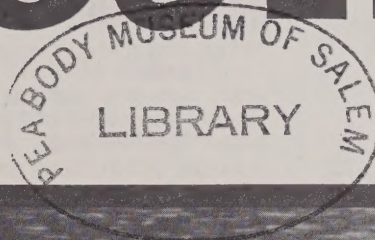




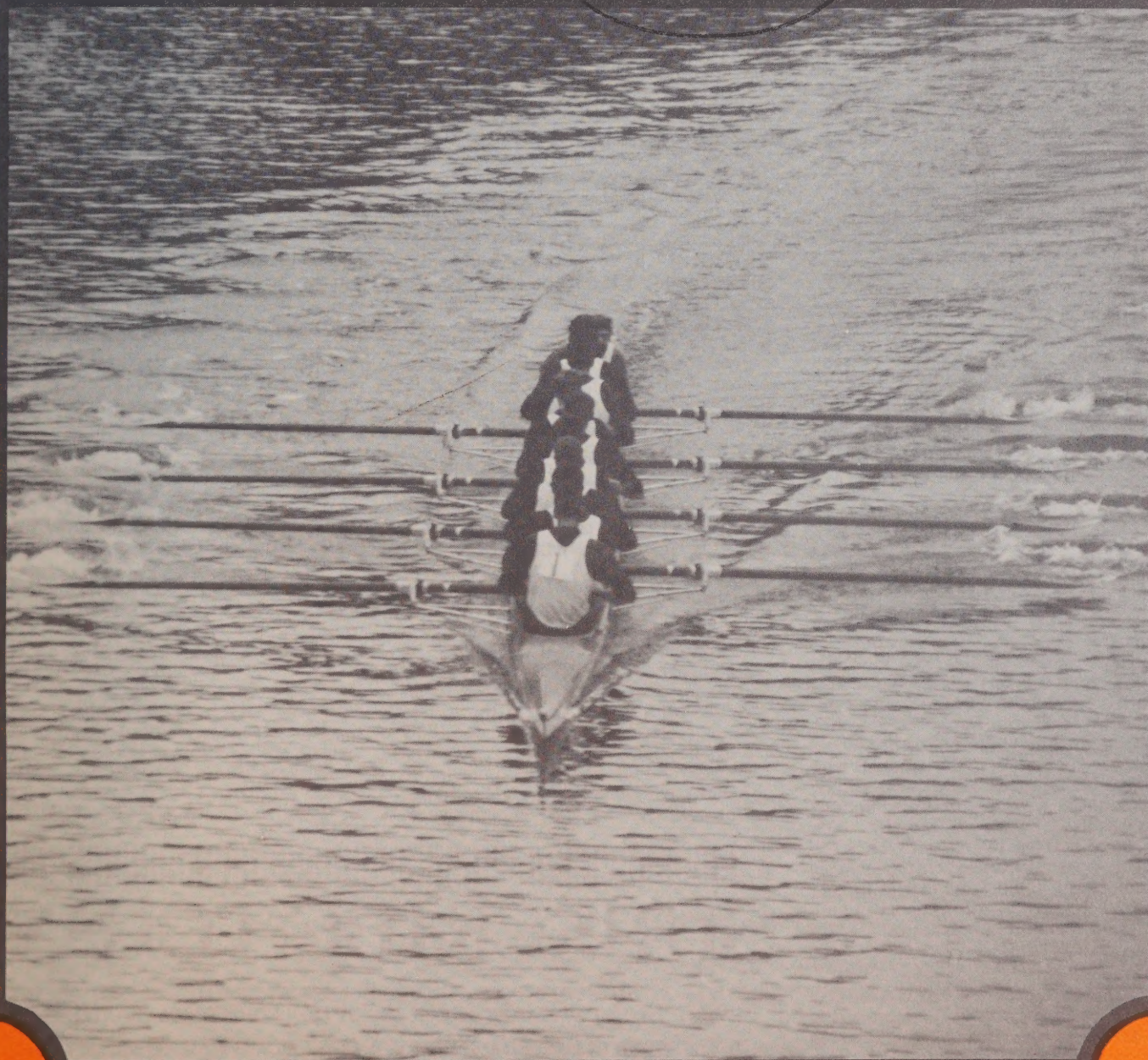
messing about in BOATS

Twice a Month

Volume 1 - Number 14



December 1, 1983



Commentary



BOB HICKS

messaging about in BOATS

PUBLISHED TWICE A MONTH, 24 ISSUES A YEAR. SUBSCRIPTION PRICE IS \$15 FOR 24 ISSUES, PRE-PAID ONLY. ADDRESS: 29 BURLEY ST.

WENHAM, MA 01984
TEL. (617) 774-0906

PUBLISHER & EDITOR: BOB HICKS

OUR GUARANTEE: IF AT ANY TIME YOU DO NOT FEEL YOU ARE GETTING YOUR MONEY'S WORTH, JUST LET US KNOW, WE'LL REFUND YOU THE UNFULFILLED PORTION OF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENT.

Our Next Issue

... will go into the mail the first week of December. Subscription orders received before December 1st will begin with Issue #15 unless otherwise requested. You may order back issues as part of your subscription if you like, but Issues #1, #2, #3 and #12 are now out of stock.

In the Next Issue

... we will have coverage of what is probably the last of our on-the-water events for 1983, the Concord Ice Breaker rowing/paddling race on the Sudbury River in Concord, Massachusetts on November 6th. Over 200 craft took part in this free-for-all outing. We'll also have a report on a visit with Jim Forrest and Jeannette Denby of the Ace Boat Co., looking at their Ace Speedboat and their recreational rowing shell with forward facing oars. While on the sliding seat subject, we'll also have something on a sliding FEET rowing outfit. You may have noticed the classified ads for museum boat clearances, we thought that an interesting subject and expect to have a report on why Mystic Seaport is selling off a number of boats.

On the Cover

... The United States Naval Academy eight oared championship shell nearing the finish at the Head of the Charles race on October 23rd. A full report on this major event in this issue.

Readers who have been with us a while now are noticing just how wide ranging our notion of "messaging about in boats" is becoming. While we're not a racing publication, we do cover a lot of racing events, mostly because they bring together a wide variety of craft of all sorts for a day of sport. Nearly all of these events we've attended have been the low key informal affairs organized by individuals or tiny local club groups. A couple have been more formalized serious affairs. The feature article in this issue on the Head of the Charles discusses our subjective impressions of what is a very serious amateur contest. The sliding seat oarsman (and woman) at their best. While it's perhaps a pretty specialized way to mess about in boats, it is certainly a fascinating way to play.

We didn't go to see this event as a sporting contest, although that is what it is. We wanted to see how the ultimate expression of sliding seat rowing is presented. The excitement of the competition was contagious, however, and we did come to feel the thrill of seeing people who are really good at rowing display their abilities and determination to excel.

The spread between the single shell and the eight oared teams is wide, indeed. Two completely different experiences. The solo oarsperson striving on alone against the clock (seldom did they get bunched up) more nearly resembling the recreational oarsperson out on a less radical sliding seat craft. Just the quiet steady application of muscle power and technique to moving the narrow splinter of a craft through the water. The doubles pretty much the same, they too can be viewed as not too far removed from recreational rowing. But, moving up through the fours to the eights, adding on the coxswain and his/her highly vocal

participation changes the whole nature of the activity.

The eight oared shells certainly captured our main focus, to see these long slender craft, weighing 80 pounds, more or less, with 1500 pounds or more of muscle balanced upon them, being propelled by eight individually managed oars in perfect co-ordination was just so impressive. Realizing that an oarsman like me, totally inexperienced in this sort of craft, couldn't even keep the boat upright, moving or not, makes watching eight big people in action appearing not the least precariously balanced something like viewing acrobats. Yet, the movements of the oarspersons are not to maintain balance, they just move back and forth applying power to move the boat ahead.

It was also great to see so many women involved. Until recently, women's athletics in college didn't get much of the financial support. Here we found many, many women, solo through eights, college age on through to veteran level, rowing these delicate craft with zest. I thought the women crews displayed more competitiveness, at least they got jammed up more in bunches despite the time lapse starts and went at it for position without backing off an inch, producing some collisions and wildly tangled oars.

We'll certainly go to see the Head of the Charles next year, even though we have no great personal ambition to even try to row one of those shells. We can give the more stable recreational sliding seat craft a go of it, probably will next season, but not the serious shell. Despite this absence of personal involvement, we view this event as well worth the day spent. Anyone who has any interest at all in sliding seat rowing at any level should make this event a MUST.

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A BI-WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE WHO ENJOY MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS!

November 23, 1983

Dear Maritime Organization,

I think that readers of our publication (current issue attached) might be interested in knowing more about your facilities and activities of interest to marine and boating enthusiasts. Would you care to place us on your mailing list for publicity releases and also provide any descriptive brochures which you may have as background information?

This helps us when we carry articles such as the one on the Connecticut River Foundation's Traditional Vessel Weekend as appears in the attached issue on pages 12 and 13.

Advance notice of coming events is particularly welcome, the earlier the better. Follow up reports on the events are also welcome, we do attend certain such events but cannot possibly attend all that are offered.

Even if you are not within the New England - New York - New Jersey area we cover, your information could prove useful to readers planning trips and travel.

