

TAKE TO THE BOATS.

A bit of Devon, deep in the heart of London. It's the centre-piece of the Boat Show at Earls Court, a wonderful escape for an hour or two from that awful winter outside, evidence that millions are becoming more boat-minded every year. On show, there's everything from a tycoon's yacht down to a canvas canoe. And as the girls insist on coming along too, boating's a new field for the fashion world. Charlie Chester's in the swim if that's a tactful phrase to use in nautical circles. But of course many of the boats cater for inland waterways. Taking many an eye was the power-driven catamaran; a real sea going craft. A canoe that you can put together yourself has a big and growing appeal. The speedboat "Friendship" has a power unit with a big reputation in this class.

Refugees from Tristan da Cunha show how the island boats have been built for centuries. What must they have thought of the Micro Boat, in glass fibre? Or of the Elba a twin screw, seven berth yacht, with a basic price of £17,000. Optional luxuries can take the figure up to thirty-thousand.

If you're thinking of joining the weekend-afloat movement, the Boat Show will have the craft of your dreams.