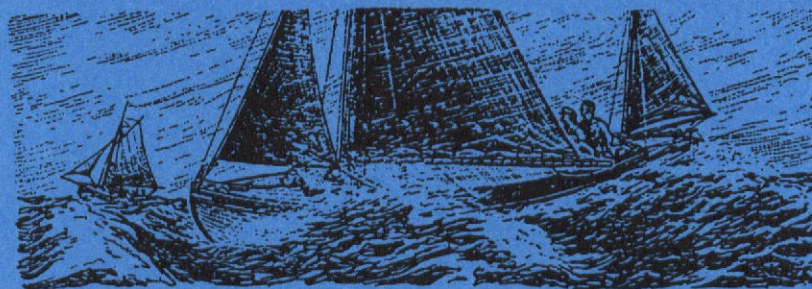


THE HARRISON BUTLER ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER No: 48

WINTER 1998-99



THE HARRISON BUTLER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH - O. Joan Jardine-Brown (October 1998)
 On the balcony at her home 2 The Chestnuts, Theale, Berkshire
 Courtesy - Adrian Morgan, Classic Boat Magazine

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THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

November 1998

2 The Chestnuts
Theale

Dear Members

As usual, I shall start with the sad events and pass on to happier things.

From time to time I ring members for an interchange of news and to that end, fairly recently I rang Hector and Iona Macneill's number. Iona replied and told me that Hector had died on 19th July which saddened me considerably as I had so much enjoyed the two days I spent with them some years ago, getting to know them very quickly. I learned how much Hector was and had been for a long span appreciated in the community. As headmaster in the school at Campbeltown his influence will have rubbed off onto hundreds of his pupils and his skills were not all academic for he was a very fine craftsman. I saw a dining chair which he had made and, but for his name carved on the underside, it was indistinguishable from the ones which had been crafted professionally. These talents were housed in a man of integrity and great charm and I retain very happy memories of my visit. As a widow myself, I can well understand Iona's grief and gave what comfort I could from my own experience. I am happy to say that Iona is remaining as a member and that 'Faoileag' is in the care of one of her daughters.

Though not an HBA member, my sister-in-law Joan Butler (née Hickson) had a distinct connexion for she was the Bogle after which my father named one of his designs: the best one he had done up till then (1933) in his own opinion (later 'Askadil' took the crown). There was wide coverage in the press of her death in October and Colin drove me to Wivenhoe to join her son, Nicholas and daughter, Caroline Holton and the rest of her family for the funeral service. Afterwards, there was a large gathering of family and friends at the Wivenhoe Sailing Club, among whom was Trevor Bowen (script-writer for the Miss Marple series) whom I was delighted to gather back into membership. His "disappearance" had been inadvertent.

We have had an interesting collection of new members recently and from such distant places as Milwaukie, Oregon; Kansas City, Missouri and the Falkland Islands. The two latter members joined on the telephone and Gary Francis, despite living so far from the sea, is the present owner of 'Trade Wind', one of our boats which has been "missing" for several years. I gather she was found mouldering in a mangrove swamp but has been trucked from Florida to Maine where she is being made shipshape again.

Mike Hughes rang from Stanley. He's a New Zealander, a wooden boatbuilder who settled in the Falklands with Kirsten his Danish wife a few years ago and where they manage the Lighthouse Seamen's Centre. He had just finished reading "Cruising Yachts" and wanted to know more. He wrote a most interesting letter which I'm sending to Paul for inclusion rather than me giving excerpts. When you read his letter I'm sure you'll join with me in admiration of his achievements. Perhaps one day he and Kirsten will sail into a UK port in an HB boat. Do any trees grow in the Falkland Islands? I know only a shrub, Hebe elliptica - no use for boat-building.

Gary Larkins from Milwaukie who was on our joining list is now with us. He wrote for the plans of 'Cora A', which is, of course, 'Englyn' and these have been sent. He has retired from his work in order to do a "hands on" nine months wooden boatbuilding course so maybe there'll be another 'Englyn' to make the tenth (as far as I know: there may be more).

'Free Spirit' is with us again, landlocked at present in Herefordshire. Robin Williams is restoring her. I don't know if she has ever actually seen the sea. She used to belong to John Paton.

I haven't mentioned all our new members - names are in the Autumn Supplement, but I extend a warm welcome and hope that you will all enjoy your membership and that over the years you will be able to contribute to our general interest in addition to receiving the benefits of belonging to the HBA "family".

It is rewarding to know that my letters are actually read! I had proof of this when I was talking to Peter Crook after the Laying-up Supper. He has volunteered to take over from Simon Wagner at the AGM and I think it's safe for me to say that Peter will be our new Treasurer - for a good many years, I trust. I doubt whether there will be a queue for the job. I am most grateful, Peter and it's a great relief to all concerned that my heartfelt plea in the Summer newsletter has been answered so promptly.

Simon has kept us on the straight and narrow for at least five years and now finds that fatherhood occupies much/most of his spare time. He has been very helpful to me over the years. Finance is not my forte - it's fruit cake with which people couple my name, not bags of gold. Again, we are lucky to be having a Chartered Accountant at the helm. I can't say that the HBA is a self-steering craft but correct balance can be maintained with good guidance and Simon leaves our affairs in a healthy state. Thank you.

This reminds me: subscription time is on 1st January, £10. We are enclosing Standing Order forms again in case anyone needs one. It saves a lot of remembering on one's own part and could spare quite a lot of chasing on mine (I'm too old to chase!) and/or of the Treasurer.

The Laying-up Supper was, as are all our functions, very enjoyable. I usually sit with new or not-often-seen members so that I have time to talk but even so, there were members with whom I had time to say little more than 'hail' and 'farewell'. David and Elizabeth Stamp were among these but they (and Paul Cowman) lunched here before returning to Australia so I had even longer with them. Kind Elizabeth did the washing-up while my back was turned: true friendship! Shall I ever be able to do the same for you, Elizabeth?

I was lucky, also, to have a visit from Geoff Taylor just before he began his Winter migration. He was later in setting off so had decided to overwinter in Vilamura from where, faithful correspondent that he is, I have another interesting letter which you can share with me.

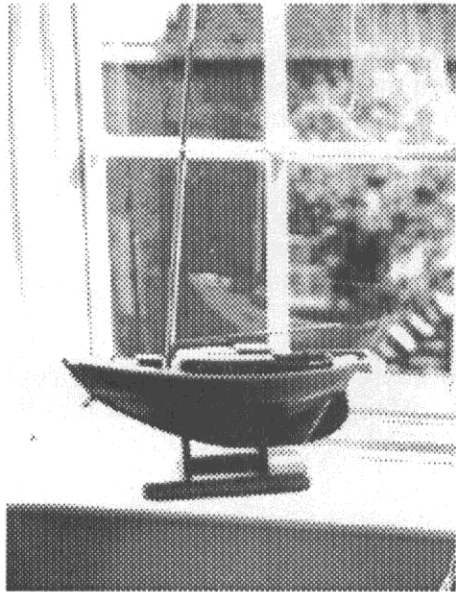
This year's Laying-up Supper was unique but in a way which I hope will not be repeated. There was not a single HB boat to be seen. In fact, the only boat attending was a large, inflatable motor-boat belonging to Bernard Hayman in which he had zoomed round from Poole in about fifty minutes. Please, next year, at the same venue but rather later than usual (2nd October) may we have a large fleet, both of HB boats and Associate boats to liven the scene. We did, however, have a goodly gathering of members though for some reason several of us had great difficulty in remembering how to get to Gin's Farm. Once again, Jill Betts and I had the good fortune to stay overnight with Clive and Ann Lester and we much enjoyed their hospitality.

Edward Burnett delivered my HBA 80th birthday present on the day after my 81st birthday which seemed a very apt occasion. I took *'Prima'* to the Supper so that members could see their gift - from which I derive great pleasure and I am so very lucky to be the recipient of your generosity and your affection.

'Prima' will also, of course, be visible here at the AGM on 27th February. I checked with the Red Lion and was assured that the skittle alley widening will have been completed by then.



Joan with her mother aboard *'Vindilis'*
Laying-up weekend
Bursledon, September 1937



Joan's 80th birthday present
Scale model of 'Prima'

As usual, the AGM notice accompanies this newsletter and I look forward to seeing our regular attenders and to introducing new members to the pleasures of the AGM. People do enjoy it - and some come from afar each year.

Reverting to 'Prima', we are intending to include a photograph of her so that all the generous subscribers may see the product of their donations and we are putting in a photograph of the designer as she was at the time of designing. I have selected a snapshot of my mother and me on board 'Vindilis', taken by my then fiancé, Robert. We were spending a weekend doing laying-up jobs. I have chosen this one as I often feel that everything is (inevitably) so much THB orientated that my mother gets overlooked and she was a distinct force in the family. The quality of the print may not be first class. It was taken with my mother's VPK way back in 1937.

Another picture which Paul may use was taken very recently by Adrian Morgan, contributing Editor of Classic Boat and is used with their permission. It portrays me as I should like to be remembered, laughing! Despite my protestation that I am not "Profile" material, Adrian came and spent most of a day here chatting - although I think I did most of the talking. He was gathering material for his 'At Close Quarters' piece in the December issue of Classic Boat. I am astounded and flattered that so much space has been given over to me. A few of the facts have become slightly confused which is understandable given the nature of our interview but I must just correct the name of my brother Rupert's boat which is 'Seasalter', one of the two Fastnets which were built, the other being 'Galatea', in Canada. 'Seasalter', I heard, is in a bad way, somewhere in the Caribbean.

Edward Burnett and his archivist friend William Collier, Jill Betts and I are making an onslaught on the listing and storing of THB's designs in a more suitable way. They have been rolled up since birth and some go back to about 1912 and really should be stored flat. We have already had one session and hope to complete the sorting stage next time, removing all the original drawings and tracings to be stored separately from the duplicates and duplicating copies. We still haven't found the three missing original lines drawings, viz. 'Dream of Arden', 'Queen of Arden' and 'Prima' so, if anyone received these in error (which seems unlikely), please return them to me to be exchanged for copies.

The task is one which needs several people and I think we all felt quite tired after concentrating for about 7 hours, with a break for lunch. It is a job well worth doing but it doesn't end with this stage. I have to go through the list of designs and give details of all the boats known to have been built to each of them. Some have never been built as far as I know. I have already done some preliminary work on this but not in a very ordered way - bits of paper here and there! Why wasn't I tidy? But I might have been born bad-tempered as well.

One more thing about me - there's been too much already - by the time you read this I hope to have become a NEW WOMAN. I am to have a decompression operation on my spine (not "the bends") on 2nd December.

Patrick has intimated that he would like to retire so we must find a new Chairman. Please send suggestions to me and I will see whether your nominee is willing to stand. Please note that our Chairman can just as easily be a Madam Chairman. We don't go in for the four-legged ones.

I'm most grateful to Patrick who has served us well for I think more years than most. He has done a lot of what might be termed extra-mural activity on my/our behalf and I personally have received great kindness from both Lesley and Patrick.

The International Wooden Boat Show has moved from Greenwich to Beale Park, Pangbourne for 1999, about six miles north from Theale. So get in touch if you are going to be there and maybe we can meet.

If anyone is still waiting for information, designs etc., from me please get in touch again. Although my memory 'remains undimmed' (Adrian Morgan CB126) it has got some downright holes in it and sometimes needs to be prodded.

I'm sure you will all wish to join me in thanking Paul for another splendid newsletter in the summer. He has to be very patient and forbearing with me - more and more as time passes - but I hope to improve a bit. All is now said - I think - famous last words so I'll just add

My affectionate greetings and good wishes for our 26th year, 1999, and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

Stop Press

I had spinal surgery on December 2nd and am very much improved thereby. My convalescence has been enhanced by a lovely vase of freesias from the HBA. Many, many thanks and for all the good wishes I have received. Bless you.

*Yours aye
John.*

* * * * *

EDITORIAL

The 1998 sailing season will hardly be remembered for particularly good weather, with only a few events on the traditional boating calendar blessed with sunshine and fair winds. There were, never the less, a few notable exceptions which fortunately included the much heralded International Festival of the Sea, held over four days, which included the August Bank Holiday, an occasion not usually associated with fine weather. The sun shone, however, and the fresh South-Westerly breeze kept all the burgees and ensigns fluttering for the largest maritime festival ever held in Britain.

Portsmouth Harbour and the generous 300 acre Naval Dockyard, despite being a security nightmare, proved tremendous hosts for about 600 boats, ranging from the largest sailing ship in the world, the Russian 'Sedov', the replica 'Matthew', back from her Newfoundland voyage, tall ships including 'T. S. Royalist', to state of the art destroyers and frigates and, of course, a spectacle of Harrison Butlers (well, two actually) 'Minion' Cyclone II design and 'Kelana' Z4 tonner, flying the flag for the Association. They jostled fenders with many eminent yachts such as 'Emanuel' (Commander Graham), 'Lively Lady' (Sir Alec Rose) and 'Nancy Blackett' (Arthur Ransome) to name but a few. A realistic 18th century street market, Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines, several thousand other musicians and street theatres entertained the capacity shore-bound crowds. The resident historic Nelson's Flagship 'HMS Victory', 'HMS Warrior', Royal Naval Museum and 'Mary Rose' all worth a visit. Together with several spectacular firework displays this really was an event not to be missed whatever your age or maritime interest. But for me, one of the most memorable sights was tucked quietly away in an old quayside warehouse, hanging in the gloom from the beams, one of 'Victory's' original hand stitched canvas topsails, straight from the battle of Trafalgar and complete with numerous canon holes, the sense of history was awesome. Apparently, but for a last minute decision, this important historic relic could have lain forgotten in a dark corner for another 193 years.



**'Minion' Cyclone II design
A visitor at Portsmouth I.F.O.S.**

Members' Letters

'Isabella'

A short note to acknowledge receipt of the HBA Newsletter Summer 1998 edition. I have been keenly looking forward to receiving same and was beginning to think that it may have gone astray. However I can now spend some pleasant hours reading and re-reading the articles as I always find there is something new to think about each time I pick it up. No doubt this is due to the fact that anything associated with the sea and the vessels that sail thereon is very much an art form and not a science. Opinions and views will always vary and be open for discussion. So again thank you for the "letter" and as always for your contributions therein.

On 3rd March this year I returned home in *'Isabella'* from a voyage to New Zealand and back. I am enclosing the chronicle of the voyage that I subsequently put together. You may care to use parts of the chronicle in a subsequent Newsletter. (See page 16 for an account of the outward bound voyage). The chronicle is taken from the boat's log and includes impressions as well as actual entries. I make no claim for any great literary merit. For some people the chronicle is too long and for others, too short. Needless to say at no time did I have any worries about the seakeeping ability of the boat and I was more than happy with the average days run that we attained.

Hope you are keeping well and enjoying the summer. We have no imminent plans to visit the UK in the near future. Unfortunately the currency exchange rate is not at all good for people changing the Australian dollar into sterling so we will wait until the situation improves before planning a holiday in the UK.

Ann joins me in sending you (Joan) and all in the HBA our very best wishes.

Mornington
Victoria, Australia

Frank Hart

* * * * *

'Watermaiden'

Back at last where the sun shines and the sky is blue. After such a dreary summer I had almost forgotten what good weather was like.

I got away from Plymouth on Monday 21 September. The Easterlies had just appeared with a high over Eastern England so, since I had been ready and had just finished the topside painting, I decided to go.

With a quartering wind I covered 300 miles in the first three days and got well West which gives you

something in hand if the wind should go westerly, which fortunately it did not.

