

The journal of the Swift Association

Newsletter 38 :: February 1992

Editor's column

Chatting with Doug Brodie at the laying up supper I innocently mentioned that I earn my living running a print company. By the time the AGM came round I'd 'agreed to volunteer' to edit the Newsletter . . .

It was ironic to find myself being proposed for the office by Alan Probyn of all people. But for Alan's assistance and encouragement last Spring during and immediately after my near-disastrous maiden voyage it is highly unlikely that I would at this time be a member of the Association - let alone it's journal's editor! If I ever find myself short of copy for a future issue I'll consider telling you the full story.

1992 will be my second season as a boat owner. I sail out of Bucklers Hard in my as yet nameless Swift 18 - I've just had an idea for a competition! - with my wife Maria, daughter Katie (13) and son Fraser (11).

My printing and publishing credentials are thankfully better than my sailing ones, having spent 25 years in the business. I'll be trying to inject a few new ideas into the journal, but please recognise that all I can do is collate, layout, print and post out **your** contributions. Flicking through back issues it seems that 90% of material has been submitted by 10% of Association members. I hope I can encourage more of you to contribute in future.

Having access to the printing process we now have the opportunity to reproduce photographs in our pages, so you can now illustrate your correspondence and technical tips. You may not have a story to relate but we all have a favourite picture of our boat - or someone elses - so send them in. From the cover you'll see that I've started the ball rolling!

On page 10 you'll see a section headed 'Boat Jumble'. Here's an opportunity to sell, buy or exchange those 'essential' items that are now cluttering up your garage: the cockpit tent or spray hood that you've never used; the waterproofs that the kids have grown out of; treated yourself to a new sail? there may be members out there who could make good use of your old one. You don't need to draft an advert - just ring me and I'll include your sale or requirement in the next issue.

There may be someone out there prepared to build/make those ingenious mods. that we see in Technical Topics and sell them to those of us who would like them but haven't the time or ability to build them for themselves? Boat Jumble is the page to make your skills available to the rest of the members and earn a few bob towards your sailing expenses in the process.

Jim Crick is generally regarded as the Association's most experienced sailor. He has agreed to write a regular 'Sailing Tips' column which will be of particular interest to us less experienced members.

This first issue of the year will be followed by others in June, September and December. I'd be delighted to hear any ideas you may have on ways of further improving **your** journal.

STEVE HART

Secretary's notes



Let me first introduce myself - my name is Alan Probyn and I sail with my wife Lesley and children Helen and Elise, from Bucklers Hard on the South coast.

I have sailed my Swift 'Helise' for the past 6 years, so when the position of secretary came up at the AGM, I thought I'd better 'do my bit'.

Apparently a large part of the job requires me to talk about the Swift 18 to other members, both current and prospective. As my wife will vouch, once started on the subject I'm difficult to stop! So if anybody wants advice, especially new owners, please give me a ring and If I can't help, I'm sure I know a man who can!

You'll find as a loose insert in this edition your Membership Renewal Form for 1992. Please return this as quickly as possible to Treasurer Chris O'Brien (whose address is printed on the form).

I hope to see the membership increase during my term of office and to that end I've asked Steve to supply all members with a second Membership form. Keep this in your boat and if during the season you come across any Swift owner who isn't a member then get your recruiting sergeant's cap on. With the Association now holding essential spares (see AGM report) there's never been a better incentive to join the Association. Let's all do our bit to get the message across.

I hope you're all re-greasing your trailers, checking your rigging and polishing your boats ready for an early start to the season.

If you're sailing in the Solent this year I look forward to seeing you on the water . . . or even better in the local pub. Until then, good sailing!

