

'GYBE OH' -

This Newsletter of the Metropolitan Police Sailing Club was originally circulated in September 1972

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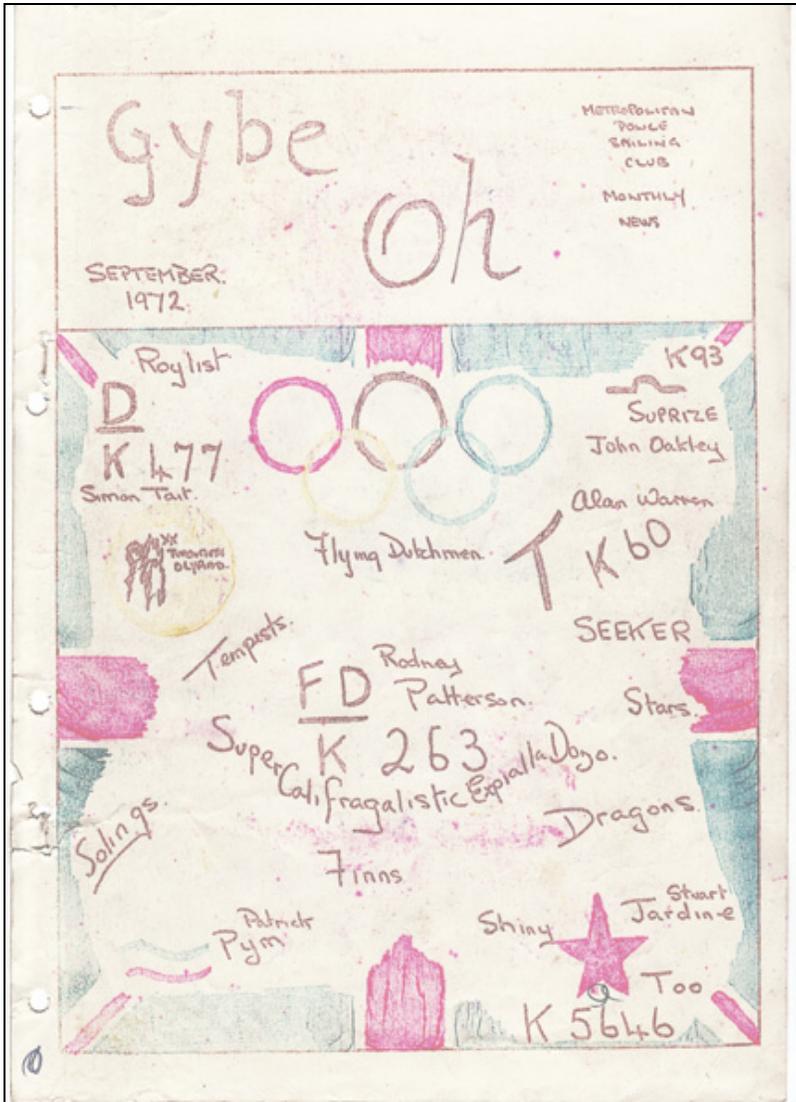
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Editorial

Be it known by one and all that henceforward I shall not be printing apologies for the lateness of Gybe-Oh each month, for I am getting tired of writing them and I am sure you are all sick of reading them. This month, obviously, with so much happening, all at the end of the month, plus the fact that I am on a course, has given me no opportunity to publish on time.

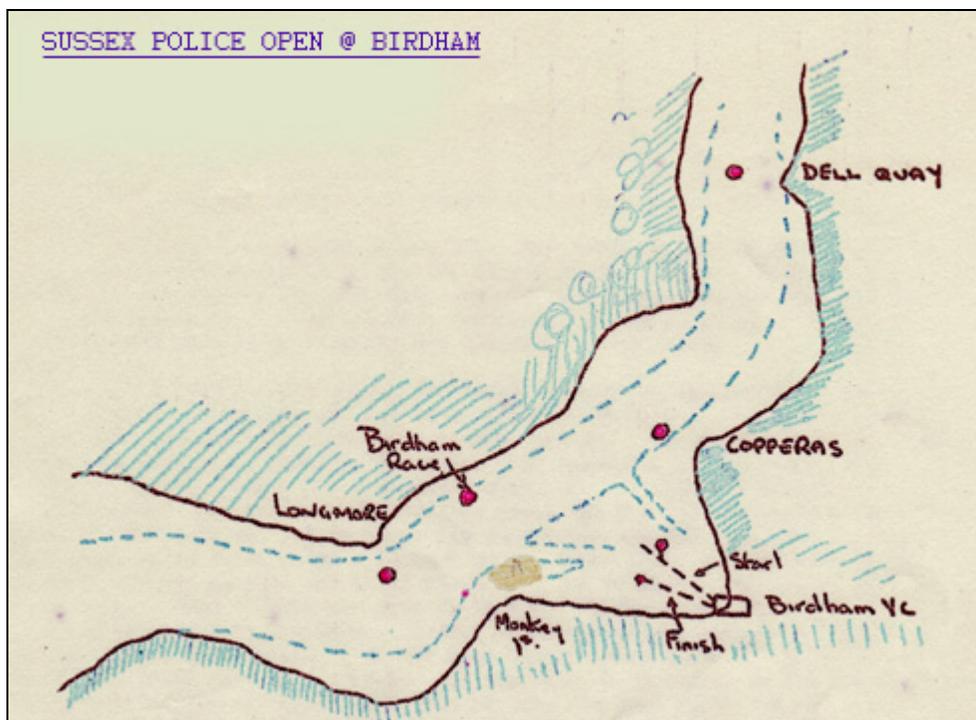
I expect by now most of you will have heard of the sad death of Keith Jones, one of the stalwarts of the 104 Mirror Fleet. It is always sad to lose one of our colleagues, but when they are also connected with our sporting past-times, the loss becomes even greater, especially in one so young. I am sure you will all join me in offering our sympathy to his family.