We publish twice monthly and are thus able to stay quite current and topical on announcements of upcoming events as well as on follow up reports.

I hope to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,

Bob Hicks
Editor

What's happening...

DECEMBER 8: PEABODY MUSEUM TSCA MONTHLY MEETING, SALEM, MA.

The regular monthly meeting of this Massachusetts north shore group of traditional small craft enthusiasts will be held in the Museum's education room at 7:30 p.m. For details on the program feature, contact Bob Hicks at (617) 774-0906.

DECEMBER 13 & 15: SAIL REPAIR WORKSHOP, MAINE MARITIME MUSEUM, BATH, ME.

The Maine Maritime Museum is sponsoring a winter series of workshops on subjects of interest to traditional small craft enthusiasts. Each workshop consists of two three hour sessions, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The fee for each is \$35 for non-members, \$25 for members of the Museum. Each workshop is limited to eight participants, so early registration is advised. To register, call Dennis Thoet at (207) 443-6311 during business hours.

The December program in the ongoing winter series will provide instruction on sail repairs, materials, hand and machine work. Sails in need of repair may be brought to the workshop. Instructor will be Nat Wilson.

JANUARY 13: CANOE CAMPING WORKSHOP, TOPSFIELD, MA.

Walter Harmer of the Ipswich River Watershed Association will provide instruction on how to pack your canoe for camping trips. The meeting is at Walter's on Willowdale Rd. in Topsfield, MA. at 7:30 p.m. Please call him beforehand if you plan to come at (617) 887-8671. Please bring something for the refreshment table if possible..

THE SHORTEST SHORT SHIP.

In the report in a recent issue (#12) on the Short Ships Race at Rockport, ME, Jim Brown made mention of Ted Robinson's 6 foot scow dinghy, a late finisher but nevertheless applauded for effort. Now we have a photo, thanks to Dynamite Payson. Here is Ted in his creation with his own design "guitar" shaped oars. Newspaper reporter Helen Barnes had a ride in harbor but did not join Ted in the race itself. For a six footer, she's quite a burdensome craft.

...and from our readers:

DEAR MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS:

I am now a student at WCVTI in Eastport, ME, I think the school is the only one really worth reporting on. Here we do ALL the work, we are all glad to be here and feel lucky to have been accepted. For each of us there were three other applicants who didn't get in.

There isn't a whole lot to do down here so we eat, sleep, drink and study boats. Boats, boats and more boats. No distractions. Bangor is further away than St. Johns, New Brunswick. There are lots of trees and only a few roads leading out. Everyone around here is really scrounging, people really want to learn the trade.

Come on down and see seven Whitehalls and 4 Buzzards Bay 12-1/2's being built side by side. We do all the drawings and lofting ourselves. And we build them ourselves. No program anywhere can match this one in terms of the education in two years. No other program has as good a record as VTI's. The boats we learn to build were selected as they provide an opportunity to learn a large variety of skills, they're small boats built big boat way.

So come on down to Eastport and meet all of us, way down here at the edge of the earth where things haven't been Nantucketized and it's all that's left of Maine.

John Hammell, Eastport, ME

DEAR MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS:

I subscribed to your little publication a short time ago and would like to offer my heartiest congratulations on the fantastic job you are doing. I don't see how you manage to cram so much enjoyable and interesting material in each and every issue twice a month but I am very thankful for your interest and talent in so doing. Keep them coming! William Kissel, Lake Placid, NY

DEAR MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS:

It was pleasant to read about our old LEAL, nee ALLEGRA, in your Issue #10.

I might mention one or two minor discrepancies in your story. The petcock on the inlet manifold SPEEDS up the engine, the carb is set very rich, so much that power and speed is reduced. It has been that way for years. Why don't I adjust it? Well, rich works fine cold and with that old machine every little bit helps. The extra gas consumption is probably around two gallons a year. In the upper speed range mixture is about right as is, because the engine speed is not noticeably altered when the petcock is opened to lean out the manifold mixture.

Scraping bottom a trifle doesn't do any damage. The rudder shaft is now the lowest point on the boat, about 6" lower than the prop which is also protected by the skeg. The prop is original (1912) and in good shape. The rudder shaft is unnecessarily long as I made a new one about five years ago of 7/8" brass when the original steel one had about rusted away. The new one sticks down below the skeg about 4" because it was that much too long and I saw no need to cut it off.

That engine is a flathead, yes, but "T" head is more accurate, exhaust valves on one side, intakes on the other. No one has made such a combustion chamber shape since the teens. Most accessible for service, a joy to work on, but most inefficient for economy, just the opposite of the compact, efficient hemispherical design chamber.

One of my real loves is the canoe. We have two Rushtons and had a 17' Old Town until it was stolen a few years ago. I also have an 1888 James Everson sailing canoe which needs restoration that I may never get to as I'm 83 and who knows?

Chapin Condit, Syracuse, NY





In Search of a Camper/ Cruiser-2

The Westlawn MITE under sail.

Westlawn Mite & Rabl's Titmouse

My next candidate was the Westlawn Design MITE from the Gray Dawn Series. She looks to be a salty little jib headed or gaff sloop, 16' LOA, 13' 5" LWL with a 7' beam and 185 square feet of sail area. The Westlawn literature bills her as a centerboard boat for rough water service and I must admit that she looks it. They claim her origins to be in both the Grand Banks dory and early Dutch punter. In some ways she is much like the Great Pelican in that she is a big boat for her length and shows a lot of flare with a flat bottom. She does show some tumblehome along the sheer which might cause complications for the home builder. MITE can also be planked with a variety of materials from plywood to the more traditional pine planking. The original MITE plans call for white pine or cypress carvel planking 7/8" thick and keel and stem of 3" sided white oak, hardly what I would call puny dimensions for a 16' boat. In many respects MITE is the most traditionally constructed of the four boats I considered. Mr. Ammerman of Westlawn Associates indicated that MITE could be built with plywood with 1/2" bottom, 3/8" sides and deckhouse and 1/4" deckhouse top.

I did not choose MITE for two reasons, which should not be considered as liabilities if you are not going to trailer

your boat or are of a different temperament. First, she has a lot of standing rigging which is a definite pain if one is going to trailer boat. Second, the literature accompanying the study plans led me to believe that she might be a bit on the slow side. In truth, I don't mind a slow boat as long as it is a little bit faster than the boat alongside me. Actually, I did a lot of thinking about transforming MITE into a world beater. Her sprit looks long enough to make her into a cutter and while we are at it we could add an old fashioned balloon spinnaker for off the wind. Then I realized that to handle such gear one requires crew that knows what it's doing, and that does not describe my family. Plus, what would I do with all that extra sail on a 16' boat with a wife and two kids? It also dawned on me that I am not a naval architect and all these hot ideas might not be compatible with the basic hull form. The thought of rigging and unrigging at the boat ramp finally sank the MITE as my choice.

TITMOUSE, from Sam Rabl's book, *BOATBUILDING IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD*, is a 15' sloop, 6' in beam with a 116 square feet of sail area. She is the smallest of the four boats I considered but she has several advantages. Her lines are proven, as a number of

EDITOR'S NOTE: In our last issue (#13) we began a three part article on the search for a camper/cruiser by Richard Zapf. In the first installment Richard spelled out his basic requirements, including his limit of 16' LOA, and then went on to discuss his first of four designs he considered, the Great Pelican. Now Richard goes on to review the Westlawn MITE and Sam Rabl's TITMOUSE:

these have been built. Her plans are quite detailed and there is a complete list of building materials which is a considerable help to the amateur, since I have found that amateurs like myself spend half our time running around looking for this piece or that.

Rabl designed TITMOUSE for trailer sailing and camping sailing. For that reason, TITMOUSE has a quick knock-down tabernacle mast for fast rigging and unrigging and just looks as if she would not be much trouble to get on and off a trailer. For camper sailing she has a cleverly designed poptop on her cuddy to increase headroom below. She is also a very pretty boat in my opinion. TITMOUSE's construction is a dory planked bottom and framing with stripped plank

topsides. There seems to be a good deal of Swamscott dory in her and I have often wondered how she would look with lapstrake sides rather than strip planking. I am not a great fan of strip planking in that I find that after the work of gluing and pounding literally thousands of brads, that it is still difficult to get a fair hull. Another problem from the amateur viewpoint regarding TITMOUSE is the fact that her sides are rounded which looks like the frames would require use of a bandsaw or thousands of years of scraping away with a coping saw.