ALAN PROBYN

Technical topics

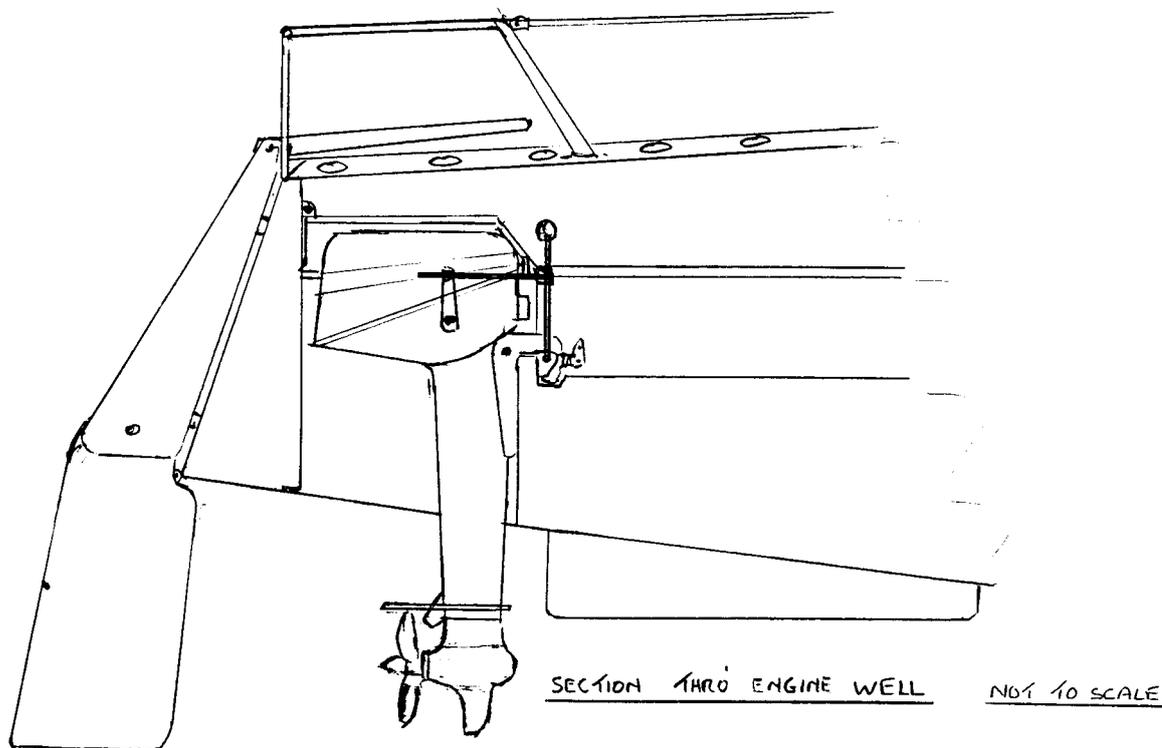
ENGINE GEAR SHIFT LEVER FOR SWIFT 18

Before implementing this modification my wife often complained about the difficulty of operating the engine gear lever. Apart from hurting her fingers, it was inaccessible and required her to take her eye "off the road" as it were.

The purpose of this modification therefore was to provide mechanical advantage and to enable the engine to be manouevred without taking ones eye off the "goings on".

It was produced from bits of odds and ends lying about in my garage and whilst I will provide sketches of the details of my effort, it is the principle that is important. The same result can be achieved with alternative materials and dimensions.

Some purist sailors may consider this mod to be a little "OTT" but believe me it really does work and, as frequent visitors to the Norfolk Broads where the engine is in regular use, we wonder how we ever managed without it.