As I said briefly above, the month has been rather hectic. We have had three meetings all on top of each other and more to come. Whether we have any boats left with which to compete is another matter. Whilst the Chichester meeting proved another triumph for Dan Glen, ably supported by Len Gooch, Barry Luscombe and Derek Wyeth, Sheppey was a complete disaster. I shall of course be publishing a full report next month of the Sheppey race, but for me, here are a few brief notes. 104 boats set out in Force 5/6 wind which rapidly increased to Force 7 with gusts up to Force 8 and a vicious sea.. Peter Moore had his boat badly smashed. Peter Coombes was badly holed. I was dismasted and rolled over in heavy seas. John Fillery was also dismasted. Derek Wyeth was swept out of the boat and retired into Leysdown. Arthur Smith was driven ashore at Whitstable, luckily without much damage. Of the Kent brigade John Eccleston with OK Aries, suffered a total loss of his boat. He was winched to safety by the Manston Air-Sea Rescue Service off Shell Ness, and to date his boat still has not been found.. Even Dave Sinnock looked visibly shaken when he came ashore. Of the 104 starters only about 23 limped across the finish line about six hours later, among them three Met. crews - Clive Bishop, Peter Truelove and John Bayliss. Very well done to you all - you deserve a medal.

In the following pages you will see a report from Peter Moore on the various projects under way for the rest of this year and the beginning of next. You will also see that our application to the P.A.A. Council has unbelievably turned down. Whilst the matter is still being pursued it makes you sick to listen to the pathetic string of feeble excuses issuing from so-called responsible officers. As I understand it, the P.A.A. exists to administer to and to assist serving police officers and cadets to participate in sports, games and pastimes, up and down the country with members of other areas and forces, to the mutual benefit of all. I see nothing written that says you need a board of enquiry or go down on bended knee to have a particular sport adopted. As I understand it, if enough officers in enough areas are interested, then competition is arranged between the areas. It happens for bowls, cricket, football and even squash, would you believe, yet with the hundreds of serving officers actively sailing, to the question of sailing, they say, and I quote: 'It's all been suggested before - what's the point?' The point is, gentlemen, you have elected yourselves by means of seniority into a position where with God-like power you dictate what sports and pastimes your men will, or will not, pursue. The object of the P.A.A. Council surely, is to assist, not obstruct, the free flow of sports. It is bodies such as this, in this country today, we can thank for this country's repeatedly poor showing at such large international meetings as the Olympic Games. The apathy and dragging of heels over the setting up of sports facilities and the interchange of top level competition makes one cry, yet the persons responsible are the first to criticise poor results.

As you can see, I feel rather strongly about this - whether the officers sitting on the P.A.A. Council fully realise just what is going on up and down the

SUSSEX POLICE OPEN @ BIRDHAM



Wednesday, 30th August, 1972 and nine Met crews (only 9) made the journey to Birdham in that extremely picturesque corner of Chichester Harbour, for the Sussex Police Open Regatta. For once the weather was absolutely glorious with hardly a cloud in the sky, yet with a good sailing wind.

A total of 49 crews entered the meeting, comprising of Metro 9, Kent 3, Sussex the hosts 16, Hants 7, Beds & Luton 1, Herts 2, Essex 5, Police College 3, RMPSC 2, and a rebel entry under a club name.

These were divided as is customary at 100/101 into fast and slow groups, giving 30 starters in the fast handicap and 19 in the slow. The wind was fresh North Easterly of force 4/5, which with a strong flood tide gave very choppy conditions for the first hour and caused several crews to taste salt.

