



Hunter Liberty & Minstrel Owners' Association



Spring 2006

Newsletter Dates & WWW

The next newsletters will be sent out during the summer.

Please send your articles to me in the format most convenient to you as soon as you can.

The HLMOA website is at; www.hlmoaflyer.co.uk

Contact Andy Beevers or another member of the committee for help if you have problems.

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Reflections On The AGM

The 2006 AGM was a big success, demonstrating how important the mutual support that the members offer each other is. Present at the AGM were Bob & Rita Ager, Andy Beevers, Jane & Anthony Bowden, Bruce & Vera Bown, John & Alison Boyle, Chris Brooks, Sandra Catts, Nigel Chilcott, John Clough, Peter Craven, Rosemary Dabbs, John & Audrey Dale, John and Kate Dinnin, David Goldstein, Geoff Hales, Martin Hampshire, Gavin and Sandra Hodgkins, David Howden, Phil Naylor, Andy Peter, Chris Trimm, Mick and Dee Wells and Roger. Apologies were also received from several members.

We had a few special guests – Rosemary of Rochford a key employee of Hunters and Jane & Anthony Bowden who also attended the first AGM.

In this newsletter you will also find information about Bob Banks bowsprit, Jonathan Sykes experiences of importing goods from the USA, the Dales trailer sailing their minstrel in Holland, MOB techniques and Geoff's idea for modifying the rudder. I hope that you will find something of interest and something of use. I also hope that you will feel that you have something to offer the other members.

With this newsletter you will find both the current membership list and the membership renewal form. I hope that you will wish to continue your membership and that if you know of ways in which you can help to make the HLMOA more useful to its members you will share your ideas with others.

I wish you all long hot summer days, with a gentle wind and a favourable tide. Martin Hampshire

Association Burgees & Boats for Sale

Burgees are available from Geoff Hales & Sandra Cats for £14 including P & P.

If you are looking to buy or sell a Minstrel or Liberty contact a member of the committee as we are regularly contacted by people who are looking. You could also make use of the Association Web Site.

Welcome to New Members

A warm welcome to the following new members who have joined since the last Newsletter:

David Dring - Gulliver L23 (ex Roy Russell)
Danny Lustig - Lydia L23 (ex David Furlong)
Stuart Guy - Abraxus L22 (owned from new)
David Speed - L23/Min Sunshine (ex David Howden)

The following is a summary of the AGM in an attempt to provide a flavour for what was done and said.

It started with tea, coffee and lots of talk as members arrived.

Once formal procedures had begun Geoff Hales, as Commodore, welcomed all present. He also reported that there had been no formal get togethers this year, as the informal system seems to be working. (*However if you want to organise one then feel free to advertise it through the web page and magazine. Ed.*)



Sandra Catts, as Membership Secretary, reported that membership had remained roughly constant. 14 boats had changed hands during the year, mostly by the web site, and that 2 boats had been sold in Scotland during the week before the AGM alone. Of particular interest was the 1980 Southampton Boat Show Boat, Abraxas, which had been found in the Southampton area. (*Its original, and still current owner, is now a member.*)

There was a discussion about the Data Protection Act. There is now a requirement to receive members consent to having their names on the Membership List. It was agreed by common consent that there should be an opt-out option on the Membership Renewal Form.

John Clough, as Honorary Treasurer, confirmed that the accounts were in good order and that there would be no need to increase the cost of membership from £10. Nine new members joined the association during the year and only three had left. As this was John's last year as Treasurer and as a thank you for the work that he has done for the HLMOA John was presented with a small token of thanks.

Martin Hampshire, as Newsletter Editor, reported that the following people had contributed to the Newsletter during the year. Some more than once. Bob Banks, Ernie and Barbara Brazier, Nigel Chilcott, Kevin Cornmell, Audrey and John Dale, John Dinnin, Ivor Flitman, Geoff Hales, Martin Hampshire, Adrian Hope, Phil Naylor, Ian Ridsdale, Jo Schaeuble, Andrew Steele, 'Barras Stone', Marjolein Suwijn and Anne-Marie Schueler, Jonathan Sykes and Mick Wells. (*This must make us probably the 'magazine' with the most active readership! Thank you to everybody for their contributions and please keep the material coming. It is a HLMOA tradition that those who contribute to the newsletter have the right to free membership the following year.*) There have been various problems with getting the newsletter out on time during the last year and Martin apologised for the problems.

Andy Beevers, as Webmaster, demonstrated the latest version of the web page and explained how he was trying to put all the past Newsletters on the web site in pdf format. He also described the 'discussion forum', the 'boat register' and the 'for your information' sections.

Following comments in a previous Newsletter the date of the AGM was discussed, with a proposal that this is moved to after April 15th. It was unanimously agreed to keep the AGM in February.

John and Alison Boyle agreed to take on the role of Honorary Treasurer for the next year. The other officers of the association agreed to remain in post. Geoff Hales as Commodore. Sandra Catts as Honorary Secretary and Membership Secretary. Martin Hampshire as Newsletter Editor. Andy Beevers as Webmaster.

There were then two talks by members.

Vera's Accident In Croatia : Bruce and Vera Bown (Avocet) have spent their summers sailing in Croatia for 22 years. Starting in May for 8 or 9 weeks of sailing. Normally without a problem. This year Vera put her foot on the step above the centre board and for some reason slipped. As a result she sliced off a hand sized piece of flesh from her leg which took a lot of skilled work by surgeons to put back. Croatian surgeons are unfortunately well practiced at this type of work.



While Vera stood on a chair showing the injury to all present, Bruce said "We taught she had slipped so we bought some anti-slip matting." Bruce then produced a cardboard scale model of the heads toilet that he had produced earlier. He then demonstrated why the curtain was a danger...."if you fully unzip the curtain it can sit on the step where it acts as a sheet of ice. Vera slipped on the curtain and the wood/fibre-glass inside edge to the step cut the flesh and damaged the bone." The Bown's have no stitched up the bottom edge of the heads curtain so that it can never sit on the centreboard case. (*Contact Bruce Bown if you want more details.*)

In the following discussion Phil suggested the idea of a hand rail above the curtain in order to provide more support while entering and exiting the boat.

Bruce then showed some pictures of the raised engine mount that he uses with his 8hp motor, the farsail that he uses on Avocet and the bimini that is set below the mizzen.