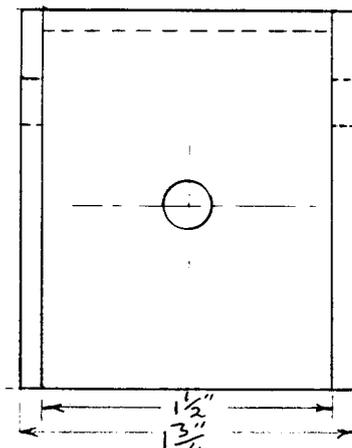
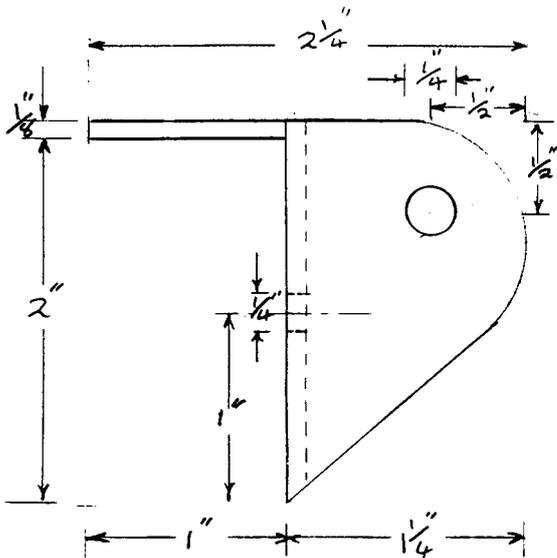
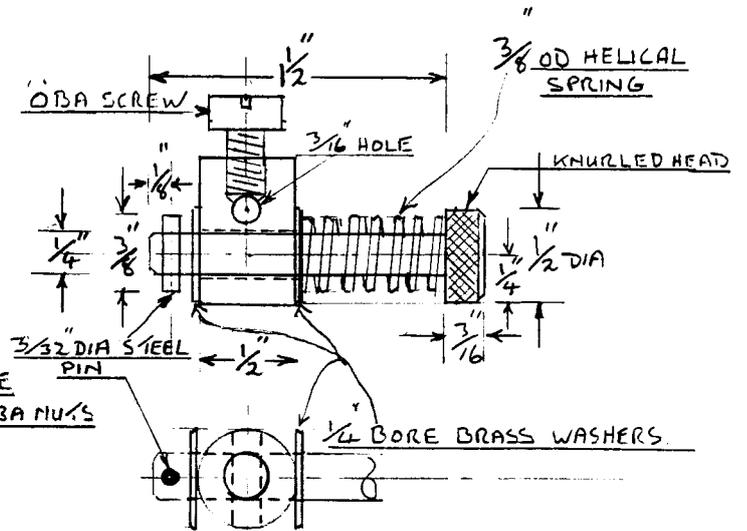
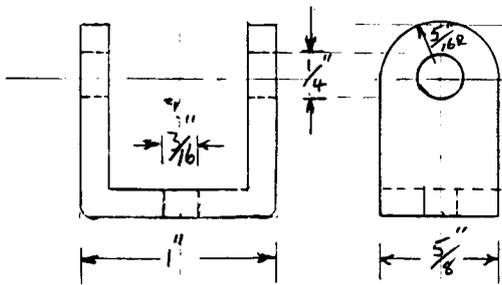
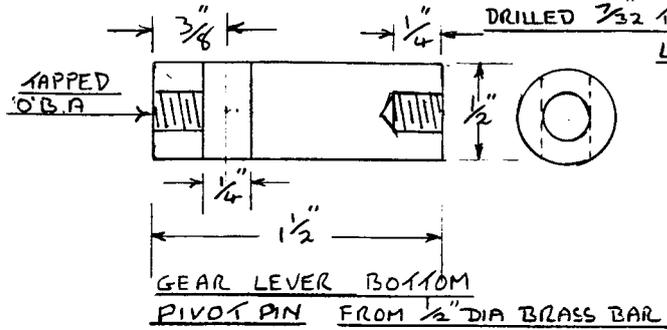
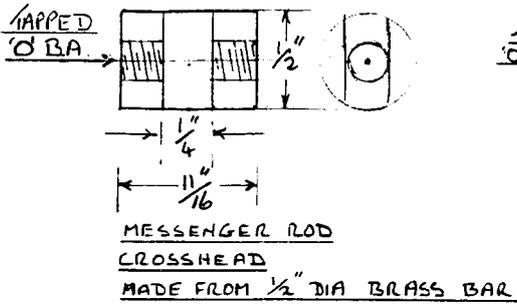
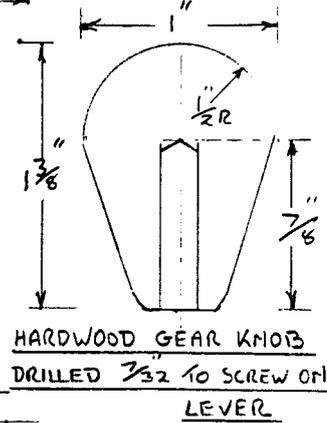
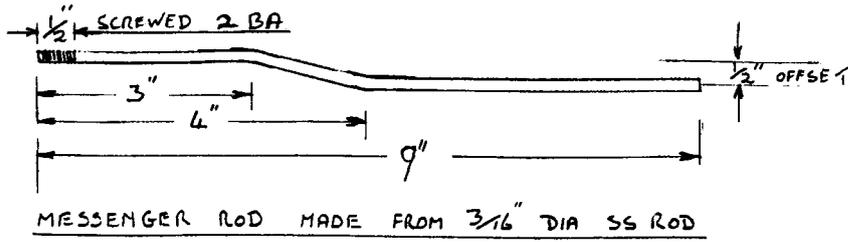
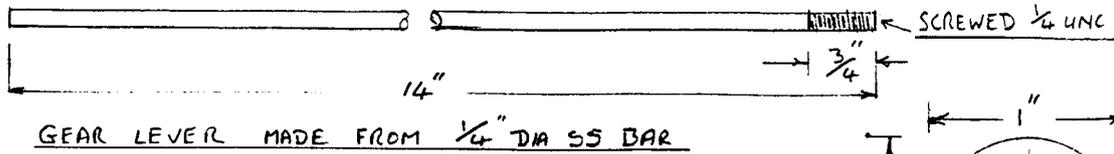


GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF ENGINE GEAR LEVER.

B.H. 14.11.91

The mechanism is fully adjustable in both the vertical and horizontal planes so that gear lever position and the required degree of mechanical advantage can be attained to suit individual requirements. The lower bracket in which the lever hinges is secured to the starboard edge of the engine transom by a single 6mm stainless steel bolt requiring a hole to be drilled in the engine transom. A ss wing-nut and washer is used to secure the single bolt. B.Hormbrey. SO 307.

DETAILS OF COMPONENTS FOR GEAR SHIFT LEVER



BH 14.11.91

Jim Crick's sailing tips: Reefing

"The time to reef," says the adage, "is when you first think about it" and these pearls of wisdom were firmly embedded at an early stage of my sail training.

Although my passion for sailing was absolute from the minute I finished my first long chat with Neptune, and my head rapidly filled with all manner of salty folklore, I do seem to have missed out, for many years, on how to reef simply. My early days were spent thundering about the Solent, scared witless, carrying far too much canvas. (I also only sailed in the dark blue bits of the chart but that's another story!").

It is fair to say that slab reefing was a lot less popular then and we had to crank the boom round with a big handle on the front of the mast whilst trying to keep the leech pulled out so that the sail rolled up flat. The job was always such an epic that we often tried to ignore the rising wind and clung on until we reached shelter. If you have never worked this system try and work out what happens to the kicking strap!.

I did put it all down to early ignorance on my part until I spent some time last year with a number of people, all at least experienced crew, who were setting out on that endless learning curve of command. almost to a man and woman they believed, as indeed I used, that it was essential to bring the boat head to windward to reef the main or, come to that, to change the headsail.

Unless you start the engine and force the issue it is one of life's little lotteries which side of the bows will catch the wind but suffice to say that we spent quite some time with a backed jib, pirouetting around the keel, with yards of mainsail billowing over the guardrails!

Now all this took place with a strong crew, plenty of briefing, and several tons of lead in the keel. It gets even more exciting on a Swift when the wind gets up.

The golden truth that I, and more recently my pals, had missed was that it is only the sail being worked which needs to be "head to windward" and combining this with the knowledge that most modern yachts will close reach comfortably under either main or jib alone makes the exercise much simpler.

My reefing routine starts when I hoist the mainsail by leaving enough slack in the topping lift for the sail to set but having it tight enough to support the boom without further attention during a reef. Then it's just a case of close reach, free off main sheet, lower halyard, hook on, harden halyard, haul in reefing line, and sheet

in. All done with the boat firmly under control throughout.

If you don't have a topping lift then I do recommend you to fit one. Mine is just a piece of line tied to the mast crane which comes straight down to the outer end of the boom where it passes through a small block with an integral jamming slot.

To conclude this lesson in egg-sucking let me just caution against tying anything too tightly through the reefing points. They serve no structural purpose and I have seen a gust of wind rip the centre out of a sail in which all the baggy bits had been smartly trussed up to the boom.

Our Swifts are great little boats but they do not give their best when overpressed so, get those reefs in, and reduce both your leeway and your crew's anxiety!



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AGM report

The 10th Annual General Meeting of the Swift Owners Association was held on 19th January at the Hilton Lodge Hotel, Basingstoke. 28 people attended and apologies were received from 9 members. Altogether there were 22 Swifts represented.

