

*Morvyn & Karen Phillips*

## *Darius*

Motor Boats Monthly contributor Morvyn Phillips and his wife Karen have owned their Moonraker 36 since 1991, and in that time have covered 6000 miles in her.

They have cruised to eastern Germany (see MBM Feb & Mar 94) and to Denmark and Sweden (see MBM Aug & Sep 95); in fact the boat spent two years in Scandinavia, and Morvyn's account of a cruise from Copenhagen to Stockholm will appear in a future issue. *Darius* is one of the older Moonrakers built in 1971 with an aft cabin but without a flybridge (with one, she would not have been able to do the mix of coastal and inland cruising that the Phillips enjoy). Originally she had an open-backed wheelshelter, but a previous owner converted it into a fully enclosed wheelhouse.

Morvyn and Karen liked the boat enough to buy her despite the fact that she was suffering from osmosis. After her gelcoat was removed, she spent nine months on the hard, drying out, before a new one was applied.

The two 145hp Perkins were taken out for rebuilding, which entailed cutting a hole in the wheelhouse roof. Morvyn reckoned this was the best way of making sure they would run properly. "Engine surveys can only tell you so much," he says. One of the main problems turned out to be with the heatexchangers. "They were gunged-up with sand, which seemed to confirm what we had been told about the boat having always been on the East Coast. Touch wood, they have run OK since then.

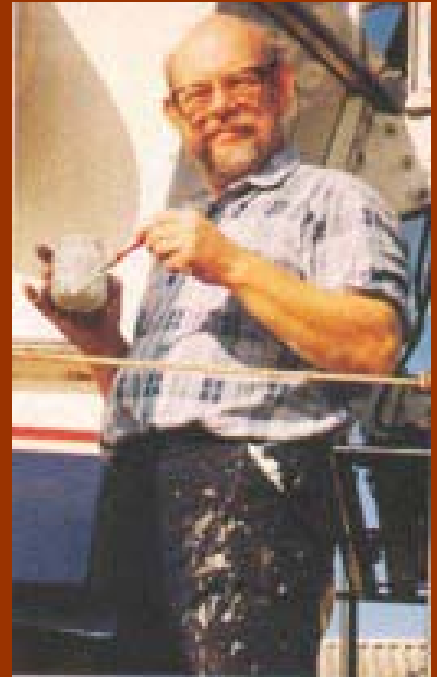
With all the gear they carry on board for their long cruises, top speed is only 14--15 knots. "In fact we often cruise at displacement speed, about 8 knots."

Morvyn confirms what most owners say about the seakeeping of Moonrakers, at least of the early models

"In a head sea she is brilliant. Wet of course, but with no problems other than that. She is not very good in a following sea. It's all right if you can outstrip the sea, but if it outstrips you the boat likes to broach and you have to fight the wheel."

At low speeds she has proved to be very easy to handle, and it is normally only Morvyn and Karen on board. "She's the best boat we have had for low-speed manoeuvring, because she is heavier. Other boats have been blown about by a mere puff of wind."

*Darius* leads rather a nomadic life, with nowhere she can call home. "We don't have a permanent mooring," Morvyn explains, "because we get bored staying in one place." Currently, just for a few months, the boat is on the Medway, but very shortly she will be leaving for this summer's cruising, in home waters for a change. She will be going round to the South Coast and continuing west, weather permitting all the way to the Scillies.



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