Her dory origins seem to lend her to be stretched. I have often wondered how it would be to lengthen her a foot or so, thus giving a bit more sprawling

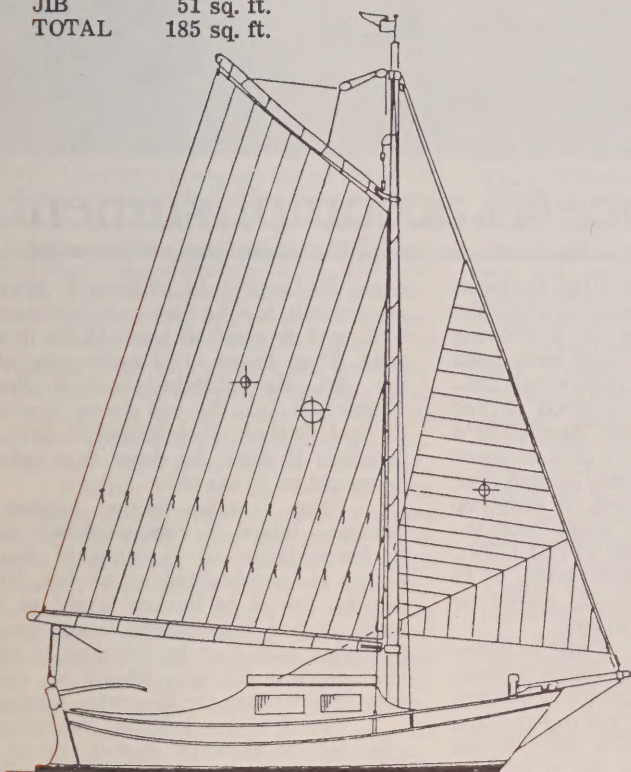
room and more waterline. However, such a project might well take her out of the realm of being built by an amateur. Despite her obvious advantages, I did not choose TITMOUSE because of her relatively small size and that 116 square feet of sail area. I was not convinced that she was going to move with despatch in light airs. But, if the truth be known, she just looks too much like other small sloops to suit me, in spite of her looks being good looks.

Report by Richard Zapf.

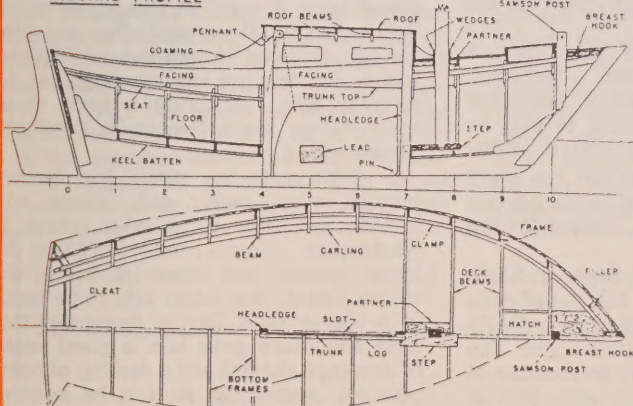
(NEXT ISSUE: Richard concludes this series with his discussion of why he did choose to build Phil Bolger's 16' catboat, MOUSER.)

LOA	16' 0"
LWL	13' 6"
BEAM	7' 0"
SAIL AREA	
MAIN	134 sq. ft.
JIB	51 sq. ft.
TOTAL	185 sq. ft.

Mite

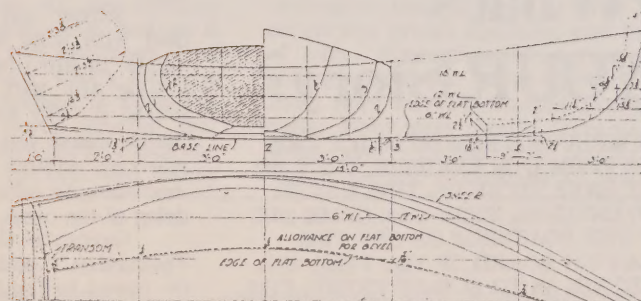
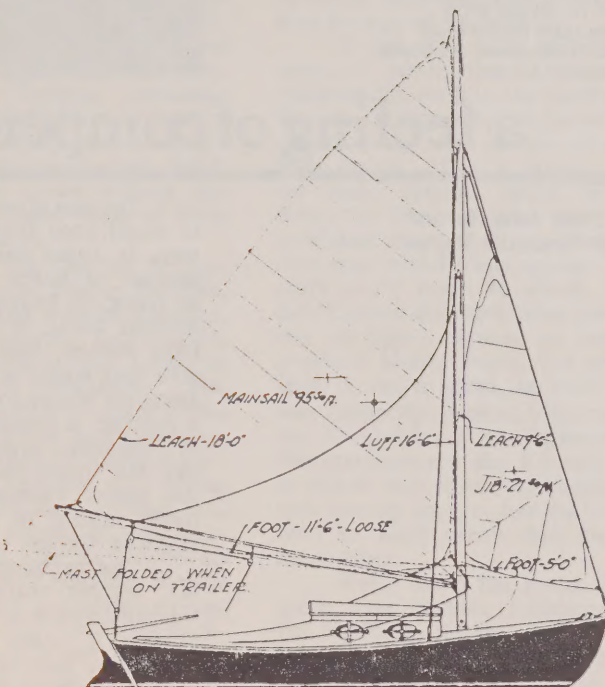


INBOARD PROFILE

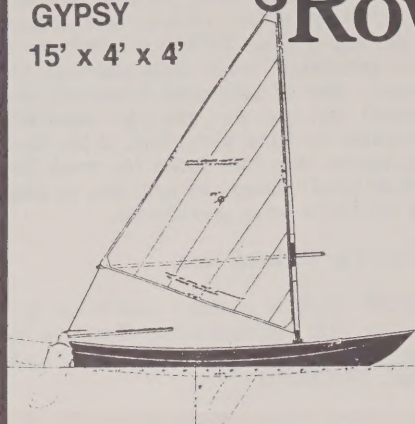


Titmouse

LOA	15' 0"
LWL	13' 1"
BEAM	6' 0"
SAIL AREA	
MAIN	95 sq. ft.
JIB	21 sq. ft.
TOTAL	116 sq. ft.



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Rowing the Maine Coast...



a feeling of competence & accomplishment.

Report from John Garber
Photo by Dynamite Payson

The idea of cruising along the coast in small open boats, camping along the way, is being promoted by a growing number of hardy types who have been so doing, in kayaks, canoes, small traditional boats. A sixtyish wood carver from Boston, John Garber, decided he'd give that notion a go this past summer along the Maine coast. After looking over a number of possible craft, he ended up at Dynamite Payson's in South Thomaston, ME where he bought GYPSY GIRL, the latest Payson instant boat, a 15 footer meant to be sailed, rowed or motored. Garber chose to row.

The camping part of this particular camper/cruiser trip was different. Garber did several leapfrogs with his van, driving it ahead to a further planned overnight, then hitchhiking back to the boat to commence the day's rowing. This complex maneuvering reduced the amount of gear he had to carry in the boat.

Garber did this to help himself deal with what he termed a personal crisis in his life, he had no plans for setting any sort of record, in fact he played it very safe as a novice on the Maine coast and finished out the eight day trip without hassles or dangerous moments. No adventures. Except for the doing of the deed.

Garber's itinerary began at South Thomaston. Loaded with 150 lbs of gear he rowed to Graffam Island near Owl's Head, stopping there his first night. The second day he rowed over to Camden in about 2-1/2 hours, gaining some idea of how far he could expect to go in a given

time. In Camden he stopped to have a cover made for the fore part of the open boat, and dropped off about 50 lbs of his gear. Then began his leapfrogging with the van. He hitchiked back to South Thomaston for the van drove it ahead to Seal Harbor, then hitchiked back to Camden. It would be three days before he caught up to the van.

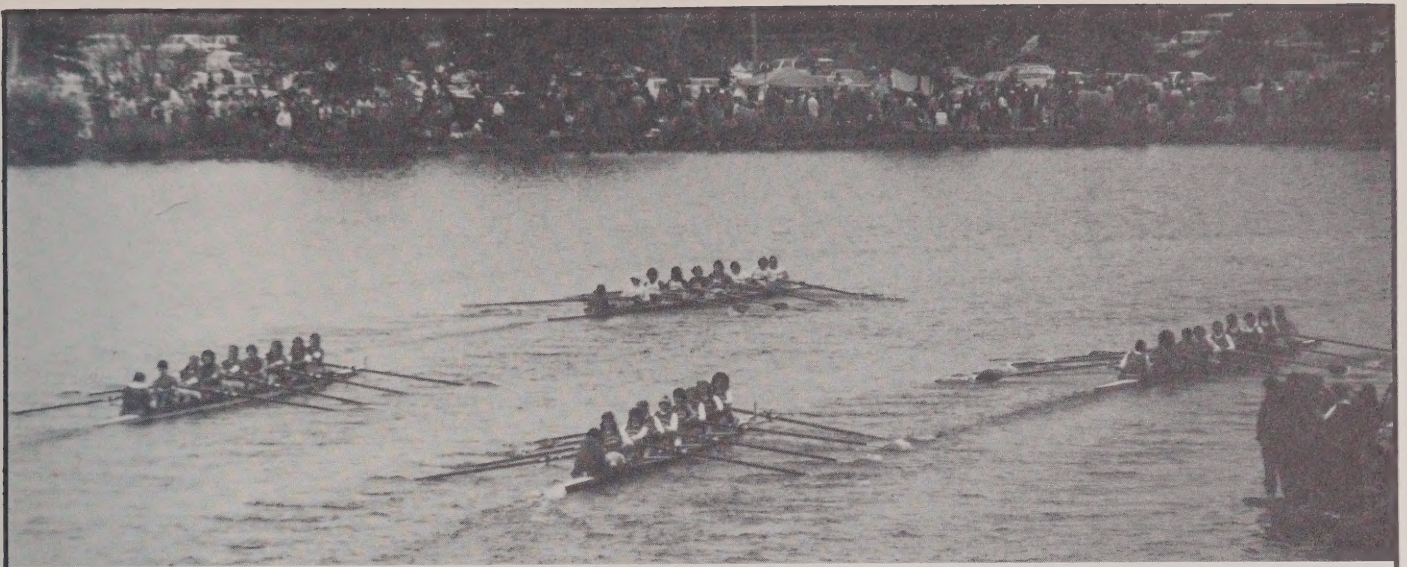
From Camden Garber headed to Compass Island in Penobscot Bay, then to Sargentville on Eggemoggin Reach where he overnighted at an inn. Next day he rowed to Harbor Island at the south end of Eggemoggin Reach where he tented out. Now he faced an 11 hour row to Seal Harbor, where he spent four days waiting for favorable weather.

