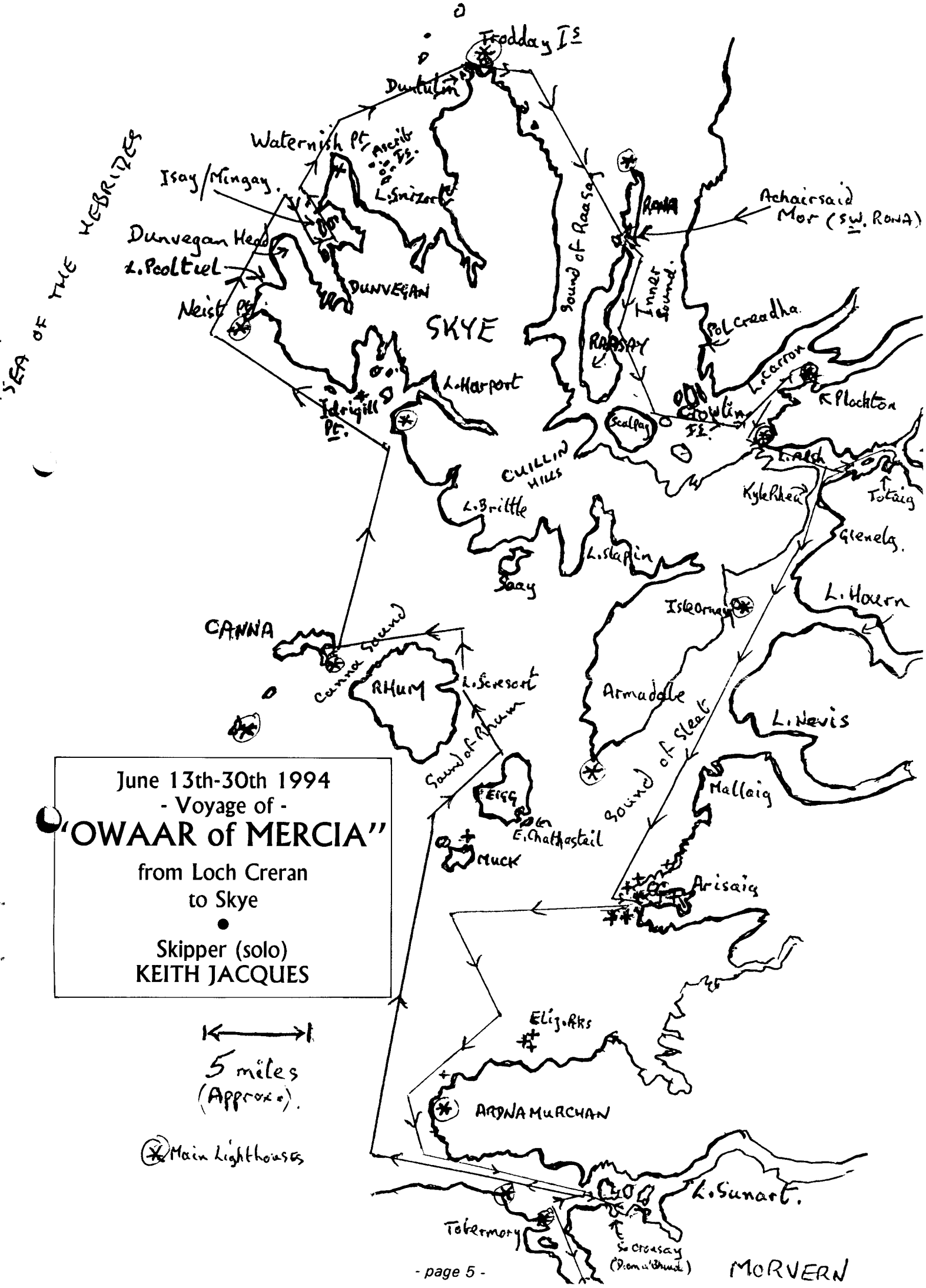
THIS TRIP WAS ENCOURAGED by the success of a circumnavigation of Mull in 1993, but it was recognised from the outset that there would be an order of magnitude difference in both the extent, the exposure and the general difficulty - particularly since 'Owaar of Mercia' uses upper Loch Creran as her home port!

