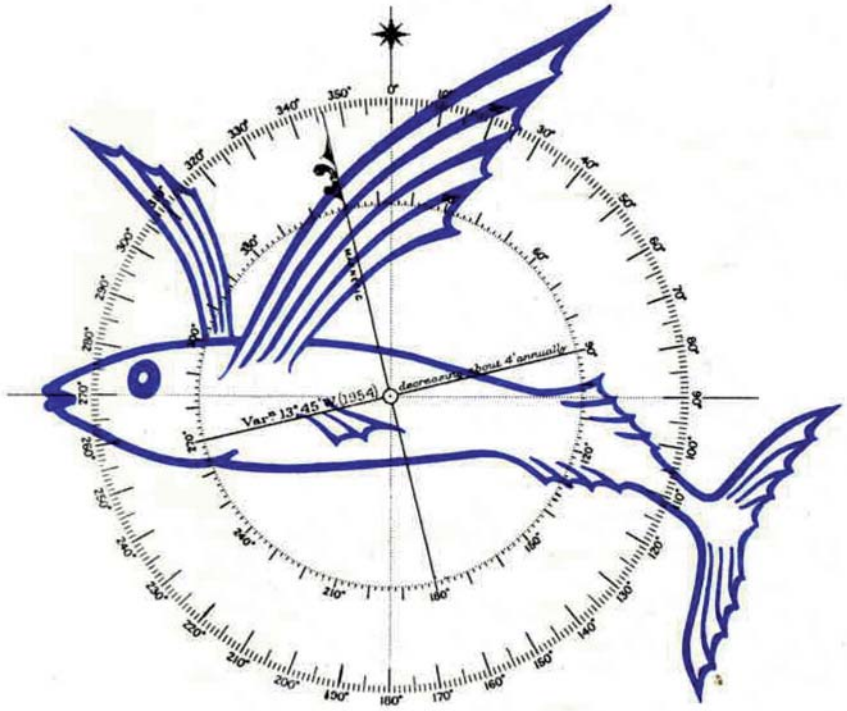
flying fish

1998/2



Ocean Cruising Club Journal

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Subject matter: absolutely anything which is likely to interest, inform or amuse other members. PLEASE concoct your own title - my powers of invention frequently fail me here.

Length: preferably no more than 3000 words, based on the fact that *Flying Fish* as printed contains approximately 500 words per page, nine pages is near maximum length, and a balance of two-thirds text to one-third illustrations is about right). However exceptions may be made.

Format, in descending order of preference: 3½" disk with accompanying hard copy (please specify software programme used); good quality typescript which can be scanned (preferably using 12pt or 'typewriter' sized script and the best print quality your printer can produce); faxed or photocopied typescript; legible handwriting; faxed or photo-copied illegible handwriting!

In deference to my cabin lighting, please use double spacing for anything which might need to be copy typed, PARTICULARLY hand-written material.

Illustrations: preferably colour or black and white prints (no need to send the negatives), or failing that colour slides (please specify 'viewing' side) - all with CAPTIONS please! (Please note that photocopies, including colour laser copies, will NOT produce bromides of usable quality.) Black and white line drawings of approximately final size make an interesting alternative, in which case good quality photocopies are normally fine.

Please ensure that you either own the copyright to photographs or have the photographer's permission for them to be reproduced. Neither should the subject matter be copyright - eg. a book or chart. Please also include a sketch or photocopied chart (with place names etc) if relevant, which can be professionally redrawn. In this situation a photograph IS acceptable, as it will not be reproduced in its original form.

I always take great care of photographs and other artwork and return them after use, but the Club cannot be held responsible for loss or damage.

Deadlines: Deadlines, as always, are **31 March** for the June issue and **30 September** for the December issue, but it eases my life considerably to receive articles several weeks - or months - in advance.



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Once again we have a really great collection of cruises in *Flying Fish* – and I do mean 'great'. Working from south to north, Roger Wallis visits Antarctica with *Parmelia*, Paddy Barry and friends attempt to follow Shackleton's wake in the diminutive *Tom Crean*, and Maurice and Rosie Sumner cruise Australia aboard the only slightly less diminutive *Christobel of Hamble*. Then Brazil gets more than a mention, with Nick Bryant and *Force 8* 'Rolling down to Rio', a city also much enjoyed by Maria and Guus 't Hart aboard *Zouterik*. Meanwhile Rija & John van Logchem send us a warm *abraço* (hug) from *Queen of Hearts*, a long and fascinating tale which will be continued in the next issue.

Of course *Flying Fish* wouldn't be *Flying Fish* without a good crop of Caribbean cruises, but while Bill McLaren and *Vagrant* enjoy the well trodden route, and Doug and Dale Bruce aboard *Bluewater* venture up the windward side of Martinique, Bob and Angelique Crampton conclude their cruise of Cuba in *Beach Bum* and John and Jean Armitage work even further west aboard *Ostrica of Orwell*.

The slant in favour of the New World is only slightly redressed by Jim and Sue Chambers, who divert in the last stages of a five-year circumnavigation to explore the Gambia with *Sea Shanty*. Finally we have Founder Member Lee Rice celebrating another 'big zero' by sailing his 25ft *Puffin* the 1500 odd miles from Ontario to Maine, mostly singlehanded – and sadly encountering some appalling seamanship (if you can call it that) en route.

Changing the subject totally, but still thinking particularly of founder or other senior members, does anyone have any early copies of *Flying Fish* they might be willing to donate to Club archives? So far as the Committee is aware there is no complete set of *Flying Fish* in existence – we're not even certain how many have been produced or who edited it in the early days. With the Club's fiftieth anniversary only just over the horizon it's high time we filled in the gaps.

Still apropos reading, but of a different type, the number of books reviewed in *Flying Fish* seems to increase with every issue. Do you find this a useful service or do you consider it a waste of space? And if you wonder why you never see a really *bad* review, only variations on the good or very good, it's simply that I don't waste space on the second rate – and believe me, there are quite a few!

Lastly, no, I'm still not on e-mail, though it's my number one project for the

winter. And *very lastly* let me remind you that the DEADLINE for *Flying Fish* 1999/1 is 31 MARCH – though as always I'd much appreciate receiving articles (and particularly longer articles) earlier if possible.

Meanwhile, good sailing if you're in sailing latitudes, and Happy Christmas wherever you are!



THE COMMODORE

OCC events around the world seem to have prospered in 1998, with the possible exception of the Forty Baskets Beach party in Sydney which was, we hear, driven indoors by the weather. Here at home the Beaulieu and Falmouth events at each end of the season were well attended and much enjoyed. Tony and Coryn Gooch from Victoria, BC were in Falmouth in *Taonui* and even as I write Tony is getting that singlehanded yearning out of his system by sailing to the Falklands without Coryn. We wish Tony every success and sympathise with Coryn waiting at home before rejoining for the onward passage to South Georgia and Capetown. Also in Falmouth was Brian Coad who sailed *Raasay* all the way from Waterford in Southern Ireland especially for the event and all the way back again. What is more he was singlehanded both ways. I hope he thought it all worthwhile – we certainly enjoyed his company! This is what the club is all about – knowing that one can choose an objective from the club calendar and be sure that there will be a great welcome and a good party when one gets there.

I had a letter recently from some lapsed members wishing to rejoin, and one of their comments was that there is no longer a desire among sailors to entertain on board but rather to meet in bars on shore. Pat and I have noticed so often that one crew will call on another and instead of being pressed to come aboard they will talk for ages with the visitors sitting in their dinghy and being talked to from above by the owners of the yacht they have called on. If you stop by a yacht flying the Flying Fish burgee I hope you will get a better welcome than that. As the fleets of cruising yachts get larger it is more difficult to make that initial contact that leads to longer friendships. Between members it should not arise, so fly your flag and look out for others and go and call as soon as you see one.

This is certainly the spirit in which I hope the Millennium Cruise will be conducted. Details are enclosed with this mailing and enthusiasm is steadily growing.

Mike Pocock, Commodore

OBITUARIES

Bill Howell, Founder Member

William Belford Howell died suddenly on 26 July this year at the age of 72, and it is almost impossible to think that we shall not cross tacks again with our fellow club member 'Tahiti Bill'. (And who ever knew him as William Belford?).

Bill was perhaps the perfect prototype for a founder member of the Ocean Cruising Club when it was set up by Humphrey Barton in 1954. He was using the oceans as a highway for his chosen life rather than for holidays or adventures. His chosen life, of course, was worldwide cruising supported by professional dentistry. The dentist chair and the foot operated drill were notable and unusual fit-out items in his first boat.

After serving as a bomber/navigator in the Royal Australian Air Force, Bill Howell went to University to train as a dentist before coming to this country to practice in Hammersmith. His qualifying voyage for the OCC was Falmouth to Gibraltar in 1951 in the famous *Wanderer II.* In 1955, with Frank McNulty, he set off to return to his native Australia, filling teeth and writing *White Cliffs to Coral Reefs* along the way. *Wanderer II* had to be sold when he got to Vancouver and he returned to London to marry Gwen and set up a full time and very successful dental practice in Wimbledon. Bill specialised in, and became a world authority on, reducing pain and trauma in dentistry.

However, there was plenty of boating to go with it. He had a catamaran *Golden Cockerel,* later renamed *Tahiti Bill,* built, and cruised and raced over many years including several singlehanded transatlantics. His next and last boat was the trimaran *Tahiti Belle.* Perhaps we shall miss him as much as anywhere at our Club meetings where his presence was always notable and his Australian origins apparently undimmed by a lifetime in London.

Colin Mudie

Robin Graham Cooper

I am sure there are many wives out there who will understand when I say that there's a certain sinking feeling when you discover that the

man you've fallen in love with adores boats – I spent most of our courtship cowering in the saloon. However, eight years later and I was more than happy to be sailing off into the proverbial sunset with my darling Robin.

Amongst the beautiful places we've sailed and lived have been the Morbihan in Brittany, Sardinia, the Bay of Islands in New Zealand, Vava'u, Fiji, the islands of Venezuela, most of the Antilles, Maine and the Bahamas. Impossible to précis a journey like ours: fifteen years of adventure and love. Our epiphany came in the shape of Hurricane *Alison*. We met her in the Gulf Stream, en route from Bermuda to Newport – 65 knots of wind and horrendous seas. I'm sure it was only Robin's sailing ability and confidence that pulled us through. Needless to say, if it hadn't been for my love and admiration for Robin I would *never* have sailed again..

Robin died in April after a short, sudden illness. He was only 61. He had a sailor's soul, full of hope and enthusiasm. Even in his last days he had such plans for us and his much loved and cared for *Honey Girl*. There were so many places he wanted to sail to and explore, and despite the sadness of it all I hope to read all about them in future issues of *Flying Fish*.

Finally, I would like to say 'thank you' to my family and friends, who have been and remain invaluable to us.

Nicola Cooper

Martin Clucas

Martin and I first met in the early 1980s, but it was not until 1993 that we sailed together. Between 24 July and 29 August that year he sailed with me for 2600 miles in *Arabel*, a 33ft Bermudan cutter.

The 1993 cruise plan was to sail from the Orwell to Scoresby Sund on the east coast of Greenland, then back to the Orwell via Iceland. Martin was gratifyingly enthusiastic about the expedition plan, but having read about *Arabel*'s trip to Spitsbergen he wanted my assurance that she had now been equipped with a heater and a reliable engine! I reassured him warmly on both counts. A few months later, in the Greenland Sea, the newly installed heating system failed to work at all.

On our passage up the North Sea, Martin distinguished himself not just by being the only man aboard not to feel sick but, more importantly, by his invention of the wholemeal bread, ginger preserve and cheddar cheese sandwich. In Lerwick, he famously prosecuted the search for a really good Stilton right up until the moment of our departure, when he appeared laden and jubilant on the quayside.

On the volcanic island of Jan Mayen, while I was gale-bound ashore with half the crew, Martin was in command of *Arabel*. When the chain parted after a day and a half of gales it was Martin who steered out of the bay under bare poles, made radio contact, and directed us to a sheltered rendezvous some twelve miles up the coast.

A few days after the crew was reunited *Arabel* was stopped by 10/10 pack ice, with Greenland in sight about 10 miles off. So we never did enter Scoresby Sund – but it was a good cruise and it saddens me that Martin will not be coming on any other such jaunts.

Christopher Hamblin



A YEAR IN AUSTRALIA

Maurice Sumner

(In Flying Fish 1997/2 *we left* Christobel of Hamble, *a Halmatic 30, just arrived in Cairns, Northern Queensland. At that time Maurice and Rosie were planning to push on for Southeast Asia that coming spring. But plans are made to be altered.....)*

Christobel continued her charmed life by arriving in Cairns in mid June 1997 after a hard, twelve day voyage through the Coral Sea from New Caledonia, peppered by continuous strong winds and squalls. Making our base in Port Douglas, sixty miles north of Cairns, we did much essential work to our ageing boat in the cooler winter months. As the seasons advanced, and realising what a huge country this is, we decided to pause on our journey home and explore Australia for a full year, a decision that has proved to be an excellent one.



In that time we have cruised the length of the Queensland east coast and the Northern Territory round to Darwin, travelled overland to visit the major cities, and seen something of the interior of this vast country. Throughout our stay we have been struck by the friendliness and generosity of the Aussies we have met. Many have British origins and take great pride in their adopted country's achievements with its tiny population (18 million) taming an enormous and less than friendly dry landmass.

In October, as settled spring weather approached, *Christobel* joined in the annual Port Douglas Yacht Club Rally to Lizard Island, 120 miles to the north. This passage is particularly interesting as it covers the most traumatic section of Captain Cook's voyage in HMS *Endeavour* in 1770. Sailing past Low Islets and then Cape Tribulation where 'all his troubles began', around Hope Islets and close to the notorious reef which his ship struck and was so nearly lost. Then on past Weary Bay and the Cooktown estuary where the disabled ship was beached and repaired. Historians now say that if this story had turned out badly then Australians might now be speaking French! Our cruise continued past Cooktown, pushed along by the ever-present southeast winds, past Cape Bedford and Cape Flattery to Lizard Island with its dominant peak. From here Captain Cook and Joseph Banks climbed the hill to look out over the reef-strewn sea which he called 'the insane labyrinth', looking for a way out to the deep ocean.

Watson Bay anchorage at Lizard Island, taken from near Cook's Lookout

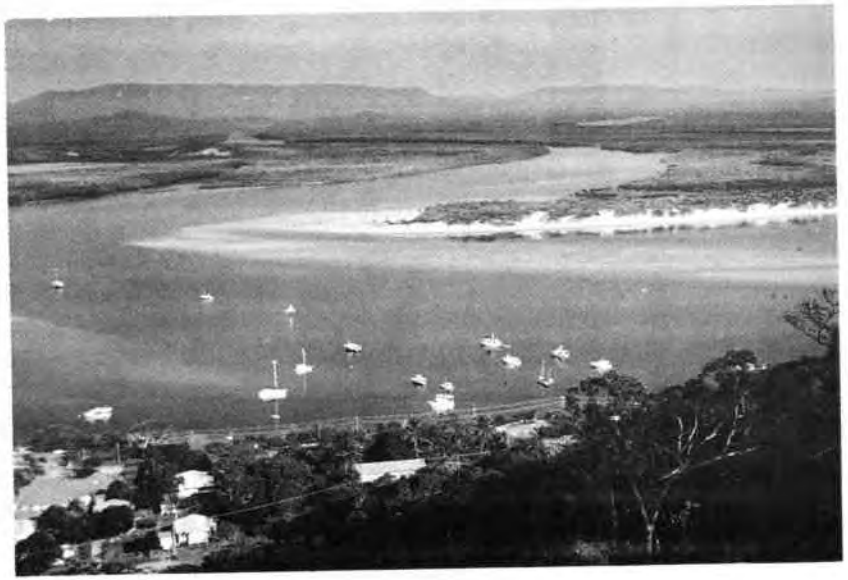


At 0600, in the cool of the day, we also climbed Lizard Hill (358m) in the footsteps of the great man, and stood at Cook's Lookout seeing the six reef passages to the Coral Sea ten miles to the east. Then swiftly downhill as the sun rose and back in time for a good cholesterol breakfast.

About thirty boats joined in the Rally, and barbecues on the beach were enjoyed each evening. The Watson Bay anchorage on Lizard Island appears to be sheltered from the prevailing southeasterly winds, but was still uncomfortable with regular bullets of wind descending across the saddle in the hills and making dinghy rides ashore very damp. It is possible to fly to Lizard Island in a light aircraft and stay in a posh resort which is off limits to scruffy yachties.

Our journey back south was a hard motor-sail into the teeth of the southeast trades, first to Cooktown where we spent a few days absorbing the history. The museum houses Cook's original anchor and cannon jettisoned from the *Endeavour* when they tried to lighten ship to get off the reef. These artefacts were recovered as recently as 1969 when modern magnetometers were used to detect metal hidden on the reef under layers of coral growth. On our first attempt to leave Cooktown we were beaten back by 25 knot southeasterly winds with 2m swell – after six hours of endless tacking to a point where it took just one hour to return to port. Later, in more moderate winds, we sailed down to the idyllic Hope Islets anchorage next to the infamous Endeavour Reef, followed by a rolly

The Endeavour River at Cooktown





A monitor lizard at Lizard Island

night anchored at Cape Tribulation. This part of the coast can only be reached on land with four-wheel drive vehicles via a dense tropical rain forest track.

The southeast trades are a real force to be reckoned with on this coast – only occasionally is there any relief with periods of east or northeast winds allowing reasonable southward progress for small sailing boats with auxiliary engines to match. These winds occur over the New Year period so *Christobel*'s summer cruise began in the torrid heat of December, heading south from Cairns down the Queensland coast to somewhere south of the Tropic of Capricorn, where the incidence of cyclones is less and our insurance company happier. We headed towards Brisbane to seek a safe spot where we could leave the boat and travel the interior of Australia during the hot/wet summer season up to the end of March.

Good progress was made in the heat of the day calling at various anchorages. Then overnight in cooler air we reached Magnetic Island and Townsville. Hurrying south to take advantage of the favourable winds we arrived at the Whitsunday Islands and Airlie Beach, a tourist and yacht charter centre. The Whitsundays have a multitude of idyllic anchorages and posh resorts and the VHF crackles continuously with charter fleets discussing their latest destinations and disasters.

Another good overnight trip brought us quickly down to the Curtis Coast and the Keppel Islands where we coincidentally bumped into fellow survivors of the

1995 Caribbean Hurricane *Luis*. Curtis Island to the south of the Keppels straddles the Tropic of Capricorn and is separated from the mainland by the Narrows, a drying channel negotiable by keelboats only at high water springs. Vehicles and cattle can cross the Narrows at low water so timing is crucial. Entering the Narrows at dusk we anchored for the night just short of the drying section, along with the friendly sandflies and mosquitoes from the nearby mangroves. Early next day, with pounding hearts, we gingerly motored through at the top of the tide without incident, along the well marked channel. Like many experiences the anticipation was worse than the event and we soon emerged at Gladstone, a pleasant town and industrial port with an excellent marina and hospitable yacht club.

Christmas was spent in Gladstone with fellow cruisers, followed by New Year celebrations in Hervey Bay 130 miles further south. This was greatly enhanced by a family reunion with younger son Edward and girlfriend Kate on holiday from the UK. They arrived laden with Christmas mail and presents from home, including much prized sloe gin and marmalade from Rosie's sister Sal. It was great to see Edward after nearly three years and we had much to catch up on.

The Great Sandy Strait to the south of Hervey Bay runs between Fraser Island and the mainland. It forms a wide expanse of sheltered water spread thinly over sandbanks, with a navigable channel through its forty mile length. Fraser Island is one of nature's oddities as the largest sand island in Oz, yet it supports a large rain forest in apparently poor soil, with an abundance of rainfall which creates freshwater lakes. We navigated the Strait in two legs to take advantage of tidal flows which meet in the centre. It is essential to tick off each numbered beacon as you pass and not cut any corners or you are soon aground – we made it fine right up to our night anchorage point, where we promptly grounded right alongside a marker beacon and had to lay out a kedge to pull ourselves clear.
Our summer sailing destination was a small, well protected marina in Tin Can Bay at the southern end of the Great Sandy Strait. Here we put *Christobel* to bed and made preparations for an overland trip to the other side of the country. Our cruise had taken us nearly 700 miles south of Cairns in hot and humid conditions and yet on the Oz map we seemed to have moved about an inch. The distances take some getting used to. Australia is bigger than the USA, and you can fit the Indian sub-continent within the borders of Western Australia alone. How do you tackle such a place if you wish to sample the interior and see something of the other states? Buying or hiring a car is one option, but the roads and scenery do not change much in hundreds of miles and road signs warn, 'Passenger! Is your driver alert?'. Air travel is obviously the quickest and most efficient but is expensive and you don't see much. So we plumped for train travel on the Indian Pacific railway which goes twice weekly from Sydney to

Perth via Adelaide and across the Nullarbor Plain, a distance of 2400 miles, in four days and three nights. Buying a fifteen day Rover ticket for $600 we planned a route taking in most of the major centres other than Darwin, which we would sail to later.

Our great train journey began with a bus to Brisbane and train to Sydney using backpacker hostels – rough and ready accommodation but good value and bookable, with double rooms at $35 a night. Sydney was impressive with the great Bridge, elegant skyscrapers and the Opera House on the waterfront the perfect centrepiece. A cruise around the enormous Sydney Harbour in lovely weather convinced us to stay a week to fully explore the area.

Boarding the Indian Pacific railway was like boarding the Orient Express, with car attendants welcoming and ticking off names, then showing us to our air-conditioned cabin which converted to sleeping berths with linen sheets and pillow cases. A shower and toilet were down the corridor and a fold-away wash basin *en suite*. The restaurant car served sit-down meals of good quality and value. There was even an enclosed saloon for the unspeakable smokers among us.

A 'Jabaru', or Black Necked Stork, at Kakadu National Park





Cristobel rounds Cape York

And so we trundled out of Sydney in the afternoon sunshine towards the Blue Mountains and settled in for the long haul of eating, sleeping and drinking on a grand scale. The landscape looked parched and brown as we passed through places with evocative names like Katoomba, Menindee and Broken Hill, reaching Adelaide in South Australia on the evening of the second day. Then we settled in for the crossing of the Nullarbor Plain, 600 miles of flat, lunar, scrub desert hiding the sinister remnants of weapons test sites – Woomera and Maralinga – beyond the limitless horizon. The railway boasts the longest section of dead straight, level, track in the world here at 300 miles, but the train still trundled at a steady 50mph while we sipped our sundowners before retiring – and then watching the dawn rise over the same endless desert. I wouldn't want to walk it!

With a stop at Kalgoorlie we reached Perth on the morning of day four – a very English flavoured city in Western Australia, with the beautiful Swan River and estuary at Fremantle. Jim and Margaret, cruising friends from our Pacific crossing, met us at our YHA hostel and immediately invited us to their home in Perth. They were great hosts, showing us around the area even including early

morning swims in the Indian Ocean. Back on the train visiting Melbourne, Canberra and back to Sydney gave us a good sample of the country and life. By the time we returned to Tin Can Bay we had covered over 6200 miles in five weeks, and as the end of March approached we set about preparing *Christobel* for the long haul north.

The distance from Tin Can Bay in south Queensland to the tip of Cape York is about 1000 miles, before turning left in the Torres Strait for Darwin in the Northern Territory, a further 600 miles westward across the top. *Christobel*'s cruise north began on 9 April with the help of regular southeast trade winds, stopping at a number of new anchorages en route. The big ship channel up the coast inside the Great Barrier Reef has excellent sea marks, making navigation relatively simple even on the occasional night passages. Back in Cairns by 6 May we stored up to the limit and bade fond and sad farewells to friends we had made there and in Port Douglas over the year.

Then on 24 May, in company with *Morning Tide* (Jim and Margaret from Perth completing their circumnavigation back to Fremantle) and *Myvanwy* Graham and Morjika from Melbourne heading for southeast Asia) we again headed north. We day-sailed in legs of up to sixty miles, with overnight anchorages at Hope Islets, Cooktown (four nights due to high winds), Cape Flattery, Ninian Bay, Cape Melville, Flinders Island, Princess Charlotte Bay, Morris Island, Cape Sidmouth, Portland Roads, Cape Weymouth, Margaret Bay, Cape Grenville and the Escape River. Finally we transitted the narrow Albany Passage past the tip of Cape York and into the Torres Strait at Thursday Island on 7 June.

The country beyond Cooktown is true wilderness with access only by four-wheel drive vehicles, aircraft or ships. A few Aboriginal settlements, mining and pearl farm workers comprise the sparse population and the coastal scenery is of low scrub sand hills. It looks a very dry, baked, hostile land, and at the few anchorages where we ventured ashore beautiful beaches were blighted by sandflies and mosquitoes. Swimming must be done with care, with one eye out for lethal jelly fish and the other for crocodiles up every estuary. A nightmare for any tourism promoter looking for new coasts to exploit!

Two days were spent in the Horn Island anchorage opposite Thursday Island with last minute runs for fresh food, water and fuel. Our small fleet grew in number as we met other yachts heading towards Darwin, and sailing west past Booby Island into the Gulf of Carpentaria we understood Captain Cook's feeling of relief from the interminable reefs and the sandbanks of the Torres Strait.

From Thursday Island to Gove in Arnhemland, Northern Territory is 360 miles across the shallow gulf waters with their reputation for short, steep, uncomfortable seas. In the event ours was a dream three day voyage with light southeasterly winds assisting us across calm waters with clear sunny days and full

moonlit nights.

The Australian Customs Coastwatch aircraft is vigilant in this area, searching for illegal immigrants, fishing and drugs from neighbouring southeast Asia. Coastwatch regularly flies over yachts on passage or at anchor and we were visited four times between Cairns and the Torres Strait. Over the VHF you are asked to identify your vessel, port of registry, last port and next port. All vessels are listed on their central files from the time of entering Australia, and they will see us off the premises when we leave.

Gove is a major bauxite mine and refinery producing aluminium oxide for smelters elsewhere. Gove Yacht Club is the kind of friendly place where yachties call, find work and stay for years. Some boats remained in Gove to join the Over the Top Rally to Darwin in late June. *Christobel*, in company with *Morning Tide* and *Myvanwy*, sailed northwest to Cape Wilberforce and to negotiate the 'Hole in the Wall', a 65m wide channel through islands in the Wessel group. This pass runs at up to 9 knots, and we careered through just before slack water into the relative calm in the lee of the island where we anchored for four days while the wind blew up to 30 knots. A two night passage brought us to Port Essington on the Cobourg Peninsula, anchoring at Coral Bay. Victoria, at the southern end of Port Essington, is the historic site of the first township of European settlers in 1839. But after eleven years of deprivation and disease the few survivors were shipped out and only a few stone walls, chimneys and tombstones remain to mark their valiant colonisation efforts.

From Port Essington we sailed round the headland of Cobourg Peninsula to Cape Don. In a moment of inattention one of our fleet ran aground on a hidden reef. We stood by as the tide made and the local Park Ranger launch came out quickly to free the stricken yacht. This was a very anxious wait and it was fortunate that help was near, and yet another reminder of the dangers around us. Taking the tide at Cape Don gave us an overnight roller-coaster ride through the Vernon Islands down to Cape Hotham at speeds up to 10 knots over the ground, and by mid-morning of 27 June we motored into Cullen Bay Marina in Darwin.

In Darwin the entrants are gathering for the Darwin–Ambon Yacht Race/Rally which starts on 25 July. We have joined this rally mainly for the mutual protection of strength in numbers as we move into strife-torn Indonesia. Consular reports say conditions are now stable for visitors and we anticipate a smooth run, however the irksome safety requirement of the race organizers to have all entrants conform to Category I of the AYF Racing Rules has been an expensive exercise which we could have done without. In spite of this we intend to enjoy the event in which we expect, as the smallest boat, to come last!

Well that was Australia folks – now for southeast Asia!

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DISCOVERING THE (ALMOST) DESERTED EAST COAST OF MARTINIQUE

Doug and Dale Bruce

Who would have believed that finding a beautiful, deserted anchorage without a single charter boat or other cruiser was possible in mid-season in the Eastern Caribbean? It can be done, and there are many choices of harbours, plus charming towns and delightful restaurants to enjoy along the way, IF you are willing to wait for appropriate weather and to navigate around numerous unmarked shoals. The east coast of Martinique beckons the cruiser with an adventurous spirit and a desire to escape the typical over-crowded Caribbean anchorage – the sort that makes you feel as if you've rejoined, rather than escaped, the rat race.

In February 1998 two OCC boats, *Honey Girl*, a Hallberg Rassy 49 with Robin and Nickie Cooper in command and our own *Bluewater*, a Tayana 55, decided to get off the beaten path as part of a leisurely cruise north from Trinidad through the Lesser Antilles. A stop in Martinique is always a refreshing change, at the very least to stock up on good cheese, wine and other delectable items not found in the typical Caribbean grocery. The island is a study in contrasts, as it provides amenities not found on other Caribbean islands – good roads, shops with worldly goods and most modern luxuries – and deserted areas where sailors and tourists can experience a remote Caribbean existence. However, the crowd of boats and tourists in west coast harbours such as Cul-de-Sac Marin, Fort de France and Anse Mitan tends to lessen the enjoyment. So the four of us decided to attempt a journey to the overlooked 'other side' of Martinique – the east coast (locally called *La Côte au Vent*) where the trade winds pound the rocky shoreline with their unyielding seas.

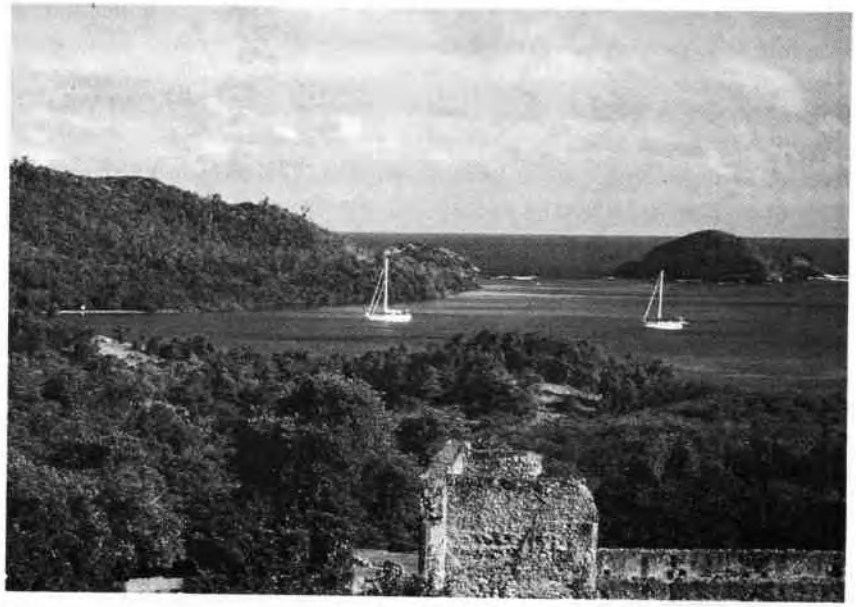
It should be said that sailing in this zone is less straightforward than elsewhere in the Lesser Antilles, although not as complicated as regions such as Brittany or the coast of Maine where the navigator must also take into account tides, currents, poor visibility, lobster pots and boating traffic. Nonetheless, one must have solid experience with coastal navigation, good charts with close-up detail, an accurate compass and GPS, plus binoculars, polarized sunglasses – all the expected tools of yachtsmen travelling in the tropics. One should also limit movement in and out of harbours to the hours of good overhead sunlight, to allow for unrestricted visibility of charted and uncharted reefs.