Down off the North Spanish coast, and later off Lisbon, I was right in the path of intense depressions moving West to East. They were downgraded hurricanes "IVE" and "JEAN". I had been plotting them from the French Atlantic forecast on domestic short wave. Luckily winds were down to 7 or 8 and did not pick up much sea as they were quite compact.

The second one showed the classical effect of the "eye of the storm" as what had been the gloomiest of weather with low black cloud, squalls and showers suddenly cleared away and the wind dropped to nothing. The skies overhead were clear with stars and a half moon. A couple of hours later the wind came back from the opposite direction and by dawn it was sunny and bright with only a strong to fresh sailing breeze from astern. From Lisbon the wind was NW which carried me right round Cape St. Vincent and along the Algarve coast, a weather shore under these conditions.

I arrived in the evening of 5th October. I did not bother stopping en route as I am always loath to give up a fair wind and also, late in the season, it is prudent to get South as soon as possible and off that West Coast of Portugal which is not the most inviting of places.

At present the plan is to stay here for the immediate future, possibly for the Winter, but occasionally the odd delivery opportunity comes along so I remain flexible. As I have a few friends and acquaintances in the area I find it an agreeable place to stay. Interestingly the character and atmosphere of the marina is little changed from the first time I brought *'Watermaiden'* here in 1979.

Regards.

Watermaiden
Marina de Vilamoura, Algarve

Geoff Taylor

* * * * *

New Members

It was such a thrill to talk with you (Joan) on the phone recently and to sense your obvious enthusiasm for the HB Association.

I ordered *'Cruising Yachts'* via mail order only a couple of months ago, having no previous knowledge of its existence.

I am grateful to you for keeping alive the work of your father so that people such as myself, and I'm sure many after me, can benefit from his obvious knowledge and ability. It would be a privilege to meet with you sometime should my wife and I have the opportunity to visit the UK again.

As a little bit of background about myself: I was born in New Zealand in 1960, completed a timber boat building apprenticeship by age 21, and began my own business constructing typical New Zealand style cold molded yachts. Unfortunately I was taught, and believed, that anything old in design and building was out of date and simply not relevant to today's yachtsman.

Over a number of years I managed to steal time here and there to build my own yacht. Quite a rare thing for a boat builder. It was an American Doug Peterson cruising design, 33ft LOA and designed in the mid 70's. It was by no means radical and was supposed to 'track' quite well. I suppose it did this better than many modern vessels, but I was always aware that it wasn't quite balanced at varying angles of heel.

At age 26 I began a circumnavigation which took me, single handed from Wellington NZ to South America, around Cape Horn to the Falklands and then direct to England. From Oban in Scotland I began a 132 day non-stop voyage to Wellington via the Cape of Good Hope. I subsequently sailed the vessel to Japan and sold it, and then began a yacht delivery business for a time in the Pacific.

Throughout my 45,000 odd miles in the Peterson 33, and many 10's of thousands of miles on other craft, I have always wondered why these boats couldn't be balanced so that when the wind increased or decreased slightly I didn't have to keep on adjusting the self steering as it struggled with the changing helm pressure. I'm not ashamed to say I rarely helm a boat, preferring the self steering gear to this tedious job. Having asked myself time and again why a vessel couldn't be designed to balance, not only through changing wind strengths, but also changing wind directions, and making my mind up to explore this and possibly design myself such a vessel, I find that greater minds than my own had been studying this question long before I was even born. In some ways I feel deceived by modern designers whose quest for speed and sleek looks have overridden this most basic of design requirements.

I feel like a mathematician wondering for years how to perfect the ideal square bottomed, pointed top shape, visiting Egypt for the first time, and finding someone had already thought of building a 'pyramid' thousands of years before.

I have for some time been looking at the designs of Colin Archer, although am conscious that his pilot and rescue boat designs have limitations, such as

their lack of speed, weatherliness, and their liveliness in a seaway due to their excessively flaring topsides.

To find that THB had been addressing these as well as the ever important balance problem comes as a breath of fresh air. How I wish I, or he, had lived in a different era so I could have talked to him about these things. Thank goodness he had, or made, the time to commit these things to paper.

I still have much to learn, and will never be as competent as THB was in analysing the various elements that combine to make up a successful design, not least the artistic element. However I do gain tremendous satisfaction in studying his various line drawings and trying to pick up his line of reasoning behind the progressions and variations through the years.

I would of course dearly love to own an HB boat. And if I ever find myself able to afford the moderate outlay it would require, would hope to discuss a particular vessel with you beforehand. In the meantime I must satisfy myself with studying his drawings while continuing to fit out our home, a 76ft ex. Danish sailing trawler.

Berthed next to our vessel here in the Falklands we have Susan and Eric Hiscock's old 'Wanderer 111'. It is owned by a German boatbuilder who knows of HB's work. He told me he became quite friendly with an Italian chap named Allesandro Sternini, who only a few years ago built a vessel called 'Khamseen', which he assumes is a 'Khamseen A'. He has the address if you haven't already got it.

I look forward to further communication with you and thank you again for your dedication.

Kind regards.

Lighthouse Seamen's Centre
Stanley
Falkland Islands

Mike Hughes

* * * * *

New Members

I have just enjoyed reading your article with the excellent photograph in Classic Boat magazine, December and also note we are the same age.

I have many cuttings, all filed in H.B. book (15/-), that came out to me in Rangoon, Burma in 1946 and have for many years meant to write and ask when your father passed away to try to identify when "The Midland Sailing Association" meetings were held in the Midland Hotel, Birmingham. They must have been pre-war; once I sat next to him when he was to thank the speaker Brig. Miles-Smeeton. He was fast asleep, was woken by the clapping and stood up and did the job perfectly! Probably after a hard day's

work. I think the organisation continued for a year or so afterwards, names that come to mind are Charles Chatwin of Barnt Green S.C. and Mr George Barrow a food shop in Birmingham were the possible organisers. They got some very good speakers along.

{George was a co-partner with Charles in the law firm Wragge & Co. I know of no connexion with the very high class grocery emporium Barrows Stores but there may have been one. This letter has particular interest for me and I like the THB anecdote: new to me. Peter and Pamela are our most recently joined members and are most welcome. OJJB}

What changed times we live in. In a 20 mile radius of Birmingham there was one sailing club, the Midland Sailing Club - now there are twenty. Every

little puddle is sailed on and some of our best helms in the country start around here.

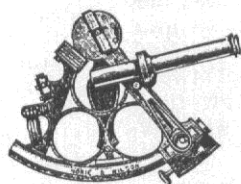
The mysteries of hull-balance continues until this day - but so many more helms start in high performance dinghies today so they have a far better understanding when they move to larger boats. Some having been taught to handle a dinghy with no rudder on, so they can understand the forces and pressures on the various parts of the hull and rig.

Your interest in the HB Association must give you a lovely interest in life and so keep you looking so well as your picture.

Best Wishes.

Pentland Gardens
Wolverhampton

Peter Waine



Longitude is Time

By P W HASLER

Seamen have always been preoccupied by time. Long before the development of the chronometer a daily noon sight was taken to establish a ship's latitude, and a knowledge of time and tides was essential for the success of all early coastal voyages. But here is William Dampier in 1687 on his way to Manila with a new problem.

'Having travelled so far Westward (Dampier writes) keeping the same Course with the Sun, we must consequently have gained something insensibly in the length of the particular Days, but have lost in the tale, or number, of the Days or Hours. According to the different Longitudes of England and Mindanao, this Isle being West from the Lizard, by common Computation, about 210 Degrees, the difference of time at our Arrival at Mindanao ought to be about 14 Hours. And by so much we should have anticipated our reckoning, having gained it by bearing the Sun company. Now the natural Day in every particular place must be consonant to itself. But this going about with, or against the Sun's course, will of necessity make a difference in the Calculation of the civil Day between any two places. Accordingly, at Mindanao, and all other places in the East Indies, we found them reckoning a Day before us, both Natives and Europeans. For wherever we met Europeans coming Eastward by the Cape of Good Hope, on a Course contrary to the Sun and to us, they were a full Day before us in their Accounts. So among the Indian Mahometans here, their Friday, the Day of their Sultan's going to their Mosques, was Thursday with us, though it was also Friday with those who came eastward from Europe. Yet at the Ladrone Islands, we found the Spaniards of Guam keeping the same Computation with ourselves; the reason of which I take to be that they settled that Colony by a Course Westward from Spain, the Spaniards going first to America, and from there to the Ladrones and Philippines. But how the reckoning was at Manila and the rest of the Spanish Colonies in the Philippine Islands, I do not know, or whether they keep it as they brought it, or corrected it by the Accounts of the Natives, and of the Portuguese, Dutch and English coming the contrary way from Europe.'

The anomaly was not finally solved until 1884, with the establishment at 180° from Greenwich (excepting for adjustments to meet the convenience of some island groups) of the International Date Line, to the East of which the date is a day earlier than it is to the West.

Extract from 'A New Voyage Round the World' (Hummingbird Press 1998)

Hull and Sail Balance

A SUCCESSFUL DESIGNER COMMENTS UPON *a* VEXED QUESTION

by *Dr. T. HARRISON
BUTLER*

This article rounds off a very interesting series which commenced in our issue of July 31st. Dr. Harrison Butler's contributions are always worth studying and those readers who missed one or more of these articles would do well to obtain back copies.

SINCE writing the foregoing I have had what to me is a unique experience. I have been in a yacht that automatically sails herself like a perfect model. Mystery, a 10-tonner, designed by Robert Clarke for Mr. Osborne, was launched by Messrs. Moody and Son on July 4th. I see she was described in *The Yachting World* of July 24th. She is, to a large extent, a small edition of Mr. Clarke's design that was bracketed second in the recent competition held by *The Yachting Monthly*.

Mystery is 26ft. 6in. L.W.L., and has a beam of 8ft. 8in. She might almost be described as a cruising 8-metre yacht. The sails had not arrived, and so it seemed as though Mr. Osborne could not try out his new ship and would waste a week-end. Fortunately Vindilis' suit was available. Her mainsail, with an area of 235 sq. ft., was only about a foot too short on the foot, but naturally it was deficient in luff. It was practically Mystery's mainsail with one reef down. The staysail was correct on the foot but short in height. Vindilis' balloon staysail had to function as a Genoa. It was, of course, ridiculously short on the luff.

Perfect Balance

As Mystery has an infinite number of stations for the lead of the sheet of the Yankee jib, we had no difficulty in setting our balloon to the best advantage. The whole contraption must have had a somewhat ridiculous appearance, but in the strong breeze that prevailed it was quite efficient. There was enough weight in the wind to lay Mystery down to the covering board, and at times even further, so we may say that she was carrying the correct amount of canvas for going to windward. It at once became evident that Mystery was perfectly balanced in all respects.

Under main and Genoa she sailed herself exactly like a model. When the Genoa was added she balanced just as well. We lowered both head-sails to make certain adjustments. Under main alone the yacht could be sailed with minimal helm on any course, and went to windward perfectly. Left alone she came up nearly head to wind

and hove herself to quietly with the sail just full and with no slatting.

It was obvious that there was one way of heaving to, and yet we hear that a modern yacht will not heave-to. I have not the slightest doubt that Mystery would heave-to with three reefs down in the main, or with try-sail, without any head sail.

Under Two Head-sails

We now lowered the main and sailed the yacht to windward with two head-sails. She came about quickly and certainly, and travelled quite fast four points off the wind. Left to herself, she came up to the wind, went about, and quietly hove herself-to with the wind abeam. This with the Genoa a-back. On any point of sailing it was quite easy to trim the sails, so that Mystery sailed herself with no one at the tiller.

One hears that a modern yacht is of no use as a single-hander, because "she cannot be left alone for a

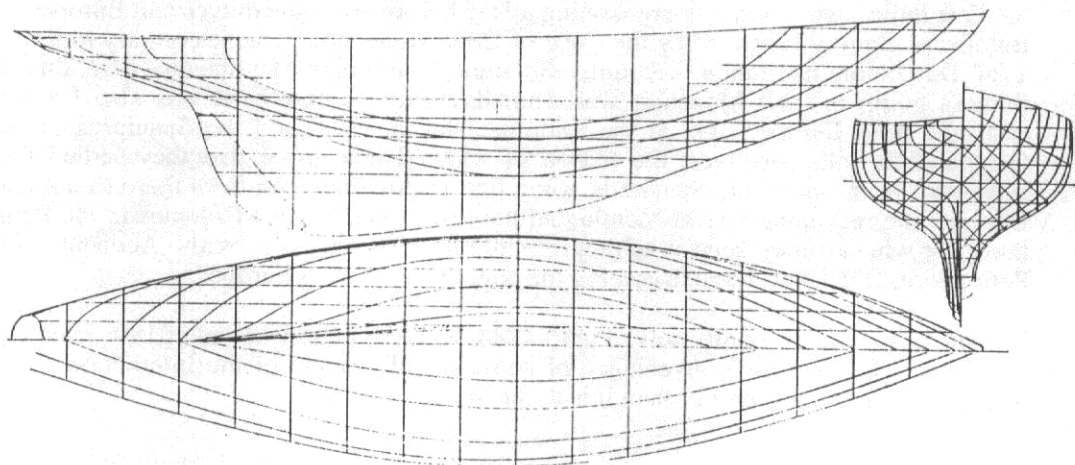
moment." I have never sailed in a yacht, even the straight-keeled Sandcock, that could be left for a fraction of the time that Mystery allowed. Finally, we ran up the Hamble River from the Buoy to the entrance with no attention to the helm other than was called for by the curve in the Channel. Instead of coming up into the wind she tended rather to pay off with a suspicion that she might gybe.

It was a marvellous performance by a witch of a ship. Whatever combination of sail we put over her she steered perfectly, and even when hove down to the rail a child could have held her. All this was done under a jury rig, with ill-fitting head-sails.

An Education

The whole performance goes to prove that it does not matter one whit where the centre of effort is as long as the hull itself is perfectly balanced. It demonstrated that the profile of a yacht is not as important as it was supposed to be in giving steadiness on the helm. We had the advantage of sailing in company and at the same speed with Askadil and Verian, the former one of my own standard designs and the latter a Quay punt, and so I was able to compare the actions of three yachts of entirely different type at the same speed.

Mystery, with by far the smallest sail plan, was sailing as fast as the others; she was steadier on her course, took no helm, never even threw a spray over us. The trials took place in Southampton Water. Mystery is the first of Robert Clarke's designs to be built, and she reflects the greatest credit upon all concerned. She floated exactly to her marks, a feat remarkably difficult to achieve. I am deeply grateful to Mr. Osborne for giving me the most interesting sail of my life. Every moment was an education.



The lines of Mr. Robert Clarke's Mystery



Clockwise Around Tasmania

By RICHARD RULE

The lightning threw everything into stark relief; bunks with their canvas leecloths, a jumble of sailbags on the cabin floor, foul weather gear and safety harnesses, then blackness came again until our eyes, blinking through the darkness, could once more see by the warm dim light of the oil lamp. There was no respite from the heavy lurching and rolling; the quick intake of breath on hearing an approaching roar, waiting for it to hit, then reeling under a smashing blow, feeling the yacht going down on her side, then coming upright to lift up and up until the sudden, sickening stagger as the full force of the gale punched into her on the crest: Drilling through everything was the never-ending scream of the bloody wind. I lay in my bunk, waiting tiredly for this Tasmanian West coast gale to let us go, and thinking how little sense it made to subject ourselves to all this in the name of cruising. My thoughts went back to when it all began...

