

The Traditional Yachtsman's Compendium

CRUISING ~ HINTS ~

Francis B. Cooke



Seventh Edition ~ Foreword by Charles Stock

WELCOME TO THE WORLD of traditional yacht cruising — the world of Francis B. Cooke. Four generations of sailors have been informed, entertained and inspired by his down-to-earth, 'one of us' writings, in countless magazine articles and nearly 30 books. His first published writing of any kind was in 1883, and he was still writing, aged 100, in the early 1970s.

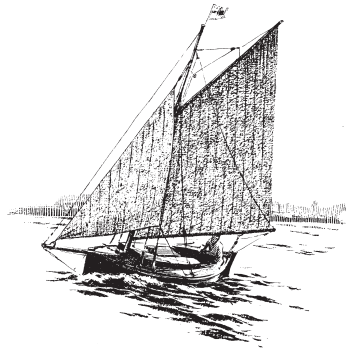
The GEAR and TECHNIQUES of our pursuit have changed hardly at all in more than a century, making Francis Cooke's advice as relevant now as in his heyday. CRUISING HINTS, Seventh Edition, for the first time condenses all of his practical books into one. To know Cooke's views on any cruising topic, look no further. There are practical details here which are in print nowhere else, and some of them are alone worth the price of the book.

In the history of 20th Century BRITISH YACHT DESIGN Francis Cooke's books have been a valuable reference point, but it's often been a problem to recall in which of his many titles he 'wrote up' a certain design. *Every single one* of his design commentaries is here, with drawings — and we have updated many boat stories to the present day, with owners' comments and photos.

Cooke's writings on boat type and selection, Thames Estuary locations and his charming CRUISING YARNS provide us with a valuable window onto English sailing culture in the early 20th Century.

688 pages plus 16 pages of plates; about 250 line drawings in the text, plus 77 full-page design drawings, all digitally restored for this edition. Comprehensive Glossary and Index.

£35.00



Cruising Hints

Books (Editions) by Francis B. Cooke

Cruising Hints (1904, 1904, 1907, 1928, 1935, 1948)
Seamanship for Small Yachts (1906)
Yacht Racing for Amateurs (1911)
The Corinthian Yachtsman's Handbook (1913)
In Tidal Waters (1919)
London to Lowestoft (1919)
Seamanship for Yachtsmen (1923, 1948)
Coastwise Cruising (1929)
Single-handed Cruising (1931)
Cruising Chats (1932)
Week-end Yachting (1933, 1948)
Small Yacht Cruising (1937)
Pocket Cruisers (1938)
Hints, Tips and Gadgets (1939)
The Single-handed Yachtsman (1946)
Practical Yachting Hints (1946)
Yachting with Economy (1960)
Yachting Yarns (1944)
Sailing (Foyles' Handbook) (1949, 1951)

~ CRUISING HINTS ~

by

FRANCIS B. COOKE

Seventh Edition

Illustrated by

PHILIP H. BROOKS

NORMAN S. CARR

ARCHIE WHITE

KATHLEEN COOKE

with a Foreword by

CHARLES STOCK

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TO
MY SON AND FORMER SHIPMATE

RONALD L. COOKE

IN MEMORY OF MANY HAPPY DAYS SPENT TOGETHER
“FOOLING AMONG BOATS.”

For will anyone dare to tell me that business is more entertaining than fooling among boats? He must never have seen a boat, or never seen an office, who says so, and for certain the one is a great deal better for health. — R. L. STEVENSON.

(From the Sixth Edition of *Cruising Hints*, 1948)

About this Book

Francis B. Cooke was born in 1872 and lived to the age of 102. His first published writing was at age eleven, a review of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island* in 1883, for which the *Manchester Guardian* paid him five shillings, a small fortune to a small boy. He went on to produce some thirty volumes and countless magazine articles on the subject of yacht cruising. Generations of cruising sailors have been encouraged and influenced by his experience, down-to-earth approach and accessible writing style, but he has been 'out of print' in conventional book form for many years. I hope this volume restores him to currency, and grants him a new and deserved lease on life with readers old and young alike.

I have set out to embrace and organise everything Francis Cooke had to say in his books about yacht cruising which retains a relevance to the present day; to know his view on any practical aspect I hope that this book will suffice, and so eliminate the need to search his many earlier titles and editions – which can still be recommended as charming books in their own right. To provide a window onto the cruising world of Cooke's heyday of around a century ago, I have retained his writings on Thames Estuary 'headquarters', and a number of his early cruising yarns which provide interludes between the main parts of the book. Francis Cooke included in his books the designers' drawings for many interesting craft, along with his own comments upon them. He remains a frequent point of reference for those interested in British yacht design of his period; often one reads or hears of some design that "Cooke wrote about it in ... which book was it now?" All such designs, and his commentaries, are here. All but a hundred or so words in this book are Cooke's, my contribution being only enough prepositions and the like to 'hold it all together', and some chapter headings.

The techniques and technology of traditional yacht cruising have changed pleasingly little in the past century and more – one of the great attractions of the pursuit, for most of us – so I have not encumbered an already long book with references to its many forebears. In some passages the approximate date of writing may readily be inferred; for the remainder, we are fortunate that it is of no consequence. Francis Cooke's own views changed little during his writing career; the reader may notice one or two instances where they did. But with so broad and detailed a subject, he helps us by making us think about each of his topics at all, whether or not we may regard his view as the right one. I myself am on my fourth, and surely ultimate, yawl (Plate 11, top) and three of those have had canoe sterns, so I beg to differ from his views on both of those design attributes. I should mention some areas in which modern developments make obsolete the advice given: Synthetic rope and sailcloth eliminate concerns regarding rot and

ABOUT THIS BOOK

sail stretching; and those in quest of a sea-anchor should be sure to study the modern Series Drogue. Importantly, *all* local pilotage, buoyage and regulatory information in these pages is out of date and emphatically *not* to be relied upon. It is included for historical interest only. Readers who are neither British nor of a certain age will be at a disadvantage with some of Cooke's vocabulary. The Glossary is intended to address this, in addition to defining all but the simplest nautical terms and phrases.

In composing this book I have acquired every edition of every cruising title by Francis Cooke except three volumes, for the loan of which I am grateful to David Measures and John Cookson in Lancashire, and Graeme Forrest in New Zealand.

I am delighted to be able to thank Francis Cooke's granddaughter Valerie Palmer, and through her the Cooke family, for their support of this project, particularly his three surviving daughters, all now in their nineties. Their elder sister, Kathleen – known as Kay – drew many of the knot illustrations in her youth. Francis B. Cooke remains in copyright until 2044, and the family are directing the book's royalties to a charity close to their hearts, Arthritis Research U.K.

Those line drawings bearing florid lettering, and others in their style, are by Norman S. Carr (1877-?), a prolific illustrator and occasional yachting writer of the early 20th Century. Those most recent, depicting details of *Iolanthe*, and others of that style, are by the well-known East Coast artist, writer and yachtsman Archie White (1899-1957) whose art works and books are well worth seeking out. The remainder, including the navigation marks and maps from *Coastwise Cruising*, are by Philip H. Brooks, about whom, unfortunately, I can discover nothing.

An avowed fan of Francis Cooke is Charles Stock, who at 83 has just 'swallowed the anchor' after a lifetime sailing every inch of the Thames Estuary and its tributaries in his tiny gaff-rigged yacht *Shoal Waters*, described in his delightful book *Sailing Just For Fun*. His achievement has been a model of 'Yachting with Economy', and I much appreciate his agreeing to write the Foreword.

The most comprehensive of Francis Cooke's books went under the name *Cruising Hints*, in six editions from 1904 to 1948, and so it seems fitting if a little presumptuous to adopt it again here. I would be grateful to be informed, for the benefit of any future edition, of any errors or serious omissions.

Finally, Francis B. Cooke's writing is not without its humour, intentional or otherwise; I particularly like the unclassifiable final sentence of Chapter 37.

Richard Wynne
Editor & Publisher
May 2011

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Foreword

Throughout the nineteenth century the pastime of yachting began to move away from large vessels with paid hands to smaller ones owned by keen amateurs, some of whom even sailed singlehanded. They soon gave way to the urge to put pen to paper. Fiennes Speed was an early one, describing his difficulty in finding anyone on the lower Thames who had ever sailed to Burnham, and his trip there in his twenty foot, five foot three inch beam *Viper*. Macgregor's account of his trip to Paris in the *Rob Roy*, behind a string of six lighters, towed by a tug working its way along a chain on the river bed makes good reading. Frank Cowper produced the first pilots for the growing numbers of venturesome voyagers, but Francis Cooke seems to have been the first to realise the need for a readable, easy to understand, *how to* book, sorting out those details relevant to small boats in tomes such as the superb Admiralty Manuals. Seamanship is a traditional art and craft; a delight to practise in all its aspects from a sailmaker's whipping to catching a fair tide at just the right time. This book explains them all.

Once I became interested in sailing, I soon got hold of Francis Cooke's *In Tidal Waters* and was hooked. Working at the Admiralty gave me access to the three Westminster libraries and I read everything of his that they had. When it was published I bought *Pocket Cruisers*. After I left the Marines in early 1949 the shortage of craft and soaring prices meant my hard-earned savings only ran to a sixteen foot half-decker, but she took me from Maldon to the Wash and Poole Harbour, sleeping in army blankets under a tent of barrage balloon canvas. Looking back over sixty years and seventy-five thousand nautical miles, topped by the award of the Royal Cruising Club's annual Cruising Medal, I feel that my success was in no small part due to studying Cooke's *Cruising Hints*, which first appeared in 1904 and ran to six editions. This book summarises them all, together with some delightful yarns to whet the appetite for life afloat. Throughout the construction of *Shoal Waters* and her subsequent miles between Whitby, Dunkirk and the Solent, I kept a copy handy.

I recommend this book to all owners of cruising craft. Even those with modern plastic craft and all the modern goodies will find many useful tips for those days when the engine or the power winch fails to start, and the electrics die. All will find it a good read, and it will make them realise how right King Henry the Eighth was to give his subjects the right to sail all tidal waters, as he considered that practicing the art of navigation was an asset to the realm. It still is!

Chas. Stock
ex *Shoal Waters*

Preface

To the Sixth Edition of *Cruising Hints*, 1948

One of the charms of yachting is that it has no finality. New types of vessel and innovations in rig and equipment are frequently introduced and serve to keep one's interest alive. One is, indeed, always learning something new. When the first edition of *Cruising Hints* appeared more than forty years ago, it was a slim little volume of less than 150 pages, but as with the effluxion of time my experience and knowledge of yachts and yachting has increased, each succeeding edition has swollen in size. This sixth edition, by the way, is really the seventh, for that intended to be the fourth was subsequently called *The Corinthian Yachtsman's Handbook*, as I had included a section on racing and thought that *Cruising Hints* was not an appropriate title.