Unfortunately Birdham for all its charm, is one of those places where, due to tides, only one race is possible, but this was more than made up for with a pretty lengthy course in ideal sailing waters. The course of approximately 7-8 miles in length took competitors away from a broad reach start off the Birdham Club line, straight across the river to Birdham Racing Buoy where they turned to beat up river but with the flood tide beneath them. Copperas had to be passed to the east out in the fastest part of the tide and very choppy water, and it was here that a number of crews came to grief. From Copperas the water smoothed slightly until competitors turned the corner, freed the sheets slightly and headed for the windward mark off Dell Quay. There was more rough water but somehow it claimed no victims. Crews then had the chance to relax a little on the long run back to the club line and the Gybe mark before before turning into a hairy planing reach skirting Monkey Island, and turning back into a beat in very rough water at Longmore. Here more victims bit the salt. From Longmore the whole process was repeated, Birdham, Copperas, Dell Quay, and on the second round several crews benefited from the experiences of the first beat, and scorned the help of the tide and stayed inshore on the north side and picked up boat speed in the smoother water. It was on this second beat that a lot of places changed hands, and the bid for final places made. From Dell Quay all the way back to Longmore via the club line and back up to Copperas, this time left to starboard and then the last run back to the club finishing line.

In the absence of a Met representative onshore and due to the fact that the boats became strung out over what was quite a big course, it is not possible to give a blow by blow account. However, the slower boys got away at 14,30 with several boats having to return and re-cross the line - the magic puff on a broad reach start, upsets the best timing - and as a result when the fast handicap started at 15.00 most crews had taken note and were visibly line shy, but getting a clean start.

Dan Glen immediately surged into a commanding position in the first three in his brand spanking new boat 'Alibi'. This really is a dream of a boat with a Butler fibreglass hull and Proctor spars. The second Met boat was yours truly with the OK in sixth place closely followed by Peter Moore with Colin Rea crewing in the GP14. Dick Povey, with his son crewing, in 'Blue Lamp', got into a little difficulty shortly after the start but I really didn't see what happened to him after that, but I did see him on occasions battling on grimly. I reckon he deserves a special mention in that it is only the second time he has taken the helm and only the second time his son has crewed. Conditions were a trifle difficult and 'Blue Lamp' is not the easiest boat to sail.

After turning at Birdham, Dan took off in the lead and except for one occasion when he almost missed the mark - getting a habit that - never looked in any trouble at all. We learned afterwards that he had in fact sailed the whole race with back trouble and after coming ashore looked in considerable pain. Dan was of course ably supported by the family back-up crew.

My own fortunes after the first mark fluctuated; the first beat consisted of smashing into walls of water and getting soaked with spray and I really got bogged down in the rough water around Copperas. Peter Moore passed me and I thought at one stage I wouldn't see him again. However, after punching into the chop for what seemed like hours my razor-sharp brain deduced one would go faster out of the tide and eventually arrived somewhat knackered at Dell Quay in about twentieth place. I had noted that the first four boats as they passed me one the way back as Dan Glen, H. Kennet of Dell Quay in the Seafly, Dave Sinnock in Endora and a Hants Kestrel. After turning at the windward mark the OK really came into its own and I tore down onto Peter Moore in the GP. Peter's spinnaker had gone up in a knot and the blue haze drifting around the boat was quite noticeable - still it was Colin's only mishap in an afternoon of very good spinnaker handling and if we are not very careful the OK fleet will lose Colin for good to the GP's. Thereafter Peter and I stayed together, first one leading and then the other - almost like cruising in company -. On the second beat we both stayed close to the north shore out of the tide and chop, and only coming out for Copperas and we both pulled back a number of places, eventually to finish tenth and eleventh over the line. On handicap my tenth place became fourteenth and Peter stayed eleventh.

"Fast Fleet"

1st	Dan Glen	Metro.	Albacore
3rd	Colin Lewis	Hants	Kestrel
3rd	H Kennet	Dell Quay	Seafly
4th	Petty-Major	Essex	Albacore
5th	D. Sinnock	Kent	Enterprise

In the slow handicap Derek Wyeth put up his usual good performance and finished fourth with the Mirror. Lenny Gooch in the GP14 crewed for the first time by Barrie Luscombe who left his OK at home and came along as a spare crew, gained a creditable 3rd place.

"Slow Fleet"

1st	R Jones	Beds & Luton	Mirror (Spiegel)
2nd	A Flexman	Sussex	Mirror
3rd	L Gooch	Metro.	GP14 (jib set)
4th	Derek Wyeth	Metro.	Mirror

<u>Methelms places</u>		Fast Handicap	30 starters	
1. Dan Glen	JW	Albacore	Alibi	1st Place
2. Pete Mobre	TD	GP14	Sayonara	11th "
3. Eric Molyneux	TDV	OK	Bellarophon Pride	14th "
4. Dick Povey	TDV	Enterprise	Blue Lamp	Ret
Slow Handicap 19 starters				
1. Lenny Gooch	TDV	GP14 (J)	Jiffle	3rd Place
2. Derek Wyeth	XU	Mirror	Sandalwood	4th "
3. Arthur Smith	ZB	Solo	Smudger	9th "
4. Clive Bishop	QD	Pacer	Persetu	11th "
5. John Bayless	TDM	Mirror	Springbok	Ret.

