

## EDITORIAL

We shall never agree on a definition of dinghy cruising. Strictly speaking, only those of us who sail in open boats are doing the thing properly - and that is probably how most of us start. Some of us begin by wanting to cruise, and discovering that it can be done without buying a cabin cruiser. Others have racing dinghies, and find that racing is not enough, and that it is possible to use the boat for sailing from place to place, camping ashore, or on board if the boat is suitable. Some of us, of course, knew from the start that cruising in a small, shallow-draught, open boat is just what they want to do - and choose the right boat for it. That is the point of it - a boat small enough to be manageable under oars or to be beached if need be, able to go in over banks which would close many interesting waters to keel boats - such a boat can yet be stable enough for you to go to sea in fairly rough weather, and fitted out so as to be a comfortable cruising home as well.

Why do some of us add lids to our dinghies, or load them with ballast? I suppose this is chiefly because we are not all members of the ideal cruising partnership - two of the right size for easy sailing and for fitting into the boat at night. Single-handed one can do a great deal in a small dinghy, but once it becomes big enough for more comfortable living, it becomes very hard work for a solitary lightweight in bad conditions. Then there are those of us with families; either they must be left at home, or the boat must be able to sleep not two but four (at least until the younger ones reach the age for independent dinghy cruising), and of these some will be too small and light to be much help in sitting up the boat. So the dinghy is changed for a 16 or 18 footer with some sort of cabin, and possibly ballast as well. It is not really a dinghy any more.

However, this is an academic argument; we need not define ourselves too carefully. All of us who sail round the coast in very small boats have enough in common, and the variety of craft we use adds to the interest.

J.A.

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