As the accompanying summary log of the voyage will reveal, these expectations were fully met. Superb, utterly exhilarating sailing days and fine scenery were rewards for sometimes wearying and once quite hazardous, days spent in secluded harbours and lochs awaiting the right combinations of tide and wind.

Overall poor weather throughout June was not wholly unexpected - 'flamin' June' is quite well named in these latitudes (what a contrast to the English South coast reports! At least I had good 'driving winds!') but I can count a mere five days out of eighteen when sunlight was sufficiently sustained to allow high speed photography; three days were shrouded in mist with only half-mile visibility; on four 'lay-by' days the wind was strong enough - even in sheltered anchorages - to give some concern, and to demand extensive 'anchor watch.'

Given that circumnavigation of Skye was the objective, I had not planned to linger in the many sea lochs of Western Skye. Indeed many of these places have a very poor report for violent squalls from the hills. Loch Eishort, Slapin, Scavaig and Brittle on the South West, and Lochs Sligachan and Ainort on the sound of Raasay were all avoided at the planning stage for this reason. There is a limit to what a 60-year-old amateur can safely attempt in remote places without courting trouble! Loch Scresort on Rhum was likewise not in my plan.

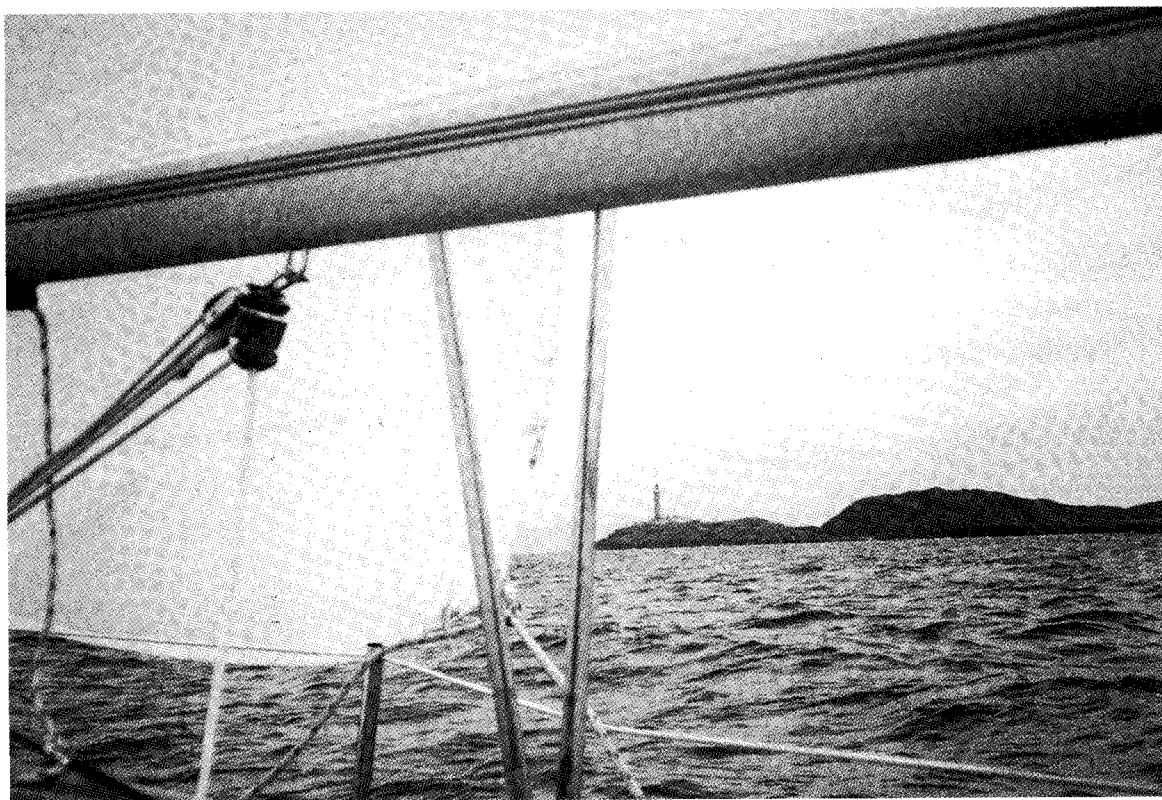
The idea was to include as many interesting ports of call as possible with 20-25 mile passages between them. In this spirit, the main expedition route was outlined to include Drom a' Bhuide (S. Oronsay), round the Ardnamurchan Point to Muck, thence to Soay Harbour (half tide entrance), Loch Harport, Loch Pooltiel, Duntulm Island (Loch Snizort), Rona, Poll Creadha or the Crowlin Islands, Caolas Scalpay (if weather was fair), through the Kyle of Loch Alsh and Kyle Rhea to Isleornsay or Armadale on the Sound of Sleat and finally to Arisaig (or to Eilean Chathasteil on Eigg - if weather was fair) before coming 'home' round the Ardnamurchan and back down the Sound of Mull.



