

from WIDE HORIZONS

★ Our gal in Durban, **BIANCA LAVIES**, talks to and photographs some of this summer's ocean-crossing "little ship men" calling at South African ports. . . .



His first contact with the shore (above) after 81 days at sea. Rhodesian Humphrey Thwaits on board of his 27 ft. home built yacht Humpty-doo, which he sailed single handed from Australia.

ON October 2, after 81 days at sea, a tired 39-year-old Rhodesian arrived at the Durban yacht basin after sailing his yacht *Humpty-Doo* single-handed all the way from Queensland, Australia.

His last port of call had been Thursday Island. Since he left Cairns in Queensland, the hardest part of his trip had been trying to get into Durban. For a week he battled with strong winds which kept blowing him up the coast. His yacht carried no engine.

Humphrey Thwaits, an engineer's surveyor, left Rhodesia in 1948 for Australia.

He had built the yacht, which was launched in March this year, himself taking three years for the job.

Humpty Doo belongs to the Daydream Class, designed by Kenneth Watts, Sydney.

Humphrey had hacked a piece into the Australian bush and then started building his dreamboat from scratch. He even had to borrow money to obtain the plans!

It had been in his mind from the start to sail in his own yacht back to Africa and go to see his parents in Rhodesia again. He has no big round-the-world plans for his ship.

He enjoyed every minute of the trip and never felt bored. Throughout his voyage he kept a log and made drawings of the things he saw—birds, whales or just an endless stretch of sea.

Whales and dolphins followed him on the trip and he said that as the shell of his boat was so thin he could clearly hear the whistling noises dolphins and whales made to communicate with each other.

He had also made a large fish of cloth for his little cousin. "It proved to be a very hungry one," he said. It had eaten half an army blanket.

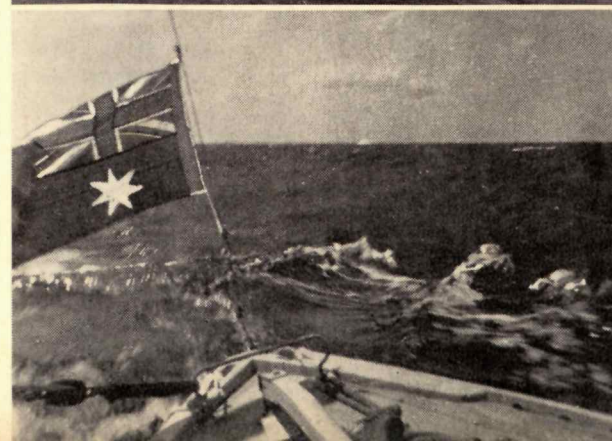
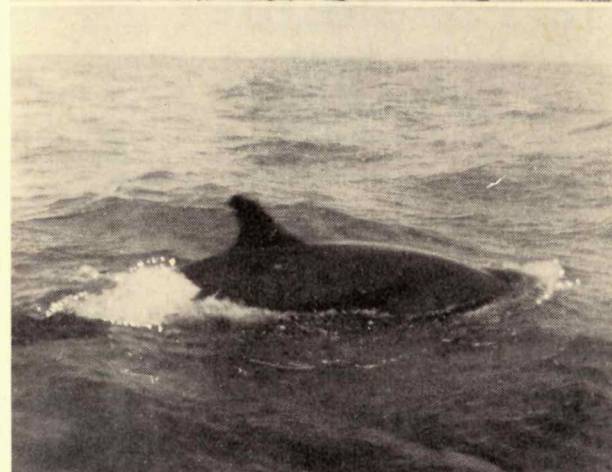
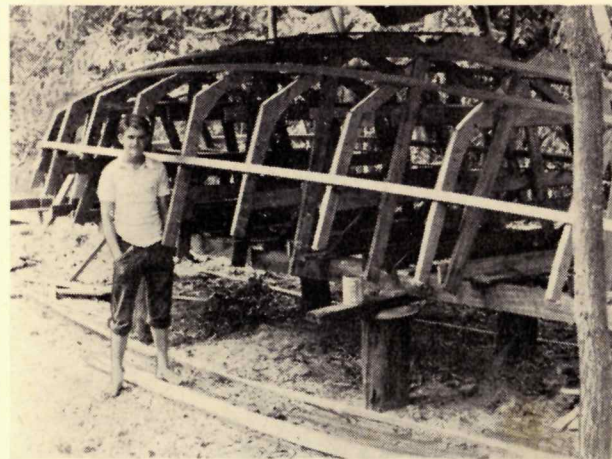
Another thing that had kept him busy on the trip was making mead, an alcoholic mixture made of honey and water.