The final leg left Seal Harbor and took him to Bunkers Harbor where he overnighted with a fisherman's family. The last day was the longest, John rowed from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. to reach Beal's Island. He rested after crossing the bar at Petit Manan behind Tibbetts Island and this put him hard against the outgoing tide, requiring a hard three hour row to reach Beals. On Beal's he stayed with a friend.

John now has plans for further travels, some under sail. These will include not only some lake travel in Washington County, but trips along the inner islands and outer islands of the Maine Coast, the latter trip to be made in a bigger boat. Garber found that this first adventure gave him a great sense of accomplishment and a feeling of competence, something he felt he needed.

What's YOUR Story?

WE WELCOME REPORTS LIKE THIS ONE FROM OUR READERS. THEY DO NOT HAVE TO BE ON-THE-WATER ADVENTURES, THEY CAN COME OUT OF THE BOATSHOP OR OFF THE DRAWING BOARD. IF YOU FEEL UNCERTAIN AS TO OUR INTEREST, CONTACT US FIRST AND TELL US WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND. OUR ADDRESS IS: BOATS, 29 BURLEY ST. WENHAM, MA 01984. OUR PHONE IS (617) 774-0906.



The "Head of the Charles"

It never occurred to us beforehand that we might actually spend a whole day, from 8:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. just standing around and watching an endless parade of racing shells pass by on Boston's Charles River, but here it was a bit after 4 on a cloudy Sunday, October 23rd and we were still there, up on the Elliot Bridge awaiting the final race of the day, the Men's Championship Eights. This was race #18 and leading off would be the 1982 winner, and course record holder, the United States Naval Academy. Our vantage point was about a half mile before the finish, where the Charles takes a sharp bend to pass under the concrete arches of the Elliot Bridge, and the contestants start a sprint to the finish.

Waiting to see the best of them all along with us were thousands of others lining the river over the entire three mile course. At last, around the bend into our view came the Naval Academy crew, and it was worth the wait. The precision was awesome, the power of those eight big men applied so absolutely in synchronization that the shell's progress was implacable, an irresistible momentum without fuss or fervor. All the boats that day, over 700 of them, were rowed by experienced oarsmen and women. Many displayed enormous physical power and precision. But this one capped it all, the ultimate rowing machine powered by eight great big men with perfectly timed strokes. It was some day.

Well, we heard of the event as being awfully "preppy", after all many of the oarsmen and women were on college teams, or on private club teams made up of ex-collegiate rowers. And

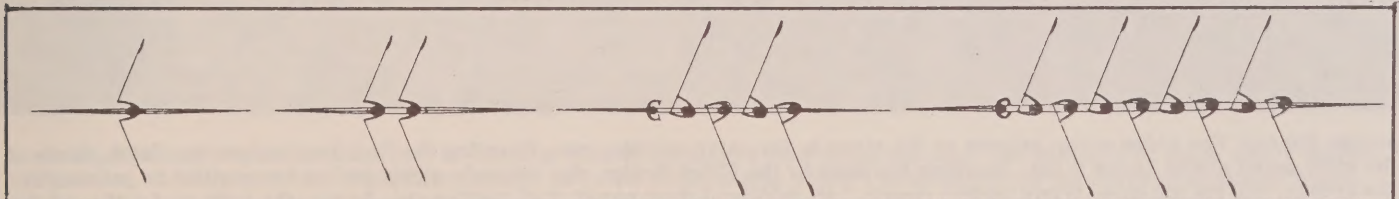
the enormous gathering of spectators was heavily college, small wonder in the midst of this university concentration. Thousands of cars were parked all along the riverside where parking is not normally permitted. Tailgate luncheons of epicurean proportions and content were everywhere. Obviously alcoholic beverages were being consumed. Yet it was an exuberant crowd without any rowdiness or nastiness. Some of them even watched the races.

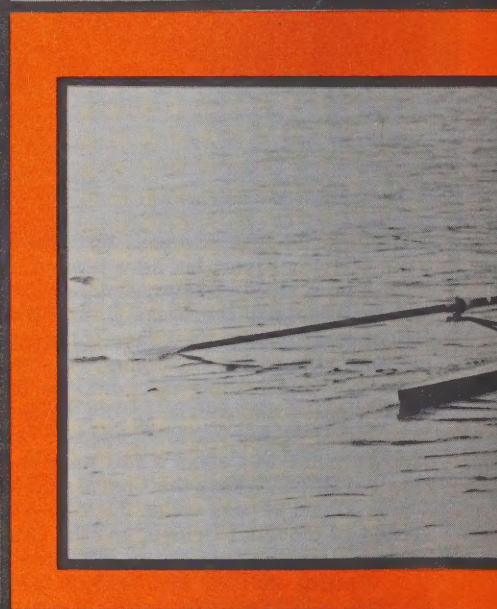
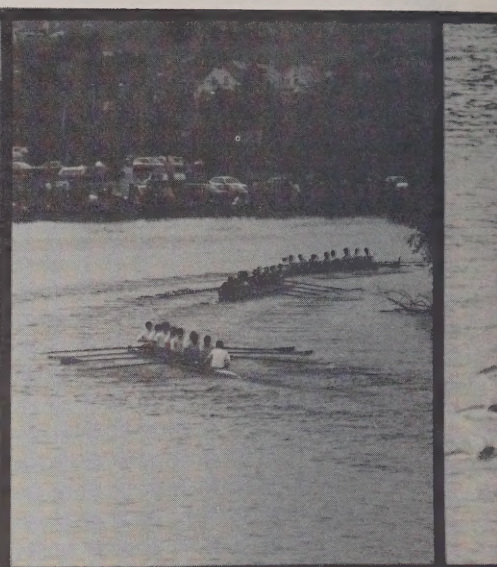
The Head of the Charles is limited to racing shells, singles, doubles, fours and eights. Men, women, masters, senior masters, veterans, lightweights, club level and championship level. In all, 18 races of 40 boats each. Yet, beginning it all at 8:30 a.m., an hour before the official program gets underway, was the Alden Ocean Shell Association's private contest. They're not racing shells. No, but they have special dispensation from the Regatta to have their own contest just as long as they're all done before the Men's Veteran Singles start off at 9:30. And, getting the day underway at the Boston University Boat-house was the "Voice of God." The man on the PA system at the start, "Now hear this!" Booming out over the early morning river instructing the Alden rowers about the procedure he would follow to start them off, ten seconds apart. Then the countdowns, and so it would go on until late afternoon. The "Voice of God"? Well, that's how one of the officials described it when the first authoritative words boomed out. Oh yes, why do Aldens get into this and other recreational craft do not? They

are similar sliding seat craft rowed by many ex-collegiate crew and I guess they have good connections.

