

# John Rusher Diary

Volume One



*Boleh*  
*Can do*

## Boy Sent to Approved School



# JOHN'S BOOK

## AN EXPLANATION

Placed 12<sup>th</sup> July.

When we were preparing for the voyage in Boleh and until we got as far as Colombo, we were all extremely vague how an affair was to be put on record for our friends and especially else who was not enough to pay to read about us. This was some idea that I might have a shot at a book later on, I thought it was obvious that any book would come much better from Polih, as the whole has been essentially his, he was far too occupied with worries about the boat, the crew, the stores and above all the rig, was to consider the future.

Peter, an appalling correspondent, had promised his Mother and young brother that, though he would write few letters, he would keep a personal diary which they could see at the end of the voyage, and he started writing on the day of sailing. I was determined to keep up my letter writing - but with the idea that on day, even if I did not write a book somebody else would, I set about recording everything that was of interest to me personally in a journal which became, as time went on, more and more of a diary.

When we reached Colombo Polih received news from his brother in law that some paper (the Sunday before I left) was prepared to offer a considerable sum for the exclusive rights to a story, but he was still too preoccupied with immediate affairs to set to work; however, by the time we got to Singapore he ~~was~~ <sup>had</sup> detailed instructions which insisted that he must write the whole affair himself. He set to work then and there, and as he had to work far too fast, decided to weave the story around selections from Peter's diary. My journal having been written largely as notes, and for no other eyes than my own, I have given him ~~some~~ <sup>rather</sup> various ideas and ~~some~~ details that have not been covered in the diary. So I am now free to embark on producing my own book, not, in any account, for publication, but for my own relation and friends to read, thus hoping it will amuse them.

I am afraid that both the writing and the majority of the photographs are very poor but I am having to write this on my lap at sea and the photographs are the best I have available at present!



Robin  
Kilroy

## PRELIMINARIES - How IT ALL BEGAN

Robin has <sup>for many years</sup> had ideas about building a boat  
aboard and sailing it home, but it was not until  
he was appointed as Boom Defense Office Singapore in December  
'47 that he could even consider it. Incidentally this  
appointment was in every way typical of the navy.  
Robin had previously applied to active, but was turned down  
flatter than that owing to his aviation experience being  
indispensable. He was at the time at the naval air  
station at Sembawang (Singapore), and at the end of  
'47 he was appointed home and put in to a tempo.  
Meanwhile a friend of his at the Admiralty, hearing  
his ideas, arranged for him to go as Boom Defense  
Office Singapore, and this appointment was actually  
received at the Flag Office before he sailed.  
However, the secretary (a very second rate team) failed  
to pass on the signal and Robin got as far as  
Columbo before he knew the good tidings. He spent a  
fortnight there (a pretty hectic one by all accounts - he  
knew the island well having been ~~not~~ there during the war)  
and then came back to Singapore and moved in at  
Kajang.

So he got the <sup>perfect</sup> job ~~he wanted~~ in the end,  
but only at the cost of great personal inconvenience,  
~~and~~ it was too about the best place in the world to  
send a man whose aviation experience was invaluable!  
I must explain why this job was so suitable.  
A Boom Defense Depot is really a little outgrowth of a  
specialist character. These the anti-submarine boom, the  
nets, floats of all sorts, sinker anchors and wires are  
kept and maintained in peace time and then they are  
brought for repair in war. Thus there is always a crew  
and a host plenty of covered storage, machine tools  
and workmen and everything the amateur boat builder  
could wish for. As Robin was to live in a very  
pleasant bungalow in the depot his delight at the whole  
affair can be imagined.

As soon as he was installed Robin wrote to  
their landlords for a firm undertaking regarding the length  
of his appointment, and was assured that this would  
be for two years. ~~The~~ This assurance was as expected, broken,  
but fortunately not long before time was up. Then he  
applied to the Flag Office (Rear Admiral Clifford Carlson)  
for permission to build the boat at the depot, and  
received approval, but having judged it was however,  
he decided to go ahead.

The Builders  
and one helper

Jarwe



Embong



Ali



Leaving island of Singapore on  
31st July - left 12<sup>th</sup> September

Robin planned to employ Malay shipwrights for the building, but he needed the assistance of a skilled European boat builder to translate his designs in to practical work, and he first had the duty laid to see if there was a candidate there. He was extremely fortunate in this because almost at once he met Jarwe, a first class boat builder, mad about sailing, who was due to go home about the right time, and who also all had ~~the~~ longed for years to do a real ocean passage in sail. From that time onwards Jarwe ~~was~~ <sup>met</sup> to be having every week end, and although together they did a good deal of racing in a 'Star', the rest of the time was spent on Boleh. Pete and I both knew of the man from the start and Pete had some ideas of joining up, but nothing could have been further from my mind at that time. I had not then ever been even interested in sailing, (to ~~be so~~ as with so many other naval people it had seemed something of a 'humane holiday', and anyhow I had always been absorbed in games. Bet's too, hated sailing which probably affected affair.

By the spring of '49 however, both Pete and I were seriously considering ~~the~~ asking Robin if we might join up, and in May Pete definitely became a candidate and applied for Admiralty permission. I still had hope that I might possibly get promoted in June and so stood back (for it would have been a pity to get ~~thoroughly~~ involved and then have to drop it all) until the time lute arrived. Once again I had failed to catch the selector's eye, and so on the 1st of July I rang up Robin and said was ME too. These hardships permission (cagey to a degree on the matter of pay) came amiss, and I started helping with the building.

In afraid my sources were few and evasive until mid-September, because I had another, and perhaps even <sup>more</sup> important ~~one~~; certainly even more important commitment — Jeremy's arrival and 6 week stay in Singapore. Had what fun that was. He came out with no <sup>one</sup> to logang but not in afraid only have painful memories of Boleh for we forgot to warn him not to go down the head towards the sea. He ran down it — my shouted warning were too late and he slipped — so many other people have done full head long and cut the hair wide open.

However he was able to help for a bit - and  
was employed by Jaws in winding up washing cotton.  
The ferry went off row and I found up as  
a 'full member'.



On the hand at  
Loyang

## DESIGN — BOLEHS PECULIAR SHAPE AND RIG

Hull. <sup>Small</sup> influences ~~which~~ affected Boleh's design ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~all~~ <sup>all</sup>. Boleh is an individual of many parts, artist, aviator and yachtsman among them, and both the artist and the yachtsman were much affected by the Chinese junk, the artist by ~~the~~ <sup>its</sup> beauty of form and the yachtsman by ~~the~~ <sup>its</sup> remarkable seaworthiness. The very high stem is I suppose their most unusual feature in Western eyes — but after all one must remember that it was not so long ago that European ships had great high aft-cantles just as turrets from which the soldiers could fight, and later built for accommodation and as platforms for the great ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~great~~ <sup>great</sup> guns. Boleh's low, swamping bow line has often been likened to that of an Arab dhow, but in fact many junks have the same line forward. Of course they have eyes each side of the stem looking ahead (fishing like junks naturally have their eyes cast down) — and Boleh's eyes add further to her junky appearance.

Below the waterline she is of a more conventional shape. From the side she has a lovely lines, and though she is a somewhat portly lady ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~so~~ <sup>so</sup> ~~trim~~ <sup>trim</sup> ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> ~~her~~ <sup>her</sup> ~~length~~ <sup>length</sup>, and very full forward and aft all this contributes greatly to her undoubted seaworthiness. She really is a wonderful sea boat. The open stem has demonstrated this. All the experts and many others too, ~~have~~ <sup>have</sup> ~~given~~ <sup>given</sup> ~~no~~ <sup>no</sup> ~~good~~ <sup>good</sup> ~~descriptions~~ <sup>descriptions</sup> before we set out of her great hissing combing would come pouring in aft, swamping the cockpit, flooding the cabin and soon reducing poor Boleh to a waterlogged ruin, but now has one even looked like doing this. As each great curving roller comes up astern, so many of them coming up in a really frightening way, ~~like~~ <sup>like</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~lady~~ <sup>lady</sup> ~~Boleh~~ <sup>Boleh</sup> ~~gathers~~ <sup>gathers</sup> ~~up~~ <sup>up</sup> ~~her~~ <sup>her</sup> ~~skirts~~ <sup>skirts</sup> and gently lifts over and up as the wave with a furious hissing snort at being backed of its prey passes gently under the counter.

Of course this business makes her slower than she might be, and the fullness forward stops her in a head sea, but she was not designed to go fast to windward, and the ~~mainly~~ <sup>mainly</sup> ~~reason~~ <sup>reason</sup> ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~her~~ <sup>her</sup> ~~slow~~ <sup>slow</sup> ~~speed~~ <sup>speed</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~built~~ <sup>built</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~run~~ <sup>run</sup> ~~fast~~ <sup>fast</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~windward~~ <sup>windward</sup> and the ~~mainly~~ <sup>mainly</sup> ~~reason~~ <sup>reason</sup> ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~her~~ <sup>her</sup> ~~slow~~ <sup>slow</sup> ~~speed~~ <sup>speed</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~built~~ <sup>built</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~run~~ <sup>run</sup> ~~fast~~ <sup>fast</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~windward~~ <sup>windward</sup> and the ~~mainly~~ 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side in  
sloping  
boats



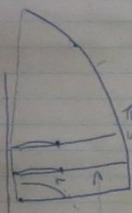
a mainmast -  
made in sections, and with a  
great curve in the back -



and did not fit one of  
these old foremasts with a fantastic rake  
forward -



forward how he was prepared to be  
conventional -



Wishbone Gear

The Mainmast  
with wishbone gear  
fitted

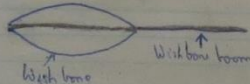
The perfect shape for a  
sail is the same as that of  
an airplane wing - a big curve forward  
forward and flat aft

The curved things are the wishbones, and  
the straight ones the wishbone booms

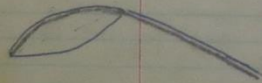


wishbone fitted  
(Otto Steiner Vanguard  
in the way!)

looked at from above they are like this



The joint between the wishbone and the boom is hinged,  
so when on a wind the whole thing stays like this



and the sail (shown in pencil) etc is forced  
to adopt very nearly the ideal shape as  
shown above.

The wishbone gear could  
not be used with a single  
mast.



Showing how the  
sail is slung in the  
quadripod.