Bruce then described how to save a lot of money while trailer sailing and in Mediterranean ports. If you carry your mast under the pull pit it will be less than 2.4m height, important on the ferries. 6.94 m is the correct length of a Liberty or Minstrel, 7 m will cost you more in harbour.



During lunch there was a lot of discussion about this and other topics.

Dixie in Holland ; John and Audrey then shared their experiences of trailer sailing in Holland. (*Details later.*)

MOB and Other Safety Issues ; Geoff Hales then opened up a discussion about life jackets, safety harnesses and MOB techniques. (*Details later.*)

There were various displays of boarding ladders, suggestions for rudder alterations and many members brought photos with them.



An hour after the end of the formal meeting members were still happily chatting.

We hope to see you at next years AGM. The more the merrier. It will be towards the end of February at the same venue. The Old Bell, Hemel Hempstead unless circumstances beyond our control happen.

(*If you need a lift to next years AGM check to see if others local to you are also coming. Each year members are asked to let Sandra know in advance if they intend to attend the AGM, so a phone call to her might help you locate others in your area.. Ed*)

Comment from the Commodore

Geoff Hales

At two weeks to go we were concerned that we would only have 20 people but as usual you turned up trumps and 17 boats were represented by 30 owners and guests. All the comments at the time and since have recorded pleasure at the best meeting yet which was undoubtedly assisted by the trouble the Old Bell team had taken to improve the room layout and cleanliness. The food was also better but still at bargain prices and anything the staff lacked in style they more than made up for in willingness, patience and good humour. We will still look for other venues but think it is most unlikely we will find anywhere that can match the Old Bell's combination of bargain prices and attitude.



A very welcome new face at the AGM was that of Rosemary Dabbs, better known to us all as "Rosemary at Rochford", who did so much over the years to help not just Lib and Min owners, but everyone with a query about any Hunter boat. Her reputation as a "solve anything" was well founded: Bob Ager recalled that she found him a part that officially was not even made and we are all very grateful for her memory in being able to sort out our boat details, due to her amazing memory of owners' names. Those at Select Yachts who could not recognize an expert when they saw one, thought her surplus to their magical new plans - which was just one of the mistakes they have made – she brought the appalling news that Select had closed down Hunters, a decision they are bound to regret pretty soon. Rosemary was obviously (and rightly) very cut about this, so it was not the time to ask her to talk about her memories: we will save enjoying them for a future event.

I had hoped to be able to introduce Mick Hughes, who bought his Liberty kit in the autumn of 1980, which makes him the earliest owner that we know of – and he still owns **Sherbet** today. Sadly he was not able to come and nor was Stuart Guy, who has owned the completed **Abraxus** since new: he bought her in the spring of 1981. I think this makes him the first of the existing owners to sail a Liberty, though it is possible that Anthony Bowden's father sailed a demonstration boat at around that time, before he bought **White Wings**. Stuart says that my boat test for YW influenced his decision (and mine too, years later), so I am glad that he still likes the boat. I had thought I did the test in the late summer of '81, but hunting through old diaries has shown that it was on 9 and 10 October 1980.



Many thanks to our speakers ; enjoyable cruise details from the Dales (*Pictures later. Ed.*) and a cautionary tale told with good humour by Bruce and Vera Bown.

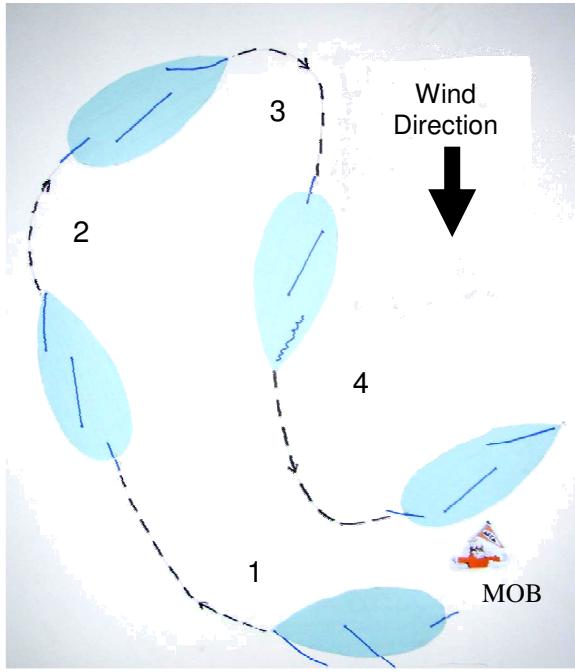
The Hon. Treasurer tends to toil out of sight but is an essential member of the team and John Clough certainly deserved everyone's appreciation for his work and in particular for staying on after Dodona was sold. It was a great relief when, after an ominous silence, John and Alison Boyle volunteered to take on the task and we wish them well.



The logic of moving to a better weather time of year for the AGM, to make travelling more predictable was discussed. The members present however made it unanimously clear that fitting out time was more important. So we will continue with our late February date.



Safety at Sea - Geoff Hales (Vasco)



Remember the 3 minute rule

This manoeuvre takes less than 1 minute and is surprisingly easy to do.

This is Geoff's MOB routine as presented at the AGM.

1. Whatever your original heading, come up onto the wind and sheet in hard. Mayday call on VHF.
2. When about 3 boat lengths from the victim, heave to and bear away onto a dead run, without easing sheets from the close-hauled tension.
3. Head so that the victim is going to pass 1½ lengths clear of the headsail clew. Start engine, but leave it in neutral.
4. Luff hard to the hove to position, to bring victim down the lee side for pick up from the cockpit.
5. If needed, use vigorous helm movements (hard over to hard over) to stop the boat and swing the stern towards the victim.
6. If you turned too soon and are upwind of the victim, run engine astern and the boat will slide downwind.
7. Cancel Mayday.

Safety at Sea - Phil Naylor (Morwyn Del)



The timely piece on safety by Geoff Hales in the Summer/Autumn issue of 2005 was illustrated in part by a photo of the recovery ladder fitted to Morwyn Del (left) shown extended but not quite to the full as it would be when the MOB has put his weight on to the bottom rung. The ladder in its folded (travelling) position is shown in the picture on the right. It is fitted with a simple slip knot and dangling chord (not easily seen in the pic) ; a pull by the MOB drops it to his/her aid.

