

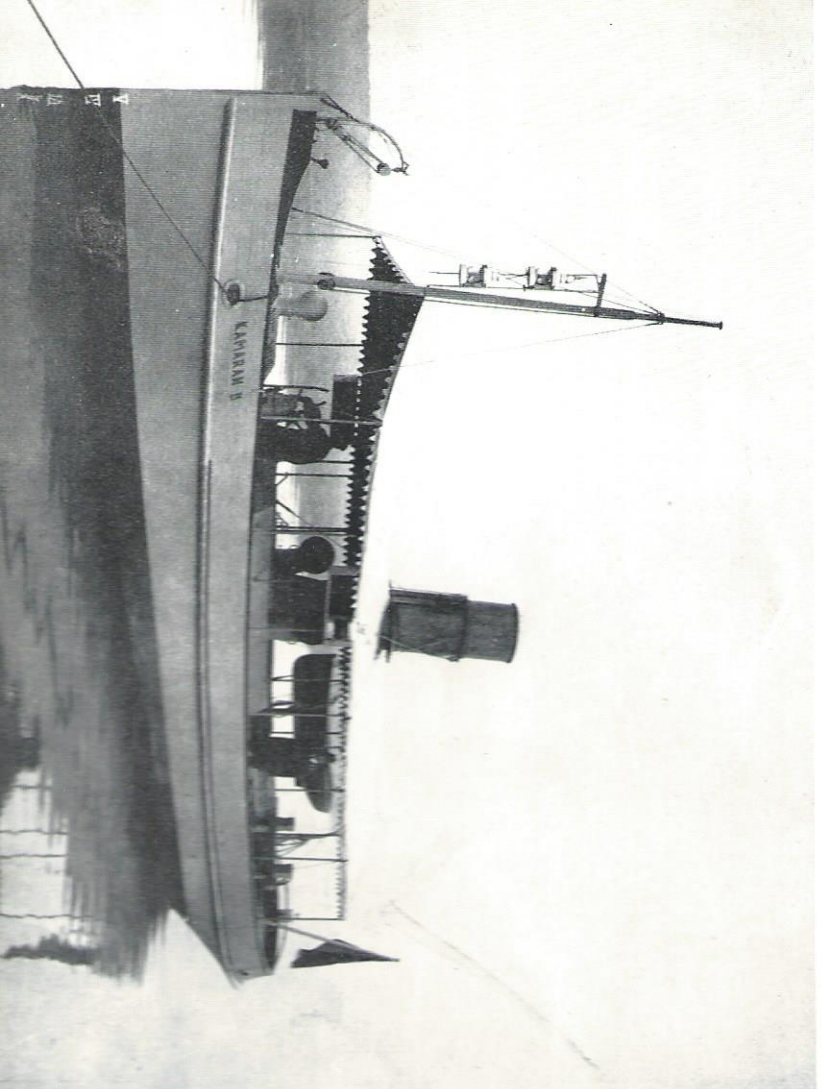
No. 326), built in 1925 for the London and North Eastern Railway Company to operate the ferry-boat service between Harwich and Felixstowe. Registered to carry 230 passengers, she had a trial speed of nine knots and is, twenty-nine years later, still in service under British Railways ownership.

Also built in 1925 was the sturdy wooden steam tug to the order of Jones, Burton and Co. for service in Aden and the neighbouring islands. Named *Kamaran II* (Ship No. 335) she was powered by a steam engine of our own make to give a speed of eight and three-quarter knots. This vessel later made headlines in the daily Press when she rescued boatloads of refugees from the port of Hodeidah (Yemen) and, to escape the bloodshed and looting which took place during the war between Saudi Arabia and Yemen in 1934, towed them to the safety of the British-protected island of Kamaran in the Red Sea.

An unusual craft built in 1935 was the *Armand Ruffer* (Ship No. 505). Classed as a Dispensary Launch, she was for the use of the Medical Port Officer at Port Suez. Forty-six feet overall, she was constructed of teak and powered by a sixty-eight b.h.p. Ailsa Craig engine to give a speed of nine and a half knots. As will be seen from the illustration, this craft bears some similarity in general lines and form to the fifty-two and a half foot Harbour Service Launches developed and used by the Royal Navy at bases all over the world.

One of the most recently-launched Rowledge productions, Ship No. 833. She is a 50 ft. wooden-built Police and Pilot Launch for the Aden Port Trust, diesel-engined (twin Perkins 56M) to give a speed of 12½ knots

Ship No. 335: *Kamaran II*, a sturdy 60 ft. steam tug delivered in 1925 for service in the Aden area