Some months after selling our much-cruised H28 ketch *'Janessa'* in 1977, we bought the veteran Harrison Butler designed 12m sloop *'Seasalter'*. She is well-known in Victorian waters, a double-ender of 12.19 tonnes, built of Huon Pine, straight-keeled and a proven ocean racer of yesteryear.

My brother and I thought that it would be an interesting exercise to circumnavigate Tasmania. For days charts, notes, Pilot and Sailing Directions littered the lounge room floor. We organised a six week Christmas holiday starting from Mornington, Victoria; four weeks with our families, in turn, at Wilsons Promontory and two weeks for Clarrie and me to circle Tasmania, departing from Port Welshpool in late January after unloading everyone else.

The route planned was Port Welshpool - Goose Island - Banks Strait - East Coast - Dennison Canal - D'Entrecasteaux Channel - South Coast - Port Davey - West Coast - Bass Strait - Port Phillip - Mornington, a total of some 960 sea miles.

Our third crewman, unfed, unpaid and overworked, was a Nautech Autohelm which eventually steered most of the way far more accurately than we could on any point of sailing. As a bonus we had our sea legs after four weeks living aboard not to be taken lightly at the beginning of a long trip when motivation and determination hang in the balance.

After leaving our families we headed south, making brief stopovers at Hogan and Deal Islands. We

motor-sailed most of the way south from Deal in light NE breezes which turned into fog and blanketing rain. We barely managed to take cross bearings before visibility dropped to less than half a mile and we continued without seeing anything for another 20 sea miles until abeam of Prime Seal off the west coast of Flinders Island which was entirely blotted out.

The fog and rain cleared to a fresh 15 knot E wind and we quickly reached towards Goose Island, identified by its lighthouse, off the south west coast of Flinders Island. We checked out the best anchorage for SW weather there before crossing over to low-lying Badger Island to seek shelter from the rising NE in good holding ground. We had motor-sailed 63 sea miles.

At 2 am we awoke to a 20 knot WSW change and after some difficulty in breaking out our CQR anchor, punched wetly against a short steep sea to Goose Island, two sea miles away.

We headed for the flash of the lighthouse, our only guide in the blackness, before searching for the anchorage, a short distance north, indicated by a white anchor painted on a large boulder. After motoring slowly along using our spotlight to avoid the groups of underwater rocks close to the boulder strewn shoreline, we laid the 16kg CQR with 24m of chain to a sand bottom in 5m of water, and went below, shedding our oilskins, thankful to be out of the heavy rain and vivid lightning display.

The weather was hard to anticipate, for the next day it veered to the WNW and blew at over 20 knots with rough seas. The wind strength was consistent.

While lying at anchor in such desolate surroundings it was not hard to imagine the brutal sealing industry of the early 1800's when, in one year alone, more than 26,000 sealskins and countless casks of seal oil were exported from these Bass Strait islands. When the tough sealers, inured to privation and hardship, were not killing their luckless prey, they were busy breaking each other's heads as they jealously guarded their hunting grounds from Yankee sealers out of Boston or from anyone else who happened along, even shipwreck survivors. We were amused by the antics of several Cape Barren Geese stalking gracefully amongst the bushes, pausing often to peer at us from over or behind their cover.

Late in the afternoon, after a pleasant chat with the crew of *'Ischia'*, a half-tonner homeward bound for Burnie, we began a 160 sea mile journey through Bank Strait, carefully calculating the tides, and down the East Coast towards Wineglass Bay, on the Freycinet Peninsula. With dusk approaching and the chart showing foul ground ahead in the shape or reefs and rocks just south of Swan Island, we turned offshore for night sailing, standing out 20 sea miles before turning south again.

It was very pleasant sailing, and we each took two hour watches, sitting inside the doghouse munching biscuits and drinking cocoa while the autohelm continued steering as it had done, all day. We had set our big genoa and main with three reefs giving us a speed of five knots over slight seas. Next morning, during breakfast, to the NE we saw a familiar "Clutching Hand" sky which promised some excitement later in the day.

Before long the weather freshened from the NE and we were running fast at speeds of up to eight knots. We goose-winged the sails and watched with pleasure the autohelm handle a difficult sail combination with quartering seas without collapsing the headsail or broaching. Some distance north of Vicheno we passed an anchored Japanese trawler which we later heard was escorted to Devonport by the Navy and charged with illegal fishing.

Navigation required constant attention and we were not satisfied until we crossed a morning sun sight position-line with a shore bearing from the hand bearing compass and obtained a fix, which placed us further offshore than we thought.

The weather now really came up and we began to experience the sound seagoing qualities of *'Seasalter'*. The larger seas proved her alive and steady with never a drop on deck, making speeds up to 10 knots as her 12 tonnes got moving.

The seas became steeper and closer as we closed the coast until finally a curling dumper landed in the cockpit from over the port quarter, bursting the weathercloth and drenching the both of us. We were now in a strong breeze bordering on a gale and the seas around us were beginning to break.

It took us 45 minutes, crawling on hands and knees on a deck rising and falling five metres, to hand the genoa, get it below and hank on the storm jib, although we left it lashed on deck as *'Seasalter'* was sailing comfortably and fast under the reefed main on autohelm. Lunch was a couple of biscuits and a mug of coffee each as we kept a careful eye on our navigation, with Clarrie passing bearings to me below, braced at the chart table, as we did not want to overstand our destination in these strong conditions.

Late in the afternoon we entered Wineglass Bay like a 39 foot surfboard, after 160 sea miles in 29 hours from Goose Island. Violent down draughts off The Hazards at the northern entrance laid us almost on our beam ends as we struggled to hand the mainsail. We joined six pitching crayboats tucked behind an outcrop at the south end of the beach; partly sheltered from the worst of it, we were all waiting for the promised SW change, which arrived at 2.30 the next morning. *'Seasalter'* was snatching violently on her anchor until we bent on a nylon rope snubber from the chain to the windlass.

A day later we hugged the cliff face to avoid the worst of a big southerly swell as we motored around to the Schouten Passage on our way over to a calm anchorage at Orford where an obliging boat owner drove us 10km in his car for fuel. The same thing happened later at Dunalley, beside the Dennison Canal, except this was the school bus!

To save a day, and possibly a rough trip around Cape Pillar, we motor-sailed inland down through the Mercury Passage to Blackman Bay with its tricky leads and winding channel markers and on into Dennison Canal. We draw two metres and had no difficulty negotiating the narrow cut. There are traffic lights and the toll is 50 cents paid into a plastic bucket at the swing bridge.

We cut across a quiet Storm Bay, past the Iron Pot and into the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, 35 sea miles long, with its completely sheltered anchorages. A larger chart will show all the detail. There are many villages with names such as Dover, Lymington, Strathblane and a little group of islets called Faith, Hope and Charity. We anchored in small, delightful Simmonds Bay, crowded with more than 20 other yachts and cruisers.

We made the most of the mild weather and motor-sailed south along the Channel early next morning. The waterway was completely shrouded with fog and misty rain as we carefully navigated our way by compass and sun log down to Recherche Bay on the south east coast of Tasmania. We were piloted by a cray boat through the dangerous passage behind Actaeon Island, outside the entrance to the Bay. We were never far from history or tragedy: it was near here that disaster overtook the Hobart-bound convict ship *'George III'* when she struck, piling her wreckage and 133 convicts and crew along the rugged coast. This passage saves a sizeable detour but is only recommended in mild weather with good local knowledge.

After touching bottom at The Waterhole we changed anchorage to the Pigsties two miles away, pondering the strange name. Later, examining the black mud on our anchor, we thought we'd found a clue but at least it was odourless - unlike Geelong Harbour.

We remained here whilst a SW gale developed and visited *'Aphrodite'*, a beautiful 10m gaff rigged ketch of 8.12 tonnes, designed and built in the old tradition by its talented owner, Martin Seymour.

Never far from our thoughts was the rugged South Coast with its sheer storm-battered cliffs and the lonely Mewstone and Maatsuyker Islands. We never thought further than the next leg of the journey and already we were behind time due to bad weather. We were now entering the dangerous phase of our cruise. Local fishermen take no notice of weather forecasts along this coast, as it makes up its own mind daily.

A day later the forecast was for favourable light SE winds. Like most people cruising near latitude 44 degrees south, we did not delay and at dawn the next day both yachts motor-sailed from the Pigsties, avoiding the heavy kelp beds and blind reefs and headed out into the moderate SE swell, setting a direct course towards Maatsuyker Island, aiming to pass south of it.

The weather remained fine and sunny and *'Seasalter'* arrived off Port Davey on the south west coast 10¹/₂ hours later, with *'Aphrodite'* one hour behind, after motor-sailing 68 sea miles.

Using the Port Davey British Admiralty chart, and taking bearings to avoid several underwater rocks near the entrance, both yachts slipped behind Breaksea Island via the South Passage and on into the calm waters of Schooner Cove.

Beautiful, desolate Port Davey with all its grandeur and winding waterways will remain relatively undisturbed because of hell and high water one has to go through to get there - and get back.

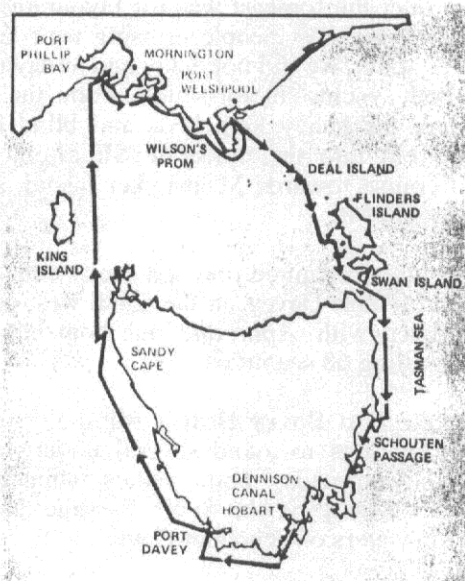
'Aphrodite' intended staying a few days before returning to the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, whereas we were anxious to sail on to clear some 220 sea miles of inhospitable West Coast before the present spell of good weather passed. Ocean Passages For The World recommends the desirable, often necessary route down this coast for sailing vessels during December - February to be 120 - 150 sea miles offshore.

We planned to modify this advice by sailing at least 35 miles offshore, to the 1200 fathom line so as not to be caught in the shore break at 60 - 70 fathoms or less, in the not unlikely event of a SW gale. These Southern Ocean waves were coming unhindered all the way from South Africa and they break, in many places, more than five sea miles offshore.

Next morning we motor-sailed from Port Davey and made reasonable progress up the coast in light variable NE winds, on a long slant offshore. The following day found us moving slowly (under sail to conserve fuel), off Sandy Cape - according to our celestial observations.

The weather maintained light variable northerlies but the sky turned to a white milkiness, which aroused our suspicions. The only refuge along this coast for the likes of us is Port Macquarie, with the aptly-named Hell's Gates, of which the Pilot makes grim reading. One gets the impression that in heavy SW weather the only approach possible to Port Davey should be made inside a steel barrel.

But we were not to escape so easily; on the afternoon we were abeam Sandy Cape when we were stopped by a powerful NE gale of 40 knots gusting 50 knots or more, together with an electrical thunderstorm of fierce intensity.



With the glass falling and Hobart's gale warning on our minds, we worked furiously to prepare ourselves for the worst. We lashed down everything on deck, including the liferaft on the cabin top, with its razor sharp knife handy, and secured everything below. We chocked-off the lockers, stowed glassware, fitted leecloths and the forepeak hatch strongback. We plotted our present position and made thermos-flasks of soup and cocoa and piles of sandwiches. All ventilators except one were screwed down and the chain naval pipe was blocked off. Finally we had a hot meal and a can of fruit juice, although we had lost our appetites! Well fed and warm crews can work a ship better than cold and hungry crews.

"Here it comes!" Far away across the smooth sunlit seas, towards the east, we saw a dark band of wind and whitecaps racing towards us. Then, with all its violence, it was upon us with steep seas quickly building up. Thankfully, we had plenty of sea room but there was no question of us sailing in these conditions. The mainsail was flogging wildly as we hauled it down and the halyard looped itself around a spreader. We untangled it with difficulty and double-lashed the sail to the boom. Next we changed down to a storm jib but *'Seasalter'* did not like that either, so it was quickly removed and we lashed the spitfire jib to the pulpit, secured all the halyards and crawled on hands and knees back to the cockpit. We thought this was getting to be a habit.

We were not saying much to each other, but thinking a lot, and as identical twins usually know what the other is thinking, I was not very encouraged by Clarrie's thoughts at all. However we also knew without any doubt that we had the best boat for the coming thrashing. *'Seasalter'* was lying ahull pointing NW and was, for the time being, comfortable. Clarrie lashed the tiller to leeward and, as an afterthought, reefed the weathercloths. We took one last look at the worsening conditions and

went below, putting up the storm boards behind us and sliding the hatch shut. The closed hatch could not muffle the worst sound of all, that shrill scream of a rising wind, clearly heard above all else. We were glad we had secured the halyards because it would have been nerve wracking to endure the constant mast slapping.

Down below the boat noises were quiet and reassuring, the low creak of the companionway steps as the boat rolled, the slow tap, tap of the swinging primus stove and the soft squeak of the oil lamp on its gimbals. We knew that *'Seasalter'* was well proven, unlike a new 13m yacht we had heard of, lying ahull during an Atlantic gale whose skipper and crew were forced to lie in their bunks watching the screws unscrew themselves with the working of the boat.

Our drift was south-west, offshore, out into the Southern Ocean, but rather than a lee shore. Since our position report to Hobart Radio was hours old we called for anyone to relay our present one and *'Moana'*, sheltering at Three Hummock Island, NW Tasmania, answered our call. He relayed our information to Melbourne Radio, and a few minutes later our friend Dick Burgess, skipper of the ex-trading ketch *'Julie Burgess'* also answered and gave advice on the likely West Coast weather pattern.

We were now wedged in our bunks and night was on us. The earlier feeling of excitement had given way to a certain grimness and a tight rein was kept on wandering thoughts. Our oil lamp was turned down to a cheerful glow, just enough to light up the saloon; the rest of the boat was in semi-darkness, which we found very soothing. Every now and then a wave would hit the starboard side with a jarring bang or with a loud crash or we would feel one go completely across the boat. When that happened we would slide open the top hatch and shine a torch forward through the armour plate windows of the doghouse and check that the liferaft, indeed the doghouse itself, was still there.

Another eerie effect during that long wild night was a continuous lightning display, all around us with the flashes bright enough to light up the interior of the cabin. We heard no thunder, just the screaming of the wind and the heavy thrumming of captive halyards; the hissing roar of approaching waves, and feeling *'Seasalter'* going up and down like a lift, to stagger sickeningly under the full force of the wind on the crests. We waited it out, listening tensely to every noise, but also noticing how well *'Seasalter'* managed herself. She was sound, and we had no leaks.

At dawn we strained to windward for an improvement but saw only a grey overcast sky and an angry foam-streaked sea. Large chunks of water flew straight off the tops of many of the waves and the sea appeared to be smoking. It was spume being blasted off the backs of the waves and it swirled upwards and forwards at great speed to lash against the topsides.

We drank from long cups with a towel held under the chin but had no appetite for food, although we were not sick. We ate chocolate and barley sugar and remained in our bunks to avoid injury. At times we dozed. We estimated the wind was blowing 50 knots or more.