I sail single-handed but I do not visualise this safety aid being of use to me when under way. It is fitted for my possible self-recovery when anchored in isolated places as I frequently am. As I grow older and less agile this seems to me the most likely circumstances for my going over the side, especially after a good supper! I consider this folding ladder is inferior to the fixed s/s ladders that are fitted to some of our boats (e.g. Freya – Jon Sykes) but probably much cheaper.



Underway I have always taken to heart the stricture "stay with the boat" and to this end I have brought all lines aft to the cockpit and perfected their operation to my satisfaction save in some emergency I should not have to go for'd. Of course emergencies do and will arise and to meet them in part I have doubled up the guard rails, fitting an extra line between the single one supplied and the deck, because I could see myself rolling under the one line. If the circumstances warrant a harness then I pass the lanyard round the mast and back to clip it on its self, this shorter hitch much improves the feeling of security and still allows adequate movement, admittedly on the few times I have had to.

I notice that on Swinde, Marjolein and Anne Marie have fitted netting on the guard rail, (photo on page 7 Summer/Autumn NL 2005) even better.

Mick Wells (Muskrat)

Just before August Bank Holiday last year an old friend visited for a couple of days' sailing. Colin has sailed in a variety of boats for many years and in his younger days was quite an accomplished racing dinghy helmsman. Now I consider that Dee and I are at least "average" in getting *muskrat* along, But Colin sailed her like a big dinghy in the light breezes of the day and it was a transformation; we found ourselves passing boat after boat; of course I pretended not to notice. There was a downside; he had me trimming the jib so often there was barely time to refill the G & Ts.

I discovered a bit of rot in the very top of the mast last year where water had penetrated a crack in the *Plastic Padding* car filler I'd put over the cap. Fortunately there was not much and I was able to get rid of it by sawing an inch off the truck. The new wood provided an excellent key for a couple of coats of epoxy followed by a thick layer of epoxy filler. I was later told that *Plastic Padding* is probably not waterproof and the car filler type I had to hand does not bond well to wood. Everything looked fine when I lowered the mast this time.

Once again the AGM was an outstanding success and thanks are due to Sandra and Geoff for making the event the enjoyable event we have come to expect. The first, very informal, meeting some eight or so years ago attracted some 15 members and crew, since then, numbers have doubled and the informality maintained – something must be right!

I couldn't resist a wry smile when I read of Marjolein and Anne-Marie's difficulties with the centreplate hoist disappearing and finding its way round the outboard propeller. Some years' ago we had a similar incident: motoring through the congested moorings in Mersea Quarters our trusty Honda suddenly stopped dead. On investigation I discovered that the tail of the rudder downhaul had found its way out through the cockpit drain only to be sucked up by the greedy propeller. The outboard was now very firmly locked down and it took a deal of fiddling to unwind the overlong tail. Needless to say the downhaul was immediately shortened considerably.

Going on from *Swinde*'s adventures, I suppose we all naturally tie an overhand or figures of eight knot in the ends of sheets and halyards? We had one occasion when I was glad I'd missed one. Sailing down the Wallet towards Harwich, 1.5 knots of tide and a gentle Force 2 all in our favour, perfect. I was down below playing with a new GPS and asked Ian to go close to the North Eagle (a large north cardinal buoy) so I could mark it. He took me at my word; there's close and really close, and Ian chose the latter. The mainsheet snagged neatly on a handrail on the buoy and brought us to an abrupt halt. We couldn't haul *Muskrat* back to get enough slack to lift the mainsheet over the rail, and our mainsail will not drop with the wind abaft the beam. Fortunately with no knot in the mainsheet we were able to let it run immediately and within seconds we were underway with yards of mainsheet trailing from the boom. I still put stopper knots on most ends, but I make a point of not pulling them tight so they'll undo easily.

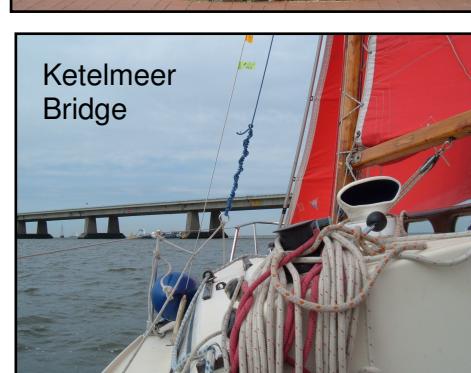
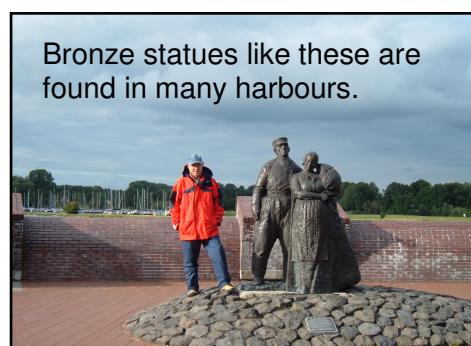
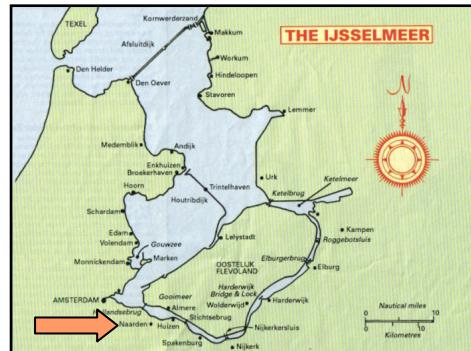
I'd always been something of a Luddite so far as things digital and PCs were concerned – until I bought a digital camera. My conversion came when, playing with a digital photograph of *Muskrat* on the computer I discovered I could zoom in to look at detail. Our roller reefing has always been less than smooth in operation but it was difficult to see why from deck level. The zoom allowed me to look at and identify the problem at the masthead – and discard one of my proposed solutions. I haven't worked out another yet, but I'll let you know if and when I do.

As I write this, the new season is only a month away – but it's still brass monkey weather here on the east coast and I'm a bit behind with fitting out, but I daresay we'll be ready. With the new outboard waiting to go I wondered how much "drag" is generated by the outboard and if there is any advantage in raising it to what the handbook calls "the shallow water" position and what about removing the engine altogether for long passages – is it worth it? On the latter, a friend with an Anderson 22 used to remove his outboard when sailing until he had to replace it quickly in heavy seas, not a pleasant experience, I gathered, so I think I'll be leaving mine in place – but I'd be interested to hear anyone's views on the subject.