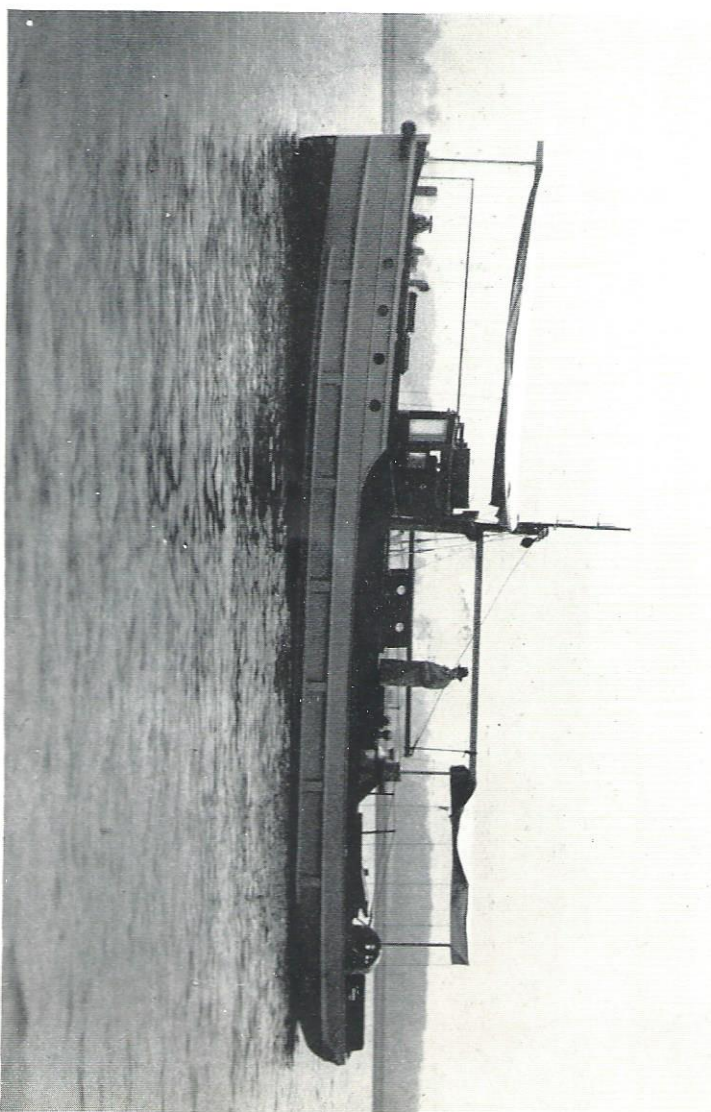
Ship No. 563, *Minaitlan*, a towing and utility launch, was built originally to the order of the Eagle Oil Shipping Co. Ltd., but before leaving the yard was purchased by the California Standard Oil Company and re-named *Callanura*. Intended for service in the Persian Gulf, this launch was installed with a 61.3 Gardner 102 b.h.p. engine giving a speed of nine and a half knots.

Probably the most renowned of the R.N.L.I. Life-boats built at Rowhedge is the Cadgwith boat *Guide of Dunkirk* (Ship No. 570). Financed by funds raised by the Girl Guides' Association of Great Britain, this Life-boat was originally intended to replace the St. Ives boat wrecked in a disaster which cost the lives of all but one of her crew, but following many modifications to suit the especial hazards of the Cornish coastline, and an absorbingly adventurous war life, the Life-boat is now on the Cadgwith station.

Incorporating many of the latest developments of the Institution, this Life-boat is of the double-skin self-righting type and many at Rowhedge recall the unusual sight which she provided in the River Colne when deliberately turned keel-up during the course of exhaustive capsizing trials. Unfinished and still on the slip when news of the impending evacuation of Dunkirk was received in 1940, she was immediately launched and joined that heroic fleet of "little ships" which snatched the British forces from the jaws of defeat and enabled them to live and fight again. We are glad that a Rowhedge boat was there.

Ship No. 505: Also in Middle East service (Port Suez) is the 46 ft. *Armand Ruffer*, a Port Dispensary Launch

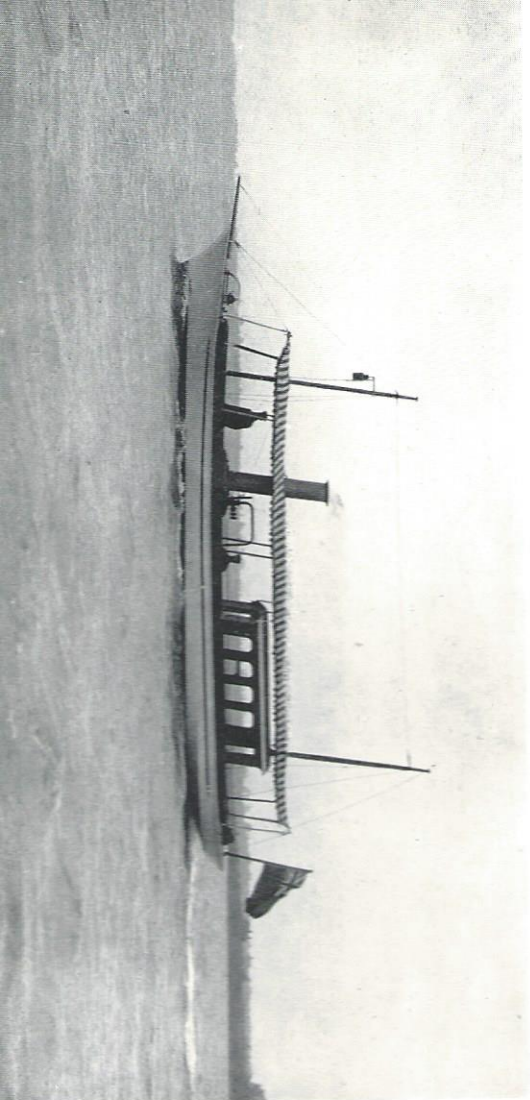
Ship No. 563: *Callanura*, a 48 ft. diesel launch, does duty for an Oil Company in the Persian Gulf