I have endeavoured in this new volume to tell the potential owner how to select, buy, equip, maintain and sail a small yacht, with suggestions as to where to keep her. That is a very big field to cover in one book and I don't suppose I have altogether succeeded in my purpose, but I hope what I have written will prove of service to beginners and others who, although not quite novices, have not yet had much experience of sailing.

The book was written at a time when we were changing over from war to peace conditions, and as prices are not yet stabilized, nor likely to be for some years, I have only ventured with caution into the realm of figures, and in the chapter on catering have assumed that rationing restrictions are only temporary. But if I have not told the reader the cost of the various items of equipment, I have indicated where they can be obtained and he can easily ascertain the price from the suppliers. For the benefit of the novice I have added a comprehensive glossary of nautical terms.

I have to thank the designers of the yachts whose lines appear at the end of the book for lending me the drawings for reproduction. Nearly all of the illustrations in the text were drawn by Mr. Archie White but a few retained from the last edition were the work of the late Mr. P. H. Brooks.

F. B. C.

TABLOID CRUISERS

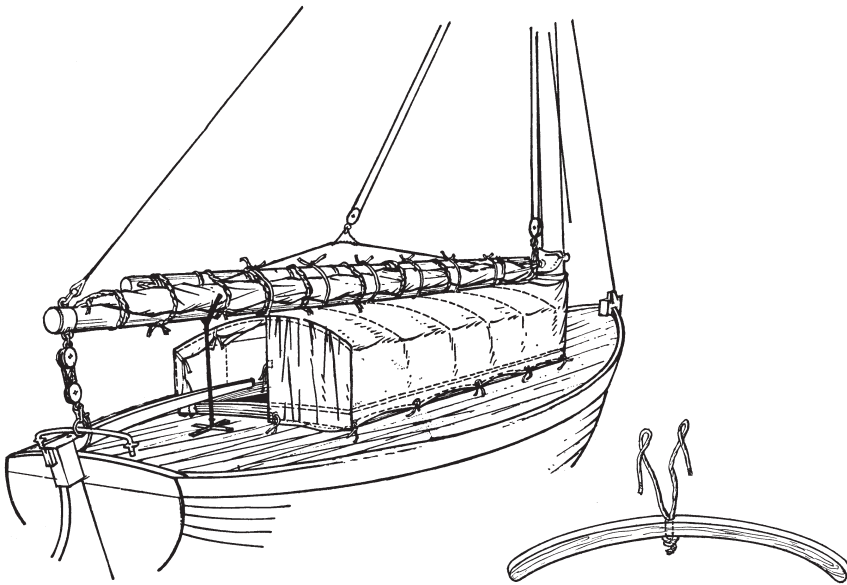
lanyard through the eyelet. The fore end is closed by being laced round the mast and the after end by canvas curtains, which can be folded back for ventilation purposes.

To erect the tent, the fore end should first be laced round the mast. Then, hauling the tent aft as you go, you pass each lanyard in turn round the furled sail until finally you secure the end of the tent to the boom-crutch with a lanyard kept on the tent for the purpose. The sides are fastened to brass screw-eyes on the outside of the coaming.

When erected, you will have a snug little cabin, with sitting headroom all over the well. Being made to the same shape as the well coamings and with a rounded top, it should look quite neat. Such a tent is quite simple, and when you have got everything organized, I don't think it will take very long to erect or take down.

Whatever form of tent you use it will be prudent to keep on board a waterproof ground-sheet, as when you bring up for the night the floor will often be wet with rain or spray. During the day the ground-sheet will be useful for protecting your blankets, etc. For a mattress I would suggest one of those Lilo things on which film-stars and other 'lovelies' lie on the beach sun-bathing (apparently with a camera man in attendance). They are waterproof and easily inflated, but care should be taken that there is nothing on the floor likely to cause a puncture.

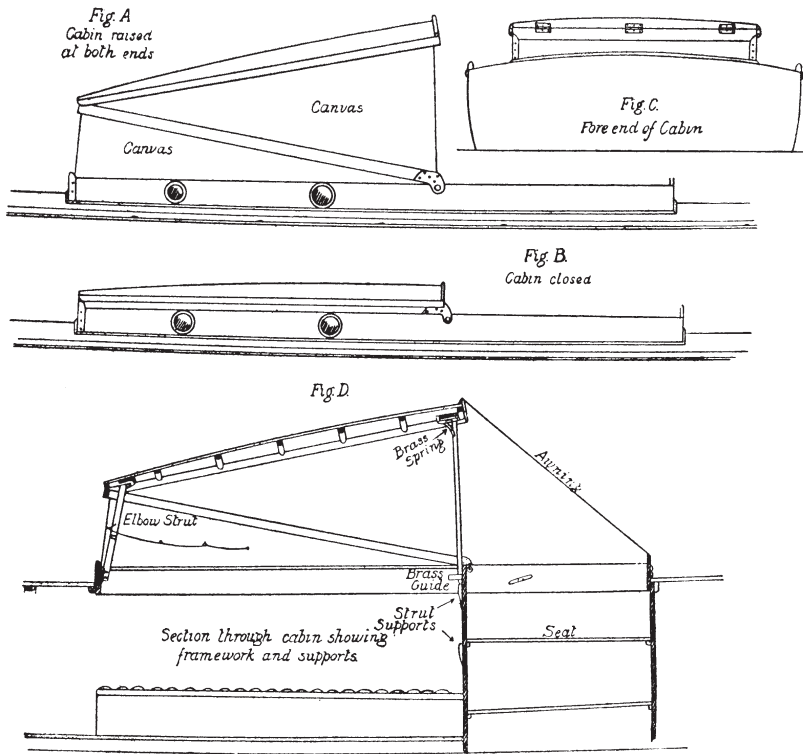
To camp out under a tent when the interior of your boat and most of your gear are dripping wet is a miserable and depressing business, and the success or failure of your cruise is largely dependent upon the weather you experience. In the case of a half-decked boat, however, this difficulty can be overcome by the addition of a lifting cabin-top, which can easily be fitted to most boats of that



Another form of tent

THE BOAT

type without much expense. The best lifting cabin-top that I have ever seen is that designed by the late Mr. G. Umfreville Laws. It has been fitted to many small craft and has, I believe, given general satisfaction. The advantages claimed for this cabin-top are: (1) Lightness. (2) Can be raised or lowered in a few seconds. (3) The supports act automatically. (4) It is adjustable to any strength or direction of wind. (5) Is adaptable to any size of yacht. Mr. Laws' description of the appliance reads as follows:



Laws' lifting cabin top

It will be seen from the drawings that the cabin-top lifts in two sections, both forward and aft. The coamings are in two parts, the upper part being strongly hinged at the fore end of the cabin-top, and at the aft end of the lower part. Figs. A, B and C show the hinges. Fig. B shows the cabin-top lowered and Fig. A shows it raised. The lower coamings are bound at the forward corners with brass angles, which project about 2 inches above to receive the upper coamings when lowered, and so prevent any lateral play. The cabin sides consist of light duck painted with Berthon flexible paint, and in them may be inserted, if desired, windows made of celluloid.

Although the arrangement looks fragile and flimsy when raised, it is in reality very firm, and will easily bear the weight of a man on top, raised or lowered.

HEADQUARTERS

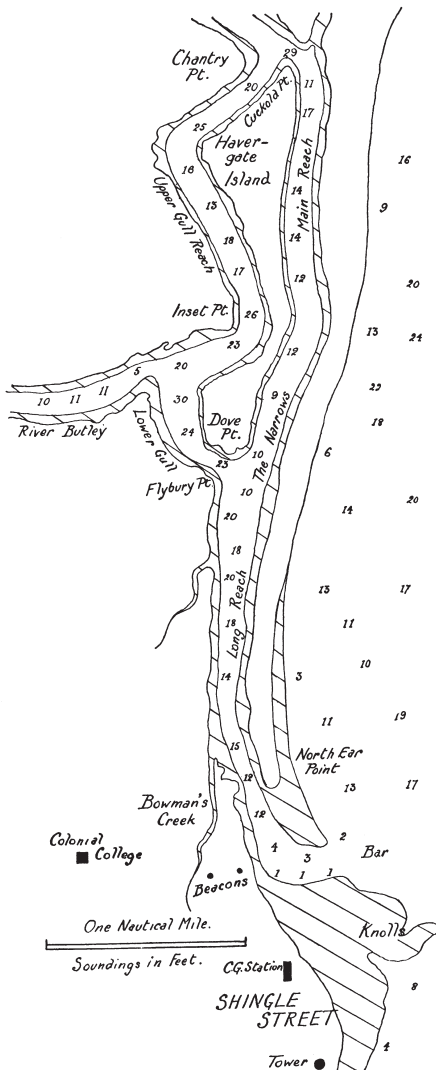
it is a capital anchorage, as, being protected by a horse in the middle of the river, there is but little fear of the yachts being damaged by passing barges. There is an inn, and tradesmen's carts come in from Felixstowe every day and one can procure from them such articles as meat, bread, vegetables and other necessaries. The chief drawback to the place is its inaccessibility, the nearest station being at Felixstowe nearly three miles away; but as holiday headquarters for a family man it is a most delightful spot. There is a nice sandy beach for children to play on and a capital golf course, whilst good sailing can be had in the river for those who do not fancy negotiating the difficult entrance. The river is extremely pretty, the scenery up by Ramsholt and Waldringfield being but little less attractive than that of the Orwell. It is, however, a rather tricky river for a stranger to

navigate as the mud flats are wide and the channel none too well marked. One can sail right up to Woodbridge on the tide, but it is prudent to make the trip on the young flood, when the flats will be for the most part uncovered.

Club: Deben Yacht Club. Annual subscription, ten shillings.