Dixie in Holland - Audrey and John Dale



To get to Holland we used the Harwich to Hook of Holland midweek Stenaline Caravan Special. (www.stenaline.co.uk). We sailed on the IJsselmeer launching Dixie at a slip near Naarden.

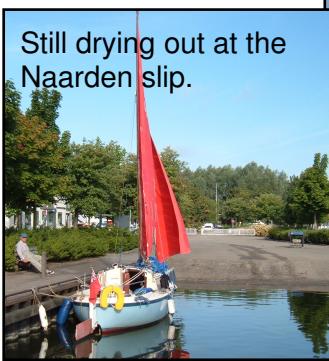


Dixie in Holland - Audrey and John Dale

Drying out after a storm



Still drying out at the Naarden slip.



Packing up. With a final night in the car park.



These pictures are part of the presentation given by Audrey and John Dale at the AGM. They are clearly experts at using their Minstrel as a trailer-sailer...Ed

Book Review

Mick Wells (Muskrat)

REEDS/PRACTICAL BOAT OWNER SMALL CRAFT ALMANAC : Adlard Coles Nautical

With the onset of the new sailing season, estuary and seagoing Liberties and Minstrels will be looking for up-to-date tidal and other navigational information for their areas and for which the PBO 2006 Almanac is admirably suited. Not only is it the cheapest by far, its coverage – from Denmark to Gibraltar – will be more than adequate for most purposes.

Tide tables and graphs for the whole of the designated coastal area are backed up by a very comprehensive list of Secondary Port Time and Height differences, together with a Tide Stream atlas incorporating information on most of the UK's principal tidal gates.

Most of the other usual Almanac tables are here, sunrise and sunset times, dipping heights, contact details for most UK harbours and marinas, information on weather, the rescue services, use of the various marine radio bands, and much more, are all included in this volume's 416 pages. The publishers even find room for a basic reminder of cardinal and lateral buoys and their light characteristics as well as the small boat collision regs. On top of all this it is updated monthly in *Practical Boat Owner*, and at £14.95 from most chandlers I consider it a bargain.

NOTE: Since writing this the publishers have apologised for printing wrong information on pages 307-309, reprints available from www.reedsalmanac.co.uk They go on to say that a few copies had pages 225-256 repeated and 257-288 are missing. If you are unfortunate enough to acquire one of these, return the title page to Adlard Coles Nautical, 38 Soho Square, London W1D 3HB



Messing About In Boats

France - Peter and Lesley Stubbings (Grace)

"If any members are thinking of travelling to Brittany to sail this Summer, we are collecting together a lot of useful information about Marinas, sailing etc. We hope to launch in the Bay of Quiberon for April, May and June if we can get Grace prepared during Feb. She is already out in France, parked by the cottage, having towed her out in September. Good tow across Northern France - all dual carriageways or autoroutes

- and very reasonable ob Sea France. We paid £77.00 one way for us, Jeep, Grace, and Kenai the dog! We also have a spare room (check first to see if available) and car/boat parking for any members travelling through."

Peter and Lesley's French home is just N of the Golfe de Morbihan.

Parts For Sale

David Speed (Sunshine)

Liberty mizzen mast and one or two booms, not known whether they are for main or mizzen or one of each. As such items have not come up for sale before, David Speed has accepted the suggestion

that they be sold to the highest sealed bid received by him by 1st May 06. Tel: 01246 238275 for more details

Poole 2005 - Phil Naylor (Morwyn Del)

Either side of Sandra and Geoff's Solent adventure I enjoyed days of vigorous Solent sailing in cold, overcast and strong westerly, reefed down and slogging through lop and chop much of the time and losing a couple of days creek bound by small craft warnings which were spent in bosun's jobs and wading into Bill Bryson's "Short History....". There was plenty of opportunity to test out some of my recent changes and modifications.

By Friday 8 July a period of more settled summer seemed in prospect and I left my anchorage in the Beaulieu River at 08.30 and picked up a gentle 2-3 NW which carried **M** slowly west over the flood and allowed a traverse of Pylewell Lake through the Lymington Marshes. I cleared Lymington at 13.30 at the start of the ebb, just in time to meet a change of wind to SW sea breeze: back to beating. I took the fast ebb out through the Needles Channel when dammit, just clear of the light, the wind failed altogether. With the five or six other boats in company, I motored like mad to keep out of the lumps of the overfalls and then thankfully, close to the Fairway Buoy the NW land breeze returned and I found a nice easy slant to get into Studland through the gloom ahead. A burst of engine was needed at the last to get across the ebb piling out of Poole Fairway and into the anchorage. At the turn to the flood I motor sailed on the little remaining wind into Poole and found anchorage W of Brownsea Island and so enjoyed the first hazy warm evening.

The following four days of near calm mornings and afternoon sea breezes, I spent reminding myself what a lovely place Poole is, exploring its corners and nearby shores. I started sailing **M** here twenty years ago and I can never forget it. Wind, or lack of it and tide conspired to prevent a passage further west although in truth I was half hearted in any attempt. One curious phenomenon I noted while west of Brownsea Island, where there is a good stretch of open water rejoicing in the name of Ball's Lake: while sailing west across it with the SW sea breeze on the quarter, it suddenly fell light and swithering with periods of calm, then less than half a mile further west it picked up as the land breeze of the morning, a determined 2-3 NW. I had crossed the boundary between the two winds and on my return from a look into the Wareham Channel exactly the reverse occurred.

While I was wandering, Sandra and Geoff were mustering company and on the late afternoon of Tuesday 12th July, Jane and Anthony in **White Wings** met **M** quite by chance at the entrance to White Ground between Brownsea and Furzey Islands where we anchored together and Anthony with his dinghy at the ready as always, collected me for an animated boat chat, soon to be joined by Jon Sykes in **Freya** who had enjoyed a good sail across the two bays (Christchurch and Poole), then in the early evening **Vasco** completed the company, having come down from Wareham. Supper resources were pooled and the company enjoyed the meal and ample vino in **White Wings** while Jon described his trailer sail to the West of Scotland and the frequent hairy moments induced by atrocious weather, followed by much more enjoyable conversation of which I can remember but little.