For men will go a-sailing

IT IS OFTEN SAID that there is a goodly dash of the briny in the veins of the average Englishman and this no doubt accounts for the fact that so many find their greatest delight in life in getting aboard a boat. The urge to do so has, moreover, increased rather than diminished, for although successive Chancellors of the Exchequer have reduced to a very few the larger craft requiring paid crews, the demand for smaller boats (both sail and power) which are inexpensive to buy and to run is both an encouragement to Britain's craftsmen boatbuilders and a considerable challenge to their arts and resources.

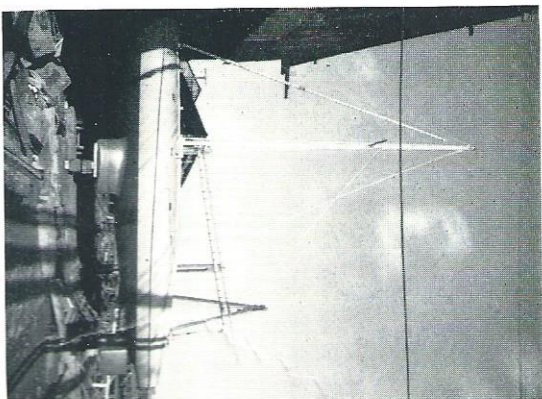
It should, incidentally, not be overlooked that at one time Rowhedge was itself a considerable yachting centre. For instance, Lord Alfred Paget endowed four cottages for his yacht hands, while some of these craft were of such size that thirty men would sign on one of them.



The output of the Yacht Department at Rowhedge, and of its long-established predecessors, has covered almost every conceivable type and size of such craft. Undoubtedly one of the most colourful was the *Turry* (Ship No. 100), a steam yacht built in 1911 to the order of James Pollock, Sons and Co. for a high South American dignitary. Resplendent with highly-polished brass funnel and an awning in what the womenfolk would now call a red-and-white "candy-stripe", she reflected the status of her owner even to the extent of having a small saluting cannon. Forty-two feet six inches in length and powered by a five-inch and ten-inch by six-inch C.S.C. engine of our own make, she had a speed of eight knots.

A very different and much more recent yacht is the *Umbria* (illustrated on page 24), a seventy-six foot diesel vessel in steel (Ship No. 705) built in 1949 for Mr. R. G. Gillilan, an American citizen of Scottish descent who lives in Nairobi. One of the largest private yachts built since the war, she was designed by Mr. W. G. McBryde, M.I.N.A., and combines the purposefully efficient aspect of an East Coast drifter with the dignity and manifold amenities of a modern luxury vessel of the best possible standard. *Umbria* is the practical outcome of the owner's thoughts and ideas over

Ship No. 100: The 42 ft. 6 in. *Turry* (1911), for a South American dignitary, was a considerable eye-catcher in her day



Ship No. 530: An acid test indeed of yacht-building skill was the cigar-shaped Auxiliary sailing cutter *Buttercup*, designed by Robert Clark. Quite apart from her unusually extensive and pronounced curvatures, her edge-to-edge planking had to be entirely uncaulked. The smaller illustration shows the highly unconventional twin keels and rudder-post designed to keep her upright when taking the ground

many years and it is significant that he should elect to have them expressed in a British-built yacht complete with a British engine, the latter being a Gardner 61.3 developing 114 b.h.p. and driving through 2 : 1 reduction gears to give a speed of eight and a half knots.

Umbrina (flying the Stars and Stripes) was launched in such unusually complete trim that she ran her engines within ten minutes, her sea trials a week later and within a second week was off on a 6000-mile maiden passage to her home port of Mombasa, from whence she cruises in the Indian Ocean. As recently as April this year the owner wrote: "... she is as sprick and span as the day she left England and it still gives me pleasure merely to roam about the yacht contemplating and admiring the fine cabinet work and the many other refinements for which your yard was responsible".



Rowhedge-built yachts have, however, by no means been confined to power craft, and notable among sailing vessels was *Merganser* (Ship No. 506), a thirteen-ton Thames Measurement teak cutter built for Squadron-Leader G. S. Oddie, D.F.C., A.F.C., in 1935. Thirty-nine feet four and a half inches overall, she had a four-cylinder Parsons auxiliary petrol engine of 10/20 h.p. at 1000/2000 r.p.m.