Also, of course, there were the various and never-ending little jobs of maintenance to be done to the boat.

Humphrey has now left for Rhodesia to work on a tobacco plantation. He wants to buy new sails for his boat. And then? He will just see what he feels like doing next. What is the use of making plans, anyway!

RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM:

Humpty Doo starts taking shape, out in the Australian bush. Some whales followed the yacht for hours out in the Indian Ocean. The Australian ensign, and the endless horizon of the Indian Ocean.



The Tuarangi, from New Zealand, another double-ender, took six years in the building. She is also circumnavigating the trade-wind route.

The 36-ft. round-the-world ketch *Myonie* which turned up in Durban crewed by an American couple, Dr. Albert Gehrman and his wife Helen—all three shown here just after their arrival off the Point Yacht Club. The ship was designed by John Hanna, who with Bill Hand were the chief exponents in the States of the popular Colin Archer-type of deepwater ship. More about the bluewater folk in this issue's "Durban Doings" feature.



The crew of Tuarangi. From left: Peter Baxter, Owen Jones, Jack Crooks and Jack Hargreaves. All except Englishman Owen are from Invercargill, New Zealand.



The junk Ying Hong's new crew are, from left: Pat and Mike Briant, Wally Johnson of Durban, and Leon le Roux of Pretoria. The dragon figurehead was carved in Durban by a friend of the ship, Henry Nevill.

The Chinese junk Ying Hong, which has slipped mooring after a long stay in Durban, and had dropped in on Knysna at time of going to press. Here she is sailing down the bay on her way to the blue water again.





Steve Glinane's new H.M.V. fibreglass Finn Finance—the first Dutch Finn in the Durban fleet.

Deep water visitors . . .

BILL GEERING was welcomed to Durban after a three-week single-handed trip from Mauritius in *Kate*, by a 64 m.p.h. storm.

The 35-ft. ketch had practically reached Durban when a gale sprang up and he decided to head out to sea again for safety.

At midnight the wind was recorded by the Bluff signal station at 64 m.p.h. It was the worst wind which *Kate* had experienced during her eight-month voyage from Hong Kong where she was built.

Bill Geering is originally from Adelaide, Australia. The ketch was designed partly by him and partly by a friend and took eight months to build. He had left Hong Kong in April and had sailed via Penang and Rodriguez to Mauritius. It is his first visit to South Africa.



Bill Geering receives his first mail aboard *Kate of Hong Kong* after pulling in from a three-week passage from Mauritius.

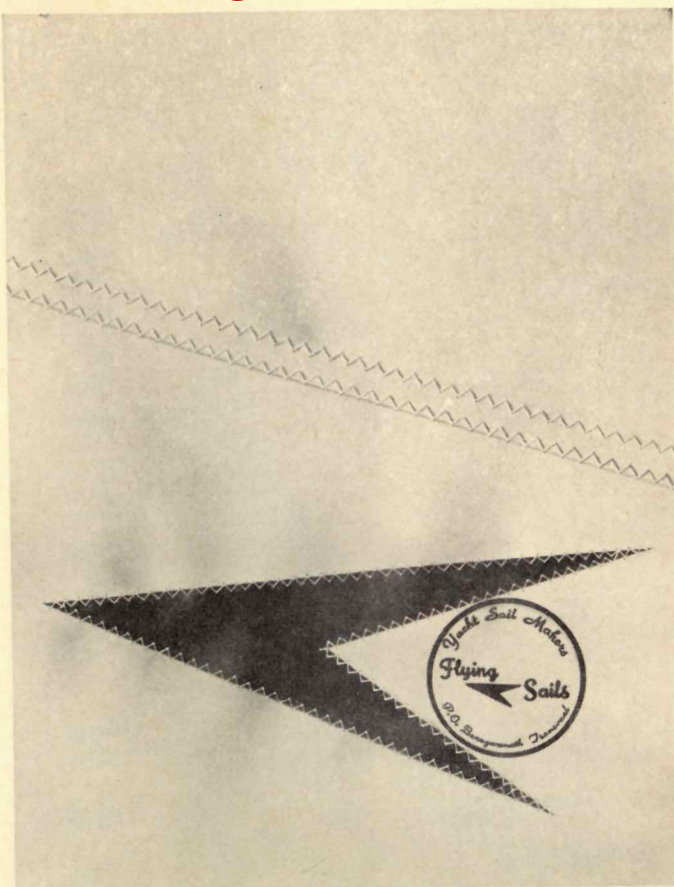
Photo: Bianca Lavies.