All in all a very good day out was had by one and all, the full facilities of the Birdham YC were made available to everyone whether they were sailing or not, organisation was excellent, and once again the cadets formed a shore party that very soon became indispensable as 49 boats wanted in, then out of the water all at the same time it seems. To one and involved in the organisation and entertainment of visitors at Birdham, I say thank you, and we look forward to further invitations.

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AN INTERIM REPORT FROM YOUR SECRETARY

Peter Moore.

With reference to the proposed National Police Dinghy Championships and the application to the PAA for the adoption of sailing as a PAA recognised sport. The pro-formas that were sent out to all the forces for their figures and comments have been returned in only 37 out of 75 despite the rather optimistic start. One would have thought that more forces would have taken the trouble to reply even if they were not interested.

At a recent meeting of the PAA Council, the Assistant Chief Constable of Wiltshire presented the facts obtained from the returned circulars to members of the meeting and made a formal application to the Meeting.

The result was not encouraging.

Apparently various Senior Officers expressed doubts on the feasibility of the proposed events. The main objections were based on financial difficulties and the difficulty in deciding what classes to race. (Strangely enough, the event will be Handicap!!! with possible class prizes - so where is that difficulty?)

The general attitude was "It's all been suggested before, so what's the point?"

It seems that in order to get anywhere it will be necessary to "Go it alone"... with or without the blessing of the PAA.

Further efforts are in hand, and it is hoped that more concrete news will be available by the AGM.

Over the past few weeks there have been a number of developments affecting the club, and as the AGM is approaching details are presented in this interim report for your comments. It is hoped that most if not all club members will attend the AGM which is to be held this year on Wednesday 15th November 1972 from 3pm to 6pm in room 1309 at New Scotland Yard. Please make a note of this now. Please attend promptly, in order that there will be plenty of time for discussion. The room must be vacated by 6pm. If you have any ideas you intend putting forward, please send them to me typed on plain paper, in good time. This way the meeting can be planned to run as smoothly as possible.

At the time of writing it is pleasing to report that our membership has risen to 65, - an increase of about 20 on last season's total. It is still however, not up to the 80 of three years back. It is fair to say that the present 65 members are actively engaged on sailing matters, whereas a lot of the 80 we once had were not very active.

Many of our readers will have heard about the first class results achieved by our Vice Commodore Dan Glen at the National Albacore Championships held at Whitstable. In his brand new boat Alibi (No 5115) he was placed 6th out of 95 entries - beating Sam Bott of the RAF Sailing Ass. in his Chocks Away, and incidentally Bill Holley, who achieved a very good 14th place. Don't forget these placings are against the very best Albacore helms in the country. I am sure we are all very proud of and pleased for Dan and Bill. Dan was crewed by Cadet Broughton, one of our newest members and who is keen for further crewing jobs. Incidentally if any members is thinking of a new Albacore I have some leaflets that may be of interest.

Egham Lake Sailing Club will be closing down in October, and it will be necessary to find a new place to keep and sail "Blue Lamp", and a fresh venue for the Longhurst Trophy Regatta. If any members have any suggestions, please let us have the ideas in time for the AGM, since these are matters that ought to be widely discussed.

In respect of the Longhurst Regatta, steps have already been taken to hold a two day event in 1973, during May at the Queen Mary Sailing Club. It is expected that a good meal will be laid at the club house following the end of the first day's racing, and prior to a coach trip around the sights of changing London - primarily for our visiting crews and families. Three races per day are proposed. It will probably be up to the club to provide race officers and rescue crews. We will have to cover the cost of rescue boats fuel, a fee for use of the water, and for other sundries. The meal is expected to cost a little under a pound for a full fill you up 4 course meal, the coach trip will vary depending on the number going. A race fee will have to be charged, but will be kept as low as possible.

As the event is planned to be rather more pretentious than in past years advanced entries are obviously going to be helpful. Queen Mary Reservoir is about the best sailing water in the South of England, apart from the sea, comprising about 460 acres of completely open water. There are no obstructions at all around the water, the wind is usually very constant and full Olympic courses can be set up to 5½ miles per round.

If any members have any suggestions, objections or ideas with regard to the proposed - and I emphasise Proposed - regatta let's have a note of them. The club is for the benefit of ALL members, and not the favoured few, but if no ideas are made known, then inevitably the events are arranged by the few.

In particular the problem of what to do with Blue Lamp is causing trouble. Last year the idea of selling the boat and acquiring a new one was mentioned at the A.G.M. The idea was put to the M.P.A.A. whose reply indicated that self-help was the order of the day. In other words, if a new boat is required by members, then the club members must expect to pay a proportion of its cost. Some members have advocated disposal of the boat as most of our active members have boats of their own. This is not so acceptable to those who do not have a boat of course, and it is useful for members to be able to have the use of Blue Lamp.

