

TAKING THE WORLD BY STORM

Stormy Weather, the most successful ocean-racer of her day, was a dilapidated charter yacht working in the Virgin Islands by the mid-70s. Paul Adamthwaite tells of Stormy's original construction and her restoration, while Greg Jones heads her into the channel



Stormy Weather was launched on the hazy morning of 14 May 1934 and christened by Mrs Polly Le Boutillier. She was designed by Olin Stephens and her construction at the Henry B Nevins Yard, City Island, New York, took four months. It was

carried out amid a degree of secrecy. *Stormy's* owner, Philip Le Boutillier, and the boat, were codenamed 'Mr X'; a suitable name had not been chosen. This was eventually chosen just before launching. Le Boutillier and some friends were having dinner at The Manor in Montauk, Long Island, where a young singer was singing *Stormy Weather*. He called her over and asked her to sing it again. Afterwards, she asked how he liked it. "Liked it?" he said. "You have just named my new boat." Lena Horne's career went on to become just as famous as *Stormy Weather's*.

Nevins' scantlings, well respected at the time and still used as a yardstick today, were scrupulously followed throughout. *Stormy Weather* is basically built of Philippine mahogany on New England white oak. The frames were steamed on 12in (305mm) centres, sided 2½inches (54mm), except in way of the main mast step where they were sided 3½in (89mm) and moulded 1½in (48mm) at the head, increasing toward the keel.

The planking is a single thickness of 1½in (35mm) fastened with Everdur bronze screws. The keel, stem and sternpost are also of white oak, while the horntimber and deadwood are of mahogany. Over 19,000lbs of lead ballast are bronze bolted to the keel with the centre of gravity corresponding to the boat's centre of flotation. The eight floors supporting the main mast step and all the hanging knees are bronze. Shelf, clamp and bilge stringers are of Douglas fir. The deck beams are of spruce, except for the mast partners and fore and aft ends of the skylights, hatches and coachroof which bear an extra load and are made of white oak.

The deck was planked with Port Orford cedar to save weight, with the strakes, 1½ x 1½in (48 x 35mm), payed with black glue except for the cockpit seats which were payed in white out of deference to the ladies' skirts. Noblesse oblige!

Both masts and booms are hollow, manufactured from Sitka spruce, and glued with Resorcinol. The main mast carries three sets of spreaders, to allow the use of a genoa jib, and a set of jumpers. The mizzen has one set of spreaders and a single jumper. Two sets of running backstays are provided on the main mast and one set on the mizzen. Both the hull and the deck are diagonally strapped with bronze, to avoid distortion of the mast partners. The main chainplates are massive, 5ft 4in x 1ft 4in x 3/8in (1.6 x 0.4 x 0.01m), Everdur bronze plate, let into the frames next to the planking. The lugs, which most readers will probably think of as the chainplates, were then through-bolted to the planking, main plate, oak backing

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Paul Adamthwaite details the building of Olin Stephens' ultimate racer and yachting legend Stormy Weather

two-blade Hyde propeller via a vee-drive. It is interesting to note that in 1935 Rod Stephens, the designer's brother, removed the engine and propeller for the Transatlantic and Fastnet Races to 'make more room for coal.'

