



Firstly, the best of sailing in 1965 to all of you, and a welcome to the following new members.

H. Benham, Feldy, The Lane, West Mersea, Essex
Miranda
R.C.Dobbs, 1107, West 76th St., Los Angeles 44, California.
Galathea
R.E.Griffiths, 51, Silvestor Road, Cowplain, Hants.
Reedbird
M.R.Laver, 90, North Avenue, Highbridge, Somerset.
Welsh Bounty
G.S.Marchant, Cnaigielea, 32, Hillhouse Drive, Billericay, Essex
N.McCready, Celtic, Heybridge Basin, Maldon, Essex
Aark
F.H.Parsons,, Shirley House, High Street, Freshwater, I.O.W.
Mina
A.H.Purnell, Rosemead, 26, Downs Road, Maldon, Essex
Oyster II
W.G.Tucker, Tower Cottage, Green Lane, Bursledon, Hants.
Trammel
A.J.Yeatman, Riverside Yard, Bursledon, Hants.
B.C.Jarman, c/o Flat 2, The Cottage, The Rutts, Bushey, Herts.
Privateer

NOTES AND NEWS I know all members will join me in wishing speedy recoveries to Ken Beale, in Stoke Mandeville Hospital following a motoring accident; and to Peter Tangvald, in hospital in the south of France recovering from a heart infection. I am also sure that all members who listened to the radio on January 29th will join me in congratulating Peter on the recorded interview on Dorothea's circumnavigation.

EAST COAST AREA MEETING. There will be a meeting in the Tea Room at the Blue Boar Hotel, Silver Street, Maldon (the top end of the town, opposite the church) on Sunday, March 28th. at 3-0 p.m. There are several points concerning the race to be discussed, and we must have a larger race committee. We hope as many members as possible will come along.

BOAT SHOW Helping our local yard at the recent show, it was encouraging to hear enquiries for the original gaff rigged version of their 1921 designed Blackwater Sloop. Also at the show, I hope all of you who visited Earl's Court saw V.A. Hammond's excellent oil painting of Gladys, Rosena, Sugar Creek and others at the start of the 1964 East Coast Race. Mr. Hammond and I hope that paintings of the race will be a regular feature in future years.

THE RACING RULES The Association has copies of the I.Y.R.U. racing rules for sale at 3/- each. We do NOT wish to see our races become a gathering of sea lawyers with the ultimate result decided by protest committees, but as the events grow in popularity, rules must be observed to avoid collisions or gross unfairness. There is really nothing terrible in the racing rules - they merely make it clear (or fairly clear!) who has right of way at marks etc., and other similar points not covered in the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea. Now that the Int. Regs. are to be changed, there will not be the outstanding differences between the two sets of rules, and this year's races will be a good chance for those who enter no other races to try sailing under the new rules before they apply to all boats.

CORRESPONDENCE Recent correspondence includes invitations from J.M. Robson, of La Chaumiere, Sark, C.I. to any members contemplating cruising in the area to drop him a line; and from Mr. & Mrs. L.C. Sparrow for any member cruising on the Crouch to call aboard their bawley Gladys, moored at North Fambridge.

Mr. and Mrs. E. Mappley, of Langley House, Stein Road, Southbourne Near Emsworth would like to hear from any members who have photographs of their cutter Evergreen. (See picture page).

I have also received leaflets on car badges, lapel badges, neoprene sailing suits (any member who would like to know more, drop me a line), and a copy of the East Coast edition of Boat World. This yearbook, published by Business Dictionaries Ltd., St. Dunstan's House, 133-7, Fetter Lane, London E.C.4, is remarkably good value for money at 10/-. The East Coast Edition covers the area from Berwick on Tweed to Portland (the rest of the country is in the West Coast Edition) giving information on clubs, mooring and launching facilities, and general facilities ashore in the "where can I sail and cruise" section, which constitutes the last third of the 768 page book (768 plus 16 pages of maps). The centre is a typical trade directory, which appears to be VERY comprehensive, whilst the front section contains short articles on a wide variety of subjects, similar to Reed's Almanac. The tide table included is a single page covering H.W. Dover from April to September, and differences are given for only a few ports. I intend to take care never to be without a copy in future and recommend it to all members who want a quick reference book.