So much for plans - roughly eighteen days of sailing, with enough stores and water on board for twenty six days 'just in case.' The reality, exciting and fulfilling in many ways, had to be somewhat different! I had 'warning' enough: three days to get up the Sound of Mull to South Oronsay, instead of two; a waiting day there (this one quite expected) to get S/SW3 and a flooding tide to take me round the Ardnamurchan Point - Four days supplies gone before tackling any of the bigger challenges! Yes! it only took seven **sailing** days to complete the clockwise circumnavigation and five of these were more than 30 miles (one more than 40 miles) with between eight and eleven hours 'continuously' at the helm - (my autopilot consists of a 6mm rope stretched across the cockpit and linked to a piece of shockcord and is satisfactory with properly balanced sails in most winds F2-5).

The 'leap-frog' approach missing out some of my safe havens to take fullest advantage of fair tides and good winds, worked well and the diversions into Loch Carron and Loch Duich were rewarding in every way. However the bad days at anchor were somewhat of a trial: One in particular in Loch Dunvegan, spent between Isay and Mingay dragging my anchor on and off for 24 hours was absolutely exhausting of nervous energy and quite the worst experience of all my various 'sailing' exploits over the years . . .

More about anchor watches anon, but I rate this experience, single handed and with no possible help to hand, as far, far worse than my later midnight arrival at Drom a' Bhuide Bhuide in a hailstorm (on the evening of Tuesday, June 28th after a late run round Arnarmurchan). This was pure exhilaration and achievement compounded by the fact that I had finally 'pulled the loop tight' round the circumnavigation!!



- *June 17th: Going N. round the Ardnamurchan.
SW F3-4, flood tide northwards.*

I have mentioned the gentle art of 'leap frogging' to take advantage of the good days between 'storms'. Such was the outgoing venture round Ardnamurchan. A SW3, freshening around lunchtime, had lifted me without incident, and with following tides, round to the west of Muck. 13.00 hours is a bit early to anchor for the day and the forecast Southerly F6, reinforced by increasingly gloomy skies southwards and some increase in the running swell, gave pause for thought. Tomorrow would probably be a bad day, so should I tuck in behind Sheep Island (north Muck anchorage), or run on to Canna Harbour with a further 20 miles to do at least? The decision was to go ahead to the safer haven, but to take the inner route to the East of Rhum to gain some protection from bigger seas which might build up later. There would inevitably be a close-hauled reach across the Canna Strait, once clear of the relative shelter of Rhum, but not more than an hour of 'exposure' there.

The plan worked, except for the unexpected sea fog which was the curtain-raiser for the new southerly wind! I had just enough time to take cross bearings on Muck, the looming NW cliffs of Eigg, and the southern end of Rhum, before the gloom set in and scurrying showers reduced visibility to half a mile or so. Broad reaching across to Eigg and then back across to the mouth of Loch Scresort successfully put me into 'rain shadow' and brighter, if more gusty conditions (the hills of Rhum playing their predictable role as 'wind funnels' in the S/SW wind).

A sense of achievement as the cliffs NE of Canna came into view across the sound! With a reef tucked in 'Owaar' made little fuss of the up wind, cross-tide passage across into the shelter of Sanday just in front of Canna. 41 miles, eleven hours at the helm - my longest ever day in the eighteen footer, but a great land-coming!