The Chinese junk Ying Hong . . .

AFTER spending 18 months in Durban, the Chinese junk *Ying Hong* has continued her wanderings round the world. She left Durban for Cape Town just before Christmas with three men, one girl, a Siamese kitten and a canary on board.

She is the second Chinese Junk to be in South African waters since 1848.

(Continued on page 72)



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more CLUB NOTES

(Continued from page 71)

The only one left of the original crew is Mike Briant. Mike is 27, was born in England, but grew up in Cape Town and then joined the Merchant Navy. He had the *Ying Hong* built in Hong Kong and sailed from there in August, 1961, on the 9,000-mile voyage to Durban, with two other crew members.

The others now on board are Wally Johnson, of Durban, who is part owner of the junk and Leon le Roux, 20, of Pretoria, who studies engineering but plans to take a break for 18 months. Then there is Mike's wife Pat. Mike and Pat were married in December last year. She is a Durban girl.

They plan to spend about two months in Cape Town, where they will decide where to go next—England or the West Indies. "It will probably be the West Indies," said Pat. They would then sail to England, where Mike hopes to get his master's ticket.

Eventually the junk will be sold in the United States.

During the trip from Hong Kong to Durban the mainmast broke twice. The pieces had been lashed together till the junk recently got a new mast, made by Mike from a log brought up from Cape Town. While in Durban the junk had a railway line fitted along the full length of her keel to give her extra ballast.

They also had a new mainsail made.

Ketch from Invercargill . . .

A 10-FT. round-the-world-ketch, *Tuarangi*, arrived at Durban recently manned by three New Zealanders and an Englishman.

They built the ketch themselves in six years and had left Invercargill in January. They had sailed to South Africa by way of Australia, Indonesia and Mauritius. They left Reunion 15 days before arriving in Durban, and during that trip they had experienced the strongest winds of their trip.

One of the crew, Peter Baxter, developed pneumonia in the middle of the Indian Ocean, 12 days from the nearest port, but recovered in five days.

Owen Jones has left for England, but the three New Zealanders hope to work in Durban for some time before continuing their trip—through the Panama Canal to the South Sea Islands.

Leisurely Wanderers . . .

AFTER a two-year round-the-world trip in their 36-ft. ketch *Myonie*, the American couple Dr. Albert Gehrman and his wife Helen "sneaked into Durban harbour", as the newspapers put it.

This because they came in in a rather unusual way: in the middle of the night.

They managed to find their way round on a 33-year-old map of Durban given to them by an English ship in Mauritius. Things had changed considerably since then! They circled the harbour five times blowing their horn and, as it looked as if they could wake no one up, they berthed on a vacant mooring near T jetty and went below to catch up on sleep.

Only at 11 next morning were they "officially discovered" by the harbour authorities.

They left their home in Miami two years ago, sailing by way of Jamaica to the Galapagos Islands and Tahiti, where they explored islands for three months. They then continued to Samoa, Fiji, the Solomon Islands and the Philippines.

There at Zambange they had the worst experience of their trip. One night while they were ashore, their yacht was burgled and all their clothes, blankets and most of their other belongings, including a 16-mm. movie camera, were taken.

They sailed next to Singapore and Ceylon, the Maldives and Mauritius, their last port of call before Durban.

(Continued on page 82)



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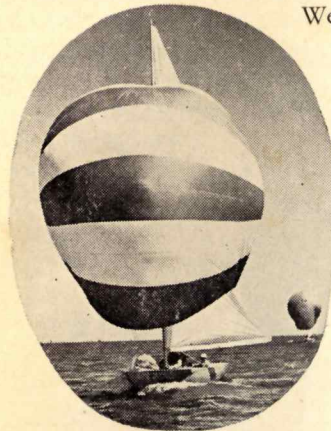
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more CLUB NOTES

(Continued from page 72)

And here they are, a pleasant friendly couple who originally set off to see the islands in the Pacific and they "kept on going because it was easier".

They take a tremendous interest in the people they meet and the things they see. They read about the culture and the history of each place before they visit it. Dr. Gehrman even studied Polynesian to be able to understand the people he would meet on the Pacific islands.