FINANCE At the start of a new year, this newsletter contains copies of the Association's statement of accounts, and a copy of last year's East Coast Race accounts. In the race account, postages and envelopes have been divided to show the amount spent on publicity, sailing instructions etc. The telegrams had to be sent because of the G.P.O. strike. The three small cups which were presented were left over from 1963 and do not appear on the accounts. With increasing popularity it is hoped that we can make the launch pay for itself, and the sale of copies of the sailing instructions as souvenirs should increase. However, with an enlarged prize list this year, we shall need a larger entry to pay our way. It is not intended to publish the race accounts every year, although they will always be available on request. I have included these to give all members an idea of the cost of running such an event.

The main accounts show an item for East Coast Race Folders because the Association made a bulk purchase, and for the next few years these will be transferred to the race accounts as they are used.

No ties are shown in the stock in hand as they are not the property of the Association, but of the member who financed their purchase.

Whilst on the subject of finance, there are still some cash subscriptions outstanding. Please send them in as soon as possible so we can estimate the sizes and numbers of newsletters we can afford for the year.

PHOTOGRAPHS in this issue are by R.E. Griffiths, of 51, Silvestor Road, Cowplain, Hants., from whom copies can be obtained. Prices are 6/- full plate or 3/- half plate. Matt or glossy finish. Larger sizes to order.

SMALL ADDS. For Sale. ROTHION 37'0.A., 30'W.L. yawl, built Thomas of Falmouth 1896. Sleeps 4, Gas cooker, Sink, S/L W.C., Dinghy, all sails 5 years old. Engine possibly no use. £900 Enquiries to East Coast Yacht Agency, Woodbridge, Suffolk.

INCOME

EXPENDITURE

[illegible]

Audited (Signed) R.G.B.Daws 10 - 1 - 65

CATALOGUE OF GAFFERS

TWILIGHT 117988 8 Ton yawl designed and built by W.E.Thomas of Falmouth - a true Quay Punt. Before I bought her she was reputed to have been round the British Isles twice and to the Baltic at least once. I have proof of half way round the British Isles anyway in that a friend of mine who is a retired officer in my own Corps helped fetch her from Oban to the Medway here in 1922. Uffa Fox writes about bringing her back from Kristiansand to Cowes in what he calls four and a half days sailing. I myself have taken her to the Baltic twice, and all along Southern Ireland twice as well as numerous cross Channel trips. In the fourteen seasons I have owned her she has made good 12,000 miles.

B.G.Bloomer (Col.)

1964
SOLENT
RACE

CYGNET



'CYGNET'

26/24

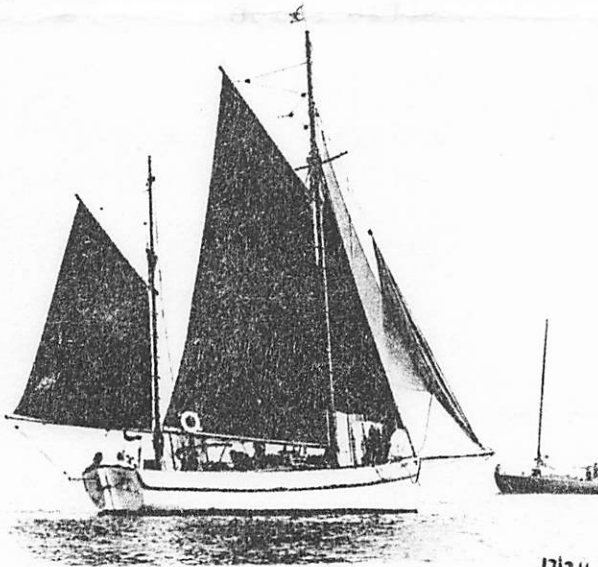
EVERGREEN



'EVERGREEN'

18/24

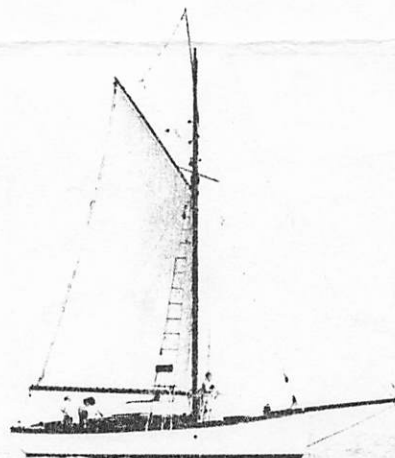
GIRL STELLA



GIRL STELLA

17/24

ROSALIND



'ROSALIND'

3/24

Catologue of Gaffers (Cont.)