ALDEBURGH

The next river, going north, is the River Alde, which is of very similar character to the Deben, although most people consider the entrance even more difficult. An extraordinary feature of this river is that after proceeding for some miles at right angles to the coast, it turns off sharp at Aldeburgh, and for a distance of ten or twelve miles runs parallel with the coast and so close in places that anyone on board a yacht in the river could almost throw a stone into the sea. Between the sea and the river there is nothing but a narrow strip of shingle, and it certainly seems strange that the river has never succeeded in breaking through this extremely narrow obstruction at Aldeburgh. The River Alde is a capital sailing river, as there are few obstructions to trap the unwary, and the

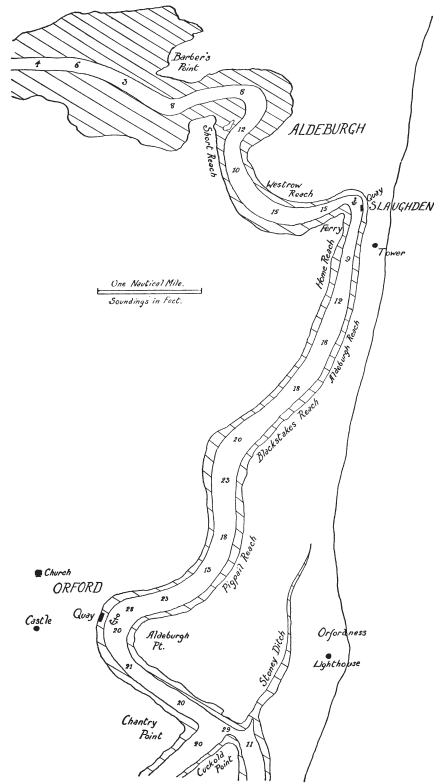


Orford Haven

WALTON TO LOWESTOFT

banks are for the most part steep-to. Near the mouth the tide runs very hard on the ebb, even more so than that of the Deben. I have heard it stated that the velocity of the ebb exceeds seven knots and from my personal observation I do not think that is an exaggeration. Half-way up the river is Orford, a delightful little place where a few yachts are stationed. A visitor to Orford should make a point of inspecting the ruins of Orford Castle, in which there still remains a room that is fully furnished.

Aldeburgh is a capital place for dinghy sailing, as one can either go seaward, past Orford, to Shingle Street, or else inland up the river to Iken. It would be an ideal place for holiday quarters for a dinghy sailor, as he could easily take his boat there by train. There is an exceptionally good golf course and all the attractions of a seaside resort.



Rivers Ore and Alde

Club: Aldeburgh Yacht Club. Entrance fee, one guinea; annual sub., yachts under 2 tons, one guinea; over 2 tons, two guineas.

SOUTHWOLD

Proceeding up the coast the next port is Southwold, or rather Walberswick, about a mile to the southward of Southwold town. Some years before the first World War a sum of £65,000 was expended on reconstructing the harbour with the idea of using it as a relief port to Lowestoft for the North Sea fishing fleet, but the harbour failed to attract the fishermen and has been allowed to go to wrack and ruin again. The planking of the piers has rotted away and the channel silted up, although I am told that it is still navigable for small craft with care at certain states of tide. It is a great pity that the harbour has not been better cared for, as Walberswick is one of the most picturesque spots on the East Coast and would have been a convenient refuge for small craft that failed to save their tide to Lowestoft.

LOWESTOFT

Lowestoft is about twelve miles farther north and, as every one knows, is one of the most popular watering-places on the East Coast. It is one of the few artifi-



A Night on the Buxey

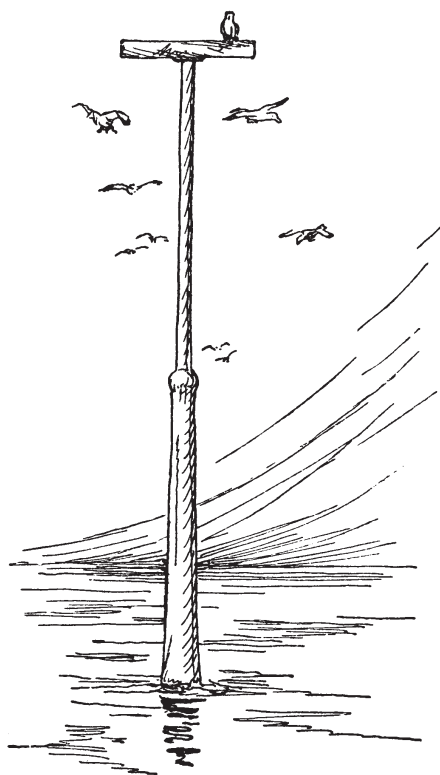
The miniature cruiser has her limitations and it is imprudent to put to sea in such a craft if the weather looks threatening. I think I mentioned in a previous chapter that when I was a boy I had a little converted ship's boat named *Wave* in which I cruised upwards of 1,200 miles in one season. She was only 16 feet long by 5 feet beam and half-decked, the after part of the boat being quite open. I had a lot of fun in her and incidentally the fright of my life. As it may serve as a warning to other enthusiastic but inexperienced youngsters, I will tell you about it.

Having been rather lucky in the way of Christmas tips, I bought a little binnacle and compass that I had seen in a yacht-chandler's window and coveted for some time. It was a pretty dome-shaped toy of shining brass, with a lamp at the side—the sort of thing that nobody but a silly kid would buy. Having mounted it on the cabin-top, where it was rather suggestive of a brass knocker on a pigsty, I was, of course, all agog to try it, but did not get an opportunity until early in February.

It was late when I arrived at Fambridge, having missed my train, and then much time was wasted in getting on board. To reach the river-bank in those days was a difficult matter, as, owing to a breach in the sea-wall, the marshes were flooded at high water and the tide swept rapidly across what was left of the road. As a rule we crossed the floods in an old shooting punt, but that night it was not there and I had no alternative but to remove my trousers and wade. As the road was full of holes, I had, like Agag, to walk delicately, but feeling my way carefully I contrived to cross in safety. I was miserably cold, however, when I arrived on board, as a handkerchief is a poor substitute for a towel.

Having set the sails, I made the dinghy fast to the mooring, as *Wave* was too small to tow a dinghy, and got under way, bound for Brightlingsea. The tide had just begun to ebb and, with a fair wind, the little boat made good progress. It was beastly cold, but with a blanket wrapped round my legs and another over my shoulders I managed to keep fairly warm. As I ran down the river with a fresh north-westerly breeze, I ate some sandwiches I had brought with me from town.

It was a dark night, with low driving clouds, and sailing down the river was a rather nervy business, as the loom of the sea-wall made it difficult to judge the distance from the shore. Well as I knew the river, I frequently had to heave the lead, and handling the wet line numbed my hands. But I contrived to keep



Buxey Beacon

off the mud as far as the Roach, and then the lights of some barges brought up at Shore-ends were a useful guide.

When clear of the river, I had nothing to guide me but the compass and lead, for in those days the West Buxey buoy was not lighted. Now was the time to try my new binnacle. After several attempts I lit the lamp, but in a few minutes it went out. Time after time I relit it until, having used up a whole box of matches and exhausted my patience, I came to the conclusion that it was a futile toy of no practical use. Then it occurred to me that perhaps a bit of candle might burn, so, lashing the helm, I went into the cabin to get one.

But I could not remember where I had stowed the candles, and as I frequently had to return to the cockpit to re-adjust the tiller, it was quite a long time before I found what I wanted.

While thus occupied I had lost touch with the edge of the Dengie Flat and it was obvious that I should have to rely entirely upon the compass.

Substituting a short length of candle for the binnacle lamp, I was glad to find that it burnt pretty well and kept alight for quite long periods. But then I was faced with another difficulty. The compass was not a spirit one and the card oscillated like a thing demented with the motion of the boat. To steer a reliable compass course under such conditions would have tried a far better navigator than I, and after a time I was forced to the conclusion that I had fairly lost myself.

I continued to sail on a north-easterly course as nearly as I could and hoped for the best, thinking that sooner or later I should see the lights of some vessel coming through the Raysand Channel. But I saw nothing and every minute became more and more anxious. The wind had freshened considerably and the sea was getting up. Moreover, the visibility was reduced to a few yards by a mizzle of rain intermingled with sleet. I carried on in this way for a time and was just thinking that I should have to reef when there was an ominous scrunch, and *Wave* was hard and fast on the Buxey Sand. As I had been travelling fast, with a fresh wind on the quarter, she had run on good and proper, as they say. Of course, I should have at once jumped overboard and pushed

with roller reefing gear, and the foresail also has a roller, she is very easily handled. The steering well is of the water-tight, self-draining type, which, personally, I do not care very much about; but the floor seems to be placed sufficiently high above the water-line to prevent water slopping in through the drainpipe.

There is a locker in the well for oilskins, and a large fresh-water tank is placed below the cockpit floor. The cabin is fitted with two sofa bunks, and there is a wardrobe on the forward end of that on the port side. At the after end of the starboard bunk is a sideboard, with a cupboard above, and a bookcase at the forward end. *Alethea II* is a capital sea-boat, and, for a vessel of her rig, has quite a good turn of speed.

In 1911 she won the Romola Challenge Cup – one of the most coveted trophies of the Royal Cruising Club. In the course of the cruise, for which Mr. Cockburn was awarded this cup, *Alethea* got caught out in heavy weather whilst crossing from Cherbourg, and had to run for Poole, where she arrived safely after a rather exhausting passage of twenty-five hours' duration. In the course of this run of over seventy miles, with a heavy following sea, the ketch behaved splendidly, and her owner, in his log of the cruise, speaks very highly of her capabilities as a sea-boat. I have only to add that she is strongly built, carries all her ballast in the form of a lead keel, and below decks is most tastefully finished in polished woods.

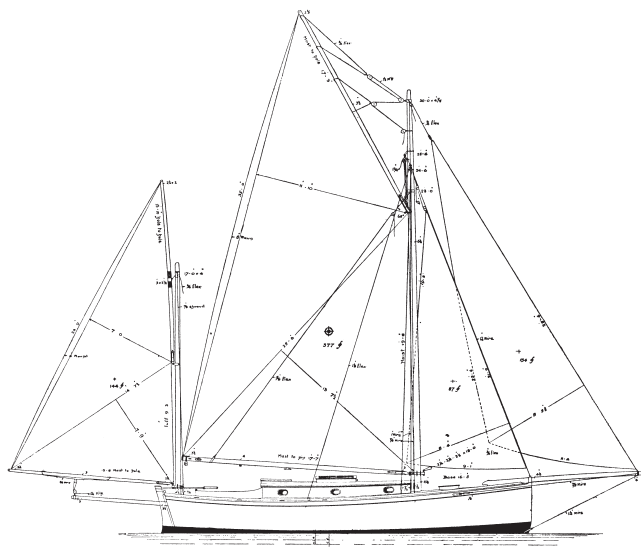
LADY BELLE

(Drawings 22, 23 & 24) by Harley Mead, c1910

LOA	28ft	Draught	6ft 2½in
LWL	26ft 8in	Displacement	9.13 tons
Beam	9ft 2½in	Sail area	750 sq ft
Year built		1910	

The next design I give is that of the 28-feet Falmouth Quay punt, *Lady Belle*, whose lines come from the board of Mr. Harley Mead. One sees many pseudo Falmouth Quay punts nowadays, but this yacht is the real thing, being modelled on the lines of the boats used by the Falmouth watermen who get their living 'seeking.' She has the usual yawl rig of the quay punt, but the mizzen is of a more serviceable size than is usually found in small yawls. The internal accommodation of *Lady Belle* is particularly well arranged. The roomy saloon has a settee on either side, with a folding berth above, and there is a folding table in the centre. There are shelves above the berths, and at the after end of the port settee is a wardrobe; whilst opposite, on the starboard side, is a sideboard with bookcase above. Between the cabin and the fo'c'sle the pantry is placed on the port side, and a toilet-room and lavatory on the starboard side. There is a folding cot in the fo'c'sle, where also the cooking galley is situated. Under a coach-roof of moderate dimensions there is plenty of headroom for comfort; and below the cabin floor is placed a 30-gallon fresh-water tank.