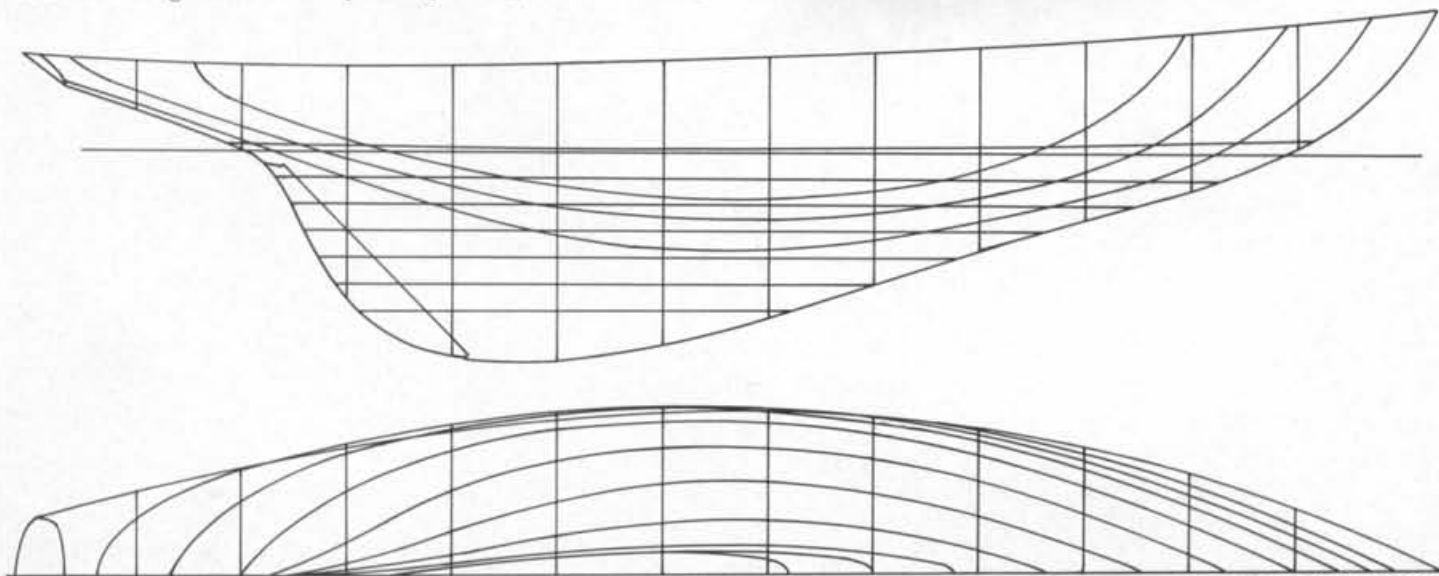
All the deck and spar fittings, including the winches, were manufactured from bronze in the foundry at the Nevins' yard, although within a very few years the patterns had been taken over by the new Merriman Company.

The remainder of the equipment was typical of the times and included: tiller steering, trailing log and coal-fired galley. But there were innovations as well; the inner forestay was quickly removable by a lever system to allow faster tacking of the genoa jib; a thermometer was permanently installed for sea water temperature readings; the aft companionway was protected by a canvas hood to allow better ventilation in bad weather, although there were many 'Dorade' type ventilators; and there were lifelines, but no bow or stern pulpit. The designer and author Uffa Fox was so impressed he devoted a large section to what he called these 'gadgets' in his *Second Book*.



Opposite page: Doing what she does best, knocking into a F5 carrying all sails. Note the reef points in the mizzen, two running backstays, with the aft backstay split, taking the strain of the jib and the main. Forward running backstay goes to staysail. **Left:** In 1934, *Stormy Weather* was launched from the yard of Henry B Nevins. Aboard is Olin Stephens and unidentified crew members gathered around the makeshift mast. Note the nearly straight line of the deadrise, with no curved sections until above the waterline.

Below: The lines are very much of the period, with considerable overhang aft. The forefoot, with a trace of sinusoidal curve to it, harkens back to the lines of American fishing vessels. The lack of tumblehome keeps the beam full and maintains buoyancy as she heels.



COURTESY OF SPARKMAN & STEPHENS



PAUL ADAMTHWAITE

Above: Deep in the bilges, Stormy Weather was completely re-framed, using epoxy glues. Note the taper of the bilge and the sturdy floors, with the metal strap floors running up the ribs.

Below: The twin bunkin provides an excellent platform for the rane

*steering. Note how the mizzen sheet is rove to avoid fouling the steering. **Right:** Fitting a tiller means the helmsman doesn't have to be standing all the time, and the binnacle had begun to look dated on a competitive ocean racer. Note massive size of deck timbers and cockpit drain.*



PAUL ADAMTHWAITE



MICHEL THERSIQUEL

I had known of *Stormy Weather* for most of my life, by reputation and from the written word, but when I first saw her in the Virgin Islands in the mid seventies it was literally love at first sight. The owners, Doug and Sue White, were a youngish American couple who were doing their best to make ends meet in the charter trade. But even then plastic motor sailers were attracting the majority of customers with their hot showers in all cabins, roller furling, hydraulic anchor windlasses and very non-nautical double bunks.

Stormy Weather had also changed over the years. Previous owners had modified and 'improved' things. Between 1954 and '65 James J O'Neill had replaced the main mast, damaged by lightning at the Seawanhaka Yacht Club, with a cut down aluminium spar from a 12-Meter. Giving up the vee-drive, he installed a large Mercedes diesel, in the middle of the aft-cabin, transferring the aft companionway into the engine room entrance. Charter guests referred to the bunks in what was left of the cabin as the 'coffins.' A 110 volt electrical system had been added for mixers, blenders and hair dryers; three automatic fire extinguishing systems, all non-operational, had been installed to satisfy US Coast Guard passenger carrying requirements; and green tennis court carpet had been glued to the deck in an attempt to cure leaks. It was an endless horror story.