DELTA 18 Ton ketch. Built in 1912 by Maclarens of Dumbarton for the Mersea Mission to Seaman. Originally she was a motor sailor with two masts gaff rigged. During the war twin Chrysler engines were fitted, the masts removed and a 16 ft. mast for steadying sail only substituted, but no other alterations made to the lines of the hull. I am fitting her out as she was originally with two masts and gaff sails. Although not in the racing class we hope to make her a comfortable sea going boat.

J.B.Holmes

CHESTER TO LONDON

By Alex. G.Taylor.

The decision to make the trip by canal from Chester to London was made as a matter of necessity rather than for pleasure purposes, but in the event it proved to be quite a pleasant holiday.

Twelve months previously my wife and I had purchased the battered remnants of Kathleen, a 20 foot clinker built centreboard gaff sloop. She had, so far as we knew, been built or converted for shrimping around the first war, and had been operated from Parkgate on the Dee estuary. Ours was the usual search for a boat, very cheap but with possibilities of being made seaworthy. The search led us to the banks of the Alt at Hightown on the Mersey. "Yes" they said, "you'll find her on the hard, a bit rough, wants painting etc." We found her, and a very sad sight she was, heeled amid a forest of marsh grass, rigging a complete shambles of rusty wire, a mast of a diameter to suit an America's Cup challenger, completely devoid of varnish and finished like a pit prop. Poking drunkenly out of the cockpit was the boom and broken remains of the gaff. (The children from the land of the "Mersea Sound" are indeed strong in the arm). The only consolation was her overall appearance. She looked like a sailing boat. We maintain there is a distinct difference between a boat and a yacht. A boat is sort of fish shaped in plan, usually has a wide transom, no overhang and a long straight keel, and is of course built of wood. They also have a general air of knobbyness, chunks of wrought iron in place of slim pieces of stainless steel, a la Design Centre.

A peep into the cockpit revealed the biggest, ugliest engine imaginable. A quick check showed that the engine had not been bolted down. The size and weight were such that we felt sure that poor old Kathleen couldn't possibly have floated with that load of old iron in her tummy. To have lined the crankshaft up with the hole where the propellor shaft should have been would have entailed some slight modifications, i.e. a 3' x 1'6" hole in the bottom.

I made a careful examination of the hull, at least as careful as my lack of experience made possible. This led us to the conclusion that she wasn't a complete write off, but that the most serious damage seemed to be split planks and broken ribs, 33 in all. I knew in my heart that she would probably leak like a sieve but I felt that if she could be made seaworthy she would probably sail quite well; reasoning that if she had not been a seaworthy little craft she would have been condemned to rot many years ago. Moreover the materials of which she was constructed were of good quality, pitchpine on oak. In short, it was a case of an old tore out or nothing, at least until our mythical ship came in, and by that time we suspected we would be in receipt of the old age pension. So throwing caution to the winds and in the face of a fair amount of opposition and well meant (probably sound) advice, we concluded the deal.

A quick coat of black varnish was slapped on the hull and the mast removed with its attendant spiders web of rusty wirework. With the mast lashed on the car roof rack we set off for home. The journey was not without hazard as the projecting mast made the journey a kind of twentieth century jousting tournament. Various bits and pieces of rigging were made up by erecting all the components in the garden and a new gaff was fabricated from a broken G.P. mast kindly presented to us by a Hightown Sailing Club member. A couple of weeks later the return trip was made, the mast stepped, standing rigging secured (deadeye and lanyard type). Selecting a suitable spring tide, after much trench digging and heaving out of ballast she was persuaded to pull up her roots and towed down to a temporary mooring.

A week later while sitting round a cosy fire at 11 30 p.m. we received a somewhat garbled message that Kathleen had sunk ! There we were planning some sailing (we actually had a coastal chart spread out on the hearth at the time) only to find that the old tub couldn't even remain afloat at her moorings. We leapt in the car and rushed off to the scene of the disaster. A quick survey of the moorings disclosed 6 feet of mast protruding from the water.

The remainder of that night we shan't easily forget. It was very cold and lonely on that stretch of windswept foreshore with only the revolving loom of the lighthouse to relieve the darkness. Waiting for the tide to recede, we boarded Kathleen in a borrowed dinghy and by wading up to the armpits into the cabin, I managed to block up the slot in the centreboard case. After some vigorous baling she floated once more.

We decided that we must get her where serious repairs could be carried out. The following weekend, in company with a friend (John) we arrived at the top of the tide and prepared to sail across the Mersea estuary to Hilbre Island and thence to Chester. I had made up my mind that future plans depended on whether Kathleen performed in the manner born or not. If not she would be left to rot. I couldn't visualise anyone else being silly enough to buy her. She must have realised that her fate was in the balance because, though battered and unkempt, she gave us a wonderful sail.