He is writing a book about their trip and has been keeping a record since they left on 16-mm. movie films. In fact he plans to write three books: one adventure story, one on the technical side for use by future round-the-world cruising yachtsmen and one on the type of cooking on board and how to simplify it.

On the latter aspect they seem to have made a special art. During the trip they often have fresh fish. "Helen is excellent at cooking fish," said Dr. Gehrman. "It is amazing that the more fish you eat the more you like it. We even eat it raw, either in the Japanese way with soya and mustard, or in the Tahitian way, small pieces soaked in lime juice and eaten with onion and garlic."

Helen bakes fresh bread once a day, on top of the fire in a frying pan. Baking powder is used instead of yeast and they eat it with pineapple or peaches out of tins.

Their big meal they have early at night, so that Helen has a chance of tidying up the galley before it gets dark.

They usually carry fresh potatoes and onions, but have experienced that the best way is to find out, after arriving at an island, what the cheapest food is and then buy lots of that.

In Ceylon it was tinned pineapple. In Singapore damaged tins that were dropped during shipment. In Fiji tinned sausages from Australia and in American Samoa they visited a new tuna fish factory where they were sold two cases of tuna very cheaply.

In one of the small islands in the Pacific they exchanged old clothes for food and even sailed off with five live chickens which they had exchanged for a neck-tie each. They tied them in a row, one leg to the next so that they could not get away, and gave them the run of half the deck. They were fed on ground coconut. To their surprise and great delight, there was an egg in the cockpit each morning. As a result they were rather apprehensive in killing the first as they were scared it might be the one that laid the eggs! They made the boat very dirty, however, and in the end after getting very tired of scrubbing everything down each morning one chicken was prepared in the pressure cooker every three days from then onward.

The pressure cooker had proved a very necessary item as at some islands the meat was extremely tough.

During the trip, Albert works according to a list. First thing in the morning he would wind his chronometer and his watch, the ropes are checked as well as the sails to see that nothing is wearing or needs immediate repairing. Three times a day a sight is taken.

If near a coast where they could understand the language, they would listen to the weather forecast and the news. Albert also kept a diary and from this he would work on his book several hours a week. Helen corrects the manuscripts because "her English is much better than mine".

Helen is, apart from the cook, also the barber. Albert said, "I get a haircut five days before reaching port to give it the chance to grow out a bit when it happens to be not such a good one."

They share the night watches, which are three hours on, three hours off. "You get so used to the sound of your boat, though, that you can hear if the sails are not right," Albert said.

They bath once a day in salt water and wet the deck as this keeps it cool below. On their trip from Mauritius, which took 21 days of which they were becalmed for nine,

they saw thousands of tuna fish, birds and whales, which came up to the boat to splash around it.

Myonie was built in 1951 and designed by John Hanna. She has a 12-ft. beam and is very heavily built. She is very comfortable inside and the couple prefer comfort to speed. The engine is a four-cylinder petrol engine of 16 h.p. which they say they used very little. Albert said he knew very little about engines when he left and "I am now beginning to be an expert". They carry between 80 to 100 gallons of water.

The couple had no deep-sea sailing experience when they left Miami two years ago. They are planning to leave Durban in January for Cape Town, after which they will go via St. Helena and Ascension back to Miami where they hope to be in May before the hurricane season starts in June.

Throughout their trip they have collected souvenirs from all the islands they visited and the many spears and masks now decorating their cabin will after they arrive in Miami bring back the memories of their unforgettable 2½-year-round-the-world trip for many years to come when they have settled down again to a life ashore.



TOP: Some of the fleet of Sharpies sailing at East Rand during their three day Christmas regatta.

ABOVE: Paddy Peel-Pearce rounding one of the marks in his Sprog.

Photos: Andy Embleton

Ocean-crossing model . . .

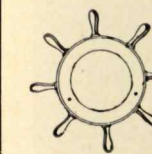
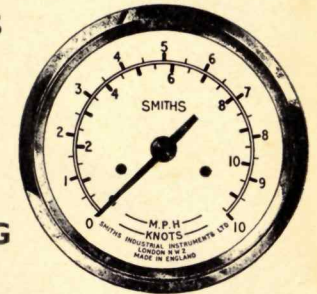
CAPE TOWN dress designer, Robert Abraham, at present living in Durban, made a perfect replica of the Chinese junk just before she sailed.