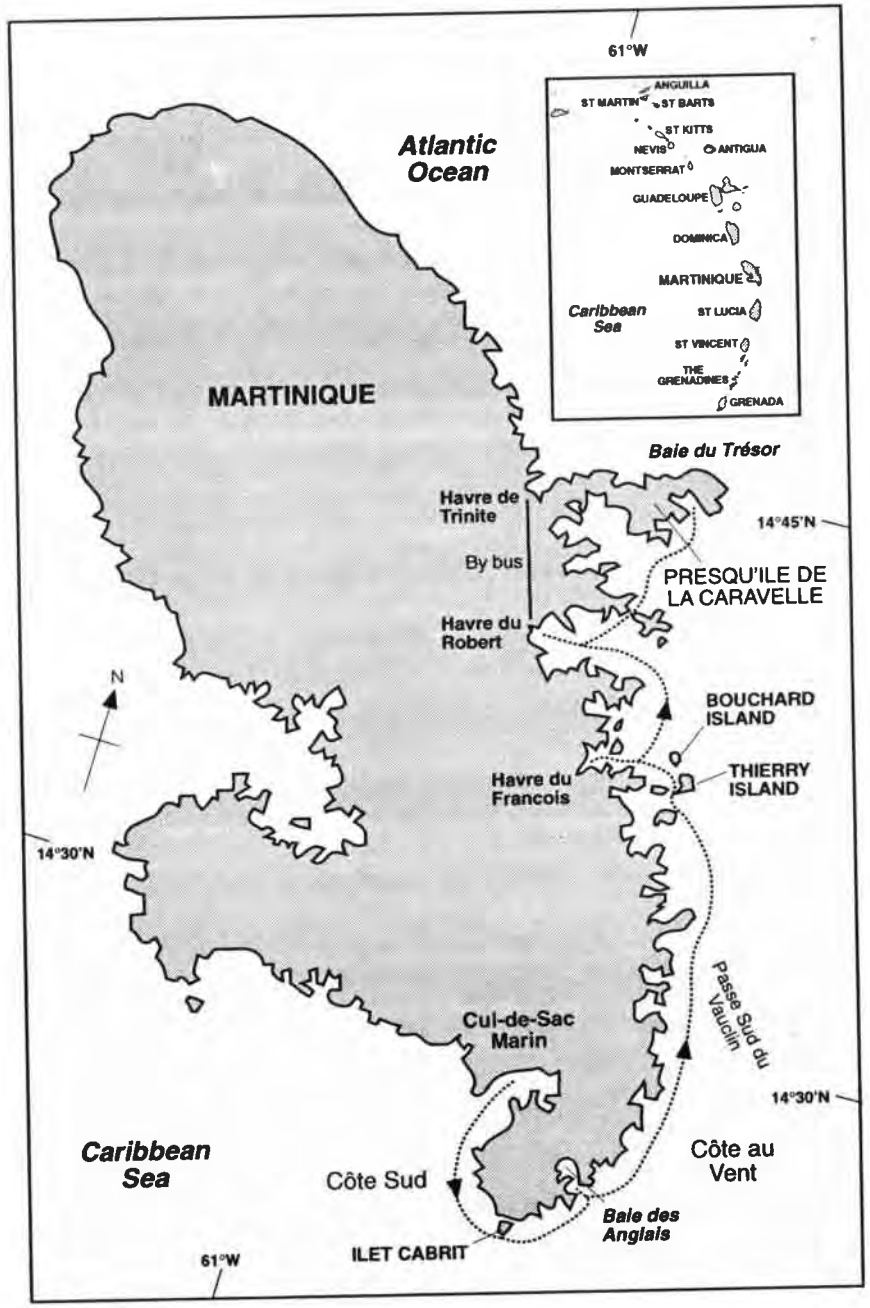
Keeping a close watch on weather conditions is also critical. Many islands in

this region have AM or FM radio forecasts, useful around Martinique if one's *Francais* is as good as one's *Anglais*. We relied on the daily SSB broadcast by David Jones, the well regarded 'Caribbean Weatherman' and former yachtsman now based in Tortola, BVI. His voluntary appearances on USB frequencies 4109 kHz at 0830 and 8104 kHz at 0845 local time (AST) were carefully monitored each morning. Assuming David can hear your call, he will provide localised forecasts geared to the interests of sailors not tourists. For the east coast of Martinique, the bad news would be above average trade winds (25 to 30 knots) and/or big northerly swells from a winter gale in the North Atlantic. Either circumstance produces uncomfortable and potentially dangerous conditions around the many reefs and harbours where entrances are narrow and usually unmarked. Fortunately there are harbours where one can find refuge, most notably Havre du Robert which has a broad, deep entrance and proper buoys. But the anchorages most yachtsmen want to see and the ones we visited are the somewhat trickier ones to negotiate.

One bit of advice before we get on with the story – do get a copy of *A Cruising Guide to Martinique Côtes et Mouillages* if you are considering a visit to 'the other side'. It is available in most chandlers on the island, or can be obtained by

Bluewater (left) and Honey Girl at anchor in Baie du Trésor, seen from the ruins of the Chateau du Dubuc





writing, calling or faxing the publisher, Trois Rivieres in Fort-de-France (Tel: (19) (596) 750707 or Fax: 750312). This book contains excellent large-scale hand-drawn harbour charts, sketches of landmarks from offshore, and superb aerial photographs that provide essential guidance for exploring the reef-strewn areas – the whole point of the exercise. Text is in both French and clearly translated English. As the ad used to say, 'don't leave home without it'.

The adventure for *Bluewater* and *Honey Girl* began in Cul-de-Sac Marin where a good source of culinary essentials is located, most notably the Supermarche Annette. Marin also houses numerous chandlers and a few good restaurants. It is a perfect starting point from which to approach the east coast, as the harbour entrance is only about four miles from Ilet Cabrit, the southernmost point on Martinique where Côte Sud becomes Côte au Vent.

Fortunately the weather Gods smiled on us during our visit by providing a calm spell, thereby easing the navigational chores and allowing mostly eyeball pilotage. On our day of departure with light southeast trades on the nose, we motored up to the tip of the island noting the few well-charted reefs along the shoreline, then set sail for the reach up the east coast to the northeast. And as expected, we were bucking a noticeable 1–2 knot westbound current just as we rounded the corner.

Our goal was Baie des Anglais, the first sizeable refuge coming from the south, only another four miles from the turning point. As Baie des Anglais has an unmarked channel we allowed enough time (ie. good sunlight) to reach the next viable harbour up the coast if conditions seemed perilous. The entrance brings you into 20m depths between ominous looking small islands (basically large rocks). Very quickly the depth comes up to just 5m, with a white underwater sandbar blocking what appears to be the continuation of the channel directly ahead. Fortunately, Robin caught the attention of a local fisherman who directed us to the extremely narrow channel (just 10m wide) leading between the sandbar to starboard and a dangerous submerged reef to port. Later inspection with snorkel and leadline confirmed depths of 4–5m in the centre with considerably less than 2m on either side. Advice: if you cannot clearly identify this narrow part of the channel to port on coming in, anchor in deep water and find it with a glass-bottom bucket or dive gear. The anchorage behind the sandbar was smooth as glass and looked as if it would be peaceful in most conditions. The channel continuing on to the inner bay carries 2.5m according the chart, but we would suggest not venturing too far up in a keelboat without careful soundings. A catamaran? – no problem, mon!

Once anchored and revived from the trauma of transiting this narrow pass, we began to look around and observe the unspoiled lands and uninhabited islands surrounding this lovely bay. It was at this point that we realised we'd discovered

the proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for cruisers who cherish privacy and seclusion. To the west, on Martinique, are former sugar plantations turned to low foliage. To the east are several small islands each fringed with reefs, offering good snorkelling and sandy beaches without a swimmer or sunbather to be seen. On weekends a few locals reportedly use this bay with their small runabouts and kayaks, but it has the feeling of undisturbed splendour at every turn. We spent two days enjoying the sights, sounds (light surf outside plus a few birds) and the underwater delights of Baie des Anglais, and could easily have stayed longer. But not wanting to waste a favourable weather forecast, we moved further up the coast to find our next piece of paradise.

Day three brought clear skies and more light south-southeasterly breezes to permit pleasant broad-reaching as we found the way to our next destination. Leaving in good light to see our way through the narrow pass, we allowed just enough time to reach Havre du Francois by 1400 also in good light – even if we had to motor to make the fifteen-plus mile distance. Fortunately the wind picked up enough to set gennakers as the two boats 'raced' each other to the north, *Bluewater* taking the outside route and *Honey Girl* going inside, through and behind the barrier reef at Passe Sud du Vauclin. Although narrow and requiring

Baia du Trésor as seen from the surrounding hills, with Bluewater and Honey Girl just visible at anchor



close attention to position at all times, the pass does have some buoys and several prominent landmarks, making it a comfortable trip out of the swells. But it is not for the faint of heart – certainly no-one ever accused Robin Cooper of being faint of heart, or lacking competitive spirit. Aboard *Bluewater* we later discovered that Robin was constantly tracking us on radar, with a special feature that told him our course, speed and closest point of approach. Amazingly, the 'race' ended after fifteen miles in a dead heat, giving everyone cause for celebration.

Havre de Francois is a more proto-typical east coast harbour, with vacation and everyday homes dotting the shore, docks for landing the dinghy, and a town with basic amenities (phones, fresh baguettes, wine, and tempting restaurants) nearby. It is tucked in the lee of several outlying reefs and islands providing good protection from just about any weather conditions. While anchoring we observed a gleeful group of teenagers learning to sail Martinique's equivalent of the Bermuda fitted sailing dinghy – too much sail area and too little freeboard – but they certainly were having a ball! Once ashore and after a walk to town to stretch our legs, we decided to reward ourselves with dinner at what appeared to be a pleasant small hotel plus restaurant on the waterfront with its own dock. The town of Francois is a nice spot – nothing remarkable except cheerful people and lovely green sugarcane fields everywhere in sight. Our evening at La Riviera Hotel proved memorable in more ways than one.

The meal was superb – the attractive French Creole owner charmed us with amusing stories, and the waitresses entertained us with their noble efforts to speak English. After perhaps a bit too much wine we walked down to the dock to discover, much to our dismay, that *Honey Girl*'s dinghy was missing and nowhere in sight. This set off a considerable effort on the part of the hotel staff to recover our indispensable transportation. One man jumped in his four-wheel drive truck to comb the nearby shoreline, while others dug out big torches to scan the harbour. When all these efforts proved fruitless the hotel owner's husband was summoned. He quietly jumped in his fishing boat and motored into the blackness of the harbour. After a brief search he brought back the dinghy amidst gleeful cheers from the growing contingent on the dock. How the dinghy came untied, and how it drifted out into the harbour, were subjects of much amusing speculation. But who cares – a lively evening which could have ended badly left us instead with an even more positive impression of the delightful people at La Riviera Hotel and everything associated with Martinique's east coast.

Havre du Francois features several secluded anchorages, plus a pair of protected islands near the outer reefs where one finds a shallow white sand bottom perfect for snorkelling. The space between Bouchard and Thierry Islands looks tempting

on the chart, and on some days it might be worth exploring with fin and mask, but when we were there the area was besieged with tourists ferried out from west coast resorts so we quickly escaped to our next destination.

Havre du Robert is a large and attractively situated bay just a few miles north of Francois. Martinique's towering mountains and broad green valleys dominate the view. It is reasonably well populated, but not crowded like the bays around Fort de France, and an easy sail or motor around a couple of unmarked reefs leads into the well-buoyed channel. On each side are numerous islands, cul-de-sacs and sheltered anchorages for vessels of any size or draught. Our guidebook suggested that Havre du Robert is about to undergo increased industrial development and shipping activity, but for now this appears a long-term goal rather than a reality. We chose to anchor tucked up behind Ilet a l'Eau where the reefs and bold shores provide nearly complete protection. No other cruising boats came into view, aside from a few friendly fishermen waving greetings from their motorised pirogues.

We took our speedy dinghies into the village of Robert, about a mile from our anchorage. There we found a friendly tourist office and a few amenities. From Robert we ventured a bit further inland, and took a fifteen minute minibus ride to the more substantial town of Havre de Trinite. This town lies along the shore of an absolutely gorgeous bay – one that looks treacherous to enter by boat and exposed to the moderate northerly swells coming into the bay – but beautiful nonetheless. The shops were enticing, the coffee and baguettes delicious and the outing provided a good diversion from boat maintenance chores. And unlike our experience on the busier west coast, here we found the local people to be more outgoing, more willing to accommodate our limited language skills, and generally more helpful and pleasant.

At Raisiniers, on the outskirts of Havre de Trinite, there is a customs and immigration office (*douanes*) which will handle check-ins and check-outs for yachts. We found the officers to be very cordial even though our departure date was uncertain. As our next stopover was to be The Saints near Guadeloupe (where there is no customs facility) we were not too concerned about the precision of our paperwork. Fortunately most officials in the French islands appear to share this relaxed attitude.

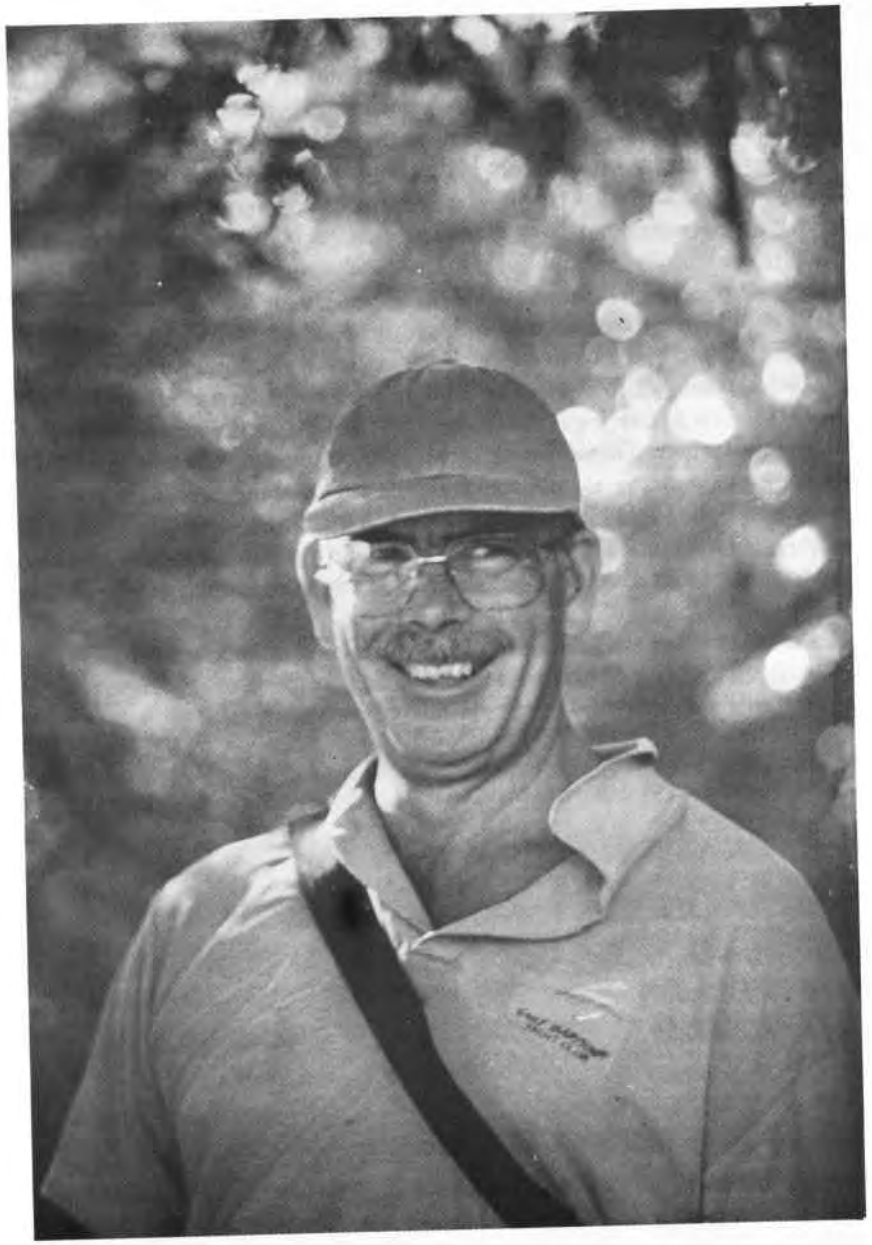
Our next and final destination on the east coast proved to be the most beautiful of all. Baie du Trésor is neatly tucked under the outstretched peninsula called Presqu'ile de la Caravelle, about two-thirds of the way up the coast. It is a magnificent natural harbour with mountainous hills protecting three sides and several shallow reefs preventing any swell entering from the south. The water is so clear we could see bottom at 15m. *Bluewater* and *Honey Girl* shared this anchorage with one other small boat, but the area is so large that we felt we had

it to ourselves. The vegetation along the shore is interrupted only by the remains of an old plantation and an unmanned lighthouse at the top of a cliff. Everything else is wild nature preserve. A few paths allow tourists to explore the ruins, the lighthouse and the beaches on foot. Although a road comes into the preserve, it is not noticeable and there is a long walk to the nearest village. The opportunities to explore by dinghy, on foot and with the binoculars seemed endless. The peace and quiet were surpassed only by the visual feast of gorgeous sunsets over the hills. It was a special time that will not be forgotten, both for the sheer beauty of the surroundings and the unbridled joy of spending quality time with truly good friends.

We could have stayed a week in this idyllic spot, but the urge to sail to our next destination overtook us and we exited Baie du Trésor on a morning when the easterly trade winds and seas had built back up to their more normal, blustery levels. On this day we learned why the east coast of Martinique has earned its rugged reputation. The seas near shore were quite steep and this, combined with waves bouncing off the rocky shores and heading back to sea, made everything quite confused and lumpy. Having a reliable engine (plus just enough sail to quell the motion) allowed us to punch our way out to windward beyond the reefs to a point where we could bear off and sail comfortably for the islands to the north.

Dangerous surf outside Baie du Trésor





The indomitable Robin Cooper in February 1998

We felt most fortunate to have experienced 'the other side' of Martinique at a time when the weather treated us gently. It is an area we look forward to exploring further, as we visited only four of the thirty-eight different harbours listed in our cruising guide. But we will wait for a good weather window and treat the area with the respect it deserves.

Endnote: Shortly after this cruise, which took *Bluewater* and *Honey Girl* from Trinidad to Antigua, Robin Cooper became seriously ill. In late March he returned to England to a hospital near his home in Royal Leamington Spa, and passed away peacefully with Nickie and other family members at his side. In an obituary this question was posed: 'Did you get to do what you wanted in your lifetime?' And Robin's response: 'I did!' He meant it, and we were privileged to have shared these memorable times.



Handling a small yacht in a big, steep sea is a grand experience not easily forgotten, especially if it be attempted on a pitch-dark night, with a little too much canvas aloft for comfort, too big a sea to allow you to take your eyes off each phosphorescent crest as it comes crashing towards you, and with a dangerous shoal somewhere to leeward. Under these conditions you generally wish to goodness you hadn't come and begin to wonder exactly how long the boat will stand such a terrible pounding ...

Maurice Griffiths, *Sailing on a Small Income* (1953)

DUET — THE DREAM MACHINE

Kitty van Hagen

Our new boat is a 45ft aluminium sloop designed by Judell & Vrolijk. She was built in Holland by the same yard, Kestebo of Brouwershaven, that built Simon's previous boats. The big difference this time was that this was to be a genuine cruising boat in the touring class, not a soap dish with hand-holds and kidney belts. Originally we thought to have water ballast even on a cruising boat, but when we really got down to the detailed planning it became quite clear that, on a yacht of this size, water ballast would take up far too much space.

For ease of handling we opted for a double roller headsail rig with a large, fully battened mainsail – 100m^2 of sail. Simon has years of singlehanded racing under his belt, so the deck lay-out was entirely his design that has been refined by experience. For example, all the control lines lead aft to the sides of the cockpit, where we have the primary and secondary winches set inboard just forward of the steering wheel. This is so that we have the winches in the most efficient position without having to sacrifice a full-length cockpit. Either side there is a block of nine jammers for the lines, all of which lead to the two winches. Thus guys, downhauls, spinnaker and headsail sheets, boom and spinnaker pole control lines, the runners and the furling headsail lines, as well as the mainsail sheet, are handled from the cockpit. It is only necessary to go forward to handle the reefing lines and the main and spinnaker halyards. We find this a safe way of handling the boat in any kind of weather.

Building began in November of 1995 and *Duet* was launched a year later. It was not until the spring of 1997 that she was really ready to sail, so we had a short shakedown cruise to Ireland in June. It was all a bit of a rush to say the least. Not only did we have a boat to get ready for an Atlantic crossing, but also Simon had to sell his businesses. I had to pack up the house and put all our possessions into storage, as well arrange the odd farewell party.

For most of September the winds were constantly north to northeast – if only we could leave. During the first two weeks of October the wind remained in the same sector, but of course when the time came for us to depart these shores we were halfway down the Channel when the wind went into the southwest and increased to gale force. We skulked in Brest for a couple of days before setting off for La Coruña, where we hid from another storm. Oh, the joys of weatherfax! It is a marvellous piece of equipment and without it we might have found ourselves battling down the Spanish coast forever. We used the German Offenbach station, as it covers the whole north Atlantic and gives the clearest synoptic charts and forecasts.

Strong to gale force headwinds en route for Madeira caused us to pause for a couple of days at Porto Santo – much nicer, we thought, than the crowded and doubtful delights of Funchal. There are large mooring buoys now that cater for yachts up to 15 tonnes. The harbour is secure, but a truly vicious swell moves in when the wind decides to howl at you from the southwest. The helpful ladies in the harbour master's office did our laundry, so we were able to pack our thermal gear away in the deepest recesses of *Duet*.

With a fair wind and hot sun we set off for Las Palmas, Gran Canaria. After a couple of days there we decided we could no longer stand the noise and dirt so departed for Puerto Mogán on the southwest coast, a far more pleasant alternative. Due to its popularity and limited space, it is vital to reserve a berth at Mogán prior to your arrival. It also pays to be a little economical with the truth when saying how long you intend staying – longer the better. To our delight and surprise we met up with Robert Nickerson, OCC, aboard *Panic Major*. We enjoyed several good parties with them before leaving on 18 November, four days before the ARC rally.

A day and a half out from the Canaries we decided it was time to try out the water-maker. (We had not tested it previously as once used it has to be run continuously). First of all we were disappointed by the amount of water it produced. The manufacturers claimed that it made 26 litres per hour, but after careful measuring it only amounted to about 12 litres. The water-maker runs off 12 volts but the drain is such that we have to run the engine. After four days the alternator burnt out so no more electrics. We even unearthed the sextant, blew off the dust and wondered which way up to hold it. Thank heavens for wind vane self-steering! Ours is German-made, a Wind Pilot, Pacific model.

Our original intention had been to head for Tobago, but in light of the lack of power we opted instead to head for Guadeloupe where we thought we might find a Volvo agent or at least someone who could rewind the alternator – and so we did. However, we later realised that a single alternator simply could not cope and that what was needed was a second one, which we added in Martinique. It is so easy to be wise in retrospect and we should have realised the need for two alternators in the first place. We have also decided to change the water-maker we have for one that runs directly off the engine.

Of course the main problem in any yacht is lack of space for the amount of equipment to be installed. Thus the builder finds he has to fit in all these bits and pieces and often doesn't care if they turn out to be in the wrong place. For example, when the salt water filter for the water-maker leaked it dribbled onto the electric pump for the sea water cooled fridge compressor. Naturally enough that pump packed up – although it has to be said that it worked again after a great deal of cleaning. There's not much we can do at this stage, other than to

take two spare pumps and hope the leak doesn't happen again.

The more time we spent on board the more it became obvious that cruising is really about maintenance and more maintenance. Another problem occurred with the outlet pipe from the loo. We have two outlets, one direct into the sea and the other into a holding tank, so fortunately we were able to use the holding tank which was pumped out every other day or so. It seems the pipe became blocked by a build-up of sediment caused by the reaction between uric acid and seawater. I suppose the chemical reaction is faster in the warmer water of the Caribbean than Europe. Also continuous use has to be taken into consideration. Normally we would expect to clean the pipe once in a season, or even every two seasons. Being a chemist Simon went for the hard hit – sulphuric acid no less! It took several days to clear it when we were in Trinidad laying up. We then put a paint dye down the loo and found that it took twenty-five pumps before the dye showed in the water. That means a minimum of thirty pumps to really flush. So we will see how long it is before it builds up again – if at all.

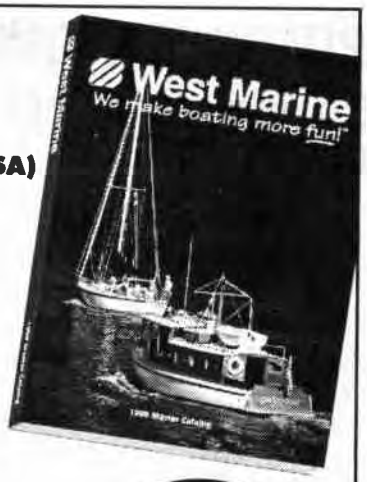
Another problem which may be of interest occurred with the pipework on board. We have a pressure pump for the deck wash, via a flexible plastic hose reinforced with stainless steel wire because it has to go round corners. Unfortunately it soon self-destructs as the wire inside pokes through when the hose is bent around too tight a turn. You can imagine our frustration when we found water in the bilges without knowing where it came from – yet again all the floor boards came up to unearth the problem. We also had to replace quite some length of the hose.

These are the sort of problems which the first year of cruising in a brand new, purpose built, yacht are all about. We also learnt, and Mike Pocock had warned us of this, that you underestimate the amount of power you will need. We have now installed two big solar panels to supplement our wind generator. Wind generators are fine, but a word of warning – they put in nothing when you are running downwind, and are very noisy unless well insulated. We intend to try packing the inside of its pole in an effort to stop the thing sounding like a jet taking off. We have been aboard yachts with wind generators mounted on the mizzen mast where they are silent.

Our cruising this year has included all the islands from Barbuda south to Trinidad. With the exception of Michael and Eve Bonham-Cozens, OCC, aboard *Gemervescence*, whom we ran into on several occasions – Antigua, Bequia and Grenada as well as in Trinidad – we saw very few OCC burgees until we reached our final destination. Where do they all hide?

We plan to return in September and, once fitted out, cruise in Venezuela before making our way north to Cuba for January and February. Then towards Panama and into the Pacific. Oh what a dull life!

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PUFFIN'S MAINE CRUISE

(to give way or not, that is the question)

Lee Rice

This saga had its beginning some time ago, in fact in December of 1997 when I reached the proverbial three score years and ten. For many years it had seemed to me that my sailing career would terminate when I became old. However, now at seventy there was a problem. I did not want to stop sailing and cruising, so why should I? So where should I cruise and when? Attending an Ocean Cruising Club Rally was one idea that came to mind, and I casually mentioned it in a letter to our Past Commodore, and he replied that he was surprised to find any founding member still sailing, let alone contemplating a voyage of some 1500 nautical miles.

The challenge was on, and after much soul searching, crew searching, and information searching we, that is Puffin, a 25ft Bayfield sailboat, Andy Soutar my brother in law, and I set out from Little Current on Manitoulin Island on 12 May 1998. We were bound for Tobermory, our first port of call on the trip to Maine some 1500 miles away.

In reality the cruise proved easier than anticipated, the fog much worse than anticipated and the dangers of being run down far greater than ever imagined. In the end we came to the conclusion that it is better to heed the soldier's maxim when desisting from the fight, 'Better to be a coward for five minutes than a dead man all your life'.

The weather was cold and showery with mist patches, and after exploring the well-known flowerpots near Tobermory we were glad to get into port for the night. More fog and headwinds kept us there until 17 May, when we had a fine sail for the best part of a day. We tried out our new Navik self-steering gear with good results, but by dusk the wind had gone and we started the engine, a trusty little one lung Yanmar diesel. By noon next day we were under the great Bluewater Bridge at Sarnia and Lake Huron was but a memory.

The passage down the St Clair River was relaxing, despite the odd dollop of water from a passing stinkpot cooling off from the heat ashore. Even the Great Lake behemoths with their enormous cargoes of grain, coal, iron-ore and fuel did little to disturb the placid scene that May day as they pushed their way slowly 'Downbound' towards the Lower Lakes.

Our anchorage that night was, quite unexpectedly, one of the best I have ever been in. Unlike the surrounding area, the whole of the great marshland that lies between Walpole and Squirrel Islands is quite unspoiled. Time has stood still



Puffin enters Chamcook Bay, New Brunswick at the end of her 1789 mile cruise

here – there are no cottages, no grandiose homes, no ships, only the gentle whispering of the reeds answering the soft winds of the evening, and the narrow channels beckoning one to explore further. Wildlife abounded, yet we were almost in sight of the great cities of Detroit and Windsor. We vowed to return someday soon.

Tuesday 19 May was a memorable day spent gliding gently with the current down the Detroit River past the tall towers of Motor City and Windsor, divorced from the pall of urban life yet close enough to marvel at its complexities. A complete and utter contrast to the peaceful anchorage we had left just a few hours before.

Pelee Island, Canada's most southerly point, which we reached next day was yet another contrast. Here again time had stood still and we found it a delightful spot, peaceful and calm, unlike surrounding Lake Erie which gave us two troubled nights. We hove-to in an effort to gain some comfort, if rolling around in the shallow seas of this lake in a 25ft sailboat can ever be called comfort.

Finally we gave up all thoughts of reaching Buffalo non-stop and put into the very pleasant port of Erie, Pennsylvania. Here we cleared customs and enjoyed

Locking through the Erie Canal



the friendly atmosphere, both in the town and at the marina. A very nice port to visit, and we were glad we had aborted our efforts out on Lake Erie.

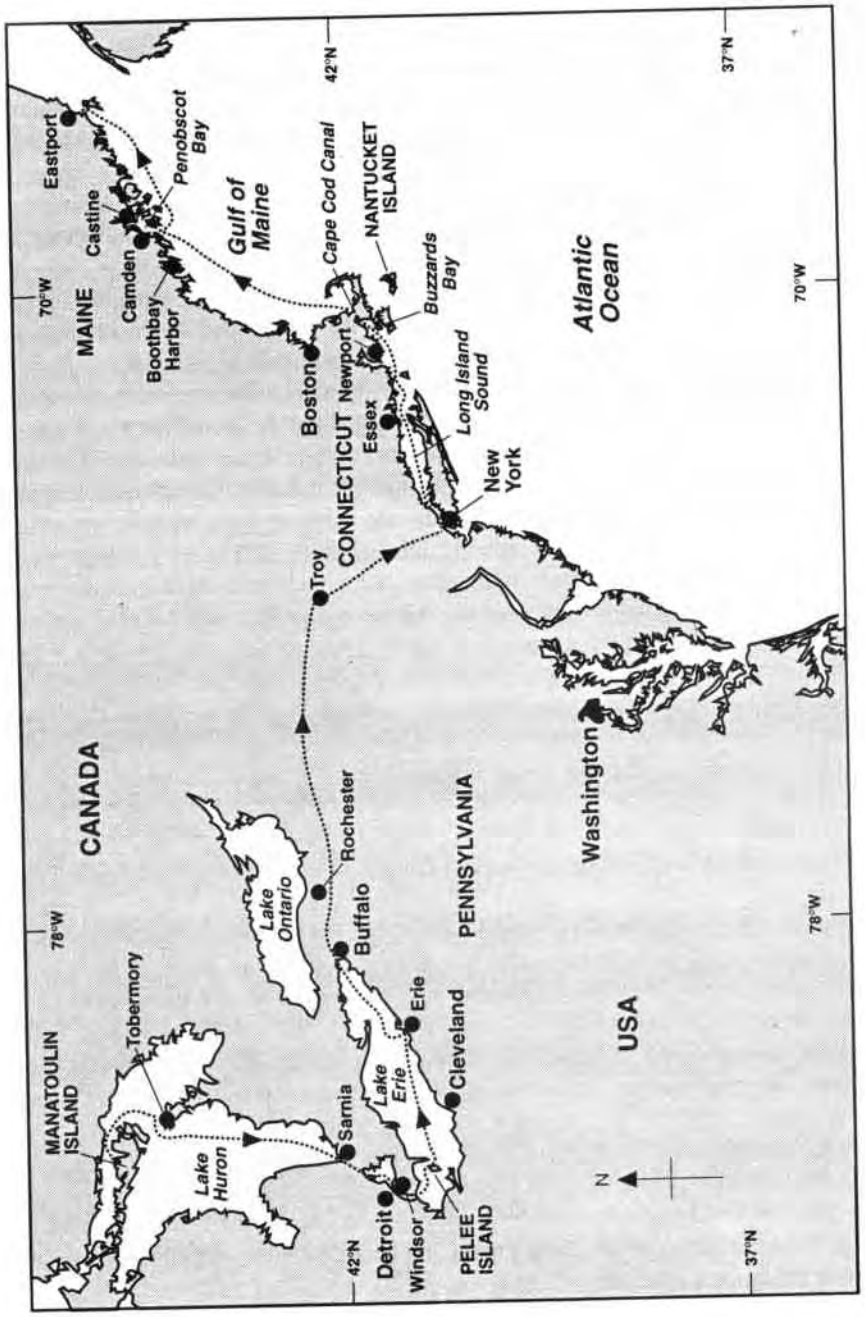
Andy had to leave as his two week vacation was over, and I was fortunate in getting an old sailing friend and ex-racing skipper to come for a time to help me through the locks of the Erie or New York Barge Canal. Stu Greig is a great raconteur and bon vivant and we fared very well, especially in the evenings when Stu would regale me with tales of his student days in the west of Scotland as we washed down a good meal with the appropriate wine.

We had the mast taken out at Wardells famous yard at Tonawanda, near Buffalo, just before the first fixed bridge on the canal, and so we became a motorboat of sorts. 'You'll find the canal the best part of your trip', said an experienced sailor in Erie, and he was so right. For a completely relaxing atmosphere the canal is the place to be. We sailed past fields and forests, flowers and farms, and even saw a young deer swimming across the canal ahead of us. The old tow paths have been preserved for public use and, as we cruised on our way, we passed joggers, walkers, cyclists and strollers enjoying their evening outings.

At Fairport, New York, we found a village completely restored from the former canal-side factory town. It is now quite a people place, with cobbled walks, boutiques and an amazing variety of quaint little restaurants. Strollers, who came mostly from nearby Rochester, would stop by the boat and chat. It was all very pleasant and we gave full marks to the designers and city fathers for their efforts.

But as they say, all good things must come to an end. Ours did on 31 May when we had 'the day of the tornadoes'. Five in one day, and there had only been three in the previous fifty years! One completely demolished the lock-keeper's house on the nearby Chaplain Canal and one touched down just five miles away from *Puffin*. We were lucky, but not so with the accompanying thunder and lightning and torrential rain. Viewed from the bottom of the great steel-lined lock at Little Falls the scene was quite impressive and not a little scary. One great bolt hit the river just ahead of us and we just waited for the next hit, but fortunately it never came.

The lock-keepers on the canal, which is now run by the very efficient New York Thruway Authority, were helpful in the extreme and exhibited a true American hospitality that we were not to see again until we arrived in Maine. Most keepers had us through their locks in fifteen minutes or less and no waiting – quite a feat, we thought. They made our day and everyday on the canal. What a group of wonderfully friendly and super efficient men and women. We finally left the canal at Lock One near Troy, New York, and after thirty-four locks we were ready for a change.



