

Several unit members have taken out a cadet or mirror at Longridge, but the sailing that we have been doing recently has been much more ambitious.

We first heard of the London Sailing Project from Ray Perkins last November, and as he linked it with the word "cheap" unit wheels began grinding, until finally Irish managed to book seven places.

We all travelled down by coach on the Friday night. The journey was uneventful and people were generally quiet and slightly apprehensive of the w/e to come. There were about twenty other bods in the coach most of them being "first timers". We arrived at Portsmouth at about 11 pm. (the journey having been delayed by a sudden epidemic of dry throats) and crossed by ferry to Gosport a few minutes later. We were met at the landing stage and directed to a small dinghy which took us the remaining few yards out to the boats.

Peter and Chris were on the Rona, while John B., John R., Tom, 'Ampton (Clive to the lesser members of the unit) and myself were the entire crew (bar the captain and mate) of Lord Amery's private yacht Ailanthus.

Ailanthus was a magnificent boat of about 13 tons.

Commander Scott welcomed us aboard and the skipper soon gained our respect:—keeping good discipline and having an apparent faith in that once told how to do something we would remember it and in future get on with it.

After stowing our kit we were shown the boat; where everything was and how it worked. We were then given our respective jobs for the w/e.

The other member of the crew arrived early Saturday morning. Colin, a Royal Navy P/O, was to be the mate for the weekend and seemed a friendly capable fellow with whom we got on well with from the start.

We left Gosport at 11 am. and by 2 pm. we had reached Cowes during which time we learned the docks and don't aboard ship. We had an hour ashore to look around Cowes (this consisted of exploring a large room with a bar down one side) after which we returned to the boat using a rubber dinghy (for those who are unfamiliar with the term a rubber dinghy is akin to a large rubber duck seeming most unstable and going round in circles when one rows). We spent the night in the picturesque harbour of Yarmouth returning to Gosport next day in the rain.

Altogether it had been a terrific two days and we were all looking forward to another trip next year, however we were invited to crew the boat for a week in July.

Tweet and Chris have since been on two more trips on the Rona and Tweet and has been offered a place on the Rona for the tall ships race.

I strongly recommend any venture unit to try and get some places on one of these w/e.