The Whites did their best, living in the forepeak, taking six guests to lesser known anchorages, cooking gourmet meals on a rather old and cantankerous kerosene stove. Despite hard work and TLC the competition got the better of a tired classic and a limited budget.

By the late 70s, the local banker was getting worried about mortgage payments and I got lucky. It took me more than a year to assess and prepare for what was evidently going to be much more than patch-work repairs. I took *Stormy Weather* out sailing one day, with balmy tradewinds blowing over calm seas. Dan Neri had turned up with the whole team from Shore Sails, unsure how to suggest an inventory without first hand experience. Most of the sails were shapeless, but she moved well after the overheating Mercedes finally came to a stop. A visit below, however, confirmed my fears: the galley furniture had fallen out, and the sky was visible through the planking on the port side where seams had opened gaping wide. We tacked, and the seams closed up with hardly a dribble, but now there was daylight on the starboard side. Muttering, Dan took some sails back to the loft for free-of-charge overnight recutting. We tried again the next day and the next, finding more and more wrong.

Eighty-eight of the 110 frames were broken, with all the fractures above the floors and below the bilge stringers. There was no rot; the old oak was too black and brittle. Shore got our order for 27 bags of sails, most of which we still use for racing.

The carpet was mercifully removed, but made the need for new decking obvious. The only rot was in a few of the half deck beams in the cockpit area. The engine and interior were removed, panelling and fittings that could be saved were numbered and stored ashore. With every day's work the job got bigger, rather than smaller.

I spent a lot of time at the Sparkman and Stephens offices in New York. Olin Stephens had officially retired, but Rod and his colleagues were more than helpful. Except for the dinghy, all the original 1933 drawings were available. I wanted *Stormy* back to her original condition, capable of racing hard and crossing the Atlantic, with the warm glow of oil lamps reflecting on the Mexican mahogany of the main saloon.

Rod was as practical as ever and used modern epoxy laminating techniques for framing and decking; stainless steel for the new mast fittings; and sails and running rigging of modern synthetics. But he was very clear that he would have used the materials employed in the 30s had they been available.

I was scouring lumber yards for Sitka spruce, white oak, mahogany and teak for the deck overlay. Port Orford cedar was

REBUILDING AND RESTORING

Twenty years ago a tired Stormy was in need of more than just patch-work repairs. Paul Adamthwaite tells of her restoration

just not available. Little by little, everything was shipped to the Virgin Islands.

We started in earnest in 1983. 'Chippie' Jim Rosenberry, house carpenter Kevin Bosh and little Billy Havlicek put nearly two years into the project. It must

have been for the love of it and the few cold beers I had in the ice chest. It certainly wasn't for the pittance wages I could afford.

The decks were the first priority. Rainy season was approaching and we did not need fresh water in the bilges. We started cooking up test pieces of various laminates: teak on ply, oak on oak, some ash for the tiller, all to be soaked in salt water then chiselled apart. We learned how to degrease fresh lumber with acetone, how not to plane the laminates but to pick the correct rip saw blade for maximum adhesion, how to use the natural heat of the sun for epoxy saturation, and what thicknesses of oak could be bent to various radii.

All the deck fittings and associated joiner work were removed with the exception of the coach roof and the main saloon skylight. They were raised but kept in place on their bolts. A camber pattern was cut and new main mast partners laminated from oak. The cockpit area was gutted, removing a beautifully manufactured, very heavy, but non-original wheel and quadrant steering system. The carlings were replaced and tie-rods checked, old screw holes were plugged and the inner edge of the covering boards was routered. After checking the alignment of the beams, new and old, the first layer of marine ply, 6mm, was glued and ringnailed into position, epoxy saturated on both faces, nibbed in around the roof and skylight bolts and butted to the covering boards. The second layer, 8mm, was put down with the butt joints staggered over different beams, and the edges routered 1in (25mm) into the covering boards. We stopped work on the decks at this point, not wanting to damage the teak overlay.