● June 19th: Neist Point, NW Skye
"Where two arms of the tide meet . . ."

After a stormy Saturday inside Canna Harbour, Sunday, June 18th came clear and with a gentle WSW3; photographs of distant hills (the Cullins, cloud-capped as ever) and distant prospects (the outer Hebrides, N and W) do no justice to a fine day's sail, past Idrigill Point, Neiss Point (a place of tidal 'meetings', white water and cross-chop) and finally round the bulk of Dunvegan Head and its adjoining weather-sculpted cliffs, into Loch Dunvegan.

Not wishing to sail or motor deep into Loch Dunvegan (only to reverse the mileage on the next leg) I chose to loop round into the channel between Isay and Mingay, islets lying within the protective arm of Ardmore Bay in the mouth of Loch Bay. This is a recommended anchorage in the Pilot with a note that it might be 'lumpy' in a southerly blow . . .

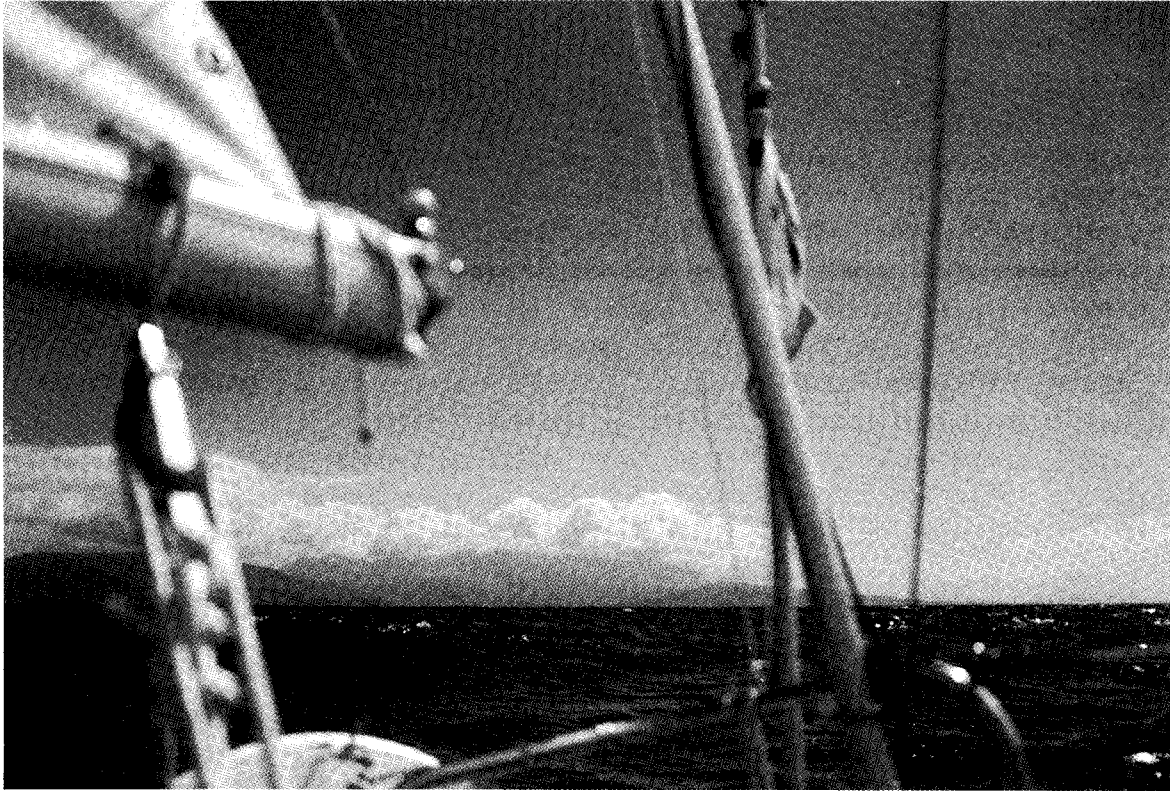
In the calm of Sunday evening a beautiful place to anchor in 15-20ft. of water near to the derelict cottage, near S.E. Isay . . . but **not** a beautiful place in a wind-scoured dawn on Monday! I was to spend until 16.00 hours coping with a dragging anchor in a screaming F6-8 - little hope in that narrow channel of an orderly departure to Loch Erghalla at the head of loch Dunvegan. Nothing for it but the risky procedure of firing up the Mariner 4 (ever reliable, thank goodness!) and **trawling stern first** for a firm hold!