Another wooden yacht which called for an especially exacting degree of craftsmanship was the Auxiliary Sailing Cutter *Buttercup* (Ship No. 530), built in 1936 for Mr. C. E. Foster to a highly unconventional design by Robert Clark. She was twenty-five feet overall. The extreme curvature of the above-water hull-form allowed no latitude in craftsmanship and those familiar with the technicalities of wooden construction will appreciate that this, coupled with the fact that the hull planking was "edge-to-edge" and entirely without caulking, imposed the severest possible test upon the capabilities of the yard. The finished craft was a source of unusual satisfaction both to the owner and ourselves as build-



ers. She was fitted with a four h.p. auxiliary and a special point of interest is the way in which her twin keels and specially designed rudder post and skeg enabled the yacht to remain upright when aground.

The main Rowhedge contribution to the needs of the modern-day yachting enthusiast with limited resources but who, nevertheless, wants no compromise with high standards both in construction and performance, is the *Firecrest Fifteen*, a half-decked centreboard sloop designed exclusively for Rowhedge by that highly-experienced and successful dinghy designer Robert N.

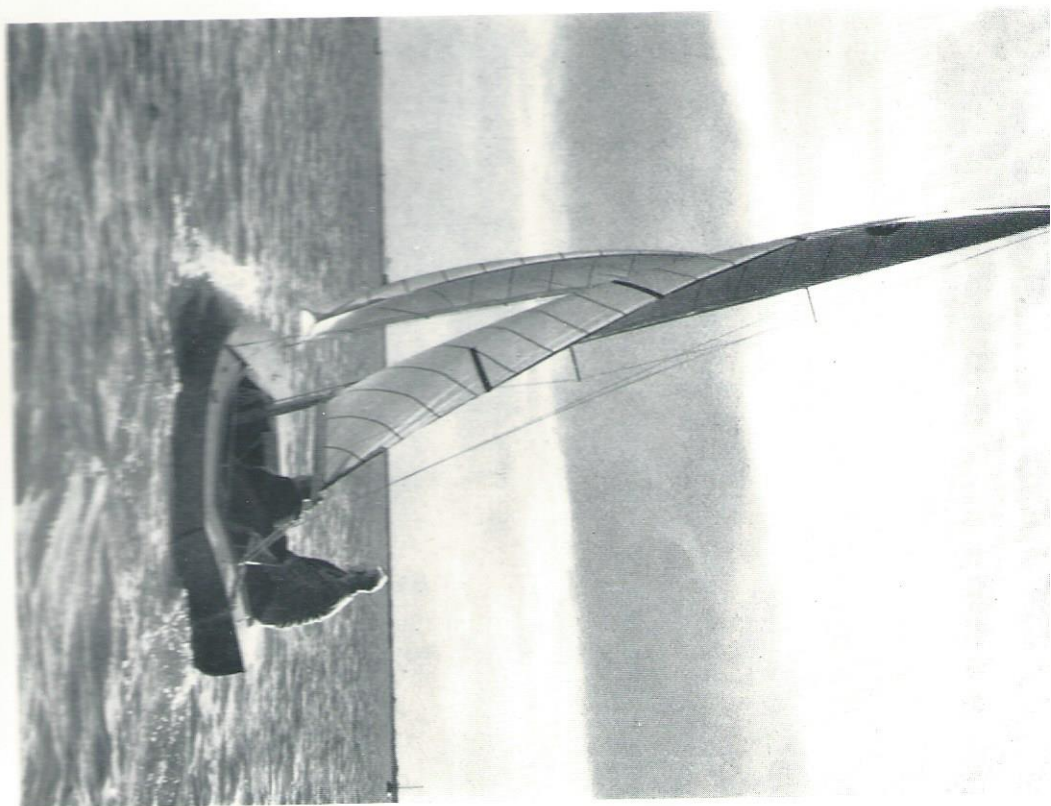
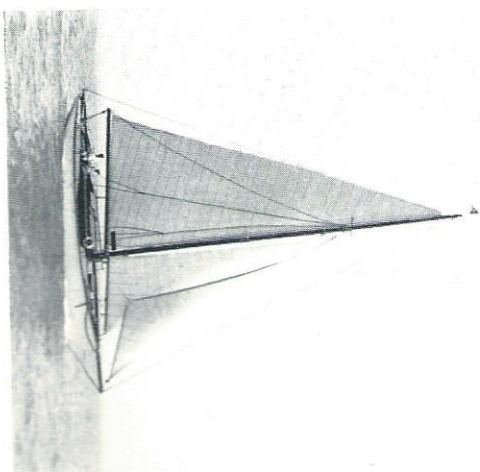
One of the largest private yachts to be built since the war is the 76 ft. *Umbria*, constructed for an American owner. She was designed by Mr. W. G. McBryde, M.R.N.A. As the interior view to some extent indicates, and notwithstanding her self-evident seaworthiness, *Umbria* was fitted to the best modern luxury standards in every detail of accommodation and equipment. She is undoubtedly one of the finest vessels of her size and type in commission anywhere.



Stone. First introduced at the 1950 International Motor Show, the *Firecrest Fifteen* is in regular production at our Lower Yard and is being increasingly taken up both here and abroad, several, for example, having gone to Venezuela.