The model was given by him as a present to the owner, Mike Briant, who says it will be placed in the main cabin of the junk under a glass case.

(Continued on page 84)

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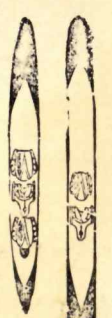


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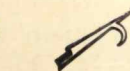
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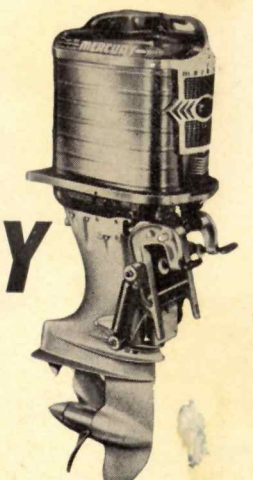
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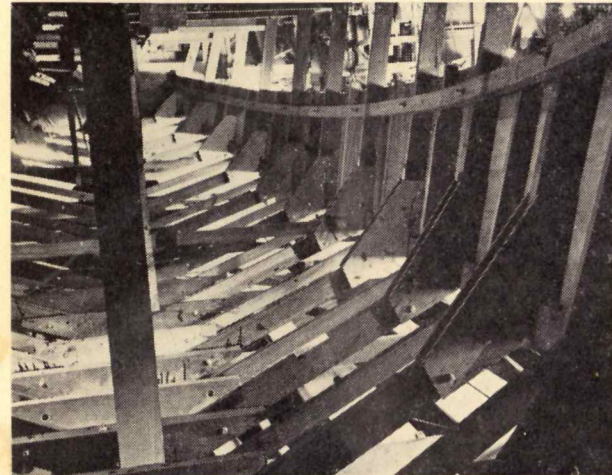
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more CLUB NOTES

(Continued from page 83)

Mike had lent Robert the plans of the junk and the model, made of balsa, oak and marine ply, is exactly to scale, with all details such as deck winches included. Robert had been working on it, one or two nights a week, for half a year.

For 17 years making models of yachts has been his hobby and he has won several prizes since 1954. He hopes to send an entry to the World Hobbies Fair in London next year.

He is working on an idea for a mechanism to sail a 5-ft. schooner, which he plans to build next year, across the Atlantic from Cape Town to America. The mechanism has to be able to keep the yacht on her course regardless of wind changes, weather and current.

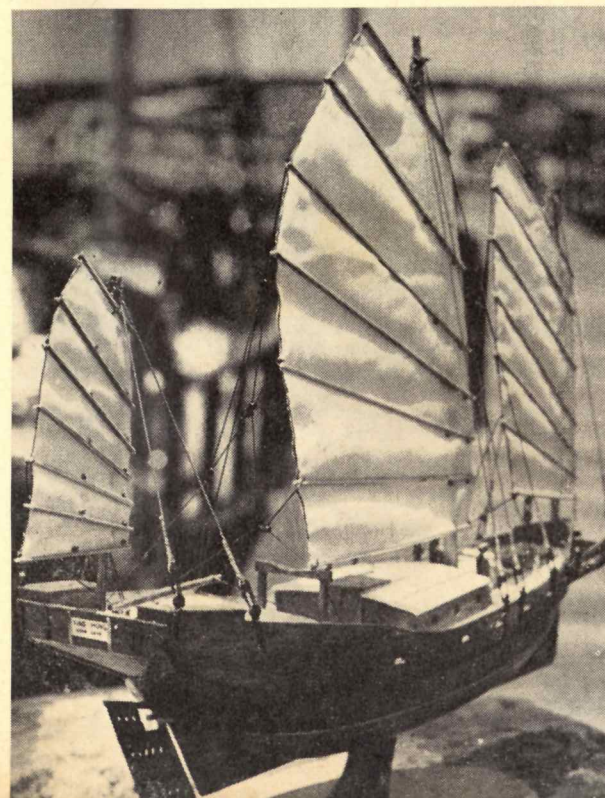
The yacht will have a fibreglass hull, fibreglass mast, nylon rigging and Terylene sails. It will take him six months to build and he will start early in the new year.

In 1959 he managed to sail a 15-in. schooner across the 25 miles of False Bay.

BELOW: Robert Abraham taking notes on the deck of the junk Ying Hong, for the building of the model.

BOTTOM: The completed model.