Much later in the morning, during a brief lull, we dressed for the deck and raced up top to hoist the spitfire jib to encourage 'Seasalter' to point higher, before falling away, then we scrambled down below again as the turmoil resumed. We were concerned that if the waves began breaking continuously we would have to run off while towing a warp, or risk being rolled over. We did not reach that stage and were able to continue lying safely ahull. At last, 18 wearying hours later, we heard with relief the shriek of the wind begin hesitantly to go down through the scale. It seemed a long time to us before we could get moving again. No sights were possible in the overcast conditions, but we estimated we were thirty sea miles SW of Sandy Cape.

All day we sailed quickly under the storm jib and main with five reefs. The wind backed WNW with strong squalls and limited visibility. That evening Hobart Radio renewed the strong wind warning; 'Seasalter' shouldered her way through the confused sea, with squalls now from the WSW, making eight knots without putting her bulwarks under, sending sheets of spray flying as she tore through the crests, on a fast reach northwards.

In the cold dark hours of the following morning we sighted the black shape of a large island looming dead ahead through the darkness. Bass Strait is littered with the wrecks of ships whose skippers guessed where they were, so we disengaged the autohelm and hove to until dawn when, checking our Sailing Directions, we confirmed Black Pyramid, situated between that graveyard of ships, King Island and the Hunter Group, NW Tasmania. Feeling the strain of the previous 36 hours, we prepared to cross

our next obstacle. To our frame of mind at that time Bass Strait presented no particular problems, although we know it is dangerous. We set a larger headsail and let draw on course for Port Phillip Heads with a SW wind and 135 sea miles to go.

Black rain squalls from King Island sent us quickly on our way and we powered through one after the other. We spoke briefly by radio to 'Sarda of Burnham' on passage from Port Phillip towards Wilsons Promontory, and assured Murray Barnett that we had used up all the bad weather both for him and us. By later information we heard he found himself a decent serve of rough weather.

Before dawn next morning, when abeam Cape Otway and near the shipping lane, we saw the lights of a seemingly stationary ship close on our starboard bow. I loaded the Verey Pistol, switched on all the lights including our spotlight on the mainsail and we hove to, until he picked up speed, crossed our bows and rapidly disappeared into the rain and darkness. We believed he had slowed down because of our 30cm radar reflector in the spreaders. This is intended to reflect an echo comparable to that of a 23m vessel.

The miserable SW weather moderated by dawn and, with the past two days all but forgotten, we enjoyed one of our best sailing days into Port Phillip Bay on the flood tide, and on to Mornington where we had much pleasure in being met by our families and, very appropriately, by John Mitchell the previous owner of 'Seasalter'.

Our total sea mileage from Mornington for the six weeks was 1272. We took 17 days and 960 sea miles to sail around Tasmania from Port Welshpool to Mornington and were at sea for five days after leaving Port Davey on the south west coast of Tasmania.



Courtesy Modern Boating & Seacraft 1978

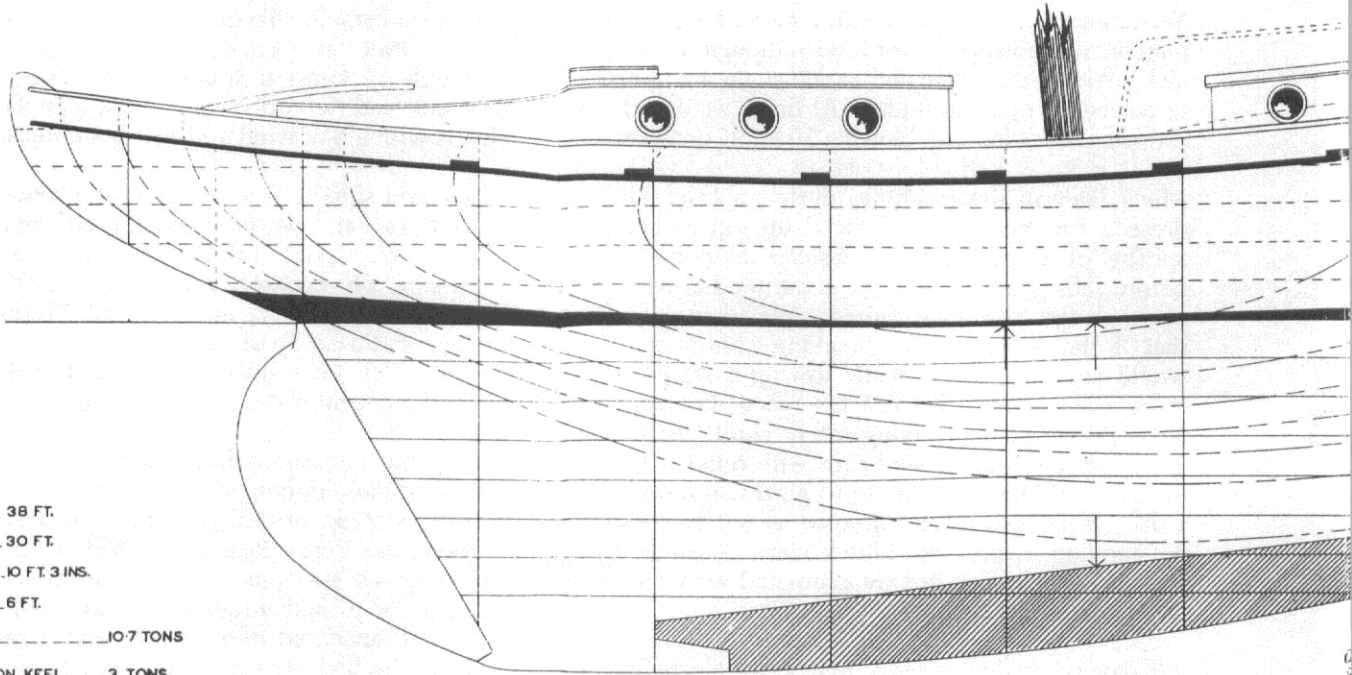


'Aristene'

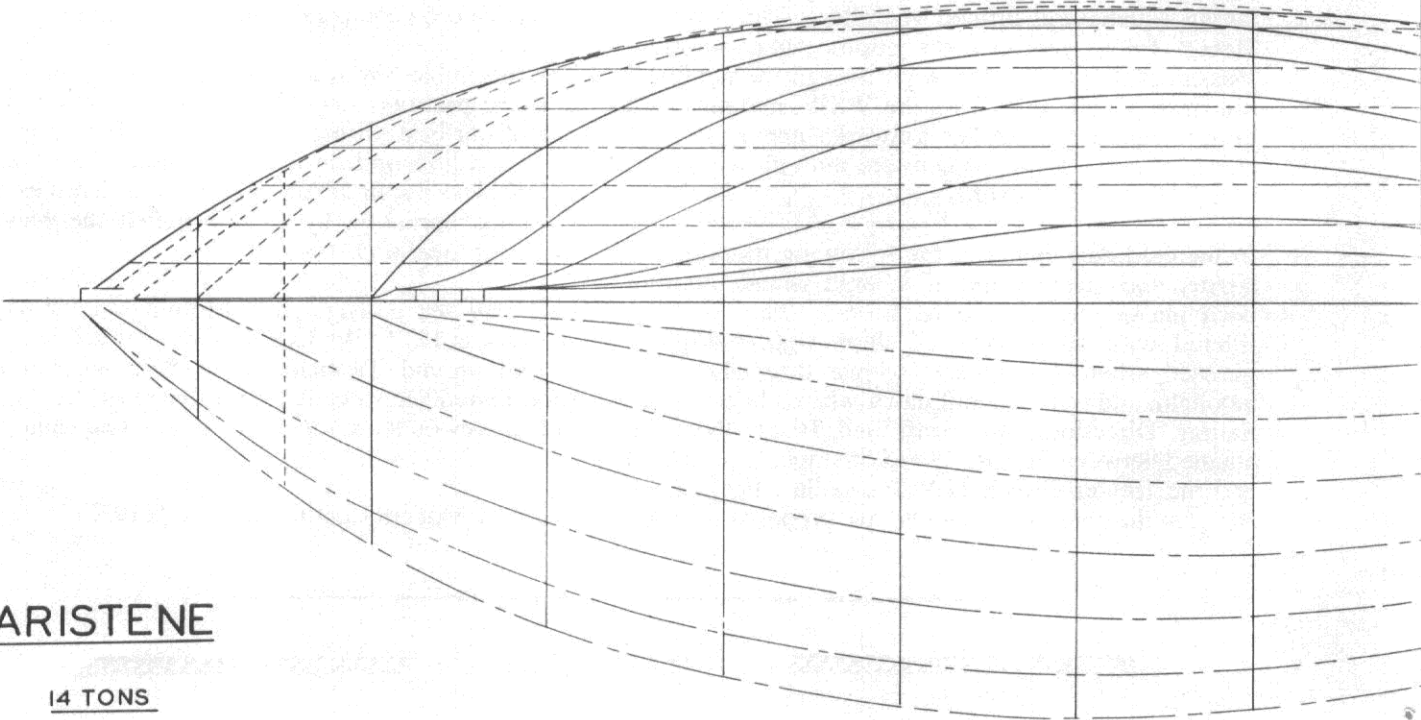


Although personally I do not care for the schooner rig in a yacht as small as 14 tons, it may be an advantage when the vessel has to be handled by a small crew. Anyhow, rig is largely a matter of personal choice and does not affect the design of 'Aristene', which seems to me a very useful boat, which could be rigged according to the owner's fancy. In sending me her lines for reproduction, Dr Butler writes as follows:

'The leit-motif of this design is ease. Her long easy lines should give an easily driven hull, her softish bilges make for ease in a sea-way, and her schooner rig for ease of handling. We can regard her for home cruising as a 60-40. For this purpose she could have a 15 to 20 h.p. engine, and then she would be ideal for handling with a small crew. A similar design of mine, 'Fastnet', is run all the year round in British Columbia by the owner and his wife. For ocean cruising, for which I think she is very suitable, I would give her a 7 h.p. Thorneycroft Handy Billy engine. On the other hand, she could be rigged up to her capacity as a Bermudian cutter or yawl. Another alternative would be the Bermudian ketch, which is now so popular in America. The lines and the plans speak for themselves. A suitable lay-out has been sketched in, but many alternative plans could be adopted.'

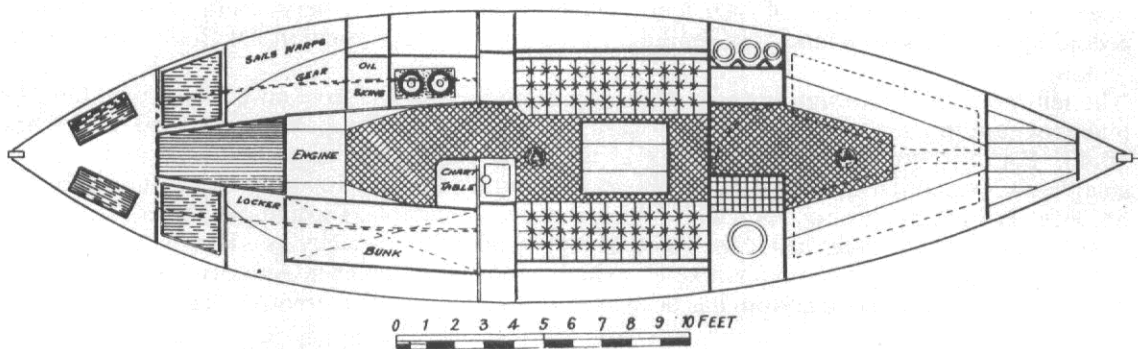


LOA..... 38 FT.
 L.WL..... 30 FT.
 BEAM..... 10 FT. 3 INS.
 DRAUGHT..... 6 FT.
 DISPLACEMENT..... 10.7 TONS
 WEIGHT OF IRON KEEL..... 3 TONS