Everything had so far been done on the mooring. We had no haul out facilities and minimal space on shore. So we towed *Stormy* up to Nanny Cay in Tortola, in the British Virgin Islands. Here she became a semi-permanent fixture, either on the end of the work dock, next to *Finisterre*, Carlton Mitchell's Sparkman and Stephens designed centreboard yawl, three times Bermuda Race winner in the 1950s or hauled alongside the machine shop. During our stay the work dock became quite famous for classics, which included amongst others: Frank Lotito's *Nordwind* and Frank Pierce's *Whirlaway*.

Reframing was a long, hot and sticky task. After rechecking the fairness of the hull lines we attacked them by pairs, port and starboard, to avoid distortion in the dry tropical air. We rigged a sea water sprinkler to maintain humidity in the mahogany planking. Firstly, each pair of frames was cut out, the old fastenings discarded and the floor, shelf and clamp bolts copied out of bronze stock. Oak laminates were then quarter sawn and sprung into place. After epoxy saturation, each laminate was glued and ring-nailed into position, using a minimum quantity of micro-fibres in the resin. Refastening was long, hard work but was easy compared with drilling the bolt holes in line with those in the original floors, shelves and clamps.

It was a lengthy and messy job. I had to give the crew hair cuts, not because of a somewhat hippy look, but just to remove cured epoxy, which, as we had to work nearly naked because of the heat, seemed to get all over us.

While in drydock, we did a little recaulking, unsure how the planking would swell. Obvious spots were taken care of, oakum below the waterline, cotton above. After relaunching the engine and electrics were installed. Both water tanks and the diesel tank, made of tinned copper, were steam cleaned, pressure tested and refitted. After belt sanding and resaturating the surface of the deck ply, ultraviolet rays tend to break down any epoxy, teak strakes, 1 1/4 x 1/2in (48 x 13mm), were layed in epoxy and micro-fibres. When the mid-point of the deck was reached, a 'false' mahogany kingplank was



Top: Looking forward from the starboard saloon. The cushion at forward end of table is the usual seating for the cook, and cases some of the difficulty of the forward galley. The curved opening in the bulkhead was cut during the refit.

Above: One hand for the winch, one hand to tail on, another to hold your nose. Barely visible through the foam is a member of Stormy's crew sheeting in the jib while racing off Antigua. *Right:* Looking aft in mid-Atlantic; mizzen furled and a bit of water to the stern.



nibbed in, the stainless screws removed and their holes plugged.

It was at this point that in hindsight I made a big mistake. The seams were filled with tinted white epoxy in the cockpit and black graphite elsewhere. Over subsequent years the epoxy has cracked, and while it is only a cosmetic problem, a more elastic compound would have been preferable.

The new 73ft (22.3m) main mast, made at Bill Cannell's American Boat Yard in Camden, Maine, had been shipped down to us, with great difficulty. It finally arrived in Nanny Cay on an inter-island freighter at the height of the Charter Boat Show, to the great consternation of all the 'million dollar boat' owners and skippers. We had already made the main boom and stripped and revarnished the original mizzen mast and boom. The fittings and rigging were made up locally. In January 1984, with no interior and limited deck fittings, *Stormy* sailed again.

The deck layout was probably the easiest to finalize as we had the original drawing plus Rod's suggestions. Every one of the 1933 Nevins winches were in perfect working order, but it was decided that two large three-speeds would be needed in the cockpit. Lewmar had a couple left over from the previous year's America's Cup and supplied them with custom produced bronze drums. The two redundant Nevins winches were donated to Mystic Seaport Museum for the schooner *Brilliant*, the only other 'big' boat, at 61ft (18.6m), that Olin had designed between *Dorada* and *Stormy Weather*. Two self-tailers were also added near the foot of the main mast to facilitate reefing and spinnaker control. New sliding hatches were made for both companionways and a copy of the dodger fitted to the aft one, the new dodger being folding rather like a pram-hood. In all but the worst weather we hardly need the canvas hatch covers.

Below decks took a lot longer. The obvious starting points involved plumbing, electrics, mechanical items and safety gear. Early on it was decided a little 'modernism' was required. A completely independent 90 amp-hour battery with its own alternator and cut-off switch system was installed for the engine. The house

batteries were two banks of deep-cycle Surettes fed by a 100 amp alternator. I also wanted a mechanical refrigeration, so the front end of the engine was rebuilt for the two alternators and compressor. The battery boxes, inner linings of the ice boxes and the pan in the bottom of the heads were built out of GRP. A minimum of 5in (127mm) of thermal insulation went around the ice boxes, as less space, more efficiency were the words of the day. It now takes the deep freeze five days to thaw out completely, even though running time for electricity and refrigeration is rarely more than 45 minutes a day.