CRUISING DESIGNS



Lady Belle sail plan

CHERUB III

(Drawings 25 & 26) by Albert Strange, 1910

LOA.	28ft 6in	Draught	3ft 9in
LWL.	22ft 11in	Displacement	4 tons 12 cwt
Beam	8ft 2in	Sail area	483 sq ft
Builder		A Dickie & Sons	

Cherub III is a beamy shallow-draught canoe yacht, specially designed by Mr. Albert Strange to fulfil certain conditions. She was wanted for rather a large party, comprising the owner, his wife, and two sons. Intended mostly for sketching, an easy draught was essential, so that she might lie in shallow harbours, enter the mouths of small burns, and use the harbours of the East Coast with comfort. It was also desirable that she should be light enough to be shipped abroad if required.

During two summers she has fulfilled her purpose satisfactorily. These two seasons were spent on the West Coast of Scotland, and all sorts of weather and sea were encountered. The boat proved stiff, dry, and, in fresh winds, fast for her length; her best day's work being a cruise from Tarbert to Inverary and back to Loch Gair – forty-one miles in eight hours five minutes, rather less than a third of the distance being a turn to windward with a failing breeze. Her small sail plan is against good performance in light winds, but is a great comfort in a strong breeze, the short, slight spars adding to her stiffness. The yacht will lie to very steadily, and sail to windward with the tiller lashed a trifle to weather.

Another yacht built from the same lines has had an addition of 12 per cent, made to her sail area, and 4 inches extra draught aft – alterations that will doubtless be found improvements so far as general speed is concerned. *Cherub III*

and shelves and lockers wherever possible. There is a fore-hatch, and the cabin is lit and ventilated by means of opening portlights and a mushroom ventilator. To facilitate entrance and assist ventilation a sliding hatch is fitted at the after end of the coachroof.

The yacht possesses several unusual and interesting features. The mast, for instance, is stepped on deck in a steel tabernacle, which is securely bolted to a steel frame going right round the boat. The shroud-plates are also bolted to this frame and as no trouble has been experienced it must be assumed that the arrangement affords adequate strength. The absence of the mast below decks renders the fo'c'sle easy of access from the cabin and also tends to enhance the comfort of the latter. The engine is installed on a massive steel bed, cast to fit the boat. I do not know what the weight of this casting is but should think it must be something like 4 cwt. and it forms part of the ballast. As it is bedded down in bitumen there should be no risk of water settling below the casting and rotting the planks. It is claimed that by this method of installation vibration is completely eliminated. Another unusual feature is the laminated stem, but I do not know what advantage, if any, it has over the ordinary solid stem. Both mast and boom are hollow, the gooseneck of the latter sliding on a short rod, so that the luff of the sail can be set up by a purchase on the tack, which seems a sound idea, and there is a permanent backstay leading to a bumpkin aft. When I was at the yard I was shown a 'Z' cruiser with a raised deck, or over-all cabin-top, which they had built as an experiment and the difference it made in the vessel's internal accommodation was astonishing.

I have dwelt at some length on this 'Z' boat because I think she represents mass-production at its best, but she must be regarded as a standard cruiser *de luxe*.

MONIE

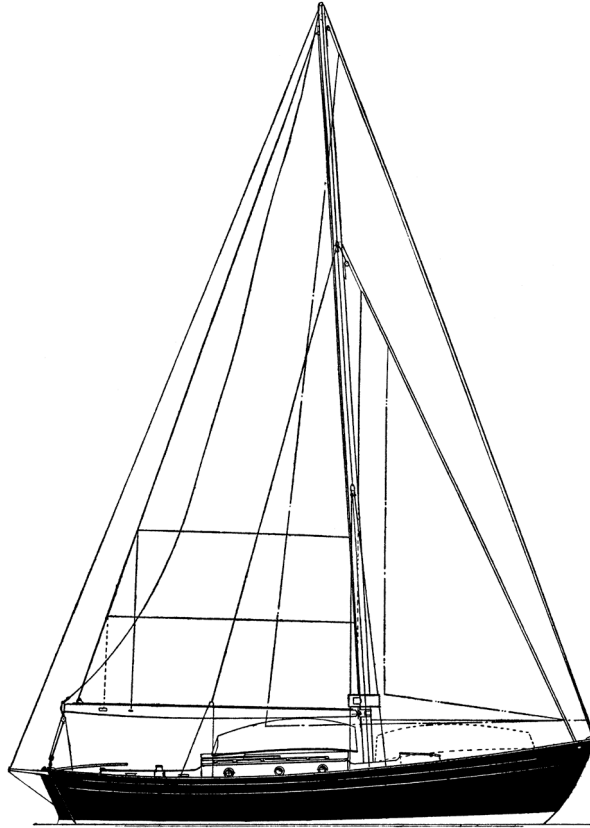
(Drawings 70 & 71) by J. Laurent Giles, 1938

LOA.25ft 3in	Draught	4ft 6in
LWL.21ft 6in	Headroom in cabin	5ft
Beam	7ft 2in	Sail area	380 sq ft

Mr. Laurent Giles, designer of *Maid of Malham* and other well-known ocean racing yachts, has long been recognized as the creator of exceptionally able small cruising craft, and I am pleased at being able to reproduce the lines of one that I think he regards as the best boat he has yet designed. A large number of yachts have been built from these lines, and although in some cases minor modifications have been introduced in the accommodation and sail plans, the hulls of all are similar to that of the pioneer *Andrillot*, 5 tons T.M., which was built by Moody & Son at Swanwick in 1936 for Mr. R.A. Kinnersly. As *Andrillot* was a gaff cutter and her cabin plan, designed to suit the wishes of the owner, rather unorthodox, I have selected her sister ship *Monie* for reproduction in this book.

CRUISING DESIGNS

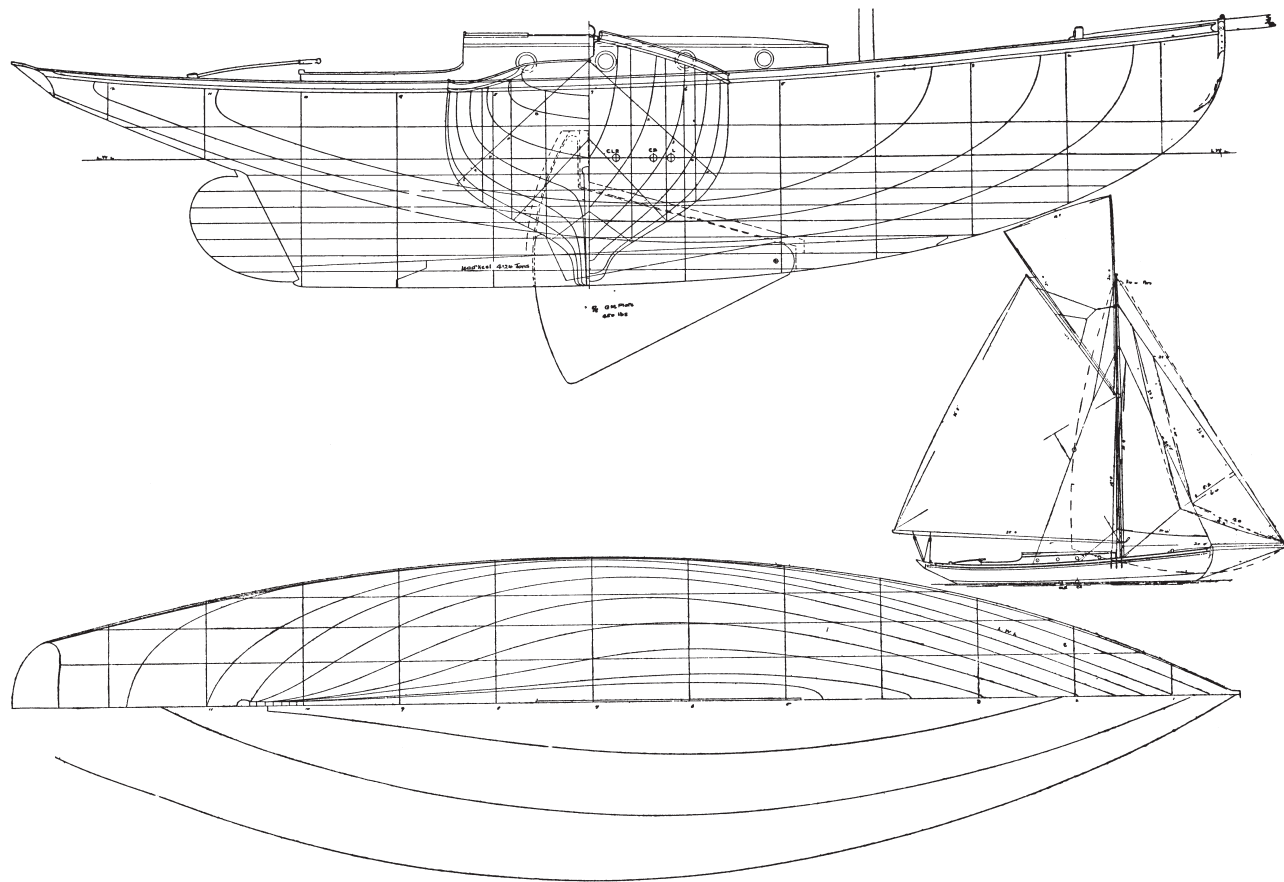
Monie was built by the Berthon Boat Co. at Lymington in 1938 for Mr. D. Milner Deighton, and is rigged as a stemhead Bermudian sloop. These yachts have sweet lines and are beautifully balanced. Experience has proved them to be fine sea boats, and although intended solely for cruising, they have a good turn of speed. In 1946 one of them, *Francolin*, was third in the Round the Island race, competing against the best the Solent could produce in the way of racing craft. The latest edition is fitted with a 'dog-house,' which gives 6ft. headroom at the after end of the cabin and enables one to stand up and look around through