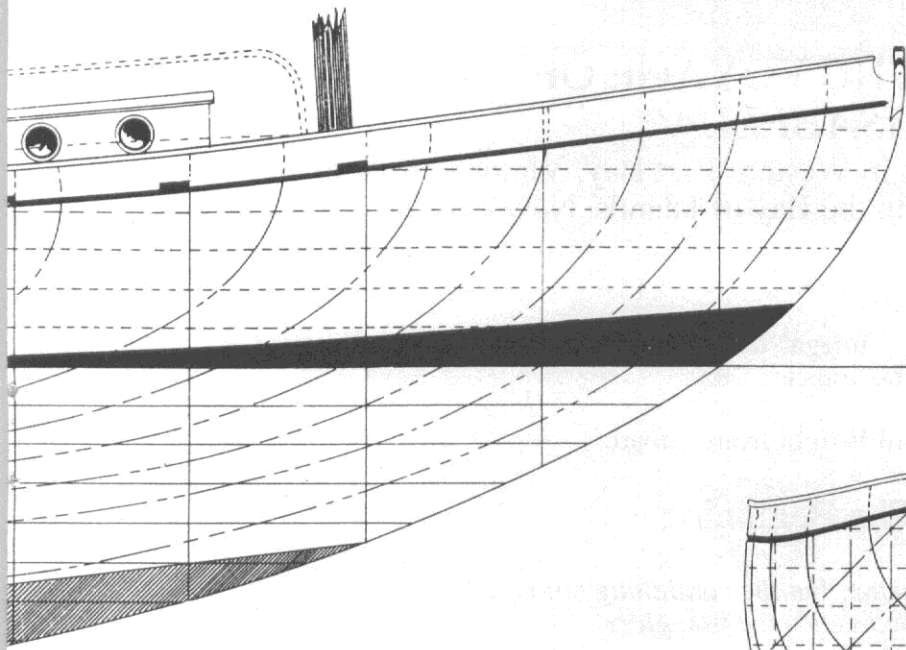


ARISTENE

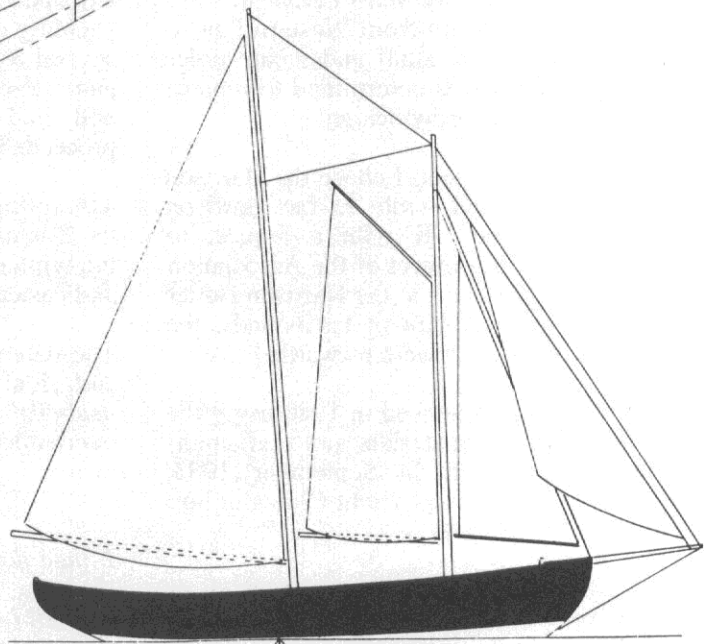
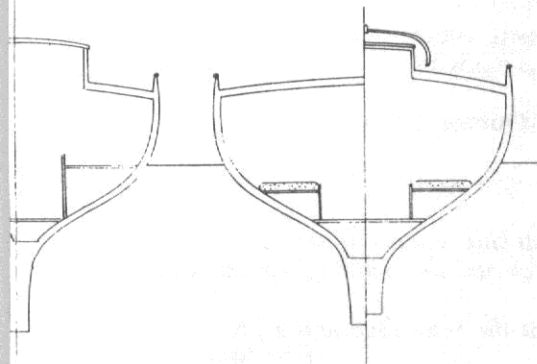
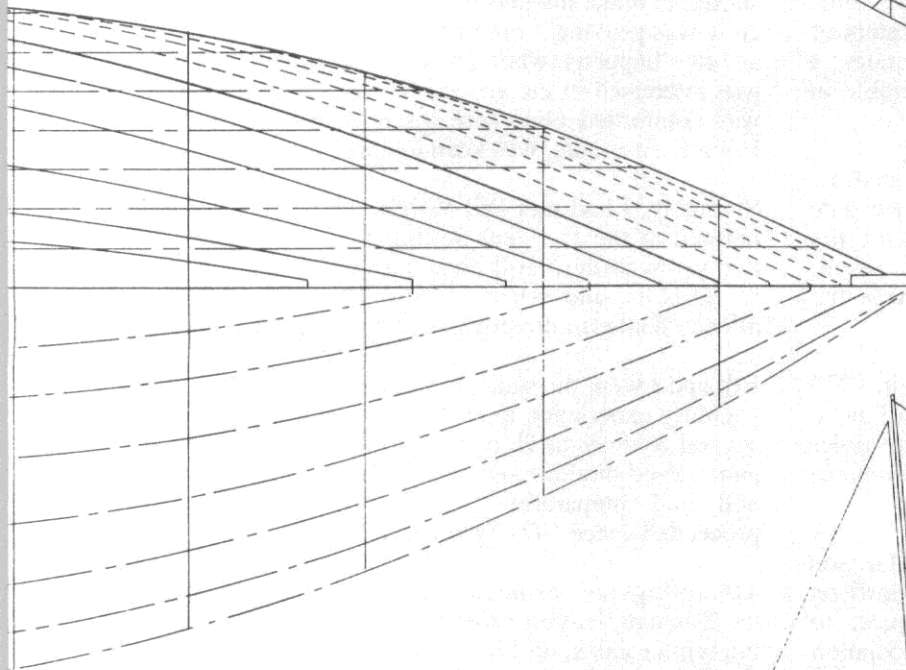
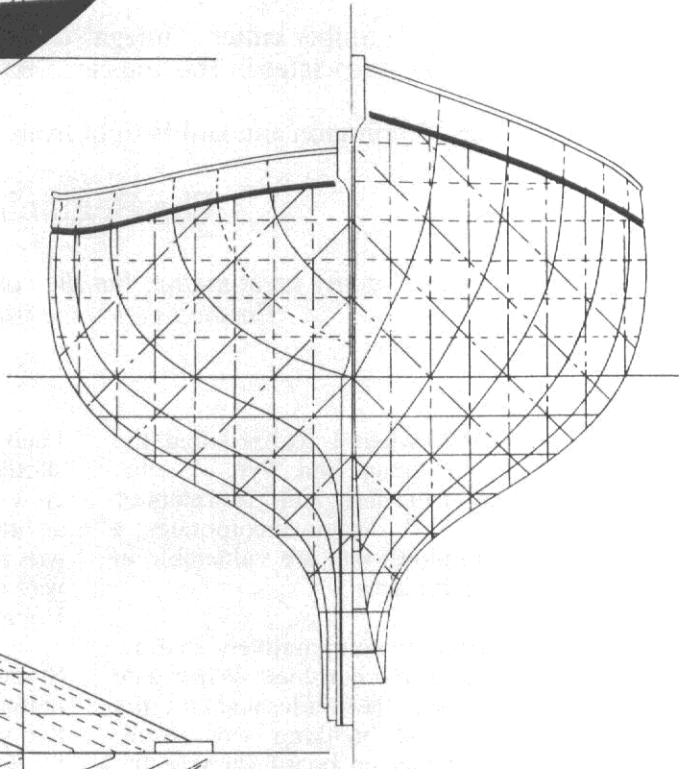
14 TONS



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 FEET



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 FEET



MAINSAIL 512 Sq. Ft. FORESAIL 162 Sq. Ft. STAYSAIL 79 Sq. Ft. JIB 76 Sq. Ft.
TOTAL SAIL AREA 628 Sq. Ft.

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 FEET

"RISTENE"

A CHRONICLE OF THE VOYAGE OF THE YACHT 'ISABELLA'

From the port of Hastings in Western Port Bay, Victoria, Australia
to the port of Opus in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand

Description of vessel:

Twenty seven foot six inch timber cutter "Omega" design by T. Harrison Butler. Designed in 1936 and built by Frank Hart & Associates in Hastings in 1983.

Crew Frank Hart from Mornington and Bill Wright from Hobart.

The Beginning

There must be a beginner of any great matter, but the continuing unto the end until it be thoroughly finished yields the true glory.

Sir Francis Drake

The story starts in 1980 when I realized that the seaworthiness of my Holman and Pye, "Stella" design yacht was suspect to safely sail the waters of Bass Strait. The "Stella" design incorporates a doghouse with large windows that are vulnerable in heavy weather and breaking seas.

The waters of Bass Strait are comparatively shallow and subject to strong tides and currents. When gale force winds blow contrary to these tides and currents dangerous short, steep and breaking seas result. Such seas are likely to break on board, damage the doghouse and flood the boat.

I experienced such weather two years earlier in 1978 when sailing across Bass Strait from Western Port to Tasmania. Although we lay ahull under bare poles and weathered the gale, I was determined to replace my yacht with a more seaworthy design.

After much study of the subject, I chose the Harrison Butler "Omega" design and wrote to the Harrison Butler Association in the UK with a request to purchase a set of plans. An object of the Association is to foster the building of boats to the Harrison Butler designs and for the modest sum of ten pounds, the cost of copying the plans, they were forwarded to me.

Building the new boat commenced in 1980 using the best of Australian timber, materials and craftsmanship and three years later, in September 1983, 'Isabella' slid down the Hastings Yacht Club slip into the waters of Western Port Bay.

Since that day 'Isabella' has sailed many thousands of miles on the Australian coast, sailing to Queensland on two occasions and Tasmania many times. Sometimes I sailed single-handed and sometimes with one or two crew, however my dream of crossing an ocean in 'Isabella' had as yet not been fulfilled.

I had set my mind on sailing to New Zealand and had started to make the necessary preparations. Finding a crew was proving more difficult. Then, unexpectedly as often happens, when I asked an acquaintance if he was interested in the voyage he said that although he was committed elsewhere his brother, who lived in Hobart, Tasmania, was keen to come.

Strangely, I had met Bill Wright when 'Isabella' was berthed at the Derwent Sailing Squadron in Hobart two years earlier. Bill owned a yacht similar in size to 'Isabella' and when visiting Hobart I had been allocated a berth directly opposite Bill's yacht.

Bill and I were the same age and probably had similar yachting experience to each other. Bill had sailed in several Sydney to Hobart yacht races and had raced and cruised on the coast. I quickly made contact with Bill and preparations to sail to New Zealand proceeded apace. The date was then mid-1997.

The springtime seemed to be as good as any to cross the Tasman, leaving Western Port after the worst of the winter gales, and before the subtropical cyclones and easterly winds could be expected to arrive.

The date chosen to leave was early November 1997 and final preparations were pursued with a will. 'Isabella' was slipped, stores purchased and gear overhauled. All was ready by the due date.

The Outward Voyage

*I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.*

John Masefield

Sunday 2/11/97

0900 hr. Busy stowing provisions and bending on sails. Bill joins after lunch and a small crowd gathers on the jetty to bid farewell to *'Isabella'* and crew.

1400 hr. Wind WSW 15kt. We depart Hastings Jetty with feelings of excitement and awe, tinged with the sadness of farewell, as our family and friends wave goodbye. *'Isabella'* is sluggish as we manoeuvre off the jetty and has a much reduced freeboard being deeply laden with fuel, water and provisions. The boat will become lighter and move more freely as our stores are consumed, however I wonder how she will lift in a seaway until then. The weather forecast is for moderating SW'ly winds. We expect a soldiers breeze for the run to Wilsons Promontory, a distance of approximately 100nm. Our plan is to depart Western Port via the eastern entrance and pass under the San Remo bridge. A strong ebb tide is pushing us along as we sail down the harbour.

1800 hr. Passing Newhaven Yacht Squadron to starboard we communicate with Ken and Kate Matthews from *'Yendor'* on the VHF radio. They had joined with us and a number of other friends for a farewell dinner several days earlier and were planning to sail from Newhaven the following day for Wilsons Promontory. As they are both in their seventies we do not feel such ancient mariners after all!

1815 hr. Cape Woolamai is abeam to starboard as we leave Western Port Bay and head out into Bass Strait. The wind is from the SW at 12kt. and is tending to lighten. A short and steep sea is running, together with a confused swell. The boat is pitching and rolling making conditions on board uncomfortable. The motor is started to help keep the boat moving at a reasonable speed and to escape from the confused sea. I comment to Bill that the stretch of water outside the eastern entrance to Western Port is invariably confused and disturbed with the outpouring of the last of the ebb tide. Our evening meal consists of pre-cooked beef casserole, which is heated on the pressure kerosene stove, however the uncomfortable motion of the boat takes away our appetite and we do small justice to the fare.

1900 hr. As night approaches we set the watch and decide to change watch every two hours. Throughout the night the motor pushes *'Isabella'* along. The noise, thump and vibration of the single cylinder Yanmar diesel engine are soon lost to sleep by the crew below. The man on watch sits in the shelter of the spray dodger with one hand on the tiller, his gaze moving from the compass to the sails and then round the horizon looking for navigation lights and beacons and the lights of other vessels at sea. At the change of watch the crew coming on deck marks the boat's position on the chart and calculates the distance to the next change of course. Any necessary alteration to the compass course is made to keep *'Isabella'* on track. The new moon sets



'Isabella' at anchor

soon after sundown and darkness comes upon us. The sky is clear and bright with stars and the visibility good. The stars of the Southern Cross with the two pointers are clearly seen on the starboard side and the constellation of Orion rises later in the evening and climbs to the Zenith during the night. No ships are sighted but time passes quickly as we slowly become accustomed to our new environment. Bill, who is a large fellow, is using the starboard bunk as it is easier to get in and out of. He barely fits behind lee sheets on the narrow berth and his feet hang over the end of the bunk. I am concerned that he may have difficulty obtaining proper rest during the voyage, but I say nothing, hoping that my thoughts will be proved wrong.

Monday 3/11/97

0600 hr. Our first night at sea is over and we start to feel more at home. Approaching Wilsons Promontory we thread our way through the off-lying rocks and islands. It is time to fit the Navico electric steering. Watch-keeping immediately becomes less onerous, as the man on watch is free to move around the boat, tend the sails, navigate and make a snack and hot drink. Once round South East Point, at the tip of Wilsons Promontory, the sea smooths out and

conditions on board become user-friendly. The headland and lighthouse stand out boldly against the backdrop of the pale early morning sky and the land changes colour from dark to light grey and green as the sun climbs into the heavens. Sailing eastwards, throughout the day, the Promontory slowly fades into the distance and we wonder whether this will be our last view of Australia before returning home.

0710 hr. Coastguard Lochsport transmits the weather report on the HF radio, the forecast is for light southerly winds. We report our position, course and speed knowing that folk at home will be anxious to learn of our progress. A large school of porpoises arrives to inspect *'Isabella'* but they soon lose interest in our pedestrian progress and romp off leaving us alone. Our interest switches to the flocks of short-tailed shearwaters (mutton birds) fluttering and skimming across the waves. They fly in no set direction, frequently alighting on the water as they scavenge for food, until they themselves are disturbed by unseen predators and move on to seek more plentiful feeding grounds. During the morning we tidy the boat and restow some of the provisions that came on board at the last moment. The wind continues to lighten and our progress slows. The full main and No. 1 genoa headsail are set, they are hard to fill in the light airs and hang limply in the breeze. The motor pushes us along at 4kt.

1800 hr. The sky is overcast and the air cold. Almost half the fuel on board has been consumed and only sufficient remains for 36 hours motoring. The weather forecast is for east winds. We discuss whether we should make for Eden to refuel or keep heading east towards New Zealand. We choose the latter option, not wanting to be distracted from our main objective by the first hint of difficulty. We report our position to Coastguard Lochsport and also to Penta Comstad radio station, who we plan to use as a radio base whilst crossing the Tasman.

1900 hr. The engine is turned off as the wind picks up. It is blowing at 15kt. from the south. The sheets are eased and *'Isabella'* is making 4.5kt over the ground. The Navico electric steering is replaced with the Atoms windvane. The vane is a wonderful piece of equipment, where the directional force is produced by the wind and the power comes from the sea passing across the pendulum, which projects down into the water. The drudgery of steering, when sailing short-handed, has been removed by the advent of the windvane. The windvane was developed 40 years earlier by the British and French pioneers of short-handed sailing and refined by many ocean voyagers since that time.

Tuesday 4/11/97

Melbourne Cup Day holiday at home, when the local world stops for a horse race. There is little time for such distractions on *'Isabella'*, we are involved in our own one horse race. Our race is one of endurance rather than speed. Little more can be done to help

'Isabella' go faster as there is no weight in the wind. The sails are watched and tended constantly.

0630 hr. As dawn breaks, *'Isabella'* is in the middle of the oil rigs and halfway between Wilsons Promontory and Gabo Island, 100nm. from each. Our appetite has returned and we enjoy a hearty breakfast of cereal, and bacon and eggs. During the morning the anchor is sent below and the dinghy on the fore-deck is lashed more securely.

1200 hr. Bill is on deck while I am preparing lunch. I hear the shout of Whale ho! By the time I arrive on deck there is little to be seen, except for a disturbance on the surface of the water, about one cable off. Four cargo ships pass near by as we sail across the main shipping track between Wilsons Promontory and Gabo Island. During the afternoon the fickle wind frustrates us further and completely drops out. Sitting in the cockpit and watching the clouds pass by, *'Isabella'* appears to be drifting backwards. It is only an illusion. Back and forth we roll on a gentle sea. Eventually the sails are lowered as they are slatting and banging and playing havoc with our nerves. We drift past a basking shark and a shudder runs down my spine at being so close to the beast, even though I know we are secure within the confines of the boat.

1800 hr. Radio contact is made with Coast Guard Lochsport and Penta Comstad base and we relay our position, complaining of the slow progress. *'Isabella'* is fitted with a GPS navigator and Bill has brought his portable GPS along. These instruments instantly provide the latitude and longitude together with all other relevant navigation information. We check one against the other, to be certain of their accuracy. Another cold night. The mainsail and the genoa are set but there is little wind in the sails. The radar reflector, which is attached to the halyard, swings and hits against the mast, showering the deck with plastic and alloy. My faith in the effectiveness of these reflectors has never been great. Believing that a good lookout is to be preferred, we now have no other alternative. At least we are warm and sleep well when not on watch.

Wednesday 5/11/97

0300 hr. The wind freshens to 15kt. from the east, which is the direction we are trying to sail. Who has neglected to pay the washer woman? At the change of watch we put one reef in the main and change from the genoa to the Yankee jib and staysail and head off to the SE thinking, "Bluff here we come"! The easterly wind persists throughout the day. The Gippsland people who live along the coast say, "The east wind is three days coming, three days with you and three days going". The thought of contrary winds for the next week is depressing. Our course to New Zealand will be in the latitudes known as the "Variables" named after the nature of the wind found between the SE Trades to the north and the prevailing Westerly winds to the south.

