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CONTENTS PAGE

I wrote the editorial for *Flying Fish* 2011/1 on a lovely sunny April day, rejoicing in print that the coming change to the production schedule would free up future Aprils for far more important tasks ... like boat maintenance! Equally, the change to the autumn schedule, so that you receive this in January rather than in December, means that I'm at my desk on a bitterly cold November day rather than on a pleasant, sunny day in early October. Now why didn't I think of this years ago?

Hopefully, *Fish* arriving in January have a better chance of being read on arrival than they did in December, when many of us have other things on our minds. However, it does mean a very short gap before the next deadline on 1 February, so if you're thinking of contributing you'd better get moving! I'll go out of my way to be flexible, of course, so please drop me an e-mail and tell me what you have in mind, and I'll tell you what's possible. Thanks for your co-operation. One thing I'd particularly welcome is some more recipes for the '*From the Galley of ...*' series. I'm sure many members have tried-and-tested favourites which they fall back on both afloat and ashore, so please do share them with the rest of us via the pages of *Flying Fish*.

Coming back to the present, we have the usual eclectic mix, including Graeme Mulcahy's highly topical account of running the Red Sea 'gauntlet'; ocean sailing in the Pacific, the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans with Misty McIntosh, Linda Lane Thornton, Daria Blackwell and new member Peter Paternotte respectively; and coastal cruises in the Canadian Maritimes, along the Norwegian coast, from south to central France via Gibraltar, and finally around Great Britain and Ireland, and also round the Delmarva peninsula – Delmarva? see page 103 – with Beth Leonard, Helen and Gus Wilson, Steve Pickard, Mike and Helen Norris and Art Ross. Rigging and medical problems rear their ugly heads, balanced by Nicola Rodriguez's reflections on cruising with a young family and Rosemarie Smart-Alecio's rueful tales of (survivable) problems in paradise.

Finally, and returning to where I came in, could I remind you that the **DEADLINE** for the next *Flying Fish* is **WEDNESDAY 1 FEBRUARY** though, as I've already said, the new schedule should allow more flexibility than in the past. I may be away from Falmouth in late January or early February, but I WILL have e-mail so please submit your text – or simply get in touch – electronically if possible. If photos need to follow on CD that's fine (text needs editing and proof-reading; photos don't) but I'd rather not return to discover a heap of unexpected articles in my pigeon-hole ... the pigeon wouldn't like it much either! Many thanks indeed.

Dolphins in Aspic. See 'Be Careful what you Wish For' by Steve Picard, page 35. (And yes, we know it says flying fish...)

THE COMMODORE'S COLUMN

In a recent column I mused on the whimsy of naming inanimate objects in your boat and building them up into their own personalities. Who doesn't name their auto pilot for example?

The other day I was reminded by a friend who had read the column – at least somebody did – that there are also less animate, more ethereal crew members. They are always there in the background, they bring good or sometimes not so good luck and sometimes they speak to you.

We've all had the experience. It's a quiet night with the boat slipping gently along and all is well with the world. You are in that dreamy state where you are struggling to stay awake and you become aware of a repetitive voice just at the threshold of your hearing. It is saying something which you can't quite understand. It's a distant whisper; you are not quite sure of the language or the message and you know it shouldn't be there. Your rational being tells you it is no more than a combination of harmonics from the rigging combined with a creak from the steering gear, but you are not convinced and struggle to understand. You wonder if you are losing the plot; you know there can't be a voice, but still you listen.

In my friend's case the ghostly crew is definitely female and rejoices in the name of Miriam Ironing Board. That's because 'Miriam ironing board' is all she ever says. Now that's a limited vocabulary by any standards and she must be tedious to have around. I get the feeling that Miriam's influence is generally thought to be slightly malignant. While she has no reputation as a harbinger of disaster, she has a history of appearing around the time of minor problems like the 'fridge breaking down or the loo blocking. Coincidence? Probably, but you can't be sure.