The following morning, in the light breeze I was able to take up Geoff's challenge, that single line reefing cannot be made to work off the wind. I had fitted Kemp's system some years ago for the mainsail which on a single line, pulls down the leech first and the line then continues on to pull down the luff. This had worked excellently in stiff conditions when beating, but with a following wind I have on very few occasions rounded up to pull a reef down. Geoff's contention was that you may not always be able to do this safely. With **Vasco** firmly anchored and a bow and stern line taken to **M** we were able to vary her angle off the wind and make the experiment, to find that any load on the sail was enough to prevent the luff from being pulled down on the single line, leaving me some what miffed and with the decision whether or not to make alterations. As I love messing about with rope I have subsequently converted the two mainsail reefs to double lines so that I can still reef from the safety of the cockpit. First indications are that it will work off the wind, although keeping the mast track well lubricated is a requirement.

In the afternoon Jon and I set off to sail our separate ways: me for a last look at Redhorn Old Quay and South Deep and a pass between Furzey and Green Islands. We returned to the anchorage at virtually the same time and after supper met up on **Freya** for vino and chat and much admiration of Jon's comprehensive array of equipment, power assisted by a substantial wind generator mounted on s/s tubing extending abaft the pushpit.

Poole 2005 - Phil Naylor (Morwyn Del)

So to my departure on Thursday with a promise of mist and an SE 2-3. The plan was to catch the last of the ebb to get well out toward Old Harry and thus on a good line for Hurst and the Solent, but due as much to a miscalculation on my part as to the general uncertainty of Poole tides we arrived as a flotilla at the Haven to find an adverse tide. **White Wings** continued to fight her way over the tide down the Fairway but led by **Vasco** the other three of us crossed the shore end of the Hook Sand and made to seaward and the east in virtually no tide. I waved my farewells at the E Hook and on starboard tack pointed Hengistbury which was faintly discernible in the mist, in a light 1-2 SE. I roused out the staysail/blade and set it on the mizzen mast, pegged the mizzen to the centre and got an immediate lift in speed and at least 10 degrees up on the wind, enough for **M** to clear Hengistbury by half a mile. A hole in the wind meant 20 minutes of motoring to pick up the wind again in Christchurch Bay and this lasted to within a quarter of a mile off Hurst. I motored into the Solent with an hour's tide in hand to find a flat calm so continued motoring into Pylewell Lake to anchor, completing a most enjoyable visit for both the nostalgia and the good company.

Some recent modifications on *Morwyn-Del*

My sort of sailing does not call for the latest technology: charts, hand bearing compass, tiller pilot and a depth sounder (rarely used) and that is it. My mods are pretty well all to help me with boat handling and improved performance under sail in particular.

2005 was my second full year of a new suit of sails by Ben Green of Shore Sails at Swanwick and I can now pronounce them a super success. **M** is faster and closer on the wind. The sails led me to consider a revised sheeting plan for them by adopting the **Vasco** plan for the mainsail: viz – instead of the traveller on the horse over the coach roof, a block at each end of the horse on a U bolt gives a four part sheet, triangulated, and led via a turning block to the jammer at the cockpit edge of the coach roof. This works perfectly giving precise control of the boom and makes even gybes friendly. Alas the downside: I cannot set the staysail/blade over the triangulated sheet and so have reverted to the horse and traveller while I think again: spring hanks (allowing a rapid switch) come to mind.

For the mizzen sheet, entranced by the car on **Freya**, I shaped a left over piece of pontoon planking (good hard wood but workable) to fit tightly against the

pushpit rail, secured it with U bolts and mounted a Barton sliding genoa car on it, the slide having a spring loaded peg to hold it in a variety of positions, at three inches intervals. This takes the lower block of the conventional mizzen sheet. Having the ability to peg the lower block was good but having to remember to lift the peg and hold it out when going about was not. Problem solved by my engineering son-in-law with the purchase for 70p of a mini pipe clip in plastic, chafed a little to ease the fit around the peg, so holding out the spring loaded lift and restoring complete self tacking. To use the peg pull the clip off by its cord attachment and let it hang.

I exchanged the conventional jammer cleats for the sheets for Barton's lever operated clams, a great advance, why didn't I do it years ago?

Because a special offer tempted me, I have ventured into Dyneema this year, for the mainsail halyard and the staysail. Both are situations where the non-stretch characteristics are invaluable. The material has proved surprisingly kindly to bare hands and the really taut luffs are a boon.

My boat came with a Holt swivel tiller extension, a fairly useless device except possibly for applying lee helm in light airs, whereas a rigid tiller extension allows the helmsman to retain control while tending the sheet with his free hand. I have converted the extension by first of all shortening it by about 9ins, moving the swivel aft on the tiller and mounting a stiff pipe clip in its former position. Out of use, the extension is folded aft and secured in its original crutch. In use it is over ended and held in the pipe clip giving enough of a rigid extension to allow the helmsman access to the sheets. I recall a hairy moment running in towards Cowes in a gusty wind and a vicious one nearly forced **M** into the wind; she would not pay off and I could not let go to get at the sheets. This was in a crowd of boats and a collision seemed certain but fortunately my neighbour's skipper next up was fully alert and let his own boat luff, the gust passed and we could straighten up. Now with a rigid extension and quick release jammers I should not be caught again.

Finally, for this year, I fitted a safety ladder, not with any hope of using it underway but solely to save me should I go over the side in some remote anchorage; the most likely occasion being when paddling about the deck in my carpet slippers. I have had the folding steps for many years and have used them on a few

Poole 2005 - Phil Naylor (Morwyn Del)

occasions to go over the side when dried out. Folded, hung over the push pit with a cord to prevent the hooks falling off, secured with a slip knot and trailing cord: pull the cord, the ladder descends and up you go with the solid push pit rail to help. At least that is the theory. Anthony Bowden, an inveterate swimmer, tried it while **M** was in Poole. The ladder descended OK but kept slipping sideways on the hull

making ascent difficult: however Anthony was content that a panicking person would make it! The folded steps prove not to be in the way of any action.

In all the years I have owned **M** I cannot think of one when there has not been some modification, change and trial. Liberties inspire this sort of activity: you've got to love them.



Product Reviews

Mick Wells (Muskrat)

Mick has no connection with any of the mentioned retailers or manufacturers. His comments are offered with no guarantee of fitness for purpose, or quality of product.