0530 hr. Sunrise finds us heading south with a cold easterly wind. Bill pokes his head up through the hatch and climbs into the cockpit. After giving him the course and handing over the watch I go below, make some toast and a hot mug of tea that I pass out to Bill through the hatch and after a brief chat crawl into my bunk.

0900 hr. The wind backs to the NE and we relax as the sheets are eased. During the afternoon the wind freshens and the boat begins to strain, causing us to put an extra reef in the main and drop the staysail. Our course remains SE, as the boat will not sail freely closer to the wind. The further south we travel the nearer we approach the westerly air stream and the colder will be the weather. Spray is blowing across the deck and water gets below through the mushroom ventilator on the back hatch. The ventilator has not been properly closed.

Thursday 6/11/97

0700 hr. Wind NNE 15kt. course 105 degrees and speed 4kt. The HF radio (our long distance radio) has developed an intermittent fault. The connections to the battery, earth and aerial are all checked but the fault is not located. After several unsuccessful attempts we eventually make contact with Penta Comstad, who describe the symptoms to their radio engineer and he advises that the fault can only be rectified in a workshop. This is annoying as the set was serviced and the frequencies updated prior to our departure from Hastings. *'Isabella'* is now making good progress in the right direction. Our new concern is for more water found in the bilge and the ingress is traced to the bolts securing the bobstay fitting. Next time the boat is on the slip the bolts will need to be recaulked. The bilge is pumped dry two or three times per day.

1000hr. Time for a grand clean up of the boat. The cockpit gratings are lifted and the cockpit washed and wiped out. Carpets and bedding are shaken over the leeward side and the cabin cleaned and gear stowed. We have a good wash and our morale improves.

1500 hr. The tiller lines on the Atom windvane are chafing in the lead blocks. It is necessary to heave-to and carry out repairs. *'Isabella'* has no stern rail and working over the stern is precarious. Bill hangs on to my feet to stop me disappearing overboard. Satisfaction and joy when the work is complete, as we have come to rely heavily on the windvane to save us from many hours on the helm and we now know what to watch for and how to fix the problem.

1600 hr. First the sound and then we see a 747 aircraft flying overhead, apparently en-route from Melbourne to Auckland, making better time than ourselves and enjoying a smoother ride! We should be envious of the passengers' comfort but strangely this is not so! Each day we have the company of the sea birds, albatross, petrels, gulls and shearwaters. They watch us just as intently as we

watch them circle round. It is difficult to determine who is the more inquisitive. Whilst Bill is off watch I try communicating with the odd petrel that swoops and circles the boat, seeing whether I can out-stare him. Soon one or other of us tires of this futile game and the spell is broken as our attention is diverted elsewhere.

Friday 7/11/97

0600 hr. The wind backs to the west and increases to 25kt, we are now running square. The boat is pitching and rolling and the sea and swell are increasing. The barograph is falling, indicating that a frontal change is approaching. We reduce sail and, being cautious as this looks like being our first gale, put two reefs in the main and take off the jib!

1030 hr. A freighter heading west appears about four miles distant on our starboard beam. We call them on the VHF radio. The ship is the Greek container ship *'Prestige'* and is bound for Melbourne from Lyttelton, having passed through Cook Strait between the north and south islands of New Zealand. The officer on watch is unable to see *'Isabella'* in the rough sea or on the ship's radar, yet we have no difficulty seeing the freighter. Another lesson learned, don't rely on being seen by other vessels, particularly in rough weather. Our feathered friends never leave us. We wonder how much sleep and rest they need. The stronger the wind blows the more they seem to enjoy their flight. They alight on the water to feed and are oblivious to the sea and swell. Schools of dolphins visit us from time to time, they are a different species to those usually seen in Bass Strait, being smaller in size and having a more pronounced nose. During the day the wind continues to blow from the west and good progress is made in the right direction, with just a fully reefed main set and no headsails. The wind and swell continue to increase during the night.

Saturday 8/11/97

0600 hr. The swell is now heavy from the SW and the boat is hard to steer. The wind has increased to 35kt. so we decide to hand the main and lay ahull. This is the moment of reckoning. For many years I have taken every opportunity to discuss the topic of heavy weather sailing with experienced sailors and have read every authoritative account I could find on the subject. I am interested to ascertain how my theories stand up, but have little time to contemplate options as decisions have to be made and acted upon quickly. I am glad that my research and study has been carried out in advance. We lash the tiller to port and the boat lays with the wind four points on the starboard quarter. The wind blows from the SW at 35 to 40kt. The motion of the boat is not comfortable but, apart from spray sweeping across the deck, we ship very little solid water. There is plenty of noise from the wind. The swells are long, big and regular and the crests curl over as they pass by the boat. They are not breaking heavily and the boat lifts over them and then descends to the comparative peace of

the trough. As the boat lifts to the next wave we hear a roar as it approaches and we wait to see if the wave will break over the boat or pass harmlessly beneath. Occasionally the boat shudders as a wave breaks against the side but after a period of time we gain confidence in the ability of the boat to ride out the gale and we make the best of our time below, keeping warm in the bunk, reading, sleeping and keeping our inner self sustained with tea and cake. We are content to see out the gale before trying to cook a proper meal on the stove. Every half hour or so we take turns to open the hatch and check the boat to see that all is secure. The wave train stretches from one horizon to the next. We marvel at the enormity of the swell and estimate the height to be about 30 feet but, unlike the short steep seas in the shallow waters of Bass Strait, the swell here is long and the front and back of the waves are not steep. The radio does not function and we can neither transmit nor receive. We have no weather forecast. The barograph is closely monitored and the changes in the atmospheric pressure noted. We are keen to get under way as soon as the weather will allow. It seems a waste of time laying ahull and making no headway. I sense the impatience in Bill but I prefer to exercise caution. The boat is secure and we are not expending reserves of energy. The gale continues all day. During the night the barometer steadies and levels off and by daylight the following morning the wind drops to 15kt. from the south.

Sunday 9/11/97

0700 hr. The wind and sea have moderated, we set the main with three reefs and the Yankee head sail, we put the boat on course and adjust and engage the windvane. The boat is delighted to be under way and with a shake of its quarters it rapidly gathers speed. The course is 090 degrees and our speed 5kt. over the ground. Whilst laying ahull with no sail set for 24 hours we made 35 miles leeway in the NE'ly direction. We will continue to head east and when closer to the New Zealand coast will decide whether to make for Cape Reinga and then to the Bay of Islands or make for the port of Taranaki or the port of Nelson or sail round the south of the South Island to the port of Bluff. We will study the weather pattern before deciding our destination. Cape Reinga is 788 miles distant, Nelson is 774 miles and Bluff 750 nautical miles. Our preference is to sail to the Bay of Islands round the north of New Zealand, if conditions allow.

0735 hr. With relief, after many attempts, radio contact is made with Penta Comstad and our position is relayed to them. The pressure valve on the kerosene cooking stove is now causing some concern as it is hard to operate. Although there is a spare for every other part of the stove on board, there is no spare pressure valve. If treated with kindness maybe it will last the distance! First the radio, then the windvane and now the cooker have developed faults. I guess these are all relatively minor problems. Fortunately the boat, rig and engine are working

well. The sun comes out and dries the sails and the deck. Although the rough sea and heavy swell are slow to abate and the movement of the boat makes cooking at the stove difficult, we are able to prepare a hot meal during the day, which gives us energy and lifts our spirits. Good progress is made through the night and the windvane is doing a fantastic job steering the boat. The night passes comfortably as the person on watch is able to keep warm in the confines of the cabin and make regular sorties to the deck to scan the horizon for ships. We are now well into the Tasman Sea and away from the great circle track, so the possibility of sighting another vessel until nearer the New Zealand coast is slight. Any temptation that existed previously, to divert to Sydney to effect repairs, is discounted as the distance back grows.

Monday 10/11/97

0900 hr. The wind has lightened off so the full main, Yankee and staysail are set but progress slow. It is now the second week at sea and generally all is well. Tiredness with the lack of a full night's sleep seems to be our main complaint, but the longer the time at sea the more we settle into a routine. Most of the minor problems would have been resolved before sailing had we lived on board for two weeks before departure. What arrogance to set off on an ocean voyage, stepping on board from living ashore, with no time to settle in or fully test the equipment in an operational sense! I had tried to be meticulous in my preparation for the voyage. If our experience to date tells us anything, it certainly suggests that two or three weeks living on board and settling in before setting off on a deep sea voyage would have been the prudent and seamanlike approach. I suspect the pace of life today does not permit such luxury and the expectation for instant fulfilment has dulled the sense of reality.

1900 hr. Another frustrating day, all combinations of sail have been tried but progress has been slow. Managed to receive part of a high seas weather forecast this evening on the HF radio, something said about gales, but we missed the area. The barograph is falling, which is not a good omen for tomorrow.

Tuesday 11/11/97

Remembrance day. My memory flicks back to London and Whitehall when it was always bleak, cold, wet and overcast. A sombre picture of the soldiers and sailors wearing their great coats and bridge coats, standing in front of the Cenotaph, comes to mind. I wonder why? A chilly day is heralded in with weather not too dissimilar. The sky is overcast and the horizon is obscured by rain. A feeling of foreboding and loneliness persists.

0530 hr. The barometer continues to fall and the wind is freshening from the north. We put two reefs in the main and hand the Yankee leaving the staysail set. A very snug rig in hard conditions. Our regular fan club is circling around and keeping an eye on us.

The bird book is brought out to check the varieties of albatross, petrels and the smaller birds. We have some sooty albatross and the larger wandering albatross and two or three varieties of petrels, we also have some prion that skitter across the waves. The larger birds seem to glide through the air and over the waves, rarely beating their wings, just subtle changes in the shape of their wings to use the updrafts and lifts, enabling them to swoop down and soar back at will, one bird follows the other. I start to give them names as they become better known but I am uncertain whether it is the same bird or his sibling that circles the boat.

0930 hr. Occasional glimpses of the sun are seen through the clouds racing across the sky towards the east. The wind continues to blow from the north, although the change must be near as the barograph is levelling out at 1005mb.

1200 hr. The wind has backed to the NW and increased in strength to over 30kt. We wait anxiously for the change to arrive. It is time to take off all sail and lay ahull again rather than wear ourselves out trying to control the boat across the seas. Maybe we are both suffering from too many years of the easy life to want to make heroes of ourselves. The windvane is unshipped and the tiller lashed to port. The cabin is a mess. Bags, books and belongings are being dislodged and allowed to stay where they fetch up. There is little point in replacing them as they would again soon be dislodged.

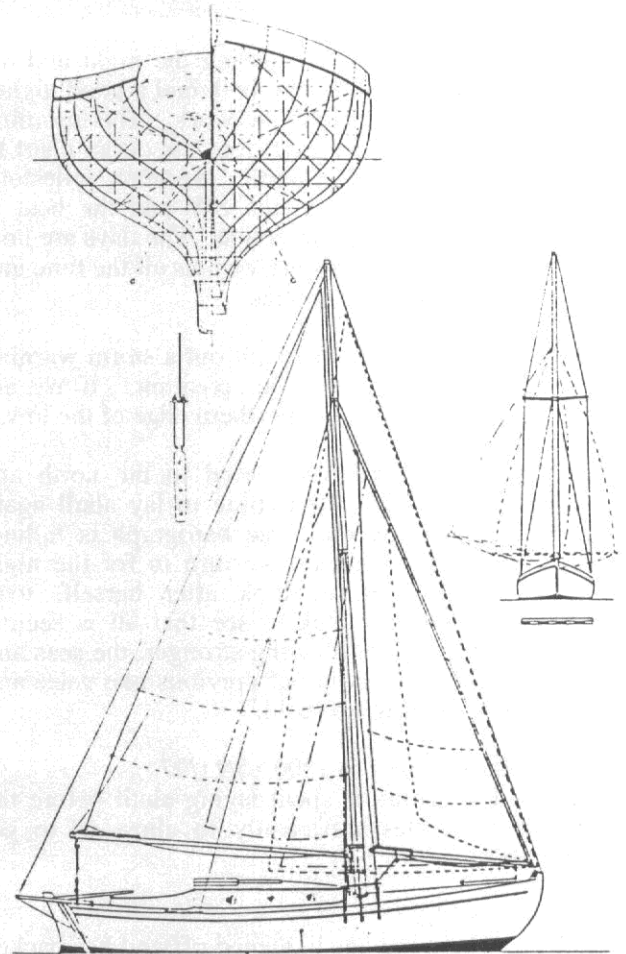
1800 hr. The wind has backed to the SW and dropped to 25kt. allowing us to get under way. We hand steer through the night as the windvane is too difficult to rig in the dark with the boat rolling around. Proper rest is at a premium and if it wasn't for our wish to press on I would suggest that we heave-to for 24 hours to rest and recuperate. I realize this would be no good for morale. Resting would have to be done in fine and settled weather and that is the time to make all speed. The weather continues to moderate during the night.

Wednesday 12/11/97

Fickle winds all day. Again a variety of sails, mostly full main and No.1 genoa. The wind boxes the compass but we slowly work our way to the east. We are now over half way across the Tasman, definitely no turning back from here on. To avoid changing sails during the night we put a reef in the main before dark. The wind has settled in the west and at last we begin to feel that our destination is getting closer. It has been a continuous battle with the elements up to now.

Thursday 13/11/97

Another day of changing wind strengths and changing sails. Our course is now directly towards Cape Reinga and North Cape. Further south the W'y winds are blowing in the right direction, however the forecasts that we receive indicate they are too strong



for us, averaging between 40 and 50kt. as gale follows gale in quick succession and the temperature is too cold. The sun comes out this afternoon and warms our backs. Bill, more than I, seems to crave for some warm weather. The distance to North Cape is less than 500nm. In light winds we hand steer as the windvane will not hold a course and the electric steering uses too much battery power. We wish to conserve fuel until we are on the coast and making port. The engine is run for half an hour each day to keep it free and dry and to help charge the batteries. The pressure kerosene stove continues to cause some anxiety and the pressure has to be pumped up each time before use. After dark we switch on the a.m. radio and can faintly hear a New Zealand radio station, the first real sign of approaching land. A change in diet, a glass of red wine and some fresh meat, cooked by someone else, would be welcome. So far the crew has never complained about my cooking, much to my delight. We still have plenty of water and provisions on board and are eating well. The Potts rye bread is just coming to an end and has kept well with no mildew. The potatoes, cabbage, onions, oranges and apples have also kept well and will last until our arrival. Little alcohol has been consumed since our departure other than some brandied apricots that Bill brought with him which are great when the weather permits us to relax over dinner. Even the duty free spirits are still intact!

Friday 14/11/97

0700 hr. No sail changes during the night and the boat takes care of itself. We both had a good night's sleep as the windvane did the work. This morning our position was transferred from the ocean chart to the chart of New Zealand! Another milestone crossed! The wind is in the SW and the boat is making 4kt. in the right direction. The days are now much warmer. The birds are with us all the time and the dolphins pay regular visits.

1600 hr. Taupo radio have put out a storm warning for waters well south of our position. If we are unlucky we may catch the northern edge of the low.

2000 hr. The wind has veered to the north and strengthened to 40kt. It is time to lay ahull again rather than struggle on. The barograph is falling. Once everything is secure we turn in for the night and leave the boat to look after herself, with occasional visits on deck to see that all is secure. Although the wind is blowing stronger, the seas and swell are smaller than in our previous two gales and the temperature is not so cold.