The electrical system was protected by thermal circuit breakers. New, or nearly new electronics included wind instruments and communication and navigational equipment. Although I use my sextant regularly, I strongly believe some electronics, once their limitations have been fully understood, give the skipper more time for his other duties. Satnav, loran-c, decca and RDF were installed. Radar was not installed for two reasons. Firstly, technical progress and mass marketing were and still are making such tremendous headway that it was easy to say that tomorrow would bring a better and less expensive product. And secondly, the mizzen was original and had lost some wall thickness over the years, so putting the weight and windage of a radar aerial up aloft had me somewhat worried.

Safety equipment was influenced by the Royal Ocean Racing Club's requirements as much as by the Board of Trade. At the time, memories of the 1979 Fastnet were fresh. Four bilge pumps were installed, two electric and two manuals, one in the cockpit and one

below. The eight man life raft and the flares are below, next to the aft companionway, in a dedicated, dry locker, with the life-jackets, safety harnesses, ditty bag and solar still. More than adequate ground tackle found its home in the forepeak, rather than on deck. Double lifelines, jackstays for the harnesses, bow and stern pulpits, side and stern lights at deck level plus a masthead tri-colour, twin horseshoes completed the safety gear that has, thank goodness, never come near the final test.

The layout below, according to the original drawings, was saved in spirit with only minor changes. Starting forward, the forepeak, originally the home of the paid hand with two single berths in vee, has seen the port berth widened slightly to make a cosy double, and the starboard one reinforced to make a work bench with storage underneath. Next aft is the galley and the only changes from 1934 are the holding plates in the ice boxes, which swapped places with the stove and the sink. We installed a gimballed propane cooker with oven portside forward, and a double sink next to the main mast where the coal stove had once been. Despite criticism of the galley forward, we have never gone wanting for a hot meal at sea. The bulkhead between the galley and the saloon had to be completely replaced, so I took the opportunity of opening up the ventilation by creating an ellipsoid cut-out in what is still a structural member supporting the galley and saloon furniture. Nowadays, most guests on board believe this to be original, not knowing that the paid hand used to be really cut off from the owner's quarters.

The main saloon, navigation table, lobby and toilet room, to use the names on the 1933 drawings, are the most original. We saved nearly all the old panelling; only the leaded glass cupboard door over the buffet and the sink in the heads needed replacing.

The aft cabin, the owner's quarters, used as the engine room, had to be entirely rebuilt, only small pieces of the original furnishings remaining. Knowing that I would be spending most of my time living aboard, I changed the original two single upper berths with settees to a double berth to starboard, with storage for

the safety equipment beneath and a lee cloth to convert it to a single at sea. On the port side I moved everything nearly 3ft (0.9m) aft, converting the bunk into a bookshelf and the settee into a sea-going pilot berth.

The space under the cockpit is still used for sail storage, we try not to use the racing sails for cruising, and gives access to the packing glands on the drive shaft, offset to port, and the rudder stock.

Most of the restoration was carried out prior to 1986, but wooden classics are a never ending source of 'let's do this,' or 'why didn't we do that before.' For the last several years we have hauled-out in Venezuela where old-fashioned craftsmen are still available without needing a tax write-off. We have replaced bulwarks where modern genoas have made a mockery of the car-tracks; the main mast step whose original white oak was more than tired; and

six years after we left the planking to swell we recaulked below the waterline. Rod Stephens was always proud to tell me that *Stormy's* bilges were dry. I can say the same thing now.

Stormy Weather has now logged over 190,000 miles; crossed the Atlantic 18 times, including a couple of single-handed passages; and won a lot of races, and placed in many more. We have had an awful lot of fun cruising, and have always encouraged youngsters to come and experience an older classic. We live on board, cruising, racing, entertaining in a proper ambience.

When I'm asked what my next boat will be, I reply: "I beg your pardon. What did you say?"

STORMY WEATHER'S EARLY RACE RESULTS.

Out of 31 major, well documented ocean races between 1934 and 1954, Stormy Weather won 12 outright, with 15 firsts in class, nine seconds, five thirds. She was disqualified once, in the Governor's Cup in Nassau, 1937, when the whole fleet bar two boats went the wrong way around a mark of the course. The donor of the Cup, Governor Clifford, was on board Stormy Weather at the time!