Monie sail plan

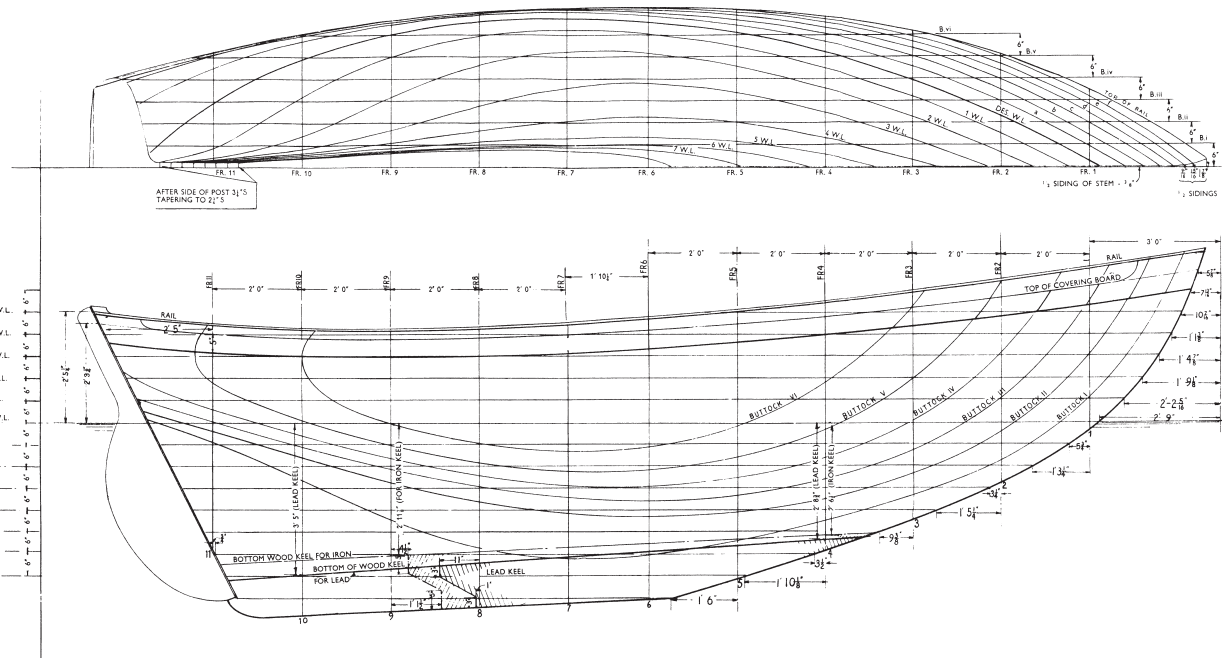
the armour-plate glass windows at the sides. The dog-house fits there extremely well and gives no trouble, but necessitates carrying the dinghy on the fore-deck instead of on the cabin-top.

In 1937, Mr. H. D. E. Barton, a member of the firm of Laurent Giles & Partners, borrowed *Andrillot* for a short cruise and accompanied by his wife, sailed to Concarneau and back. The following year he sailed *Monie* to Pwllheli, via the Caledonian Canal. He says it was a most interesting comparison of rigs on identical hulls, the Bermudian proving preferable on every point, particularly in heavy weather, of which he had more than his fair share, encountering two gales

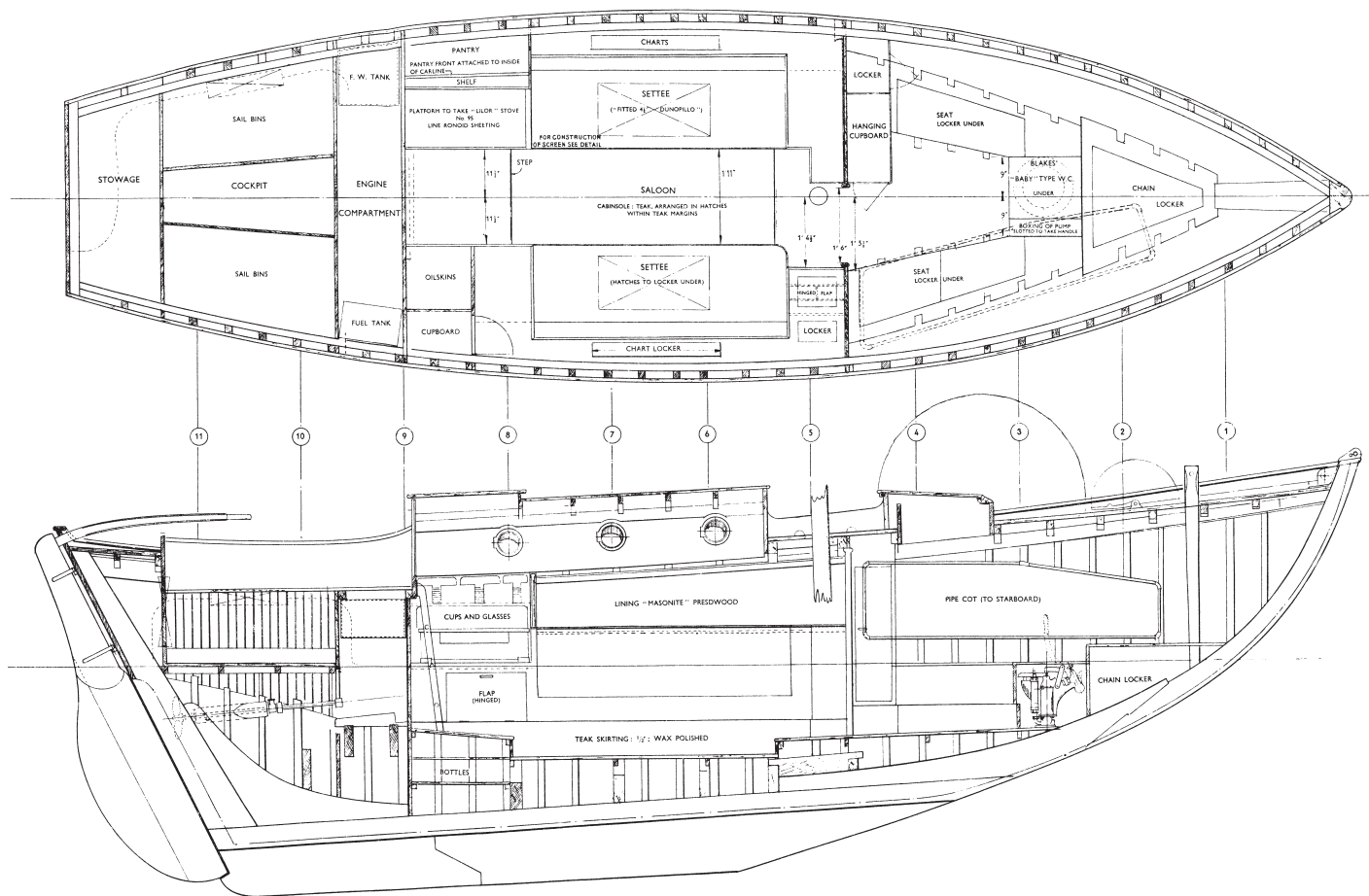


Drawing 18: 10-ton Centre-plate Cutter by Linton Hope — Lines





Drawing 70: Monie by J. Laurent Giles — Lines



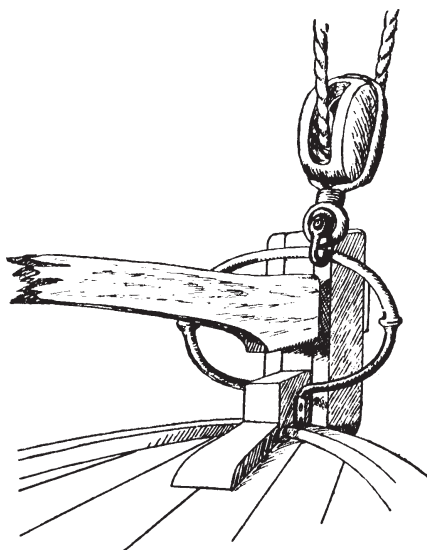
Drawing 71: Monie by J. Laurent Giles — Construction and Accommodation

Seabird I got over the difficulty by the use of an oval-shaped iron hoop bolted to the sternpost. The tiller worked inside of this hoop, which, being within a few inches of the rudderhead, allowed plenty of play for the tiller. In effect it was a miniature horse, the lower main-sheet block having about a foot of travel ere it was pulled up by an iron collar shrunk on to the hoop in such a position as to prevent the block traveller from getting foul. This fitting, I admit, was rather unsightly, but eminently practical. In my little canoe-yacht *Snipe* there was a main horse just abaft the well coaming which answered fairly well, but as the horse restricted the movements of the tiller the boat required a good deal of water in which to come round.

And now I want to say a few words about the lead of headsail sheets. In many small yachts, indeed, in most, the cleats for the headsail sheets are fitted either on deck or on the outside of the cockpit coamings, in which position it is impossible to put much power on to the sheets; and when the vessel is in stays the sheets are often dragged forward as far as the fairleads and are out of reach. That entails climbing on deck to recover them. Now, if the sheets are led through holes in the coamings and belayed inside, you will be able to put all your weight on them, and if the ends are knotted, as they should be, it will be impossible for them to get adrift. And if you use wooden jam cleats, such as I shall describe later, you can belay the sheet with a single turn. The difference this makes to easy handling cannot be realized until you have tried it.

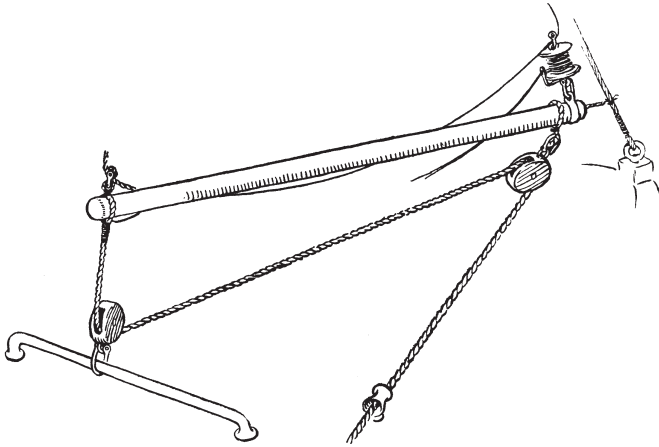
Of course, if you have one of those silly little self-draining cockpits like a foot-bath, you cannot lead the sheets inside, but with a cockpit of reasonable depth it is a great convenience to have them where you can put your weight on them and where they are always ready to hand.