To avoid  
simply say that he

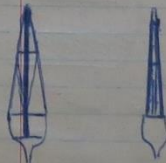
Rig

Pursuing his junk ideas, Robin was determined to  
have a mainmast of their type, made in sections  
and with a great curve in the back. Fortunately, he did  
not go so far as to adopt later sails with multiple  
battens and sheets. Favored, too, he was prepared to  
be conventional, and did not fit one of those odd  
foremasts with a fantastic rake forward.

I think it was partly the aversion in Robin  
that induced him to employ a peculiar device  
known (for some reason that I in my ignorance have never  
been able to fathom) as 'wishbone' gear. A man  
called Henschelot used a similar affair once, but  
Robin's was really largely original. In effect it was  
not a success and was eventually discarded,  
but obviously it is a good principle if only the  
right materials can be found to make it (I have tried  
to explain it opposite!)

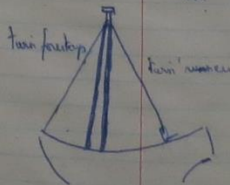
Neither the junk shaped mainmast nor the wishbone  
gear could be used with a conventional single mast.  
(The great disadvantage of the junk mainmast is that it is  
inefficient when on the wing side of the mast) so Robin  
was forced to adopt either a bipod, tripod, or quadripod.  
Without going into the thing in ~~the~~ detail I will  
eventually settle for a quadripod. As well as enabling  
the junk sail and wishbone gear to be used, this  
reduced standing rigging, and it meant more space below deck.

more space  
below deck -



what a mess but maybe it shows what I mean

The quadripod is ~~is~~ stayed and braced like this:-



Four foretops

Two masts



Two upper internal shores (booms)

Two lower internal shores (crosses)



Forward end of wishbone.



Wishbone booms.



Arrangement at top of mainsail.

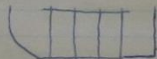


Main sheets.



### Castling the Keel

First the bolts (1 1/2" brass - each one of them strong enough to hold the keel on!) were put in templates like this



Then the lead should have been poured in one lot and the contraction when the lead got cold would have pulled the bolts in bodily to their proper positions. As it was however the lead had to be poured in three lots, so this happened



First pouring brought the bolts in bodily the expected amount



Second brought them in like this, and the third made it worse still.

(Of course these drawings are very much exaggerated)

## BUILDING

Even before Rohn went to Hongkong he had put his ideas into concrete form in the shape of two models, one built by Japanese prisoners at Seremban and the other, a lovely 1" to 1 foot model, by himself. He had given both of these extensive trials under various rigs and had even been able to try them out in comparable sea-going conditions from a beach up in Malaya, so, when James paid up on the spring of '48, Rohn had pretty firm ideas of the general lines of the vessel.

At this time Rohn estimated that the actual hull construction should not take more than five months, so he and James took their time in laying down the screes (I think that is the right word - anyhow I mean the full scale drawings that must be made of any hull, even a battleship, before it is built). They considered ~~the~~ every curve, tucked it in a little bit more here, eased her out a bit there, and filled out a too-flat but somewhere else, and there is no doubt that the results are beautiful. They actually drew out these screes under Rohn's singular direct, like nearly all the pre-war Singapore boats, was built on stilts.

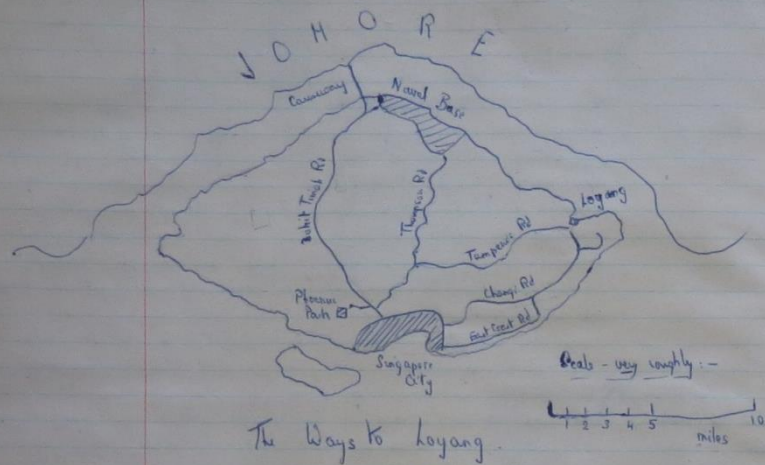
By September the screes were ready, they had started to collect the timber and fastenings, and when the two Malay shipwrights from Terengganu arrived they were able to get to work ~~at once~~ at once. These two, Embong and Ali, were good workmen, but Jim afraid like all Malays they were damned idle, and although two men would finish them six months later it was not until October '49 that the hull was ready for launching.

Building was started in a large corrugated iron hangar in the Boom Depot, and ~~so fast~~ the hull was largely completed there. It was moved down to the keel in August, and then moved on to the lead keel which Rohn, Pete James and various small boys of Rohn's entourage had had a hell of a job casting a few Saturdays before. Everything had gone wrong, it was a horrendously hot day and when eventually they had finished the casting, which they had to do in penny numbers because only one of the boiler works, the brass bolts all grew inwards so they wouldn't fit the ship!

No. These were not screes but left drawings for which the 'models' are made. The 'screes' are cut in the 'screes' board, and for their 'best' frames are cut out.

Rohn and James had also put in a good deal of work on the keel so Embong and Ali had only to 'smooth it off'.





Robin at Loyang.



Boats not fishing at Loyang.



At Loyang.

The hull had just arrived at the land when I 'joined up', and although it was structurally nearly complete there was a deal of a lot to do before it could be launched, let alone fitted out. Chiseling, painting, sheathing, the engine to be fitted - and many other major jobs.

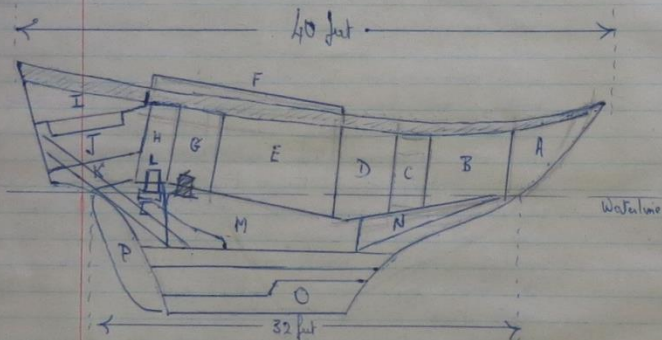
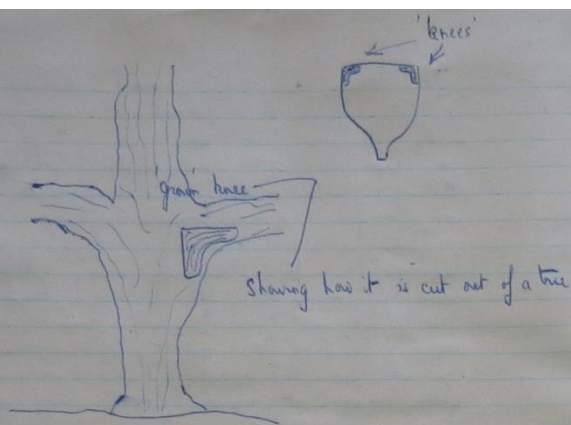
During this period and when fitting out proper started after the launching, my jobs were painting internally, fitting all the electrics (except those connected with the engine & radio) and general odd jobs. I used to be able to go to Loyang every Wednesday as well as at week ends for which I was glad because it meant I could make up a little for my late start. I used on Wednesdays too to take assistance with me - nearly always women who worked at Phoenix Park (the Command Headquarters) and who also had a 'half-holiday' on Wednesday. We would take a picnic lunch and a bottle or so and absorb it on the way, then get down to work, and had those girls worked. The duller the job the better they seemed to like it, and the more glamorous they were the less they seemed to mind working in a temperature of well over 100, in a confined space, and getting paint in their hair and wood shavings down their backs and generally spending what one would imagine a pretty heavy afternoon. But women are good at dull, repetition jobs, and I suppose it was a change from their usual life.

One particular creature taught me a sharp lesson. A very lovely girl called Daphne Atgell who worked in an office and whose husband worked on the ship did not have Wednesday off. She came several times to Loyang and was a tiger for work, but once she was all huddled up like a monkey painting the (speak) and I was stupid enough, when I came to see her she was getting on, to haul with milk at her - she looked so very different from her usual immaculate self. Long before I ever saw the ghost in her dark brown eyes I had received one paint brush full of white paint from my nose to my umbilicus. . . . never again shall I laugh at a woman carrying a lethal weapon.

The wood used in the construction was nearly all chenghai, a heavy Malayan hardwood, and teak, and internal fittings were of teak and of various local softer woods. There is practically no iron in the hull, all fastenings were of brass or copper.







A Section of Boleh - not accurate - but designed to show the main spaces in the ship

- A Forepeak - for stowing ropes, anchors, cables etc.
- B Forecabin - benches each side, but used for stowing sails
- C Water tank amidships - four lockers each side
- D Galley space - four lockers each side lockers used either for grain and clothes
- E Main cabin - sixes each side - folding bunk each side over sixes kitchen in middle
- F 'Coachway'
- G Chest rabbet port side - low stowage (I put the engine in here by mistake)
- H Engine space amidships - water tank port, companion stairway
- I Cockpit
- J Rains cabin - Rains tank starboard - Change bunk port - whiskey amidships
- K Whiskey
- L Motor
- M Space under floor boards filled with beer, water, and beer.
- N Main space for stowing food etc.
- O Lead keel  $4\frac{1}{2}$  tons
- P Rudder

The knees are all 'grown' (the grain runs naturally toward the corner so that the knee is much stronger) and many of them are over a hundred years old, having come from ~~the~~ a ~~single~~ junk. Some other, beautiful timbers, were cut from a tree which was unearthed by the engineers extending Changi runway.

Boleh is I won't go on about technical details, but perhaps I have written enough to show that Boleh is most beautifully built, & built to last many many years.

Perhaps this is when I should explain that 'Boleh' is Malay for 'can do' - and it was naturally used all the time of building as Pohn explained his designs to the shipwrights and always ended 'boleh?' getting the reply 'boleh!' - or sometimes 'ta-boleh' (no - can do).



On the hoist at hoisting the day before launching

God willing, and the tide serving  
The Junk Yacht Bolch

will take the water at

H.M. Dock Defence Depot, Loyang  
about noon on the 23rd October, 1949

M. Douglas Young will break the traditional bottle and there  
will afterwards be a small celebration and a lighting of auster  
of dips d'art and tri-a-trac at

Number One Bungalow

The Master, Master's Mate, Carpenter  
and Cook of the vessel would esteem it an  
honour if

.....  
would assist them on this unique occasion

R.S.V.P.  
The Captain's Clerk,  
Yacht Bolch,  
H.M. B.D.D., Loyang.