Vagrant also has her ethereal other, but she is very different to Miriam. She is also female but rarely speaks and is known on board as the Good Luck Fairy or the GLF for short. Her influence has always been benign and we wouldn't be without her. Her greatest triumph was when we had crossed the Davis Strait from Greenland and had just arrived at Hopedale in The Labrador. We noticed that a cotter pin was missing from the lower fitting on the forestay. The clevis pin was half out and the mast had no right to be standing. There have been other occasions when good luck rather than good management saved the day and we always offer thanks to the GLF. Coincidence? Probably but you can't be sure.

Anyway, we believe in the GLF and would never sail without her. Many folk have asked to borrow her for a day or two but we have always refused. Even to Miriam's skipper.

Bill McLaren
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A SECOND SUMMER VOYAGE IN THE LAND OF NORSE MYTHS

Helen and Gus Wilson

(*Gus and Helen crossed the Atlantic in 2008 aboard their 38ft Sabre MkII* Wings, *and have been based in the UK ever since. This is the third time they have visited Norway – but possibly not the last?*)

Our first summer cruise to Norway, in 2009, took us only as far north as Bergen, but it inspired us to return in 2010 with the Lofoten Islands as our target. We left London's St Katharine Dock in May, but a haul-out for maintenance in Lowestoft grew from three days to three weeks while we waited for parts to replace a seacock. Afloat again, the Shetland Islands were our first goal until, on the third day and after more than 300 miles, headwinds prompted a detour to the sheltered harbour of Peterhead, almost the easternmost point in Scotland. Underway again with a narrow weather window, an overnight sail with light winds brought us to Lerwick, arriving at the onset of a Shetland Islands' festival coupled with the arrival of both the Round Britain and Ireland and the Bergen-Lerwick race fleets. Crowded it was, but with an enjoyably festive atmosphere. We were boxed into the harbour by the race boats, but sheltered from the near-gale outside. On 22 June the crowds left, the weather eased, and we set sail for Norway. Our immediate destination was Bodø, 625 miles north and 40 nautical miles inside the Arctic Circle, with the intention of sailing in the Lofoten Islands and adjacent mainland and fjords.

While weatherbound in the Shetland Islands we listened to a Viking storyteller recite tales from Nordic myths and sagas

The thought of sailing further north than we had ever been was intimidating. Pilot charts for June show a zero chance of gales over the area, although of course that should be taken with a grain of salt. The forecast showed a moderate low to the west, moving slowly to the northeast ahead of us. If that forecast held we would have fair winds the entire passage. We also studied our charts and the *Norwegian Cruising Guide* by Phyllis Nickel and John Harries, OCC, picking the best entrances into sheltered fjords along the coast, and set those latitudes as decision points. We planned basically to parallel the coast, far enough out to avoid inshore currents and risky headlands, but positioned so that if a serious turn was forecast, we could either head into sheltered waters or, in the event of a very sudden change, turn west to gain sea room.

The passage took four days and six hours, under sail for almost the entire distance. The sky was grey and it was frequently misty. Twice we had to steer around seismic survey ships towing several miles of cable, but in both cases the skippers let us pass close ahead instead of requiring us to make a 10 mile detour. Towards the end of our passage the winds shifted to the northwest, showing that the low was moving northward. We crossed the Arctic Circle at 66°33'44"N, sailing to windward with lots of spray and mist. Approaching Bodø on a lively reach, the skies began to clear, and once inside we were helped to dock in strong winds by crew from a Polish yacht. We stayed a few days, found a police officer to stamp our passports, and enjoyed the aviation museum, including a U2 spy plane (Bodø was the western terminus of the 1950s spy flights). The harbour master, Trine, was very helpful and there was ample space on the outer pontoon. Free (password protected) wifi in the nearby Kafe Kafka worked well – in contrast the marina wifi was weak.