The holes in the coaming should be of ample size and bored straight through, not at an angle. When my present boat was built, the builder, with a view to obtaining a fairer lead for the sheets, drilled the holes through the coamings at a sharp angle, and although the idea was correct in theory, it did not pan out well in practice, as the wood was so thin at the edges that it soon began to break away. If the holes are bored at right-angles to the coaming and of sufficient size, the sheets will render quite freely. For $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch (circumference) rope, the holes should be, say, of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch diameter.



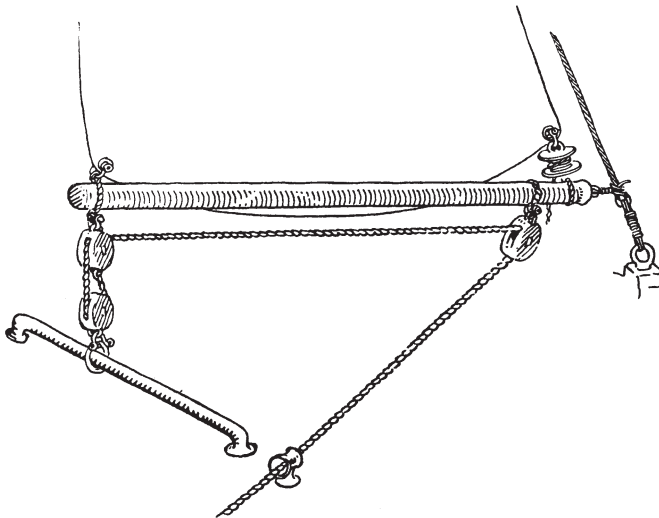
Mainsheet horse on *Seabird*

EQUIPMENT



Boom foresail sheet lead

When I bought the 7-ton *Fancy*, she had two-part sheets on both jib and foresail and they were belayed on deck. I told the late owner that the first thing I should do would be to scrap the two-part sheets, which were always getting foul, and substitute single-part ones, led through the coamings and belayed inside. He replied that if I did so I should never be able to handle the sails, but being a pig-headed sort of cove I put my ideas into practice. The result was a revelation. The single sheets never fouled, were quite easy to handle and in light winds I no longer had to go forward to overhaul the weather sheet after going about. When hauling my wind I certainly found the foresail a bit of a handful, but could always get it in by giving the boat a 'shake-up.' Two-part sheets are an infernal nuisance. They foul everything it is possible for them to foul when in stays, and in light winds the friction is too great for the weather sheet to clear



Boom foresail sheet lead — alternative

reefed, but the lazy yachtsman who objects to the trouble of shifting jibs will no doubt welcome this clever invention. When the correct position on the shroud for the fairlead has once been found, this reefing device is quite automatic, but the upper rolling line should be of plaited cord, for otherwise when wet it may coil itself round the shroud and prevent the weight from travelling freely. As a matter of fact both rolling lines should be plaited, as hawser-laid rope is apt to kink when wet. A hank of plaited sashline cord, as used for windows, serves the purpose admirably and can be bought almost anywhere at trifling cost. Of course, when it is desired to set the whole sail again, the lead weight must be released before unrolling. The accompanying illustration shows the device and method of fitting.

The utility of the Wykeham-Martin furling gear has long been recognized and it is used in small cruising craft all over the world. Indeed, in my own district, most yachts seem to have it on the jib and many on the foresail as well. It has in fact quite superseded the du Boulay gear for cruising, although the latter is still used in little day boats and some small racing craft.

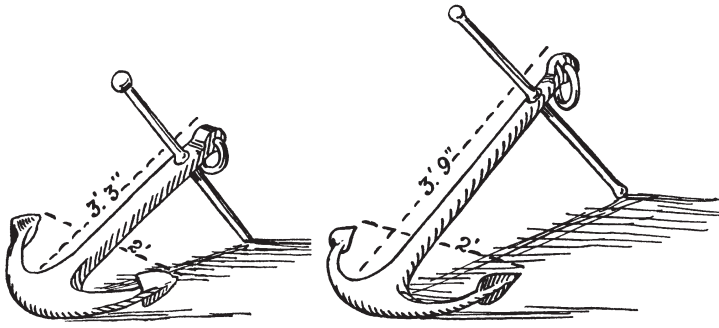
Some owners who employ the Wykeham-Martin gear on the jib leave the sail up throughout the season, just putting a tyer round the clew when the yacht is at anchor. That, however, is not to be recommended, as the leach cloth gets dirty and stretched out of shape. To leave the sail *in situ* for a night or two is all very well, but for longer periods it should be removed and stowed away. If the fittings are left on the halyard and bowsprit respectively they will be ready for use with any size of jib you want to set.

CHAPTER 27: *Ground Tackle*

There is no part of a yacht's equipment more important than her anchor and chain, for on their efficiency depends the safety of the vessel and that of other craft brought up in her immediate neighbourhood.

When I began cruising, more than half a century ago, one seldom saw a good anchor, but in these days one seldom sees a really bad one. In the old days the anchors produced for yachting purposes were modelled upon the Admiralty pattern, which combined all the faults an anchor could have. They were short in the shank, inordinately heavy, and had blunt spade-shaped flukes, that might have been specially designed to foul the cable. Notwithstanding its great weight, such an anchor could not be trusted to hold a yacht in anything more than a fresh breeze.

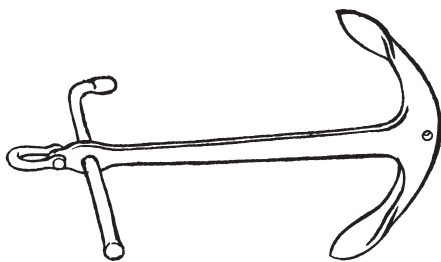
In course of time the Admiralty type of anchor was superseded in yachts by the 'fisherman,' which was much lighter and of better shape, for it had been discovered that it was not so much the weight as its proportions which gave an



Admiralty and fisherman's anchor types

anchor its holding power. Most writers on yachting are agreed that the shank should be long in proportion to the chord (i.e. the measurement from fluke to fluke), which is very true, but few have cared to venture into the realm of figures. Having taken measurements of a good many anchors which I knew to be good holders, I am of the opinion that the length of the shank should not be less than one and a half times that of the chord and not more than one and three-quarters. The stock, which in the case of a bower anchor should be fixed, should be almost as long as the shank, and the flukes sharp and of leaf, or spear, shape. Those are the proportions of the Nicholson, the best anchor of conventional shape yet devised. The shank and arms of the Nicholson anchor are of flat section to enhance its strength. In the 7-ton cutter *Seabird*, which I owned many years ago, I had a bower anchor which weighed but 32 lb., and it was a rare holder. The shank was almost twice as long as the chord measurement, but was evidently too long, as on one occasion when I had anchored over a stiff clay bottom, the shank was badly bent. I should think that anchor must have been specially made for a previous owner, as I have never seen any other with so long a shank.

With regard to anchor stowage, if the anchor be light enough to lift bodily on deck, the following method – which I believe was first adopted by Mr. G. Umfreville Laws – will be found to answer admirably: Close to the mast a tube, sealed up at the lower end, and just long enough to take half the stock of the anchor, is inserted through the deck, whilst the other half of the stock, standing up and



Nicholson anchor

down the mast, will not foul the head-sail sheets. The shank rests in a chock screwed to the deck for the purpose, and is secured by means of a button. When bringing up all one has to do is to lift the anchor from its resting-place and drop it overboard.

A method I have personally employed for many years is as follows: The anchor is placed on deck in such a



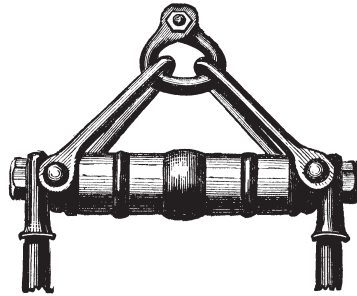
Wooden jamb cleat

but left perfectly flat. In most jam cleats the edges are rounded off for the sake of neatness and their gripping qualities impaired. With my cleat a single turn jams the sheet and although I have now

used them for a good many years, I have never known the rope to slip.

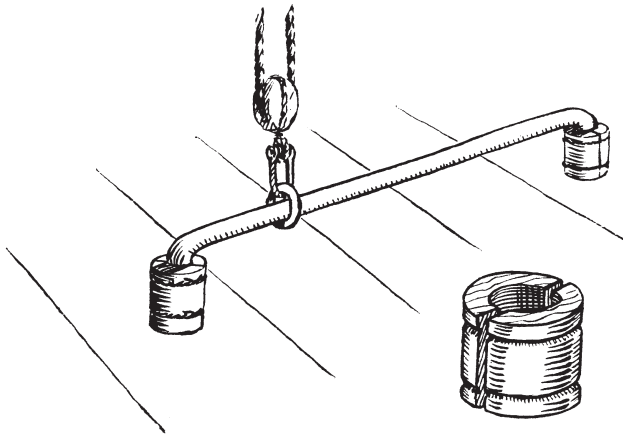
The cleat should be fitted to the inside of the coaming, about nine inches abaft the hole through which the sheet is led, with the jamming horn forward and slightly raised. By the way, brass bushes for the holes in the coamings can be procured from Woodnutt & Co., of St. Helen's, Isle of Wight, who also stock a roller sheet lead, which can be let into the coaming. The addition of the roller assists materially in getting in the sheet.

Mainsheet buffer: A mainsheet buffer robs a heavy gybe of half its danger and is a refinement well worth the money, if you can afford it. An excellent buffer can be procured from Messrs. Pascall, Atkey & Son. It is of the double-action type and the fixing bolts can be made so as to bring the buffers any height from the deck, or the buffer can be made upon a horse so that the tiller may operate beneath it.



Mainsheet buffer

Main horse chocks: When the mainsheet travels on a horse trouble is often experienced through the block falling over the end of the horse and getting jammed. To prevent this, turksheads of hambro-line are often put on the ends of the horse, but they are seldom very satisfactory and soon get worn by chafe. A better plan is to fit rounds of hard wood on the ends of the horse. Turn the pieces of wood up on a lathe and then split them in halves. After



Wooden chocks on mainsheet horse

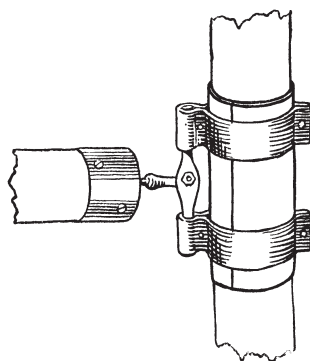
scooping out sufficient of the middle to fit round the horse, they can be seized on with copper wire. A disc of old motor-car tyre on top of the wood would serve as a buffer. Similar stops can be fitted to the fore-horse, if your foresail has a boom.