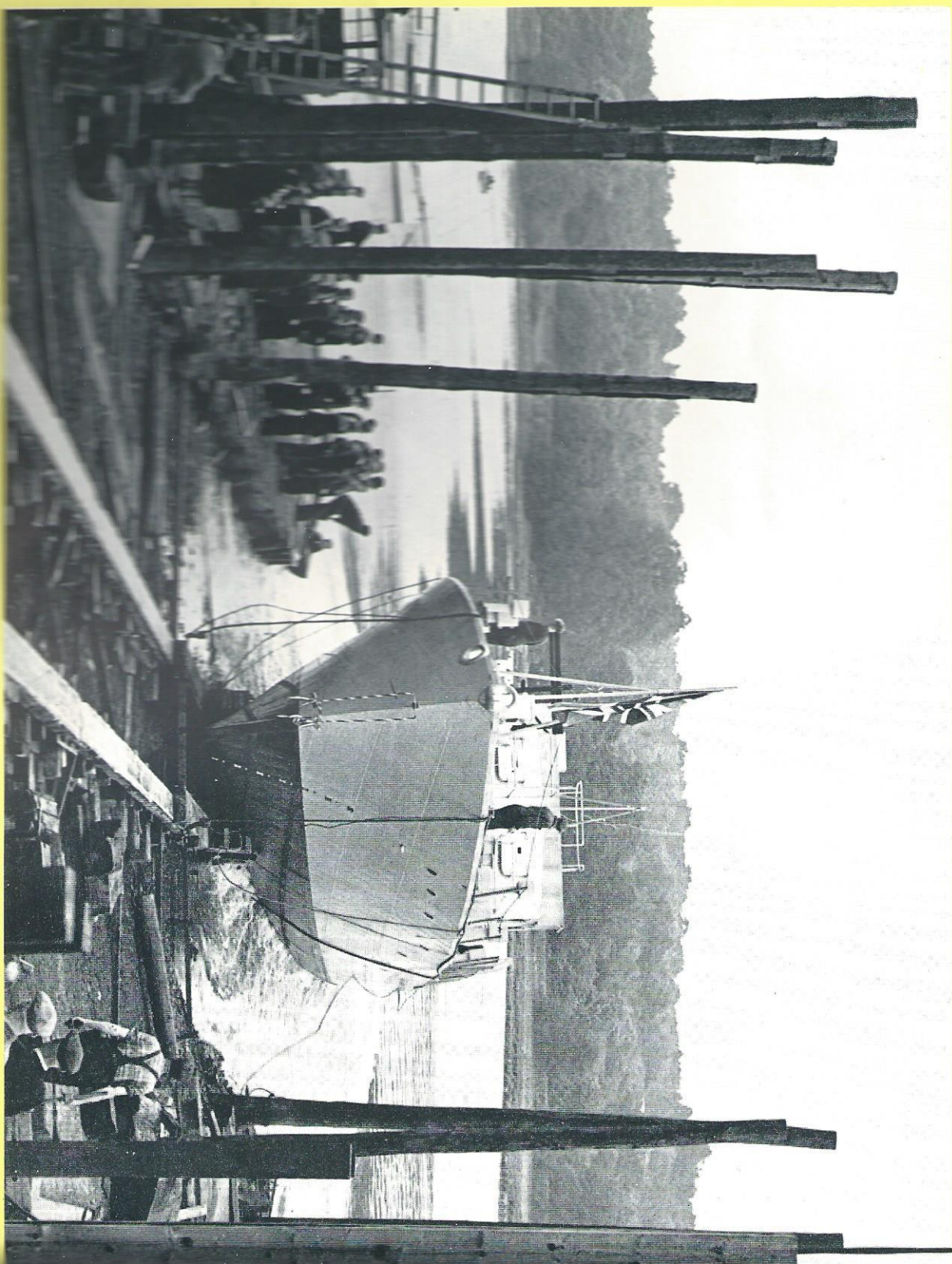
This "Firecrest" class was so called to perpetuate one of the most famous names in the annals of yachting, a ten-ton racing cutter built in the same yard at Rowhedge, which between 1923 and 1929 was sailed around the world single-handed by the French lawn tennis star, Alain Gerbault. He is referred to by Lt.-Cmdr. E. C. Talbot-Booth, R. N. R., dealing with epic lone cruises in his book, *Yachts, Yachting and Sailing*, as "perhaps the most intrepid man of all". Both he and the boat nevertheless made their final landfall safe and sound despite the worst that wind and weather could offer, a supreme tribute alike to the prowess of the helmsman and the craftsmen who built her.

In this H-Bomb age it is reassuring to be reminded, as we are from time to time, that neither of these fundamental skills has been lost.



ABOVE: Exclusive to Rowhedge is the *Firecrest Fifteen*, a half-deck centred round one-design boat created by Robert N. Stone. Named after the celebrated round-the-world *Firecrest*, also built at Rowhedge, she has gained considerable popularity since first introduced at the 1950 Motor Show. The new *Firecrest* provides a high standard of construction and performance at a price which many enthusiasts can afford (over 1000). Ship No. 5001. Notable among Rowhedge-built sailing craft is *Morganster*, a thirteen-ton Auxiliary Cutter. She was built of teak.