The meeting commenced with the Secretary welcoming the members who attended but voiced his disappointment at the generally poor response to the AGM notification with over 80 members not bothering to respond to the invitation. The Secretary then thanked the Honorary Officers and the Regional Representative for their support and work over the past year. He mentioned briefly the two rallies which took part in the South and the well attended laying up supper, also in the South. Once again, there were no organised events elsewhere.

In his capacity as Newsletter Editor, Doug Brodie thanked the members who contributed to the Newsletter over the year. He requested that the members should keep the logs, stories, tips and information coming in. He stated that it would be nice to hear more often from the North, West and East, as it is interesting to learn more about the sailing in these areas. He also thanked his wife Roz for her help with putting the Newsletter together and with stapling, enveloping and posting it.

The Treasurer's Report came next with Chris O'Brien presenting the Income and Expenditure Account for 1991. He explained that although membership had slightly risen, the actual subscriptions received were a little down. This was due to a few new members joining in the second half of the year and thus paying only half the annual subscription. Although we now have 97 boats in the Association, this in fact represents 38% of Swift boats in production. Chris said that we had done well to keep up membership and hopefully the numbers would continue to rise. The expenses of the Secretary and the Treasurer had been very small in 1991, and it was pleasing to note that once again the Newsletter production was inexpensive due to the ability to have it printed at no cost to the Association. Finally, Chris reminded the membership that we still have a small stock of ties, scarves and burgees for sale.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss the Subscription Rates and matters arising therefrom. The Secretary explained that the subscription rate had remained at the same level since the Association was founded and that the costs had been kept down by the generosity of some people. It was suggested that the subscription rate should be put up to £10 to cover the rising costs of postage and for unforeseen circumstances such as having to pay for printing the Newsletter. A lengthy debate followed with the main topic of discussion being the possibility of the Association purchasing spares on behalf of the membership. This would enable members to have immediate replacement of important parts (i.e. winding mechanisms, rudders and windows) at competitive rates. It was generally agreed that this was a good idea and a useful benefit to offer members. The meeting agreed to invest up to £1200 in such spares and Alan Murphy together with Roger Marsh were entrusted to organise this and report back to the Treasurer for the funds. Roger Marsh mentioned that, with the frequent problems experienced by members with their winding mechanisms it may be an idea to change the keel lifting gear to a more simple device, i.e. a cable mechanism could replace the current gear without too much alteration. This was discussed and it was agreed that a volunteer would be needed to test out this idea. The Newsletter would be used to ask for a

volunteer. The money spent on last year's AGM and the laying up supper were on the high side as members were treated to drinks. However it was agreed that, although a generous gesture, Association funds would be better spent on boat spares and keeping the subscription rate down. After all, we had a healthy bank balance which should be used for the benefit of all members. It was finally decided to keep the subscription rate at £8 for this 1992.

The appointment of Honorary Officers was the next item. Having decided to split up the posts of Secretary and Newsletter Editor the outgoing Secretary had circulated the job descriptions of all the Honorary Office posts to members. No volunteers had been received through the mail but, as stated in the last Newsletter (No 37), Chris O'Brien was willing to retain the post of Treasurer, and Alan Murphy had offered his services once again as Technical Editor.

SECRETARY: Alan Probyn volunteered for this position at the meeting. He was thus proposed by Jim Crick and seconded by Roger Pigden. As no other volunteers or proposals were forthcoming Alan Probyn was declared Secretary for 1992.

TREASURER: Chris O'Brien volunteered to retain this post. He was thus proposed by Alan Probyn and seconded by Harry Ellis. As no other volunteers or proposals were forthcoming Chris O'Brien was declared Treasurer for 1992.

TECHNICAL EDITOR: Alan Murphy offered to continue in this capacity. He was thus proposed by Chris O'Brien and seconded by Don Harvey. As no other volunteers or proposals were forthcoming Alan Murphy was declared Technical Editor for 1992.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Steve Hart volunteered for this position at the meeting. He was thus proposed by Alan Probyn and seconded by Alan Murphy. As no other volunteers or proposals were forthcoming Steve Hart was declared Newsletter Editor for 1992.