The entrance between the Alt and the Mersea estuary is a difficult one, drying to a mere trickle at low water. Even at high water it is necessary to navigate with care to avoid grounding on one of the numerous evil smelling mud banks. We sailed carefully between the marks maintained by the local club and got out without touching. Once in the open water under mainsail and foresail, Kathleen bowled along nicely. The wind increased and it soon became necessary to reef. We had pumped out before starting, but in such a flat floored boat a little bilge water goes a long way. Thus most of our gear, charts, etc., were soaked before we had been sailing many minutes. The rest of the trip was very enjoyable. Kathleen handled very well and seemed to have no vices, apart from leaking at a prodigious rate making frequent pumping necessary. The pump is one of those delightfully simple fisherman types, consisting of eighteen inches of two inch bore copper tube, a simple wooden bung with leather valve forming the foot. The plunger consists of an iron rod with wooden piston and leather flap valve. It proved very effective in pumping water, matchsticks, bits of sandwich, cigarette packets etc. without choking, but had an incurable habit of spraying the operator on every up stroke.

We anchored off Hilbre Island for the night and a most uncomfortable night it proved to be. Apart from the lack of

civilised amenities such as bunk mattresses etc., the interior of the hull was still covered with nasty slimy mud, and as the Alt is an unashamed drain for a sizable portion of Lancashire, the accomodation smelt not a little. The situation as regards comfort was a cross between a mountain bivouac and a sewer. John, whose idea of comfort is Christmas spent in a tent in the mountains, settled into his particularly dirty little corner and went to sleep. To ensure that Kathleen didn't slip quietly to the bottom while we weren't looking I dozed with one hand trailing in the bilge, the caress of cold water being the signal to rise and pump. By morning we were high and dry and I was able to walk ashore to telephone my wife. Not being able to locate a public telephone, I knocked on the door of a private house. The lady of the house gave a visible start on seeing me and her eyes travelled in horrified amazement to my feet, protruding from a pair of wet and tattered tennis shoes. My request to use the 'phone was agreed to provided I removed my footwear before entering her "Homes and Gardens" type hall. I arrived back at the boat just as the tide was making - in fact I had to swim the last few yards.

We then proceeded to make a classic error of judgement, the sort of thing that makes the learned write letters bristling with nautical terms to the Yachting Press. The wind was on shore and for some inexplicable reason we decided to take her out under our pathetic little hired outboard. We had not gone fifty yards when it was snuffed out by a passing wave. I quickly got the anchor away but it started dragging due to lack of scope. To have increased it would have put us on the rocks. I immediately started getting the mainsail up and John fought to get the rudder in place - removed the previous night. How he got it home God knows; it's very heavy and no easy job under calm conditions, without trying to do it with the boat rolling rail under in the rough sea kicked up by the nearby rocks. She began to pay off into the wind and we were able to sail the anchor out. A few tacks later we were out of danger. In my experience a lot can be learned from dinghy sailing but of seamanship you don't learn much. This particular experience taught me how dangerous it is to rely on an engine and also how quickly a simple operation can become dangerous.

The rest of the trip was uneventful, Kathleen bowling along in grand style as far as Connah's Quay. From here to Chester the river narrows and has been canalised. The high banks make sailing almost impossible so we motored the last lap to Chester. An interesting feature of the Dee is the "bore" which under the right conditions produces a wall of water about two feet high moving at about five knots. This brings debris up river with considerable force and more than one moored craft has been sunk by being torpedoed by a large chunk of dunnage wood.

My wife and I had previously prospected around for a suitable place to carry out serious repairs and had located a strip of fenced off river bank, decorated by a tumbledown shed and bearing the proud sign of Tinkler's Boat Yard. This little place proved ideal for repairs as the boat could be beached on the top of the tide and then blocked up clear of all but the highest tides. No real yachtsman ever came near the place due to its location (adjacent to the gas works) and lack of amenities, no water, power or covered space, but it was cheap. How cheap we have only just realised. The practice of assessing storage rates by the number of five pound notes that can be laid end to end along the keel has not penetrated to that particular part of the world yet. It was a real make do and mend yard, littered with handy baulks of timber. Everybody was most helpful and interested, tendering

good, bad and indifferent advice on how any job should be done. Many of the salmon fishermen frequented it, storing and repairing their boats there.