“BLUE” PERFORMANCE COVERS: “Blue” market a variety of canvas covers for winches, hatch covers, halyard bags and when I came across their outboard engine cover it looked just the thing to protect the lustrous paint and snazzy artwork on the cowl of our new Mariner 6 hp outboard. These covers come in four sizes – most Libs or Mins will need size 2 for 4-8 hp models – and are essentially a box shape crafted in a rip stop waterproof canvas covering the entire engine and folded back tiller of most makes of outboard. Mine is attractively finished in two shades of grey with a blue trim and cost £17.99 from **MAILSPEED MARINE (01621 781120)**

PLASTIMO do something similar for £18.99 (I thought it didn't look quite as attractive as the “Blue” product).

AQUAPAC WATERPROOF POUCHES: I've used one of these pouches for some 15 years to protect the handheld VHF radio from the elements and a potential ducking and it was only when one of the seams gave way recently that it came to mind that I had one. Made from a clear flexible plastic with a completely watertight enclosure, models are available for handheld VHF radios, mobile

telephones, GPS receivers and anything else that needs to be kept dry. Although completely sealed it is still possible to operate most things normally and with the added advantage that the air trapped in the pac provides a measure of buoyancy should it be dropped overboard.

Aquapacs are readily available from most chandlers and start at about £17.00 for a mobile ‘phone cover.

UNIROSS BATTERY RECHARGER: There can be few of us who do not have something requiring multiple AA or AAA batteries – GPS receivers, radios, small torches – to name but a few. So many in fact that it probably makes sense to consider using rechargeable batteries. The initial expenditure might be considered a bit steep, but as the batteries can be recharged *several hundred* times it doesn't take long to recover costs. I bought a **UNIROSS FAST CHARGER** and eight rechargeable batteries for £32.99 mail order, but almost certainly available cheaper from say **DIXONS** or **MAPLINS**. The charger came complete with a transformer and a lead for the car cigarette lighter and will charge four AA batteries in two hours, but keep the engine running if recharging in the car.

I'm told it's worth spending slightly more and buying nickel-metal-hydride (I paid £9.99 for four AAs in Dixons), rather than nickel-cadmium (Nicad) batteries, as they are more tolerant of random charge-discharge regimes

More On safety At Sea - Mick Wells (Muskrat)

Geoff's article on Safety comes as a timely wake up call to just about all of us. It's so easy to ignore the problem of MOB but we small boat sailors do so at our peril. Fortunately, an accidental MOB is probably a rarity for Lib and Min crews – but it's an ever-present danger.

On the face of it things are stacked against us: many of us sail with only a partner, both perhaps hampered by the passage of a number of birthdays. How does a mature lady of say 10 stones (or less) go about recovering an MOB of 12-15 stone? As Geoff sagely observes, **BY NOT GOING OVERBOARD IN THE FIRST PLACE.**

Realistically, there should be no need to go forward once away from mooring or berth. It is possible to fit effective slab reefing controlled from the cockpit to both Libs and Mins, and the latter have roller-furling jibs as standard,. But things can go wrong, invariably in lively conditions, and someone has to go on deck, the boat lurches and old bumble foot is in the water. Even at 1 knot, 15 seconds later you are a boat's length away, and at a more likely 4 knots your MOB is 100 feet astern.

What do you do first? Quite honestly I don't really know. : Should you have entered a MOB position in the GPS, what about a May Day or Pan Pan call? Do you know where you are should you decide on a distress call? Is the boat under control and MOB in sight – or have you run him down! It's frightening thought . A clipped on harness might have prevented the situation, but that's water under the bridge now – there's a body in the water with or without a lifejacket. I hesitate to disagree with Geoff on this but I feel a lifejacket at least counteracts the drag of heavy and wet clothes, and perhaps provides the rescuers with a wider time window in which to take positive action.

I do, however, agree with Geoff that the horseshoe lifebuoys are somewhat flawed as sold. They skate away downwind, the opening is too small to go round all but the smallest person, and why is the grab line clipped shut across the opening. A couple of years ago we were given a Plastimo Recovery Line – 60 ft of floating line packed into a smallish canvas tubular bag. When thrown at a target the bag acts as a drogue that may allow the MOB to be encircled with the line, assuming he's conscious. (I seem to

remember PBO tested this and were favourably impressed). If he is, my second line would then be to deploy our *Le Step*, a plastic folding ladder similar to Phil Naylor's, hooked over the pushpit. We have recovered a couple of exhausted swimmers courtesy of this ladder and it seemed to work quite well.

Assuming you have your casualty secure alongside and conscious, it will be difficult to get him/her aboard without a ladder; and impossible if unconscious. Fairly soon after we acquired *Muskrat* (and some years ago now) I dropped over the side for a swim, to my dismay I found I was unable to haul myself back on board. Fortunately, a very hefty friend was with us and he and Dee together just about managed to drag me back over the side. Next day Dee bought *Le Step*. I've banished all thought of using halyards, at 8 mm diameter there's little grip, and with no winches, well the sail alone seems quite heavy. Then, think about the effects of, say, even 10 stone hanging from the top of a Liberty's unstayed mast, add the crew's weight on the low side and a beamends situation might be close (are your washboards in?). Much the same applies to mainsheet tackle - topping lift unlikely to be strong enough..

So, with an unconscious MOB secured alongside it might be tempting to head slowly for shallow water or the shore, but this may make it more difficult for help to get to you. I think it's best to waste no time in putting out a distress call. This not only alerts the emergency services, but will also be heard by nearby vessels some of which may be able to offer immediate help. Most sailing areas around our coasts are usually only minutes away from either lifeboat or helicopter; there's no shame in calling for help – and these services are manned by dedicated professionals, who will have probably dealt with a situation similar to yours many times.

Geoff's strictures are so right: but is it really that gloomy? According to the radio this morning, sailing in the UK is the second largest sport with something over 3 million active participants. But its also one of the safest percentage wise, probably because we are all aware of the potential dangers and guard against them. The old saying was, "One hand for the ship and the other for yourself," and this still applies. However, the very best advice remains **DON'T FALL OVERBOARD IN THE FIRST PLACE**

Importing goods from USA - Jonathan Sykes

With the internet now a medium for sourcing goods from abroad I thought my experience of a recent purchase worth reporting for the information of members.