If the idea of a new boat is to continue, then it will undoubtedly be necessary to raise the annual subscription, which has for the date that the club was formed, been only £1. Fair-minded members must agree that to have the use of the club boat, trailer, together with the monthly mag. all for £1 is pretty good value. If sufficient members feel that the club should be conducted on a different basis to that at present then consideration should be given (at the A.G.M.) to the increase of the subscription and the possible appointment of a treasurer to handle the financial matters. Do not forget that, when catering for a widely scattered membership, where regular hours are just not

on, it would be difficult if not impossible to become as other clubs, with regular racing. The basic aim of the club as it stands today, is to bring together Methelms by means of the newsletter, and to train new members - by means of Blue Lamp - in order that some form of organised representation at open events can be arranged. Another and no less important, although up to now a rather neglected part, is to encourage social activities. It is in the interests of all sailing members to ensure that their families are not left out of things.

Returning to the subject of a National Dinghy Championships, a few ideas for you consideration before the main discussion at the AGM.

The general idea is to hold a three day series, preferably on Grafham Water or some similar location reasonably accessible to all forces. In order to make things worthwhile an entry fee of about £1.50 or £2 would probably have to be asked, this would be to ensure that the affair would be as self supporting as possible. Advanced entry and entry fees would have to be a must, and cancellations would not necessarily mean the return of entry fees.

To end what has seemed to be rather a woe column on a brighter note, Dan Glen and Ross Elliston are to receive their MPAA colours on the 29th September. Congratulations to both.

Dan Glen has returned from a very successful meeting at Bala. He secured 3rd in the handicap, 2nd in the Albacore Class, and first in the general pursuit. If anyone is looking for a load of glassware inscribed Bala SC - I believe there is some going for a song.

News has just been received from J Clark (Beds and Luton) that he has just learnt that Grafham Sailing Club charge something like £3 per boat per day for the use of the water and facilities. Obviously we won't be going there for the Championships.

Lastly see YOU at the film show in October, we need your support.

Peter Moore

A MAN, A BOY, AND A BOAT

A sort of monologue come play by the driver of Bell's Pride

Time: 30th August 1972

Place: Birdham, Sussex.

Scene: Water and Water with spray overtones.

1400 Hrs, Dad arrives at a charming little field, full of boats, and sets about organising Mum and a boy unhitching the battered blue boat from the car and blocking up the exit to the field.

Dad: Guess we'll be first on the water son.

Boy: Yes Dad.

Dad: Put the sails up son, I've some talking to be done.

Dad sets off and visits the Loo - the race hut and gets a piece of paper with weird hieroglyphics inscribed thereon. He then visits the bar in the firm belief that several bevies - not bought by him I might add - makes the paper easier to read. He then sees a friend and talks some. He sees another friend and talks some more. Return visit to the Loo to make sure it is still there, and then proceeds to leisurely change into sailing gear. He sees another friend and talks some more before wandering back to the field to find the boat gone. Seeks out boy, and finds him still with bits of boat scattered about, right in the corner of the field.

Dad: Why's the boat here son?

Boy: Some men came and moved it dad - and they were rather cross.... What's a boss eyed lopsided moron Dad?

Dad: Never mind, go and get changed son, I'll do it.

Dad then hurriedly rigs the boat, amid more talks with yet more friends, then proceeds to organise Mum and the returned boy to move the boat towards the water.

Sounds of distant gunfire..

Boy: What's that dad

Dad: 10 minute gun son.

Organises the work party to put the boat on the water. Dad and boy climb aboard and promptly ram the bank.

Dad: Get out and push off son.

Boy: But it's muddy dad.

Dad: That's what a crew's for son.

Further sounds of gunfire

Boy: What's that dad.

Dad: Five minute gun son

Boy: Why are all the boats sailing away dad?

Dad: 'Cos the timekeeper's mixed up all the guns son.

Dad then turns the boat round and sets off after the fast disappearing fleet.

Dad: Darn watch has stopped again.

Boy: What's that noise dad?

Dad: Tobacco tin son.

Boy: What's that banging noise dad

Dad: Rudder son.

Boy: Why's it banging dad?

Dad: Needs adjustin' son, you watch the boat son, I'm gonna be over the back here adjustin' (proceeds to hang rudder on BOTH pintals)

Boy: Dad, Dad..

Dad: Just a moment son, I'm adjustin'.

Boy: Dad the...

Dad: Hold yer wish son, I'm adjustin'.

Boy: But Dad...

Dad: I told you son, don't bother me I'm adjustin'..... Why we stopped son?

Boy: The mast fell down dad.

Boat half full of water rocks violently as dad and boy attempt to get the mast up again.

Dad: Hold it boy

Boy: I can't dad. It's too heavy.

Dad: Nonsense son, you just hold it while I screw this bottle thing.

Mast falls over the side again with crash.

Dad: Gadarnit boy, you didn't eat your Weetabix this morning.

Boy: It's the wind dad, can't we take the sails down first?

Eventually boat takes off again with the sails hung in the rigging to dry.

Dad: Can't stretch out the sails yet awhile son - have to wait for them to dry.

Boy: Yes dad.