The launching party  
went over the  
ropey causeway



Bolch was baptised with a  
bottle of excellent champagne  
given by the French naval  
base office at de V. Nguyen  
his wife was baptised at this  
historic British mission of  
good wine.

## LAUNCHING

Whilst on the hard Bolch was sitting on a  
somewhat sticky cable and when she was ready  
for launching this had to be dragged down to the low  
water mark using a wire from one of the boom vessels  
out at the pier. This was a most terrifying business which  
I tried to watch but could not stand it.



On the cable -

(There is another photograph at the top of page 9)



When she was down at  
the edge of the hard a watch  
was set for the night, and  
in the morning final preparations were made, including the  
rigging of a most ropey 'causeway' for the launching team to  
board her. I took no part in this as I was being  
fully occupied with preparations for the lights and as a matter  
of fact more profitable sides of the affair.  
Robin came down with Toby Nicholls - Robin looked quite  
astonishingly unwarmed.



Robin &  
Toby Nicholls



and then we waited for the spring tide to rise.  
When the moment came it was all over very  
quickly, Robin, Mutt Young, James Dopey, Embury and Ah,  
and Mac went on board - a shield blast from a  
whistle and a great tug from the Bar vessel - and the  
she was afloat and looking wonderful.

Then she was towed away  
to the pier looking wonderful -

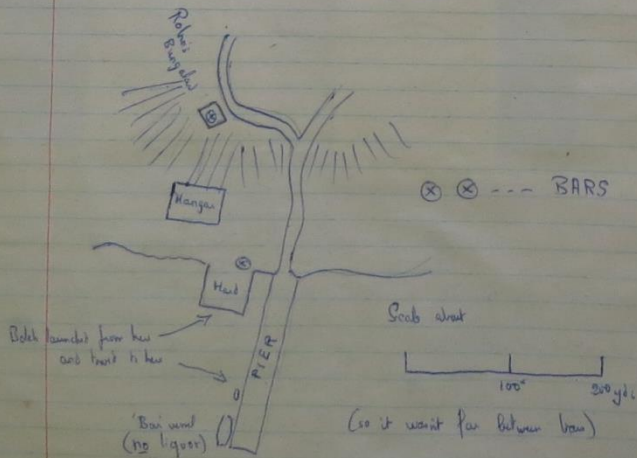


Mac  
dean  
Yang

Dopy  
Ali  
Indong  
Rohie



His Majesty's Boom Defaw Depot - Loyang



When everybody (about 200 I suppose) had had a look at the ship and started to grouch then that at the hour we moved them up to the bungalows and had the auction. That was fun. I had undertaken to do the auctioning and as the moment approached I got more and more windy but, when I started, all the old palter I used to listen to in the market at Penhou came back and with the most terrific support from the customers it was all too easy. Again and again I had to stop people from bidding against themselves - Robin was running around at the back blushing furiously and saying this is murder but its very nice!

The best selling piece ~~possibly~~ was the quilt ~~(possibly)~~ were of course Robin our paintings and drawings - he is no mean performer and has shown several things in the Academy -

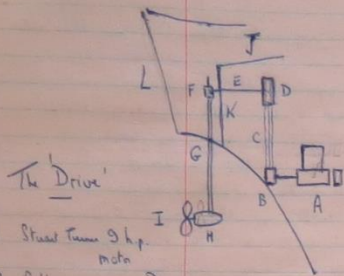
Altogether we grossed about £1760 - minus say £200 for the cost of the party - net say £180. Not bad.



Penhou  
Proves  
Propriety  
Patched



Ornan and Ahmad  
(Robin's Malay boys)



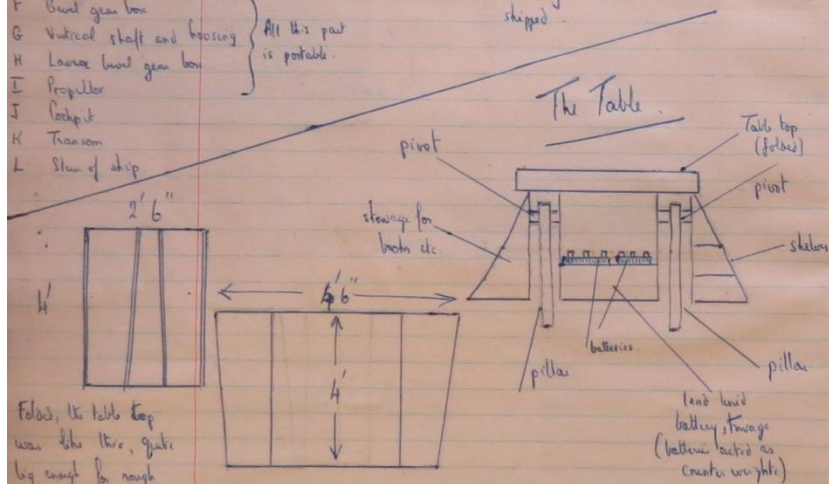
A Steam Turbine Ship motor

B Pulley  
C Multiple belt drive } 1:2 reduction  
D Pulley  
E Horizontal shaft  
F Bent gear box  
G Vertical shaft and housing } All this part is portable.  
H Lower bent gear box  
I Propeller  
J Cockpit  
K Transom  
L Stern of ship



Pulley

Showing how the drive is shipped.

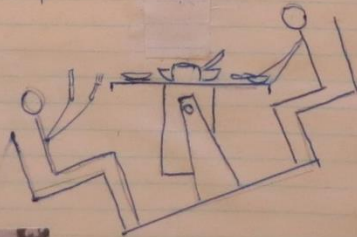


Folded, the table top was like this, quite big except for rough weather.

but opened out it made a very decent sized table



Mass ballasted launch.



Five lead and cable stoppers.

## FITTING OUT AND TRIALS

Of course 'fitting-out' (which is, strictly speaking, the fitting of everything in a ship other than the hull) had started well before launching, but now the hull was really completed fitting out went on with furious energy. Every week end we used to gather at Haying, and Indian bungalow hummed with the purpose — the single purpose we all had — a wonderful feeling and the whole atmosphere was vibrant with it. We used to work like mad by day — Peter turning us out at 7 to get washing in Sunday morning — eat enormous meals and drink quantities of whisky which was inevitably swatted out soon after it was drunk. In the evening there were great discussions about the hull and, hence so, the rig, but I stood severely out of them except when asked for an opinion on major policy. I was certainly not qualified to take part in ~~major policy~~ hull or rig; instead I occupied myself with planning food affairs.

Robin's pact with the kishiks was unilaterally (I think that is the proper word nowadays) broken in November, which meant that he had to leave his home as early as possible, and we persuaded him to meet himself and the ship up to the Naval Base on December 15<sup>th</sup>. I left Phoenix Park, and went to Peter's home — and the same day, and so we were all at last together. By this time we had in theory finished fitting out, but there was still a great deal to do — ~~not~~ all the stowage provisioning, and trials — hundreds of fittings still to go on — men painting — and so on, so well as the business of settling our own affairs, turning over our jobs, saying good bye (no more talk in a place where you have lived for 2½ years) — packing gear and ~~on the way out~~ I have tried to draw a few of the more important fittings in the opposite page — the engine and its central drive arrangement which was to give us so much trouble and expense — & the wonderful table and cooking stove.\* I have also drawn the sails\* we started out with — and listed\* (proudly!) the many electric lights which I fitted and used with my own incompetent fingers. This is also a very bad drawing of that, incredibly important fitting — my bunk!

\* next page — I overhauled!



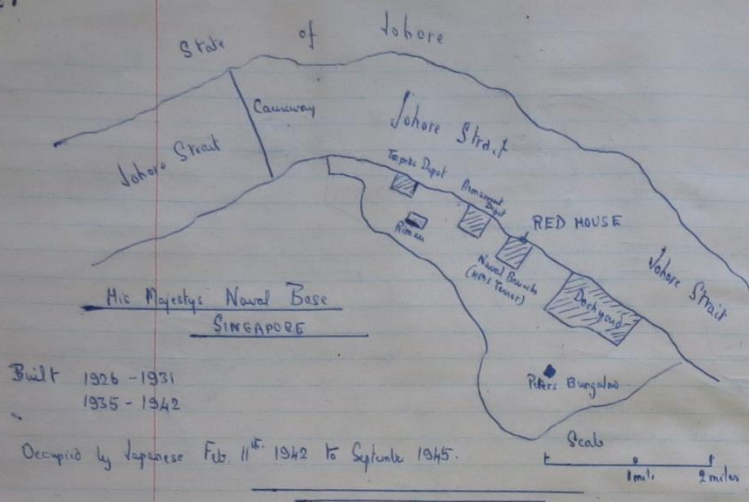
Working like mad...



great discussions...

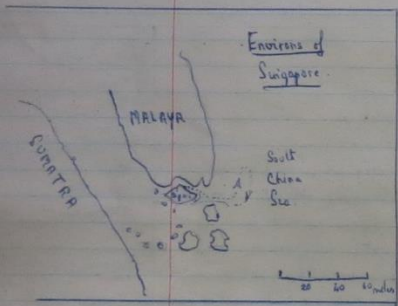






Built 1926 - 1931  
1935 - 1942

Occupied by Japanese Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> 1942 to September 1945.



To travellers in far places, homing for a

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

off for the Christmas trip -  
Turkey hanging on the side.



Mac with Anu Killy-Beer and  
Robin's Dopey - the most unusual  
dog eat of King.

from Sir & James Napier  
(see back!)



Dec 15<sup>th</sup> -

From this time onwards everything became more hectic each day & I was so occupied with my own affairs that I really took very little notice at the time of Peter and his rigging down and the ship getting (the Malay carpenter and Mac and their many women with the engine driver) Robin and of it all however we managed to get away for Singapore on Friday evening 23<sup>rd</sup> December taking besides us four

Dec 23<sup>rd</sup>



'Mac'

Chang, Teo Chew Hong, Robin's horrible little brown dog whom he adored, and ~~John Mac~~ Mac. I'm afraid that I know very little of Mac - John Macdonald, a Comander (E), very small, perfectly delightful, and a first class sailor who has had a great deal of experience in ocean sailing with John Hargreaves. Of course Mac ought to have done the trip but he had only been in Singapore a few months so it was impossible for him to get away. Apart from his sailing experience he helped Robin unobtrusively in getting the drive going and was in every way of great assistance to us.

Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>

(see map opposite)

The trial trip was great fun. Of course it was far too short, but we managed to get off for enough out in to the South China Sea to make ourselves sick and get a bit of sea-sailing. Chang and I were detained on a real Christmas dinner and although we had to chop the turkey in two to get the damn thing in the oven we made it all right. As we had started on her at 9, came to Bala at 10 and gun at 1130 lunch was pretty hectic - we all ate too much and when it started to blow about 5 Christmas dinner was soon being returned to the oggins. Incidentally ~~we~~ I thought Robin had forgotten the turkey and he thought I had so we found when we had sailed that we had two on board! Fortunately we managed to return one.

Jan 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>

Teo Chew Hong was sick the entire 3 days. Poor wretched little creature. Everywhere he tried to lie down he was in the way and soon got kicked out. I'm sure he'd never want to go to sea again. We had one other excursion - to the Royal Singapore Yacht Club regatta. That too was a grand party. We spent one day going down from the naval base and slept a board in the club lagoon, then got under way next day for a grandstand view of the class races, but we anchored off the club as the dinghy race ended and took out the 'gun pendant'. Very soon we had a swarm of people on board (even one



Philip and Ann  
Kibby Bar at work —



Philip sketching  
the Malay boats from the Red House



Robin, Ann and Philip  
having a stand-easy



from Vonnie Allen

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS  
AND  
A HAPPY VOYAGE  
THROUGH THE  
NEW YEAR

pongo friends had learnt what a gun and white  
pendant meant!) and seven dinghies and a star scum  
alongside. It was only with difficulty that we  
saved the last guest out in time to have a  
sumid lunch and get ready for the all-comers race.  
There were 3 I think water on board for this —  
including the Kirby-Greens who had been very sweet and  
helpful to us — and we came surging up to the  
line on the port tack for a perfect start. Various  
Australian crews of the 16 foot shiffs coming across  
on the starboard tack were hauling to us to give way  
but of course it was impossible. But they wouldn't  
appreciate this — (the 16 footers are Australian boats —  
no more need be said).

Jan 8<sup>th</sup>

We really did very well and came in about  
ten minutes after the leaders in a difficult race which  
lasted two hours. The club gave us a finishing gun  
and Robin was presented with a special prize.

Jan 9<sup>th</sup>

The next morning we set off very early to  
get back to the naval base — I had promised  
Robin I would go with him but was sorry afterwards  
because Colin and Mary Gray came through from Hong Kong  
on their way to the Sultan that day and I  
missed them. But we had a good sail back and  
arrived at tea time.

Dec 31<sup>st</sup>

My 'last chance' came during this time. I'm certainly  
not going to write how hard I felt, but there are two  
things I want to record. Robin, although he was absolutely  
flat out, suddenly realising it was 6 o'clock on  
Dec 31<sup>st</sup>. These away work and spent a long time trying  
to find me to tell me he would go out ~~with~~ with me  
for the evening or do anything else I wanted. Actually  
I had driven in to Singapore to take Penny from home (she  
had been working a boat for ~~her~~ her drive back to the  
Penang for a year and had so he could not find me. I also missed  
her as I got a plane and play tennis with her and I didn't know until  
the other thing I must put down is that I  
didn't know until this letter blew full how many of  
real friends I had. Good people were heard — so  
beyond my head that it was almost overwhelming.  
But that is quite enough about that.

a lovely turkey about Peter

Dec 15<sup>th</sup> - Jan 17<sup>th</sup>

While we were up at the naval base we  
lay all the time alongside the Red House — the  
naval base sailing club house — and this  
was a great help. It meant we had storage for



Red House



Off for the Christmas  
trial trip.



— hard at work as usual —



Chang - offered to come with us -



own gear, the ship easily reached, and an open  
for night alongside. It was perhaps especially  
useful to me because I could get all my provisions  
delivered to the Red House when I could not then out,  
unpack them and stow them in my own time. I am  
not going to write any details about the trip here as  
I have already set down the whole story elsewhere -  
would that somebody had done that in detail before, it  
would have saved me a great deal of work. But  
I've done it now so ocean sailors of the future  
won't have to work from scratch as I did.

Jan 10<sup>th</sup>.

When we got back from the Rye against Mac  
still had a great deal of work to do on the drive  
but other work was beginning to straighten  
themselves out, and my wife and George (and myself)  
by an on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> and the poor chap was put  
to work straight away! I had written copious notes  
for him and I only hope they helped. We had  
a busy day with the provisions on Sunday when Naomi  
Kitty Chen set for a whole day butting eggs and  
packing rice, sugar and tea in to tins and Chang  
and I too about the place fetching stuff and showing it.  
Chang had suddenly offered to come with us and after  
a quick discussion we all agreed that it would be an  
excellent thing - which it certainly was - to have a  
full time cook. I was quite prepared to do the  
cooking, but it would have been a devil of a  
quid if we had had to keep watch as well which  
I certainly should have

So many people helped each of us that I can't  
mention ~~was~~ all - but I must put down that of course  
dear Clair Bunnett came up to scratch. She came  
having down from Bahit ~~been~~ with everything I had  
forgotten a mixed (she knows without being told - amazing  
person). White - yellow cans (pab blue - my favourite  
colour, and sea-sacks so they don't rot) - eye-brown  
cans (solid but necessary) lovely cans - bottles of  
rum and lots more what-what. Bless her.



Bahit Luce  
(taken by Jimmy).

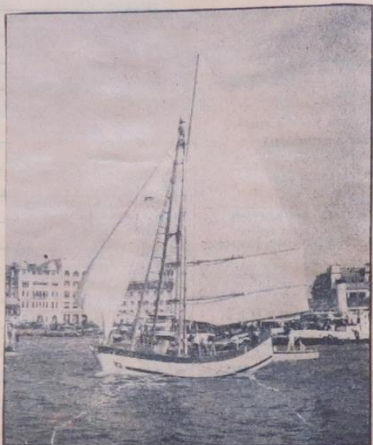
Jan 16<sup>th</sup>.

Robin and Mac worked till 11 at night the next  
day (Monday 16<sup>th</sup>) to get the drive finished and we  
had a good night here at the Red House.

Jan 17<sup>th</sup>.

The next day we were ready early - but not  
before David Kennard had turned up with his great  
pantheon of a recording van and three wee  
wires and microphones all over the place. I was





HOMEWARD BOUND — Four Royal Navy men and a Chinese cook are sailing to England from Singapore in this strange hybrid craft described as a "dhow-junk." Lieut.-Commander John Rusher, of Cheltenham, is a member of the crew, and the other three men are from Devonshire.

JANUARY 18, 1950.



Commander Robin Kilroy's 16-ton junk-yacht Behch, which sailed from Singapore this morning for Britain with a crew of three naval officers, a Navy dockyard official and a Singapore Chinese cook-seaman.



NO HOUSING PROBLEM — Commander Robin Kilroy, of Salcombe, Devon, aboard the Behch, at the start of the voyage from Singapore. Formerly Commander of Leyang Beam Defence Depot, Changi, Commander Kilroy is retiring, and plans to live aboard when he reaches England.

Malayan Breweries had very kindly given us 8 dozen but we reckoned it wasn't quite enough.

As we arrived off the pier a boat came alongside with dear Fat Pity officer Foo Cho Wah - bringing my shipping which I had stowed on in the car ~~on~~ when we sailed at 0900! It was done as only Mrs Foo can do it - perfectly. This seemed to crown all the wonderful service I had received from Foo and all his team - heaven how I was going to miss them.

In the evening I stayed on board because I ~~had~~ had now said good bye and wanted to feel I had really started - besides Chang needs somebody to help him look after the ship. We had to shift billet twice owing to a dragging anchor, so it was lucky I did stay.

Jan 18<sup>th</sup>

The next day we really sailed. This time it was mainly my friends who came to see us off - including the Phoenix Park people, C's staff and so on - late that afternoon I got down to my journal -

My feelings during the last few days have been and especially at their crescendo <sup>this morning</sup> have been so mixed that they are <sup>very difficult</sup> impossible to analyse.

(There are a lot of friends I shall miss - but we're going HOME) — The thrill of sitting off - but balanced a little by slight qualms of ~~the~~ what lay before us. The deep joy of kind good people whom I have known and lived with and worked with coming out in Sarapan to see us off - balanced by the quite astonishingly powerful embarrassment of being the centre of all attention.

39  
SINGAPORE, THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 1950.

# NG OF CA



COMMANDER ROBIN KILROY'S 16-ton Singapore-built junk-yacht Boleh sailed from the Colony yesterday bound for Britain by the Cape of Good Hope—a 15,000 mile journey which the crew hope to complete in six months. Above: Boleh's sails fill as she gets under way. Below: Chang Hai Kun, only Chinese aboard, who will return to Singapore after the voyage. The rest of the crew of five are naval men.—Straits Times picture. (Story P. 7).



R.S.V.C.  
(taken by Henry)

Jan 18<sup>th</sup>

The dreadful fear that some useful thing would go wrong while we were rigging the boat and while Robin was under way last minute chaos. And the pain! A sailor too and ~~was~~ a friend who understood that never taken had to get his story with picture. One outstanding feeling - an absolute overwhelming desire to get away and just a little with the rest. Again we set off under sail and motor ~~and~~ saw through the water barrier, past the River headquarter where we got a

Royal Signals  
semaphored 'good luck', past the Yacht Club where we have all had such happy times, who gave us a ~~parted signals~~ starting gun for the 'long con' and another message of good luck, saw through Keppel harbor as ~~the~~ a spanking tide and out in to the open beyond like a cork out of a bottle. Another (more this time) signal for the entrance ~~port~~ <sup>(Doe & Mibogalmond)</sup> with a reply by semaphore and my reputation as a signaller was firmly established. (I suppose I shall be picked up whenever there is signalling to be done in future!) And then a happy feeling of utter exhaustion and relief. The haze has been kind and we ~~to~~ passed Sulta Shoal ~~by 3~~ at 2.30 pm ~~(the night)~~ but later it became very quiet and we under the big jib we ~~see~~ were only making 1/2 knots.