STOP PRESS: The Ying Hong has now arrived in Cape Town.



more CLASS NEWS

(Continued from page 81)

the Association hopes to issue a booklet containing useful articles on building, paints and painting, the names of approved sailmakers and suppliers of materials and hints on handling, sailing and tuning G.P.s. This booklet has been compiled with the emphasis on South African conditions, and will be issued at a small charge to *bona fide* builders who become members of the Association. It is expected that in the near future kits will also be available. These kits will be from the Bell Woodworking Co., Leicester, the home of the G.P., and are of a very high standard.

WINGER ASSOCIATION—Hon. Sec.: K. H. Leigh, P.O. Box 860, East London.

W

THE SEASON PROGRESSES apace and the news from East London is that after a great deal of jockeying for position, Allan Wilson's *Williwaw* is showing the other Wingers the way home although he by no means has it all his own way.

Williwaw has been plagued with troubles for some time. Allan is a wily bird at the best of times and with his new mainsail he now has the edge on his competitors. Well done.

It is the similarity in performance that gives so much interest and fun to the East London Winger fleet. It is impossible to forecast the results of a race and a "follow-my-leader" race is rare indeed.

The Border Sailing Association regatta at Bongola, Queenstown in September saw another desperate struggle in the Winger Class. Bill Prince's *Westwind* (E.L.Y.C.) finally emerged a deserving winner, followed by Bunny Curran's *Winger* (E.L.Y.C.) and John Meacham in *Whippet* (Q.P.Y.C.). Q. Perry in *Wigwag* trounced all classes in the handicap event and emerged winner of the open race. Congratulations, chaps!

The National

(Continued from page 65)

Dewey, and Erica Beele sailing *Blitz*, both of whom were singlehanded. For most races they were in close company and eventually it was only a second place against a fourth in the last race that gave the edge to Erica.

There was an entry of six yachts in the Royal Cape Yacht Club One-Design Class, this Regatta being the first at which deep-sea keel boats have competed. Only one tune-up race was held, won by Cliff Leih sailing *Zeeslang*.

Zeeslang held a clear advantage for the first two races of the championships, with excellent spinnaker work, but in the third race was challenged by Ken Warr in his newly-acquired *Schatzi*, who was leading until he went for the wrong mark, allowing *Zeeslang* to slip through.

In the last race, however, *Schatzi* made no mistakes and had a good first. Both *Zeeslang* and *Schatzi* were well ahead of the other competitors.

The Regatta was, on the whole, a great success, sailing was magnificent, with the element of luck largely eliminated through steady, fair winds of about 10 to 15 miles an hour.

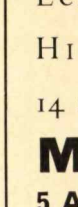
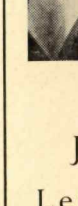
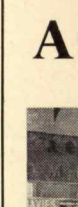
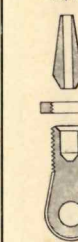
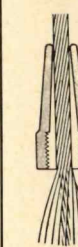
Race organisation, however, left something to be desired. Starting and finishing lines on the outside course were often not square to the wind and caused bunching. On several occasions bloomers were made by judges and ended in protests against the "bridge", which does not make for happy sailing conditions. The sirens used for recall and general control purposes were inadequate and could not be heard on the water.

(Continued on page 86)

NORSEMAN

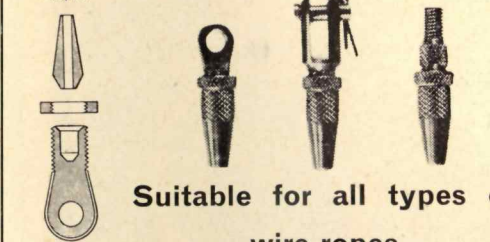


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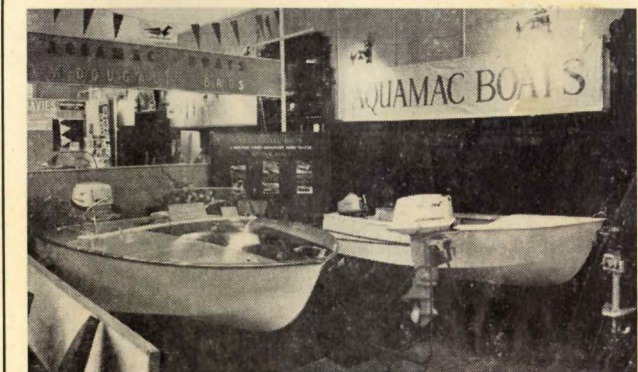
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