At Castleton-on-Hudson we stepped the mast, Stu left as his vacation time was over, and I went for a medical check on a suspected cracked rib. Fortunately it turned out to be just a bad bruise, the result of a fall on Lake Erie, and the bother it had been causing soon went away. So off I went, singlehanded, cruising down the river, in this case the Hudson, bound for the joys of New York City.

Viewed from the Hudson and East Rivers the Island City, for such it is, of New York is quite a marvel. And what a great way to see that fabled place, with each building easily recognisable as it appears like the map said it would. However, if you go there avoid the dark blue shuttle boats on the East River as their demented drivers create enormous washes, refuse to slow down as they manoeuvre close to you lest you miss their 'Kiss of Death'. One scared the hell out of me as he came within a few feet of *Puffin* and put the bow right under, doing some damage below as gear flew all over the place. Not even the open Atlantic could compete with this idiot. Long may he rest where I wished him to be!

Long Island Sound gave us a taste of things to come – fog, more fog and yet thicker fog. Without our radio, radar reflector and above all the little GPS we would never have made it. Then on 10 June the log showed that we had completed 1000 miles from Lake Huron, so I decided to take a day off. And having decided that I took two days off, and anchored in the peaceful Hamburg Cove just above Essex on the Connecticut River.

Friday and Saturday 12 and 13 June were days I would as soon forget. We lay storm-bound at the east end of Fisher Island in quite a good little harbour, well sheltered from the strong southeast wind but not the torrential rain. It was absolutely awful, like the rain that comes with a line squall and lasts for about fifteen minutes, but this lot was different, very different. As I listened below for thirteen hours to the bombardment on deck, a sound like a full scale aerial machine gun attack, I concluded that it was only a matter of time until this torrent stove in *Puffin*'s deck. When it all ended I was genuinely surprised not to find the expected wide scale pitting. Earlier that morning the forecaster had announced, in his best funereal voice, 'Rain, rain, and more rain'. That, I felt, was the understatement of the year.

A fast passage – fast for *Puffin* that is – followed, and we bounded into Newport on top of the usual big swell at 4½ knots under jib alone. A beautiful schooner passed me to leeward and I envied her her large crew. She carried full sail and looked magnificent as she tore up the Bay with a huge bone in her teeth. I puzzled at the number of lighthouses I could see flashing in the area, as it was only 1400. It was then that I truly recognized the tenure of the day's weather.

Newport, where I stayed for four days, offered us lots of treats – fog and lots of it, rain, great gusts of wind, and nightly serenades from all the local fog horns.

The people ashore were very helpful and friendly. Ever tried to order a taxi in Newport? If you have you will know why I was so grateful when one of the grocery clerks drove me and my supplies to the docks on her way home. I especially enjoyed a visit to the Museum of Yachting, where I watched a 30 Square Metre being lovingly restored. This boat had been the ideal of my youth, with her radical bent mast and her inboard rig that pushed a sleek hull so easily through the waves. She gave off that wonderful perfume that all wooden boat enthusiasts will recognize as a major appeal at any wood building shop. What a marvellous experience to be carried back to the memories of one's youth.

Thursday 18 June came to be known on *Puffin* as the day of the pea soup fog. It was also the second great test of my navigating ability, or should I say the second great test for dear old Mr Garmin, and he never failed us.

When the overnight fog cleared at 1030 I decided not to wait for the start of the next day's Bermuda Race and set off up Buzzards Bay bound for the Cape Cod Canal. This canal is quite short and, being lockless, is ideal for the singlehander. We got there one week later, after fighting a pea-souper all the way to Hadley Harbor and Woods Hole, where we had to wait for a new autopilot and radio. Both had given up the ghost, perhaps due to severe falls when they were tossed about in the East River by our idiot friend in his dark blue shuttle boat. If it had not been for the efforts of managers Mike and Mike at West Marine in Falmouth, Maine, we would still be waiting at Woods Hole. 'We'll get the parts over to you tomorrow. Don't worry Lee'.

The sojourn at Woods Hole was made more pleasant by the presence of another OCC boat, *Nicolisa*, and her jovial Irish skipper Gerry Gregory from Dublin. Making much of the spoken word we had a great time talking, as only the Irish can, and I was able to catch up on all the happenings of my old country, having emigrated from the Emerald Isle some thirty-five years ago. I was sorry when they left, as they certainly brightened my day.

By Wednesday 24 June we were in good shape again and I was feeling particularly pleased with my electrical abilities, having wired up the new Icom VHF, but a little put out that I could not get the wiring for the autopilot right. Later, out in the Atlantic, I suddenly thought of reversed polarity and, sure as could be, when I reversed the wires the darn thing worked. Those of you who have singlehanded will know the value of that repair.The log states that we had a grand sail up Buzzards Bay from Hadley Harbor to the entrance of the canal, but with considerable overfalls for the last mile or two (the result, I would suspect, of wind against tide). We arrived, as anticipated, at slack water and had a favourable push out into the Atlantic Ocean. The canal was most pleasant and devoid of traffic for my passage.

Once out in the open Atlantic we set a course across the Gulf of Maine for



The Skipper, an Ocean Cruising Club Founding Member

Seguin Island with its powerful light, and things went reasonably well despite the by now omnipotent fog. The new radio proved its worth, and the ships I called up all said they saw me on their radar screens and would take avoiding action. These people were, of course, professional sailors and I was glad that there were no 'yachts' out there with skippers who did not know the rules of the road, but I am jumping ahead of myself and more on that sad topic later.

The second night on the ocean proved to be the real test, and leaving a very dark deck at 0200 to literally crash onto a bunk depressed by the continual fog and very tired, I asked myself, 'why in the hell am I here?'. Of course I already knew the answer, and I was there whether or not I liked it.

Dawn comes very early in these latitudes and at this time of year, and with it a measure of relief. At 0455 on 26 June we picked up Buoy R18 near Seguin Island, which we never saw or heard even when quite close to it. As we felt our way into Boothbay Harbor entrance at the Cuckholds in dense fog we were nearly run down by a fishing boat, which had neither slowed down nor sounded his horn as required by law. Shortly thereafter the same happened again, this time with a powerboat which was clearly the burdened vessel but which refused to give me the right of way. A collision was narrowly averted when I altered helm just in time. Feeling my way along the foggy shore I anchored at the first suitable spot and sighed with relief.

Saturday 27 July found me quite depressed and needing a shower and a chance to do some laundry, so I called up the yacht club at Boothbay and asked for a mooring as the fog had lifted somewhat. A very pleasant female voice answered my VHF call and asked if I had been in Boothbay Harbor before. When I replied in the negative she said, 'Well then, let me come out and welcome you in'. What an uplifter, and when Erin Murphy appeared – for such was her Irish name – she obviously knew how to handle a boat, and later told me that she held a US Coast Guard 100 ton skipper's licence. With her red hair she was as attractive as her friendly voice on the radio suggested. I mentioned a need for some groceries and she told me where the store was, so I planned on going there in the morning. However there was no need as Erin delivered all my wants, including the Boston daily paper, before I was even up. What a girl! She was, to my mind, the best tourist advertisement that the state of Maine could possibly have.

Later in the day I met Phil Brooks, the local OCC rally organizer, and discussed plans for the July rally which, due to unusual circumstances beyond my control, I was not able to attend. Castine, my ultimate destination, was getting closer. So on Sunday 29 July I sailed out of Boothbay on a beautiful clear day, bound and determined to see my landfall at Seguin Island as I had missed it in the fog.

All went well until we were almost out of the harbour, when I spotted a large

sailboat approaching from seaward on a collision course. We were under full sail and close-hauled on the starboard tack. Safe as houses you would say, windward boat keeps clear, but not so this boat. Had I not altered at the last moment I would have hit him on his port quarter, and he had a boatload of women and children with him. Later I met some kids in sailing classes at Castine who knew more than this skipper, and they were all of ten years old.

On talking this and other incidents over with experienced American sailors, I got the reply, 'Oh, there are lots of them out there. If you think your experiences were bad than listen to me'. One, an OCC member, related how he had been hit amidships by a fishing boat with nobody in the wheelhouse – they were all working in the stern of the vessel which was under autopilot! A US Coast Guard officer told me, as he laughed at my stories, 'It's simply a case, Sir, of fat wallets and not too much up top'. I heard that theory several times and there was much evidence to support it.

Next day gave me the best sail of the cruise to date, when we headed for Tennants Harbor in a moderate southwest wind. And yes, we had to alter course while under full sail to avoid a lobster boat which came from over a mile away apparently intent on cutting us in half. I spoke to her skipper later and suggested he should make his intentions clear, as the law states, long before a collision could possibly take place. He said that he would never run a boat down, and as he was a very pleasant fellow I had to believe him. We managed to run the

McGlathery's Island, Merchant Row, Maine





Marji Bancroft and grandson Adam sailing Puffin at Castine

lobster trap obstacle course into Tennants without mishap. *Puffin*, with her old fashioned long keel, has the ideal underwater profile for this game and we never fouled a trap from one end of Maine, where the obstacle race starts, to the other, where it ends. As a Canadian and Irish sailor, used to limited seasons, it came as a surprise to find that there is no closed season in Maine. 'Ah, me boy, the lobsters ain't as plentiful as they used to be', one old Maine fisherman told me.

I truly enjoyed Tennants Harbor, where the fellow boaters all seemed to know the rules of the road and were super friendly, especially the crew of *Snowbird* out of Freeport, Maine. They took me to visit the very quaint and wonderful

Roseledge bookstore. The owner, a delightful and well educated lady, spent most of the afternoon discussing Arctic and Antarctic literature with me, and we both agreed that the best adventure story ever told was by Sir Ernest Shackleton in his book simply entitled *South.* I purchased a book about the famous schooner *Bowdoin* which I had last read at Hope Bay in Grahamland. It brought back fond memories of happy times spent 'Down South'. Imagine my joy when I docked at Castine and looked at the name on the beautiful schooner beside me. There she was in reality, so as I passed I saluted and paid her the respect she was surely due from one Arctic sailor to another.

As the Irish song would put it, with apologies to the memory of Percy French, 'Oh, Castine you will never get near it' etc, and it seemed that might happen for fog again played a hand on our departure from Tennants. However, by now *Puffin* and I knew a thing or two about navigating in fog and avoiding being run down. So off we went via Pulpit Harbor (and what a delightful spot that is) bound for Castine, our Holy Grail, and the Gods were good to us with a beautiful clear day and a fair wind.

For those, and there must be many, who know Marji and Den Bancroft it will be superfluous to say that a warm welcome awaited us when we arrived at their Smith's Cove anchorage a few miles south of Castine. Marji, of course, is Port Officer for Smith's Cove and both are long standing OCC members.

There were many highlights during my stay of several weeks, and the one that stands out most was a day's sailing in *Puffin* with local experts Marji and Den on board. Their grandson Adam, who had learnt to sail while cruising with his grandparents round Newfoundland some years before, skippered *Puffin.* His sailing skills were excellent – as Den put it, 'we just have to sit back, do nothing and enjoy ourselves'. For this lone sailor that was a treat indeed. After that great afternoon on the water we had a miniature OCC rally, with three boats and several members present at the turkey supper that Marji and her daughters had prepared for us.

Again, two six day cruises stand out in my memory, one alone and one with my family, around the delightful island paradise that is Penobscot Bay in, believe it or not, ideal conditions – free from fog and with moderate winds, always fair, and bathed from dawn to dusk in sunshine. I firmly believe that Marji, with her magical touch, had arranged all this. Imagine our final day, when we sailed at near maximum speed on a broad reach in bright sunshine all the way from North Haven to Castine. To add to this scene of perfection we had a grandstand view of all the Rockland and Camden schooners as they passed us, one by one, tacking down to a rendezvous at Stonington. Our cameras were busy.

Yet once again there was a sour note to add to this utopian experience. It came in the form of a 40ft Albin powerboat. Her owner refused to give way or

even slow down for *Puffin*, broad-reaching in a stiff breeze, in the narrowest part of the Casco Passage. As we approached the red buoy defining the passage he kept his course for the same buoy at full speed (but from the opposite direction), and only a quick, 'throw her into the wind' avoided a collision when he was but two boat lengths away. As a thirteen year old girl in our crew remarked, 'I don't know about these rules of the road, but I do know that you should not head straight for a little sailboat at full speed in a big motor boat like that'. Full marks to that owner – he took the prize for the worst case of non-seamanship that I have ever seen. As instructed earlier by the Coast Guard, we reported the incident to Camden on the VHF.

Time runs out on all of us, and on 23 August we set sail for St Andrews in New Brunswick, Canada, where *Puffin* was to be laid up for the winter. A return voyage is contemplated, starting next spring and sailing via Nova Scotia and the St Lawrence Rivers back to Lake Huron and Little Current. To return the same way as we had sailed out was unthinkable after our experiences with near run-downs and the East River shuttle drivers in particular.

With Bruce Campbell and Bill Taylor as crew we were well equipped for the expected fog and the fast passage dictated by a lady called *Bonny*, who was fast approaching our area from the Carolinas. We made it okay with the log reading just a few miles short of 1800 miles. For me it had been an instructive cruise as I had never sailed long distance singlehanded before. Feelings had run from tired to terrified, from bored to bedlam in the Fisher Island storm and from great memories to marvelling at the abilities of GPS receivers.

It was hard to leave the little boat which had been my sole companion for so long and had looked after me through thick and thin. But not as hard as it was to leave beautiful Smith's Cove and the sanctuary that the Bancrofts have created there, and which they so generously share. They made kindness their accomplishment, a kindness that it would be difficult to repay in full and one that I will never forget. To me they are the heart and soul of what America is all about. Long may they live as the unchallenged King and Queen of Smith's Cove.



May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
And the rain fall soft upon your fields,
And until we meet again
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

LITTLE BOATS v SMALLER BOATS

Peter Rose

The arrival of *Flying Fish* is always welcome in our home. For many years I have been unable to sail. I have no complaint about that, as I had a fair share in my time, but an occasional wallow in nostalgia is always enjoyable!

Two articles attracted particular interest in the 1998/1 issue. Jill and Tony Vasey's delightful account of their passage from Maine to the Chesapeake in their 24ft gaff cutter was very similar to part of my cruise along that part of the eastern seaboard done in the opposite direction in my first *Odd Times*, a 23ft gaff cutter, in 1966. But I did not even think of attempting the Harlem river! What memories this article evoked!

I was also most interested in Richard Lowery's *Big Boats v Little Boats*. I suppose that all is relative, but my experience is that his little boat, a 35 footer, was only slightly smaller than my 'big' boat – my second *Odd Times* – which was 37ft; whereas my first crossing was on the already mentioned 23ft boat. On the first I crossed from Las Palmas to Barbados in 1965/66, on the second the west-bound ocean crossing was from Madeira to Cayenne. So, for me, 35ft is already quite a 'big' boat. It may be that a few reflections might be of interest from this rather different perspective.

My first *Odd Times* was built for pleasure day fishing in the Thames estuary. She had been built in 1956 by Woodhams of West Mersea to a design of John Leather, and she was built solidly! I purchased her (for £800, believe it or not) in 1961 and after a few weeks of sailing locally and getting to know the boat, I spent about the same again on making a few changes, persuading the fish hold cum cabin to become a liveable home, some new sails, etc. In 1962 I sailed her via the Canal du Midi to Malta, and in '63 on to Greece and then back to Britain. In 1964 I sailed round Britain, but I was 'chicken' and went through the Caledonian canal! From time to time I was singlehanded, but various friends sailed with me for considerable periods.

By late 1964 I reckoned that I knew the boat and what she could cope with. I handed her over to Ian Brown at his yard at Rowhedge for a re-fit to make her ready for the Atlantic. Not that there was all that much to be done. For, and this is my first main point, the sea-keeping ability for a boat destined for an ocean crossing is actually identical to that which is not going further than the English Channel. Even on a 'mere' hundred mile crossing, say from Cornwall to Brittany, anything can happen weather-wise, and sometimes does... So, for even the relatively modest passage, both the boat and those who sail her must be fully prepared for any superfluity of naughtiness that the sea might provide. So I

contend that a vessel, properly equipped and maintained for the channel, is fit for the Atlantic.

The main differences in preparation are to do with logistics and navigation. So, for the Atlantic, I had to contrive a degree of minimal competence with a sextant and sight reduction tables, deduced reckoning obviously was inadequate after leaving the Canaries. This competence came thanks to a wonderful slim volume *Celestial Navigation for Yachtsmen* by Mary Blewett. (Is it still in print?).* Actually you only need a few pages of her book – where she tells you in the simplest language what to do, (almost starting from which end of the sextant to look through!). Providing you can add and subtract, and you do exactly as the lady says – it works! Beautiful simplicity. And nothing to go wrong if you don't drop the sextant or your little portable radio which gives the Greenwich time signal.

Logistics require careful thought and planning, and obviously water and allied liquid intake is the first priority. *Odd Times* had a 35 gallon water tank and a five gallon can. There were two of us on board for the ocean crossing. We boosted the water by a medium sized can of fruit juice every day, and a can of beer each day except on Wednesdays and Sundays when it was replaced by a bottle of Côte du Rhone – a wine that stands up to constant motion better than most. We also had a carton of long-life milk (then just on the market) every other day. Cooking was with the appropriate mix of fresh and sea water to preclude adding salt. Half a gallon of water per day per person is perfectly adequate for health and comfort, particularly as we both chose to shave on alternate days. We showered courtesy of rain showers, which usually stopped abruptly when the hair was full of shampoo. We reached Barbados after thirty-seven days with plenty of water.

We had no fridge, so fresh food was purchased according to our estimate of how long it would keep. We had fresh meat for only the first couple of days, but the onions lasted us all the way. Our reliance on canned food slowly increased as the voyage progressed, though curry powder helped make even the dullest of cans edible. And we had on board some well hidden delicacies for State Occasions. Thus on Christmas Day we feasted on Roast Pheasant in Port Wine (out of a splendid tin from Fortnum & Masons!) On Boxing day we ate cold roast pheasant for breakfast – without either of us having to get up to prepare that or the coffee. One advantage of a very small boat is that everything is within reach of one bunk or the other – food, water, the stove... You don't have to get up before having breakfast in bed. I recall describing this breakfast as 'dicing

* Yes indeed! The eleventh edition came out last year – almost half a century after it was first written. Ed.

with death at every wave'.

In 1965 Blondie Haslar's wonderful invention, the wind vane self-steering gear, was just becoming available. But I didn't have one. So it was with the traditional boomed out twin staysails linked by bits of string ingeniously adjusted to the tiller that we waddled across the ocean. A back of an envelope calculation indicated that we would have saved a week had we steered. That leads to another point which I feel is important. I am truly amazed that anyone should wish to do such a delightful crossing as a trade wind 'milk run' rapidly! Were I in a hurry to get there I would go by plane. Not all have unlimited time available, it is true, yet most who cross under sail are free from the Monday morning deadline that afflicts most cruising in the English channel. Although it is good to reach one's destination, is not the actual voyage a very large part of the fun? Why curtail it by rushing, if not in a race? Quite by the way, I found that first crossing to be an admirable convalescence after having my appendix out in Las Palmas in circumstances that left much to be desired.

Finally, on the very small boat, crew compatibility is really essential. I was extremely fortunate with Dick Maddison, who was with me on that voyage. Indeed we are still friends. I recall a 28ft ketch arriving in Barbados with the crew packing and the owner inflating the dinghy before even putting down his anchor – so that no time need be lost in their parting company after immigration had dealt with them! The owner continued round the world on his own – happily! Yes, when you can't get more than 15 feet away from someone for several weeks, compatibility becomes important... If in doubt, sail alone.

I lost my first *Odd Times* off the coast of Newfoundland in 1967. But I didn't lose the name, which I used for my next boat, the 'big one' at 37ft, and later for a gaff cutter. The second *Odd Times* was also designed by John Leather, with much input from Monique and myself, and she was built by Ian Brown at Rowhedge. By then I was married to Monique, and this *Odd Times* was our home for a couple of years. No more even potential 'crew problems'!

The second *Odd Times* was, for us, real comfort afloat. The cabin had room for all that we considered essential for long distance cruising. Loads of storage for food, a galley which was comfortable for cooking at sea as well as in port, decent heads, a convenient navigation centre, substantial book shelves, a good tape recorder plus masses of tapes... What more could one wish? Water was carried in two 50 gallon tanks – more than adequate. We never saw any need to ration ourselves, but we did not waste water. You want to drink half a glass? Pump out half a glass!

As a home for two people, our heavy 37 footer served us very well. We had comfort without luxury. Indeed I think that comfort and luxury are mutually exclusive afloat. One can only be subjective, as one sailor's luxury might be

another's comfort. As an example, we were perfectly comfortable without any refrigeration. Oh, there were times when it would have been very agreeable to have ice in a drink! And of course there would have been the advantage of longer availability of fresh food. But we then would have had to run the engine or a generator regularly, and that was a discomfort I could not live with. On our ocean crossings, when we used the substantial batteries for nothing other than lighting, I grudgingly accepted one hour or so of charging every Monday morning. It was all that was necessary. We had a good radio receiver, but no transmitter. Never saw the point. One of the many delights of ocean cruising was, for us, NOT being on the phone.

Our 'big' *Odd Times* would have won no races. She was a bit under canvassed, by choice, as there were seldom more than the two of us, and neither of us were exactly athletes! But given a moderate breeze she sailed well enough, and the jib headed tops'l was excellent - douse it, with great ease on any point of sailing, and that was one's first reef equivalent with no effort at all. During a wonderful passage from Bermuda to Horta we enjoyed a full week averaging 140 miles every twenty-four hours.

Clearly we all have different requirements. Ours was for a safe, strong, solid vessel that would be sea-kindly and look after us in a blow, modest but adequate comfort, and as much simplicity as seemed reasonable. Both boats could cope with worse conditions than I could. Indeed the first *Odd Times* proved that conclusively during forty grim hours between Morocco and the Canaries when, so the port captain at Las Palmas told us, force 10 (50 knots) had been consistently recorded over the whole area. The sum total of damage was one broken hatch clip and two sets of shattered nerves. I think that the boat being solid and simple had much to do with this. Whoever it was that coined the notion of the KISS factor (Keep It Simple, Stupid!) seems to me to have had the right idea. I suggest a choice for ocean sailors between little boats and smaller boats - and fewer gadgets make for more fun!

I end by wishing the present generation (whatever they may sail) fair winds, bright sun and sparkling seas.

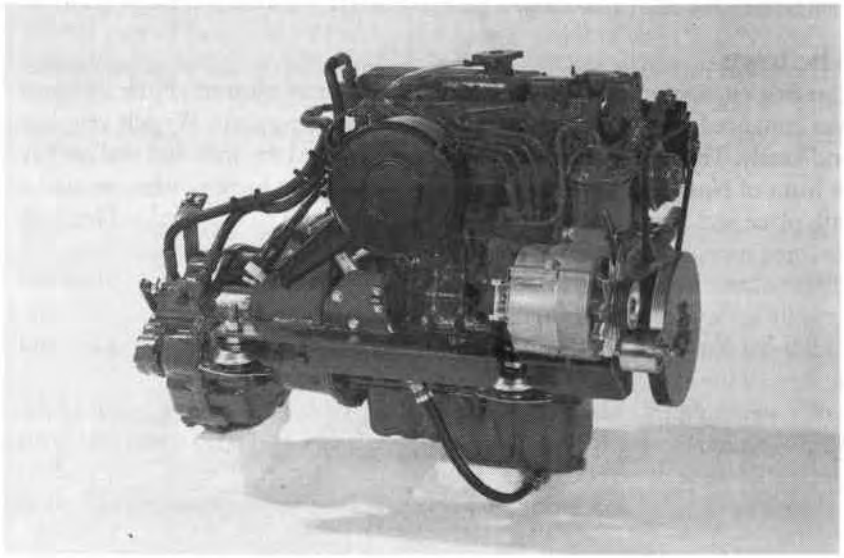


The wide loneliness of a great ocean breeds a humility that is good for the soul.

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RIO'S DELIGHTS

Maria and Guus 't Hart

(*Dutch members Maria and Guus 't Hart have been cruising Brazil aboard their 42ft* Zouterik.)

The town

Our first encounter with Rio de Janeiro was no great pleasure. Pitch darkness was enhanced by a rich tropical downpour and strong gusts. We felt very lost and lonely. The water became quiet when we entered the wide and shallow bay in front of Niteroi just opposite Rio. We dropped our hook in what seemed a safe place and after having set the anchor light took to our bunks. The next morning morale was better when we met the hospitality of the *Clube Naval* at Charitas, with its charming Commodore Justus Garcia. This well protected marina with its luxury swimming pool served as our base during our stay in Rio. The additional sixty minutes' travel time were easily compensated by the safety and charges of the club.

We were told that Carnival in Rio is not to be missed. It takes place in the *Sambodromo*, a specially constructed arena about 1.5km long and with amphitheatre seats on both sides. Through this alley an incredible and endless exhibition of mind shattering and senses killing processions proceed. It is magnificent in every aspect with each procession containing some 3000 people. We enjoyed it until we were literally burnt out, and at 0500 left the arena, gulped down a few beers at one of the many stands in the neighbourhood and went exhausted back to the boat.

There is also the other and more recognizable carnival of the streets. The participating families in the Rio Branco (Centro) were our first encounter with the real *Cariocas* (inhabitants of Rio), and we met many nice, warm people. Our Portuguese lessons whilst crossing the equator paid off.

Copacabana was a deception, however the Centro with its rich colonial inheritance was beautiful. Many hours were spent in the *Centro Cultural do Banco do Brasil* where we saw a fine dancing performance, *the Casa Franca-Brasil* with an original exhibition about Afro-Brasilian religion and *the Museu do Correos.*

There was much more like the Salvador Dali exhibition – what a fascinating artist – which we visited at the end of our stay. The characteristic Museum of Contemporary Arts dominating the skyline of Niteroi, which we passed in the bus on our way to Rio, was so obvious that we almost overlooked it. Its view is gorgeous and architect Oscar Niemeyer shows us what modern Brazilian creativity can achieve.

The Costa Verde

After a fortnight in Rio we were glad to be on the move again. The outgoing tide swept us past the Sugar Loaf in the early morning on our way to Ilha Grande. The famous beaches of Copacobana, Ipanema and Leblon appeared on our starboard side and were already getting crowded as we sailed westward, under cruising 'chute and mizzen staysail, in the light winds which are so characteristic of this part of Brazil. Ilha Grande, the largest island of the Costa Verde and considered to be one of the navigational jewels of Brazil, was soon visible on the horizon. The six weeks spent in this region were very rewarding and we found another Brazil, totally different from Bahia.

The Sugar Loaf at departure early in the morning





Parati, a jewel of Brazilian colonial architecture

Angra dos Reis is the largest town in the area, not a thing of beauty but convenient for its multiple facilities. Opposite the town lies the Angra dos Reis Marina Club. Guest buoys are available, and during the weekends when members arrive the atmosphere becomes lively. We spent many hours with these talkative and friendly sailors around typical barbecues on the beaches of the islands.

From Angra we explored some of the 365 beaches of the Costa Verde – there is no need to become bored! Winds are generally weak and always seem to come out of the direction where we wanted to go so the engine was used frequently, but this was not a big item as distances are moderate.

At Bracui, a marina village west of Angra, we met the first OCC members south of the Equator, our compatriots John and Rija van Logchem in their Swan 47 *Queen of Hearts*. They have lived in Brazil for some years and are a real source of information, and we shared quite a few anchorages. Between Bracui and Frade, our next stop further west, lies the lovely island of Cunhambebe. This is a pleasant weekend refuge when one wants to escape the jet-set of Frade with their ultra-fast and very loud boating playthings, even including a seaplane. The latter had the habit of starting through the anchorage, which we considered rather unsafe. This aspect of Brazilian life will become a burden on the future development of the region with its sensitive nature.

We learned about the existence of a large tree of *Frute de Pão* (breadfruit) on

Cunhambebe and appreciated this traditional staple of the locals. The tree stands on the east side of the island. With Pasqual and Gloria, an Argentinean couple, we collected a bucket of little shells just buried underneath the sand in half a metre of water at low tide. Cleaning them was time consuming but rewarded by the delicious dish prepared by Maria.

Parati

The loveliest place in the region is the well kept and colourful village of Parati, where gold and precious stones were shipped to Portugal from the 17th century. The town was built with an important influence from Free Masons who came to Brazil to escape from the Inquisition in Europe. They wanted to create a new world. Many architectural and ornamental signs can be identified by the trained eye, as was explained to us. The streets are V-shaped and this ingeniously allows tidal cleaning. This was a clever invention in the days when mule transport left large amounts of smelly manure.

We met Rachel and Marcus, the owners of the *Teatro Espaco*. They are very world-wise and travelled extensively in Europe and the States during their hippie years. Their puppet theatre is adorable and with plenty of humour. We spent a day with them exploring the nearby jungle, swimming in the different *cachouiras* (waterfalls) and feeling like Tarzan whilst swinging on the lianas. This was a trip very well remembered as our stock of insect repellent was left on board. In the evening we were invited to their place, where we enjoyed a tasty dinner and discussed the opportunities and constraints of modern Brazil.

The old Defensor Perpetuo fort, built in 1703, is used today by the Centre of Arts and Popular Traditions of Parati. The influx of money over past centuries attracted artists, and as a result the canoes and paddles became more elegant and violin-type music instruments were developed and used at parties. These and other handicrafts are shown at a permanent exhibition.

Ilha Grande

During the last week of our stay we explored the ocean side of the island, although the anchorages are less comfortable due to the ever present southerly swell. Some unspoiled villages like Provetá and Aventureiro have kept a very distinct identity. Most children go to school and the church imposes some discipline in clothing. We left these places with a good stock of fresh fruit and fish, gifts from the hospitable locals. The snorkelling was terrific – it was a long time since we'd seen such an abundance of large fish in such variety. Our last night before returning to Rio was spent with Roberto and Claudia on board their ketch *Malagueta*. They had an ample quantity of *lula* (squid) and dining took a long time. We had many good memories to take along!

BEAUTIFUL BITTANGABEE CREEK

Hugh Garnham, Roving Rear Commodore

(Glenshiel VII, *whose cruise around the Louisiade Archipelago featured in* Flying Fish *1997/1 and 1997/2, is an Adams 39 ketch.*)

Glenshiel VII was returning to her home port of Hobart, Tasmania some years ago when we passed the coastal freighter *Seaway Tamar* about six miles east of Schouten Island on Tasmania's east coast. Although it was 2300 I called the ship on VHF to have a chat, and in answer to the question 'where from?' replied that our last anchorage had been Bittangabee Creek. 'Ah' said the ship's master, 'beautiful Bittangabee Creek, I know it well,' and we went on to discuss this delightful anchorage at some length. He had camped there regularly as a youngster.



Even with swell breaking across the entrance,
Glenshiel VII lies comfortably inside 'Beautiful Bittangabee Creek'

Many yachts cruise Australia's east coast. However most have not heard of Bittangabee Creek and even fewer have visited it, though the numbers are growing. There are probably two reasons for this. One is that the port of Eden is only eleven miles to the north and has all-weather access at any time of the day or night. Eden also has wharves, jetties, breakwaters and all marine facilities, together with shops and showers and a warm welcome at the Fisherman's Club.

However it is also a very busy commercial fishing port, and laying alongside one can be, and often is, disturbed at any hour of the day or night by arriving and departing fishing craft. And although one can anchor well southwest of the town at East Boyd Bay, the large woodchip plant in that area doesn't help the serenity.

The second reason for Bittangabee Creek being rarely visited is that it is a fairweather, daylight only approach. Unless one has a full moon and calm conditions it would be inadvisable to try and enter at night, but as a hideyhole to await good conditions for crossing Bass Strait, usually when a strong sou'westerly is expected to abate, it cannot be beaten. I would never attempt to enter in strong, or even moderate easterly weather, and once inside one should make certain not to be bottled up by strong easterlies which are, in any event, ideal for making a passage either north or south.

The approach is from the southeast and the entrance, about two miles north of Green Cape, is quite difficult to spot from seaward. Some years ago fishermen painted a white cross on the northern headland, but this has faded quite a lot. Once inside the northern headland the approach is parallel to the shore keeping clear of the disturbed water to port. When the entrance opens a sharp turn to port, through the exact centre of the break to the south and the inner northern head, is essential to avoid submerged and very nasty rocks on the northern side.

I have twice seen these exposed, though usually they are just below the surface, and they must be treated with great respect. Most skippers concentrate on the

Bittangabee Creek in relaxed mood



break to the south and tend to edge too far north, which looks to be clear water. Even in daylight I find radar helps greatly in positioning oneself. I would also be wary of entering in any sort of sea in a boat drawing more than 6ft (1.8m) – *Glenshiel VII* draws only 5ft (1.5m) – as although there is more water than this the margin for error north or south is reduced.

However once inside it is all worth it, with good holding and little or no roll. The best anchorage is just off the ruined supply shed, which was built to service Green Cape lighthouse. I have only ever seen one or two people on shore, except last year when we spent three days there in January and went ashore, instead of our usual twelve to thirty-six hours with no shore excursions. Much to our surprise we discovered a large, well-appointed camping ground not far inland but completely invisible from the anchorage, and although a larger number of people were fishing and swimming it was still an idyllic spot. Apart from summer vacation time, I doubt if you would see anyone.

So next time you're in Eden waiting for that sou'wester to ease, consider a short passage to one of the prettiest anchorages on the South East Australian seaboard.

(Unfortunately it was not possible to reproduce Hugh's sketch chart in *Flying Fish*, but copies are available from the Cruising Information Service.)