- a villainous looking parang-parang -

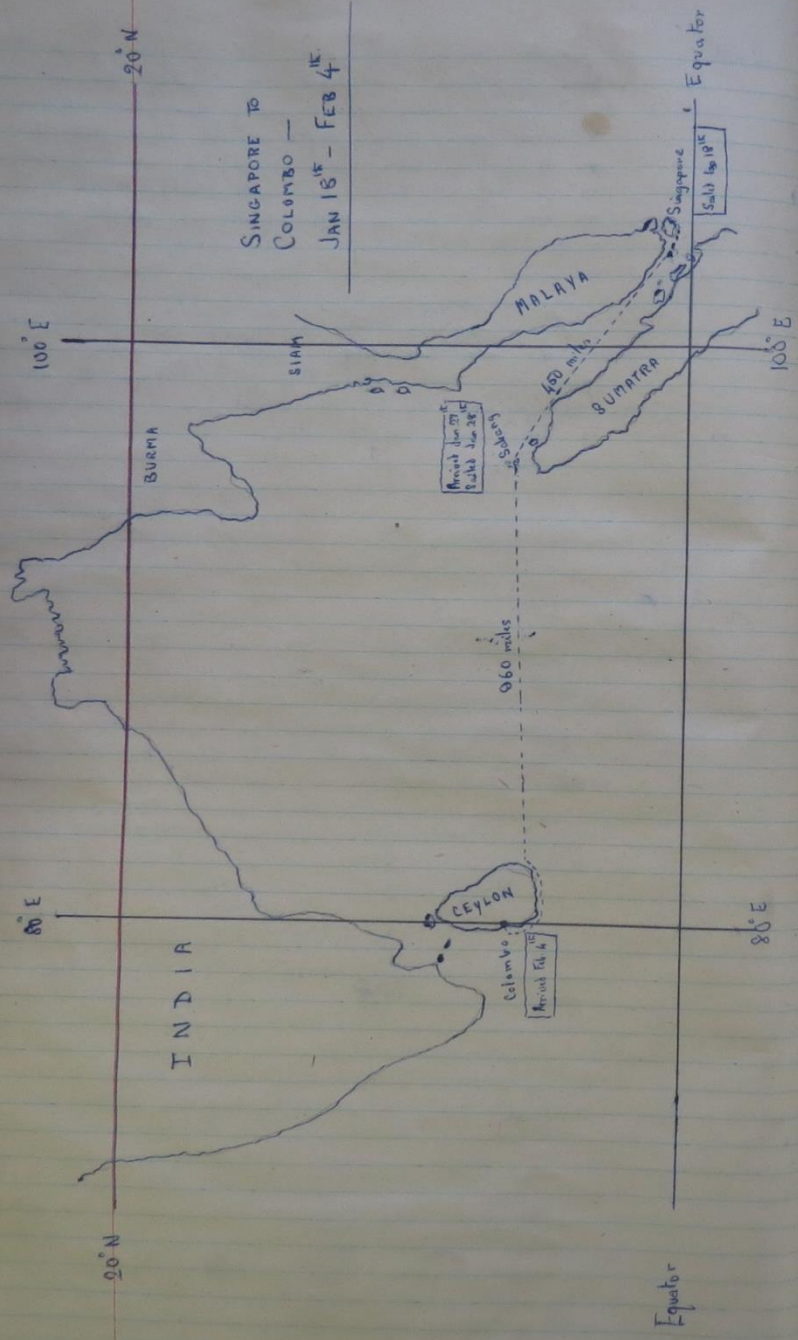


Jan 18<sup>th</sup>

In the evening, drifting along with the flood up us to the Strait of Malacca, we hired a fishing boat and bought a villainous looking parang-parang from his even more villainous looking Malay captor - we hoped that this was the first of many freshly caught fish we should eat, but in fact we didn't see another until March! Then we had the first of many quiet and peaceful evenings on the upper deck drinking a little whisky and talking of our findings.

In some ways it was all so familiar - in other so strange. The routine of ship life was just the same as sea ~~any~~ other ship - watchkeeping - chores - one's own special job - eating and sleeping. Perhaps the most striking difference was our sudden descent from a warship bridge to Bolek's deck, and I wrote -

The correction that you have to apply to the sextant altitude of a star when it is measured from the bridge of a destroyer is 5.7 minutes of arc - for the deck of Bolek it's 27 minutes - only three minutes <sup>offers</sup> - a <sup>hundredth</sup> of a degree - but how what a difference this really is. Perhaps ~~if you had~~ it is emphasized if you have been used all your life to surveying the sea with a ~~slightly~~ <sup>anyhow</sup> level in - (a reminder that to do ~~levelly~~) for high up on the bridge of one of His Majesty's ships, and then suddenly and <sup>(height of eye)</sup> suddenly you are thrust down to H.E./8 feet. The flying fish fly away from you at your level and all at once become of immense interest again - just like the first ones you ever saw - not instead of being pretty little things far beneath. One might even come in broad, and does quite often, a delicious event.



Jan 18th.

All the tiny particles ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> air in the water begin to appear and every change in the wind and the movement of the sea is of immediate and vital interest.

And if I had not been entirely idle I could have written a lot more - for it was a most striking change - incidentally I'm afraid the rumour regarding flying fish coming inboard quite often was based on other-manner tales and was not fulfilled in our case!

Jan 18th/19th

in HMS Albat

The ComC & Lady Brand accompanied by Flagg and Otto sailed from Malacca for Singapore at 9 o'clock on the evening of the 18th. and we much hope to meet them at sea. They say the Brinds had taken a great interest in the ship and been very good to us (amongst other things we all went to lunch there just before sailing) - Otto too had ~~not~~ helped us by lending me some first class deep sea fishing gear - this was my journal for the 19th.

Prejudice is ~~often~~ <sup>often</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~really~~ <sup>really</sup> ~~decided~~ <sup>decided</sup> - yet truly if the <sup>really</sup> feminine women of the world (and praise God they are still the great majority) had their way we should only be punished over the really important things, feeding babies, the fruit stengah in the evening and an love affair. Yet Bishop Malles has written that the precise cult which ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Royal Navy conducts its affair is 'uniquely', ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> ~~unmistakable~~ <sup>unmistakable</sup> ~~story~~ <sup>story</sup> and the habit of



# Talk of the Town

By The Man on the Spot

77, Burg Street.

THE Caronia and the Boleh will both drop anchor in Table Bay this year. You will know all about the luxury cruise liner Caronia, but what is the Boleh?

She is a small, Singapore-built craft known as a "how" — a mixture of Chinese junk and Arab dhows in design.

Three Royal Navy officers, a Royal Navy Dockyard civilian and possibly two Malay youths intend to leave Singapore this month or early in February to sail the Boleh to England, calling at the Cape on the voyage.

Boleh means "can do". It is a 20-ton vessel and it will certainly take some doing to cover a 12,000-mile voyage in about five months, as they intend.

Prime mover in the venture is Commander Robin Kilroy, D.S.C., R.N., who has supervised the construction of the craft.

## The Boleh's Course

AS planned at present, the Boleh will sail from Malaya to Ceylon, across to the Seychelles and through the Mozambique Channel to Durban. She will call in here (Royal Cape Yacht Club please note) before setting course for St. Helena, Ascension, the Azores and so to Salcombe in Devon.

The Boleh has a great brown sail like a junk and a hull of stout chegal wood. But she will not rely entirely on sail and has a nine-hp engine. Water tanks can hold 120 gallons but there is no refrigeration for food storage.

So far, those sailing with Commander Robin Kilroy are Lt.-Col. John Rusher, Lt.-Col. Peter Aplin and Mr. George Jervis of the R.N. Dockyard at the Singapore Naval Base, Salcombe, where the Boleh is headed, is his home town.

punctuality becomes ingrained in any properly brought up naval officer to an extent which makes him a delight to some <sup>but</sup> ~~is~~ irksome to any right thinking wife.

But to sail, as David had so wisely written some weeks back, punctuality is impossible. You cannot make an 'estimated time of arrival signal', or if you do you're a fool, you must just sail and arrive when you can and your own skill will let you. ~~But~~ like however a very smart officer saying 'good bye' yesterday morning had called out "sil signal the

Commander in Chief and told him you'd sailed, what's your estimated speed of advance? ~~But~~ the <sup>owner</sup> ~~owner~~ called back "three knots", and this was duly reported to the C.C. who was due to sail in his despatch vessel for Malacca for Singapore at 9 o'clock last night. By his calculation he must have expected to meet us before 1 and 1/2 past last night and it has to be admitted that it was eminently satisfactory that after a day of calms and bays — of shifting tides that helped and equally strong ones that didn't, ~~or~~ few of them coming when they were expected, Boleh was right there at her proper position ~~and~~ at the

paper tonic. A chat signal on a torch identified the two ships - a kind 'God speed message' was ~~thrust~~ replied to - and the C. C. himself shouted "God luck" in his great bull voice. Punchability is usually a curse - in sailing boats it is impossible -

I think this incident more than any other made us realize that we were at last, not only on our way, but on our own.

Jan 19<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>

but on this occasion it was deeply satisfying. It was also my friend's hope that our C. C. should be the last to say good by to us - and at once too.

For the next week the elements were really most unhelpful and at times thoroughly unkind. Of course we didn't expect a great deal going up through the Malacca Strait, but we did hope to get the NE monsoon after three or four days, and we did not expect to meet so many violent Sumatras out at sea as we in fact did. I see from my journal that on the 20<sup>th</sup> we had 'bad Sumatras' all day and there was slight gumpiness all round. The next day, although we made very little progress, the weather was kinder, and I was ~~so~~ glad of it because we had our first breadbaking in the afternoon - Chang and I started in after lunch at 12.45 and the loaves came out of the oven at 6.50. Slight scepticism among the others and pessimism on my part was changed to amazed delight when four good flat shewing brown loaves were proudly produced from the oven and put on the upper deck to cool. Since then we have baked every few days when shore baked bread was not available (except one that perished when our reserves flour was found to be bad) and it has been a great moral sustenance. Chang was 'agin' baking for a long time and I used to do most of the work - he thought it was an unnecessary luxury and anyhow he is a cook not a baker. It wasn't until ~~a long time~~ <sup>many</sup> later that I realized he simply did not appreciate that fresh bread meant as much to us as rice to him - and since I explained that he has been perfectly happy to bake whenever it was necessary.

In the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup> as we were drifting up on the flat tide we had farewell to Malaya - the last view we saw was the low

Jan 21<sup>st</sup>

countless off Port Swettenham topped by three monstrous columns of cumulo nimbus rising from Sumatra. I wrote that it was 'a poor analogy for tomorrow' and I was just too right.

That evening we met the Cable ship Petrain - Peter knew one of the officers who had been at Singapore and the Captain asked us one for a drink but Robb felt we must pen on and decided against it. It would have been fun but of course he was quite right.