Latest of a line of vessels launched at Rowhedge for the Admiralty is the Seaward Defence Boat U.M.S. *Leiford* (Ship No. 774). 117 ft. 3 ins. in length with a beam of 20 ft. Diesel-powered, these craft are of entirely new design, their purpose being to detect, locate and destroy submarines, including the midge variety, in the approaches to defended ports. They will be equipped with guns, flares, depth charges and electronic apparatus



In these they have served

"LAUNCHED WITHOUT TRACE" may seem a somewhat alarming and highly unnautical expression, but it is true (photographically speaking) of quite a high proportion of the many offensive and defensive vessels which have taken shape at Rowledge over the last fifty years. Built under security conditions, they were not photographed, and while many of them have since been pictured elsewhere, we have, being somewhat limited for space, confined our illustrations to those which were recorded at the time.

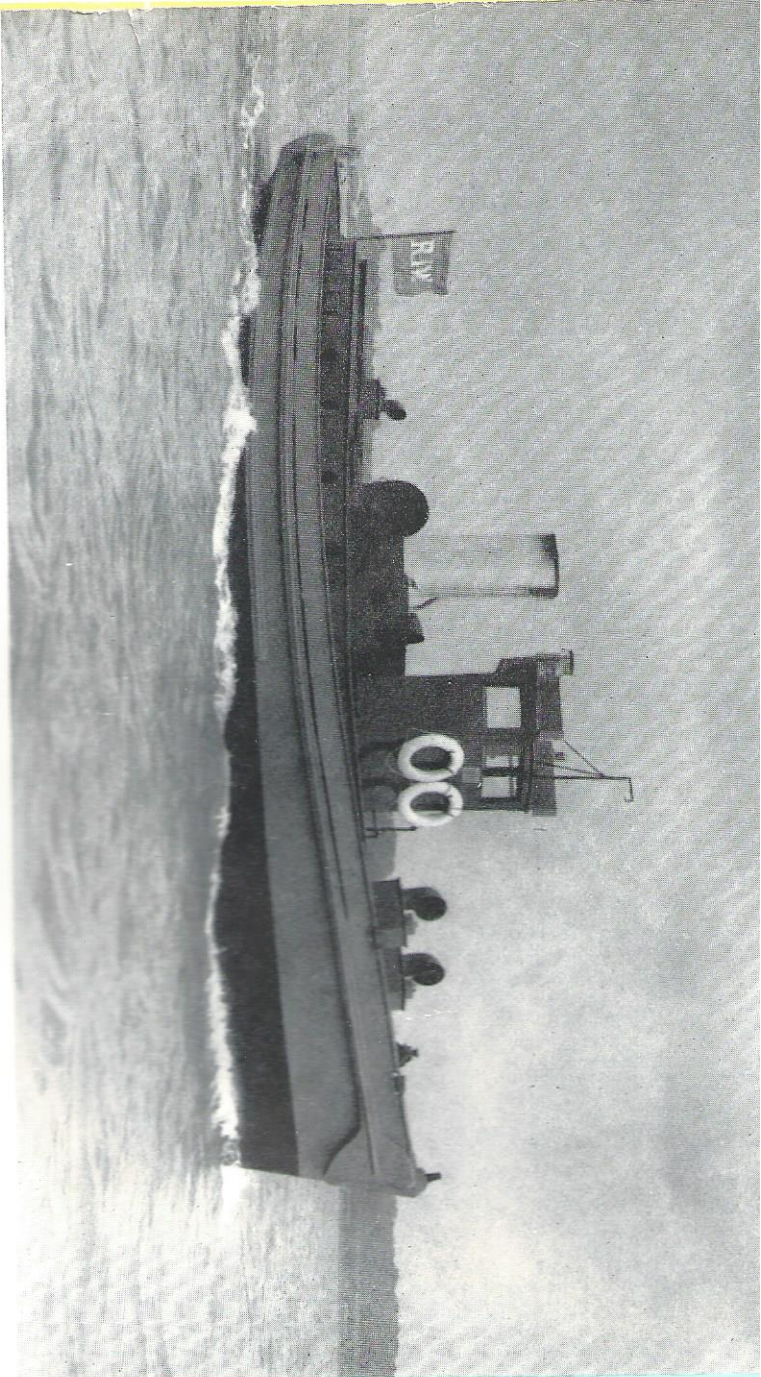
Typical of those not illustrated were some Steam Pinnaces of fifty feet in length, usually powered by engines from our neighbours of the time, A. G. Mumford Ltd., and supplied during the period 1912-15 for service with such legendary vessels as H.M.S. *Tiger*, H.M.S. *Delhi*, H.M.S. *Barham* and H.M.S. *Malaya*. These potentially lethal little craft were along overboard from their parent ships and, by what now appear to be very crude methods, went into the attack with torpedoes and were thus no doubt the precursors of the redoubtable last-war M.T.B.'s.