Hail, Captain, man of Kent our Navy's pride
To famous mariners by birth allied,
Though who deep versed in the Surveyor's art
Provid'st the sailor with a priceless chart
Wherein are seen inscribed in black and white
The rocks and soundings of each bay and bight.

Seen on a memorial stone to a naval hydrographer
on a headland near Sydney Harbour. Dated 1877.



RED SEA WARNING – The Hanish Islands

Richard Le Quesne, *Diamond for Ever* **July 1998**

It is not a new danger, but I would like to emphasise the warnings that others have given about the risks associated with approaching the Hanish Islands in the southern Red Sea. They lie in the middle of the Red Sea, and their possession is contested by Yemen and Eritrea. It appears that they are occupied by Eritrea.

Recently we made a passage through the Red Sea and experienced these problems at first hand. We were motoring northwards against a moderate northerly breeze on a large sailing yacht about six miles west of the islands, when we were approached by a fast open launch about 8m in length carrying a bunch of scruffy looking individuals and what looked like a bloody great gun or rocket launcher wrapped in tarps. The boat bore no markings and flew no flag. The crew did not appear to be carrying guns.

The boat came up from astern and attempted to run parallel to us about 25 metres off. Because of the seas and our bow wave they could not hold station there and surged in and out. They were shouting at us, but we could not understand what they were saying so I made hand signals that they should call on VHF radio. Eventually they produced a large portable radio from a locker and tried to use it, but I received no signal on Channel 16.

Eventually I slowed to slow ahead and they came in close enough to shout. When I told them that I did not speak Arabic one of the started to speak English. They claimed to be Eritrean navy, said that we were in a prohibited military area and invited me to accompany them into port in the islands. When I claimed the right of innocent passage they denied that such a thing existed. When I questioned whether they were really navy because they were wearing no uniform and flying no flag there was frantic burrowing into a bow locker and eventually one of them waved in the air a piece of camouflage battledress such as is sold in every trendy boutique.

The negotiations continued. They insistedthat I had to turn back and go into port, while I declined their offer saying that I was on the high seas and intended to continue on to Egypt. Although we were forced to shout back and forth there was no aggression or bad temper on either side and no guns were pointed at us. All this time we were motoring steadily northwards and the conditions made it pretty rough for them. Eventually they simply gave up, said goodbye and turned around.

I know that MY *Rose of Newport* was shot at when anchored in the islands in 1996, and I know of two smaller yachts whose skippers felt unable to re ise the invitation to go into port and who subsequently had to buy their way out.

Keep well clear of the Hanish Islands!

DISMASTED

Keith Flint, *Helsal II* **April 1998**

You will be sorry to learn that our mast broke only three miles from the finish line in the Port Lincoln Race, just off Boston Island, in 15 knots of breeze. One of the fittings for the upper shroud disintegrated, the mast folding over just above the upper spreader. No one was injured, but we were extremely fortunate that the trouble occurred in the smooth and protected waters of the harbour, as we were unable to get the mainsail down, all of the halyards being jammed at the break!

If this had happened in an offshore event we would have been in diabolical trouble, and this is the point that I am trying to get through to the insurance people. In bad conditions with a lee shore under us we could have lost everything, as even in the moderate conditions the mainsail was flogging about and of course still attached to the upper section of the mast.

Most fortuitously we were able to call on the services of a crane, and by the time we had reached the wharf at Lincoln Cove everything was ready to take the mast out. Then a friend and I motored *Helsal II* home in ideal conditions with a following breeze all the way. We have been impatiently waiting for the new sections to come from Brisbane - hopefully they will arrive next weekend.

Apart from that all is well. *Helsal II* has had a complete new paint job all over and is looking great. Keep a look-out for us in December - we might be doing another Hobart Race.

PS: John Maddox, who forwarded the above letter, adds that *Helsal II* carries a 7/8th rig, and that the break occurred where the forestay fitting attaches to the mast.

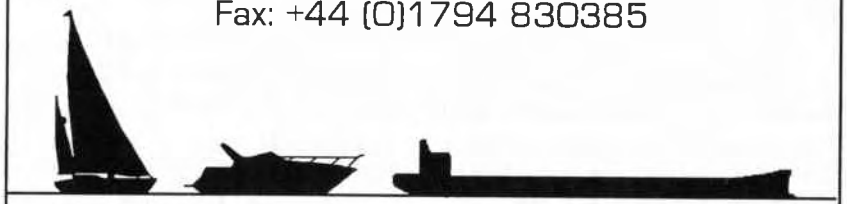
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ROLLING DOWN TO RIO

Nick Bryant

The VHF crackled into life '*Force 8*, you may follow the ship out', followed by a rather belated 'bon voyage and good sailing'. It was 1000 as we tucked ourselves in behind the stern of a 35,000 ton container ship and motored out through Durban's narrow entrance channel. I liked the 'bon voyage' part – the port control officer knew we were heading west and further west, and that it would be many years and many miles before *Force 8* would approach his port again – and then it would be from the east.

As a result of a succession of strong westerly gales a heavy swell was breaking over the south pier, but we now had a small window of predicted northeasterly winds to make our dash down the eastern seaboard of South Africa, hopefully covering the first 400 miles to Port Elizabeth. At long last we were on our way. This was not the first time we had cleared Durban's narrow entrance for a long voyage, but before it had been cruising in the Indian Ocean and always knowing that we would be returning to our established farming life in the beautiful Natal Midlands. This voyage was different – we had endured the agonising decision and then the execution of selling up our farm, home and cattle. The deteriorating economic and security situation, as well as the 'low grade' civil war raging in the Natal Midlands, had taken its toll on Helen's health and my own nerves. We wanted to believe again in the fun of life and to literally pack the guns away, instead of figuratively doing so every day and night.

It had been two years since the last voyage and during that time *Force 8* had undergone a major refit. She is a Compass 47 designed by Angelo Lavranos, her round-bilge hull built of corten steel with wooden deck and coach roof – she is sloop/cutter rigged and sails like a witch. She was built twenty years ago in Umtali in the former Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, many thousands of miles from the sea. She sailed in the 1979 South Atlantic race from Cape Town to Punta del Est, Uruguay, with eight members of the Rhodesian armed forces, hence her name. It was no macho naming trip from us!

We headed out in a southeasterly direction, to get ten to fifteen miles offshore and well into the south-going Agulhas current, and by mid-day were under full sail and bowling along before a freshening northeasterly. By midnight, with a double-reefed main and staysail set and with the wind blowing a good 35 knots, *Force 8* was eating up the miles at 8 knots. Midnight the following day we passed East London, the only bolt hole on this notorious stretch of coastline, and there seemed no point in stopping a ship in full flight! Weather forecasting is good off the South African coast, but not to be taken as gospel, and by 0300 the

northeasterly was moderating, the glass had fallen and within an hour a southwesterly had come through with a bang.

We hove-to on the port tack in 45 knots of wind and heavy rain. The heavy rain helped to keep the seas down, and thanks to the Agulhas current we were still making 1–1.5 knots in the right direction! The wind moderated in the late afternoon, and by early evening we had to resort to the iron topsail to see us across the last thirty miles of Algoa Bay into Port Elizabeth. It was an eerie, calm, brightly illuminated night (the result of a phosphorescent rich sea). By 0700 we were tied up at the Algoa Bay Yacht Club, drinking our traditional arrival beer with bacon and eggs sizzling in the pan.

Port Elizabeth to Hout Bay

Port Elizabeth is known as the friendly city and it certainly is – it is also known as the windy city and it certainly howls! We endured a couple of unbelievable days when the wind-induced surge in the marina had *Force 8*'s 16 tons surfing up to her pontoon walk-on. 'So that's why all the locals use enormous metal springs on their mooring lines!'. We had to resort to our hands and knees to walk along the finger of our section of walk-on, and that was on the way *to* the pub! Still the hospitality and friendliness of the Algoa Bay Yacht Club made up for the rough moorings. We stayed in Port Elizabeth for three weeks, to see our son James in his final year at the local university and to watch him playing cricket for Eastern Province. The Addo Elephant Park is also well worth a visit for a couple of nights and is an easy trip inland – you see hundreds of elephant of all ages and sizes. The exciting part is trying to keep them off the bonnet of the car!

During our stay in Port Elizabeth there was virtually no window in the weather, but finally at the end of November a gap appeared. From Port Elizabeth westwards the coast is a little more hospitable, with a couple of harbours and one or two anchorages for shelter in the event of a serious southwesterly blow. In a rising southeasterly we beat out of Algoa Bay in a lumpy and unpleasant sea – made worse by being 0600 and hardly light. However, once past Cape Recife and with a fresh southeasterly on the quarter, life became decidedly more comfortable. For the next thirty-six hours we bowled along, marvelling at the abundance of sea life. We were constantly accompanied by seals, dolphin, whales and flocks of seabirds, and were continually circled by the ever majestic albatross.

Regrettably, pleasant sailing conditions never last long off the South African coast and by 1600 on the second day out we were running hard under staysail only before a 40 knot southeasterly. We sped past Mossel Bay with the wind seldom dropping below 35 knots and often hitting the stop at 50 knots. The seas



Force 8 anchored at Ilha Grande, Brazil

continued to rise, and by the following evening we were doing 5–6 knots under bare poles with the wind generator howling like a banshee! We rounded Cape Agulhas nineteen miles offshore, passing from the warm Indian Ocean to the icy cold South Atlantic. The wild night livened up when, at 0100, a large, sneaky wave broke aboard, depositing gallons of icy cold Atlantic sea through a momentarily opened companionway over Helen, who was asleep in her bunk. After twenty-seven years of marriage I did not know that my wife had such a command of the English language! The sense of drama heightened a couple of hours later when a barely audible 'Mayday' call was picked up on the VHF – and then nothing.

We rounded Cape Point at 1100 with the staysail set and the wind still screaming at a steady 40 knots, but at least the sun was shining. VHF contact with American friends who were sheltering in False Bay confirmed that there had indeed been a 'Mayday' call. The mystery was solved when, a few days later, an elderly American singlehander was towed into Cape Town by the National Sea Rescue Institute – alive and well but battered. The seas dropped off as we closed the coast, and by late afternoon we were off the entrance to Hout Bay. The desire for respite was too strong and we decided to forgo the extra twenty miles to Cape Town.

Hout Bay is an attractive fishing harbour with a small marina, surrounded by a majestic backdrop of Cape mountains. Such mountains create very impressive downdrafts and we were blasted through the harbour entrance. Soon the three of us – Helen, Deon (our crew) and I – were enjoying our traditional arrival beer, greatly relieved to have 480 miles of heavy weather sailing behind us!

Hout Bay to Saldanha

Our neighbour at the Hout Bay Marina was *Ocean Flight* from Cape Town, owned by new OCC member Colleen Douglas. She had seen the arrival of *Force 8*'s three very tired, red-eyed and salt-soaked crew. The following day was glorious – no wind, warm sunshine, clean air, clean turquoise sea with seals swimming and darting about between the boats. We had timed it well, as it was the day that the crayfish season opened and Colleen, in true Cape hospitality style, invited us on board *Ocean Flight* for a feast of crayfish and sparkling wine. What sheer bliss to have a difficult passage behind us, be in beautiful surroundings, eating crayfish, drinking champagne and enjoying jolly good company. Ocean cruising does have its glorious moments!

We were delighted to meet Tom Morgan, OCC Port Officer for the Cape, and his wife Sue on board *Stardust*. Traditional South African hospitality was enjoyed on both boats. Tom is the author of a most useful cruising guide of the South African coast. Within a few weeks OCC member Lindsay James and his

wife Anne arrived from Mossel Bay aboard *Tao* – an excuse for more parties!

We spent six weeks in Hout Bay, and being so much cleaner than the moorings at the Royal Cape Yacht Club in Cape Town we decided to stay put. We spent a lot of time tracking down bits and pieces needed for the boat, touring the Peninsula, watching cricket, catching and eating crayfish and enjoying the hospitality of *Ocean Flight*.

Helen and I returned to strife-torn Natal to spend Christmas with our daughter, Susan, and her husband. It was a wonderful last reunion before embarking on our worldwide cruise. Then back to Hout Bay and the big stock up. The Pick'n'Pay supermarket at Constantia came up tops, fetching us and delivering us back to Hout Bay with our mountain of provisions. Besides giving us lunch in the shopping centre they took the trouble to vacuum-seal all our dry perishables. Their helpfulness and friendliness certainly made the mammoth task more enjoyable.

Mid January we sailed past Cape Town, up the coast, and into Saldanha Bay, a huge, windy place with desert-like air and light giving it a very different feel from the Cape Peninsula.

The South Atlantic

At 0800 on 27 January 1998 *Force 8,* with Helen, Deon and myself on board, cleared the north head of Saldanha and headed for St Helena.

The first five days passed with cold, rough and overcast weather but a good strong breeze enabling us to cover a lot of ground. Thereafter the skies cleared, the seas flattened out, the winds went light and we were in the southeast trades. We sustained a few mishaps during the first couple of days at sea. The first night out we lost the bottom section of our Wind Pilot self-steering gear, so a lot more helming was in store.

The other 'disaster' was an over zealous Deon pumping up diesel from the main bilge tank into the header tank. I had recently installed a new header tank, but had only taken the breather pipe up and into the saucepan cupboard. At 0100 Deon, misreading the level, continued pumping – filling all available pots and pans with diesel. It was only the overflowing cascade of diesel out of the cupboard and onto the new upholstery on the port side of the saloon that broke his rhythm. The resulting mess strangled even Helen's command of the English language.

During the succeeding days the wind seldom got to force 4 (15 knots) and mostly hovered at the force 2 to 3 level. Pleasant wing-and-wing downwind sailing, but always wishing for another 5 knots of wind. Unusually for us we began catching fish with every launch of the lure, mainly dorado, very good eating and pickling.

What a thrill it was to see the high volcanic peaks of St Helena in the early morning of our fifteenth day at sea. By lunch time we had rounded the eastern end of the island and dropped anchor in 18m off Jamestown. The anchorage is rolly and the holding none too good, but once again the people make up for it. The 'Saints' are delightful people, friendly and hospitable. I can only hope that Tony Blair's government will give them back their full citizenship – the population is only 5000 and they would be an asset to the United Kingdom.

Six happy days were spent off Jamestown, a Georgian seaport time capsule. We climbed Jacob's Ladder, swam in the super new pool in the castle moat, ate at Ann's Place, took sun-downers on the verandah of the Consulate Hotel and generally relished and relaxed in the antique atmosphere. For £12 we hired an old banger and spent the day touring the island. We marvelled at the contrast between the moonscape volcanic perimeter and the lush green tropical interior. We visited Napoleon's exile home and the site of his first burial place. At the British Governor General's house we saw the oldest inhabitant of the island – Jonathan, a 150+ year old tortoise. At the anchorage there is a ferry service which makes landing at the famous steps a lot easier. With heavy hearts we hauled up the Bruce and headed out once more into the South Atlantic for the 2200 mile roll down to Rio.

For the next seventeen days we saw no marine life, no birds, no ships, fished with no luck, baked super bread, wished our budget had allowed for a cruising 'chute, and lived entirely in a world of our own. A highlight was passing close by Ilha Trinidade, the bleak and inhospitable treasure island written about by FG Knight in his book *The Cruise of the Alert.* As we neared the coast of Brazil the weather heated up and the frequency of squalls increased, disrupting the peaceful time we had been having for the last couple of weeks.

We made landfall at Cabo Frio in the late afternoon of 6 March and suddenly we were back in the world of fishing boats, birds and ships. That night, off the entrance to the Guanabarra Bay, we were hove-to in a choppy and uncomfortable force 7 (30 knots). Daylight found us motoring over a glassy sea with not a breath of wind, close to the famous Sugar Loaf Mountain and under the reassuring gaze of Christ the Redeemer. We had at long last arrived at Rio de Janeiro. Brazil – the land of football, the body beautiful and the dental floss bikini!

Rio de Janeiro

Finding a decent mooring in Rio is difficult. The Club de Rio de Janeiro is positively anti foreign yachts. It is the club of the super-rich – they don't need you and they don't want you! How different it had been in 1971 when I had last sailed in and tied up, having completed the Cape to Rio yacht race. They do



Helen and Nick Bryant landing on the beach at Parati Mirim, Southern Brazil

however allow you to buy their diesel. Unfortunately it makes sense to do so as the club members demand clean fuel – of which they consume vast quantities in their high-powered motorboats.

A cruising guide mentions Marina da Gloria and so we went there, only to be greeted by a local yachtie warning us that we were entering the most expensive marina in the world! He was right, and the only redeeming feature is its proximity to downtown Rio. Two days of mind-numbing visits to various officials and many dollars in taxi fares got *Force 8* and her crew cleared in. All officials show old world courtesy to foreigners, but they have raised the standard of form filling to art level! We survived a week in Marina da Gloria and then motored across the Guanabarra Bay to the *Clube Naval de Charitas*, a delightful club in a beautiful country setting and a twenty minute bus ride from the city of Niteroi. They welcomed us with two weeks' free mooring and the use of their superb facilities. *Force 8* was in paradise.

Three weeks of sight seeing, the urban experience and viewing the body beautifuls on the Copacabana and Ipanema beaches was enough and we headed southwest to the Baía da Ilha Grande, the 'fillet mignon' of the Brazilian coast.

Baía de Ilha Grande

Ilha Grande is a rainforest-covered island thirty-five miles long, situated in the middle of a huge bay. Between this island and the mainland there are a myriad of smaller islands, cays and fjords, making this area a splendid cruising ground. So it proved to be, with *Force 8* usually the only yacht in a deserted anchorage with nothing to bother us except the odd squawk of a parrot. To remain legal I had to take a ferry across to the mainland harbour town of Angra dos Reis and once again visit various officials. Brazilian authorities will not allow you to visit their officials unless properly attired – no shorts, vests or sandals allowed. It was also in Angra dos Reis that we replenished *Force 8*'s supplies.

For the Easter weekend we motor-sailed further west to the Baía da Ribeiro and into Marina Bracui on the mainland, reputedly the biggest marina in Brazil, and the closest water to the city of São Paulo. That weekend there were certainly a lot of São Paulians there and we noticed twelve diesel road tankers queued up at the fuel jetty to cope with the thirst of the 'cigars' and other high-powered boats so loved by the Brazilians.

Moving further south we anchored off the town of Parati. This colonial town is one of the oldest in Brazil and was the gold export centre during the 17th and 18th centuries. The whole town is a national monument with no vehicles allowed into the old part, and has a wonderful atmosphere filled with history, music and entertainment. There are four fascinating churches built for the different communities – one for the slaves, one for the free mulattos, one for the rich whites and, not to be done down, the pirates built themselves the grandest of the lot!

Feeling rather tired after a week of late nights, we provisioned as best we could and moved south to Ilha da Cotia for a few days of rest and recovery. We found excellent shelter and holding at this totally peaceful and remote little island – a good place to take a deep breath and get prepared for the long haul north, up the South American continent to the West Indies.



It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare...
It is because we do not dare that they are difficult.
Seneca

TEN YEAR INDEX

Compiled and updated by Liz Hammick Scott

Back issues of *Flying Fish* are a valuable source of cruising information, but seeking out references to individual countries or areas can be very time consuming.

Liz compiled the first Ten Year Index in 1988, updating it in 1991 and 1994. Her latest version covers the nineteen issues from 1989/1 to 1998/1 inclusive. During that time members have visited more than a hundred countries, islands and areas, including fourteen places new to the list since 1994. The index does not cover mainland UK waters.

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When I'm born I'm black
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When I die I'm black

And you the *Papaa*
When you are born you are pink
When you grow up you are white
When you get sick you go green
When you go out in the sun you turn red
When you get cold you go blue
When you die you go purple

And you *Palangi* have the cheek to call me coloured!

(Copied by an OCC member from the notice board of the Resident Caretaker at Suvarov Atoll, Northern Cook Islands)

CRUISING CUBA, Part 2

Bob and Angelique Crampton

(Flying Fish *1998/1 followed* Beach Bum, *a 42ft aluminium sloop with Bob and Angelique aboard, as far as Cayo Grenada on the south coast of Cuba. The cruise continues...*)

Aground!

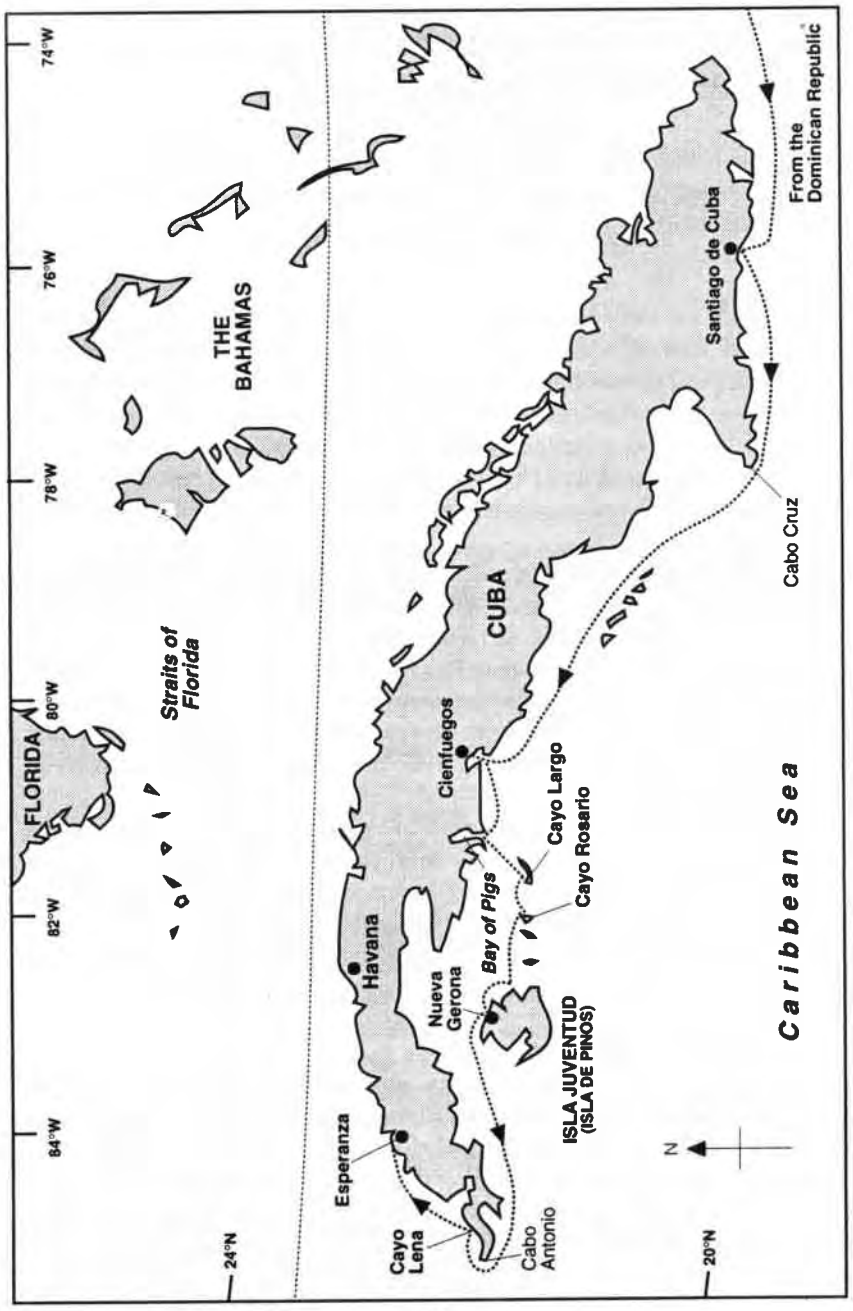
After four or five days we found ourselves exiting the reef. We had some deadlines to meet, and planned to spend the night at Cayo Ingles, an anchorage next to the open sea, but unfortunately I misread the pilot and put us aground. Two hours later we had kedged ourselves off, but not before the crew had given me a hard time! It was this moment that brought the realisation of how much we were on our own – there would have been very little chance of getting help, and even fishing boats are few and far between. In ten days we saw two sailing boats and six fishing vessels.

We soon found ourselves an alternative anchorage, and in the morning were visited by a rowing boat from the nearby fishing station. These are strange wooden buildings resting on piles in the sea, where fishing boats can deliver their catch without going to the mainland, up to fifty miles away. It must be a lonely life for the few men who man the stations for months at a time! These two had rowed at least two miles to visit us, and were very grateful for the few things we traded for some lovely fish. In this part of Cuba you never need to want for food, there is abundance in the water!

The next day Rebecca and Sid wanted to snorkel on the seaward side of the reef and, while at anchor, we were yet again visited by fishermen to be given a dozen lobster and 12lb mutton snapper, which was great eating! We gave them an assortment of items including four disposable razors. They protested that they only needed one for the four of them! After insisting they keep all four we said '*gracias y hasta luego*' and then had a magnificent Easter dinner.

An evening of local culture

That evening we headed for Cienfuegos, arriving next morning to enjoy the special early light on the old buildings. Cienfuegos is on the north side of a large, ten mile long bay, which is approached through a three mile winding narrow channel with an ancient fort defending the entrance. Once again we found it very well buoyed and easy to navigate. The city itself is old – it became wealthy at the time of the grand sugar plantations and even richer when, in the 1940s and '50s, it became one of the gambling centres of Cuba. As a result there are





Mansions overlooking the bay at Ciefuegos, Cuba

some large ostentatious palaces, badly in need of attention. Today one is a sports club, another a sailing school!

However the highlight for us was to be invited to attend an evening of Cuban music, dancing and singing at the 110-year-old theatre. The building and furnishings are, I'm sure, 'as original', including the very hard wooden seats! After 1½ hours of sitting on them we can speak with authority. The performers, about forty men and women, were students from a provincial university where they were attending drama and music schools. The show was private, and free, and seemed to be attended by a wide representation of the local community – children, youth, dignitaries, black, brown and white (we observed no colour prejudice during our entire cruise). All took an active part which, together with the professionalism of the performers, gave us a night we will always remember and associate with the music and fun loving people of Cuba.

I already mentioned the sports and sailing clubs and, wherever we went, we would see runners, cyclists, swimmers and rowers all training. Although their equipment seemed old and in need of repair, you could not help admiring their enthusiasm and tenacity.

Havana

As Sid and Rebecca were leaving from Havana we decided to go with them to the capital by private taxi. We could have travelled the 250 miles by express,

air-conditioned bus for $15, but the amount of luggage dictated otherwise. A 'private' taxi is a privately owned car whose owner can *only* accept the fare in US dollars - from foreigners or fellow Cubans. For this privilege he pays a monthly tax to the authorities, also in US dollars. Our driver was very friendly, pointing out sights on the way and introducing us to *garapa* juice squeezed directly from sugar cane (cold, delicious and very sweet, but with no aftertaste). With his help we found a cheap hotel in the centre of the old town of Havana, within walking distance of the area we wanted to explore. He and his family subsequently became great friends and helped us considerably during our stay in Cienfuegos.

Havana, like most capital cities of the world, is noisy, dirty, and you can be hassled, but we never felt threatened (this applied throughout our stay in Cuba). However it has a lot to offer in the way of history and culture. After five days we grew to like it, and learned quite a lot about the people of Cuba. We now have a little more understanding of the revolution and the present governing of the country - sufficient to say that what we hear in the West is not the total picture.

Back aboard

After a few days back in Cienfuegos we were joined by two sailing friends from England. We showed them some of the local sights, including the botanical gardens which specialise in palms. This wonderful site was established by Harvard University in the 1930s and continues to be tended by the Cubans. Our guide had worked in the gardens for forty years and took great pride in showing us some of the very special species amongst the many hundreds of different trees.

Due to the area around the Bay of Pigs being off limits we had to make a small diversion before reaching Cayo Largo. As we approached the anchorage it was nearing dusk and I realised we would have difficulty in seeing the reef due to the light. So, after a radio call, the marina manager sent out a motorboat and we were very happy to follow it though several shallow channels before dropping anchor in a beautiful bay just opposite the marina.

Cayo Largo is one of the most important holiday resorts in Cuba, and provides a wide range of facilities for tourists. We found the local disco too noisy, so next day moved to a lovely anchorage 100m away where the only noise was from the water birds, which were there in plenty. This area offers plenty of choice for swimming, fishing, snorkelling and sailing, and has wonderful clean, clear water with fine white beaches. It is possible to obtain food, water and diesel, and would be a good place to change crews as there are frequent flights from Havana.

Water spout!

Our next destination was Cayo Rosario, an anchorage between the reef and the island about thirty-five miles west, so we exited the reef from Cayo Largo, using

the well buoyed channels to the open sea. As we were approaching the entrance to Cayo Rosario the weather became very overcast with dark grey clouds, and we started to worry whether we would be through the 100m wide channel at the reef entrance before visibility deteriorated.

Suddenly someone looked behind and there was a BIG water spout about 400m away. We have seen this phenomenon before, but never so close! We all started to question what action we should take, but in the end just watched which direction the spout was going and, as it seemed to be going away, did nothing. Since then I have learned that we would have been wise to take some precautions, including opening hatches because of the pressure differences. We soon found an anchorage in 2m, and then experienced the heaviest rain we have ever seen, with visibility not more than 10m. To have been in the entrance channel in those conditions would not have been funny! This 'northerly' stayed with us for two days, but it did not stop us from snorkelling and finding lobster. We also had the customary fishing boat visit, and so were not short of food.

We decided to stay inside the reef as far as Isla Juventud (Isla de Pinos), so motor-sailed the forty miles to Pasa Quitasol over a plateau only 2-5m deep. The water was sky blue. The pass was well marked and we soon found an anchorage in a deserted mangrove bay. The following day found us entering the

The waterspout we saw astern between Cayo Largo and Cayo Rosario



rivermouth to Nueva Gerona, the capital of the island. This was contrary to popular advice. Yes, we *did* experience some difficult officials, and yes, the mosquitoes *were* present, but being within walking distance of the town and its facilities more than made up. After two days we sailed round the west coast to the resort marina of Sequanea, where due to strong winds we stayed seven days. This is a well protected port, basically for dive boats (one of the best diving areas in Cuba) but the four or five visiting yachts were very well looked after by the marina staff. The yachties all agreed that if you needed a place to shelter or rest on the south coast, this is the place to be. It was also convenient for our guests to travel to Havana (by fast ferry) before returning to the UK.

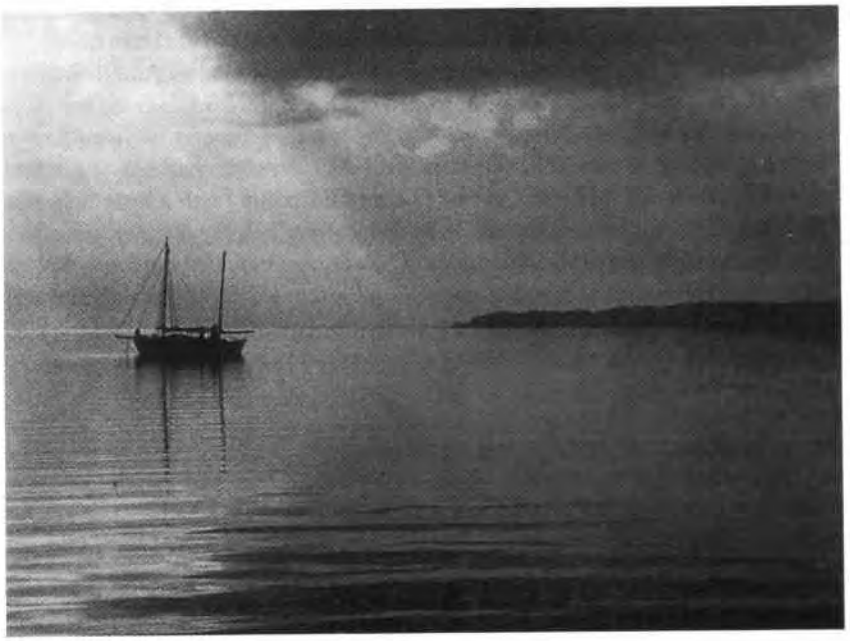
Sub-aqua spectacular

Eventually the weather allowed us to leave and we made a wonderful night sail to Maria Gorda, on the mainland. This open anchorage is in the middle of the best diving/snorkelling site we have encountered in eleven years of sailing. It is possible to lie with a mask on the surface of the water and watch the coral and spectacular fish life 10–15m below and, of course, there is plenty of water only 25m deep with equally fantastic viewing! We were concerned that, should a strong northerly arrive, we would be in trouble. However, the local fishermen (who take out the divers) reassured us that, should this happen, they would alert us and take us to a safe anchorage five miles north.

We next made for the west coast, first having to pass the notorious Cabo Antonio. The first eighteen miles were a glorious sail but, as we started for the Cabo, the wind was on the nose and we had at least 3 knots of counter-current. It took us 2½ hours, with engine on, to reach the Cayo Lena anchorage only six miles beyond the Cabo – I would recommend anyone sailing in this area to heed the warnings in the pilot. The anchorage is tranquil and well-protected, and it is hard to believe that you are only two miles from the Gulf Stream with its strong, and potentially dangerous, currents. The only sign of habitation is the Fish Station about a mile away on the shore. Of course, next morning we had the customary visit from the fisherman.

A small miracle

After breakfast I checked the engine to find fluid in the engine bilge! I soon ascertained it was salt water, but where from? Our aluminium boat has a waterproof engine compartment, and there appeared to be no hole in the hull (thank goodness!). The hose clips were all tight and the exhaust tube seemed to be okay – until the First Mate managed to stand on her head and feel under the bend at the bottom of the loop – yes, it had a hole! The lesson from this is to make sure you inspect ***all*** the tubes, not just what you can reach and see.