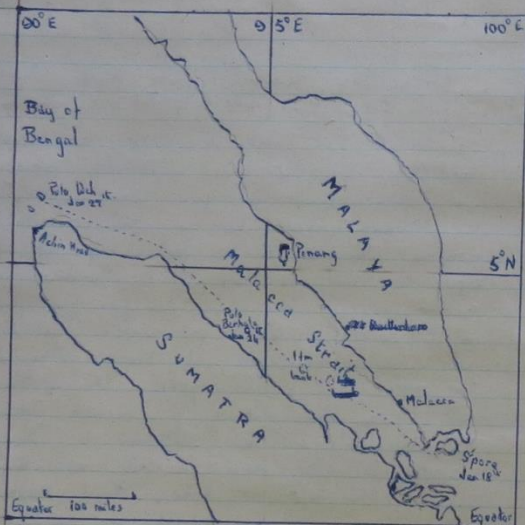
Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>

22/1 A really bloody day from midnight to dark. Thinking about in a calm half the time - raked down and saving the rest. Chang and I tried to make puff pastry but a sea came down the hatch and put the pudding out so we fried it instead. Robb for the first time for ages.

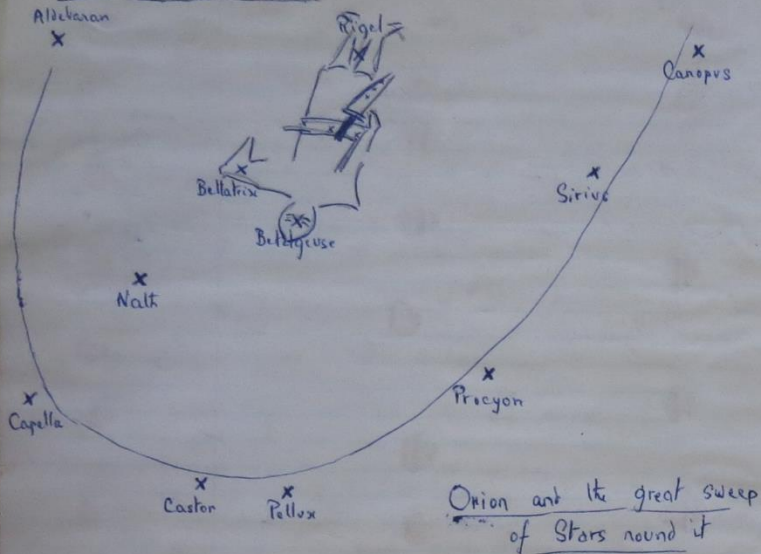
Sweet <sup>sour</sup> ham! with <sup>sour</sup> jam! with <sup>sour</sup> jam! a great success but can be much better - I never seem to have real success with butter and the obvious answer is to do it the Chinese way - dip the meat lot in the egg then - the day flour. Remarkable the way the SS sauce stuck - I didn't make enough of it - must make more next time and fairly watery too.

But this in spite of all the Sumatras we made very little and only just managed to get part 'One-fathom bank'. The real trouble with this sort of weather is that one has to be changing continually from a large area of calm to a small area and vice versa - at this time we were all new to it, and there were ~~several~~ some of the gear was difficult to handle, so very often by the time we had changed the rig to meet a calm or a storm it was all over and we had to

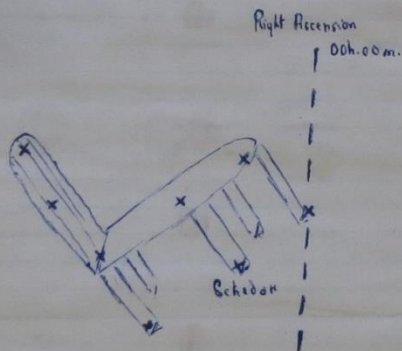
## MALAYA AND THE MALACCA STRAIT







Orion and the great sweep of Stars round it



Capella

Algol

Cassiopeia's Chair

- 1 The 'dashed' line marks 'Right Ascension 00 hours' passing through the 'first point of Aries' and the two poles, and is the Greenwich meridian of the sky.
- 2 Cassiopeia sat in his chair to watch Andromeda his daughter's rescue by Perseus - but actually she looking directly away from him.

Jan 25<sup>th</sup>

This was a complaint which I was to have often again, but it was to a great extent not Robi's fault but mine. Because there were already three experts to reger assessably debate at length every matter of sail and rigging (certainly one too many and probably two except when there was real trouble to be solved) I deliberately stood out of their discussions, ~~then~~ <sup>then</sup> and so very often when there had been arguing for ~~another~~ <sup>an hour</sup> whether or not to change the sail plan and eventually decided to do so it was, ~~as far~~ <sup>as far</sup> as I was concerned, a sudden decision. Not quite always though - sometimes Robi used to fore the opposition by announcing a sudden decision - then there was general 'nattering', especially when it was a question of reducing sail.

23 - 25<sup>th</sup>

I took a few stars and sun sights during these three days to get my eye in in case Peter went sick of course I can't get the accuracy or speed of a professional like Pete, but I have always been a little proud of ~~has~~ <sup>being</sup> kept up - my sight taking and calculation. Well all rather given to being pleased with an ability to do things that are not our job, but there is a little more to this. Gunney officers are generally (and naturally) so extremely narrow, I have tried my hard not to be, I'm probably a worse gunney officer for it, but I certainly like me better that way.

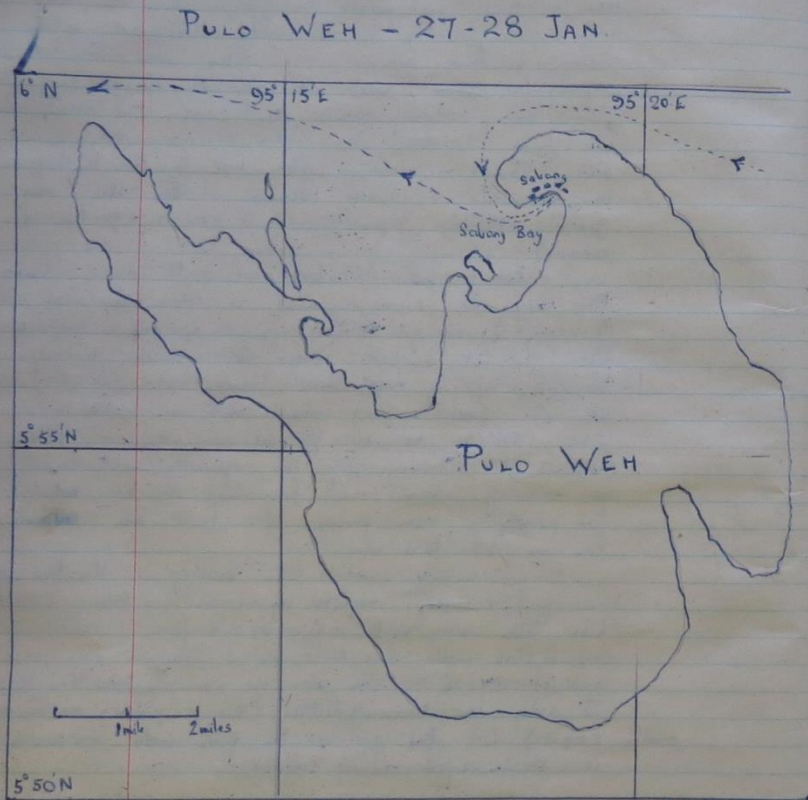
I got ~~renewly~~ <sup>renewed</sup> down to letter writing at the low and in a span, ~~renewly~~ <sup>renewed</sup> neglected my journal. I believe I really like letter writing - Pete says it's a form of exhibitionism and ~~Robert~~ <sup>Robert</sup> maybe he's right, but I believe it does give great pleasure at the other end. Far more important than this.

I really love receiving letters (this is probably another due to another complex!) but and so the main motive for writing them is ~~obviously~~ <sup>obviously</sup> self-interest entirely selfish.

Jan 26<sup>th</sup>

During the night of the 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> I got down to leaving the names of some stars that I ought to have known ages ago. ~~It~~ <sup>It</sup> was flat calm all night but early in the morning it started to blow from the north east and we thought we had picked up the monsoon at last, but by 8 am we were motoring again. We got a few puffs during the day but our progress was as slow as ever. However, we ~~did~~ <sup>did</sup> progress.

We found very soon that wing the oven was no fun in either hot or rough weather so I had to try to devise ways of doing without it, and this evening we had no fuel except fish pie. The fish was cooked in a saucepan and the porridge 'boiled' in the frying pan and they didn't meet till they were on the table.

Jan 27<sup>th</sup>.

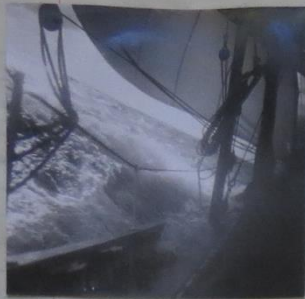
The Yam Seng, an predecessor by exactly a year, passed Pulo Weh and Sabang and was unable to get back in the teeth of the north east monsoon and Robin was very fumed that we should do the same. Peter took several nights and asked me to take one more which I did — it caused consternation until Peter spotted that I had got my 'intercept' the wrong way round.

We were still not in the monsoon, but with the help of a few hours motoring we reached Sabang just after dark and crept quietly in to the very beautiful little landlocked harbour. It was all completely deserted but after we had made several passes at various bights some nifty looking characters in uniform appeared and beckoned us alongside. We were all very keen to go ashore and have a look at the place, however further it might be but it soon appeared that this was not going to be easy. The civil police appeared to were prepared to let us go ashore, but the military police of whom four tatty little specimens appeared said 'no' and obviously viewed us with the utmost suspicion. We argued for some time, making towards the gate as we went, but it was no good, the opposition being aimed to the teeth.

So we went back on board and drank whisky and giggled and contentedly enjoyed another a great deal more than we should have done ashore.

Jan 28<sup>th</sup>.

It was a glorious morning and the steep jungle clad slopes shutting in the harbour were as lovely as we had hoped, but we very soon decided that the shorter we stayed in Sabang the better. The Indonesians had obtained their independence from the Dutch on December 31st. and so we saw nearly jumped up petty officialdom at its very worst. One incompetent one after another turned up with forms to be filled in, and one team, to avoid to the teeth, said they had aimed to search the ship. The fine looking Eurasian in charge of this party was the only one who showed any manners at all. He wanted to see all my private papers. He looked under floor boards, in lockers, ~~and~~ behind our bunkers and everywhere we were prepared to let him go. He was carried on by on one round of 12 box ammunition for James' blunderbuss. He was in full



going like a bomb in  
the North-east monsoon.