He then hauls out the piece of paper given to him by the race officer. It is sopping wet and falls into about three bits.

Boy: Which way to go dad?
Dad: I'm just studyin' son.

The wind gusts - the boat takes on yet more water and the three pieces of paper are seen floating away on the wind.

Boy: Why did you throw it away dad?
Dad: Godamit son, one of these days..... it's no good anyways. It's printed upside down. Just follow those boats boy.

Time passes and the fleet sails home for tea.
The Blue Boat continues continues to sail up and down in thrilling planing reaches, the sails still hanging like window drapes.

Boy: This is fun dad.
Dad: This is sailing son.

Timekeeper: (Standing on the bridge with watch in hand) What's that idiot up to?

Anonymous voice in background: Demonstrating how to clean the bottom off on Monkey Island.

Timekeeper: Well he can stay there. I'm going for my tea.
Dad: (Attempting to roll a soggy cigarette) Take me home son, it's tea time.
Boy: Yes dad.

Editorial - cont.

country in the sailing field or not, I don't know; whether the case was presented sufficiently strongly, again I don't know, but seems incredible that a handful of officers can receive the blessing of the PAA to play squash accompanied by a big splash in the Police Press about its adoption, when there are hundreds of police crews just itching to have a go at each other and have their application turned down.

If any of you feel sufficiently strongly about this and are still able to lift a pen, I urge you to write a letter to the PAA Council putting your case as forcefully as possible that the light might filter through to the dim and ancient halls of the Council.

Meanwhile, the decision has been taken to go it alone, the Derby County Force are very keen, so too is Somerset. Sunderland are this month holding an Area Championship at Sunderland Harbour, on the 14th and are also keen to hold a National Championship. No. 5 Region held theirs Wednesday We hope to hold one next year. To hell with senior officers who say: 'You cannot invite him - he doesn't come from our area'. I say we hold a meeting for the benefit of our sailing colleagues we will invite who we wish, and all who come will be made welcome.

See you in Civvy Street!

Eric Molyneux.

Following the article last month in which I discussed the various types of boat for different areas of water, it would now perhaps be as well if we discussed the characteristics of various boats before going on to look at some designs.

I should point out that although I have received some training on the subject, by no stretch of the imagination could I be considered to be a naval architect, and as such, if any of you do not agree with my views please don't hesitate to say so. My views are only my opinion backed up by some, but not extensive, experience. Also, I am sure you will realise, to try to condense into one article a subject that really requires a whole book, is bound to lead to omissions. This comes more under the heading of notes, the idea being to stimulate your recognition of conditions that can exist and if further information is required, to seek it on the shelves of the local public library.

First of all, in this day and age of expense, high mooring and maintenance costs, the tendency has been for boats to get smaller and yet still provide the same accommodation. This inevitably leads to compromises and compromises are not always a good thing. At one time, about ten years ago, it was recognised that the maintenance of a boat worked out at about £5 per foot per year, providing the boat was in a good condition to start with. Now, with the decline of timber and the upsurge of modern materials, one would expect this figure to have dropped. Unfortunately, rising prices have taken care of that, so you can still reckon to keep a boat in first-class order that it will cost you £5 per foot per annum. (e.g., 25 ft boat = £125 p.a.); an elderly timber boat may well cost you more. At one time a good family boat was not considered under 30 ft. yet today one sees families going to sea in mass-produced plastic chamber pots of less than 20 ft. and there lies the danger - the danger of compromise. Ten years ago, to accommodate a family of 4/5 a designer would set his overall length at at least 30 ft. and the occupants would expect to duck their heads occasionally; now, in today's molly-coddled society, the prospective captain demands full head room - even if he is over 6 ft. - a full five berths, ample storage space, toilet, engine, shallow draft, all in a 20/22 footer, and expects the same performance in all weathers for as little as possible cost. I am afraid it is just not on - it never was and it never will be.

Again, there was a time a few years ago when anyone who was anything in fibre glass and plastic world produced what they thought was a boat, exhibited it at the boat show and expected to sell large numbers. Now, thank goodness, the National Federation of Boat builders vet most designs on the market and some dangerous designs have been eliminated. Even so there are some pretty queer efforts still available.

The first maxim when looking at a boat or a design is to look at it from all angles possible and ask yourself - does it look right? If a boat looks right then it probably is right, and bears further investigation. however, if it looks wrong, leave it alone.

The second point is - how will it carry its sail? Here, we get into rather a complex subject, but basically one must relate beam, windage and top hamper, ballast carried and the position in which it is carried, sail area - its position and distribution -, and finally the draft, again in relation to freeboard and top hamper.