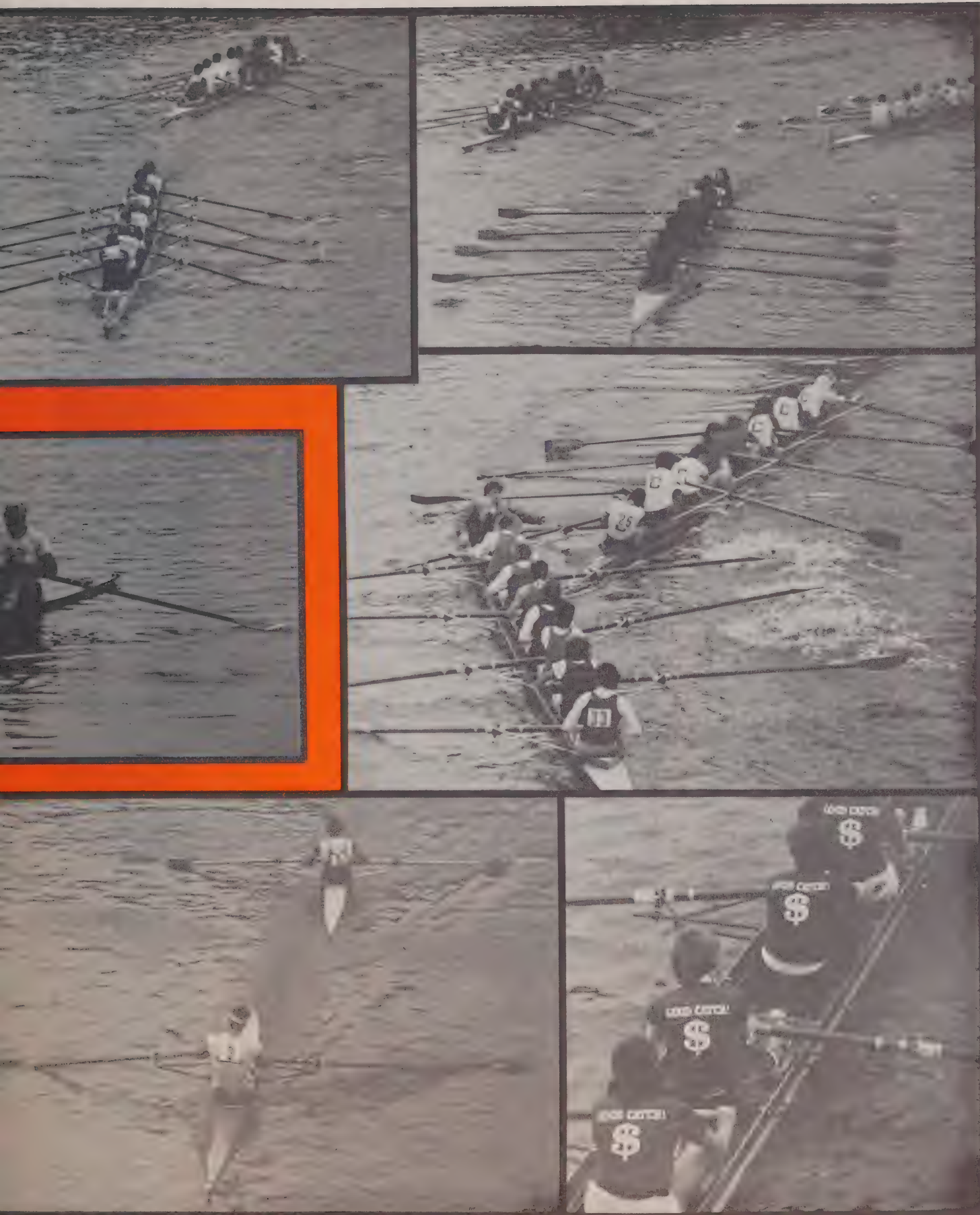
If the race were opened to other sorts of rowing craft, it would be unmanageable. As it is, the Cambridge Boat Club has it organized to perfection, it is as precisely run as the oarsman row their boats. After a couple of races, we could predict, based on program times for the course for each class and published starting times, just when the first boat would likely appear. The timed start isn't much to watch, but after 2-1/2 miles the boats often get jamming two or three abreast, as faster boats overtake slower boats. Our grand stand (and it was a stand, on cold concrete) was perfectly located, right opposite us the Cambridge Boat Clubhouse was the headquarters and the PA told everyone in reach just what was happening, who was coming up, etc. And the view DOWN onto an eight oared shell underway is fascinating.

Well, about the boats. These are those long slender splinters that are but platforms for the crew and the sliding seat oar rigs. The novice cannot stay upright in one of these, yet here were up to eight people all functioning in propelling the tippy craft yet looking as stable as a barge. Even when they occasionally tangled oars or even boats, or hit the bridge abutment with the tips of oars. Momentary consternation and getting sorted out, but no tipovers. Many boats were wood, laminated monocoque hulls. Many were plastic. Oars were all those gray carbon fiber plastic sort. The boats are essentially all the same,





Across the top: The Alden group gathers on the river in the early morning sun. Rounding the final bend before the finish, three of the eight oared shells sprint it out. Rounding the bend by the Elliot Bridge, the women's eights jockey for position to pass under the arches, and get too close (right middle photo). Left middle: A four oared shell moving out. Across the bottom: Another of the



women's eights getting their backs into it. Heading back to the start a four with coxswain. The numbers on these men's singles tell you that #3 has overtaken #2's 10 second lead in 2-1/2 miles to this point. The women from the Harvard Business School. Center: Not just dreaming or yearning for bygone days of youth, a veteran (over 50) contemplates his just completed race.

so it is the physical effort expended that one watches.

The people? From youth of under 19 to veterans over 70, men and women. Just great to watch. The young people, like the high school crews from Simsbury, Connecticut, exuberant and striving so hard, the veterans, grey and white and bald, but fit, still enjoying a sport many started in on a half century ago. In between, masters and senior masters. The 40 year old set, senior masters, were pretty competitive with the 30 year old masters. After 50, the veterans get handicapped by age, so a 70 year old rower can actually finish 3rd. And there was a crowd favorite as she came down river mid-afternoon in the Women's Masters Singles. Ernestine Bayer is 74 years old, she's secretary of the Alden Ocean Shell Association. But here she was rowing three miles in under 30 minutes on that tiny single shell, maybe she was last, but she was going well.

The serious business is, however, in the 20's age bracket, here are all the college teams, the rowing club teams, the doubles and singles rowing for old alma mater or themselves or their club. The prime of physical fitness combined with maturity of several year's of serious competitive experience. Lightweight under 165 pounds for men, 125 pounds for women. Club class made up of also-rans, rowers who had not placed highly in the season's other events. Championship class, the best, including some high placers in world championships and national championships. These young people put on a display of strength and ability that held us there, what could have been a monotonous procession was instead a succession of situations each bringing with it its own excitement.

As innocents viewing this way of messing about in boats, we acquired some very subjective impressions as the day passed by. We became fascinated with the eight oared shells, there is just the amazing teamwork and absolute power these display, they set the fastest times. The singles are all efforts of great individual merit, and the doubles and fours bring on the teamwork aspect, but those long eights with their loud little coxwains chanting the count and urging on the rowers possess the most drama. And, it was the women's eights that gave us the most action, on several occasions three or four of these eight oared craft jockeyed for position passing beneath the bridge, oars overlapping, bows sliding up beneath oars, coxwains pushing off challengers, and through it all the eight oars stroking away, those women just not giving an inch. Several times a stampede of onlookers rushed to the finish line side of the bridge to see how the tangle developing going under got sorted out.

The men were faster, and they too had some close action, but not as much and as often as the women. Perhaps the women had greater differences in ability from crew to crew which created the traffic as faster crews got in amongst earlier starting slower crews. They gave us some great action, whatever the reason.

Coxwains. The fours and eights have these diminutive passengers on board, calling cadence, correcting flaws they spot in teamwork. Many of the men's crews had women coxwains, couldn't find small enough willing males perhaps. And a couple of the women's crews had men coxwains, just to be fair. As they passed under our bridge, many were upping the cadence for that last half mile sprint to the finish, times were being set in split second differences so it mattered.

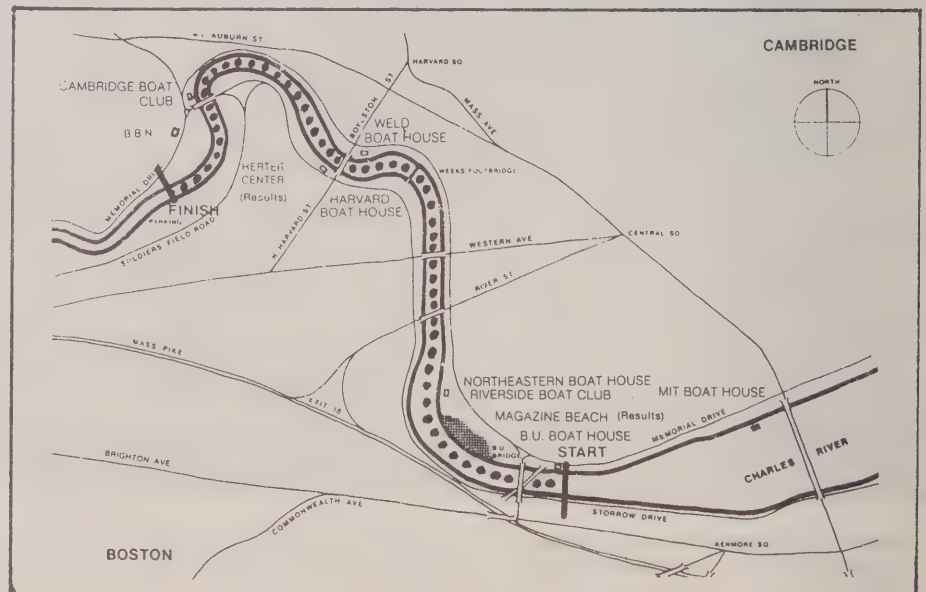
All of this is for glory and trophies. It is the ultimate regatta for sliding

seat oarsmen and women. The Head of the Charles began back in 1965 and attracted 100 boats. Now it is LIMITED to 720. Anyone who has discovered sliding seat rowing, for recreation or for local level racing, will find the Head of the Charles a happening not to be missed. We're not personally interested in sliding seat rowing, yet it caught us up in its ambience, the feeling of being on hand for a major happening where the best can be watched and appreciated. Quite a day.

Report & Photos by Bob Hicks



After explaining all about the Aldens, Ernestine Bayer told us, "But, there is nothing like a racing shell." Later she did the 3 mile course in under 30 minutes in one!