Threatening sky in the Cayo Lena anchorage near Cuba's Cabo Antonio

We carry about £700 of engine spares but not, of course, 2 metres of armoured exhaust – who does? We started to devise a jury fix, even using inner-tubes from the Bickertons, but we both knew it would not work and that we would have to sail direct to the Florida Keys as it would be impossible to find new hose in Cuba. To cut a long story short, into the anchorage came a Red Ensign yacht (we had not seen another yacht for at least twelve days), he had some left-over hose from a recent refit (it proved to be just a little larger in diameter, but who cared!) and we were up and running by the end of the afternoon. What we had done to deserve this small miracle we will never know, but we will be forever grateful that the weather the previous night in the Gulf had caused our friend and saviour to rest, instead of making a direct passage from Key West to the Yucatan Peninsular.

We continued our passage along the west coast, inside the reef. The waters are very well marked and in accordance with the Cuban charts. With the exception of the odd fisherman we had the anchorages to ourselves, with plenty of fish and bird life to keep us entertained, and so after eight days or so we reached Esperanza, a small, sleepy village with an active fishing fleet about 110 miles from Havana. On stepping ashore we soon had a young local man helping

us to find our way around (he was learning English and wanted to practise). He even managed to find the manager of the '$ store' and persuaded him to open up for us on a Sunday. That night on the VHF we heard that an American yacht was planning to leave for Key West from a bay five miles further along the coast, so after a call we agreed that, subject to the weather forecast, we would try to sail in company. It proved to be a very good decision as we had one of our best-ever sails, covering 149 miles in just twenty-four hours (with a little help from the Gulf Stream). In addition we were given every help by our new friends on our first landfall on mainland America. The contrast between the previous eight weeks and the marina at Key West was dramatic, but we were pleasantly surprised to find it still possible to anchor in the Keys – though we no longer had the place to ourselves!



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ADMIRALTY CHARTS AND PUBLICATIONS

SEA SHANTY'S GAMBIA GAMBIT

Jim and Sue Chambers

(Sea Shanty, *a Stevens 47, is sailed by Sue and Jim Chambers from Jensen Beach, Florida.*)

We were in Gibraltar near the home stretch of a five-year circumnavigation when a British bird watcher suggested we consider a diversion to The Gambia. We are not ornithologists and being so close to home we could smell the barn, but – Gibraltar is an excellent place for research and charts. Soon we became fascinated by the thought of experiencing a bit of West African culture as well as wildlife from the safety and comfort of the 'mighty' *Sea Shanty.* The diversion became one of the highlights of our circumnavigation.

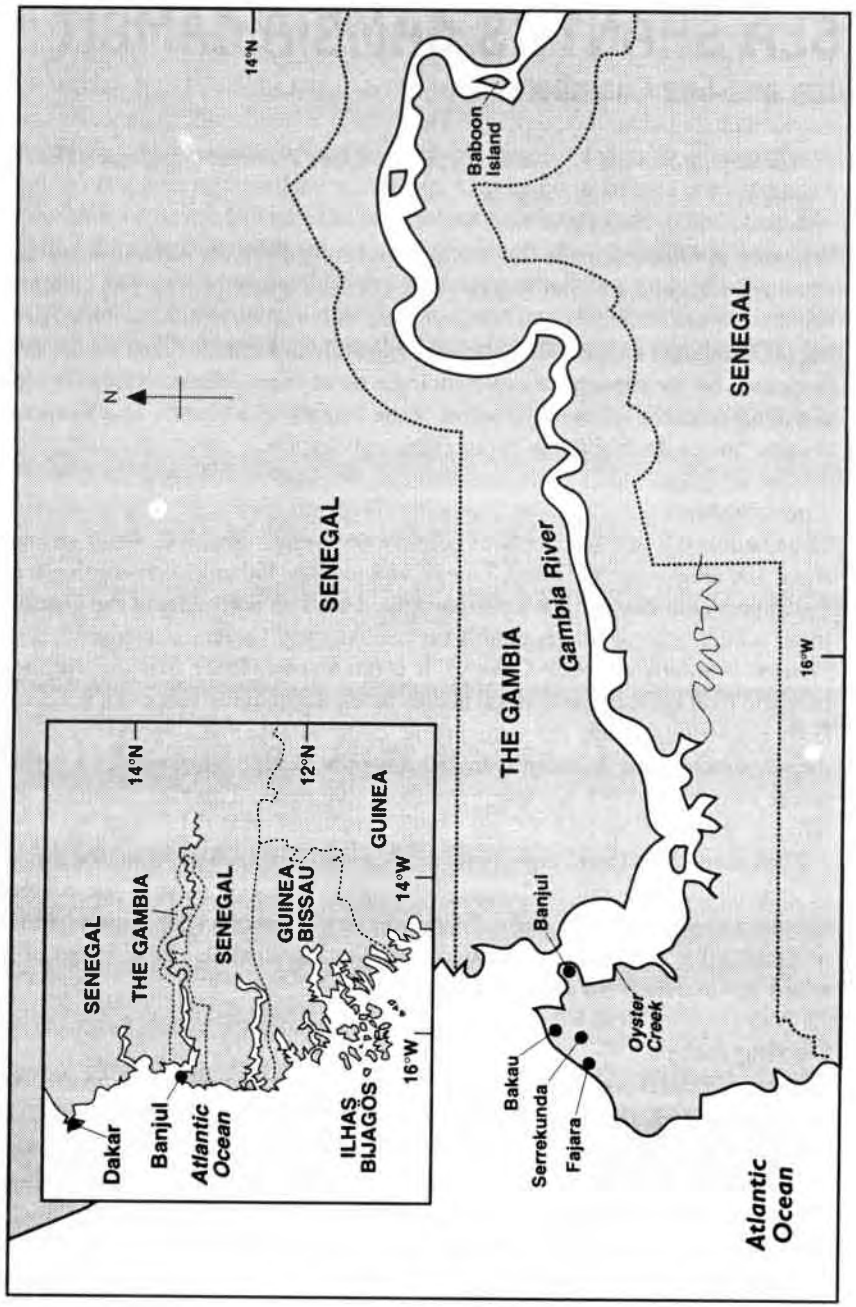
The Gambia

The Gambia is a tiny independent country (formerly a British Colony) located about 100 miles south of Dakar, Senegal and roughly 350 miles east-southeast of the Cape Verde Islands. It is a narrow strip of land on both sides of the Gambia River which, except for its mouth on the Atlantic Ocean, is surrounded by Senegal (formerly a French Colony). It is not a coincidence that the distance from the river bank to the Senegal border barely exceeds the range of a gunboat. Both countries contain the same ethnic composition, and relations between them are now quite friendly. Gambia, however, refuses to construct a bridge across its river which is navigable for about 200 miles. This fact frustrates the officials of Senegal no end.

The country's economy is poor and its only real income comes from the export of groundnuts. The official language is English although most of the natives converse in a dialect of Wolof or Mandinka, and most of its population (under one million) practice Islam. We found the Gambians as friendly and enjoyable as any group during our circumnavigation.

Getting there

Leaving Gibraltar we stopped in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria which makes an excellent halt whether you are heading down to West Africa or across the pond. Our next stop after Las Palmas was the port of Dakar, Senegal. We stayed well off the coast of Mauritania as advised (for political reasons) but found heavy fishing activity nevertheless. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay in Dakar, though it is not for the faint of heart. The port was easily the filthiest we had seen and is home to hundreds of rough-and-tumble dock workers who are allowed to camp



out within its boundaries looking for work. We ended up with two twenty-four hour 'whatmens' (watchmen) who perched on the dock a few feet from *Sea Shanty* watching us as we nervously watched the passing mob. We suggest cruising these areas in the company of a second boat, and were most fortunate to be buddy boating with fellow circumnavigators Kit and Richard Curtis from Alaska, aboard *Fiddler.*

A stop in Dakar does make it easier to time your arrival at the entrance to the Gambia River for a favourable tide in daylight hours. Currents can reach 4 to 5 knots on the ebb. The ten mile approach to Banjul, the capital, involves negotiating several shifting shoals so a rising tide is desired. Our own timing was far from perfect due to a large piece of heavy net which seriously fouled our propeller. Fortunately we were able to untangle the 6ft x 8ft patch before any damage was done, but lost several hours in the process.

Checking in

Clearing into The Gambia is quite an experience. The designated anchorage is just west of the Banjul dockyard in an area surrounded by eight or ten sunken boats. It is located off a settlement known as 'Half Die'. This community was so named because many of its population used to be lost each year to cholera epidemics due to the flooding river. Malaria, cholera and AIDS continue to be serious problems in the area and apparently about 35 percent of the local people are HIV positive.

Although we were anchored by about 1500 with Q and home-made courtesy flags flying, it was 1700 before six officials arrived, all quite friendly. The customs officer was a very articulate, English-speaking, 5ft 2in black gentleman wearing a magnificent uniform with an abundance of brass buttons and braid. He was clearly in charge and stated it was after hours for full checking-in procedures. Although there was no overtime charge, gifts were encouraged. He explained that of course as Muslims they could not accept alcohol, so soft drinks were served, inspections made, a bit of *backsheesh* agreed and a few six-packs of beer taken back for their non-Muslim 'friends'. The visit was thoroughly enjoyable and we were given instructions for checking-in next day. Next morning the Port Captain gave us tide and current tables, National Park permits covering Baboon Island and a great deal of helpful information. We were on our way up the River.

Attractions

The Gambia offers two very different areas of interest to the visiting yachtsman: (a) exploration of the city of Banjul and the areas to the east to Serrekunda, and (b) cruising the Gambia River itself. We eventually became aware of a protected



Alioune (in NBA shirt) and Baba (top centre), our hosts at the Oyster Creek Yacht Club, with Richard Curtis of Fiddler (left) and Jim Chambers (right)

anchorage at Oyster Creek 'Yacht Club' and, with hindsight, should have stopped there before venturing upriver.

Oyster Creek is an ideal place to leave a boat unattended for days at a time if necessary. One is only a few minutes from the city of Banjul, excellent food markets and local markets, or the restaurants and beaches of Serrekunda. The only disadvantage to this quiet anchorage is negotiating the narrow, mangrove-lined, circuitous creek that leads to it. It was a heart-stopping three mile trip, and at times we could have touched the mangroves on both sides while our depth sounder indicated zero. In fact we had no trouble carrying 6ft 6in (2m) through the creek, with our friends following in *Fiddler* which draws 7ft.

Banjul itself is a fascinating, non-touristy city with an amazing variety of characters. It is probably best to make your first visit to Banjul accompanied by a local or guide. Nearly every other shop sells fabrics and the sidewalks are lined with tailors seated behind sewing machines. Banjul boasts two banks, but the best exchange rates come from the many moneychangers on Wellington Street. They carry their cash in large carpetbags, are well-dressed and easy to spot.

From the African Heritage restaurant on the second floor of MacCarthy Square one can watch the throngs in the Prince Albert Market below. This is a lively affair covering several acres of winding alleys - very much like a junior version of the markets in Tangier, and a good set for a Bogart film.

Bakau, two miles east of Oyster Creek, is the upscale area of the Gambia, and has two very good supermarkets. We found provisioning here far better than in the Cape Verdes and, except for Gran Canaria, even better than the other Canary Islands. Among other things we took on five pounds of shrimp at US $1.00 per pound (shelled for free) but found the chicken somewhat below American standards. Fajara, a mile further east, begins the resort area with several restaurants and hotels and beautiful beaches.

The Oyster Creek 'Yacht Club' anchorage was a pure delight and our four day visit far too short. A few years ago a group of young Gambians set up a small outdoor bar and restaurant called Baba's to provide services for the few visiting yachts and water tours for visitors. The Yacht Club service group, headed by Alioune, clearly outnumbered the boats but were very helpful. Diesel was available by jerry can, good water at a nearby stand-pipe and almost any supply could be purchased nearby. As a result of this group there is no crime in the area and its anchorage has become absolutely hassle-free.

Baba and Alioune insisted on throwing a barbecue fish dinner for the four of us at US $1.00 each. We thoroughly enjoyed the entire crowd. Needless to say, this was a refreshing change from Port Dakar.

A local Gambian river ferry



On the subject of security, I should mention that we experienced no problems in the Gambia although we took a few extra precautions, particularly while anchored off Half Die. We rafted with *Fiddler*, who used a motion detection alarm, and on *Sea Shanty* we set up our 'barking dog' alarm which, if nothing else, wakes us up when it begins to blow.

Unfortunately I had to carry the recalcitrant 8hp Yamaha into Half Die in search of a part before venturing up the river. I was surprised to find the part and, with the help of a young local named Ebrima, repaired the motor in front of an audience of about twenty 'characters'. Ebrima insisted upon helping me carry the motor to the dinghy and on the way he quietly said, 'Mon, dis engine change a man's entire life here and in this area life is cheap - you be careful'.

The river run

Although the wildlife of The Gambia doesn't come close to that of the game parks of Kenya and Tanzania, a cruise up the river offers many opportunities to view monkeys baboons, crocodiles, hippopotami and a huge variety of birds. The Gambia claims to have at least two hundred indigenous species of birds and an equal number of migrants, and I'm sure we saw at least a hundred varieties.

We travelled about 150 miles upriver, averaging roughly thirty miles per day. Our daily routine was to travel with the current in daylight in order to avoid drift nets and debris, then when the current turned against us to anchor and explore the mangrove-lined tributaries by dinghy. Except for the native dugouts

Hippo group south of the Gambia National Park





Vervet monkeys grooming

laden with groundnuts and the local fishermen floating downstream towing their drift nets we saw only two other sailboats, both from Holland, and one local freighter going upriver.

The most interesting area is the River Gambia National Park, located on Baboon Island. This is the site of a project which takes chimpanzees from laboratories, zoos and poachers and rehabilitates them to live in the wild. Special permission is required to visit the facility itself, but the chimps are so numerous they are easily seen from the boat - apparently they will actually jump onboard if you venture too close to the trees. The Port Captain issued warnings about this, as monkey bites can be dangerous.

The hippos roam in the upper part of the river, 125 miles from Banjul. They frequently change their bathing spots so it is best to ask the local people where they are. It is also advisable not to alarm them by getting too close. We were surprised to hear that two years ago in Kenya more men were killed or seriously injured by hippos than by any other animal. The crocs were harder to spot, but we saw quite a few ranging from one to five feet long.

As already mentioned, neither of us were great bird watchers before visiting The Gambia, but we quickly became adept spotters. The splashes of colour and the sounds of warbles and wings from every direction provided unending excitement. Binoculars and a powerful telephoto lens on the camera are essential, and *The Birds of West Africa* is a must-have reference book.

There are few villages along the river. We stopped only at Tendaba village, about seventy miles from Banjul, where we were given a wonderful tour of the town by fifteen children who spoke excellent English. We then ate a fair meal at the 'Swedish Camp' nearby. The area is known for its wild bush pigs (wart hogs) which are said to have a great flavour but tough meat. Further downriver at Komodo Point is a relatively attractive hotel and restaurant. There were no guests when we stopped, but after a drink at the bar the vacant pool was a real treat. We also took advantage of the offer to use their bore hole for potable water. The Gambia turns fresh about seventy-five miles upriver, but due to the existence of a tiny parasite that burrows through the skin it is not safe for swimming or drinking. Although a few vegetables and fish are available it is also best to provision in Banjul before heading upstream.

The tumbledown dock at Komodo Point Resort, with Sea Shanty at anchor behind



We found the BA charts of the river surprisingly accurate and at no time had less than 3ft (0.9m) under the keel. While in Dakar we were most fortunate to come across a draft of a yet-to-be-published guide to the area written by Steve Jones* which was extremely helpful. The *Lonely Planet* and the *Rough Guide* provided good reference material for the country itself, along with *The Birds of West Africa*. We would highly recommend a West African diversion, particularly a visit to The Gambia, and would be delighted to pass on more information to anyone considering such a cruise.

* Now published by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson Ltd and reviewed on page 146 of *Flying Fish* 1998/1.



PARMELIA GOES SOUTH
Roger Wallis

(The following account was forwarded by John Maddox, Rear Commodore Australia, who added that Roger was to be presented with the OCC Australian Trophy in recognition of his voyage.)

To cross the Southern Ocean, to round Cape Horn, to go south to the Antarctic Peninsula, to visit the South Shetland Islands, and then to go north up the Chilean Channels I wanted a strong and fast boat, yet light enough to make good progress in light weather especially to windward. I sold my well travelled Swanson 38 and was lucky enough to secure the 47ft fibreglass *Parmelia*. She is the sistership to Jon Sanders' record breaking *Parry Endeavor* and was originally built to race from England to Australia in the Parmelia Race (and came fifth, I believe). She also sailed in the memorable 1979 Fastnet Race that led to so much loss of life and finished up with the leaders. *Parmelia* has also competed in the Southern Ocean Classic and many Sydney to Hobart races.

During a ten month refit she received new rigging, some new sails, a collision bulkhead, watertight doors to all bulkheads, new electronics, new upholstery, an aluminium dodger over the companion way and much more. By 3 December most jobs were complete and we left Australia for Bluff Harbour on the south end of the South Island of New Zealand. The crew for this leg were Ian Robinson,

Fritz Halbwidl, Alan Evans, Jonathan Smith, Jay Watson and myself. On the third day out we made contact on HF radio with Alfred Winklmayr at Commonwealth Bay, Antarctica (Mawson's Hut). Jay, Alan and myself, along with six others, had sailed down to Mawson's Hut in the summer of '97 in Don McIntyre's *Spirit Of Sydney*, to leave Alfred there alone for a year of living in isolation. His remarkable feat has gone almost unnoticed by the world. It was great to be able to contact Alfred and congratulate this modest man two days before he was to be picked up by the Russian ice-breaker, and to share our next adventure with him.

Fritz and Ian left us in New Zealand and, after a few days rest, we cleared Bluff Harbour and headed out to cross the Southern Ocean. Our plan was to stay between 45° and 50°S, moving north or south as necessary to stay on the right side of the weather systems. When we were approximately 1000 miles from the Horn we would sail south east, directly to the Horn.

During our long and lonely forty-four day passage we enjoyed wonderful sailing and became very aware of the vagaries of the weather. We quickly fell into the rhythm and routine of life at sea. We were continually reminded that it is a big, big paddock out there – we saw plenty of winged wildlife, including albatrosses and petrels, but only the odd whale and one ship. We hove-to on four occasions under triple-reefed main only, and she was very comfortable.

We celebrated our arrival at Cape Horn with champagne, courtesy of Jean and Monty, and scroggin cake from Susie Jack. It was a steely grey morning with a 30 knot westerly – a perfect Cape Horn day – and it was such a privilege to be there and to see it. Then we broad-reached across Nassau Bay with black and white dolphins all around, and headed up the Beagle Channel to Ushuaia to be greeted by my son Ben and Fritz, who were joining us for the rest of the trip. After a week of R&R and re-provisioning we were ready to go south to the South Shetland Islands and on to the Antarctic Peninsula.

In Ushuaia, we had the good fortune to meet Hamish Laird, skipper of *Pelagic*, who passed on valuable information to us which he had accumulated over many years of Antarctic sailing. *Pelagic* and *Parmelia* were to spend a lot of time together in the next six weeks. Both boats sheltered at Caleta Martial, about seven miles from Cape Horn, until we got the best weather window to head across the usually rough Drake Passage. The first day's info was no good to head off, so *Pelagic* made a landing on Cape Horn Island while we sailed the ten miles around it and attempted a landing later that day, but we were forced away by the then 40–50 knot wind and rain, so we retreated back to Caleta Martial.

By next morning, the weatherfax showed some improvement and our barometer was rising, so we left our safe anchorage and passed Cape Horn in a southwest wind and very rough seas. We headed south over the comparatively shallow

continental shelf, hoping to get to deeper water by dark. By evening the seas had evened out but were still very big, and many broke aboard. It was very uncomfortable sailing to windward in up to 50 knots from the southwest and everything was wet, probably the wettest so far for the whole trip. However by next morning things looked better, the seas had moderated and the wind was down to 30 knots. We made 136 miles in the first twenty-four hours. Our course was okay but didn't give us any westing if we had to heave-to. We passed the cruise ship *Malchanov* going north and her Captain told us we would meet the ice fifty miles north of the Shetlands. As we crossed over the Antarctic convergence zone the air temperature was much colder and the air was full of bitterly cold mist – a taste of what was to come. We saw our first iceberg at 61°43'S.

After four days hard on the wind we arrived at Hell's Bellows, the entrance to Deception Island, and made our way to the anchorage. *Pelagic* had arrived nine hours before us. She left to go south so we moved *Parmelia* into the best spot and secured ourselves with one anchor and two lines ashore in a safe but very alien environment – an active and flooded volcano. The island looks like a moonscape, there being no vegetation, only volcanic debris, snow and ice. There were gentoo penguin colonies and the ever present skuas. We were invited to the Spanish base, where a thirteen-man team is studying vulcanology and weather. They were very hospitable and we all had a memorable day. When we said we were sailing over to Whaler's Bay next morning they asked us to deliver a package to the temporary Brazilian base there.

When we arrived there we found that the Brazilians were leaving that day. With rubber ducks whizzing in and out to the supply ship *Art Rongon* and the helicopter buzzing around it was action stations everywhere. We did not anchor at Whaler's Bay because of old chains and cables on the bottom, but we went ashore in two shifts. This was a whalers' base at first, then a British scientific base until the last major eruption in the mid '60s, and was like a museum or time capsule with all the relics of its colourful past. The *Art Rongon* gave us some weather info that was useful, because by then our weatherfax had failed and it is almost essential equipment in these latitudes. (The Chilean Navy broadcast excellent weather information twice a day for southern South America, Drake Passage and Antarctica.) The *Art Rongon* left Whaler's Bay bound for Brazil and within one hour the cruise ship *World Discoverer* had arrived with 140 passengers. The captain gave us the latest ice charts and his best wishes. We left the Bay and made preparations to head further south.

Next morning we cleared Neptune's Bellows, Deception Island and headed towards Enterprise Island, 120 miles south. There were icebergs and bergy bits around, but everything was manageable until evening, then at 2300 we dropped

all sail as there was just enough loose pack-ice to make sailing in the dark unsafe. On arriving at Enterprise Island we tied up between the shore and the wreck of an old whaling ship that sank in a very convenient spot in 1916. We climbed the ridge above the anchorage and the views were classic Antarctic.

We left Enterprise Island and were escorted by four killer whales for an hour to another old whaler's anchorage at Couverville Island, where we spent an anxious night fending off bergs when the tide changed. There were many humpback whales and leopard seals in the area, and the gentoo penguin colonies on shore made the picture complete. We crossed the Gerlache Strait to Dorian Cove in absolutely perfect conditions, the mountains pure white, the glaciers with a tinge of pale blue and the sky blue as blue. We dropped anchor just ahead of *Pelagic* and put four lines ashore.

Our wind generator had failed on the Southern Ocean leg and I had ordered new parts to be delivered to Ushuaia, but they had not arrived by the time we had to go so a friend on a cruise ship picked them up and dropped them off at Port Lockroy, only two miles from Dorian Cove. When Dave and Rod, the British scientists manning Port Lockroy base, gave me the box I was horrified to feel the parts just rattling around inside, obviously not packed well enough for such a journey. It had passed through so many hands that all the electrical parts were broken.

We left Dorian Cove and headed for Vernadsky, the Ukranian Base, about thirty-five miles south. We saw many whales and leopard seals in the Lemaire Channel and encountered our heaviest ice conditions so far. This made for a slow passage to Argentine Island and Vernadsky, previously the British Faraday Base, the main data collecting site in the discovery of the hole in the ozone layer. The Ukraines invited us to 'union hour' – I think this means social time, anyway we had a great time and presented them with a Metung Yacht Club pennant which was quickly nailed to the wall at the back of the bar. Between their English and our Ukranian I think the story is that the timber used to build the bar was supposed to be used to build a boat landing – these people could be Aussies. The next day three scientists worked for a whole day to repair our laptop so we could receive weatherfaxes again and, to suit their program which they entered onto our computer, even made a new decoder out of some bits and pieces and a film case!

We were at 65°17'S and it was the end of February. The ice was too thick for us to continue south in our fibreglass boat, and with winter setting in the Antarctic was freezing behind us – often our shore lines were caught and frozen in the surface ice overnight. We decided that this was as far south as we could go with safety, so worked our way north to the Melchior Islands where we intended to wait for good weather and to get a slightly better slant for the sail northeast to

Cape Horn about 800 miles away. The weatherfax looked okay so we headed off to the northwest, hoping to get away from the ice and out into the open sea, but within five hours it was blowing well over 60 knots (our gauge only goes up to 60) and snowing heavily. It was also bitterly cold, with low visibility. We hove-to, but the close proximity of the icebergs and darkness was a worry.

We got through this gale, across Drake Passage almost to the continental shelf, and then had the worst gale of all. It was classic stuff – late afternoon, on the shallow water off Cape Horn and 60 knots plus of southwest wind.

But 'All's well that ends well' and we made it to Caleta Martial for a well earned rest. After a day's R&R the weather moderated and we went to the anchorage at Cape Horn and landed! It was just great – the two navy radio operators-come-lookouts made us welcome and we visited their little wooden chapel, their lighthouse and the monument to seamen. We soaked up all the mystique and aura that goes with the Horn. It was an incredible day and very important to all of us. We sailed up to it from Australia, circumnavigated the whole island and finally landed on it!

Next it was back to Puerto Williams to check in, then check out, because we had to go to Ushuaia (Argentina) to drop Allan and Jono off and buy provisions for the remainder of the passage. Then back to Puerto Williams (Chile) to apply for our authorisation from the Chilean Navy to travel north up the channels. It's a bit of a task but you cannot move without the Navy knowing. We had forty days' food supply and even two half sheep tied up to the backstay. We also bought extra fuel because we expected to do a lot of motoring going north in the channels.

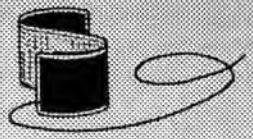
The Puerto Williams Yacht Club is the most southerly yacht club in the world and is based in an old naval ship, the *Micalvi*. We got our authorisation, cleared out of Puerto Williams and headed west along the Beagle Channel past spectacular glaciers and 7000 foot mountains. The land is spectacularly harsh and barren with vegetation only in the most sheltered places. We anchored every night in well sheltered coves and usually put two lines ashore to ensure our safety. It is not a good idea to sail at night, and careful planning is necessary to arrive somewhere safe well before dark. It can take an hour to secure the boat against the williwaws that can blast you from any direction with alarming strength.

We spent thirty-five days getting from Puerto Williams to Valdivia, a distance of 1600 miles, but two months would have been better. *Parmelia* and her lucky crew enjoyed thirty-one anchorages, every one spectacular. There cannot be many regions left in the world that are so unaffected by man.



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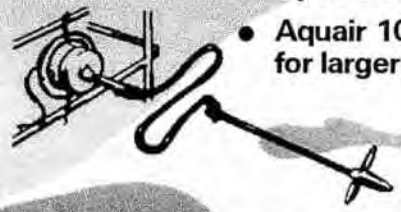
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SOUTH ARIS — THE VOYAGE

Paddy Barry and Jarlath Cunnane

(*Concluding The 'Irish Antarctic Adventure 1997', an attempt to follow in the wake of Ernest Shackleton, the first part of which appeared in* Flying Fish 1998/1.)

At 2200 on Saturday 18 January we pulled away under oar from Point Wild. Light brash ice from the calving glaciers at Cape Balsam tinkled against *Tom Crean's* 23ft hull. In cool but near perfect conditions of a light northwesterly breeze we raised our lug sails. Our feelings were of relief and jubilation that at last we were on our way. The planning, the fund-raising, the boat-building, the complexities of getting to our start were all behind us. Now it was just the five of us in our boat, sailing to South Georgia seven hundred miles to the northeast. The immediate reality was that we were too big for this cramped little boat. The simplest movements required a choreographed rearrangement of limbs, boat, gear and bodies.

The single burner gas stove, set in its metal box, was an abiding hazard to nearby sleeping bags and sleepers both. This was such a danger and commanded

Tom Crean, facsimile of Shackleton's James Caird, rowing out from the lee of Point Wild, Elephant Island, bound towards South Georgia





Tom Crean during her sailing trials on the west coast of Ireland

such respectful caution that it gave us no trouble. However it was grand to see the instant potato mish-mash being poured into our dog-dish bowls covering the tinned Spam or, on alternate days, tinned kippers. We did have varied food – muesli, Ryvitas, porridge, jam, tea – and all half hot and half cold as it was, with maybe a dollop of sea water splashing in for good measure, it was merely fuel to keep the bodies going. If we couldn't sleep much, at least we could eat – on the good days anyway.

And our first couple of days were good – great in fact. Our twenty-four hour run to Sunday night was seventy-six miles and to Monday night nearly as good, though the wind had veered round to northerly (or was it backed? – everything turns the opposite way down south!) so although we were going well we were being pushed down off our course. Our little *Tom Crean*, a faithful replica of Shackleton's *James Caird,* was little more than a rowing boat and had zero windward performance.

At 0930 on Day 2, Monday 20 January, I wrote:

> 'I just had a 'long' off-watch, great. It took me a long time to warm up my feet in the sleeping bag by rubbing them and curling them up. All yesterday we sailed to a west-northwest force 3 with all sail making 15° below our course... This morning Jarlath and Mike took down the mainsail. The sea was up and they had to steer excessively (20° plus) off course. We got a good forecast last night at the 2100 radio contact with Pelagic. The low giving our current weather has greatly filled and should now bring in only 20 knot northerlies.'

This shouldn't matter as sooner or later the wind would round astern and we'd romp along before it, regaining our northing. Tuesday was hard:

> 'All day we close-hauled to the east, with a fresh northerly wind. The boat will go only 90° to the wind. The South Orkney Islands grew ever closer as a lee-shore eventually only twenty-five miles away. By afternoon it was blowing 25 knots and at 1930 we put the boat about on the other tack heading northwest. The wind rose to a full gale. With backed jib and helm lashed a-lee, we lay-to for the night and were glad not to be blowing down on the Orkneys.'

This was the first bad weather we had met and the boat rode the seas very well with no full waves coming into the cockpit, just the occasional splash. However, the cockpit pump seemed inclined to airlock.

That blow lasted only about twelve hours and we tacked and were away again to the east. We were happy and confident though bloody cold all the time even in our sleeping bags. Inside the hull ran with the condensation, sweat and spillage – a mixed brew indeed. Outside you could at least stretch yourself in the biting wind, swing your arms and stamp your feet, until a shout from below

to 'stop the football match'.

At 1400 on Day 4, Wednesday 22 January:

> 'Today is the grandest day you ever did see – clear sky, sunny, cool force 2 off the beam, flattish sea and we are steering 040°, our direct course. We have had all our gear, bags, gloves, out drying. We are hanging round the cockpit chatting.
>
> We just ran a 'book' on our day of arrival at King Haakon Bay. The bet is one day's Ushuaia 'wages' – $20 per man. I have gone for a thirteen day passage. In fact, I think it may be less. The total is seven hundred miles rhumb line. We have been making good sixty miles a day, average, with the wind mostly from ahead.
>
> My back is stiff with the cold and damp. I took a couple of Bruefen, which help. God has it been cold, wet and miserable, even in the good weather. The cabin is so confined. Watch change is a major hassle getting out of oilies, putting them somewhere, getting off gloves, hats and boots, putting them where you hope you will find them – best under your head for a pillow – contorting feet first into the bag inside its cover, all damp. I pull my socks (two pairs) and gloves into the bag with me.
>
> Then at the end of your off-watch, the opposite. Your feet would barely have warmed up in the bag but it's time to get out again – head first – onto your knees, sideways, turn around, sitting in your dry gear on someone else's wet gear. We try and get oily trousers on inside the cabin and then as quick as can in the cockpit get on jacket, gloves, harness and hood up. Handling the boat is the easy bit.'

1730 on Day 5, WP 045° 399 miles:

> 'Last night we had a gale from the north and had to heave-to. Not too bad a night all told. This morning at about 0600 the wind fell and went westerly. We had a rollicking 4 knot sail for a while in the right direction. The TTG (time to go) even showed ninety-five hours for a spell. Alas now with a light following wind from a variable direction we slop along as best we can.'

We had made good sixty-six miles in the previous thirty hours. At 0535 on Day 6, Friday 24 January, with Mike and Paddy on watch:

> 'The wind is northeasterly force 2-3. We are sailing to the northwest at 2½ knots. It is a cold morning and misty and generally miserable. But all are in good heart, awaiting a change of wind for the better. Jamie fixed the pump last night. WP 047° 393 miles. Made six miles in the last ten hours.' Later: 'Hove-to in gale No 3 (in six days) northerly (as usual).'

The deck log finished here. What follows was written about four days later. The

wind and sea rose to a greater extent than the previous two gales, and kept on rising and rising. By nightfall the wind was lifting water, not just off wave-tops, off the seas. These grew first into regular big even crests of maybe 30 foot, but then became steep walls of water, the crests tumbling down, being wind carried off in flying spume. We put the sea anchor out from the bow; it seemed to make no difference. To look directly into the wind wasn't possible as the flying spume would cut into your face and eyes.

The boat was lying beam-on, try as we did to keep her head to windward with all other sail down and the tiller lashed to lee. We raised a triangular piece of mizzen which brought her head around about 20°, thus bringing the seas ahead of the beam. But the seas became irregular altogether and now were coming from all directions. We were pointing upwind, downwind, lying, running, we were tossed and battered about below like being inside a washing machine; wedged in, waves belting the boat, first on one side, then the other, then the deck. Going out to check the lashings of spars and sails was a dash through the hatch with the harness already clipped on, then out, slam and lock the hatch and clip on a second harness.