Other small craft with impressive associations were a whole range of Motor Boats and Cutters of thirty feet and thirty-five feet in length for service with such "ships of the line" as H.M.S. *Weymouth*, H.M.S. *Terror*, and H.M.S. *Centaur*, to say nothing of a number of Admirals' Barges, one of which is known to have been directed to H.M.S. *Repulse*.

From about 1912 right through to the second World War

Ship No. 571: Typical of a long line of similar craft constructed for the Admiralty in both peace and war is this diesel-engined 52½ ft. Harbour Service Launch. She is planked in teak on the double-skin principle





OPPOSITE, LEFT: Ship No. 384. One of two 56 ft. Motor Pinnaces built for the Air Ministry between the wars. They were of teak construction, diesel powered

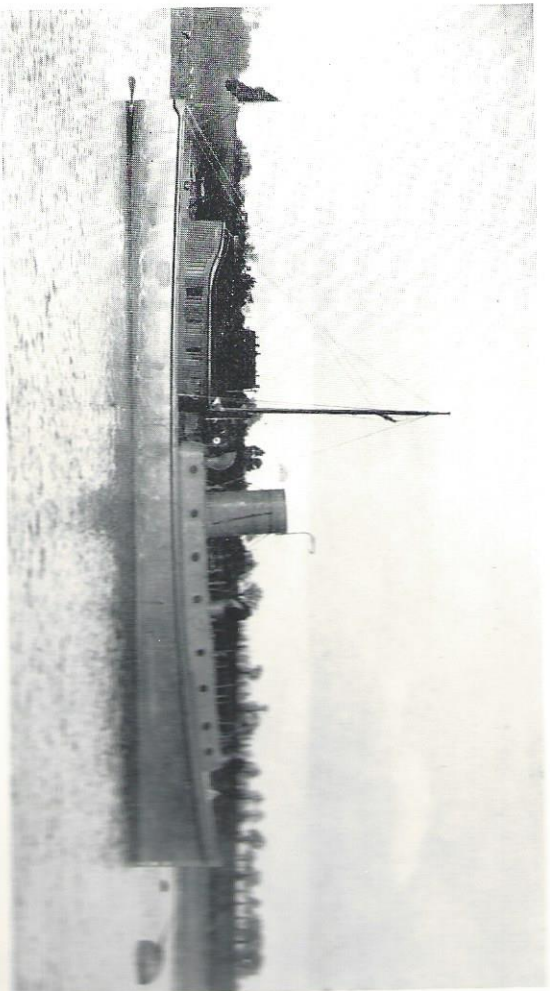
RIGHT: Ship No. 474. Also diesel-driven was the 52 ft. steel vessel *Crystal II*, an ammunition carrier for the War Office

BELOW: Ship No. 234. Built for the War Office during World War I, this 80 ft. 7 in. steel tug was one of seven for service on the Belgian canals

ABOVE: Ship No. 610. Similar in most other respects to the diesel-driven vessel on the previous page, this is one of the many 52½ ft. Harbour Service Launches powered by Howbridge steam engines



years, an almost constant sight in the yard, under construction or fitting-out, was a fifty-two and a half foot teak Harbour Service Launch and, in all, some sixty of these "handmaidens of the Fleet" have been built at Rowhedge. The 8-inch and 16-inch by 8-inch C.S.C. steam engines originally powering them in turn gave way to diesels, a process which was, however, somewhat surprisingly reversed during the 1939-45 war, when diesel engines were in overwhelming demand for submarines and tanks and there was also a shortage of skilled men to operate and service them. Steam was then reintroduced and we built 8-inch and 16-inch by 8-inch C.S.C. engines for installation in our own hulls and also supplied twelve engines for identical craft being built in other yards. Hull templates and drawings also were supplied to other builders. Where these craft are concerned, therefore, Rowhedge can fairly claim to have "mothered" their existence.