Exploring Monomoy by Kayak

On the map it looked like an interesting trip, so I drove off to Cape Cod to spend 3-1/2 days in late October (1982) exploring the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, two islands which reach seven miles south into the Atlantic from Chatham, Mass. I put in at Stage Harbor about noon on Friday and at the harbor entrance encountered a strong westerly breeze of 20 to 25 knots. After my eyes got accustomed to the waves (gradually, by napping on the beach for an hour), I ferried across the wind to inner Monomoy and rode the outgoing tide about halfway down the lee (east) side of the island, where I landed. Inner Monomoy is about 1-1/2 miles long with a narrow band of dunes on its east side and an extensive salt marsh on the west side. At low tide vast sand and mud flats extend beyond the salt marsh.

After setting up my tent several times (I later learned that one cannot camp on Monomoy legally) as the wind kept blowing out the tent pegs, I took a walk around the island. Out on the flats I finished a roll of film on some plovers that landed within a few yards of me. I couldn't reload the camera because the air was full of drifting sand. In the marsh I found a small (15-20 foot) dead whale, perhaps a pilot whale. Black weathered skin still covered the head and lay in a rumpled sheet along the back of the rest of the carcass. The 4 to 5 inch diameter vertebrae lay in a row on the flattened grass. The late afternoon sun made it warm for autumn.

Saturday rain began at 6 a.m. so I slept until 10 a.m. when it stopped. Upon looking across the marsh I saw a large gray hawk come in low and disappear behind a nearby dune. When I flushed the bird it flew to a more distant dune with the speed and determination of a flushed grouse. It was a duck hawk. A second duck hawk was perched on another dune. This bird, which stayed quite still for 20 minutes, took off and flew, as if late for a date, in a straight ascending line until it was only a speck in my field glasses high up over Stage Harbor. I saw it dive a couple of times

before I lost it.

The cloud line was in sight, blue sky coming. I packed in a hurry and departed heading south along the east (ocean side) of the island. I caught the incoming tidal current running west between inner and outer Monomoy and paddled southward along the western shore of the outer island. I landed, pulled the boat into the high beach grass and set off on foot to explore the island. In about two hours, after weaving my way among the dunes, deer tracks, muskrat tracks, garter snakes, occasional fresh water ponds surrounded by thickets holding back the sand dunes, some ducks, I arrived at the abandoned lighthouse located a mile or so from the south end of the island. From the tower platform I photographed a two masted schooner, square rigged on the foremast, heading south on the ocean side. To the west I looked out over a half dozen interconnected ponds and a cattail marsh. I surprised a two point buck and two does in the thickets around the ponds. At about 45 minutes before sunset I started back toward my kayak. Sunset came about halfway back, red with dramatic cloud patterns, and arrived with me at the boat. In the deepening dusk I walked past it a couple of times. There is no salt marsh on the west side of Outer Monomoy, only a narrow beach under the low rolling dunes and beach grass.

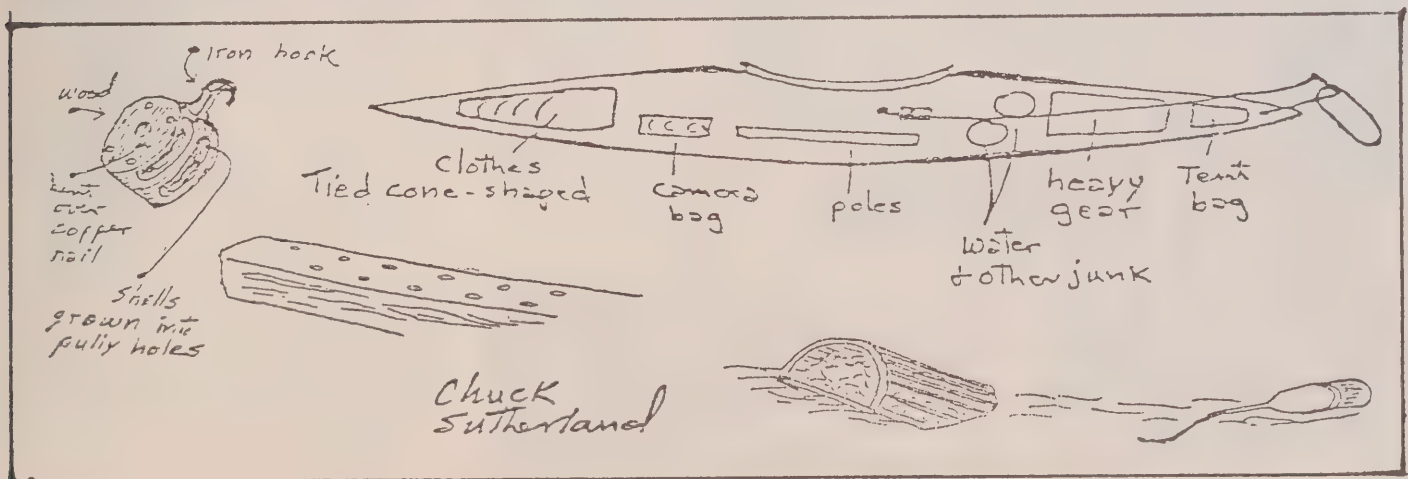
On Inner Monomoy I finally tied the tent to a large drift log. On the outer island in the moonless dark, after struggling to get the damned sand out of the fiberglass tent pole ferrules I buried the windward end of the tent in the sand to make it stay put. Sunday I hiked to the southern end of the island, chased a muskrat out of a small marshy spot, took pictures of him, offered him a bite of my all purpose hat brim, which he grabbed with his teeth, flipped him and the hat back into the marsh and then retrieved the hat. On the east side of the island, above the high tide line, I found a half dozen lobster pots all still attached to their buoys. They were probably thrown up

there by a northeast storm that passed through with 60 mph winds on Columbus Day weekend, my original trip date.

Nearby on the beach I found the side of a small fiberglass boat that was otherwise totally buried in the sand and a wooden block containing two wooden pulleys that weighed 13 lbs. This nifty find clearly dated from the turn of the century. Off shore there were rafts of common eiders and many gannets diving into the ocean where the eiders were feeding. From the top of a two story high (quite large and still growing) sand dune I saw through my field glasses waves on the ocean horizon that rose up like teeth and charged across the skyline. Some broke, causing a momentary blotch of white. Without the field glasses I might have thought them the work of breaching whales.

On the beach there were two wooden beams with two lines of peg holes containing wooden peg stubs. The beams were about 10 inches in section with the holes in each line 10 inches apart and alternating, not opposite one another. I took these to be ribs loosened from sunken sailing ships. Some brick sized chunks of coal lay about the beach. This exploration around the southern end of the island took seven hours, and I got back to my camp around sunset. My evening box of macaroni enhanced with a five ounce can of chunky chicken was very fine.

The wind eased off on Monday. At low tide I put my 14 lb bag of clothes plus sleeping bag in the bow and the 17 lb bag of camping gear (stove, bottle, pots, flashlight, etc.) in the rear along with the tent in its own bag. My pully and chunk of coal went right behind the seat. The beams with the peg holes and the lobster pots stayed on the beach. The return trip was an easy three hours. I saw more than 50 species of birds and shot five rolls of film. I encountered nobody on either island and found both islands to be almost entirely free of trash. I'll be taking this trip again. Check it out, it's as interesting as it looks on the map.





River Museum at the Steamboat Dock, Essex, CT

Traditional Vessel Weekend 1983

Races, Music, Food & Boat Parade

September 10 & 11

Report & Illustrations from the Connecticut River Foundation

September 10th and 11th provided what has now become the traditional hot and windless weather for the Connecticut River Foundation's annual Traditional Vessel Weekend, a regatta for schooners, catboats and traditional sailing craft. Early breezes on Saturday provided the necessary power for the leaders, ARIA, BOUNDING HOME and COLLEEN to take the top spots in their race. ARIA is a 1914 Herreshoff design owned by Paul

Bates of Noank, CT. BOUNDING HOME is a 65 footer designed by Francis Weisguth and built in 1933 at the Minneford yard. She is owned by Tom Schiller of Stamford, CT. BOUNDING HOME took the Steamboat Dock Trophy for being first over the line, while ARIA was winner overall on corrected time. COLLEEN is a lovely gaff rigged sloop owned by Chris Malliet and Elizabeth Lee of Killingsworth, CT.

The Sunday races for cats and gaffers saw ABIGAIL, SERENDIPITY and CATMANDOO the top three finishers. The first non-catboat to finish was Thayer Syme's WHITEHALL (name, not type of boat). The Halcyon Cup for the youngest skipper in the fleet went to Arby Dixon of FELICITY, who also was the winner last year. Donor Duncan Syme made the presentation. Syme's boat, a motor sailer, EBONY QUEEN served as committee boat for the weekend.

The Traditional Vessel Weekend is the major event run annually by the Connecticut River Foundation. The three days involve not only the racing but also a parade of the boats and social activities. The purpose is to foster interest in traditional boats, their design, construction, rigs and sailing abilities.

Linda and Michael Terry, along with Duncan Syme, have run the event for the past several years, even including the serving of breakfast to participants.

The Sunday races attract a good crowd of the public to view the races on the River and the parade. Food and music are available on the grounds of the Museum and the River Museum is open, of course. (See sidebar article for more details on this Museum). The annual Traditional Vessel Weekend is always held on the weekend following Labor Day each fall.