Some highlights are:-

1935 - Transatlantic, Newport to Bergen, First overall, and the Fastnet, First overall, Rod Stephens Jr was skipper.

1936 - Bermuda Race, First in class, second overall; a tough race, 10 of 42 boats retired damaged.

1937-1941 inclusive - Miami to Nassau Race, First overall five times in a row, owned by Bob Johnson until 1939, then Bill Labrot. Note the weather in 1938; three boats were refused the start, four more decided not to start, six retired, one sank. *Stormy Weather* won easily.

1941 - Tied for First overall in the SORC. (Southern Ocean Racing Conference.)

1947 - The Bluenose Trophy, First overall. *Stormy Weather's* only season on the Great Lakes.

1948 - First overall in the SORC.

1954 - 28 May, the Storm Tysail Race, 190 miles, 63 yachts, First overall on her 20th anniversary.



FRANCIS HOLVECK



FRANCIS HOLVECK

Above: When she was first launched, Stormy Weather had a wheel (see picture on page 14), but the tiller is a proper modification. The mechanism is less complicated, repairs at sea are far easier, and installing an autopilot takes minutes. Note the sturdy and lovely bronze main sheet horse.

Top right: Stormy carries her original bronze winches. Note brake lever arrangement.

Right: Note here the changes in the rigging from that used earlier. One running backstay, and a standing backstay has been added, with insulators to allow it to be used as a radio aerial. No reefs in the mizzen, and three reefing points in the main instead of two.



BEKEN OF GOWES

STORM IN THE CHANNEL

Stormy Weather is a creature of the sea as Greg Jones finds out when he takes her tiller and heads for the French coast

We leave Lymington at slack low water, slowly motoring past moorings and pilings with great bands of barnacles and growth exposed. Boats are drying out in the first light of morning, and we keep to the starboard side of mid-channel.

Stormy Weather's keel reaches nearly 8ft (2.4m) into the water, and we don't need to waste any time getting out by running aground. Leaving at low water, we want to make Hurst Point bucking the last of the flood.

The car ferry, large enough to have the right of way even if the ColRegs didn't require it, has a brief word with us on the radio and passes us to port. At low water, his bulk displaces half the water in the channel, and the wake pushes us even more to starboard. Gently, almost silently, *Stormy Weather* is aground. We are rock-steady alongside a dozen or so far lesser craft. Ten feet (3.1m) away, they lie on their sides or perch upright on their bilge keels. The tide is a great egalitarian force, and we are an exponent of it.

Paul Adamthwaite, *Stormy's* skipper, is finding humour to be in shorter supply than water under the keel. There are three of us crewing, and we all go astern, willing ourselves heavier. That fails; *Stormy* takes so much water we can't even see her propeller roiling the muddy bottom. We run forward, and still she doesn't move except for a pivoting motion about the keel. It is difficult to remember that patience is alleged to be a virtue when waiting for an incoming tide, and whatever Paul's virtues as a skipper, navigator and careful restorer of his boat, his home, he much prefers sailing to waiting for more water to come along.

A large rigid inflatable with two tired fishermen aboard comes by, on their way in after a night's fishing. We give them a shout, and they offer to take a line and give us a tow. We aren't stuck hard, we are the temporary hostages of a miscreant wave, and they should be able to pull us off with a little help from our engine. Their outboard churns the water; they cut back and forth in an arc. The moment we break free is hard to determine, but slowly we begin to move. We retrieve our line, thank them profusely, and head for mid-channel.

Shallow estuaries are not *Stormy's* element. She is a creature of the sea, and as soon as we clear the harbour, rounding Jack in the Basket, we run up all sails. The motor, more detectable by its vibration than its noise, stops, and *Stormy* heels to the wind. Paul is now a happy man; he doesn't seem to like harbours any more than his boat does.

The delay has cost us something in time, and when we arrive off Hurst Point the tidefall is spectacular. We round the point pushed by the tide, making nearly 9 knots over the bottom. The more wind we get, the better she likes it, and as we leave the Needles to port, the Channel Islands are dead ahead.

Stormy Weather has the manners of a true lady. She slips through the water with the grace of a dancer, and holds her way effortlessly. The original wheel steering was replaced with a tiller, and as I take the helm for the first time, I notice that we are maintaining a steady 7.8 knots. There are none of the surging excesses caused by swells in the reading; Paul is a fan of technology, and has installed a knotmeter.