Doug Brodie offered his assistance to the new Secretary and Newsletter Editor.

The meeting then turned its attention to the appointment of Regional Representative for the Solent and South region. The Secretary was happy to inform the meeting that three other volunteers had been received through the post. Proposals and seconds were received in all cases and the results were declared as follows: SOLENT & SOUTH: Roger Pigden; SCOTLAND: Doug Angus; WALES: Phil Newman; MIDLANDS; Charles Frisby.

At this stage in the proceedings the meeting was treated to a very interesting talk by Roger Marsh on the history of the Swift marque. He described how the Swift was first conceived and the different companies involved in building the boats. Roger expressed that he is hopeful for a bright future for the Swift and will keep us informed on new developments through the Newsletter.

Under the title of Any Other Business members were called upon to promote the Association to other Swift owners. The Association offers a great deal with a countrywide membership willing to assist and advise, a library of technical information and modifications, close links with the builders of Swifts, a voice in trailer-sailing and now a source of important spares. The value of belonging to the Association is considerable this cannot be left up to just the Regional Representatives. Alan Murphy suggested that a loose sheet with details of the

Association be inserted into the next Newsletter. This can be photocopied and handed out to other Swift sailors we encounter.

Chris O'Brien asked if we should invest in more Burgees. Alan Murphy suggested that we have only the new Swift logo on them which was generally agreed. We have, however still three S18 burgees left plus a number of ties and scarves.

Alan Probyn thanked Doug and Roz Brodie for their work over the last year and meeting was closed.

Boat jumble

FOR SALE: I have available for reconstruction (needs new axle, wheels, brake components etc) an SBS galvanised boat trailer chassis and most bolt-on attachments. Suitable for Swift 18 or similar boat. Ideal springtime project - Call Peter Strong on 0794 517971 (Romsey, Hampshire) to discuss if interested.

SWIFT 18 178 Shillay for sale. 1985 boat and gear. Braked SBS galvanised trailer, Yamaha Four, Rotostay genoa. All good condition. Numerous extras. Lying Oban, Argyll. £5,250. - Tel. Robert Kincaid 0631 62013.

SWIFT 18. No. 33. Zee Mist. Log, echosounder, sprayhood, 4hp Yamaha with electric charging, spinnaker pole, SBS trailer. £5500. Lying Windermere. - Tel. Chris Clayton 0772 715757.

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THINKING OF SELLING?

Even the most dedicated Swiftie may one day need a change!

If that day has come for you, you may be interested to know that Marlin runs a successful brokerage service for good used Swifts - 18s, 20s, 23s or Explorers.

We advertise every month, run a regular newsletter to circulate the boats' details, and have a 4-figure customer database to work on, having been selling and marketing Swifts for 5 years now. Some of you will have originally bought your boats - new or used - from us. Others may even have one of our own Marlin-built 400 Series Swift 18s or 20s. We are in an excellent position to get a fair price for your Swift within a reasonable period of time, as many satisfied users of our service will testify.

Should you be interested in purchasing one of the larger craft, sail or power, for which we are dealers, we can most likely even take your existing Swift in part-exchange.

Do give Roger Marsh or Marlin a call, without obligation, of course, if you think we can be of help - we shall be more than glad to discuss the details with you.

Letters: The saga of 1991

This year my contribution to our esteemed journal is a bit different from normal. Instead of regaling you with my timid adventures to gain experience, I am going to recount the tale of two Swifts 'El Nasr' and 'Xia Yi'.

Those of you who have read our Swift Owners periodical before may recall that I have owned and sailed 'El Nasr' since 1984. My sailing area has been Cadaques and Moraira. We have never done a great mileage, 1990 being a record when I clocked up 160nm in my two leaves out of China where I live and work. However, as I am fast approaching retirement when I look forward to enjoying extended periods as a 'Liveaboard', I thought it high time to give myself more space for an interim couple of years before we buy our 30 footer.

The question then was - what could I buy that would let me try out some of the more advanced bits of boating that we manage so easily without on our 18s. Last December I started investigating the various options, 22' to 26'. It was great fun waiting for the returning correspondence, getting very frustrated with the lack of interest by some manufacturers, and the over optimism of others. I also had a great problem that I was unlikely to be able to enjoy a test sail in anything that I decided 'would do nicely'.