About 0400 Saturday morning we were all below, battered, cold, eating the odd Mars bar with water, when a great hissing sound rose above the now familiar racket. I was in a sleeping bag and sort of stiffened at this new sound. Then I felt us being carried bodily sideways, swept, and then the silence. We were upside down.

A cut in my head from hitting the underside of the deck unsighted me, but Jamie said later that he looked out the hatch (it was see-through polycarbonate) and saw only green sea. Slowly forever, for there was nothing we could do, she lay upside down before rolling slightly on, when we all scrambled to the side of the cabin to help her back up. There was no solid water inside – good hatch – but to empty the cockpit we had to open a bulkhead valve and let the water into the cabin and pump it away using the cabin pump. Ten minutes of this and the outside pressure of water on the hatch was down enough to open it, get out and finish pumping from outside. Amazingly, all the spars and sails were in place, and no damage had been done except to burgees, antenna and so on.

Twice in the next twelve hours we were again rolled, same story. We radioed *Pelagic* for any weather information. They had been registering wind speeds of 50-60 knots sustained and *Pelagic* had been knocked on her beam by a 'Shackleton wave'. Their wind was now southwest, 40-50 knots, the sea completely white. Air temperature 4°C. Three cyclonic depressions were on their way and if we did not get north of them we would be hit by all of them. They called a US specialist weather outfit and an hour later gave us the bad news – for the next ten days a deepening low, going down to 965mbs, would give northerlies all over the area,

with another 60 knot session in about three days' time.

We are not quitters, but the risk was too high. Sooner or later when capsized again, one of our crew would be swept away or the mast would pull the deck out. At best that wouldn't happen, but we would be carried hundreds of miles southward of South Georgia. The wind eased. I made the sad call to *Pelagic*: 'We want to abandon'.

It was the following day before the seas went down to a manageable state and *Pelagic* had made her way up to us. Veering down their inflatable and three times winching it back with us and our gear in it, we left our dreams, and scuttled her lest she survive, be washed up God-knows-where, and cause alarm.

Our position when we abandoned was 59°56'S 44°57'W.

For the next two days *Pelagic* raced the 270 miles, engine and sails any-which-way, to get to the shelter of the nearest part of South Georgia before the weather broke. Our bodies recovered quickly and our spirits less so, but we were unshaken in our determination that 'South Arfs' should continue. We called briefly into Larsen Harbour and were anchored in Cooper Bay when the weather struck. With keel in the mud (this is one of the benefits of the lifting keel), anchor and chain out, and four warps to steel slings tied around rocks, we rode it out and were not sorry to be there and not at sea.

We determined that to ensure success in the traverse we would work hard at getting ourselves and our mountain gear up to snuff, getting familiar if not comfortable with South Georgia's mountains, snow, ice and, most of all, weather. During the next two weeks we cruised the east coast calling at Ocean Harbour, Grytviken, Leith, Stromness and Antarctic Bay. We saw the wildlife, the abandoned whaling stations, Shackleton's grave, Prince Edward Military Base (seventeen men), met Tim and Pauline Carr in *Curlew*, and got into shape for the mountains. The weather was so changeable, fine maybe in the morning but snow and wind four hours later. On 5 February, within Leith Harbour, we had wind gusts of 38 metres/sec (about 90 mph) with snow.

It was bittersweet to enter King Haakon Bay aboard *Pelagic* on Saturday 8 February. The sea was flat. A light breeze blew in from the west. *Tom Crean* would have had no bother. Setting aside these thoughts we dinghied in to the narrow 'Cave Cove', that mere cleft in the rock 200 metres east of Cape Rosa, where Shackleton had landed on 10 May 1916. There we bolted a bronze plaque cast in Dublin to the rock face, commemorating his landing and the words of Amundsen: 'In the history of Antarctic exploration, the name of Shackleton will be forever written in letters of fire'.

We anchored that night up the bay near Peggoty Camp and at 1000 next morning began our traverse. Frank Nugent, leader, with Mike Barry, Jamie Young and Paddy Barry – thirty miles only; but those miles included three mountain

Crossing the Crean Glacier in South Georgia



ranges, heavily crevassed glaciers, snow fields, fog and the crossing of a near freezing river. Fifty hours later, with aching bodies, blistered feet, striped shoulders but light hearts these four descended into the ruined Stromness Whaling Station – exultant.

All together again, we sailed round to Grytviken. There we recovered, did some filming and hiking, had a few jars with the army guys from King Edward Base and prepared for our attempt on the unclimbed Mount Roots.

John Bourke, Mike Barry and Mick O'Rourke carried loads in and upwards, from base to advance-base, on the Nordenskold Glacier. Frank and Paddy Barry continued upwards, breaking through the clouds to a great snow bowl. Camp Gaffney, we called our minuscule camp under the remaining 3000 feet of Roots. And Mount Roots still awaits its first ascent – about 1000 feet up a gully of loose snow and friable rock, with avalanches too close and in doubtful weather, we packed it in. Roots will not fall to less than a fresh and full climbing team.

On Wednesday 26 February, anchor stowed below, we departed South Georgia and sailed a thousand miles to weather, leaving the Falkland Islands sixty miles to our starboard, Staten Island to our south, through the straits of Le Maire, up

The South Arís team outside the Manager's House, Stromness, where Shackleton ended his escape from the Antarctic by sea and land. From left to right: John Burke, Mike Barry, Mick O'Rourke, Paddy Barry, Jarlath Cunnane, Frank Nugent and Jamie Young



the Beagle Channel and, on 8 March, into Ushuaia. If we in South Arís may borrow (this time from Addison): "tis not in mortals to command success, but we'll do more Sempronios, we'll deserve it'.

Jarlath concludes

Tom Crean was built as a replica of Shackleton's boat the *James Caird*. Within the constraints of the overall dimensions – 23ft 6in by 6ft 6in there was little we could do to improve her sea-keeping qualities – we did have the benefit of an epoxy-wood deck instead of the original leaking canvas over the forward sleeping cuddy.

The sailing rig was an exact copy of that used on *James Caird* and off the wind she sailed very well – it was possible to balance the sails so that she self steered.

The hull was designed to be self righting should it capsize, and I'm pleased to say in the three knockdowns we received it righted without hesitation. The structure suffered no damage at any time, the only thing lost in the capsize was the VHF antenna, burgee and radar reflector. What caused the knockdowns was not the high winds – storm force 10 with sustained 50 knot winds – but the huge breaking seas which smashed down on her decks, rolling her over like a matchstick in a waterfall.

What changes would I make if I were designing her again? The following are notes written the day after the abandonment of *Tom Crean*:

- The hull should be insulated internally to prevent condensation forming which constantly wet our sleeping bags, ourselves and our provisions.
- The quarter berths were too narrow – I'd make them 2in wider and reduce the cockpit width.
- There were berths for four crew, the other crewmember being on watch. In the enforced situation with all five crew below while hove-to, at least one crewmember was extremely uncomfortable. Reduce the crew to four or redesign the layout below to accommodate all.
- More sea trials needed in heavy seas using a 'series drogue' type sea anchor to hold bow to wind and sea.
- Improve food – more easily prepared army-type rations need investigation and examine self-heating canned food.
- Improve cabin ventilation – more easily said than done – maybe a snorkel up the mast?



WANDERINGS IN THE WESTERN CARIBBEAN

John and Jean Armitage

(*The following account arrived from* Ostrica of Orwell *with a Marque as postmark. The second part, covering Belize and Guatemala, will appear in* Flying Fish 1999/1.)

Stuck, immobile, stranded...

'We're aground!' We knew the water was only just deep enough so we had sounded with the lead line from the dinghy and were happy about our route – until now! We were stuck, immobile, stranded and frustrated. Our three nights tucked well into a sandy-bottomed cove ringed by coral had been idyllic. Lighthouse Reef is one of three atolls offshore from the main barrier reef of Belize. In the South Pacific they form around the craters of extinct submerged volcanoes – in Belize the encircling coral reef has continued to grow while the island has subsided and/or the sea level risen. The lagoons of Glovers and Lighthouse Reefs each measure approximately ten miles by three miles, and contain perfectly clear water of every shade of blue through turquoise to brilliant white where the coral sand rises to the surface. Coral heads abound, but in good light and with our increasing experience (not all calmly learned!) we had weaved our way through this magic seascape. There are hard rock-like corals and soft plant-like ones which wave and bend with the ebb and flow of the crystal waters.

Snorkelling over these coral kingdoms, we have been captivated by the endless variety of colours and shapes. There are caves and deserts, mountains and valleys, all home to the reef fish. They feed off the coral, off nutrients brought up by currents from the depths of the surrounding ocean, and of course on each other. Each day at least an hour is spent just looking down through the snorkel masks getting our backs sunburned. In recent months we have started to cross reference our sightings to a book, so know that we have seen over a hundred different varieties of fish, some spectacular for their colouring, their minute size, or both. The big guys are a bit sobering when they suddenly appear a few feet away in the shallow waters, though even the evil-looking barracuda at up to 6 feet is all inquisitive teeth but stays a comforting few feet away after first checking you out. The biggies were the sharks! They are only nurse sharks and you know they are 'rarely' aggressive. Even so, an 8 foot shark is still a shark! When we met two of them entwined in some sort of mating tryst we moved smartly away.

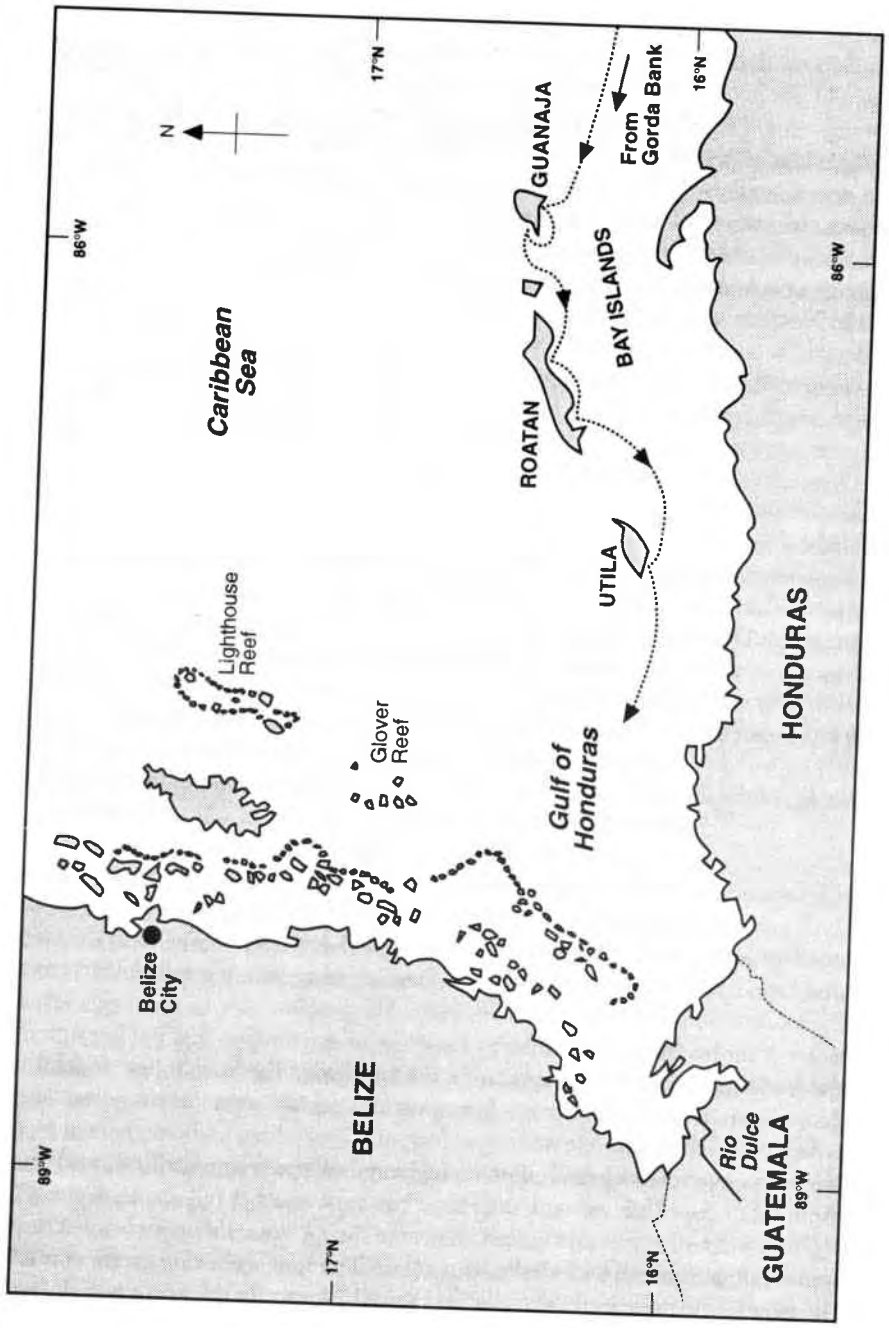
So how did we get afloat again? There is only a few inches of tide, so waiting would not help. With the genoa powered by 15 knots of following wind, and as many revs on the engine as we dared, we hoped to slip over the sand to deeper water just under the bow. Mistake. Always try to reverse off the way you go on, it says it in all the books! Now what? After a second bite with the kedge anchor we slowly winched *Ostrica* around, lots of revs, and with the change of wind angle we could sheet the genoa hard in to make her heel. We moved the required 20 feet back into 12 feet of water. How not to spend an hour and a half of your life! Now we were back where we started, inside the shallow passage out to the deep blue ocean, so tantalisingly close. A shallower draft yacht led the way and we escaped, hoisted sail and enjoyed a five hour downwind relaxing sail. Exploring the innumerable shallow anchorages of Belize with our 7ft 6in (2.3m) draught has made us a little envious of those with less than 5ft 6in (1.7m), which makes a huge difference in this part of the world.

Flashback

We had sat comfortably in Curaçao in the Netherlands Antilles through the first week of May, hoping that the constant 25–30 knot winds would lose a bit of strength. Although enjoying the company of many friends, our month in Bonaire had put us a bit behind schedule. We took the plunge (and John a pill) at dawn on 6 May, shot into the rolly following sea, hoisted headsails, and had a lively forty-eight hour start on our 1000 mile passage out to Honduras. The plot showed 200 miles over the first twenty-four hours and 153 in the next. It is a windy corner of the Caribbean and we enjoyed a substantial favourable current. As we charged into the centre of the Caribbean Sea the conditions returned to 'normal' and we settled into routine watches once again.

Jean was certain she could hear hissing from the cooker, though she could not smell gas, and now that it was no longer being brought up short on its chain but was swinging gently on its gimbals we started the search. It was soon decided that John had lost some high frequency hearing (sure sign of getting older!) and the soapy water failed to show up any leaks. The problem was, however, classified as a risk to the safety of the ship, not because of the obvious one but because of the inability to brew the Typhoo. So for two hours the boat rolled and John carefully disassembled each gas fitting on the cooker, remade the joints and failed to find the fault. Are we having fun yet? One hidden and unexpected pipe joint was eventually found after taking some of the framework off, and the Admiral declared all was now shipshape but 'take another pill you look green!'

That night all was compensated. We were slicing along the moon's reflection under full sail with all reefs shaken out at last. The stars seemed to gyrate around the glow of the masthead light, the log showed 7 knots. In the northwest sky we



had a very clear view of the Hale-Bopp comet with its long tail, even more spectacular viewed through binoculars. With the constellations above and the sparkling bioluminescence in the bow-wave and wake, a peace and contentment settled over us.

That night we passed through the position where there is no magnetic variation, so navigational calculations were simplified. By the mid-day following life was very comfortable, moving along with gentle following winds filling the cruising 'chute as we neared the shallow, reef-strewn banks off Nicaragua. Progress had been so good that it was obvious it would still be dark as we approached the inner passage around the northeast corner of Nicaragua, where the north/south coastline turns west and there are lots of things to miss! The decision was made to stand to the north in the deep water and clear all the banks. Then, in daylight, we could turn onto a southwesterly heading, clear Gorda Bank, and so enter Honduran waters. Decisions made, we were back on deck just as a turtle drifted past.

One night we were reminded of the obvious – that commercial ships either do not have sighted officers of the watch or they do not believe in giving way to sail. This happens often, but when the headsails are poled out, and with preventers on both mizzen and main booms, in the middle of the night, you just hope this once they will answer the VHF. Fat chance!

A call at the Cayos Vivorillos

There were dolphins alongside as we had breakfast, and the plot showed we could make a landfall at the tiny Cayos Vivorillos, fifty miles offshore at 15°50'N 83°18'W, by the middle of the day. The wind died away, so we started the engine to charge up the batteries and run our new joy – the water-maker. It slowly died, and it was two days before it started again. Meantime we had the nervy approach to the poorly chartered Cayos, and anchored under sail. The problem was algae in the fuel, which had blocked the head of the primary fuel filter which we eventually found contained a hidden 'check valve' solid with the black death. Somewhere we had been careless with the biocide doses we always add to the fuel. Lots of lessons learned – not least to be sure you can reach every corner of every tank for cleaning!

Time for relaxing at last as we swam the crystal waters and wandered over the uninhabited little islands. Fish and birds entertained us and the weather was perfect. Next lesson learned – even if desperate to rid yourself of the smell of diesel, do not expose your sensitive parts to too much sun!

It was only an overnight passage to raise our landfall at the Bay Islands of Honduras, in a dawn thunder squall with torrential rain. A little time was spent offshore, until we could identify the landmarks to make our approach through

the reefs. We found a blissful anchorage to end our crossing of the Caribbean Sea, 1055 miles from Curaçao.

Honduras

After an expensive tour of customs, immigration and port captain's offices we were able to fax home to advise of our safe arrival. We were on the eastern of the three principal islands of Guanaja, Roatan and Utila in the west, each surrounded with numerous cays and reefs. There are no roads on Guanaja, which is about five miles by one and a half miles wide with a backbone of pine-covered hills rising to 1300 feet. One day we started in the cool of early morning and climbed to these heights. We sat under pine trees and recovered, looking over the sea to the mountains of the Honduran mainland thirty miles away. Below was the turquoise water of the shallows inside the reef a mile or so offshore. Ten little cays are dotted along its line of white foaming ocean, now denied further progress, and all in contrast to the placid waters inside on which rested *Ostrica* under the hot sun.

On the northern coast we lost ourselves for a week in a secluded bay tucked behind the reef. Here we did the usual laundry and boat maintenance in the cool of the mornings (0530 start), swam at mid-day and enjoyed siestas and reading before tidying up in time for sundowners. These islands would be perfect tourist havens except for one thing, or more correctly millions of tiny things – the flying teeth. At sunset we were chased below, behind the protection of screens on all the openings. During the day it was inadvisable to venture ashore, particularly on the beaches, without copious bug-repellent.

An early morning expedition found us following a trail through a valley with cultivation on the lower slopes. Sugar cane, lime, coconut, cashew, date, breadfruit, and mango trees gave way to casuarina, firs and the forest trees of the steeper slopes as the track wove its way up the rough sides of the river into a ravine. After about an hour's warm scramble we plunged into a deep freshwater pool complete with thrashing waterfall. Here was the best hair-wash for a long time. The scenery may have been right out of the Tarzan and Jane films but the characters were somewhat lacking!

On a perfect, gentle morning we negotiated the reef pass as soon as the light was good enough and crossed to the more densely populated and developed island of Roatan. Columbus wrote of the Port Royal anchorage that he had 'never tasted sweeter water or of better quality' than that taken aboard here. As we slowly approached, looking for the dark blue deepwater pass, we were hailed on the VHF by a cruiser to give comforting guidance.

Once safely anchored in another paradise we set off to meet Terry and Susan from Canada, who had taken a shore job to fatten their cruising budget and

were supervising the construction of a large homestead for a wealthy Californian. Several days were spent diving on the reef and socialising ashore. A prolific mango tree provided the green mangoes for Jean and Susan to brew a vast pot of mango chutney – several pounds were stowed. John was envious at the quality of the timber and the skill of the craftsmen. Mahogany and rosewood were used exclusively for everything from roof beams to the hand-carved dining room table and chairs, all converted from sawn timber on site. The rosewood came from the mainland for 50 pence per board-foot!

Our memory of Roatan will be of an island with all the beginnings of a slow transformation into a mimic of those Eastern Caribbean islands where tourism and lack of work opportunities has created anxieties and animosities which seem to remove the smiles from the people. It has international flight connections, so tourism is growing fast. A more personal reminder is a 20 lb propane cylinder which has required the reconstruction of the gas locker. A hurricane season project, but with a doubling of our time between refills it was worthwhile.

Utila has become famous for the cheapest PADI courses for SCUBA diving in the world. As far as we are concerned it has the fiercest flying teeth so far, the nicest officials so far, and only a couple of safe anchorages. The weather was set fair, so it was frustrating to be delayed due to a paperwork mix-up by officials in Roatan and have to wait an extra day for new papers to arrive by ferry before we could get customs clearance to leave Honduras. Meantime we made new friends and it was a fine sight as three yachts rounded the little offshore cays and sailed silently into the sunset.

(In addition to writing for *Flying Fish*, John and Jean compiled several pages of detailed information on Honduras, Belize and Guatemala which is available from the OCC Cruising Information Service.)



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K Adlard Coles (*Sailing Days*, 1944)



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AN 'ABRAÇO' FROM BRAZIL

Rija and John van Logchem

(John and Rija, from the Netherlands, both speak fluent Portuguese learnt during eight years spent in Rio de Janeiro, Recife and Curitiba. The second part of their long and interesting account of cruising Brazil aboard their Swan 47 Queen of Hearts *will appear in* Flying Fish 1999/1.)

Tropical Brazil! How 'land' took getting used to again – the fierce hot sun, relentless noise, exuberant colours and smells, people and their 'land-requirements', roaring powerboats, messy handling of the environment, taking care not to be robbed, the enormous contrasts between rich and poor... We tired easily the first days, after the relatively restful routine of just over twelve days sailing from the Cape Verdes to Salvador, some 2000 miles. But we fully enjoyed again the fruits and vegetables, spicy meat and fish dishes, the velvety-warm evenings, sunrises with yellow birds calling '*bem-te-vi*, good to see you' and the colourful people who made us feel so welcome. Also, Bahia, a state in Brazil we did not know before, has a rich cultural history. Our plan was to go back to Rio de Janeiro, which we left in 1992, with the Baía de Ilha Grande our final destination. When we lived and worked in Rio we had sailed a Laser from various beaches and then a Cal 9.2, but never had enough time to fully enjoy that incredibly beautiful area.

Salvador City
The yacht club can just be seen at far right



But first things first. It was Dover Dick* who did it – convincing us to become OCC members I mean. We've sailed for many enjoyable years on the east and south coasts of England when not living in Africa or Latin America. When we first met Dick we had crossed the Atlantic from Newport directly to Falmouth, then on to Lymington and Dover in our just acquired *Queen of Hearts*, a Swan 47, built in 1977 to a Sparkman & Stevens centreboard design. We were on our way to Holland for maintenance and some changes geared to cruising in the tropics, the plan then was to sail to Gibraltar and eventually to Odessa. We were being transferred from Rio de Janeiro to Kiev, Ukraine. Odessa proved not to be such a good idea, so Gibraltar it remained. After three 'Russian' years various factors came together and we could go sailing, finally for as long as we liked. What luxury to have time!

Our mid-January crossing proved unexpectedly easy. We were a bit apprehensive about the doldrums – visions of endless calms, sudden strong squalls and having to tack all the way after the Equator, besides which I had made one jump too many from the bows. Results were ruptured cruciates and a cracked meniscus a week before our departure and a farewell party for sixty people. John and I met again in Lisbon with me having to do physiotherapy on the way.

We tried to get as much easting as possible by leaving from Porto da Praia on the island of Santiago in the Cape Verde islands, which we saw for hours. We don't carry all that much fuel – 200 litres normally, with 100 litres extra for the crossing – so to start with motoring? A minimal breeze from the northeast made us hoist the gennaker for want of something to do, and the 160m² gave us 2–3 knots, increasing to 6 knots and more during the next three days. When boat speed exceeded 9 knots we took it down, having learned just before getting to the Cape Verdes that winds suddenly increase and then it's impossible to get it into the 'chute again. (We had to do a 'kiwi-drop' over the side at 0500!) The sturdy No 3 genoa (G3) works well for us, both on the boom and with headwinds and did so again, all the way.

John, being a radio ham, kept daily contact with Trudy in Barbados (8P6QM, 21400 kHz USB, 1300 UTC). She gave position, activity and size of the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone, but it moved quicker than we could sail. We compromised by crossing the equator at 28°W, 30°W being the shortest distance. 'ITCZ 180 miles, moderate convection' said Trudy that day. For us it meant black-lined squalls with or without a lot of wind and rain, lightning all around, fantastic cloud formations, a circle rainbow over our heads and confused seas. With temperatures around 32°C, 3% humidity, and water temperature 28°C we could understand why hurricanes get born here.

* Dick Davidson, Port Officer for Dover, Kent

Tiring days, mainly because of the heat and the continuous concentration necessary, but on the other hand it was also sensationally beautiful and challenging. Winds varied from force 3 to force 7 (8–30 knots), but having no illusions about our fitness we handled it the easy way by simply rolling in the G3 and putting the main in the 'vane-position', with the standard one reef at night. We had no calms at all – daily averages remained between 145 and 195 miles. Perhaps the champagne-and-flower offer to Neptune and Iemanjá, the Afro-Brazilian goddess of the sea, did help!

When the southeast trades at first came in more southerly, we were still alright on our 190° course to Salvador. Wonderful sailing it was, on a close reach and at times almost a beam reach. *Queen of Hearts* and we were happy with the rhythm and restful colours of the ocean, clear starry nights, fluorescent performances of dolphins, quite large flying fish, our first ever sperm whale and stormy petrels weaving along, until the Brazilian coast when, nightly, we were host to some young birds fighting to get places to rest on the boom, bimini or on our heads!

We saw our first ships then, and later gaily coloured wooden fishing boats with large circular nets. Not so nice at night, when you don't see them on radar and navigation lights are left to personal creativity, people often finding it more practical to light a bright lamp when you come close.

The coastal northeast winds proved fickle, tropical downpours (finally removing the Sahara dust and giving us nice showers) alternating with very light breezes. Banging sails in swells are bad for material and morale so we opted for the engine for the last miles, but it stopped almost immediately – the filters were clogged with a residue of bacterial growth. It took a sweaty hour for John to replace them, but to our relief it remained purring perfectly. (A biocide needed to be added to the fuel, hard to get in Brazil.)

The entrance to the bay was reached well into the evening. Although there are banks and rocks and we entered on the ebb, at one point with 3 knots against us, it was no problem with GPS and radar thrown in and is well marked. To the rhythm of drums and a smell of *churasco* (barbecued meat) we anchored outside the moorings of the *Iate Clube da Bahia* just inside the bay. Time for celebration drinks and a full night's sleep!

We enjoyed the hospitality of the yacht club enormously. Helpful information, nice contacts with members, swimming pool with sea view, showers, sauna and a pleasant bar and restaurant – it was a good place for us to acclimatise. High summer; time to slow down drastically and patience increase accordingly, with norms and values adjusted, within personal limits, to get done what's needed.

We have a permanent visa but had to clear in just the same via three offices – immigration first, followed by customs and the *Capitania*, the Navy department

responsible for coast and harbours. Neatly dressed, it took half a day but we left everywhere with an *abraço* – a hug.

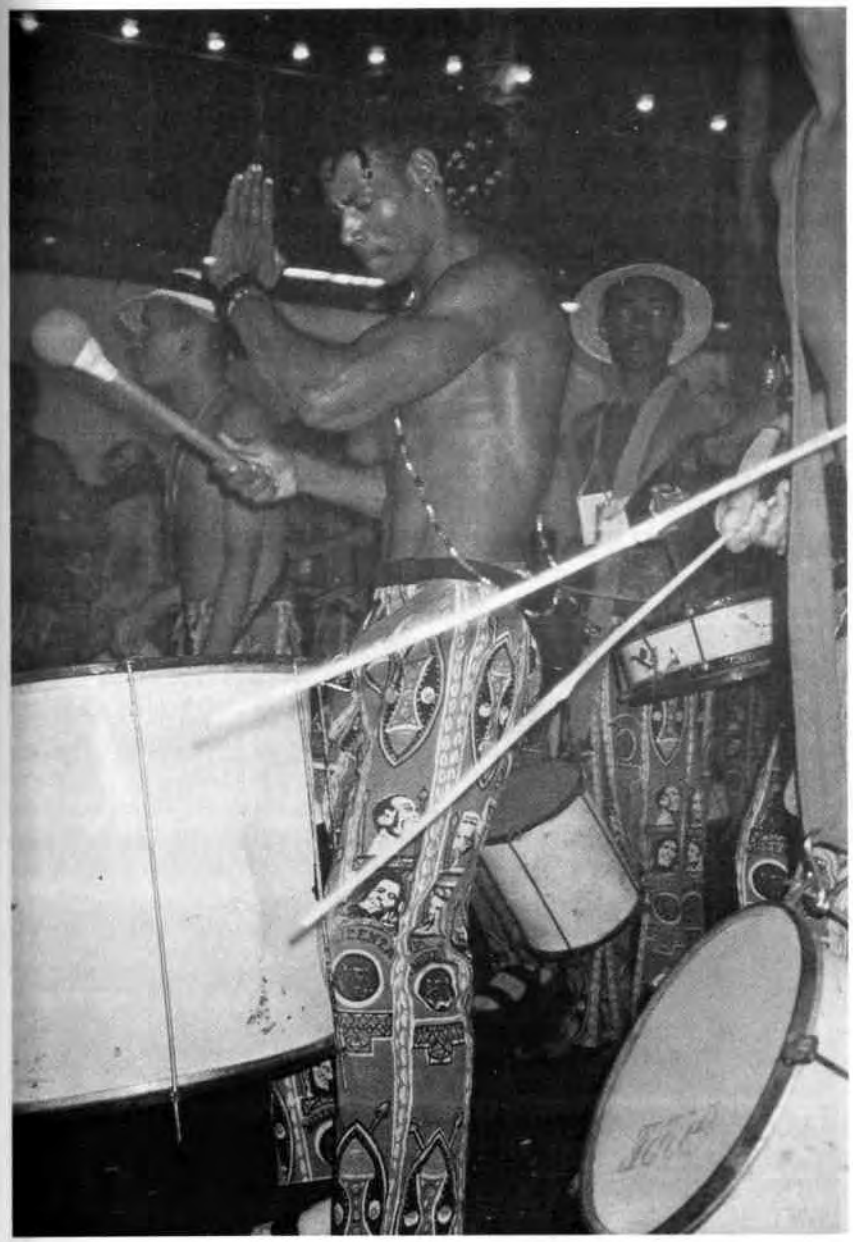
Traditionally, reception of foreign yachts has been delegated to the yacht clubs, which extend hospitality and support generally for a minimum of three days, sometimes more, free of charge. Then a fee is charged, which usually is reasonable, depending on board policy. They are good places to start when repairs are needed and often have their own infrastructure or network to solve problems. However yacht clubs are not marked on the charts, so we had to find out their positions locally. Brazilian sailors are very helpful and easy to get to know, but water sport here is rather elitist and racing more popular than cruising. Club shares are expensive and it's normal to have an employee, a *marinheiro*, for maintenance. Very often he's like part of the family and will go on trips as well, leaving the owners free to enjoy their drinks and the company. So we're also seen as 'rich' here.

Ready for *Carnaval!*

Famous throughout Brazil, with thousands of people arriving during these holiday months of January and February, we couldn't really evade *carnaval* – celebrating is an art here and drums had been beating out samba rhythms for days. We went to the new *Centro Náutico*, a small state-run marina, reasonably priced, with 24 hour security, electricity and water (not for drinking – in Brazil everyone with any sense filters, boils or disinfects water from the tap or natural sources, or uses mineral water).

The *Centro Náutico* is in the old smallboat harbour right in the centre, and here we met most of the foreign boats cruising the area. Some people left their boats for weeks to go inland by bus, as long-distance travel is very well organized in Brazil. It is only a short walk and a lift-ride up to Pelourinho, on the plateau, the oldest part of town. *Carnaval* groups dance in the streets there, or perform along certain routes with trucks full of bands and sound equipment going full blast, each group having its theme, dress and samba. One can rent a *camarote* with seats, but as frugal Dutch we found it expensive and less original than in the old city with its steep cobblestoned roads and houses, churches and squares from colonial times, some parts already beautifully restored. We found outdoor bars and restaurants, museums, art and crafts shops, street commerce and music and dance everywhere.

Pelourinho means place of slave trade – people from west Africa were sold here to work on plantations and in industry. Brazil was the last country to abolish slavery, in 1888, when over 800,000 black people had to fend for themselves, poor and without education but, through isolation and suppression, rich in African cultural expression.



'Bloco Afro' vibrating drums, and dancing becomes irresistable

In the streets you see a colourful mix of mainly Portuguese, African and native Indian. Northeast and north Brazil, where we were, is another country compared to the south, which had different immigration (mostly from Europe, Japan and the Middle East) and through industrialisation a higher living standard – something like Northern Africa to Scandinavia, with about the same distances involved. But everywhere people get along quite easily, with descent and colour often the subject of conversation.

We noticed a growing interest in and manifestation of the African heritage. Apart from scientific research, there are many things visible in daily life – for example, candles at street corners and on the beach with offers of food and flowers, an *Olodum* cross in a square, reggae-type protest music and *Capoeira* performances, originally a kind of war-dance.