Now, a 7.5 kg. Steadfast, 12 metres of five eights (yes, **five** eights) chain and up to 60 metres of 14mm. cable ought to hold a 26 footer in F8, let alone a lightweight '18'. But neither the shallows either side of the passage, nor the 'deep' (45ft.) mid channel seemed able to give me any grip at all. With rocks close to leeward, the constant worry to avoid fouling the prop in the cable or in the trip line that I always bend on, and the hour-glass threat of running out of fuel (I've never re-filled the outboard tank so fast before . . .) every hour or so, this was a very stressful day indeed.

Finally, 'Owaar' pulled up short and solid. At last!! But would it hold? At least time for some food, coffee and a sit down to think . . . The wind still too strong to risk hauling up and tacking up the loch to safer havens . . . supper . . . dusk . . . still holding, but fearing trouble. An extra pullover and a fresh dry 'Atlantic' jacket and then sleep in small shifts . . . By morning the wind had moderated, the skies cleared again and a good opportunity to sail off safely. So a good breakfast, another box of sandwiches (enough for two average days) two flasks of coffee (ditto apples, bananas, tomatoes and six Mars bar 'equivalents'!) and up anchor for the next stage . . .

It took 20 breath-gasping minutes to get the anchor near the surface . . . my 'solid' anchor was hooked to a lobster pot. One small cheer for lobster pots and so much for free-form 'trawling' with the anchor! I hereby give due **WARNING** that far from being a safe anchorage, the bottom of the Mingay/Isay channel is composed of hard bed and flints, plus elusive seaweed, and short of someone putting a 2-tonne block of concrete down with a 25 inch ball and chain, nothing will ever entice me into that place again. Even Dunvegan pier might be a better bet.

After that, Tuesday's winged flight across the mouth of Loch Snizort, through the Trodday channel and down to Achairsaid Mor, South Rona was therapy indeed! Strong, stabbing gusts fall down from the Skye hills to the Raasay sound, but carefully anticipated, they give a 'lifted' performance, with some of the fastest reaches of the tour - frequently 6.5 knots with full main and a small-overlap genoa - significantly beyond the theoretical for this size of yacht with no more than 20-25 degree heel.



- *June 19th: The Cuillins from the W. coast of Skye.
A fine W4-5 blowing across.*

Achairsaid Mor, hidden well behind its sentries of rocks and the 'camouflage' of Eilean Garbh was a most welcome haven after Isay. Amusingly, I detected two yachts, both sails down and motoring around nonchalantly, who chose to wait until I had found the south channel entrance (which is quite well into the mouth of the SW running Rona/Raasay passage) and then hurried in behind me, as if concerned to lose sight for one instant of the elusive entrance!! At least I was first in that evening, and had a nice choice of anchorage NE of the inner 'islet'.

The pilot talks of 'poor holding in places' - confirmed that night by a big motor yacht who anchored close SE of the islet and was consequently fully exposed to the southwester which chopped in early on Wednesday; He had to move across N of the islet; however I was 'secure' only 50 yards further to the N of her earlier position, in relative wind-shadow.

During Wednesday morning the wind shifted sharply NW and blew a 'hoolie', so it was not until 13.30 that I put my nose out double-reefed and with storm jib, to make my way into and down the Inner Sound.

Of course it **would** be a 'submarine exercise day' with half of HM's navy keeping guard over a single conning-tower-s worth . . . I turned down a request (by **loud** loud-hailer) from the bridge of an escort vessel to communicate with them on Ch 16. What logic was that since the only purpose of a local 'Ch.16' would be to direct the 'traffic' to another channel, why not tell me "Ch.12" or something straightaway!! The Navy rather gave up on me after that, but my hope of crossing the Sound to the Crowlin Islands was thwarted all afternoon by that damned sub . . . Compensation though, came from a bristling, sparkling beam reach under double reef all down the Raasay (west) side of the Sound.