Imagine, if you will, a 25 ft. fibreglass boat of some 2 tons deadweight,

broad in the beam, with high cabin roof to produce full headroom, with bilge keels 2 ft. deep, with a 35 per cent ballast ratio carried bolted to the underside of the hull between the keels; a hull draft of about 12 ins. The boat is caught on a lee shore on Force 5/6 rising wind and sea. The sails consist of a fashionable small mainsail with roller reefing and high boom - again so Dad can't bang his head, a large genoa, a medium working jib and a small storm jib. The auxiliary is a small outboard. Due to relatively small ballast ration, sail area is kept smallish so that Dad doesn't sail on his ear to much and here you have a shipwreck looking for somewhere to happen. It will be an extremely lucky skipper that sails this boat off under these conditions and survives with an intact boat (and family). The draft is far too shallow for the high top sides and cabin roof, and the boat cannot grip the water. The ballast ratio is too low so one cannot carry the sail to drive the boat and so compensate for leeway. The designer has tried to compensate for the low ballast ratio by building in extra beam, as this fits in nicely with the requirements for luxurious accommodation for five, but the resultant underwater shape is saucer-like - slides beautifully over the water - sideways. The auxiliary is useless except for picking up a mooring and the boat is out of control making good a course 100 degrees off the wind. Add to it a shiny anchor, about 15 ft. of chain and a moth eaten nylon rope, large cabin windows that an eager sea is just waiting to smash in, and one has trouble with a capital T. Next time you pick up a yachting magazine, just have a look at the number of like designs, waiting to trap the unwary.

Now compare it to a Folkboat, also 25 ft. long a very popular and delightful looking boat. Deep draft, high ballast ration carried low, with a beam of just under one third of the length. The coach roof is adequate, but low, it provided full sitting headroom but if you stand up you duck your head. Accommodation is adequate for 3/4 persons, but not palatial. Some have flush toilets but most have Elsens (bucket and chucket). Valuable space is devoted to a decent diesel engine and it has a useful rather than a useless sail area. Put this boat, in the same situation described above, and it will revel in its element, with confidence, thrash its way out to more sea room, soaking everyone with spray and inspiring them with confidence; the difference being of course, the first boat costs around £1,000 and the second £3/4,000. So the answer then seems to be, beware the compromise. If you want palatial accommodation in a small plastic boat - please stay on the river and save the rescue services for deserving cases. However, if you want to go to sea on a small boat, and yet have the ability to sail out of a difficult situation, be it of your own making or not, then please do expect to rough it a bit.

When looking at boats and designs, do look for the points described and try to relate to them. If you are looking for a shallow draft boat, expect a high ballast ration, even as high as 70/100 per cent. This will enable you to carry sail in strong winds and so develop speed to overcome leeway. If the high ballast ratio is not there, look for the compensators - broad beam, lower freeboard and coach roof or a powerful auxiliary. In my opinion, one should be able to carry all plain sail in a Force 6 - it may not be comfortable - but it should be possible with safety (Force 6 allows for gusts up to 7 or even 8).

If, when you go to purchase your kit, or dreamboat, or the second-hand bargain of the week, remember it is your life and your family; tread warily and seek a second opinion from a reliable source if you are not sure - don't believe all the claims made by the sales chap and the published propaganda.

The next point to consider, now that you have reassured yourself as to its sail-carrying ability, is how will it handle? When you first go out, you have to bear in mind that Mum and the kids have no experience, and it is quite probable that they will not even be happy steering, yet somehow you have to go forward and change sails. What will happen when you let go of the tiller? Well, luckily it's not all guess work. The answer again lies in the underwater shape of the ship. Broadly speaking, a boat with a long keel and a straight run aft will run straight and true and providing the rig is properly balanced will sail herself

to windward for long periods at a time with very little attention to the helm. This is valuable in a cruising boat as it allows one to move about the boat with comparative freedom, visit the loo, make a cuppa, or have a shufti at the chart. On the debit side, - there is always a debit for every credit in naval architecture - it will be slow to tack and gybe and will not always answer the helm quickly when manoeuvring at slow speeds; this is unimportant in a cruising boat, and not a bad thing as it forces one to approach slowly and allow oneself plenty of time. The boat with a spade keel and sharp rocker will be the exact opposite - she will tack on a sixpence and can be manoeuvred with gay abandon, but at sea and on passage she will be sensitive to sail balance, difficult to steer, and very demanding on the helmsman. Eventually, almost certainly you will end up by purchasing a vane self-steering gear.

We have discussed the sail-carrying ability of a boat, but at the same time if one found oneself forced into beating off a lee shore in heavy weather, almost certainly we would have a very steeply heeled boat underfoot (shades of my holiday this year). What happens to the steering characteristics as the boat heels? Well, this depends on the NEW underwater shape of the heeled hull. Leeway will increase, but then so should speed, and a compensation is effected, but usually on a well designed and set up boat weather helm will increase and the helm will become heavy and pulling all the time. This is due to two reasons. As the wind increases, the trim is altered so that the boat tends to nose-dive under the pressure of the sails. Also a lot of boats have a very shallow forefoot, and as the boat heels it increases the effective waterline length and alters the centre of lateral resistance. This is the point that the area of the silhouette of the boat below the water would balance if laid across a beam. The sail area is geared to this point of lateral resistance so that the centre of effort of the combined sail plan just leads the centre of lateral resistance for the hull. As the wind blows harder it tends to move the centre of effort of the sails further aft and yet the new underwater shape of the heeled boat has just moved the centre of lateral resistance further forward so the boat tends to turn up into the wind all the time. This, of course, is a safety factor and any tendency to the reverse is dead dangerous. However, too much weather helm is very tiring and a prospective purchaser should pay some attention to this point. Successive sail reductions in increasing wind should maintain the relative positions of the centre of effort and the centre of lateral resistance. If investigation showed that this new c of e in relation to the heeled hull c of l r when under storm canvas of spitfire jib and trisail was in an impossible position then you will have a very tiring and sleepless time riding out weather when hove to.