The Afro component in this roaring *carnaval* is clear – we're sitting having a beer, watching the scene, and here come the drums, big and small, lots of them and beaten with a vengeance, a booming rhythm all around and in you ... then somebody jumps up, dancing enthusiastically, people clap rhythmically, girls join in. Fantastic, sparks are flying, what sense of rhythm, what bodies – no wonder

The hard life!



'bum-bums' are the ultimate sex symbol in Brazil!

With our neighbours we shared the next beer and some of the food that was being offered – cheese and corn on sticks, roasted on portable charcoal burners by children, an *acarajé* (the Bahian version of a hamburger), fried bean dough with shrimps, *vatapá* sauce, hot peppers and green tomato salad, prepared by a smiling Bahiana in traditional dress.

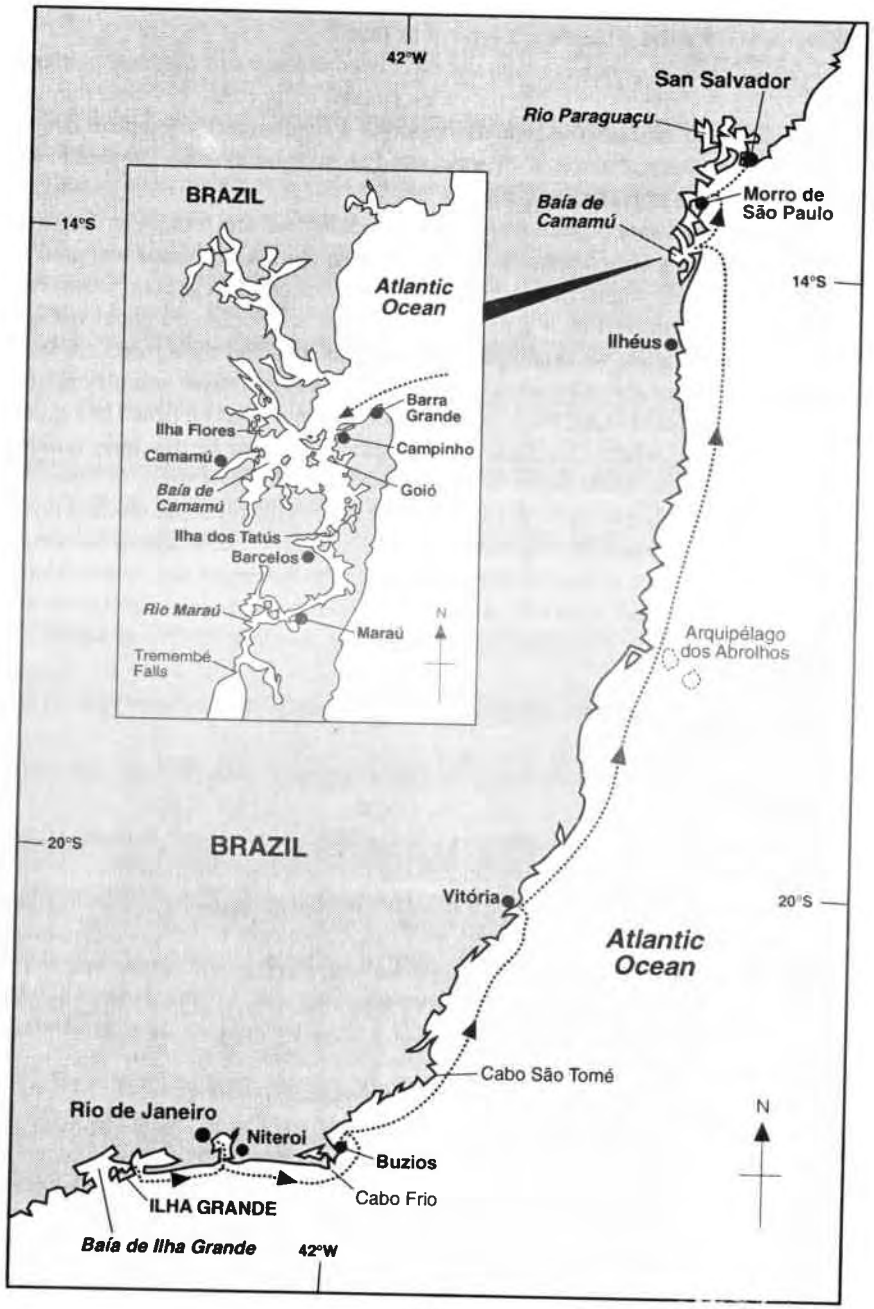
Though well aware of *carnaval* dangers we didn't see any robbery or fighting. There were many armed police in groups, however, and only plastic was used to serve. What really frightened us happened along the official *carnaval* route – we were literally trampled by a gigantic, crazy, mass of people and could not get away. In desperation we finally slid off a viaduct, but had then to get through back alleys with a revolting stench of all sorts of waste, human and otherwise!

By then John and I (and especially my knee) felt the need for peace and quiet, difficult to find where Brazilians get together. But even in this busy holiday season there were anchorages in the bay and the Rio Paraguaçu, in beautiful tropical surroundings, where the atmosphere was totally rural and modern times seemed to have passed by, and where we mostly had the anchorage to ourselves. I'd like to refer here to the excellent description by Rosemary and Alfred Alecio in *Flying Fish* 1996/2 – we felt and experienced the same, so no need to repeat it. One thing: the city side of the bay and near the port on Ilha de Madre de Deus is polluted, though they are working on it. (See the *Guia de Praias*, a beach guide available at kiosks, which has satellite pictures and information on the entire coast of Brazil).

Candomblé

Back in Salvador we got a chance to go to a *Candomblé terreiro*, literally a place of gathering. *Candomblé* is really a collection of different indigenous beliefs originating in Africa, mainly from the Yoruba, Bantu and Ewe tribes. Coming from totally different regions they could not communicate, but being enslaved they were forced to get along and to support each other, something impossible in Africa, often even today. Thus a Brazilian religious version developed, with concepts such as *Orixas* (nature gods), *Axé* (positive energy) and *Olodum* (the almighty). People organized themselves into secret brotherhoods and their gods were disguised as Catholic saints. After abolition, these brotherhoods held religious services in *terreiros*, where support and food were given – few proved to be able to live 'free'. It is strange that the government did not provide land, tools or financial help, which it gave to the European immigrants who were asked to come and settle at about the same time.

We went to a meeting dedicated to Xangó, god of fire and justice. Well known artists like musicians Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso and author Jorge Amado



also attend there. It was in a neighbourhood which John said we should stay away from at night, so we shared a taxi with two American sailing friends. Entering the grounds, however, we saw it was a lot better inside – a well-tended garden with a fountain and statues, and a house with a large, high-ceilinged room where we were asked to sit on chairs against the wall, men and women apart.

There are many doors – for Xangó to come in, I hear. Behind a pair of beautifully carved armchair thrones there is a niche with a number of drums, each with its own name and voice. Later they are used for hours, in a rather monotonous rhythm. In long robes, white with lace, the *Mae do Santo* (mother of the saint) and the *Pai* (father) dance in a circle, joined by the sons and daughters, all initiated. They touch often, kneel on the floor, bow to a door (to ask Xangó to join us) and ultimately get into a sort of trance. Next to me there's a commotion – a woman shudders all over, eyes showing white and her body in a tight half-circle. It's a bit frightening, but someone from the leadership takes her gently to a room at the back where the *Mae do Santo* is available for consultation and help as a medium to Xangó. This happens a few times – twice I see a man going, one still in his business suit and with an attaché-case. We are not the only foreigners, a Spanish girl sits suddenly motionless, staring, with tears rolling down her cheeks – she also goes inside. It seems a kind of hypnosis, by the sound of drums, smells, the heat, who can tell? Somebody tells me that now she is the child of Xangó, protected by him. One has to offer things of course, like special food and drink, but if you have worries you may tell them and ask for things.

Later, at nearly midnight, the family and support feeling is further strengthened by large pots of traditional food and lots of conversation. Two beautiful girls, very tall, slim and shining black, explain what I see. The best part is to come shortly, they say, when all the *Orixás*-gods in their particular costumes come in and do their dance. By then John and his friend are already having a drink in the bar next door, discussing whether or not it was real or a show. Either way, it was a very interesting evening.

It's difficult, but we have to leave – Rio is 700 miles away and we want to be there before the southwest cold fronts of the winter period start to come through. Also a young Brazilian couple, Julio and Sandra, had told us enthusiastic stories about a bay seventy miles to the south and largely uncharted – Bahian paradise, he called it, forgotten by time. We arranged to meet them later, just inside the Rio Maraú. At the *Capitania* we found all the Brazilian charts we needed, as well as the tide tables and Chart 12000, a handy booklet, in Portuguese and English, with explanations (all at about US $13).

John had to clean below the waterline, the growth there also being tropically fantastic, and the small floating diving compressor came in handy. I had to look



Ilhéu Campinho, a nice walk at low tide

into provisioning – according to Julio it would be difficult to find supplies, and we hate having to leave for that reason.

We knew Brazil would be expensive. The *Real* was introduced in 1994 and is tied to the US dollar. Set high initially because of speculation and distrust of government monetary policies, it is still rather overvalued, but with hardly any inflation instead of the 40% a month as before. I had loaded the boat with goodies, short-cook varieties of staples, wine etc in the Canaries. The policy here is that everything the masses eat, like rice and beans, fresh produce and meat, is relatively inexpensive. The remaining quarter or so of the population are so much more wealthy that they can easily afford expensive manufactured and imported foods. But it's a fact that the same local brand of wine or cheese costs two or three times as much in US dollars as before the *Real* period, not to mention services and imported goods. Often there is no relation at all between quality or value.

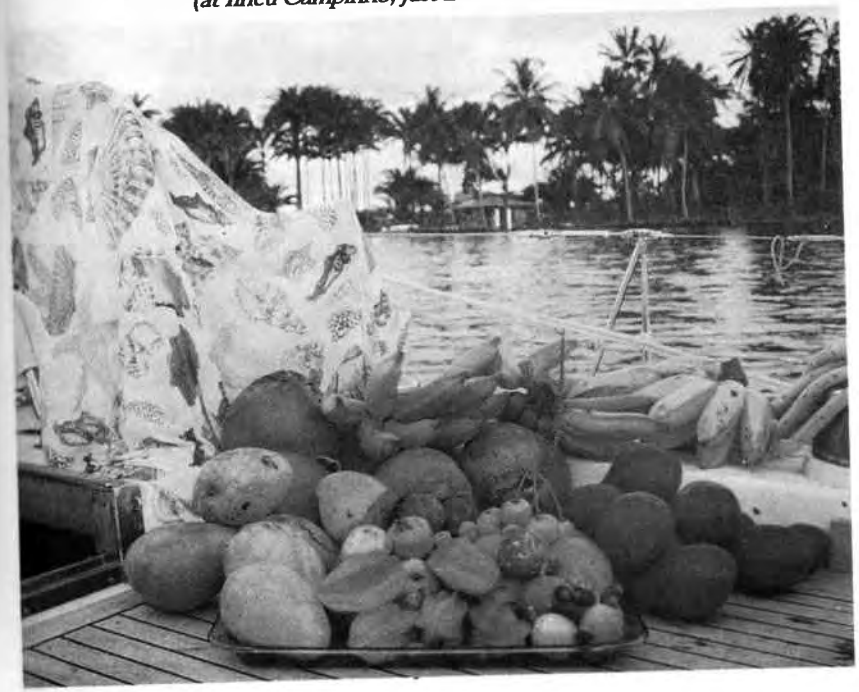
I usually buy lots of inexpensive fresh stuff and the variety is amazing. I have meat and fish cleaned and frozen – we never had a fridge nor a freezer before, but it proved a good investment if only for independent cruising and a cold drink! We don't like tinned foods, and neither do the Brazilians apparently, as there's little to chose from that tastes nice.

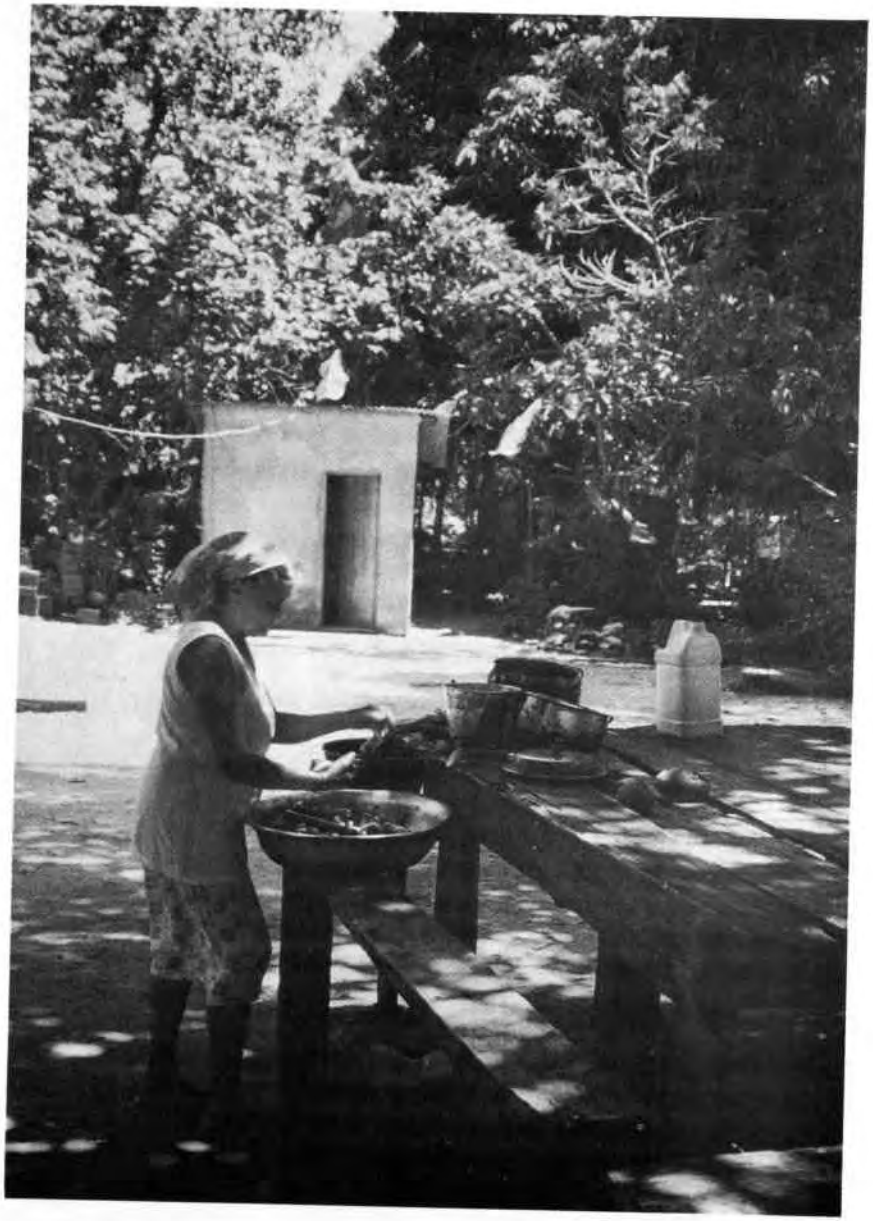
Baía de Camamú, a Bahian paradise

Leaving Salvador involved sailing through a hectare or so of floating plastic and other debris, but after that we passed deserted beaches with palm trees and clear water to Morro de São Paulo, known for its beaches and coral reefs. We'll be back on the return trip, now it's just to sleep so that next day we arrive in time to cross the bar into Bahia de Camamú with daylight. We have one of those perfect sails – lovely temperature, nice breeze, a broad reach good for the 7 knots average needed to reach the river entrance on the first half of the flood. The entrance zig-zags, but is charted and reasonably marked though the buoys are rusty, the green ones with strange tops. Some are rather close to semi-submerged reefs and sandbanks – not to be tried at night. In the setting sun, with the glare against us, they are not easy to pick up. The current in the channel runs about 2 knots.

Once through we anchor off a sandy beach on Ilhéu Campinho, just inside the Rio Maraú. No Julio – off to Goió probably, a lovely little island a bit further up with fresh water for bathing. He said he preferred it there – it was better

Time and time again we returned on board with loads of fruit (at Ilhéu Campinho, just inside the Rio Maraú)





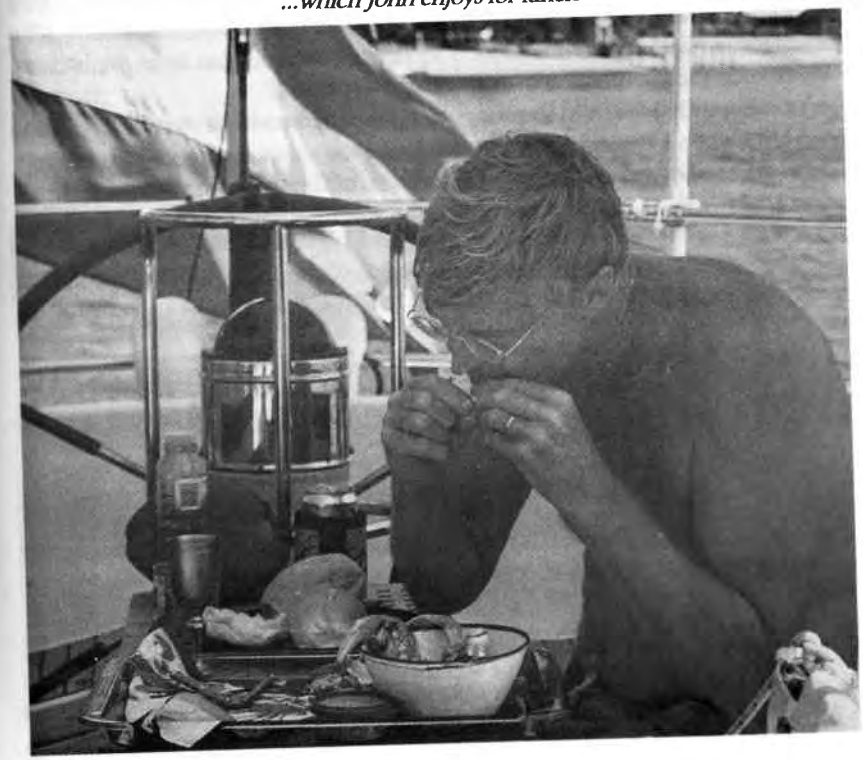
Dona Adil, at the table around which daily life revolves, shows us how to use a little stick to crack crabs...

protected though also a lot hotter. For a time we get to know life along this wide tidal river, studded with little islands, from up close. It is wonderfully scenic aqua-nature, softly undulating hills with stretches of *Mata Atlantica* - Atlantic rainforest - still intact (an exception along this coast) and mangrove, alternating with lovely beaches.

There are simple local houses hidden behind the greenery and we're invited to come and visit, normal practice along the river. At a large table in the shade of the widest mango tree we ever saw, Dona Adil, a widow of around sixty, and her son Ailtom, tell us stories about the region. Daily life centres around that table - eating, siesta, grating of coconuts, shelling the hard burned shells of home-roasted cashew nuts, cracking innumerable crabs with a hardwood stick, preparing *doces* (sweets) - she's always busy when we get there. Because cooking is a hobby, I like to help and learn and my recipe notebook grows steadily.

A lot of fruit and herbs are native but some her grandparents have planted, so apart from ten types of mangoes there are about thirty others, half of which we

...which John enjoys for lunch



have never seen before. They give us loads of fruit time and again, from sweet *jacas* and *graviola* to refreshing *acerola*-berries and green coconuts to drink. Use of their bore-hole with good water comes in handy, even with the nightly rain. No payment is expected – it's normal to give hospitality and hopefully become friends. Only when we insist, and call something a *lembrança* (souvenir) or *presente*, will Dona Adil accept anything in return.

Many people appreciate a visit – helpful and hospitable Soninha, who runs a small *pousada* (inn) and restaurant under shady breadfruit and *jaca* trees, lets us use her shower whenever we want.

A nice walk at low tide takes us to Sapinho, a tiny hamlet upriver, to see if Jorge has lobsters. Dugout *canoas* are made and repaired here. We learn about types of wood and at which point in the cycle of the moon the trees must be cut and worked – otherwise the wood will rot, because of *bichinhos* (beasties). The knowledge comes from the Indians, they say. The *canoas* are beautiful, with a nice sheer. They widen at each end, with an area on both sides of the stern to jump onto when pushing it into the water. A spear-shaped paddle is used, serving also as a rudder and, stuck in the mud, as a pole to tie the *canoa* to. Sizes vary from 3 to 8 metres. In the larger there are several holes along the side to take leeboards, and the mast with a rolled squaresail lies ready to use in the bottom. We've seen them skimming over the water – splendid!

A one hundred year old dugout is being repaired now. Its *sucupir-açu* wood

A camboa – there is always fish, because of their clever construction



took forty years to grow and is so hard that nails won't go in. Talking about techniques, we're amazed to hear the Dutch word '*breew*' and we see how a new piece of wood is inserted, using tar and fibres of beaten wood.

En passant we hear how fishing is done here – using *camboas* (large permanent fish-traps of wooden sticks, with a clever three-room construction), circle-nets with mazes so large that small fish can escape, ingeniously plaited *manzoás* (traps for crab and lobster), and with rods and specific bait. The best fish has *carne branca* (white meat). 'Nobody here needs to go hungry,' they say, 'unless they are very lazy. There's fish and fruit in abundance'. That's why every fruit tree, however far away, has its owner and everyone knows who that is. So better ask if it's okay to pick fruits.....

Time is not important here – there is time for whatever you feel like. Thus John maintains radio-contacts, experiments with e-mail and manages to set it up, thanks to the Winlink amateur radio network, via the USA and Trinidad. We can now communicate with our daughter Barbara in Mauretania, and family and friends all over the place! He has a notebook full of things to do to maintain and upgrade our twenty year old *Queen* – the materials that had to come along! The best was the installation of a shower in the cockpit, because we swim daily, and eight small fans in strategic places. I cook, and we both sleep, a whole lot better!

Ilha dos Tatús is our favourite anchorage, a small island about six miles upriver where it is about two miles wide and there is less current. We have the beach with palm trees to ourselves and blissfully laze the days away, swimming, reading and enjoying the cooler evenings. Magnificent starry 'sky-scapes', night sounds of land and sea creatures, and the distant rumble of the surf on the oceanside of the peninsula emphasise the total silence.



That is why I got a small boat of my own, so that I can poke along at my leisure, visiting remote corners of the earth and actually seeing how the other half of the world lives.

Dwight Long

DIRTY LINEN

Eve Bonham Cozens

This is a serious matter. I am not referring to metaphorical 'dirty linen' – we've had enough of that being washed in public this autumn. I'm talking about the real thing – clothes that need a scrub. It is a subject which does, I know, occupy the thoughts of sailing people more often than they care to admit. But it rarely gets a mention – it is an undignified and sordid subject, undeserving of attention. But I'm going to give this thorny problem an airing.

Which of you can deny that you have, at some time or another, and probably often, wandered forlornly from port or harbour to town or city clutching sagging kit bags full of soiled unmentionables, vainly seeking that most elusive of services – a laundry or laundrette? Very few, I reckon, unless you delegate this task to the 'crew'. How many times, I ask, have you altered course and sailed into somewhere not for the beauty of the surroundings, the excellence of the restaurants, nor the camaraderie of the bars, but for the promise of an accessible washing machine. It's pathetic – we all know it – and we all do it! We mourn good sailing time wasted in this way.

Why? Because most of us, when aboard our vessels, still retain some shred of decent civilised behaviour and want, from time to time, some clean, dry clothing. It's not too much to ask, but so often it's too difficult to achieve. I seem to hear the odd laugh of derision or scorn – well, you can stay happy and grubby and damp! But the rest of us try to deal with the problem of dirty linen.

Of course, your approach varies according to the latitude of your vessel – and indeed, other factors such as the size of your water tank, the strength of the wind, the number of miles you are offshore, the owner's sense of pride in having a tidy ship, etc.

There is, of course, the 'do-it-yourself' approach. This is the onboard solution, but it has its attendant problems. In hot climes there is no problem with the drying end of things, but the water required for the washing side of the job can be wasteful. In some places water can be hard to obtain and expensive. In colder regions there may be plenty of water available, but clothes can take days to dry. A small saloon festooned with clammy clothing for days on end is very depressing and hard to live with. Also, pegging clothing along the guard rails and removing them is time-consuming – when a rain squall comes, the nearly dry garments must come down very quickly, and strong wind or a sudden departure can also wreak havoc. I remember tearing down frantically flapping T-shirts whilst leaving a Chesapeake Bay anchorage in a hurry during a squall, and losing a couple of them over the side.

On balance, if you don't mind using the water from your tanks, in hot weather my vote goes to doing the washing aboard. But in more northern countries I'd probably try to find an ashore solution. We don't use marinas that much and far prefer anchoring, but this summer in Sweden we did on a few occasions choose a particular destination because we wanted laundry facilities. It was our bad luck that one marina had closed down the ablutions block because of a pump failure, and in another there was a power failure for half a day – just when I had planned to put the loads through their machines. The third failure was my sense of humour! It is can also be very expensive – even when you've sorted out the numerous coins/tokens required, which in any case you can't get because the office/shop is closed.

The real mug's game is 'Search for the Laundrette' which someone has told you is not far away down a side street, the name of which they can't remember, 'but it's the one with the seedy grocery shop on the corner'. I remember some years back walking round a large town in Greece for three hours with two heavy kit bags of dirty washing trying to locate an elusive laundry – I never did, and returned to our boat with my arms feeling three inches longer and my temper badly frayed. 'It's never worth it', you say, as you roll up your washerwoman's sleeves and get the job done in half the time you've spent searching for a mechanical washer.

There is also the possibility of getting someone else to do it for you. We are all very grateful to those people we meet who offer baths and a washing machine. But in the absence of such kindly angels one may perhaps pay someone else to take it home, wash it and return it. This scenario is most often found in hot countries where the locals earn a bit by doing your washing for you, in the Caribbean, for example. This is great – they take it all away and bring it back, usually the next day.

But one is never certain, and the question, 'Will it arrive before our ETD, or am I going to enrage the skipper by asking for a delay?' causes anxiety, as does, 'Will she remember the name of the boat?' or 'I can't remember her name and don't know where she lives. How could I have been so stupid not to ask?' The relief of seeing all your clothing back again, even if it is late and creased, means you probably don't haggle over the price. I don't mind being overcharged if this is done with a cheery smile (often), but I do hate being rooked by someone with a sour expression (rare).

We have all met those who never go to sea – the type who ask if you anchor at night when crossing an ocean – who blithely assume that specialist bakers, fashion boutiques, luxury hotels and automatic washing machines are to be found on every island and along every coast. They just don't understand that, on sailing boats, dirty linen is a problem. It's not just clothing either, but towels, sheets,

and pillow cases (be careful hanging up the latter – if pegged the wrong way they fill up with wind and take off like demented balloons) which really sap the enthusiasm.

So here we have the various techniques for dealing with this nightmare:

Firstly, laundry facilities ashore that are findable, within walking distance, open, and affordable. The snag here is that you will spend literally hours overseeing the wash and dry cycles, feeding machines with coins, and struggling with semi-obliterated instructions often in a foreign language.

Secondly, shipboard Chinese laundry either below or on deck, using the same water many times and scrubbing your hands raw. Then pinning the lot to the guard rail, accidentally sacrificing the odd sock or pair of pants to Neptune, and listening to it flap and snap in the rising wind – or, alternatively, dejectedly draping it all round the cabin hoping the rain will stop soon.

Thirdly, handing laundry over to a third party and getting someone else to deal with the problem, (such as a gullible crew member, an enterprising local touting for business, or a long suffering port officer/friend/bar acquaintance). This solution entails either guilt, anxiety, or both. And it'll cost you, in cash or booze!

There is, of course, another far simpler way of approaching the dirty laundry question – live with it! Let it fester. This works fine if you are a singlehander, but might be considered anti-social behaviour if you are sharing the boat with others. (The other way is to give up proper cruising and become a weekend sailor, and take the problem home with you to your own Zanussi.)

I end with a message to all skippers, whether intolerant of those who have the heavy burden of dealing with dirty linen or sympathetic to their plight. Be patient, be flexible, be supportive. Or else stay damp and stay dirty and stay smelly!



Ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land-rats and water-rats, land-thieves and water-thieves.

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

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VAGRANT'S FURTHER VOYAGES

Bill McLaren

(Flying Fish *1997/2 saw Bill and Jane McLaren reach the Caribbean aboard their Bowman 40* Vagrant of Clyde. *Apologies for keeping you waiting for the next instalment...*)

Vagrant had brought us from Scotland to the Caribbean in a voyage of six months to make our landfall at Scarborough, Tobago on 13 December. As we stepped ashore a Rasta man welcomed us with the words 'Welcome to Paradise, man! And it's time to slow down'. It was good advice, particularly as I plodded through the Byzantine immigration and customs procedures which involved complex forms asking, for example, how many stowaways we had on board. My lighthearted response that I thought there were none but that it was difficult to be absolutely certain was frostily received and I learnt that proper respect was due!

The advice to slow down was also good as we planned the winter ahead. Our cruise so far had been one of constant travelling, but in a sense we had now arrived. For the next few months we could go where we pleased at the pace we pleased, provided we finished up at the north end of the Leeward Islands by April, poised to head north to the Virgin Islands, Bermuda and the USA before the hurricane season opened in June.

And so we slowed down, but as the winter passed we realised that our plans were too ambitious and that we didn't remotely have time to do justice to all the islands we hoped to visit. This tale tells the story of an increasingly rapid gallop past some of the most beautiful and interesting places you could hope to see. We just scratched the surface and one day will come back to dig deeper.

We spent a few days in Scarborough, a cheerful, tatty town with a main street lined with small shops built of whatever materials came to hand. There were one or two small supermarkets and a thriving market selling wonderful meat, fruit and fish. Prices were low and we revelled in the unlimited fresh food after the transatlantic passage. We circumnavigated Tobago – not a vast voyage – and anchored in such wondrously named places as Man-of-War Bay. Apparently the Royal Navy's West Indies Squadron used to go there before the war for jolly entertainment from the plantation owners. Today there are few traces of the plantations and the grand houses, and the bay is lined with fishing shacks and a few small shops and restaurants. There were pelicans and humming birds, flycatchers and frigate birds, and all the luxuriant growth of a hot, wet, climate. We revelled in the peace of this gentle place.

We moved on to King's Bay and were visited by one Neil O'Neil who swam

out to sell us some oranges. A few pennies and a can of cold beer was the price, and he told us that his name came down from that of the original overseer to whom one of his ancestors was enslaved. Such was the nature of Tobago, undiscovered by the main tour operators and off the beaten track of most cruising yachtsman. Even as I write many months down stream it remains our favourite island.

We sailed to Trinidad a few days before Christmas, and joined the fleet of some 150 cruising yachts anchored off the Trinidad and Tobago Yachting Association. This is a good anchorage and the Club offers a warm welcome to the cruising community. We caught up with friends whom we had first met in La Coruña and enjoyed Christmas with them. They had been lent a car, and on Boxing Day we drove into the hills and visited the Maracas waterfalls where the water crashes from a height of 1700 feet into rocky pools surrounded by shrines to the gods of the water and the trees. This is a very special place, and was not in the least spoilt for us by the heavy rain which thundered down throughout our visit. Somehow this humid, lush, water-tumbling place was better seen in the wet and would have felt wrong if the sun had shone.

A day or so before the new year we pressed on north to Grenada, arriving at Prickly Bay after an overnight passage. Again we met up with friends made on the other side of the Atlantic. We hired a minibus with them and another boat for a tour of the island, which is heavily forested and very beautiful. Grenada is well named as the 'Spice Island', and the forests are full of the wonderful smells of nutmeg, clove and cinnamon. We visited the spice museum, situated in the

The waterfront at St George's, Grenada



last functioning cocoa plantation on the island, and saw the raw materials for all those little jars in Sainsbury's and how they are processed. There was also cocoa drying on racks which could be retracted under the building when it rained, and some wondrous old machinery of which perhaps the most modern was a very retired Russian truck from Cuba which hailed from the days of the 1984 revolution.

By Hog Island we went ashore to the village shop, which as is customary throughout the islands, sold not much more than chicken, a few tins and rum. What more do you need, after all? The owner, who rejoiced in the name of Nimrod, welcomed us to Grenada by a complex ceremony involving a wooden model of Tower Bridge which one symbolically crossed by passing over it a glass of pure cane spirit, alleged to be 130 proof. Protocol then demanded that the medicine went down in one, and once we had recovered the tops of our heads from the ceiling we were entitled to a cool beer to put the fires out. Nimrod obviously enjoyed this ceremony and joined in with gusto, and indeed took a second slug to wish us well. Clearly a well practised routine!

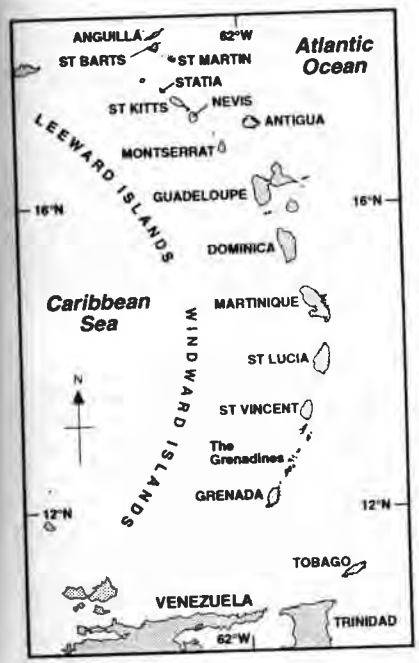
We were now firmly in potter mode and moved only a mile or two most days, arriving in Carriacou in mid January. There were some gems amongst the Grenadines, but often we found an excess of charter boats which both clogged up the anchorages and distorted the local economy. Probably the most famous and photogenic place in the Grenadines is the Tobago Cays, area of reefs and small uninhabited islands offering wonderful diving and snorkelling, with a large anchorage sheltered only by reefs to the east. We sailed in, observed the 200 (ish) boats at anchor, the T-shirt boutiques on the beach, and the hoards of boat-boys trying to flog everything from lobsters to their grandmother – and sailed straight out again.