From 2000 14/11/97 to 1200 15/11/97

A total of 16 hours is spent laying ahull before the weather moderates sufficiently to allow us to get under way.

Saturday 15/11/97

1200 hr. The wind has lightened off and has backed to WSW at 15kt. The sails are set and a course steered to the NE towards Cape Reinga. The sea and swell quickly ease. The windvane is being subjected to considerable buffeting by the rolling of the boat in the residual sea. The weather has closed in and visibility is down to half a mile in the rain and fog, just our luck to run into poor visibility as we approach the land and return to the main shipping routes. A good lookout will have to be kept.

Sunday 16/11/97 The start of our third week at sea.

1100 hr. Damn! A bracket on the windvane gear which transfers the vertical movement of the vane to the horizontal movement of the pendulum suffers a weld fracture. This is not surprising after the amount of buffeting the gear has received. No gear could stand up indefinitely to the impact stresses caused by the pitching and rolling of the boat in the seaway. A spare part is carried on board but the boat is pitching and rolling too much to permit the spare to be fitted without the risk of losing the part or myself overboard. We elect to hand steer until we find some calm sea. The Atoms windvane is a pendulum servo type and is one of the most powerful designs, however, this type of gear is more susceptible to impact damage than other types. Although the boat can be balanced with the sails, the helm cannot be left unattended for any length of time. The sails need constant trimming as the wind is neither steady in direction or force. Only when the vane gear fails, and steering by hand becomes necessary, are the

great pressures on the tiller, when the sails are not correctly trimmed, detected. Another entry for the memory log! Our rest time is now even more precious as the two or three hours on watch are fully occupied steering the boat and all other work has to be performed off watch. Less than 300nm. to Cape Reinga at the northern tip of New Zealand. With fair winds we may arrive in three or four days time.

1500 hr. The wind backs to the S and then to the SE and freshens to 24kt. We reduce sail too much, three reefs in the main and no headsail. Soon realizing our mistake, a reef is taken out of the main and the Yankee set. There is always a temptation to try to predict the likely wind strength. Sometimes one is right and sometimes wrong. In hindsight one should carry the rig suitable for the conditions at the time and make the sail changes as appropriate when the wind changes. However, when tiredness takes over and the wind increases, sails tend to be left up too long and when the wind eases the larger sails are not set soon enough.

Monday 17/11/97

0600 hr. During the night the wind shifted back to the W 15kt. *'Isabella'* is sailing at 4 kt. making good headway. A line squall is sighted approaching from the south. We decide to drop the mainsail, however the cloud dissipates before reaching us. Half an hour later the main is set again. The weather is changeable with sun and rain, wind and calm. The days are getting longer and warmer and our spirits rise. At daybreak the deck is littered with small flying fish and baby squid. They are too small to pop into the fry pan for breakfast. Still too much sea running to attempt to repair the windvane, so steering by hand continues.

Tuesday 18/11/97

0900 hr. Wind SW 18kt. Course 080 degrees. Only 150nm. to Cape Reinga and averaging 4.5kts. The HF radio remains faulty but we persevere and manage to communicate intermittently with Taupo radio station, giving them our ETA for Opua in the Bay of Islands.

1700 hr. The oil tanker *'Onsa'* passes 3 miles off on our port side, she is bound for Whangarei from Western Port. Visibility is poor as we continue to pass through areas of rain. The weather is becoming more tropical with the horizon obscured by precipitation from low dark cumulus convection clouds. We steer further to the north as northerly winds are forecast and we do not want to struggle for sea room to round Cape Reinga and North Cape. A favourable current is pushing us in the right direction. The wind is on the quarter and the GPS shows that we are making 6kt. over the ground.

Wednesday 19/11/97

1000 hr. Cape Reinga now only 47nm away. Still plenty of rain about and the wind remains in the W at 18kt. At 1000 hr Bill, who is on watch, calls out

that there is a whale to starboard and it is being harassed by a shark. It is too far off to see in detail, there is a commotion and disturbance in the water around the whale. Two more ships pass close by. We are back in the shipping lanes and need to keep a careful watch for traffic. The waters north of Cape Reinga and North Cape are subject to strong tides. According to the tide tables the tide should be favourable when we make landfall.

1230 hr. Bill sights the Three King Islands, barely visible in the rain on our port bow. Oh! for the wonders of the GPS navigator. No longer the relief of making a landfall after crossing an ocean using a chronometer and sextant, only the excitement remains.

1700 hr. Overtaken by the freighter 'Iron Flinders' and communicate by VHF with the chief officer, Nils Thompson, who owns a 26ft gaff rigged cutter on Lake Macquarie and who is keen to sail his boat to New Zealand. He asks many questions about 'Isabella'.

1900 hr. The winds are light from the NW and most of the rain clouds have dispersed. We are carrying the tide with us. Cape Reinga is sighted four points on the starboard bow, a low unimpressive piece of land, barely visible in the evening twilight and partly hidden by the showers of rain. We are excited at seeing the mainland of New Zealand. As darkness falls the light on Cape Reinga flashes weakly at us. The winds are light and although progress is slow, the light continues to draw astern and soon disappears from view. We peer into the darkness ahead looking for the brighter light of North Cape. The moon, over the stern, helps us steer our course until it sets below the horizon and then we use the stars as they play hide and seek behind the clouds rushing across the sky.

Thursday 20/11/97

0820 hr. North Cape is abeam to starboard, distance 2nm. Once round the headland, with the wind from the west, the boat is on a beam reach and our speed picks up. Being in the lee of the land there is little sea and swell. Now only 85nm to Opuia in the Bay of Islands. We will hand steer to our destination. Several ships passed in the night and there are many coastal ships and fishing vessels in sight. We communicate with Taupo radio, giving them an amended ETA for Opuia and request clearance from the Customs and Immigration. New Zealand is aptly referred to as the "land of the long white cloud". The cloud cover stretches north and south along the length of the land. When approaching from seaward, even in fine weather, the cloud can be seen from a great distance, long before land is sighted. The sun shines and the sea sparkles as we sail down the coast. Being low on fuel, we decide not to use the engine until in the Bay of Islands. The forecast is for 40kt W'ly winds! It looks as though we will have a difficult entry into the Bay of Islands, however, for

the present, we soak up the sunshine and scenery as we sail south along the coast. There are few towns of any size north of the Bay of Islands. Dwellings are limited to the occasional farmhouse. From time to time the noise of farm and mining machinery is heard coming off the land, but there is little visible activity. The farms look neat and well cared for and there is evidence of afforestation. Much chatter is heard on the VHF radio. Taupo radio advise that several foreign yachts will be entering Opuia at the same time as ourselves.

Friday 21/11/97

0000 hr. The wind has freshened from the west. We are reefed down but cannot slow the boat. Not wishing to arrive at the entrance before daylight, as there will be an ebb tide to stem and a westerly wind to sail against into an unfamiliar harbour, we heave to in the lee of the land. Several other yachts that have sailed in company with each other from Nukualofa pass close by during the night. Their navigation lights bob up and down with the movement of the boats in the seaway. As they get closer shadowy figures can be seen in their cockpits and their conversation with each other is heard on the VHF radio. They are accompanied by a local vessel. We choose not to follow but to wait for the tide to turn before getting under way.

0400 hr. We let draw and hasten towards the port. Two reefs in the main and the Yankee are enough to give us 5kt through the water. The engine is started and helps 'Isabella' to point higher in the fresh offshore wind. The leading lights are sighted and daylight is upon us as 'Isabella' enters the Bay.

0700 hr. The Opuia port authority direct us to anchor off the main town wharf. Proceeding up the channel past Waitangi and Paihia to starboard and Russel to port the popularity of the area as a yachtsman's paradise becomes evident. Yachts and power boats are visible in all directions and even in the early morning there is considerable activity on the water.

0830 hr. We find a mooring opposite the wharf and await our turn in the queue for the port officials to come on board. Yachts of all shapes and size and from all nations surround us. The choppy waters are busy with the comings and goings of dinghies ferrying crew to and from the shore. There is a great social atmosphere amongst the crews. "When did you arrive?" "How was the weather?" "Have you seen so and so?"

What a contrast after the loneliness of the ocean!

Tired but elated at having completed our ocean crossing it is time to relax and celebrate.

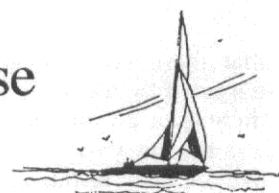
To be continued....



The return voyage of the 'Isabella' to Hastings, Australia will be featured in the Summer 1999 issue of the HBA newsletter, No. 49.

Desirable Features and Otherwise

By FRANCIS B. COOKE



Now I want to say a few words on the subject of balance. It is, of course, of the first importance when one is single-handed that the yacht shall be able to sail herself while the owner has a meal, or attends to anything necessary on the fore-deck, and no craft that is not steady on her helm will make a satisfactory single-hander. We have heard a good deal of late years about Admiral Turner's metacentric shelf system of designing, which is said to ensure perfect balance. By "perfect balance" is meant, I take it, that the vessel will keep sailing steadily on her course with the helm free, her balance not being affected by the angle at which she heels. Admiral Turner would appear to have achieved that end pretty well with his method and, theoretically speaking, the "metacentroid" should be an ideal single-hander. In practice, however, I don't think that perfect balance is altogether desirable, for if your ship carries no weatherhelm at all you sacrifice most of the pleasure of steering. If you can't "feel" her the effect is much the same as that of steering a motor-boat, than which there are few things more boring. On the other hand, if she carries a reasonable amount of weatherhelm, steering a smart little yacht to windward in a jump of sea is sheer joy, for with the tiller pulsating in your grasp she seems a thing of life. It is as exhilarating as riding a spirited horse, while in the absence of weatherhelm steering is about as exciting as driving a hearse with a corpse inside. And what is more, I am sure that you can't get the best out of a yacht to windward unless you can feel her.

Weatherhelm

The breeze round our shores is seldom, if ever, quite steady. It is punctuated by harder puffs in which it is possible to sail a little closer to the wind with advantage. In these puffs the experienced helmsman eases the helm, allowing the boat to eat up into the wind, and in this way is able to snatch many yards to windward. As the favourable puff passes he bears up on to his original course. It is done mainly by feel, almost by intuition, and if your boat carries no weatherhelm, you can't make the most of these advantageous moments. Some time ago I read in a yachting journal about some trials carried out between two boats of the "X" one-design class, one being Bermudian rigged and the other having a gaff mainsail. I was surprised to learn that in these trials the gaff-rigged boat beat the Bermudian to windward, for it is generally acknowledged that the Bermudian sail is at least 10 per cent faster to windward than the gaff sail. On reading further, however, I found it was stated that the Bermudian boat was so perfectly balanced that she would sail herself with the helm free for long periods. And therein I think was the explanation of the anomaly,

for as the Bermudian carried no weatherhelm her helmsman was unable to feel her. He consequently failed to steer her to best advantage and was thus beaten by the slower gaff-rigged boat.

Metacentric Analysis

Some of these metacentric shelf enthusiasts in their writings rather convey the impression that they consider no yacht is much good unless she has a perfect metacentric analysis, but that strikes me as nonsense. There were many fine yachts in existence long before Admiral Turner's system had ever been heard of and some of the highest speeds on record were attained by unbalanced craft. The famous '*Satanita*', for instance, on more than one occasion exceeded 16 knots and she, I believe, was notoriously hard-headed, and I doubt very much whether even '*Britannia*' had a perfect analysis. I am sufficiently old-fashioned to believe that every sailing vessel should carry some weatherhelm, not only because it enhances the pleasure of steering but also because it makes for safety. Any decently-designed yacht will sail herself to windward, or on a reach, with the helm lashed slightly a-weather and in the event of her being hove down in a heavy squall will take care of herself, for the weatherhelm will be increased as she heels, causing her to luff into the wind. Such an incident might occur when the single-handed yachtsman was in the cabin, or working on the fore-deck, and the knowledge that his yacht would look after herself until he could get to the helm would certainly be comforting.

Of course, a yacht that gripes and tends to pull your arm out with a fresh breeze on the quarter is definitely bad. What one wants, I think, is a craft, not perfectly balanced, but well balanced, and it seems to me that might be obtained by having a metacentroid hull and the sail plan adjusted so as to give her just a little weatherhelm, if that is possible. I suggested it to Mr Harrison Butler, a leading expert on the metacentric shelf system, and he replied: "Increasing the area of the mainsail or diminishing her foresail would not, I think, alter her balance. If the hull is balanced it is surprising what a small difference the sail plan makes." Nevertheless, I am told that the standard "Z" yacht designed by Mr Butler does carry a little weatherhelm.

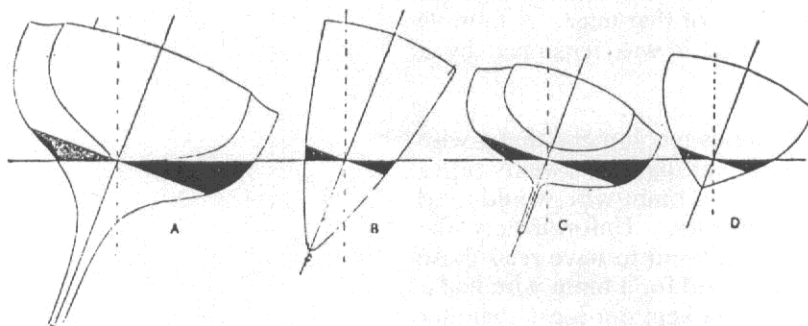
I am inclined to think that the perfect balance of which the metacentric enthusiast dreams can only exist in theory, for the balance of a small yacht is dependent to a certain extent upon the disposition of the weight of the crew. If she is perfectly balanced with a crew of two or three persons in the cockpit, it stands to reason that her trim will be affected should

one or two of them go forward or into the cabin. The upset of her trim, of course, would only be temporary and her balance restored when they returned to the cockpit. But supposing that the same boat were sailed single-handed. In such circumstances the balance would be disturbed for the duration of the cruise. Mr Butler, in an article of his that I read, proposed to get over this difficulty by

shifting, say, a couple of hundredweight of her ballast aft. All I have to say in answer to that suggestion is that he must be a darned sight fonder of heaving heavy weights about than I am.

Extract from - *The Single Handed Yachtsman*
By Francis B. Cooke 1946

HULL BALANCE



A and B represent bow and stern sections of a Watson designed fishing yacht; C and D are sections of an X-boat.

* * * * *

Hydraulic Horror

By PAUL COWMAN

Back in the early 1960's the hydraulic gear change as fitted to many Newage BMC marine engines was considered the latest mechanical wizardry.

The system worked on the principal of dual master cylinders operating a clutch and forward and reverse gears via a pair of slave cylinders and linkage mechanism located on the gearbox bell housing. This highly efficient, easily operated system, with combined throttle, allows the vessel to be manoeuvred in close quarters by slipping the clutch - with increasingly crowded anchorages a highly desirable feature.

Dawn II had this hydraulic system (D.A.S.) fitted along with a new 46 h.p. BMC Commander diesel engine in 1964 (replacing a main 6 and a wing 4 cylinder Morris petrol engines). The past season has seen many interesting and exciting nautical gymnastics as the hydraulic system began to fail - loss of forward gear when steaming into a sea lock against a foul tide is rather alarming to say the least.