The decision, however, in the end came fairly easily. Swift Boats had their 23', I had actually seen one and been onboard at a show - their part exchange offer was reasonable, and I felt confident that as a Colin Silvester design she would suit me nicely. Once I had announced my decision, Swift Boats coped well, on paper, with the wide variety of special requests that I fed into their office. I finally got and accepted a 'price', and signed up on a standard RYA purchase contract. A deposit was paid with the due delivery date agreed as 4th June, **in Spain**.

That was in March. A progress payment was called for a few weeks later, but I was beginning to get a little bit uneasy as things did not seem to be progressing as quickly as I had imagined they should. My problem is that it was proving most difficult to get a full understanding at 8,000 miles range. I had one window in my work calendar when I could possibly visit Swift Boats to find out what was really happening and this tied in with the Paris Air Show.

My visit brought to light one factor which I had not previously realised, and that was that Swift did not actually make the boat themselves but subcontracted to Winsor Brothers, a small yard near Portsmouth. I visited the yard, saw my boat in a fairly basic state of progress (when it should have been nearly completed), and sadly parted with cheque no. 3.

I duly attended the Paris Air Show, did my bit for RR in the UK, and flew out to Moraira to have a few days holiday and welcome in my new 23, with the delivery driver going to tow 'El Nasr' to the UK on his return trip. Wrong!!!

It is difficult to phone from Spain, the exercise adds to the frustration, but eventually I determined the 'Xia Yi', my 23 was not to be ready 'for some time'. There was nothing for it but to fly back to the UK and try to find out 'what the **** was happening'. With a day to spare before I had to fly back to Beijing, I duly arrived at the Winsor yard. Now everything was revealed. Swift Boats was going down the drain, had not passed on all the cash to Winsors, all the additional kit had not been paid for, some had not even been ordered, so . . . !

I went to the office of the chap who had been recommended to carry out the delivery/recovery exercise and considered my various options. To date I had parted with £11,000, and looked like having nothing to show for it unless I could get hold of 'Xia Yi', which was indeed now nearly completion in the Winsor workshop.

A phone call to a marine solicitor was a most useful step, which put the 'which option' logic into play, and I returned to Beijing, once again 8,000 miles away from the action. Over the next few weeks, I indulged in a few very expensive phone calls, got both my son and my Bank to send money here and there like confetti, till at last, I was advised that all was well and 'Xia Yi' would be delivered in time for my main holiday which started in mid-August.

'Xia Yi' was indeed delivered, but even that operation was not without its problems. I had asked that she be delivered as a tourist boat, a VAT free import into Spain, just as if you go there trailing for your annual holiday. Anyway, to cut a long story short, I, after a further 10 days of boat sitting in the local Customs, paid £2800 IVA. Now I thought, let's get afloat. Wrong!!!

As part of my 'let's try out some of the gadgets I might want for retirement', had ordered a Stow Stoboom. This had not been fitted and the task seemed beyond my limited capability. Calls to Stow Sails revealed they have a facility south of Alicanti, some 80 miles south of Moraira. Eventually they were prevailed upon to come up and do the job. It took two of them a full day, so I think my assessment of the magnitude of the task was correct.

I am now into my third week of holiday, but booked up for a crane launch for the morning of Tuesday, 27th August. The Tuesday dawned bright and clear, just perfect for a maiden voyage?! Wrong!!! I got aboard just as soon as 'Xia Yi' settled in the water and prepared to start the motor. I was somewhat alarmed to see water in the rear lockers, and even more so when I discovered water in the cabin! Lifting the keel well cover revealed a good trickle of water from the inspection hatch cover. It was only finger tight and had not been sealanted.

Back on her trailer, I dried her out, went round all the areas I thought could be a cause for worry and leaks, and booked up another launch. This finally took place at 4 p.m., and I was so grateful I just motored to my berth.

My next set of problems came with the testing of the electric and electronic systems. It was great fun however to be able to plug into 'shore power', switch on this and that, play a small TV, and even record the Spanish TV weather report. I might invest in one of these 12 volt cool boxes near year! The luxury of space was much welcomed. A sea loo and oven all add to the comforts of creature life and help one forget the trials and tribulations of boat purchase.