Paul goes below to rustle up some tea. It is a long hike forward to the traditionally-located galley. This is a point which has been discussed at great length between Paul and nearly everyone who comes aboard, especially after they have negotiated the length of the boat with a cup of boiling liquid. Paul holds his ground, defending tradition and even the galley's location. It's under the forward skylight, and the light is certainly good. The hull has begun to taper towards the bows, and when it was my turn at the tea kettle, I found I could brace myself quite nicely against the shelving on the portside, with my knees against the fo'c'sle bulkhead. A belt would probably be superfluous, at least under any sea condition that would allow use of the galley.

It's also just forward of the mast, very nearly at the boat's C of G, and the relative motion is slight. There is yaw, pitch and roll, but very little vertical motion. I'm not completely ready to concede the

merits of a galley forward of the mast, but I will say it fine tuned my cup-handling skills.

Within sight of the French Coast we gybe and put *Stormy* on a broad reach, destination Portland. As the day wears on, the wind backs and we find

ourselves coming ever closer to the wind. Paul has installed an Autohelm, and it buzzes merrily, holding us to the selected course, but eventually we come about and reach into the setting sun, sailing in a direction nearly opposite to our destination. As we make the lights near Durston Head, *Stormy* comes about, and we glide along, parallel to the coast and about three miles off.

I had taken a few winks that afternoon, and it is Paul's turn for a kip. He goes below, leaving me at the helm. Night sailing is probably the closest I'll get to heaven. *Stormy Weather* is, at this moment, a misnomer. It is F4, we are close-hauled, and the sea state is a lullaby.

The navigation lights along the coast, difficult to make against the glowing chaos of civilisation, periodically take me away from my reverie as I transfer our position from its reality on the sea to a series of triangles on the chart. Back on deck, there is only the soft sigh of hull against water and wind against sailcloth.

Alone at the helm, a few minor problems arise. I'm just not the right size to be able to lie down on the cockpit seat along the tiller. The available space is too narrow and I find the best spot is directly across the companionway, too far away to steer. Olin Stephens did not approve of, nor make possible, reclining while on watch. He didn't approve of backrests either, as the cockpit coaming is too short for real support. Obviously the low cockpit coaming hasn't deterred either the boat or her crew from out-sailing nearly every boat she has come up against, so there is more to this boat than her cockpit arrangement.

Paul, ex-Royal Navy, has clearance to berth in Portland harbour, and as soon as I make out its lights I awaken him. The next morning, we round Portland Bill with the tide and close-hauled. *Stormy Weather's* manners are again impeccable, and with a tide race that produces rows of white-capped waves, she carves a steady, straight wake. The weather deteriorates all day. Yesterday's breezy sunshine has become today's intermittent rain, but at least the wind is right. From the northwest, the wind carries us on a broad reach across Lyme Bay, F4 not being enough to wet the lee rail.

The search for more wind sends us off the coast some 25 miles, but the day won't change. By late afternoon, the wind has veered to the north. We run off, heading again out into the Channel. It's a good point of sail, and by nightfall Guernsey is off the starboard bow. The wind is now from the NNE, we come about, and begin the long slog to windward trying to make Plymouth early enough for one of the crew to catch a train for work.

Paul wants her held as close as possible; more by feel of the tiller than anything. I hold her just short of luffing. A 'bubble' begins to form in the luff. She's a close-winded old girl; that Olin Stephens certainly knew his stuff. *Stormy* took first place in the TransAtlantic and the Fastnet in 1935 almost immediately after her launch, a tradition begun by her sistership *Dorade*, who took first in the same two races in '31, winning the Fastnet again in '33. She's from a fast family, and although I could have wished for more wind, she has still been faster than any sailboat I've come near.

We set her course for a point windward of Plymouth, and begin to distinguish the coastline now in the gathering light. A few miles off the coast we let the sheets out, and she pushes softly down the wind. Plymouth harbour opens in front of us, and now we discover a problem with the engine's coolant pump. Leaning precariously over the side with a torch, I can't see any water coming from the exhaust. I shout the news, Paul shuts the engine down, and we enter Plymouth harbour under sail alone. This is the way one should come in: silently, with the slow majesty of a sailing vessel free of petrochemicals, noise and vibration. There is a nobility of action, of skill, in manoeuvring under sail. ☘