We then popped into Mustique for tea with Princess Margaret (or Raquel Welch, or Mick Jagger, or David Bowie or ....) but she was not at home and we were limited to walking round and goggling at the lifestyle of the rich at ease. Unlike any other Caribbean island it is beautifully manicured and, of course, totally artificial. Moving on northwards, all the advice was that St Vincent is an island that yachtsmen should avoid as having very steep-to anchorages, aggressive boat-boys and not much to see or do. This, of course, immediately attracted us and we found it one of the best places we had visited with great shopping in local markets, friendly people and wonderful plant and bird life. We visited the botanical gardens, which lie below the magnificent Governor's House and boast a breadfruit tree planted by Captain Bligh, and where they are successfully breeding a unique species of parrot endemic to the island.

From St Vincent we roared across to St Lucia in a 30 knot windward flog. This was typical sailing, as the wind is normally from the east or northeast and

the lie of the islands is a little west of north. The seas between the islands are often very large and it is hard, wet work. However, as one welcomes a wave in the cockpit as a cooling shower it makes for the most wonderful sailing.

St Lucia is one of the major islands and we had a visitor arriving. We checked into Rodney Bay, which has a large marina and beautifully sheltered anchorage in the lagoon. We also took the opportunity to get some repairs done, as Rodney Bay is (at a price) one of the few places in the Caribbean where nearly all repair facilities are easily available. St Lucia is geared to tourism and is not ideal for the cruising yacht, unless one is addicted to marina life and restaurants. We are not – nor, indeed, can afford to be – so once again we moved on, reaching Martinique a day or two later.



We found Martinique to be a wonderful place. As a Department of France it is clearly heavily subsidised by the Euro taxpayer and you can actually buy things like wine, cheese and croissants, which we had almost forgotten existed. It was aptly described by somebody as 'France with bananas', and apparently about 70 percent of the GNP is subsidy. Remarkably, amongst all this largesse, there is a small independence movement, but the vast majority of the islanders fully understand which side their bread is buttered and vote for the maintenance of the status quo.

Diamond Rock lies just to the south of Martinique and has the distinction of having been commissioned as an HM ship. It is, perhaps, 300 feet high and not much more across, and the cliffs are totally vertical. In 1804 the British hauled some guns to the top and garrisoned the rock for around eighteen months, which had the effect of releasing a frigate for patrolling the area. Evocative though Diamond Rock was to our ex-naval crew, we were unable to land as the trade winds were blowing hard and big seas were breaking all around. And so we sailed on past in awe at the seamanship involved in equipping the rock and the endurance involved in manning it for all those long months.

We enjoyed Carnival in the little town of St Pierre on the northwest coast. This was Carnival for the locals' enjoyment, not a show put on for the tourists,

and endless trouble had been taken with costumes and decorating of floats. Parades and floats, all accompanied by loud music, moved through the streets, but our French wasn't quite up to working out the exact symbolism of the different costumes and decorations. It was quite clear, though, that pagan roots were showing through the Christian colour rinse.

Our next stop was Dominica. This is one of the poorer and least developed islands, primarily because it has a mildly active volcano and rises almost vertically from the sea. It therefore lacks good beaches and is unattractive to the tourist operators. It was whilst exploring this lush, green island that we first met up with volcanic activity. It is a strange feeling to walk across a piece of ground which is too hot to touch and out of which is bubbling boiling water laced with sulphur fumes. There was a powerful feeling that Old Nick wasn't far underground and that we should mind our Ps and Qs.

It was time to move back to the fleshpots of France with bananas, and we moved on north towards Guadaloupe. However the good things in life don't come free, and we had a wild and woolly ride across the twenty-five mile gap between the islands. While enjoying an exhilarating 30 knot beam reach in a big sea we were hit by a rogue wave, which knocked us over to about 70° and threw

English Harbour, Antigua, capital of Caribbean yachting





St Pierre, Martinique, where we enjoyed Carnival

us into the far corners of the cockpit with the whole boat engulfed by solid water. Fortunately neither of us were hurt, and the only casualty was the binoculars which abandoned ship in the melée. We shook ourselves and carried on, with no water below or other problems, but it was instructive that after about 10,000 ocean miles the most violent moment we had experienced was on a day sail of some thirty miles. Never knock the coastal cruisers.

We spent a few days in Guadaloupe enjoying the camembert and brie and some decent wine, but were getting a bit behind schedule so galloped on soon to Antigua. This capital of Caribbean yachting is a hotbed of very conspicuous consumption indeed. We sailed into Falmouth Harbour on 9 March to find perhaps twenty yachts at anchor with values in excess of $20 or $30 million each. Some were historic classic yachts which had been restored regardless of expense and others were new, futuristic spaceships. All were graced with large satellite terminals and were fully crewed – up to ten or so immaculately uniformed people who seemed to spend most of their time ordering lobsters on the VHF and zooming around in large RIBs with even larger outboards. A different world, with little contact between the super yachts and the cruisers.

We had a rendezvous here with some friends who had left the UK a year or so before us, and cruised in company for a week. We visited Barbuda, a few miles to the north of Antigua, a classic Caribbean island with long beaches of perfect

white sand all set about with palm trees. Fortunately the approach is somewhat difficult, as you have to weave your way through poorly charted reefs and sandbanks, so the number of yachts is delightfully low and we had the place almost to ourselves.

From Antigua northwards the whole character of the island chain changes. Instead of the towering, lush, volcanic islands to which we had become accustomed, they become low-lying and arid with a completely different vegetation and wildlife pattern. The first such islands are Nevis and St Kitts, which live together as a minute nation state. It used to include Anguilla as well, but the Anguillans had a rebellion in 1969 and reverted to being a British Crown colony. This may be the only incident in history of an armed uprising to bring back the colonial power – a dependence movement, perhaps?

We enjoyed the quiet of these small islands but sadly didn't have time to linger, and pressed on to Statia to find ourselves in the Dutch administered Lesser Antilles. As it was Easter weekend the entire officialdom was closed, so we both came and went without immigration or customs. It didn't seem to matter too much. Statia has a close neighbour called Saba which is alleged to be the Shangri La of the Caribbean. Not a bad description really, and we had a lovely couple of days there. It is virtually inaccessible, as it has no proper harbour and there is no shelter from the ocean swell that rolls past whatever the wind is

All alone in Anguilla



doing. The anchorage is at the bottom of a staircase of 800 plus steps that leads from the rocky beach to the cliff top.

Until a few years ago that was the only way to get onto Saba, but now they have a minute harbour and a road, with perhaps 1000 inhabitants. Of these some 300 are the staff and students of the medical college which apparently is world famous for the quality of the doctors it trains. All funded by Holland, the college essentially keeps the island going, along with a thriving scuba diving business. It was totally different in character from any other island – clean and pretty and loved and reasonably prosperous, and all this on an island which is almost impossible of access. It seemed quite unreal, as though it had no right to have survived in such a way. Long may in continue.

Our next port of call was another extraordinary island, St Martin – or Sint Maarten. This ended up as half French and half Dutch. The two halves are totally different and are administered separately, but there is no border and no control of movement between one half and the other. Dutch Sint Maarten was the major victim of Hurricane *Luis* in 1995, when something like a thousand yachts were wrecked and many people lost their lives (see *Flying Fish* 1995/2 and 1996/1). The lagoon is still littered with the wrecks of people's homes and dreams and there were many sad stories. It was a very good incentive to make sure we were well north of the hurricane belt before the season started in June. We didn't think much of Sint Maarten, which suffered from apparently uncontrolled development, although it had some good shopping and I managed to get some long overdue bits for the boat.

Our last stop in the Leeward Islands was Anguilla. Very small, it is an attractive island with some deserted off-lying islands which we had all to ourselves when we sailed out to explore. Real desert island stuff with arid super-dry vegetation, lots of iguanas and not a lot else. The customs officer in Anguilla amused herself with what was clearly a standard joke. She informed me that I needed a cruising permit which would cost me the ridiculous sum of $150 dollars for the two or three days we were planning to be there. As I was winding up to tell her what she could do with her cruising permit she got out her calculator, did some complex sums, and announced that there would be a discount of – wait for it – $150, for reasons which remain slightly obscure but were related to the fact that we were a private rather than a charter vessel. She then announced, to great mirth from her colleagues, that they always enjoyed that bit and – by the way – 'welcome to Anguilla'. And indeed it was a great welcome and Anguilla is high on our list of islands to retun to.

So there we were. We had 'done' the eastern Caribbean in three short months and now it was time to move north to Bermuda and the USA. We even looked forward, perversely some might say, to the cold of the northern spring.



CLOSE TO THE WIND - Pete Goss. Published in hardback by Headline Book Publishing at £18.99. 282 pages plus sixteen pages of colour photographs. ISBN 0-747-22126-X

If I hadn't heard Pete Goss say so himself (on Libby Purves' *Midweek* - thank you for asking the question, Libby!) I'd have assumed *Close to the Wind* was 'ghosted' - that a professional writer had put the actual words on paper. However if he says he retreated to the shed every morning until it was done, I'll believe him. This is another way of saying that not only has Pete Goss a fascinating tale to tell but he is also a natural storyteller.

For most of us, Pete Goss was a name we'd heard from time to time, possibly in connection with Chay Blyth's 1992–93 British Steel Challenge in which he skippered *Hofbräu Lager* to third place. Then suddenly, on Christmas Day 1996, he became headline news in a desperate bid to save another man's life in the Southern Ocean (for which, of course, he received the OCC Award of Merit amongst many other accolades).

Close to the Wind is the story of how he came to be there, fulfilling the dream of a decade or more to enter the Vendée Globe Race, almost certainly the most challenging yacht race in the world. Perhaps the word 'dream' is mis-chosen – this was the culmination of singleminded effort and thousands of hours of hard slog, not to mention horrendous money worries. This is all related in totally matter-of-fact tones, even the nights spent sleeping in railway stations with barely enough money to eat, though one does occasionally get the feeling that, whilst writing and recalling, he is also thinking 'Good Lord, was that really me?'

That *Aqua Quorum* was built at all was due to the effort and input of a dedicated building team, backed by dozens if not hundreds of 'well wishers' donating expertise, cash and even scrap lead for the keel. Pete Goss has made a real effort to thank them all, by name when possible – including manufacturers, who receive praise for quick repairs or replacements, rather than criticism that their product misbehaved in the first place. And can't we all warm to a man who writes, 'I hand-steered for about thirty-six hours – making sure that my mother's fruit

cake – which I never go to sea without – was within grabbing distance...'

If I have a single criticism of *Close to the Wind* it is the inclusion of a few words which really have no place in a book which is certain to become an inspiration to a whole generation of younger readers. Doubtless they reflect Pete Goss's thoughts in moments of crisis, but surely they could have been toned down slightly?

AOMH



SELL UP AND SAIL - Bill and Laurel Cooper. Third edition. Published in paperback by Adlard Coles Nautical at £15.99. 304 pages with b/w and colour photographs, and line drawings. ISBN 0-71364-786-8

Surprisingly, neither of the previous two editions of this book have been reviewed in *Flying Fish*, although its popularity is obvious by the demand for a further edition only twelve years since first publication. On the surface one could say that this is not OCC reading but that would be a shallow interpretation. The majority of our members qualify on a 'testing' passage that leads on to more, and this often includes thoughts of a much longer voyage when they would find *Sell Up and Sail* invaluable. The title should not be too closely interpreted since the vast majority of detail applies to the preparation of yachts for long term cruising as opposed to the 'sell up' aspect.

Bill and Laurel gave up the land-bound life in 1976 and literally sold up to finance a life aboard which continues to this day. They built their first liveaboard boat themselves. At 55ft and 30 tons they confessed in the first edition that she was getting too big for the two of them. Readers of the third edition will therefore find it slightly contradictory that they are still afloat twelve years later – now in an 86ft steel motor-barge which they have converted to a three-masted sprits'l schooner. This robust approach to boat ownership is reflected throughout the book, and although their personal experience is in vessels beyond the reach of the majority of would-be liveaboards, their keen observation of the sailing scene around them has allowed them to produce a most useful reference in this prolific genre.

They are great inventors of formulae. There is a whole chapter devoted to what they call 'Your Ulysses Quotient'. Whilst this is meant as a light aside, it gives much food for thought for doubters who are not yet sure that they are suited to the wandering life. There is another on determining the real cost of cruising, a question that taxes many, and remember that their advice is the

result of more than twenty years aboard. A third determines the comfort level of your chosen boat, an oft neglected factor in the search for seagoing qualities.

Their chapter on Finance has been updated to recognize current EU regulations for both EU and non-EU yachts, a vexed subject for many potential long term cruisers. There is also a useful chapter headed 'Social Life and Entertainment' which covers a wide area of odds and ends from flag etiquette to yacht clubs. It is a pity that under the last heading they make a mild swipe at OCC admin, a problem of the distant past. And they seem not to be aware of Associate status.

Almost every aspect of liveaboard sailing is covered in surprising detail, and the text is spiced by their apposite jingles and illustrated by Laurel's charming line drawings. I may be biased since I relied heavily on their first edition for our preparations, but after ten further years of experience I still consider *Sell Up and Sail* essential reading for the embryonic cruiser and a most useful reference for those wishing to improve their understanding when preparing for further voyaging.

CAV



FAROE, ICELAND AND GREENLAND - compiled by Christopher Thornhill and Willy Ker. Second edition. An RCC Pilotage Foundation guide published by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson at £22.50. 102 pages between soft covers, with numerous b/w plans but no photographs. ISBN 0-85288-376-5

This slim volume contains a wealth of useful information for planning and executing a cruise to these northern destinations, and represents cruising notes accumulated over the years by RCC members on voyages to these challenging areas. In fact the list of contributors acknowledged in the Foreword dates back to 1929, and includes eleven trips (in three different yachts) by Bill Tilman. More recently Willy Ker and Christopher Thornhill have cruised extensively in these areas, and have combined their notes and the accumulated knowledge of others into a very readable and useful guide.

Particularly worthy of careful reading are the introductory notes preceding each of the three areas Faroe, Iceland and Greenland. These notes cover a range of topics from weather forecasts and formalities to shopping and sources of charts. Tides and currents are also discussed. Budget permitting, a very useful addition to any future edition would be tidal current charts for the Faroes, which are critical to both the approach and coastal sailing in these islands. As mentioned

in the guide they can be purchased in Torshavn, but by then a northbound traveller has already passed several areas of dangerous tidal races.

We were fortunate to have a draft of this guide on a recent (1998) trip through the Faroes and around Iceland and found it both useful and accurate, though the section on Iceland would be improved by the inclusion of more harbour and anchorage chartlets. As mentioned in the guide, the *Lieosogubok* published by the Icelandic Hydrographic Office provides excellent chartlets and aerial photographs for most harbours. It is rather dated (1988) but nonetheless very helpful. Having said this, Iceland's many harbours and anchorages are straightforward and the Danish and British Admiralty large scale charts are excellent.

We can't comment on the Greenland section other than to say that it is well written and certainly whets the appetite. It covers all accessible areas on both the east and west coasts, and includes many useful looking anchorage sketches and passage notes. Again, the introductory notes, particularly regarding ice travel and information, are useful and well written.

All in all, *Faroe, Iceland and Greenland* is a well presented guide and a 'must have' for anyone planning a cruise to these spectacular areas.

ADG



UNLIKELY PASSAGES - Reese Palley. Re-published in softback in the US by Sheridan House at $14.95; available in the UK through Adlard Coles Nautical at £10.99. 188 pages with 20 b/w cartoons. ISBN 0-713-65013-3

Unlikely Passages is not so much a sailing book as a rambling, ruminating, philosophising collection of thoughts, and quite impossible to categorize. I think it is also fair to describe it as a very American book - to be honest, I cannot imagine a British sailing publisher taking it on, particularly when first published in 1984 (very possibly their loss). If taken literally it is also somewhat dated, being a republishing of the original, warts and all: 'Given the opportunity to rewrite and correct some really embarrassing errors, I chose to change nothing. I hold that error is a necessary factor in the creative process'.

Very loosely, the book is structured around Reese's fifteen year circumnavigation aboard his 46ft *Unlikely VII* (I think, we are never given her details in so many words). Each chapter is introduced by a few paragraphs of 'Sailing Directions' relating to a particular place (though not sailing directions as I know them) and to which the ensuing thoughts are often only tenuously linked. There appear to be no other permanent crewmembers – if there are, they

are not mentioned by name or individually described – though one gathers that there were always others aboard, many of them women. Reese's musings are entirely subjective – and manifestly honest. One does not feel he is consciously writing for an audience.

I can well understand why *Unlikely Passages* achieved cult status in its first incarnation, particularly when no longer available from a mainstream publisher and not least because it's not the kind of book you pass on. It's not a 'this is brilliant, you must read it' book – those inspired by it will not wish to part with their copy. Others will be bewildered – possibly even shocked – by it, and wonder what the fuss is about. It is not a half measures affair. However if one fact shines through, it is that Reese Palley has a great sense of humour.

OHD



MEDITERRANEAN SPAIN : COSTAS DEL SOL & BLANCA - Robin Brandon, revised by Oz Robinson for the RCC Pilotage Foundation. Published by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson Ltd at £35.00. 158 A4 pages between hard covers, illustrated by hundreds of colour photographs and plans. ISBN 0-85288-396-X

At first sight this book looks very different from the edition that I used six years ago, the 1987 printing of the Brandon version. Although it has been brought in line with the RCC Foundation house style it actually owes a lot to the original. It is a shorter book than its predecessor, 159 pages versus 247. One reason is the removal of some of Brandon's harping on the obvious. However, it has also discarded some useful features – there used to be summary pages containing an index to ports and inter-port distances, and some information about the towns. There are still references to useful anchorages outside ports but some of the plans which showed their location have gone.

The major change, a great improvement, is in the photographs. These were poor monochrome, many taken from sea level. Now we get good colour photographs beautifully printed (the aerial photos taken by your editor). It is a pity that the same improvements have not been made to the port plans. These owe a lot to the originals but with increased use of colour which makes them look smarter. However they rarely contain more information and sometimes less, and useful detail on land like town layout has occasionally been discarded. It does not harm the navigation, but cruising is as much about enjoying the land as arriving safely by sea.

Mediterranean Spain is an area where marina charges vary enormously. Some are at the same level of extortion as common in Britain, but some are a quarter as much. It is therefore welcome to see that some port descriptions include a price indication on a three level scale.

A lot of the port descriptions begin on a right hand page. The effect is that they cannot be read as a whole without turning a page. Without counting, I got the impression that the balance could have been improved at the expense of one blank page. Even this could have been avoided by reducing the excessive scale of some port plans. I was delighted to see that the names of the areas for shipping forecasts from neighbouring countries are shown. In this case the plans *have* been kept on facing pages.

Overall it is a good book, valuable if cruising the area. However it is hard to avoid the feeling that it could have been an even better book with a little more attention to detail.

JCH



THE ATLANTIC CROSSING GUIDE – compiled by Anne Hammick and Gavin McLaren for the RCC Pilotage Foundation. Fourth Edition. Published by Adlard Coles Nautical at £32.00. 230 pages with b/w and colour photographs and numerous plans. ISBN 0-713-64839-2

The *Atlantic Crossing Guide* was first published in 1983 and soon became accepted as the standard reference and planning book for anyone crossing the Atlantic for the first time. Most British OCC Members will have already completed such a crossing and will be well acquainted with previous editions.

However many Atlantic crossings one has made, this new volume will provide much useful information both of a general planning nature and details of selected departure and arrival ports/harbours on both sides of the Atlantic. Much of the information in the older editions will inevitably now be out-of-date, making it well worth the expense to gain more recent information. The glossary is also most useful, leading one to the 'local' books covering each area – such as Chris Doyle's guides to the Caribbean islands.

It is difficult to criticise this new *Atlantic Crossing Guide* – the authors are both highly experienced ocean sailors and they have drawn on the experience of many others. It is good to see such a list of contributors, ranging from the Hydrographic Office through OCC Port Officers to OCC members and others who have recent experience of ocean passages. The list is quite impressive.

There is brief mention of the ARC (Atlantic Rally for Cruisers) in the Port Information section but I would have liked to have seen more detailed information, particularly as the event is, for so many yachtsmen, their introduction to long-distance sailing. Nearly fifteen hundred yachtsmen have taken part in this annual cruise from Gran Canaria to St Lucia (originally Barbados) and the event is now in its thirteenth year.

It is interesting to see that the traditional Atlantic passages have changed little over the years, but I did note the slight difference in departure date for the trade wind crossing, now given as mid rather than early November. Timing is so important, and I am pleased to see that not only is the crossing itself well covered but also the planning of the passage to the Canaries (or other departure point). Several yachts have failed due to late departure from the UK.

The details of weather forecasts both for the crossing (Radio France International) and whilst in the Caribbean (local amateurs) are particularly useful. These details can change very quickly and is essential to have recent information. Mention is also made of the changing face of communications with the advent of satellite communications and, more recently, electronic mail.

I particularly liked the chapter on 'The Crew' – I am sure we all agree that the most important factors when selecting crew are compatibility and temperament rather than particular sailing skills. An Atlantic passage would be very tedious with the wrong crew – and 200 miles or so from the Canaries it would be difficult to turn back!

The new *Atlantic Crossing Guide* is well up to the standard we have come to expect from the RCC Pilotage Foundation. Without hesitation, I would say this is an essential book for anyone contemplating an Atlantic crossing.

MPG



EAST AFRICA PILOT – Delwyn McPhun. Published by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson at £37.95. 229 pages, including hundreds of plans and colour photos. ISBN 0-85288-251-3

Surely the difference between an excellent pilot book and a merely good one – assuming both are accurate and reasonably easy to follow – is the interest value, in addition to the essential information. The new *East Africa Pilot* scores highly in both categories. Delwyn 'Poon' McPhun spent three years thoroughly researching and writing up the area from the northern coast of Kenya to South Africa, including Madagascar. His knowledge and affection for East Africa come

through in the history and information sections of this long-awaited book, adding greatly to the value of it by providing fascinating background reading.

Many useful colour photos show harbour entrances or passes, while others give a taste of the treat in store for cruising visitors to Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, and the Comoros Islands. As one of the few uncrowded tropical cruising areas left in the world (in July '96 there were only five cruising yachts along Tanzania's 400 mile coastline) it really is the place to go for good sailing, fascinating culture, friendly but unpushy locals, and some of the most beautiful beaches you'll see anywhere in the world. Armed with this book there's no excuse for missing it on the grounds that one doesn't have enough information!

It's very difficult to find anything to criticise about the *East Africa Pilot*. Everything one needs to know is here, down to the designs of the relevant courtesy flags and detailed advice on malaria prevention and treatment – really the only frightening, though not insurmountable, aspect of the area. The only detail I'd take issue with is Poon's pessimism over the state of the water supplies. We certainly didn't boil all the water we took on from local sources and never had any problems, but its obviously better to err on the safe side when giving advice! All in all we can highly recommend both East Africa as a cruising destination and this excellent new book.

EHMH



ANTARCTIC OASIS : UNDER THE SPELL OF SOUTH GEORGIA – Tim and Pauline Carr. Published by WW Norton & Co, New York & London. £29.95, US $40.00, Canadian $50.00. 254 pages, profusely illustrated with colour photographs, maps and plans. ISBN 0–393–04605–2

The first impression given by this splendid book is of an idyllic, unspoiled piece of the earth, inhabited by bird and seal life totally unafraid of humans – but this is the island of South Georgia, where climatic conditions are often awesome and unforgiving to man and boat. The authors of *Antarctic Oasis*, Tim and Pauline Carr, are the only permanent inhabitants, living in their 100-year-old engineless Falmouth Quay Punt *Curlew*, based at the abandoned whaling station at Grytviken. The couple are curators of the South Georgia Whaling Museum; also they sail to research the coastline and observe and report on bird and animal life for the British Antarctic Survey. With evident enthusiasm for life, the Carrs also cover ground ashore, hiking, skiing and mountain climbing.

The British maintain a small Army garrison at King Edward Point; incoming mail is by RAF parachute drop, outgoing by garrison supply ship. Yachts and cruise ships visit at times, and vital supplies are brought from the Falkland Islands. During the long hours of summer daylight work goes on beyond normal hours, not least must be the time spent taking the superb photographs which enhance the volume. There are maps of South Georgia on the end-papers, and detailed small chartlets throughout the text. Of particular interest to other yachtsmen is the illustrated life story of *Curlew*.

EMH



NARROW WATERS - Dee Carstarphen. Published by Pen & Ink Press, PO Box 235, Wicomico Church, VA 22579, USA (or through bookstores dealing with Baker & Taylor) at $19.99. ISBN 0-95075-444-X

This is a lovely, lovely book and I would particularly like to thank Rosemarie Alecio of *Ironhorse* for recommending it to me. The page reproduced opposite does not begin to do justice to Dee Carstarphen's beautiful watercolour sketches, which follow *Sea Wind*'s winter passage south from the Chesapeake through the Intracoastal Waterway and thence clockwise around Florida. Its 138 pages are a pure delight, and brought back immediate memories of my one experience of the Waterway, now nearly twenty years ago. A comparison with *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady* is unavoidable.

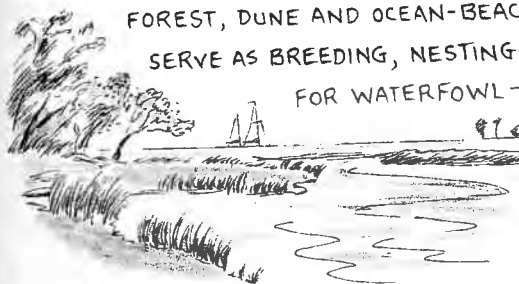
To paraphrase Shakespeare, 'all Waterway life is here'. Opening at random I happened upon pages 102 and 103. This spread alone contains four small anchorage plans, each one a miniature work of art; the skipper checking the anchor with snorkel and fins watched by a startled angelfish; several shells; a drawing of the twisted tree roots on Lignumvitae Key (the topsoil is very thin), and finally a white-crowned pigeon feasting on berries.

Dee obviously knows her birds (there is seldom a page without at least one) and her wildlife generally, but tucked amongst the drawings are some very useful scraps of cruising information for those following the same route. Secluded anchorages and old buildings to visit share pages with shrimp boats, other yachts, the ship's cat (....'trailing a fishing line we catch a small bluefish which Mr Bill says should be *his*'...) I could go on, but you'd do far better to get your own copy. I'm not lending mine though – it's one of the select band to win a permanent place on *Wrestler*'s all too limited bookshelf. A lovely, lovely book.

AOMH



WE'RE ON THE VERGE OF A TRULY SPORTING PROPOSITION. WE HAVE OUR EYE ON BULL ISLAND, PART OF THE CAPE ROMAIN WILDLIFE REFUGE. BULL ISLAND CONTAINS ENORMOUS FRESH WATER PONDS, THE RESIDUE OF A ONCE FLOURISHING RICE CULTURE. THE PONDS, NOW DECAYED TO FRESHWATER MARSHES, WERE CREATED WITH EMBANKMENTS AND CAUSEWAYS (SLAVE LABOR) TO TRAP AND RETAIN FRESH WATER. THIS RESOURCE, SO UNUSUAL FOR A BARRIER ISLAND, MAKES BULL ISLAND A SPECTACULAR MIX OF SALT MARSH, TIDAL CREEKS, FRESH WATER MARSHES AND SWAMPS, FOREST, DUNE AND OCEAN-BEACH ECOLOGY. THE PONDS SERVE AS BREEDING, NESTING AND WINTERING HABITAT FOR WATERFOWL - AND HARBOR A LARGE POPULATION OF ALLIGATORS. THE OCEAN BEACHES, IN SEASON, ARE A REPOSITORY FOR THE EGGS OF THE LOGGERHEAD TURTLE.*



*SINCE OUR VISIT, THIS PART OF THE COAST HAS BEEN DEVASTATED BY AN EXTRAORDINARY HURRICANE, DRAMATICALLY CHANGING THE ISLAND, ITS ECOLOGY AND THE CHANNELS LEADING TO IT.



DEPARTURE - Janet Stevenson. A novel, published in paperback by Blue Heron Publishing Inc (24450 NW Hansen Road, Hillsboro, Oregon 97124, USA. Tel: (503) 621 3911) at $14.95 (+$3.00 S&H on mail orders). ISBN 0-93608-537-1

The Log of the Maria M *September 4, 1851*

Course maintained through 8 A.M. N by W
Estimated position: 26° 30' N; 157° 50'W

Wind continues fresh to strong gale, ESE to SSE, gusting.
Seas high, confused at times; broken clouds and rain squalls.
Barometer fluctuating, mostly above 30"
Ship running under close reefed topsails.

The bark *Maria M* is five days out of Honolulu bound for Nootka Sound, with a mixed cargo to be traded for sea otter furs, when the captain and first mate are stricken with an incapacitating fever - delirious, unable to function, unable to navigate. The bark is forced to scud before the gale. The young and inexperienced afterguard consists of two boys. The older has been taught how to take a meridian passage of the sun, but not how to reduce the sight to a latitude. As the captain and mate sink deeper into delirium, the older boy and the bosun are lost overboard in a broach and Captain Bright's young wife, Amanda, is faced with the task of determining the *Maria M*'s position, and navigating the bark safely to Nootka Sound.

The chronometer has not been wound since the captain was stricken. With no easy way of determining longitude by time, Amanda turns to the 1836 edition of Bowditch, teaches herself to reduce a meridian passage of the sun and fixes her latitude. But as she approaches Vancouver Island she loses her 'northing' to the Japanese Current and is forced to shape a course for the dangerous bar at the mouth of the Columbia River.

Amanda Bright's battle with Bowditch and the *Ephemeris* is compelling. Catapulted into the role of captain, navigator, and master of the *Maria M* she must convince an unlettered and almost primitive polyglot crew, typical of the 1800s, that she has the ability – and the courage – to bring them safely to port. Her struggles for mastery of the vessel as well as the arcane science of celestial navigation is chillingly realistic. As she conquers Bowditch, the crew grudgingly begin to depend on her for their survival.

Departure is based on the true story of an unnamed woman and her 1851 voyage from the Sandwich Islands to the West Coast of the United States. The author is an experienced sailor whose voyages include one to the Society and

Hawaiian Islands in a 42ft Kettenburg sloop and a sail-only circumnavigation of Vancouver Island in a converted Bristol Bay gillnetter. She writes with authority and accuracy about the days of square rigged sail and the system of navigation then in use.

The book is not only a riveting adventure story, but it is an encouraging – even inspiring – account of an ordinary person's conquest of navigation before the days of Loran, Satnav or GPS.

RTC



FROM DUCK POND TO DEEP OCEAN - Erroll Bruce. Published in paperback by Boldre Marine (Kestrel Cottage, Shirley Holms, Lymington, Hants S041 8NH, UK) at £9.99. ISBN 1-87168-011-5

That nobody now raises an eyebrow at the idea of small yachts racing across wide oceans is due in large part to Erroll Bruce, for many years a member of this Club, who skippered the RNSA 24 (31ft LOA) *Samuel Pepys* in the 1950 and 1952 Bermuda and Transatlantic Races - crewed, amongst others, by OCC Founder Member Bill Wise.

From *Duck Pond to Deep Ocean* is his autobiography, written at the age of eighty-three, and follows his life from childhood as the son of a country parson through Naval training at Dartmouth College and to his first ship, HMS *Royal Sovereign*, in 1931. Life as a junior officer in the Mediterranean is related with obvious enjoyment, marred only during the early years of the War when, by then a First Lieutenant and having achieved his ambition of being posted to submarines, a depth charge (ironically dropped by a 'friendly' plane) caused back injuries which plagued him for many years.

The return of peace brought postings in the Far East, followed by a spell at the Admiralty and at last the opportunity to spend time with his wife and three small children. These were the years of *Samuel Pepys* and the Atlantic passages, and also included a happy family summer spent aboard a converted sailing trawler in Plymouth. Next came an appointment as Resident Naval Officer Orkney, based at Scapa Flow (where he promptly joined the lifeboat crew), followed by a second spell in the Med and finally command of HMS *Resolution*, a 'stone frigate' on Christmas Island in the mid-Pacific, at the time of the H-bomb tests.

The return to England in 1959 brought more small boat sailing, much of it with the Sea Cadets. The final chapters deal with the founding of Nautical

Publishing (now part of Adlard Coles Nautical) and sailing aboard his Westerly Griffon *Dayspring*, often singlehanded.

To say that Erroll Bruce has led a varied life is an obvious and extreme understatement, and in *Duck Pond to Deep Ocean* it is related in a very readable style, illustrated by many of the author's own photographs – a hobby which he modestly admits 'while still at school brought pocket money from the Press'. A thoroughly enjoyable book.

AOMH



Do you enjoy reading *Flying Fish*, have an eye for detail and reasonably reliable spelling? More importantly, would you like to do something useful for the Club, and do you generally have some free time during mid April and mid October?

If the answer to all the above is 'yes', then I'd welcome your services on the proof reading team (all done by post, of course). Please contact Anne Hammick, Editor.



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