Lastly - will she be wet or dry and how will she ride the sea? Well, this relates to the bows and stern of the boat. Fine sharp bows and a swept away racing bustle will be fine in smooth water, she will cut cleanly and smoothly with barely a ripple. As the sea rises the reserve of buoyancy in the topsides is just not there. She will pitch a lot and bury her bows, cutting into wave and throw water everywhere. Occasionally she will roll a green one down onto the cabin ports or windows. Fine bows - no portholes and especially no windows in the fore end of the coach roof, and make sure your fore hatch is leak proof. Buff bows and transom stern - well she pushes half the ocean in front of her and drags the remaining half behind her. But as the sea rises she rides like a cork, with all the reserve of buoyancy available it feels like lift off on a rocket and as the wave passes on, one is left several inches above the deck as it drops into the trough. Good for the stomachs, especially after egg and bacon. Yet water on board is minimal, usually sprayed from the slap of waves against the cliff-like bows and stern. Again, designers try to strike a compromise between the two to keep a boat reasonably dry and buoyant yet without the violent motion and the slamming up front. Your task as a prospective purchaser is to decide how far a designer has gone and in what direction.

Two good books to study on the subject, usually available from libraries, Offshore - Capt. Illingworth, and Sailing Theory and Practice - C. J. Marchaj.

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HOW TO BE AN ENTHUSIASTIC SAILOR'S WIFE AND KEEP YOUR FEET (ALMOST) DRY

I love my husband's sailing days. I pack up food, dogs, children, clothes, and my own personal survival kit, enthusiastically. The children and Fred (my husband) have packed all the actual sailing equipment, not forgetting to hitch the vessel on the back of the 15 cwt. van. (We need that vehicle just to go shopping on some occasions!)

Off we set to the coast, or gravel pit, or reservoir, or whatever wetness has been selected by the Captain. The crew, who have fought amongst themselves as to who is to support Daddy, argue happily as to which of the four of them has capsized most often, and wasn't it funny how Daddy missed the toe-strap, not once but twice, and who was it that fell into the sail? and all the other jolly times spent since they went afloat.

Note, please, that I said, "They". I quietly smile to myself, then ask if they all have spare clothes. I go over in my mind my own kit. Yes, everything is there!

We arrive, and we all help to unload, firstly watering the dogs. Two children are detailed to walk them, quickly. The rest of us get on with rigging the boat. When all is ready, Fred, plus chosen crew get set, and now follows one of the two times my feet might come in contact with H₂O. I am in charge of the trailer, and push with great strength (not for nothing did I spend three winters potatoing on the farm next to us at home) and with my heart in my mouth..... will they actually get away?

Yes, all works! He's remembered the centreboard today and the rudder hasn't bust. Off they sail into the wide blue yonder and I turn to my survival equipment.

Out come the sketch book, charcoal, paints, field glasses, and current library book. Oh, the bliss to be out in the fresh air, if it's dry, on my own, with perhaps wind enough to ruffle my hair; even for the sake of the sailors I will willingly peg down my drawing paper if the breeze is too brisk. Now, you may ask: "What does she do if it's cold, too?" Ah, guess who was the first one in the family to own a waterproof suit, and guess whose is the best quality?

"All right", say you, "But what happens when it rains?" Well, that's easy. I come from the West Highlands of Scotland, and it takes a lot of rain to penetrate my consciousness; and don't forget - we have the 15 cwt. van. In the event of really inclement weather, I retire to its cosy interior, and carry on with whatever ploy has taken my fancy.

After a while, I enter the rear of the van and get cracking with the grub. Not only are "they" sailors, but "we" are campers, so it doesn't take long to heat food on the two burner stoves, or brew up a cuppa, or on more occasions than we deserve, to remove the fresh salad and turkey from the cold box!

When my kith and kin return, having tied up their toy, father opens a bottle of wine (afforded every time because it is home-made) and the infants make do with squash, and we set to with whetted appetites, to a feast fit for anyone.

The afternoon is spent in much the same way, but I will take the dogs for a good long walk, which we all enjoy - I, using the field glases to peer hopefully for the best buy the family ever made, or to see how many feathered friends I can find.

Tea-time comes round, and I don't mind getting it, as the rolls are

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