I purchased an item from West Marine who is now advertising in the UK press. It was shipped by air, at a cost, using Fedex who were very efficient. I had expected to be contacted for payment of importation costs before delivery, but they delivered to the door before sending an invoice for duty, vat, and anything else they could think of. However I was surprised at how the charges mounted up. Here is what you can typically expect.

In addition to paying the list price for the goods together with the freighting charges to the seller you can also expect to pay Customs and Excise Duty and VAT. The duty will vary according to the item and the country from which it is bought. Typically from the USA it seems to be 6.5% of the cost of bringing it into the country, so includes the freighting cost.

It is the calculation of VAT which is peculiar if not complicated. It seems that in order to extract the maximum amount of money Customs and Excise wish to charge VAT on the freighting cost deemed to have been carried out in the UK. To simplify(?) things they assume a fixed cost of £7.36 to be subject to VAT. It seems to me that you are paying VAT twice over because they ignore the original freight cost, as in their eyes they only look at the cost on landing the goods.

On my paperwork it is called VAT Value Adjustment. All this is added together to come to a value on which to charge VAT.

The agent will also add a fee for calculating and handling the importation through customs for you.

So for example say you buy a gismo for \$138.40 Freight charges, say, are \$34.60

So, as you can see, the bargain is no longer the bargain you thought it was.

In this particular example it was an extra £31.00 on the cost of the item to get it through the front door from the USA.

However if what you want is not available in this country it may be worthwhile. Better still is to get a friend in the US to mail it to you. Now there's an opening for someone – The Sailors Friend!

Or you could get a cheap air ticket, and have sailing holiday from Florida and around the Bahamas and bring goods back as part of your personal allowance of £145! Customs have never been known for their generosity.

During the winter months surfing the internet replaces surfing the ocean waves. I don't know which is cheaper.

		Value for VAT
Cost of item \$138.40 at the exchange rate of the moment (£1=\$1.73)	£80.00	
Freighting charge. \$34.60	<u>£20.00</u>	
Value at importation	£100.00	£100.00
Customs and Excise duty (6.5%)	£6.50	£6.50
VAT value adjustment. (Fixed charge.)		<u>£7.36</u>
Value on which VAT is assessed		£113.86
VAT on £113.86	£19.93	
Agents Fee.	<u>£4.50</u>	
Total cost to buy and import.	£130.93	

Martin Hampshire - (Boru)

If you have a piggy-back trailer and the solid metal trolley wheels have rusted through and need replacing I can recommend Indespension (www.indespension.co.uk). They were cheap (£19 each), efficient and had in stock the wheels that six other supplier told me were now extinct. Their ref. Guitel Wheel BWG355/25.4-G.

Bob Banks' Bowsprit (Liberation)

Over the past twenty odd years of sailing my Liberty I have tried to find the most effective way of setting the cruising chute.

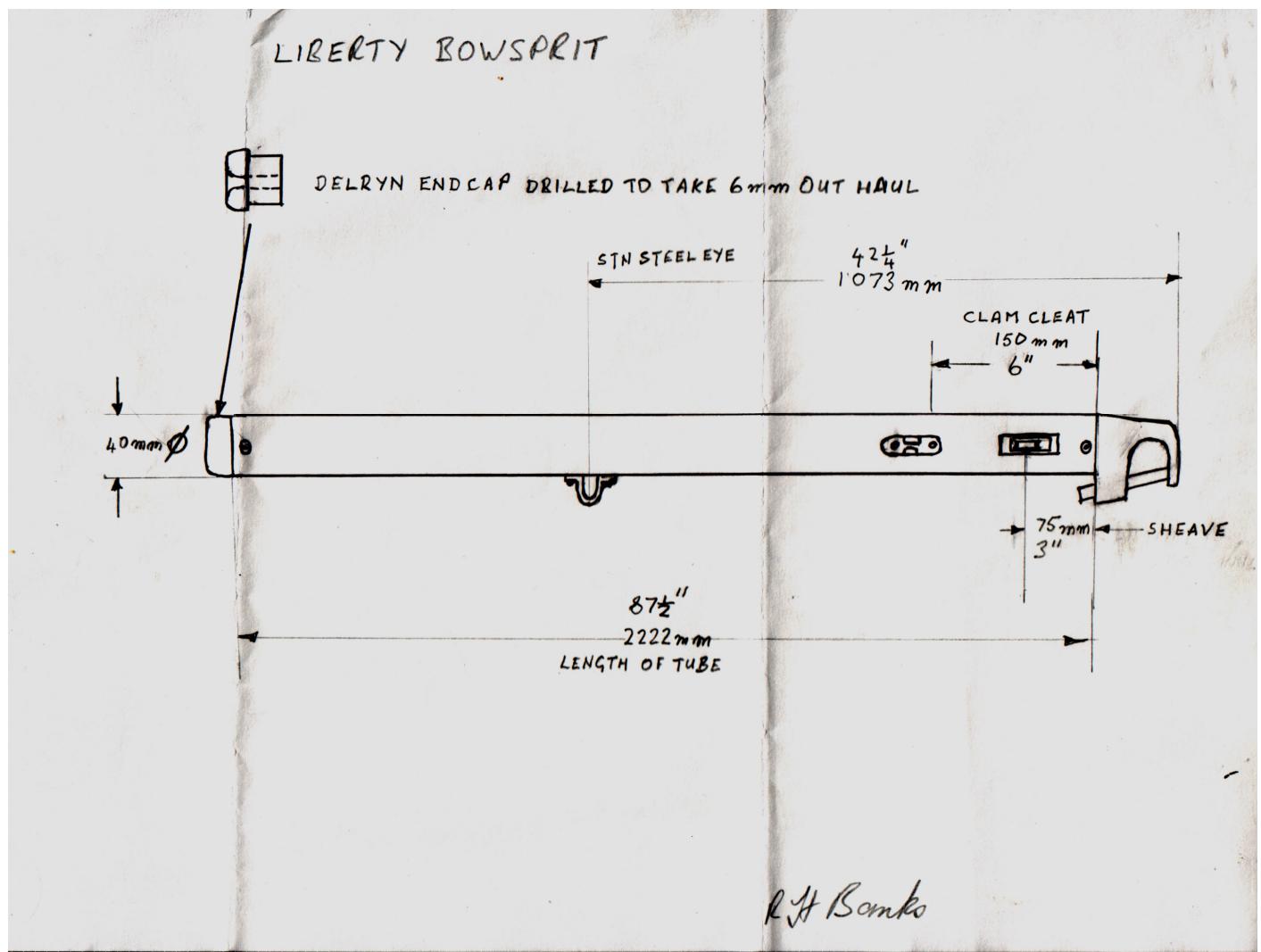
Setting as a mizzen stay'sl worked quite well on a beam reach, but has to be completely taken down to change tack. Not always practical on a crowded river.