PEN AND INK ILLUSTRATION OF LIBRARY, PARK DOCKHOUSE, DOCK BY RICHARD BROOKS



The Connecticut River Foundation at Steamboat Dock

P.O. BOX 261, ESSEX, CONNECTICUT 06426
(203) 767-8269

Exhibits and Collections

The Connecticut River Foundation owns a growing collection of artifacts that reflect the diverse history of the River. A portion of the collection is on permanent exhibit, but temporary exhibitions on changing themes permit the visitor to view new artifacts on loan or from the study collection.

Ship and boatbuilding along the River are represented by a strong collection of tools, half models, and cased full-rigged models such as the OLIVER CROMWELL. The role of Connecticut mariners in the rise of the port of New York is interpreted through a fine collection of navigation instruments and paintings.

"Yankee ingenuity" is perhaps best represented through the life-size reproduction of David Bushnell's AMERICAN TURTLE, the first submarine.

The War of 1812 can be seen in dramatic paintings, and the Golden Age of Steamboating through models, prints, and paintings and broadsides.

The warehouse itself, with its cargo doors, hoist, barrels and sacks of Valley produce provides a trip back into time. Those who love the River or are seeing its gentle waters for the first time will more fully appreciate the importance of the River in the history of New England and the nation after their visit to The Connecticut River Foundation at Steamboat Dock.

The Steamboat Dockhouse

Steamboating began in the River in 1823 when the EXPERIMENT, built at Middletown, began regular trips between Hartford and Saybrook twice a week. Landings were made at the many ports along the River and at Starkey's wharf in Essex. Goods were sheltered in the West Indies warehouse until William H. Parmelee built a new Dockhouse in 1878.

The three story, white clapboard building with the graceful cupola soon became a landmark on the River. All of the goods shipped to and from the port of New York passed through this and similar warehouses at the River ports.

The cargo hoist, hanging on the third floor, raised the goods to the second and third floors, keeping the ground floor clear for unloading wagons. Passengers awaited the steamers on the broad dock or on the second floor porch, and approaching steamers, signaled by their whistles, were greeted by crowds of curious residents, anxious for the latest news.

The Connecticut River Foundation has restored the exterior of the Dockhouse and a portion of the interior to its warehouse days. Today it houses a River museum dedicated to preserving the history of the River and the people of the Valley.

Museum Hours

Open May 30 through October 30, Wednesday through Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. All other months, Weekends only from 1 to 4 p.m.

Admission Rates

Children (under 16): \$.50 Seniors (over 65): \$.50
Adults: \$1.50 Members: Free

All groups should confirm reservations prior to visit, special rates available upon request. Please call (203) 767-8269.

School and youth groups should have one adult leader for every ten children. Call: 767-8269.

Bearings

The Connecticut River Foundation is located at the foot of Main Street in Essex Village on the River. From Interstate Highway 95 proceed north on Route 9 to Exit 3 and follow the signs to Essex and Historic Waterfront. From Interstate Highway 91 proceed south on Route 9 to Exit 3 and follow the signs to Essex and Historic Waterfront.



The first weeks of Fall fell short of expectations. Decently chilly, sunny autumn days alive with yellows, oranges and reds, days created specifically for a sharp breeze and good wool sweater, days made to follow a warm summer, such days were delayed. It was, instead, a time of hot, humid, rainy, windless days. And each rainy day demanded a trip to the cove to bail PATINA -- she has no cover, purposefully so, and that forces me out, down to the water, despite my moods.

The energy of the short row out to the mooring, always good for a groan while I'm still at the apartment, became an unexpected change of pace. Thoughts turned to oars, a rope to be spliced, a loose floorboard, a minor leak, the need for another cleat or the always marginal but basically sound condition of the dinghy. Pleasant subjects all, and the need to bail PATINA became its own reward.

But one recent rainy Saturday morning that was not enough. Despite the leaden sky, despite the drizzle, despite the near perfect calm of the cove, I needed to break away from the land. Just a touch, just to be off the shore, adrift, to see things from a small distance, to rock, to drift, to watch the rain and enjoy its misty views. So, foul weather clad, discount store variety, that is, I embarked. There was the quiet, muffled sounds of setting sail in the rain, the wisp of a breeze that carried PATINA off her mooring and across the cove, the soft presence of the rain. And, as the wind

died, the sitting. The pleasure of being dry, yet amidst the weather, the soft greyed pastel shades the rain imposed and the quiet.

Vaguely I looked for birds. The egrets, save one, were gone, the cormorants too. No birds around. Then gradually I became aware of the Great Blue Heron. Though well within my view, he moved in and out of vision, so perfectly did he, or perhaps she, blend with the marsh's edge and the rain. It was a peaceful sense of animation for a peaceful view, a sense of pleasure for things as they are. Later I rowed back to the mooring.

On the way home I stopped for eggs and milk and I do not like shopping. It was the usual Saturday supermarket rush, full parking lots and lines. Arriving home, just after parking the truck, I dropped the bag. "Eggs!" I thought, and got quickly inside to save what I could. Few were broken. And as I looked at the broken eggs, the fine white inner shells, the transparent membrane linings, the beautiful curves of the shells, I was struck by their strength and their fragility. And I thought of the cove and the heron. Ten years ago there was nothing there. The cove had been dead, a place to be avoided; the river likewise. And the life there now.

And as for Fall, it would make it in its own time, come as it liked, and bring with it what it would and be a pleasant surprise.

Classified Marketplace

Looking for a Boat or Gear?

CLASSIFIED ADS ARE FREE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

Yes, anyone who buys a subscription to MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS can place free classifieds in any issue. We hope you won't abuse this with lengthy or numerous ads, but we'll accept any reasonably concise ads for boats or gear appropriate to our editorial content.

Yes, we'll run a photo of your boat if you supply us with a black and white snapshot or a reasonably clear and light color print. No color slides can be used.

CLASSIFIED ADS ARE NOT FREE TO COMMERCIAL ACCOUNTS FOR GENERAL PRODUCTS OR SERVICES.

We will run free classifieds for any firm which has a subscription for individual boats or gear, but not for general product lines or services.

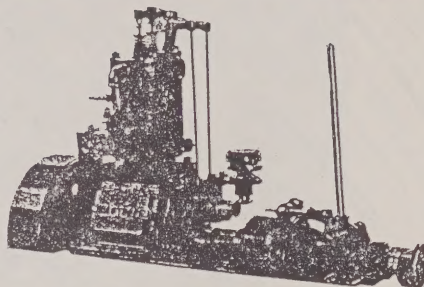
CLASSIFIEDS FOR NON-SUBSCRIBERS ARE 10¢ A WORD, \$3 A PHOTO, EACH ISSUE RUN.

MYSTIC SEAPORT BOAT CLEARANCE: Beetle Cat, \$2800. 18' double ended gunning dory, pulling only, built to plans by John Gardner, \$900. Partially built 14' gaff rigged hard chine centerboard sloop. Framed up and backbone finished, most of materials needed including the Bruynzeel plywood to finish. Fastenings, stem, spars and paint included along with drawings. Similar to Goeller's SEA MEW. Uses H12-1/2 rig. Open to offers. A nice winter project. Two 15' sailing skiffs, Will Ansel built, \$1000 each. Building jig for Seaport built Whitehall and Ames salmon wherry. Offers. BEN FULLER, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT (203) 572-0711.

MYSTIC SEAPORT FOREIGN BUILT BOAT PLACEMENTS: Mystic Seaport would like to talk to or hear from anyone interested in the following boats: 12' 10" Brazilian dugout canoe; 13' 11" Samoan outrigger canoe; 14' outrigger canoe; 16' dugout canoe; 12' 9" Philippine dugout; 15' 3" English workboat; 15' Bindal's boat; 20' Hawaiian dugout canoe, LEI ALOHA; 10' Guatemalan canoe; Philippine outrigger canoe; Philippine outrigger dugout canoe; 13' 11" Turkish caique; 18' longboat, ALBATROSS.

BEN FULLER, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT (203) 572-0711.

15' 6" BOLGER LEEBOARD SHARPIE, 1978, excellent condition, complete \$500. LANCE GUNDERSON, Kittery Pt. ME (207) 439-9623.



NEW EASTHOPE 4-6 MOTOR, marine one cylinder with 1:1 reverse. Perfect for your restoration or new (old) boat project. Dealer cost \$3235 plus \$125 freight. Make me an offer over \$2000. CARTER MANN, Box 891, Camden, ME 04843.

30' WOODEN 210, hull #44, narrow beam open day sailer/racer, bulb keel. Complete with main, genoa and spinnaker, pole and cradle, bronze winches and hardware. Needs bottom work. I can arrange trucking. \$500 or best offer. ROB HICKS, Ipswich, MA (617) 356-2542 or (617) 356-9787.

10' CHAISSON DORY TENDER, cedar over oak frames, copper and bronze fastenings. 7' spruce oars. Bright interior. \$750. ROBERT IVES, Pemaquid, ME (207) 677-3768.

TWO TRADITIONAL BOAT BUYS: 16' Palmer/Lowell Amesbury launch, restored lapstrake. Has character. Original 6hp Palmer single cylinder engine, fresh water cooled. Asking \$3300. 14' pulling boat, c. 1895, excellent design. Built on Lake George. Lapstrake hull, wineglass transom. Restored. \$950. BOB BLEILER, Mystic, CT. (203) 536-2854.