For the next 39 days we remained north of the Arctic Circle, always in the midst of absolutely stunning scenery and, until late July, also in 24-hour daylight. The Lofoten and adjacent islands and mainland are lush and green below the timberline, with mountains up to 1161m high. Waterfalls are abundant. Sheltered places to anchor or to tie alongside floating docks are closely spaced. There were few other cruisers and we saw no other American boats. We never had problems finding a place to dock and rarely shared an anchorage with another boat, though some were small and required a line ashore to prevent swinging into the rocky shore. Most places have hiking trails, ranging from non-challenging to strenuous.

Approaching Bodø, the first of Norway's mountainous islands appeared

Helen by the tranquil lake at Straumhamn

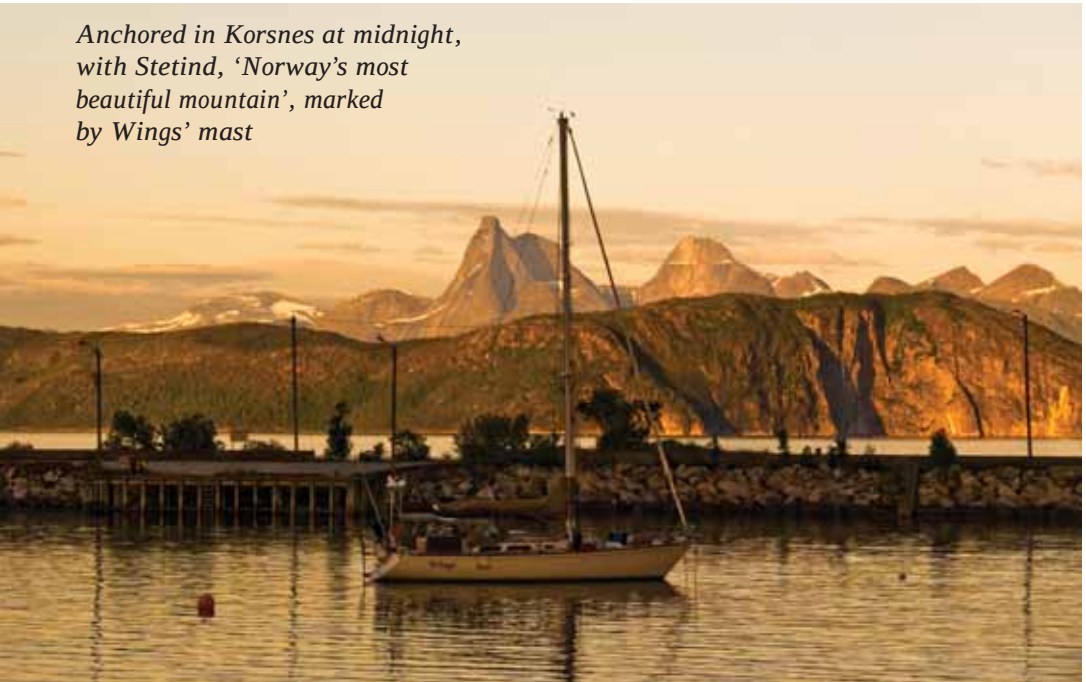
Everyone who had spoken to us of their time in the Lofotens had said that the islands were magical, with the light changing in beautiful ways throughout the day as the sun makes its transit from low in the north at midnight to higher in the south at midday. It is all true – it is hard to find words to describe the feeling of being in the midst of such constant beauty.

The night before we left Lerwick a Norwegian yacht had rafted alongside. Her skipper, Martin Due, an artist and classical violinist, had lived north of the Arctic Circle and marked his favourite places on our charts. We visited several. Kjerringøy had a gallery dedicated to illustrations in the novels of Knut Hamsund, the Nobel prize-winning Norwegian novelist, and film clips from movies based on his work. At Straumhamn we anchored far up in the narrow cove with a line ashore, *Wings*' bow pointing towards the entrance of the narrow cove. A dinghy ride across the lake leads to a sandy beach, and to where a 3m waterfall spills from a large and tranquil glacial lake. At midnight, at the low point of the sun's path, the sun was centred in the cove's entrance, hovering above the peaks of the Lofoten Islands in the distance.