Cockpit tent: A cockpit tent is a great boon in a small yacht on a wet day, as it provides one with the equivalent of a second cabin, in which one can carry on such domestic operations as washing-up after meals. The tent will also provide much-needed privacy when lying in a harbour, or crowded anchorage. The usual well-tent is just an oblong piece of waterproof canvas spread over the made-up mainsail and boom and fastened down to screw-eyes on the outside of the coamings. Such a tent keeps the cockpit dry, but affords little headroom, except under the boom.

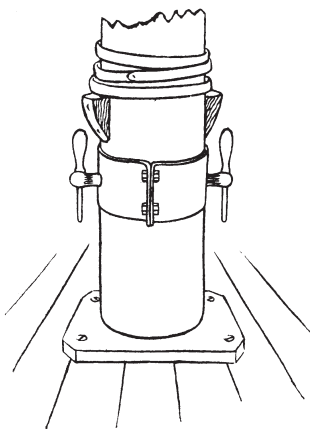
Its comfort would be much enhanced if the tent were laid over three or four spreaders shaped like a coat-hanger but as long as the width of the cockpit. It would, of course, have to be slung beneath the boom by lines from the hangers, passed through eyelets in the tent. Such a tent would provide adequate headroom over the whole cockpit, enabling one to sit up comfortably on the seats, and when not in use could be wrapped round the spreaders and stowed away in the sail locker or fo'c'sle.

Fife-rail or spider-band: Whether it is better to belay halyards to a fiferail on deck or to belaying pins in the mastband is a matter of opinion, but personally I prefer the latter. I admit that a fiferail is more convenient, but it seems to me that a great strain must be thrown on the deck when all of the halyards are set up to it. Now, if the halyards are belayed to a spider-band the whole of the strain is taken by the mast. Most owners, I think, object to a spider-band as the mast-hoops, when the sail is lowered, fall down on to the belaying-pins and get in the way. But that can very easily be avoided by fitting a couple of chocks on the mast, about a foot above the spider-band. The chocks should be fitted on either side of the mast and be large enough to catch the hoops and keep them clear of the pins when the sail is lowered.

Mast band: The usual type of mast-band, being single and narrow, has to be screwed up very tightly or otherwise it will turn. That is bad for the mast, as the wood may be crushed in the process and lead to the mast breaking at that point. To avoid this, Claud Worth designed a double band, joined together by plates of mild steel. This has a comparatively wide



Worth mast band



Mast hoop chocks

Part V: DOMESTIC ECONOMY

CHAPTER 36: *The Cabin*

Some people might think the term domestic economy rather inappropriate when applied to yachting, but I don't think it really is, for by the exercise of a little ingenuity the cabin of a small yacht may be made a veritable 'home from home,' as the advertisements say. It is true that the space is limited, but if it is laid out to the best advantage the owner can have everything about him that he needs. After all, did not Diogenes live in a tub? Still, there are cabins and cabins, and while some convey the impression of comfort and homeliness, others that I have seen would be rejected by a pig with scorn.

There is a certain type of yachtsman, if you can call him such, who delights in posing as what our American friends term a 'tough guy,' and in some extreme cases he is so tough as to be hardly decent. His boat, usually a converted smack or ship's boat, is dirty and ill-kept, and he goes about unshaven and unwashed and wearing clothes at which a self-respecting scarecrow would look askance. Strangely enough, men who do that sort of thing are often quite smartly dressed and eminently respectable when at home.

Years ago I knew a baronet who owned a 'little old tore-out' and aped the 'tough guy.' One day he went into the public bar of a waterside inn for a bread-and-cheese lunch, and when he had finished his frugal meal, he asked for a cigar. The publican offered him a villainous-looking weed which even he was not tough enough to tackle. "Haven't you something better than that?" he asked. The landlord, looking at him doubtfully, replied, "Well, yes I have, but they are twopence." The bold bad Bart. used to tell this tale against himself with much gusto, but it is difficult to understand the mentality of men who go out of their way to defy the common decencies of convention.

Some time ago I was invited on board a converted smack which was anchored close to my craft. I like to visit other men's boats, as one can often pick up useful tips and see interesting gadgets in that way. On this occasion, however, I was not interested but merely disgusted, for her cabin was in an appalling state. There were no cushions on the bunks, everything was grimed with filth and the boat fairly stank. The only thing in the way of fittings that I could see was a rusty tin lamp hanging on the mast with a smoked and cracked glass. There were no cots or any other form of beds, the crew evidently sleeping in their clothes on the bare locker lids. On the floor was an old Primus stove in a filthy state, some dirty enamelled plates and a rusty frying-pan coated with congealed fat. Articles of clothing, boots and shoes were heaped on the bunks, and among them I noticed

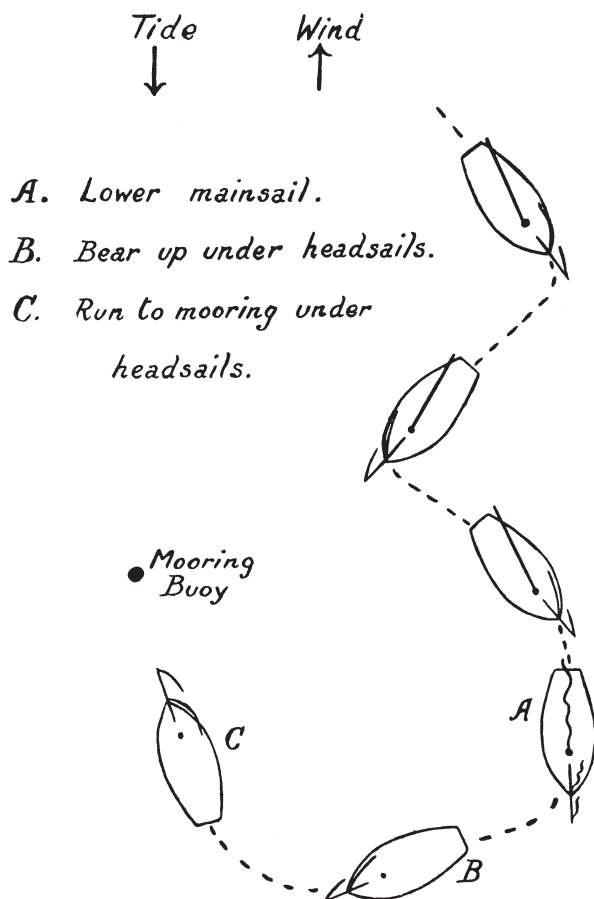
a piece of bacon and a number of egg-shells. The crew had evidently been dining. It is not only among the small yacht-owners one finds people with piggish habits. A friend of mine once bought a yacht of nearly 40 tons from a certain well-known single-handed yachtsman, and on taking delivery of the vessel was troubled by a disgusting stench. On investigation it was found that a locker in the fo'c'sle was nearly full of bacon and cheese rind, potato peelings and grease, evidently the accumulation of months, and the whole mass was crawling with maggots. Cleaning out that locker was a job that might have defeated the efforts of Lewis Carroll's "seven maids with seven mops."

There is not the slightest reason why you should not be comfortable and live decently in the cabin of even a pocket cruiser of only 2½ tons, but as the space at your disposal is not very great it is essential that you should be methodical and tidy in your habits. Much, too, depends upon the arrangement of the cabin, and that offers considerable scope for ingenuity. As it is almost impossible to design a yacht successfully round a cabin plan, it would serve no useful purpose if I gave here specimen plans, and so I will confine my remarks to various items of equipment that make for comfort and convenience, with suggestions as to where they should be fitted if practicable. It cannot be stated too emphatically, however, that the cabin lay-out must be fitted into the yacht and not the boat built round a cabin plan.

First let us consider what particular items of furniture are necessary, or at any rate desirable, for our comfort and convenience. Of course, my ideas on the subject may differ from yours, but the things I consider most important are a comfortable bed at night and comfortable sitting accommodation by day; a cupboard in which I can hang my shore clothes, a pantry in which to stow the crockery, an adequate cooking outfit and a roomy locker in which to stow stores, etc. Whether all of these desiderata can be provided must depend upon the space you have at your disposal.

In most small yachts there is a bunk on each side of the cabin, which form seats by day and beds by night. By the way, these are sometimes termed sofas, settees or just seats, but I prefer to call them bunks. There are, however, objections to sleeping on the bunks. In the first place they are apt to be uncommonly hard, unless sprung (a rather rare refinement in small craft). After long use as seats the cushions get hard, and although they may be all right for sitting on, they are not sufficiently comfortable as beds. Then, it is difficult to keep the blankets in place during the night and if you are a restless sleeper you will probably awake in the small hours of the morning to find all your blankets on the cabin-floor. A final, and perhaps the most important objection, is the difficulty of disposing of the blankets during the daytime. If you stow them away in kit-bags they take up the deuce of a lot of room and will be horribly in your way all day; if you fold and stow them at the head of the bunks, they will not 'stay put' but probably fall off on to the cabin floor when the yacht is under way, and they may get wet. The

MOORINGS



Picking up a mooring — beating with a fair tide

amount of judgment, but more often than not it is as easy as shelling peas, as they say. The trouble of most beginners is that they do not use their brains. They seem to think they have only to sail up to the mooring and pick up the buoy. The result is sometimes disastrous and sometimes amusing—at any rate for onlookers.

The error most commonly made by the novice is to attempt to pick up a mooring while sailing with wind and tide, but that is all wrong. It cannot be too strongly stressed that a mooring must be picked up against the tide. Even if you succeed in getting hold of the buoy while sailing with wind and tide, it is extremely unlikely that you will be able to hold it, as no man is strong enough to hold a heavy yacht when her sails are full of wind and she has the tide under her. I can understand a novice making that mistake once, but how he can go on doing the same thing week after week right through the season, beats me. Yet some of them do. Many years ago at Farnbridge, the owner of a certain 5-tonner provided us with entertainment almost every Sunday evening. He was obsessed by the idea that moorings should be picked up with the wind and tide, and often spent

to push her head round with a sweep. If the ground is soft mud, however, it is doubtful if you will be able to do much good in that way, for the mere act of extricating the sweep will pull her back again. In such circumstances the only thing to do is to take the anchor out in the dinghy, with a good scope of chain, and drop it in deep water. Then, as the tide makes, you will be able to haul her off. The mainsail can be left up, with the boom run off so that the sail holds no wind, but the headsails should be furled.