SEVERAL NICE TRADITIONAL BOATS: 23' Cabin Hull, 80% completed, with leeboards. \$2800. Culler Butternut canoe with paddle. \$650. 22' Chapelle Scow sloop, fine sailer and cruiser. \$4500. 19' Crab skiff, pretty boat, TIB main and mizzen. \$2400. CHET FARRELL, W. Dennis, MA (617) 398-2649 after 6 p.m.

BRAND NEW 16' TOWN CLASS SLOOP, as seen at Wooden Boat Show. Built by original builder of Townies since 1930, Pert Lowell of Newbury, MA. Bare hull complete ready for rigging is \$3400. Completely rigged with everything except sails, \$5995. PERT LOWELL CO, Newbury, MA (617) 462-7409.



RANGELEY 17' once more available in limited quantity this winter. Fiberglass hull, varnished wood rails and rowing seats. Length 17', Beam 49", depth amidships 14-3/4", ends 23", weight 185 lbs. Colors: Marine green or white. Price \$1607.

BALDWIN BOAT CO. Orrington, ME 04474. (207) 825-4439. NOTE: The Atlantic 17' ocean kayak is now on the water!

BARGAIN BOAT BUYS FOR WINTER RESTORATION PROJECTS: 15' Herreshoff Bullseye keel sloop, complete with sails, spars, all rigging. Solid hull, needs a sheer plank and some transom repair, recaulking and major repainting and revarnishing. On custom cradle. \$975. 18' vintage inboard motor launch hull only. Needs major work on hull, some replanking, refastening, recaulking, repainting and varnishing. Lines okay, solid shape but lots of work to be done. All interior finish woodwork in place. \$295. 12' lapstrake traditional round bottom tender, bare hull only, brand new in '83. Needs complete finishing out. Cedar on oak, copper fastened. \$395. BOB HICKS, Wenham, MA. (617) 774-0906.

ALDEN OCEAN SHELL SINGLE: New style Oarmaster and English F. collar oars. All in very good condition. \$850. DON CURRY, W. Buxton, ME (207) 727-3378.

MAINE MARITIME MUSEUM BOAT CLEARANCE: 16' 8" Icelon Seed, sails not included, \$3800; 17' Quoddy boat, gaff rigged sloop, \$7500; 18' Norwegian Sognanabat open lapstrake sailing boat, \$2950; 15' Whitehall, \$1800; 12' Asa Thompson skiff, \$725; 21' Alpha sailing dory, complete except for sails, \$3950. MAINE MARITIME MUSEUM APPRENTICESHIP, Bath, ME (207) 443-6311.

BOATS AND GEAR: 19' double ender, fine sailer. \$1800. 24' mast and gear from Town Class. Boice Crane 6" joiner in good shape. \$225. 3" slick, 28" long, big chisel.
CHET FARRELL, W. Dennis, MA (617) 398-2649.

FLYING CAT PLANS: All wood construction.
OCEANSPEACE DESIGN, Saratoga, CA. (408) 252-7445. Mail to 19327 Northampton Dr. Saratoga, CA 95070.

17' PEAPOD, fiberglass 1/2" Klegacle core, bare hull. Four inch full length keel and eight foot sweeps and extras. \$500.
BRIAN INSLEY, Manchester, NH (603) 627-3537.

CHINESE LUG RIG, yard, battens and sail for a 31' Southern Cross cruising sloop. Excellent condition, reasonably priced.
JODY RANDOLPH, Mattapoisett, MA (617) 758-4270.

20' U.S. LIGHTHOUSE SERVICE SURF BOAT. Fully restored in 1982. Cedar on oak construction. Gaff mainsail and spruce spar excellent. Heavily built double ender with bronze hanging knees on all thwarts, bronze breasthooks bow and stern, lifting eyes. Copper riveted, bronze oarlocks and belays. Last of her type! Asking \$1500.
JON HOWARD, Clinton, CT. (203) 669-7629.

16' HERRESHOFF DOUBLE PADDLE CANOE: Built in 1981 by Walt Simmons. Two cane seats and one paddle. \$995.
GENE GIFFORD, E. Islip, NY (516) 582-4566 from 8 to 5.

6' OLD TOWN DINK: A rare classic canoe construction yacht tender. Two rowing positions. Cedar, ash, oak and mahogany. In excellent condition, a steal at only \$400.
PHIL CARLING, Hingham, MA. (617) 749-3637.

HERRESHOFF BUZZARDS BAY 14, complete hull, deck frames in place. Needs deck, cockpit, spars, rig, etc. to finish out. Built by Ken Clayton at Graves in Marblehead as part of boat building course. A small yacht built big yacht style. Too many projects, no time to finish. \$2500.
RON GINGER, Framingham, MA (617) 877-8217.

17' KAYAK with adjustable seat, rod holder and paddle. ESCAPE model, excellent condition. New cost \$1200, asking \$800 or B.O. Also 12' river kayak in good condition, \$100.
DIANNE INSLEY, Manchester, NH (603) 627-3709.

18' MAINE GUIDE MODE OAT CANOE, cedar/canvas wilderness touring design. New, \$2800.
OAT CANOE CO. Mt. Vernon, ME. (207) 293-2694.

16' 4" GLIDER O/B RUNABOUT: Vertical grain cedar. Folding bench seats, sturdy samson post. In dry storage for a number of years. Reasonable restoration project. \$200 or B.O.
PLYMOUTH PLANTATION, Plymouth, MA. (617) 746-1622, ask for Paul Lipke.

APPRENTICE POSITION AVAILABLE. Learn construction and repair of small wood boats, 6 months to 1 year depending on skill. Must have basic hand wood-working tools, and provide own living expenses. Full time position available at conclusion of apprenticeship.
NORTH RIVER BOATWORKS, Albany, NY (518) 434-4414.

23' BILL GARDEN DESIGN CATBOAT, 23' x 10' x 2' 3". LWL, 20' 9". Double planked cedar/mahogany hull, BMW MD-12 inboard diesel. Nat Wilson 420 sq. ft. dacron sail with hardwood blocks and dacron running rigging. This is an exceptionally well designed small craft, large in comforts, built to your demands of perfection. Only three will be built. 90 day delivery. Priced now at \$28,500. Beginning January, 1984, expect price increase to \$33,750.
EMC JOINERSHOP, P.O. Box 133, New-castle, ME 04553. Write for brochure.

CUSTOM FLAGS & BANNERS, personal signals, masthead streamers, yacht club burgees, national & historic flags, etc.
FLYING COLORS, P.O. Box 57, Newport, RI 02840.

16' SKIFF, flat bottom, pine on oak. Heavily built, bronze fastened. Galvanized bow eye and oarlocks. New, unpainted. \$900.
FRED HURLEY, Winthrop, MA (617) 846-7509.

WANTED: Propellor, shaft, etc. to fit 17' motor launch. Have hull and 3hp Gray, need everything else.
RON GINGER, Framingham, MA (617) 877-8217.

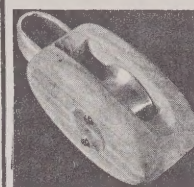
25' JUNIOR HOLIDAY SLOOP, 1954 Dutch built, mahogany on oak, bronze fastened 8hp auxiliary, 4 sails, good inventory. Send for complete details.
 Asking \$6500 or best offer.
DAVE DURGIN, Duxbury, MA (617) 585-4991.

16' ANTIQUE INBOARD LAUNCH. Carvel planked, professionally fiberglassed. Fitted with one cylinder Detroit Auto Marine water cooled engine and reversible pitch bronze propellor. Deck and interior need refinishing, boat is structurally sound. \$1200.
H.H. PAYSON, So. Thomaston, ME (207) 594-7587.

WANTED: Old mahogany runabouts such as Chris Crafts, Gar Woods, Hacker-crafts, for restoration. Also wanted are hardware, literature, pictures, models or any information relating to antique runabouts.
DAVE PEACH, Marblehead, MA (617) 631-5571.

15' CHRIS CRAFT CAVALIER, 1956 model. Also several other wooden and fiberglass boats, 14' to 22'.
DON FARNSWORTH, China, ME. (207) 968-2932.

12' SAN FRANCISCO PELICAN, great family day sailer, fir marine ply on Honduras mahogany framing. \$3500 with sails. Brand new.
OLD WHARF DORY, Wellfleet, MA. (617) 349-2383.



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BAINBRIDGE BLOCKS, 1101 Wing Pt. Way NE, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110.

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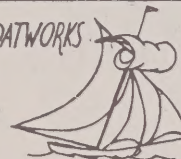
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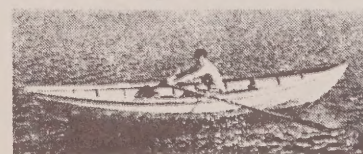
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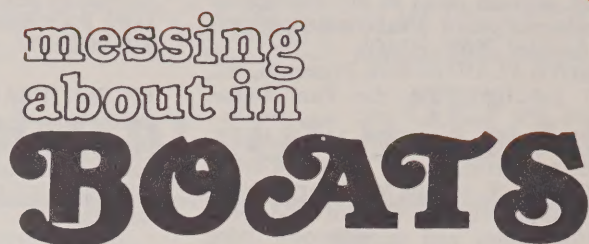
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