Setting the chute from the main mast had its problems due to the very small fore triangle that is a feature of all cat rigs. So I decided to make a whisker pole to hold the clew out.

This consisted of plywood jaws, to fit the mast, fitted onto an aluminium tube of a suitable diameter to fit a boat hook handle. A small block was fitted to the hook end to take the sheet.

This helped a bit with down wind sailing but it was hard to keep the jaws in place on the mast, and I wasn't keen to put any fitting on to locate them.

Then one day while sailing in very light winds, I was watching a traditional fishing smack race when, the penny dropped. They were setting their chutes from the end of their bowsprits.



Bob Banks' Bowsprit (Liberation)



I took my whisker pole and lashed it to the bow roller with the jaws around the mast below the mast collar and pulled the tack out to the end using the block previously used for the sheet. This worked a treat and we managed to overhaul a Moody 34.

Although this arrangement proved a point the boat hook wasn't up to the stress of being used as a bowsprit. So I decided to invest some money and made the proper one shown in the photos and drawing.

The inboard end of the bowsprit is attached to the main mast by a spinnaker pole eye. The base plate of the eye had to be gently adjusted to suit the diameter of the mast, and a layer of mastic was applied between the mast and base plate before pot riveting in place. (Holes drilled below the mast collar are less critical).

A hole was drilled through both steel plates just aft of the bow roller to take a drop nose pin which passes through the eye on the underside of the bowsprit to hold it in place on the bow roller.

The position of the sheave for the internal out haul allows the outhaul to be taken forward and cleated or lead aft in the same manner as a roller jib reefing line.

All parts for the bowsprit were commercially obtained accept the end cap which I made on a lathe at work.

When not in use the bowsprit stows down the inboard edge of the quarter berth.

Sandra Catts and Geoff Hales (Vasco)

Is your rudder blade at risk when you are moored?

Because **Vasco** has this problem and we think we may have a solution, we showed a cardboard mock-up at the AGM, based on measurements taken from **Laissez-Faire's** stock and blade dimensions. The idea is that if the pivot bolt is moved aft and down, then the blade can swing up much higher, without losing strength when the blade is in the working position.

The display attracted all three possible responses:

1. Delight from owners of boats with rudder blades at risk;
2. Polite indifference from those without a problem;
3. Extreme caution from those who thought the loads on the stock cheeks would be unfair if you were closing your mooring in a depth only just more than the bilge keels, when the rudder blade would be well raised.

The pictures on the next page show the blade fully down, swung up to stow position and at the angle which trials showed **Laissez-Faire's** blade would be, if the bilge keels were about to go aground. We thought that at this stage, the boat would only be going very slowly, so the strain on the stock would be small, but we have not tried it yet so could easily be wrong.

Two boats plan to get the drills out shortly, recognising that there is nothing irrevocable about this action: it is

Geoff Hales (Vasco)

very simple to replace the bolt in to its original holes in the stock and blade. The new hole must be bored with the blade swung as far forward as possible and on present plans this would 7cm abaft and 3.5cm below the existing hole.

It is also quite possible that there is a better position for the hole than the one we came up with as a first guess and which is shown here; we will be glad to hear about other ideas. At present we are just suffering from shock that this is the second occasion within twelve months when the first prototype of an idea has worked.

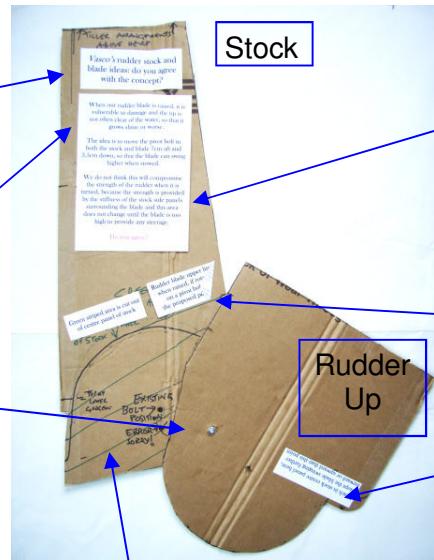
If you would like to borrow the cardboard kit to make your own trials you are very welcome to do so.

Please tell us how you get on.

Vasco's rudder stock and blade ideas: do you agree with the concept?

When our rudder blade is raised, it is vulnerable to damage and the tip is not often clear of the water, so that it grows slime or worse.

The idea is to move the pivot bolt in both the stock and blade 7cm aft and 3.5cm down, so that the blade can swing higher when stowed.



Green striped area is cut out of centre panel of stock.

We do not think this will compromise the strength of the rudder when it is turned, because the strength is provided by the stiffness of the stock side panels surrounding the blade and this area does not change until the blade is too high to provide any steerage.

Rudder blade upper limit when raised, if rotated on a pivot bolt in the proposed position.

Notch in stock centre panel here, stops the blade swinging further forward or upward than this point.

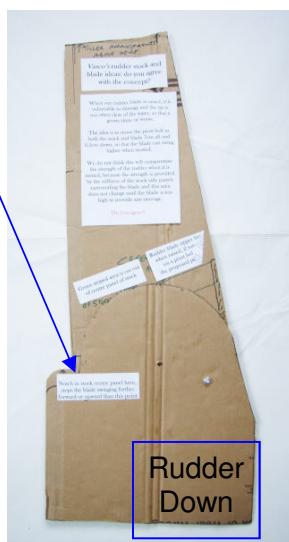
Rudder blade fully down and ready for drilling.



Rudder blade at the angle which matches the angle which trials showed **Laissez-Faire's** blade would be, if the bilge keels were about to go aground.



A different solution to the same problem. Taken from the Nov 99 Newsletter. “..it was done to improve the shallow water handling especially under power...the blade stays behind the prop when raised and it stays balanced ...” Reg Chapman (Melody II)



If you have made similar or other modifications to your boat please share them. Ed.

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