In spite of (or because of) a new house and garden to attend to, we managed to spend most weekends there. When my wife presented me with a new foredeck hand, we trundled his pram down there too, so the repairs were a family effort.

Closer examination revealed why Kathleen leaked so badly. A number of planks had split for five or six feet along the lands, also I found over thirty cracked timbers. The latter defect was not "fair wear and tear" but was due in a large measure to a previous owner having left her to pound her ribs in on the beach during the winter gales. Three damaged planks were removed. We found the easiest way to do this with minimal damage to the sound planks was to use a sharpened caulking iron. A thin iron was ground to a sharp edge, then by slipping it between the lands and giving it a sharp tap, the copper fastenings were easily sheared. We had tried using a hacksaw blade, punches etc., but a well honed iron made a much better job.

A former was made up, the average shape of the bent timbers and after steaming $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " green oak was bent over it and allowed to set. After some experiments with a home made steam box, we came to the conclusion that boiling was the most satisfactory method of softening. One end of a ten foot iron pipe was blocked up and supported at an angle, filled with water and a fire of scrap wood lighted under it. The water rapidly came to the boil, about fifteen minutes immersion of the oak was all that was necessary to make it perfectly pliable. After setting, each frame was removed from the former and wangled into place alongside the original frame. I treated each timber as a replacement and not as a strengthening piece, and somehow coaxed the maximum length into place. These timbers took terrific punishment while driving them under existing stringers. New larch planks were fitted and rivetted up using copper nails and roves. It was amazing how much difference those new frames made to the strength of the hull. We strengthened up the centreboard case and fitted heavyweight galvanised iron floors on which the iron ballast could sit instead of bouncing about on the unprotected skin.

We were just thinking about breaking up the rotten cabin top and starting afresh when I had to move jobs to the South. We debated whether to sell Kathleen and decided in the end to try to keep her. We had a feeling that if we sold her we would not be in a position to buy a boat again for many years. We only had a hazy idea of whereabouts we would be living but we felt reasonably sure it would be within striking distance of the coast. I had to leave in rather a hurry with only time to slap on a quick coat of paint and nail a rough floor down in the cockpit. I was unable to return to Chester very frequently after the removal of our domestic effects. When a date had been fixed to bring Kathleen down to the Thames my sister came to the rescue with the preliminary preparations. Assisted by a group of friends she got her off the hard and floated her from the River Dee through the locks into the Shropshire Union Canal Basin.

My wife and I arrived at Chester one very wet weekend in June complete with a second hand Brittania outboard. This was hastily bolted on the transom, the cabin cleaned out more or less and stores, sleeping bags etc. taken aboard. All the ballast, mast etc. had been removed to reduce the draught to the minimum. I haven't yet worked out how we are going to get 4 cwts. of ballast and a 20 ft. mast to her present berth. Originally I had intended to lash the mast on deck but a

quick count of the number of locks we had to pass through changed my mind. In retrospect, I think we made the right decision; the projecting mast bow and stern would have been a confounded nuisance, but I think we could have left the ballast in.

On Saturday morning we started the outboard and set off. It soon became apparent that the engine hadn't sufficient guts to propel the boat at a reasonable speed. It was a case of abandoning the trip or buying a more powerful engine. As I had only two weeks holiday left it would have meant leaving the trip until the following year. After a chase round I managed to locate a standard shaft Century Plus in almost new condition. This engine proved to have ample capacity, started easily and has not given any trouble at all. Negotiations are now proceeding with Seagulls to lengthen the shaft.

We had planned our route out roughly and decided to travel via Nantwich, Audley, Market Drayton, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Napton Junction, Banbury, Oxford, and then down the Thames to Shepperton.

The inland waterway system is divided into two lock widths, seven feet maximum and fourteen feet or over. Our route was 14 ft. Chester to Nantwich, 7 ft. Nantwich to Birmingham, 14 ft. Birmingham to Napton Junction and then 7 ft. to Oxford. Anyone contemplating a similar trip should check carefully the maximum beam of his craft as the nominal width of 7 feet is a bit optimistic. Kathleen is 6'10" wide and only just fitted into some of the old locks. Due to settlement the sides of these locks have in many cases bulged inwards, giving in some cases widths of less than seven feet.