If the tide is ebbing and your boat draws no more than about 3 feet 6 inches the best thing to do is to jump overboard and push her off. The headsails should be furled, or the sheets let go, so that the sails hold no wind, and don't wait to take off your clothes, for every minute is of importance. Go in as you are and get under the bowsprit. Heave up with your shoulder, at the same time pushing the bow round until the sails can be sheeted home on the new tack. The yacht will then sail off and if you are not 'nippy' in getting back on board, you may be left behind. It is a drastic method but extremely effective, and getting wet will serve to remind you not to stand in so close another time.

An alternative method is to take out the anchor in the dinghy and try and haul her off, but as that will take time, there will be an element of doubt about the issue.

Now let us consider the case of the yacht going ashore when running before the wind. In such circumstances she will go on pretty hard and her keel cut deeply into the mud. The only way is to haul her off stern first. Lower all sail and then take the kedge out in the dinghy and drop it astern of the yacht. Then rock the vessel from side to side to loosen her keel in the mud, and if she draws more water aft than forward, it will tend to reduce her draught if one or two of the crew go out on the bowsprit. Then, if the tide is flooding you will soon be able to haul her off with the kedge. Should it be ebbing, however, you will not have much chance of refloating her and will have to wait until the next flood.

If you are running when you get ashore and can gybe over the mainsail, the yacht will probably sail off at once, but unless you were running by the lee, it is doubtful whether you will be able to force the sail over against the wind far enough to gybe. In such circumstances, you might lower the sail and reset it on the desired side, but you would have to be quick about it if the tide were ebbing.

If you get ashore at, or near, high water, and fail to refloat the yacht, you can take it from me that you are in for a darned uncomfortable time, unless of course she is a vessel of barge type, which will sit almost upright on the mud. You will have to wait for something like twelve hours before the succeeding flood has risen sufficiently to refloat the boat, and I can tell you that there are few less comfortable places than a heavily listed vessel ashore. You can't sit on the bunks or cook a meal and all you can do to mitigate the discomfort is to put one of the bunk cushions on the cabin floor and wedge yourself against the bunk-riser. But before thinking of your own comfort, you must look to the welfare of your ship.

The most important thing is to make sure that she lists inwards, particularly if she draws a good deal of water. If such a yacht lists outwards on a shelving bank, she will lie over to such an extent that the water may invade her cockpit before she can lift to the next flood tide. That must be avoided at all costs, so you must take steps to make her list the right way while she is still water-borne. If you have run aground on the foreshore, you will of course list her towards the shore, but if she is on a horse, or flat, at a distance from the shore you may be in doubt. You should therefore sound all round her with the boathook and then make her list towards the shallowest water. To ensure her settling down in the desired position, lash the boom and made-up mainsail to the rigging. Then, if you have not already done so, lay out the anchor, while there is still water for the dinghy. The direction in which you lay it out will depend upon the way she went ashore. If there is any water in the bilge – there is sure to be a little – pump or bail out as much of it as you can, for when the yacht is resting on her bilge any water in her will rise over the bunk and wet the cushion, if you have not taken the precaution of removing it. It is also advisable to prop up the water- and oil-cans, so that the contents cannot leak out. You don't want to lose your supply of drinking water and if the contents of the paraffin-can are drained into the bilge the boat will stink to high heaven for weeks. Then if the boat will be aground during the night, you must think about illumination, for it is probable that you will not be able to light the cabin lamp, as the gimbals will not operate sufficiently. In such circumstances a candle is indicated.

If you got ashore at high water, you will be wise to study the tide tables in your nautical almanack, for it is possible that the tides may be taking off and there will be less water at the next high tide than when you went ashore. Should that be the case there will be a grave risk of the yacht being neaped and not float again until there is another big tide. If the tables show that the tides are taking off, you must take steps to reduce her draught by lightening her. You can do this by removing some of the inside ballast and putting it into the dinghy. It is a tiring, dirty job, but if you fail to get her off on the next tide, you may have to wait for days or even weeks.

I once had the bad luck to get a boat neaped for rather more than four months, and although it happened some twenty years ago the episode still lingers in my memory. In those days I owned an old converted ship's boat of about 6 tons T.M. which drew barely 3 feet of water. Having at that time only recently taken up my quarters at Burnham I did not know the river very well. One day in the early winter I was beating up the river on the top of the tide, and at the upper end of Cliff Reach, seeing a wide expanse of water before me, sailed gaily on towards Bridgemarsh Island. So far as I knew there was deep water right up to the seawall, and so I held on until the wall was but a few yards distant before putting the helm down to go about. To my astonishment the boat suddenly stopped and I realised that I was hard and fast ashore. The ebb was running fast, and before

I could do anything the vessel began to list and I knew that there was no hope of refloating her that tide.

When the water had run off I found that I was 40 or 50 yards from the edge of a big salting projecting from the eastern end of the island. A glance at the tide tables revealed the fact that the tides were taking off, and when, on returning to Burnham, I heard that it was the biggest tide that had been experienced for eighteen years, I realised that my boat was likely to stay where she was for some time. Although it was a forlorn hope, I went on board at the next high water to attempt to get her off, but the tide only just lapped round her keel. Day after day as I passed the spot in the train on my way up to town I could see my unfortunate craft perched amidst her rural surroundings and had to put up with much chaff from my travelling companions. Occasionally we could see a cow standing on the seawall gazing pensively at the derelict, an incident that never failed to amuse my friends.

It was not until the spring came round that I saw a prospect of refloating the boat. Late in March the tables showed a tide that should be the biggest of the year, and I determined to make strenuous efforts to get her off that night. And it was high time. The owner of the land threatened to seize the boat as flotsam. Whether he could legally have done so I cannot say, but the threat was quite sufficient to spur me on. For some days before the attempt I visited the spot and made the most careful preparations. I dug a trench for the vessel's keel right down to the edge of the saltings and marked out the passage with withies. I removed all the ballast, which was of scrap iron of the most varied description, and placed it in a heap at the edge of the saltings, and finally I chartered a big sailing tripper from Burnham to lend me assistance. When the eventful night arrived I was rejoiced to find the wind blowing fresh from the north-west, a quarter that favours big tides in that district. The tide came up bravely, but even so it was evident that it would be a near thing, and so I set every stitch of sail I could with the idea of reducing her draft by listing. We waited until we dare wait no longer before making the attempt. Then, when we considered the moment had arrived, I began to heave on the windlass whilst the tripper endeavoured to tow her off. For a minute or two there was 'nothing doing,' as the saying goes; then she began to move very slowly. Yard by yard we hauled her over the saltings until with a rush she leapt into deep water. With no ballast on board she was naturally very crank, but I contrived to cast off the tow rope and luff her up just in time to save her from turning turtle. Then I grabbed the sails down and let her swing to her anchor. With the assistance of the watermen I got the ballast on board and stowed away and the boat was on her moorings at Burnham long before breakfast-time. But Lord, how she leaked! The dry easterly winds had opened her topsides and she was not fit to sail for days; but she 'took up' again in time, and was little the worse for her long sojourn amongst the buttercups and daisies. I have never got a yacht neaped since, and sincerely hope I never shall.

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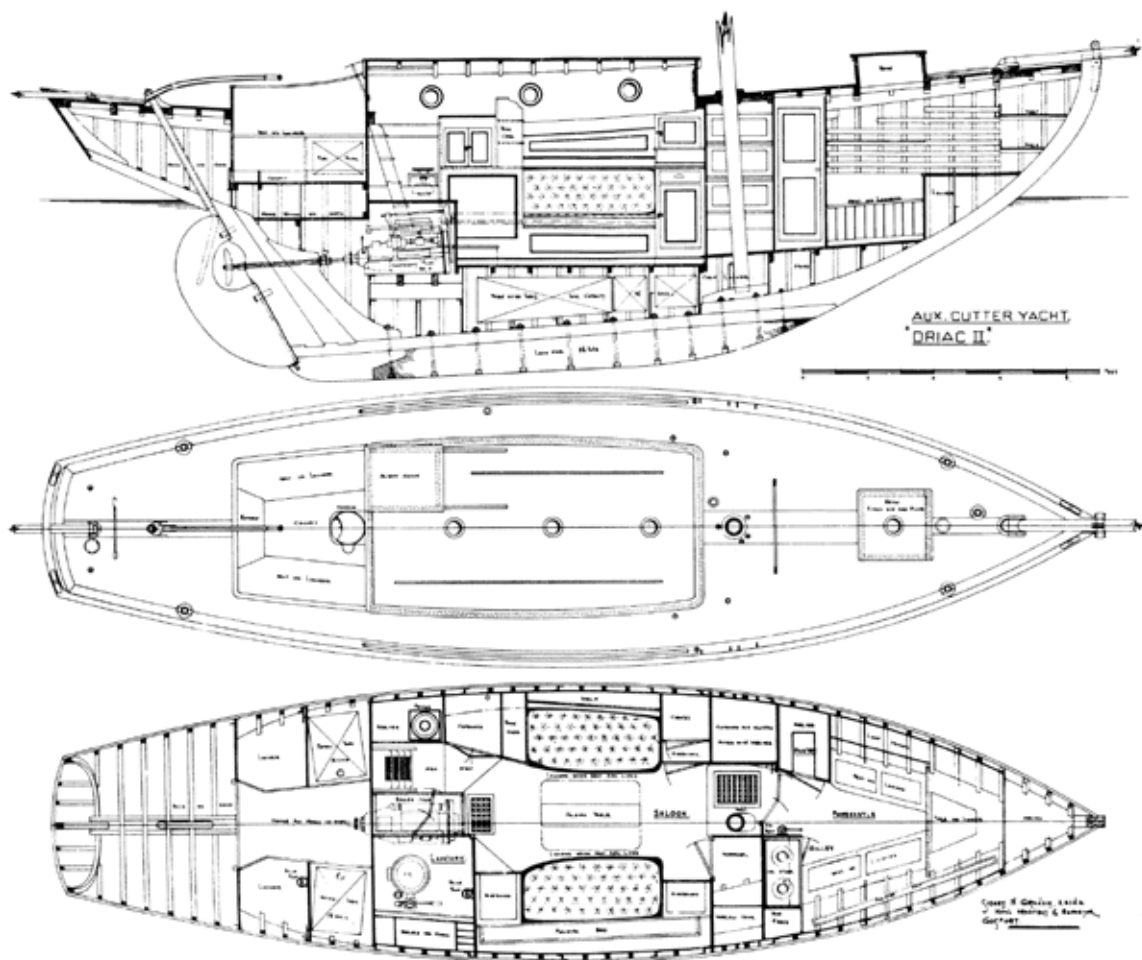
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FRANCIS B. COOKE was born in 1872, and joined the merchant bankers Antony Gibbs and Sons in the City of London at the age of 17, retiring in 1931 as head of their Australian Department, after 42 years' service. He enjoyed a further 42 years in retirement, living to the age of 102.



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