Ceylon fishing canoe



Jan 28<sup>th</sup>.

uniform while we were in Saranga and he sweated  
like two June brides, but he apologized, his saving grace.  
The place was to be a prosperous little coaling  
port but all that is dead now and the deterioration  
of the coaling gear was hastened by flat air and  
rust during the war and as well as Japanese  
lack of maintenance.

We were busy until about 11 getting in water  
and petrol and oil (for which we had to pay through  
the nose on a bogus rate of exchange) then we  
went ashore for an hour and found rather ~~nothing~~ <sup>nothing</sup>  
The town was in the same state as Singapore  
in October '45 - nothing in the shops, ~~and~~ all  
the paint peeled off the buildings, the roads dirty, and dust  
over everything. The people were sitting around  
enjoying their freedom, freedom from Dutch rule, freedom  
from work and freedom from money worries because their  
money is worthless and there's nothing to buy with it  
any way.

So we hurried back on board and got under  
way with a sigh of relief at 1.10 pm  
Puffy little cumulus clouds were scudding across the  
sky as we slipped and we had great hopes that  
we had met it at last - and we had. After  
a false start when we set the wrong rig, we  
hauled it all and ~~set off~~ hoisted the ordinary  
mainsail and genoa and were off like a dog.

Jan 28<sup>th</sup> - Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>

If anyone had offered to bet on our passage to  
Colombo before we left I should have been prepared to  
lay them 100 to 5 against an average of better than  
four knots. As it was we reached the southernmost  
point of Ceylon, about 845 miles, at 10.30 on  
Friday morning, an average of only just short of  
6 knots.

It really was most fracturing - of course  
conditions were absolutely right for Beled, which was  
designed rather for reaching and running than for  
going to windward the monsoon. Blew as steady as a  
rook from just abaft the beam and each night  
the growing moon drove us on as well as  
we plunged and bucketed down the line ~~like~~  
like a ~~stage~~ <sup>stage</sup> each flogging down the Beled  
road at full gallop to take the mail.

Our daily mean was

165

160

131

137

125

and 125 to run on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>.



Ceylonese fishing  
boats



(This photograph shows his  
narrow they are)



Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>

Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>

The last day, coasting up the west of Ceylon, we met light winds as we had expected and went slower, past Galle and on through the night to Colombo. At the very end we were headed ~~and~~ off Mount Lavinia and it took us three hours to do the last eight or so miles. (This looks some of the line)

When we were off Galle we sighted the Indian navy (the Impera Royal and 3 in a pair) cruise Delhi (ex Achille) and a sloop on their way to Pangoon for the celebrations connected with some bits of Buddha that are being taken there by the Kenya. We tried to signal to them with a radio message but failed to connect - unfortunately in the panic of the last morning at Singapore we had forgotten to bring our Aldis, a pity. Not that this was a financial loss - the Aldis was like a great many other items of the equipment, a kind of unwitting present from His Majesty.

Incidentally we were talking of this one day and it struck me that if ~~some of the most useful present~~ we had come on board and had been properly briefed, he could flatter us all so beautifully by looking round and saying 'Well, you chaps, I never see the Doldone you PTTTTTTTTTTT'.

Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>

We actually got to the entrance, through the breakwater at 1 p.m. and were met by one Tej Nicholson, wife of the Commodore of the yacht club, sailing her water-wag single handed, who shouted 'don't take a pilot - don't pay any harbor dues - follow me to the yacht club!' So we did, and were secured a quarter of an hour later.

We found a Yon long had done <sup>2 years ago</sup> in the middle of Independence day celebrations, but the port dock and the customs people were on the ball and arrived at once. Cold beer came from the yacht club too. Everybody gave us a grand welcome and it was all <sup>as</sup> very satisfying, we felt we had got on our feet hurdle - which must surely be the worst? - and were all most excited.

But the extraordinary thing was that everyone seemed to have expected us to arrive on this very day and although I had my suspicions of the course of this we didn't establish it until much later.

I have already written of David's wise advice about never making an 'ETA' - ~~them~~ <sup>them</sup> we always needed it except for short haul, quick passage and at the end when it was essential, in the sort of conditions we met



## My Guess at our Programme

Arrive	Place	Addresses for Cables or letters	Leave
4th February	Singapore		14th January, 1950.
5th February	Oolombo	Taait Boleh o/o G.F.O. Colombo	11th February, 1950.
5th March	Seychelles	o/o G.P.O. Mahe	1st March, 1950.
15th March	Diego Suarez	o/o HM Consul General, Antananarivo	20th March, 1950.
11th April	Darban	o/o P.O. Box 33	18th April, 1950.
10th May	Capetown	o/o P.O. Box 4456	17th May, 1950.
1st June	St. Helena	o/o G.P.O.	6th June, 1950.
17th June	Ascension	o/o G.P.O.	23rd June, 1950.
10th July	Flores (Azores)	o/o British Consul Flores, Azores.	12th July, 1950.
1st July	Salcombe		

Our Actual 'Ear' on my guess at our 'leaving' date	Pete's Estimated 'leaving' Date	Our Actual 'Ear' or Pete's Estimated	Our Actual 'leaving' Date
4 <sup>th</sup> Feb	13/ Feb	1 <sup>st</sup> Feb	18 Jan
3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb		1 <sup>st</sup> Feb	14 Feb
22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	8 Mar	15 <sup>th</sup> Feb	23 Mar
—	20 Mar	—	—
—	29 Apr	—	—
22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	20 May	19 <sup>th</sup> Feb	8 Jun
22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	13 Jun	15 <sup>th</sup> Feb	28 Jun
15 <sup>th</sup> Feb	22 Jun	16 <sup>th</sup> Feb	8 July

Pete. 22 Aug.

← Minutes Feb 23-26

Did not visit

← Minutes Apr 15-24

Did not visit

(Simon's tour)

← Statement July 26-28

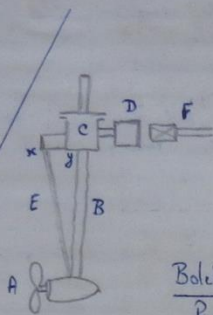
(and expected to meet) all the way to the Cape it was quite impossible to judge our speed in advance. For instance, during this first passage from Singapore to Colombo, we did the first 450 miles in 9 days - the next 960 in 7. That shows how impossible it ~~the~~ is to say when you are going to arrive, and because it is so uncertain, it is much better not to signal an ETA to the people here. I have got so used to the clockwork schedules of steam ships, that if you are a day or two late even in sail they begin to get worried. I bet a man in the voyage we carried a lot of worry and trouble because we didn't arrive when we were expected. ~~At Diego Suarez and Durban we did not arrive~~ ~~at all at either~~ At Diego Suarez Frank Bishop (HBM Consul General, whom I had seen with during the war) ~~got~~ got the French fleet an arm to sail for us when we might turn up, and at Durban this was a thorough flap until ~~we~~ we were reported to have arrived at Port Elizabeth, ~~instead~~. We did eventually find out the same and my suspicions were correct. I had some time before made out a 'programme', based on a series of wild guesses, which Daphne Angell typed in the office and of which I enclosed a copy with all my Christmas letters and cards to Kibwezo. Although I took care that all unused copies of this were destroyed I quite forgot to ask Daphne to ditch the original. Another mistake I made was to draft it in the usual form Arrive - Place - Leave, what I ought to have done was to list the places and opposite each write "with luck we might possibly arrive here - if we get there at all - by -----".

Obviously, after we had left Singapore, somebody in the C.I.C. office, ~~not~~ wanting to pass the word about us, had unearthed the original of this 'programme' and passed it on to C.I.C. East India - who in turn sent it to C.I.C. South Atlantic - and each of them took all the authority in their areas!

During the trip from Salcombe to Colombo, Pete did some 'planning', and I have shown on the opposite page the dates I had guessed. The dates we worked out in this planning, and the actual dates we achieved, the comparison is I think rather amusing.

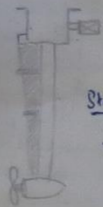


Seahorse 22 h.p.  
Outboard

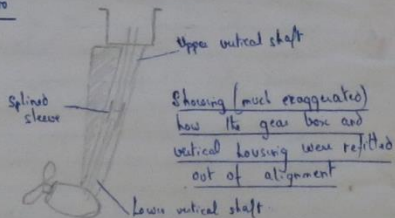


Bolch's drive -  
Portable Section

- A Larger propeller for slower running
- B Brass vertical shaft casing
- C Bowl gear box
- D Horizontal shaft and sliding collar for connection to drive from engine
- E Tie bar to take thrust
- F Drive from engine.



Strengthening Web  
fitted in Colombo



Showing (much exaggerated)  
how the gear box and  
vertical housing were refitted  
out of alignment

## Teething Troubles.

During this first passage we had as of course we ~~met~~ expected, encountered some teething troubles, especially with the drive and the main sail gear. For the benefit of those who are interested in this sort of thing I will explain them — ~~but~~ Aunt May, and others not ~~interested~~ concerned with technical details should skip this part!

### The Drive.

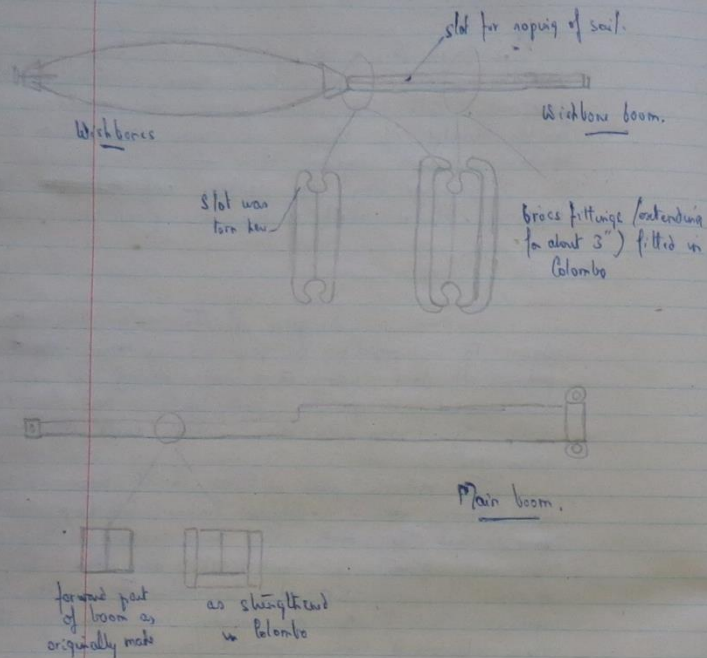
I drew a diagram of the motor and its peculiar drive to the propeller on page 23. Bob's object in fitting all this was to avoid having a shaft sticking out through his lovely hull, and to cut out drag by having a screw which could be unshipped when not in use.