The 28th August dawned fine if hazy. Certainly OK for an initial motor and sailing trial. I still had water under the cabin sole and in the rear lockers, but it was not deepening so I felt able to set out for our first trip. I have opted for a 6HP Yamaha, and the running-in instructions insist on running off the full tankful of 50-1 before you can open up the engine, so I knew I was in for a good bit of motoring before I could relax and get down to some sailing. Anyway my first problem came on casting off.

She does not reverse nearly so easily as the 18. To one side, yes, but to the left (going backwards) only with the greatest difficulty. Getting away therefore provided a few interesting moments. The people I have working on her in my absence have reported a problem with the rudder, and say they have now fixed it. I will know more for my next year's report.

In all, I managed to get out on only 6 days before I had to have her lifted out and stored for winter. The log only shows 26.2nms, a miserable showing for a sailing holiday, and certainly not to be repeated in the future I hope!

So what of the Swift 23? She certainly has the potential to provide great fun and good sailing. I just still have to get all the bugs ironed out. More expense - but I guess at this stage in her procurement cycle I have little option. I like the space and all the goodies I have onboard. I could do without the leaks, I will welcome all the electronics working properly, and look forward to a happier 1992. I wish the same to all.

So what of 'El Nasr'? In the end I felt obliged to sell her locally. My delivery/recovery driver got some information to say that as she had been overseas so long, VAT could be required on her return. Although I have a bill showing VAT from the John Chandler period of running Swifts, I did not have a stamped up receipt! I also got the feeling he was not too keen to undertake the return journey again towing a boat. Her new owner is a Spaniard with no English, and before our Honourable Secretary asks me, sorry I did not get his address, although I believe she will be sailing out of Calpe in the future.

'El Nasr' is arabic for 'The Victory', 'Xia Yi' is Chinese for 'Romantic Holiday'.

**Eric Smith,
c/o Rolls Royce (China) Ltd.,
P.O. Box 31,
Derby DE2 8BJ.**

Letters: Explore the Isles

The Swift Explorer is on all accounts a strong, graceful and well balanced open boat suitable for more than just close in coastal cruising. For the less faint hearted but cautious skipper and crew quite adventurous sea crossings can be undertaken with absolute confidence.

I say this based on my own experience as I slowly explore the main islands and sea lochs on the West coast of Scotland and, as anyone who knows these waters will testify, should take the rest of the sailing days in my life time.

Although fresh to the Swift Explorer, I've had her for 2 years, my sailing apprenticeship over the last 15 years has been in a collection of different craft - none as simple to sail as my Explorer.

My first season in my aptly named Explorer, Red Wing, took me to the Clyde and Largs marina, my departure point for my passage South of Great Cumbrae Island and eventual circumnavigation of the Isle of Bute. Although I had settled weather the wind wasn't lively enough to make the crossing to Arran and I vowed I would be back another year.

This year the sailing was far more adventurous and although I say it myself even more successful. This time my launching was from Craobh Haven over to Mull, Iona, Staffa and the famous Fingal's Cave, Ardnamurchan and back to Craobh via the Sound of Mull passing under the 'Bridge over the Atlantic' in Clachan Sound. Plenty of open sea, plenty of spectacular scenery, and with the good luck remaining, plenty of good weather. Overnight anchorages were in Tinker's Hole, Gometra, Kilchoan, to enter the annual regatta, Loch Aline and finally the Otter Pool, Puilladobhrain.

My planning for 1992 is well underway and at this stage I'm undecided, should I sail south to Jura and Islay or travel North back through the Sound of Mull into Loch Sunart. Either way Kilchoan Regatta should not be missed nor the gathering of the clan McClane's at Duart. Should I sail again out of Craobh or Creran, so much to resolve but with plenty of time to think there is no rush.

The intention will be to finish up with a journey plan 10 to 14 days duration at the beginning of June for Duart, Jura and Islay or at the end of July for Sunart and Kilchoan. Perhaps there are other owners of Swift Explorers who would like to join in the adventure or for that matter the invitation is extended to all members of the Association.

Interested parties can telephone me on 05874 226.

Andy Smith,
Kirkbank House, Orton, Nr. Penrith, Cumbria CA10 3RQ