Technical Topics

DO WE ALL SUFFER from minor leaks from the centreboard casing? I do in Tinkerbell usually when starting a weeks holiday!

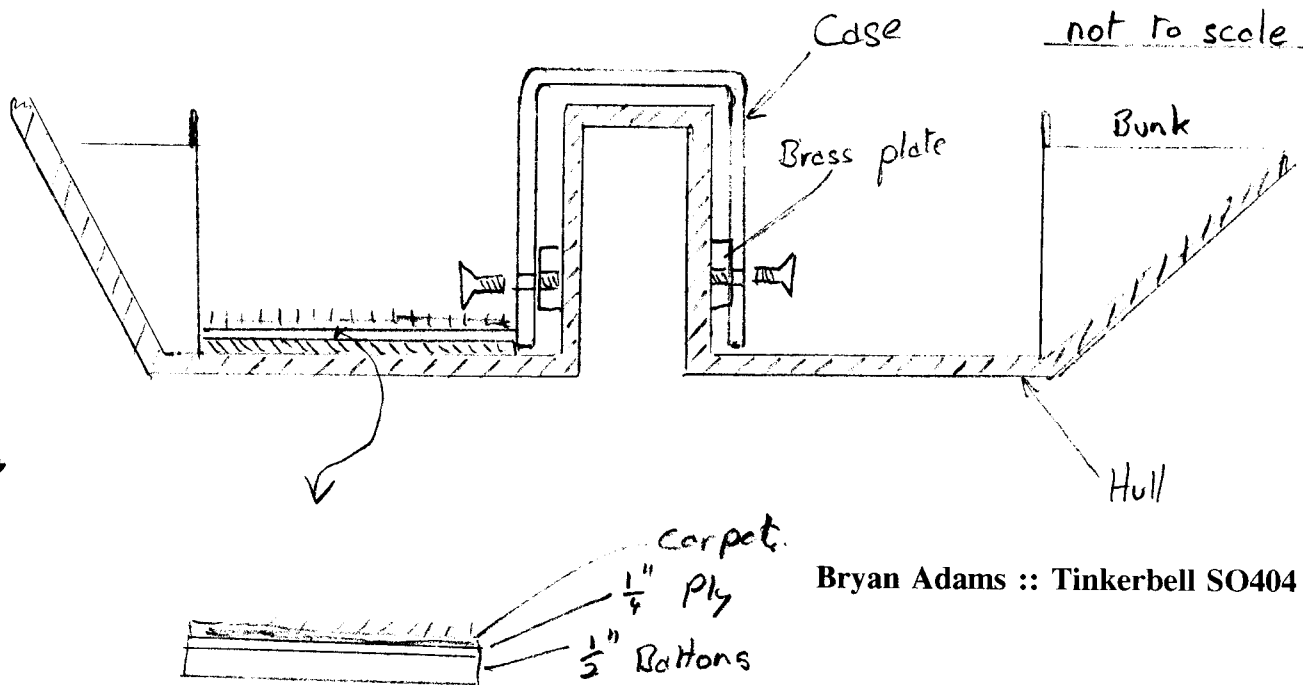
Although I tighten the keel bolt and reseal with compound, after a while we still seem to get a weep out. This is not dangerous but inconvenient.

I haven't fitted them yet but has anyone had any thoughts on fitting bottom boards in the cabin thus giving you a shallow bilge as all wooden boats had?

This would save the carpet getting wet. I expect many of us have put our foot in water when getting out of our bunks.

I think it is a very bad design to have the drop keel cover fixing screws screwing through to the water inside the drop keel case. I have thought of fitting some brass plates Araldited to the side of the casing and tapped so that screws do not go through the watertight hull.

Any ideas on this?



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Late Summer Solent Rallies

• BANK HOLIDAY 27, 28, 29 AUGUST

Participating Yachts: 'Windsong' Alison, John and Jonathan Palmer.
 'Polyanna' Janet and Lawrence Peacock.
 'Tinkerbell' Eileen and Bryan Adams.

ON THE SATURDAY MORNING two intrepid crews were ready to launch at Bucklers Hard.