The portable part (FGHI in the page 23 bearing) was based on a Johnson Seahorse 22 h.p. outboard from which the motor had been removed. In Bolch it was going to work at less than half its designed h.p. but at less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  its designed speed, so thrusts were likely to be more than twice those it was prepared for.

For this reason many of the parts had been rebuilt or strengthened and, in particular, a tie bar had been fitted to take the forward thrust of the propeller.

The many purports of doom in Singapore had forecast every conceivable trouble with this gear except those which did in fact occur; and the first one, which we met while motoring ~~up the Malacca~~ <sup>up the Malacca</sup> strait, was a fracture at the upper end of the tie rod, accompanied by a crack at the joint of the vertical housing and the gear box (x and y respectively opposite).

This was obviously ~~caused~~ <sup>caused</sup> by insufficient bearing to be cured by redesigning the strengthening arrangements to meet the fore and aft thrust, and a wretched note mechanic in Colombo undertook the job. He made quite a strong finished article by fitting welding a brass web on to the gear box and vertical housing but the silly clat welded them together out of alignment, and this caused far worse trouble later. When Bob went to collect the thing on a last day he noticed this misalignment at once and pointed it out, but the mechanic swore by all his gods that it would melt and so he would stake his reputation on this. How wrong he was! Perhaps we did accept it and sailed away.



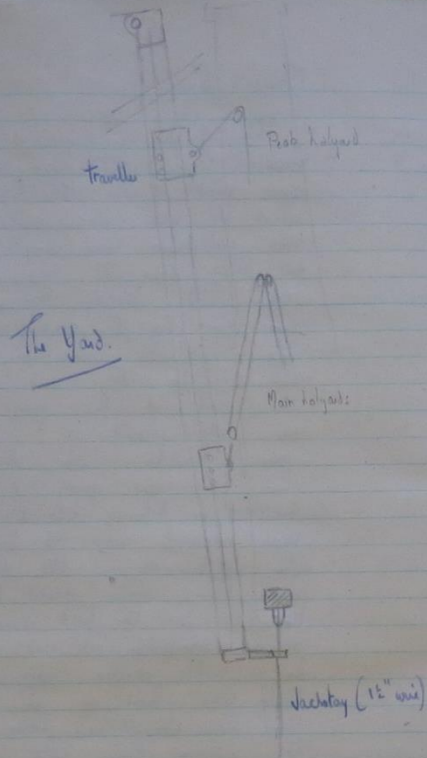
## Masted Gear

picture on  
page 11

Some of the wiseacres in Singapore had said that the masted gear (main boom and wick boom) was too heavy - some that it was too light. So the conditions for which the gear was suited both were wrong but the conditions were limited. As soon as the wind fell below force 3, so that the masted gear no longer held steadily over, the rolling of the ship ~~was~~ helped by the considerable combined weight of the gear used to cause the most sickening slatting from side to side, and nothing we could do in the way of fore guys, backing-strops and what not could prevent it. This slatting led to all sorts of troubles, and then put larger to appear when we were going up the Malacca Strait and were becalmed in between Sumatra. The two breakages that occurred were the tearing of the forward end of the slot in one of the wick boom, and a cracked main boom. Jaws needed bolt them temporarily at the time (it was the first time I had seen him at work on an emergency job and what a revelation it was of how a really skilled craftsman can work) and the boom was built up at Colombo to make it stronger. Some brass strengtheners were also made and fitted to the wick boom while we were there.

But of course neither of these were proper solutions of the problem, and if we were to retain the wick boom gear, we had to have a 'wick boomless' light masted gear for light weather. While we were at Colombo we managed to get hold of some naval duck, and Peter set to work to cut ~~some~~ a loose-fisted masted gear out of it. He laid it out on the yacht club lawn, had it seen by two tailors (who were awestruck when they left the docks on suspicion of having stolen their sewing machines) and turned out a very fine job which stood us in good stead later. He had to give up this trip to the hills on account of this job which was very bad luck, as he really needed some cool weather more than the rest of us.

As he was cutting and laying out the pieces on the lawn it began to appear that the fast diminishing roll of duck wouldn't last out and poor Peter's face got longer and longer until the very last when with a cry of triumph he filled on the last bit and had just just to spare.



The other snag which was connected with the mainmast was simple but serious. ~~and~~ The yard is hoisted in to the mast by a peak halyard attached to a traveller through which ~~the~~ the yard can be hoisted and lowered very like a self-hoisting topmast. This peak halyard was led through a block at the head of the mast, and the same slatting ~~from~~ ~~to~~ ~~side~~ which had caused the other trouble ~~at~~ through our halyard after another.

At Colombo the block was replaced by a fixed dead eye which our ropes would cut the trouble, but it was not effective and at Miniker we had to think again.



The Ball's Face Hotel.

February 4<sup>th</sup> (cont.)

Commander (S) Maulden, the local Resident Naval Officer (what a lovely job!) arrived to meet us and was very helpful about various naval matters - signals of arrival - provisions - getting cloth for the new mammal and so on. He looked at the photograph album and was very polite. [Although we had all had enough of it, the him being it was pleasant to feel we were being watched over by the women!] He answered all our questions and stayed for three quarters of an hour - and it wasn't till then that we found he had left his unfortunate wife in the sea! Poor girl. I suppose he felt it was an official occasion - or perhaps he was frightened of bringing her among the sea wolves. He was helpful.

But then the press started to arrive, and here, as at every other civilized port, they were an infernal nuisance. We really did try to be polite to them, but they came one by one - each asked the same old questions - each of them stayed and stayed. We had one save, the scrap book, and on each one arrived he was given it to read. - As the trip went on this worked better and better or ~~less~~ they ~~seemed~~ had a wider choice of cuttings to plagiarize.

In the efforts the press eventually produced (which were very fault-ridden) - there was one thing common to all - strange remarks to the effect that 'Kilroy was here'. We couldn't make this out a first, but it seems that in the comic strip 'Bringing up Father' (a gloriously American affair) the expression about one Kilroy used to crop up every day and it became a catch word I still don't get it - but it was I suppose no craze than 'Dot' - no --- in England during the war.

It was Jane's birthday so Roki took us all to the Ball's Face for dinner - an excellent dinner - good band - grand plan and all very romantic but we were 8 over and one which (Ted Nicholson). Roki had booked a room for Jane and me to 'sleep' when we divided and we fogged it till ten in the morning. Gorgeous (Miss) Moran was staying at the GF at the time and in the morning the floor waste hole in she was in the

Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>.

All the spots on this page are the results of Peter having a bath (18 July) while I was trying to write - just one of the hazards of authorship in small boats.



Diyatalawa.



Diyatalawa - Paddy Burnett and the children.

room above ours - Jaws of rain let out a din of ~~whistles~~ ~~(not too in this note)~~ ~~whistles~~ ~~(not too in this note)~~ ~~whistles~~ ~~(not too in this note)~~ piercing whistles.

Although the GF was not quite up to its old form it was still extremely good. This went for everything else in Colombo too - the streets clean, orderly traffic, few beggars, and a general air of being well run which was as gratifying as it was unexpected. Perhaps we can point to it as an example of how we have trained native peoples for independence - but there is the painful class of Burma to ~~set~~ set against that.

On Sunday afternoon Peter and I went to the country club to see G. Moor, Pat Todd, Czerwik and another character play tennis - we saw one excessively dull men's double but missed the girls. We thought they were in their dressing room getting ready for a game and as we wandered out on the verandah with a large tankard of beer each I turned to Peter and said can't you imagine those two customers in there 'Paddy dealing shall I take the first set, then you can win the second and with I'll play you the third for a quin' - we kept this up for a bit giggling gently until I happened to turn round and there were Gussi and Pat sitting back in long chairs listening to us with wide eyes. So I nudged Peter and we moved away as fast as we could while maintaining dignity -

We stayed in Colombo for ten days - too long, but we were held up by the repairs. I stayed some of the time at the Maubeni house (they went away for three days to Tropicana so I had the run of the house) and I got away to Diyatalawa to stay with Paddy and Jay Burnett for two days. It was quite wonderful to go to sleep in the sweaty heat of a Colombo train at 10 and to wake ~~traces~~ traces up shivering at 2 - my feet ~~shin~~ shins for well over 2 years. I arrived at the camp

Ceylon

feeling as if I had just polished off a couple  
 of bottles of champagne and stayed feeling like  
 that for 2 days. The first morning I wrote a  
 lot of letters including one to Aunt May - Afterwards  
 I was slightly worried as to what the reception  
 of it was but all was well although I must  
 have remembered that I really was stinking when I  
 wrote it.

I went to a pompous cocktail party at the  
 Osborns (Machinon - Machenzie) which was given for Lord  
 Inckcape who was staying with them - it was  
 interesting to meet the strange mixture of people and  
 especially the passers with their pith helmets and baggy  
 trousers - that was I think my only other  
 evening party but Inckcape seemed very pleasant -  
 shy and unassuming and finding his position  
 rather difficult to live up to.

Bob went up country to stay with various  
 friends - Jarvis found a namesake who was very much  
 of his own calibre who looked after him - Peter  
 (who had to forsake his trip up country in order to  
 supervise the making of a new light motor) stayed  
 with the Nicholsons. Chang stayed on board.

~~When we were not out while each of us was~~  
 when we were not away from Colombo we  
 used all to go down and work in the ship (though  
 I didn't care to achieve a great deal apart from  
 provisioning which is of course my real job), and the  
 yacht club was extremely useful. The members were  
 a cheerful lot and very good to us but they  
 made one mistake - they suggested we might like  
 to crew for them in their luxury race. Jarvis said  
 at once what we were all thinking but didn't like  
 to say crew for you be damned, well take you on.  
 So they had to take us on, we collected four girls  
 to crew for us and thanked the club in their  
 own boats in their own harbours. Very satisfactory.  
 I was ~~third~~ <sup>third</sup> to Jarvis's feet - Bob was 5th &  
 Peter 6th. Bill Nelson, Bamford, a sweet youngster,  
 niece of the Osborns, crewed for us and was  
 damned good.

We had difficulty in inducing Chang to go ashore  
 but I got him to the market one day. (It was a  
 revelation to see the beautiful fruit and vegetable  
 hee grow up country after the very ~~same~~ narrow  
 chow in Singapore).