After laying-up this Autumn our local yard, Seaborne Yacht Company (famous for their John Bain designed motor-yachts), advised me to contact Tempest Marine in Stamford, Lincolnshire. This I promptly did and found Claire Hutchinson, the manageress, extremely efficient and helpful. Within minutes she had faxed me several detailed drawings of the gearbox and requisite parts and information about specialist suppliers for the Lockheed hydraulic parts required for the overhaul. Within 48 hours the system was stripped down, the new master cylinders fitted, fully re-assembled and working as the designer intended. Perhaps I can now look forward to less troublesome mechanics this season.

Tempest Marine hold an extensive stock of many engine types and parts dating back some 50 years. I would have no hesitation in recommending members to contact them for advice or for that elusive 'iron topsail' part.

Tempest Marine - Tel: 01780 764387 Fax: 01780 754024.

An Ex-Editor Thinks More Thoughts



Our present boat is ketch rigged. When we bought her there was a triatic stay running from the mainmast head to provide forward support for the mizzen. This arrangement did not please me. There were two snags. It could only be adjusted by going aloft and there was always the worry that if the mainmast ever went overboard the mizzen would follow.

Thinking out how to stay the masts independently took time but meanwhile I rigged a new, adjustable, triatic. This ran through a block at the head of the mizzen then down the front of that mast. A thimble was spliced in the end and it was tensioned by a lanyard at deck level.

The pundits who write books recommend that a wire block should have a sheave of diameter twenty times the diameter of the wire, i.e. a 6mm wire would need a sheave of 120mm diameter. Unfortunately the block manufacturers do not seem to have read those books and the best I could find for a 6mm wire had a diameter of 76mm. The cost kept our local chandler happy for weeks.

Although this new arrangement meant that the triatic stay was easily adjustable, the spectre of both masts going over the side together remained. Eventually, with some assistance from the boatyard, I re-rigged the mizzen so that it would stand without help from the main. This left me with a long length of flexible wire and an expensive block surplus to requirements.

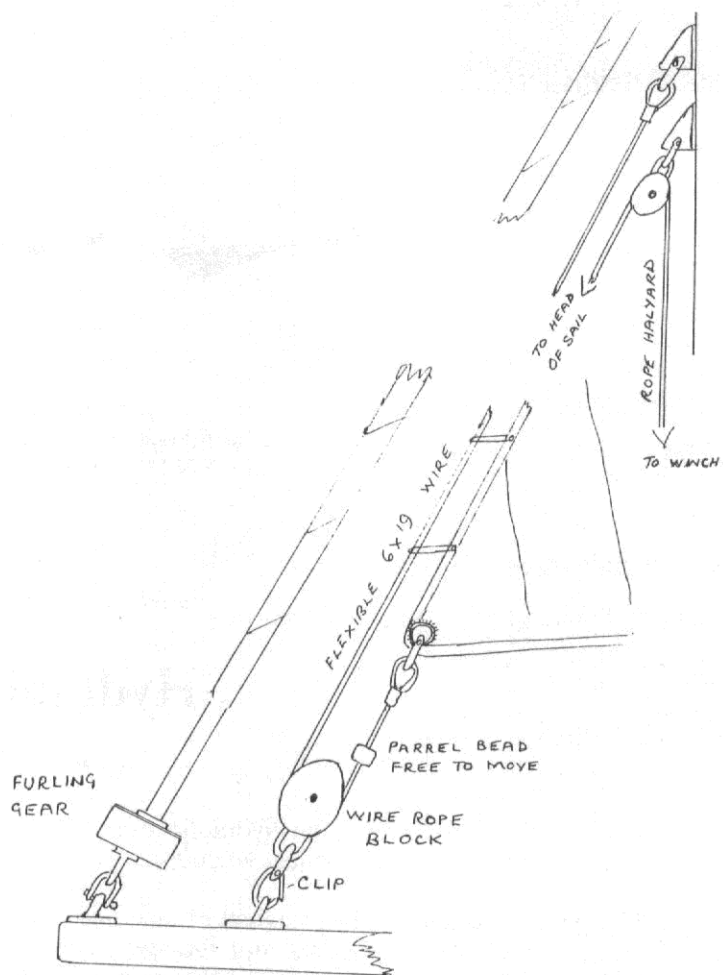
Our jib, like many today, is on a furling gear. This makes for ease of handling but limits the area of sail that can be set. As a result the boat is under-canvased in light winds. What was needed was a ghoster set on a removable inner stay. A friend had fitted such a stay to his masthead sloop to enable him to hoist a storm jib when necessary. This stay could be attached to the deck a few inches behind the furling gear drum by a very clever, but again very expensive, lever device. There had to be a simpler arrangement.

The problem wandered around in my sub-conscious for a while until a solution surfaced. This was based on a running topmast forestay, copied from the famous 'Dyarchy' and illustrated in one of Hiscock's books, that had worked well on a gaff cutter I owned years ago. Something very similar was fitted to 'Lindy II' by Ron Goodhand - see Newsletter 39 Summer '94.

One end of the redundant triatic stay was shackled to a convenient eye plate on the mast just below the attachment point of the furling gear. The similarly redundant, and expensive, wire block, fitted with a suitable clip to facilitate rapid removal, went to an eyeplate bolted through the bowsprit. A halyard was rigged, and that was that. See sketch. When not in use the block clips to a U bolt on the bulwarks forad of the lower shrouds.

If adopting such an arrangement it is important to decide the overall length of the wire stay correctly so as to avoid having to add a pennant to the tack of whatever sail is to be hoisted. An essential is the parrel bead shown in the drawing. If this is omitted then it is possible for the wire to disappear down the swallow of the block.

In practice the idea works well. Lean over the pulpit and clip on the block. Make the halyard off temporarily wherever convenient. Connect the tack of the sail to the eye in the wire and clip on the luff hanks. Bend on the halyard and hoist away. All done from a secure working position, no need for gymnastics out on the bowsprit.



Some years ago I had to attend a weekend course afloat to revalidate a qualification as a Yachtmaster Offshore Examiner. It was November and the boat was some high performance thing made out of GRP. Although it was fitted with a bewildering range of instruments - not all of which worked - there was no heating.

Part of the course was a discussion on the essential items of equipment that an examiner would expect to find on a candidate's yacht. Life raft, harnesses, flares, lifebuoys, you know the sort of thing. I did not mention a particular item that was stowed in my holdall.

We moored for the night alongside Lymington Town Quay. After dinner I volunteered to do the washing-up while my companions rushed ashore to the nearest pub. I boiled a kettle, filled the hot water bottle which had been hidden in my holdall and then went ashore to join my colleagues.

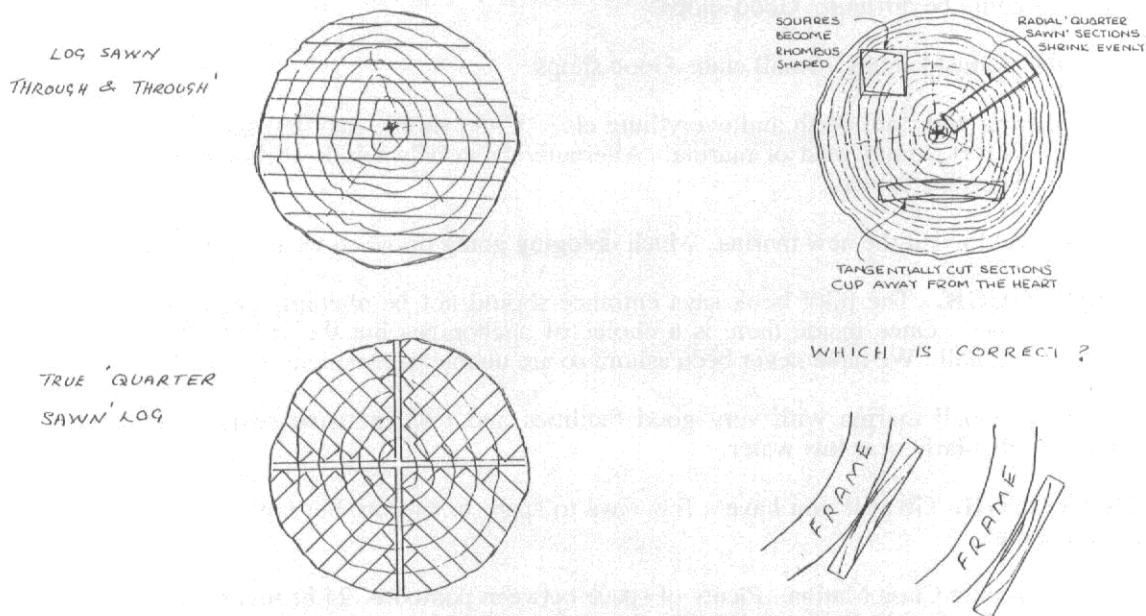
I slept warm and snug that night while they froze. A hot water bottle is high on my list of essential equipment for a well found cruising boat.

* * * * *

Basically there are two methods of sawing a log into planks, 'Through and through' and 'Quarter sawn' - see diagram. 'Through and through' yields more board feet of timber while 'Quarter sawn' is more wasteful but provides vertical grain timber ideal for decking.

All wood shrinks as it dries. The movement is always more along the growth rings - tangentially - than across the rings - radially. A quarter sawn board will shrink more or less evenly across the width and thickness. A through and through board will distort cupping away from the heart, shrinking more in the width than the thickness, see diagram.

This information is repeated in many books on boat building. The books differ, however, in their advice on how to plank using through and through sawn timber. Some say, and this puzzles me, that the growth rings should follow the curve of the frame. Others recommend the opposite. We number boat builders and naval architects among our membership. Maybe one or more will give a ruling.



In Newsletter No. 42, Winter 1995, I mentioned that the American edition of the Nautical Almanac containing the Ephemeris was considerably cheaper than, but identical in content to, the British edition. This is still true. Copies can be bought by post using a Visa card from - Celestaire, 416 S. Pershing, Wichita, Kansas 67218, USA.

Delivery takes about 10 days and the cost, including exchange rates, was £15.10 in October.

Mark Miller 11/98

West of Scotland Summer Cruise

By MARK MILLER

Joan has suggested that I might write something of our Summer cruise. A blow by blow account of our struggle from Cornwall to the West of Scotland and return would be dull reading. Depression followed depression and what should have been a leisurely progression with most nights spent in peaceful anchorages became a series of dashes from harbour to harbour. Members may however find some comments on those harbours of interest, particularly if they are contemplating heading up the Irish Sea sometime in the future.

Heading North, the East Coast of Ireland being the weather shore, is generally a better prospect than Wales, Liverpool Bay and the Isle of Man.

DUNMORE EAST is easy to enter. Approaching at night there are good lights on the Tuskar Rock, Coningbeg Lightship and Hook Head. Visiting yachts raft up on the quay outside the sailing club which provides good showers and a warm welcome. Adequate shops.

KILMORE QUAY was, until recently, a small drying harbour. It has now been developed and dredged to allow large fishing boats to lie afloat at all times. There is a small marina with good pontoons. Showers and toilets at the community centre in the village. Small shops, fisherman's chandlery.

Leading lights for a night approach but careful pilotage needed to keep clear of the Saltee Islands.

ROSSLARE. We have anchored west of the ferry port to wait out an adverse tide. Seemed good holding.

WEXFORD. It is understood that a marina is being constructed and will be available for 1999.

ARKLOW. Choice between entering the dock and paying modest dues which cover a return visit or going further up the river to pontoons outside the club. These are believed to be more expensive and manoeuvring through the moorings could be difficult. Good shops.

WICKLOW. Berths alongside quay. Small club. Good shops.

HOWTH. Large marina with fuel berth and everything else. Club, shops, easy transport to Dublin. Good anchorage, sand, off Velvet Strand west of marina. Alternatively in N'y winds anchor in the bight SW of Howth Head near the Martello Tower.

MALAHIDE. Have yet to visit the new marina. Much dredging going on when we passed in 1998.

CARLINGFORD LOUGH. The pilot book says entrance should not be attempted against the ebb. The book is absolutely correct! Once inside there is a choice of anchorages but the only marina, just west of Carlingford Harbour, is small. We have never been ashore so are unable to comment on facilities.

ARDGLASS. Recent small marina with very good facilities and resident tame seals. Approach to the pontoons is narrow, particularly near low water.

STRANGFORD LOUGH. Great if you have a few days to spare to explore but not an easy entrance for a short overnight anchorage.

BANGOR. Absolutely First Class Marina. Plenty of space between pontoons, 24 hr fuel berth, spotless toilets and showers, more helpful staff, adjacent to town with wide variety of shops. Chart supplier and two chandleries.

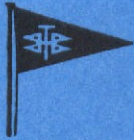
Passage anchorage in Ballyholme Bay protected from SE to SW. Beware of huge, fast catamaran ferries now using Belfast Lough.

GLENARM BAY AND RED BAY. Comfortable passage anchorages in the right wind. Very useful if making for Gigha or entering the Clyde.

The most convenient stops we have found for filling up with fuel are Howth and Bangor Marinas. The best pilot book is the 'Sailing Directions to the North and East Coasts of Ireland' published by the Irish Cruising Club.



LOOSE ENDS



ASSOCIATION BURGEEES
LARGE £8.00 SMALL £5.00 HOUSE FLAGS
ASSOCIATION TIES £6.00
Available from the Hon. Treasurer

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BOATS FOR SALE

'OMEGA OF BROOM'
26' 10" x 22' 6" W.L. x 8' 9" x 4' 9" 7.5 T.M.
Southampton Launch & Boat Co. 1939
Pitch-pine on oak, mahogany and teak brightwork, three/four berths
1994 18 h.p. Yanmar auxiliary. Bermudian Sloop rig
Completely restored as featured Boatman Magazine September 1995
Lying: Cornwall
Apply owner 01579 350137 or agent 01905 356482

'COBBER' Z4 Tonner
21' 9" x 19' W.L. x 7' 2" x 4' 4" 4 T.M.
Alfred Lockhart Ltd. 1939
Pitch-pine on oak, teak sheerplanks and brightwork, two berths and two pipecotts
Bermudian Sloop rig. Reconditioned 8 h.p. Stuart-Turner auxiliary.
Lying: Hampshire
Apply owner 01273 401076 or agent 01905 356482

'JUNE' Z4 Tonner No. 27
21' x 19' W.L. x 7' 2" x 4'
Alfred Lockhart (Marine) Ltd. 1939
Larch on rock elm, teak brightwork, new deck, two berths
Yanmar 9 h.p. diesel auxiliary. Bermudian Sloop rig
Recent tan sails, autohelm, VHF, Decca navigator. Exemplary Z4
Lying: East Coast
Apply owner 01394 383793 or agents 01394 383108

'CHIQUITA' Z4 Tonner No. 22
21' x 19' W.L. x 7' 1" x 4' 4" 4 T.M.
Alfred Lockhart (Marine) Ltd. 1939
Pitch-pine on oak, teak brightwork, four berths, Blake heads, galley
1996 9 h.p. Yanmar auxiliary. Bermudian Sloop rig. Planned Spring 1999 refit
Lying: East Coast
Apply owner 01379 566241

WANTED

Pressure tank for Taylors paraffin cooking stove, with or without pump, any size considered.
01905 356482

CALENDAR EVENTS

7 - 17 January	LONDON INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW
27 February	HBA AGM (separate notice enclosed)
11 April	BEAULIEU BOAT JUMBLE
20 - 23 May	BOATS 99, PANGBOURNE, BERKS.
2 - October	HBA LAYING-UP SUPPER, BEAULIEU

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Contributions to Hon. Editor, HBA, Shalimar, Wheatfield Avenue, Worcester, WR5 3HA