The forecast was not too good, wind west F4 increasing to F5-6 later.

At about 11 a.m. both boats were just about ready to launch. Windsong went in first, but when Tinkerbell came to move it was found both breaks were locked on. After spending quite a time helping, for which I am very grateful, Windsong thought they had better leave and had a fairly comfortable trip across sailing with one reef.

It's surprising what a good thump on the brake drums with a hammer will do. Tinkerbell then launched at about 1.30 p.m. After a pleasant trip down river we found wind against tide in the Solent and wind as forecasted.

Quite a rough trip was had (surprising how quickly conditions change). After about one and a half hours we reached Cowes and motored up river and found Windsong. We were glad the berth had been reserved.

In the evening we all gathered at the Folly Inn which was very crowded but we all had a good time and a meal even though we had to eat outside. We all then returned to the pontoon, I think Jonathan bribed the ferry man for a lift back to the boats.

At about 8 p.m. Polyanna arrived after a rough trip. This made a gathering of three boats - by chance all the crews came from the Guildford area.

Sunday dawned with wind of about F6 and it was decided not to go to Wooten Creek. Pollyanna had to return and sailed about 12.15 in a heavy rain storm. The other crews went ashore for a walk.

Sunday evening we all gathered on Tinkerbell and many hints and ideas were discussed.

On the Monday morning, Windsong took advantage of a lull in the weather and sailed at about 8 a.m. for Bucklers Hard and Tinkerbell sailed up to Island Harbour as we worry out for the week.

If anybody turned up at Wooten Creek we would like to apologise to them!

Bryan Adams :: Tinkerbell SO404

● **SEPTEMBER 24th & 25th**

Participating Yachts: **'Catriona' Mike & Val Knowles trailing from Welwyn.**
 'Tarim' Ivan, Denise and Rosemary Kirk
 trailing from Swindon.
 'Tich' Colin and Catriana Jones.
 'Helise' Alan and Lesley Probyn
 'Windsong' John, Alison and Jonathan Palmer.

ON THE SATURDAY MORNING the five Swifts met at Bucklers Hard. The forecast was for E F4-5 with rain expected. After some discussion it was decided to change our venue from Warsash to Hythe Marina. And so, after booking some spaces at Hythe we left Bucklers Hard at around 11.45 all with one reef in.

Our small flotilla being admired by other yachts coming up the river. On the last bend of the river Tarim ran out of petrol, consequently running on to the mud bank! However, with Denise winding the keel and Ivan refuelling they were soon on their way again. Once out into the Solent ourselves on Windsong decided to shake out our reef with the wind constant and quite a flat sea. It gave us a slight advantage over the others but there were times when we wished we had kept it in as we struggled to hold on!

We were all making very good progress when we noticed that Tarim seemed to be having some problems. Radio contact was made and they told us the news that one of their shrouds had broken away from the spreaders. Therefore they decided to return to Bucklers Hard, confident that their gear would hold out until then.

The four remaining boats then continued, the weather improving all the time, arriving at Hythe Marina at 15.30. After a welcome cup of tea our four crews wandered into Hythe to survey the local hostelrys for later on. Back at the marina we were pleased to see Janet and Lawrence Peacock on Pollyanna in the lock and Tarim's crew had arrived by car to join us for dinner.

At around 19.30 a table for 14 was found for us in Hobbit's Bistro in Hythe, serving us with a variety of delicious, very reasonably priced food. It was a fun, jovial evening. Those of us with children being the first to leave at around 22.30. Those of us who were the worst for wear were soon sobered up by the rain torrents from the overhead thunderstorm as we left the bistro and no doubt our hysterical laughter could be heard throughout the marina!

The weather on Sunday morning was quite changeable, most of us taking advantage of sunny periods to dry wet clothes from the night before. After a lazy morning all 5 boats entered the lock at 12.30. Tich had a slight engine problem in the lock, but we eventually got under way together. The wind was SE F3-4 with occasional quiet periods and it took us approximately two and a half hours to sail down Southampton Water, against the tide.

On rounding Calshot everything was with us, and we flew down the Solent, sailing almost all the way up Beaulieu River, arriving at Bucklers Hard at 16.30. The whole weekend was an enjoyable mixture of good sailing, good company and a good venue. Thanks to all who joined us.