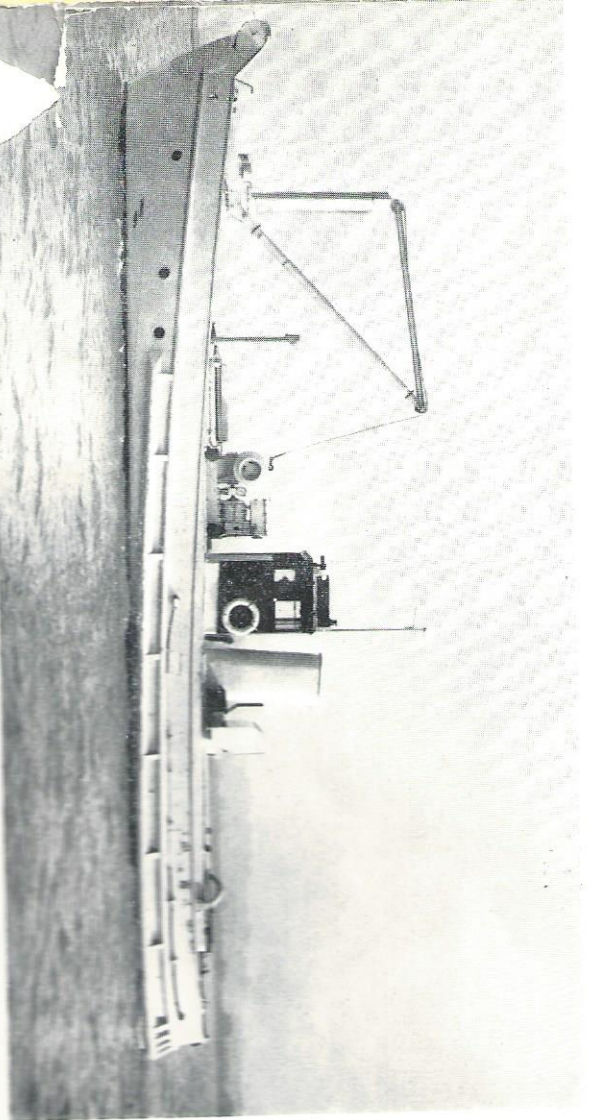


Both steam and diesel-engined versions were of similar double-skin teak construction, with the bottoms coppered as necessary for protection in tropical waters, but the diesel craft were lesser in both beam and draft. Steam engines gave them a speed of nine knots and a Ruston 5 V.P.M.G. diesel (100 b.h.p. at 1000 r.p.m.) a knot more.

Rather out of the usual run during World War I was Ship No. 234, a steel steam tug of eighty feet seven inches to the order of the War Office for use on the Belgian canals. Powered by a Campbell and Calderwood 10½-inch and 24-inch by 18-inch C.S.C. engine, this purposeful-looking craft had a speed of ten m.p.h.

In between wars, 1927, two Motor Pinnaces fifty-six feet in length (Ship Nos. 384-5) were built for the Air Ministry. Installed with four-cylinder Gardner semi-diesels of ninety-six b.h.p., these vessels, built of teak, had a speed of eleven and a half knots. A

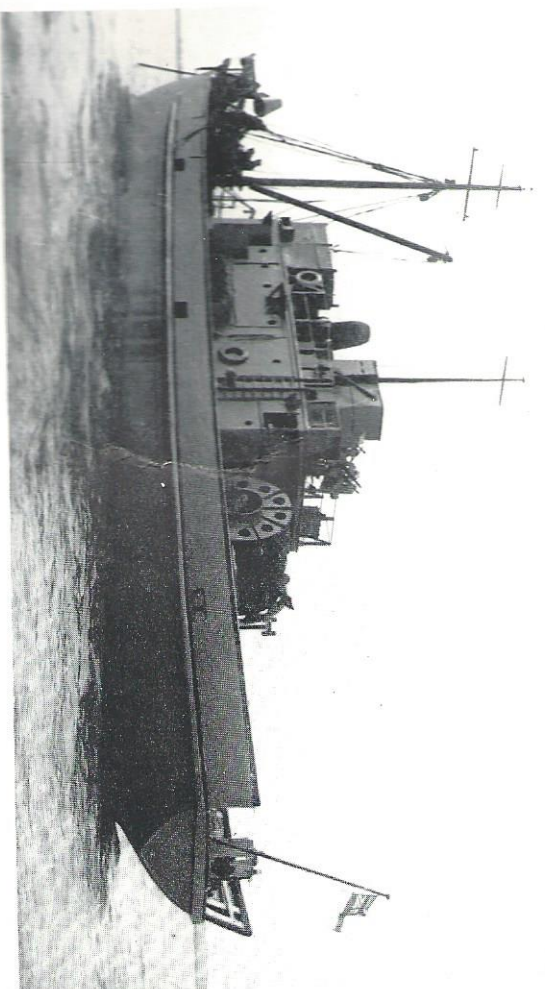




little later on came the *Crystal II* (Ship No. 474), an ammunition-carrying fifty-two-foot steel vessel for the War Office. A three-cylinder Widdop engine of 105 b.h.p. gave her a service speed of eight and three-quarter knots.

As might be expected, the service craft built for the British Admiralty during World War II were numerous indeed, while shortly after the outbreak we delivered three Mine Recovery Launches (Ship Nos. 602-4) to the order of the Turkish Government. Built of steel and galvanized, they were sixty feet in length and gave speeds of nine and three-quarter knots, powered by 187 b.h.p. National diesels.

Upon the outbreak of war in 1939, the shipyard at Wivenhoe on the opposite side of the Colne, which had been closed for some nine years, was leased from National Shipbuilders' Security Ltd.



A new company, Wivenhoe Shipyard Ltd., was formed to operate this yard which, incidentally, has a building history going back to the time of the Spanish Armada, and key personnel were transferred to it from Howbridge. Fifty-five craft, all Naval vessels, were built there during the war, at the end of which the yard was purchased from the former landlords. The main output from this shipyard consisted of 105-foot and 120-foot Motor Minesweepers, some being of all-wood and others of composite construction, i.e., wooden planking on steel frames. It is a sobering thought that each all-wood vessel required the product of approximately 250 English oak and elm trees. All machinery layout was handled by Howbridge.

Two steel Torpedo Recovery vessels (Ship Nos. 605 and 623), built during World War II as *T.R.V. 2* and *T.R.V. 4*, are of in-