We, (wife, sister and myself) left Chester in the pouring rain, heading for Beeston Castle. The first locks were negotiated successfully and without knocking too much paint off the old boat. A digression at this point about the operation of the locks may be of interest to anyone who has not used them. Generally 7 ft. locks have a single, wooden gate top and bottom. The locks come in single units or flights of up to twenty odd. The top gate has the sluice valve (paddle) in the gate and is operated by a rack and pinion drive, the pinion being turned by a shaft and removable lock key. The bottom gate has two paddles let into the lock wall so that the water can be emptied out of the lock by two underwater passages (one either side). The modus operandi is as follows;- if you are proceeding up the lock, i.e. increasing your altitude, you moor up before the lock keeping well clear of the gate. Usually a lay-by is provided. Go ashore, not forgetting the lock key, and inspect the lock. If it's full check that the top paddles are closed and commence winding up the two bottom paddles. This will empty the lock and equalise the lock water level with the canal. The reason for mooring well clear can be seen just below the lock gate. I was told by an elderly lock keeper that heavily laden commercial boats have been sunk by mooring tight up to the gates and slamming both paddles wide open. No advantage is gained in trying to open the gate before the water levels are exactly even. Just lean on the beam - as soon as the levels are even it will open. Tow the boat in or start the engine (not usually worth the effort). Moor up with bow and stern lines or hold by hand from ashore or by passing the warp round a bollard and back to the helmsman. Close the bottom gate and drop the paddles. Open up the top gate paddle, then sit on the gate, light your pipe and reflect on the skill and industry of the men who built the canals, with pick and shovel, horses and muscle power alone. In due course the water levels will equalise; open the top gate, close the paddle start the engine and away you go. Don't forget to close the paddle and the gate.

This latter operation is requested by the Waterways people in order to prevent waste of water should the bottom gate leak badly.

The only special point to watch in these locks is that you don't get swept against the bottom gate when the top paddle is opened. When descending the procedure is reversed except that you can moor hard up against the top gate. When in the lock and descending, keep well clear of the top gate. There is a ledge about a foot wide just below the gate. If the propellor shaft rests on this projection while the water level is descending, a bent shaft will certainly result. We met a couple disconsolately towing their boat having bent the shaft this way. The speed with which you can ascend or descend depends largely on whether you have to fill or empty before entering. The time you take to pass through a lock depends to some extent on the number of crew, but of course a large part of the operation is spent filling or emptying the lock, this time being outside your control. Our times were probably longer than average. I was the only male member of the party and my wife was expecting a happy event (galley hand as it turned out). On the whole it is not worth pulling yourself to pieces for the little time saved. It's not very hard work to get through one lock but if you rush up a flight of twenty you are likely to become a grease spot before you reach the top.

Our first day's progress took us as far as Beeston Castle. As I had two competent cooks in the crew a good meal was soon prepared. The cabin was a bit cramped to sleep in, but the main snag was numerous leaks in the coach roof. We got away next day as early as possible after coffee and biscuits, cooking the breakfast while on the move. The day was spoilt by torrential rain, which kept up hour after hour. Evening found us very wet and not a little tired at the top of a flight of fifteen locks at Audlem. Audlem is a pleasant little town with an excellent array of cosy pubs. After having dried and warmed ourselves in one of the aforementioned cosy pubs with accompanying liquid refreshment, we felt a lot better and agreed that the morrow couldn't possibly be any worse, but of course it was. By the following evening we had covered a further eleven miles and ten locks, mooring up at Wheaton Ashton. The relatively slow progress was due in the main to bad weather. Slipping and sliding round muddy locks in streaming oilskins makes each operation more difficult and slows progress considerably. By this time we had resigned ourselves to creeping slowly south and making as much progress as possible in the remaining ten days.

The following day dawned clear and sunny, completely altering our view of life. This lovely weather was to continue for the remainder of the trip. That day we covered 15 miles and 22 locks, mooring up in the middle of an industrial desert between Wolverhampton and Birmingham. This stretch of the Midlands was very depressing. Although the canal was just about navigable, the main snag was that the propellor kept getting choked with weeds. The scenery was really grim, miles and miles of decaying factories and warehouses. Industry in the Midlands grew round the canals and as much of the basic industry has fallen on hard times, the resulting shambles of decaying buildings has to be seen to be believed.

Eventually we travelled out of the worst of the area and headed for Napton Junction through very pleasant country. This stretch of canal is in very good condition, the width of the locks is in excess of 19 ft. and they are in beautiful condition. The paddles are of modern design and the operating mechanism works in an enclosed oil bath. Though easy to operate there are many of them, including a flight of 20 down to the junction. This flight took the best part of a day to