Alison Palmer :: Windsong

Not a rattling success . . .

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF OUR MAGAZINE I said that I was going to try out spongy pipe lagging as a means of eliminating the rattling of the cables inside the mast. It was not a success!

Fine in principle, but no good in practice due to a variety of obstructions that face the sections as they are fed - or rather forced - up the mast. The least of the problems are the sharp points of various self-tapping screws, closely followed by the additional friction that increases as the spongy sections go further up the mast. But the final stumbling block is the bar, inside the mast, to which the lower shrouds are attached. There was no way that I could push the lagging past the first of these.

I am too much of a mechanical coward to attempt removing these and so my spongy lagging only reached thus far. However, it has made a difference as only the top third of the cables rattle now.

Incidentally, if someone braver than me fancies the idea and knows how to remove (and replace) these cross-pieces, then my advice is to glue the 1 metre spongy sections together with Copydex or similar as they are inserted. This enables them to be pulled back out if necessary with the assistance of a screwdriver through the various access slots to be found along the length of the mast. I have no doubt that the 'spongy lagging' idea would work on a larger mast on a bigger boat though.

This winter I am going to try Don Harvey's idea using Evostick and thinners.

Andrew Kaye :: 'Progress' (S189)

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A Cautionary Tale

DO YOU EVER HAVE THAT FEELING 'it can never happen to me!' I certainly have and over 15 years of sailing both large and small yachts, I have never come near to having a collision. Even when a coming together might have happened, some sixth sense has always come to the rescue and the other boat has been spotted in time, or a shout of 'starboard' has awakened the complacent skipper and enabled avoiding action to be taken. Until this summer . . .

Last September myself, Sandra and my brother-in-law Adrian planned a leisurely weekend - leisurely only because the wind was light and somewhat variable. We launched from Bucklers Hard early on Saturday afternoon and made our way down tide past Cowes to Wooton Creek. Typing up at Fishbourne Quay, we had a very pleasant evening. Our newly acquired puppy was having his second outing in Icarus and was not enjoying it very much though he did look smart in his lifejacket! Unfortunately he was not wearing it when he decided to career at full speed down the pontoon about 30 degrees off course, landing head first in the (very oily) water. Fortunately, he appeared no worse for this experience!

On Sunday we made an early departure in a rising force 2/3. Adrian was at the helm and we were making only about three knots on port tack with the wind such that we could only just weather Cowes. Yours truly became impatient at this slow progress and reckoned that he could coax a lot more speed out of Icarus than Adrian, and duly took the helm. Adrian joined Sandra in the cockpit whilst I spent the next few minutes adjusting sails and direction and succeeding in increasing speed to about four knots - all this time spending more time looking at the sails and the instruments than at other boats in the vicinity. Mentally congratulating myself on this success, I was rudely awakened by a sickening crunch as we stopped dead in the water, then promptly went about and dropped off the wind, without so much as a 'by your leave.'

We had hit a 30ft. Westerly, six feet from their stem, as they sailed on the opposite (starboard) tack. Looking back, we could not understand how we had failed to see them coming. During the passage we had been aware of other boats and had, in fact, had to alter course about 10 minutes earlier to avoid another starboard boat. The fact was that no one had looked under the genoa for at least five minutes, the Westerly having been obscured by the sail for most of this time.

What about the lookout aboard the Westerly? Well, they were making their way from the Hamble to Cowes, heading towards Prince Consort Buoy. With a 2-3 knot tide running, their attention was directed to whether they would have to tack in order to avoid the buoy. They say that they had seen us four or five minutes earlier, but had paid us no further attention.

Result - a total of £2,350 worth of damage to the two craft, and all resulting from a short lapse in normal lookout procedures on both boats. The moral, of course is that the skipper should always direct a member of the crew to be responsible for lookout, if necessary by sitting on the leeward side so as to ensure good visibility. The safety of the boat and its crew must always come before sailing performance.

A further improvement I will install next season is to raise the foot of the genoa by at least 12 inches so as to give some visibility underneath the sail.

Chris O'Brien :: Icarus (SO23-001)