Tranøy is a village with several art galleries, where some of Martin Due's works are exhibited (www.martindue.no). On a rocky point is a trail along the water's edge, with framed photographs of natural Norwegian scenes together with some abstracts, all mounted on the perpendicular rock faces. We walked to the lighthouse, sharing the road with the tiny, colourful bluethroats which nest in the low trees on either side, and Arctic terns which prefer the boardwalk and aggressively defend their nests from passing tourists.

Tranøy's outdoor art gallery

Martin had also told us about Stetind, voted Norway's most beautiful mountain by Norwegians. Curious to see what distinguished Stetind from the other beautiful mountains in Norway, we sailed into the fishing village of Korsnes and anchored in the harbour, virtually deserted outside the commercial fishing season. Stetind is a somewhat isolated, steep-sided, flat-topped peak, which reaches 1392m and was first climbed in 1910. The steep slopes around the peak make clouds swirl and blow away, sometimes making it look as though the slopes are aflame.



Anchored in Korsnes at midnight, with Stetind, 'Norway's most beautiful mountain', marked by Wings' mast

Swirling clouds clinging to Stetind's steep sides make the slopes appear to be smoking

About a mile from Korsnes are some 9000-year-old rock carvings, and soon after we landed from the dinghy we met a couple (from Azerbaijan, of all places) who offered to lead us to them. They are actually life-sized drawings of animals, deeply scratched into the dark surfaces of the rounded anorthosite outcrop. Included are swans, a 7m (22ft) orca, moose, reindeer, and more. On our way back to *Wings* we stopped for Azerbaijani tea and biscuits at our new friends' home.

A little further north we reached the Lofotens and the adjacent islands to the east. In Lødingen we obtained fuel at the marina, but on enquiring about a berth were told that *Wings* was too large for their pontoons. Instead we tied alongside the outer town dock, sheltered from strong southwest winds. While talking with the Danish couple on the boat next to us an otter swam by, then a minke whale surfaced only a few metres away. The nearby hotel cheerfully gave us their wifi code, and their cold beer was welcome. By bus and rental car we drove north to Andenes, where a canyon in the continental shelf gives mile-deep water close to shore. From a whale-watching boat we were able to admire 'Luca Rho Ariwoola', a large male sperm whale, as he rested on the surface between 1600m dives to feed. Other sperm whales were in sight, and a pod of orcas passed nearby. The northern sunlight demonstrated its magic.

A 9000-year-old, life-size, picture of swans

As the whale-watching boat returned to port we were treated to a spectacular change from shades of intense blue to shades of grey as a (rare) thunderstorm passed by.

Further west, in the Raftsundet – the passage marking the eastern boundary of the Lofoten Islands – strong currents made it prudent to time the tides. We twice tried to enter the spectacular Grundfjord at mid-tide, but gusty winds in the approach indicated strong katabatic winds inside, rendering the tight anchorage potentially dangerous, so we opted in favour of safety. The narrow Trollfjord nearby was an interesting side trip – little more than a mile long, steep-sided, and with only just

The entrance to Grundfjord from the top of Keiservagen

Ships manoeuvre in the Trollfjord

enough room for cruise ships and Hurtigruten coastal passenger ferries to enter and turn around. Across the Raftsundet we tied to the small floating dock in Digermulen to shelter from the forecast near gale force southwest winds. The small grocery store is well-stocked, and we especially appreciated the fresh pastries in the morning. A climb up the 348m Keiservagen (so named because Kaiser Wilhelm climbed it in 1889 and again in 1903) provided spectacular views. The path was initially quite steep, with ropes along the side to help, but became flatter higher up.

The southwesterly winds were forecast to be followed by northeasterlies, so we made a short passage up the Raftsundet to the Tengelfjord, which gave us 360° shelter in 5m at low tide. A walk from there led to a lake a couple of miles away, where a teepee-shaped sauna (unfortunately inactive) was the only building. (The road starts at the north end of the village.) Anchored alone at Gullvika in 10m of water, only ten minutes of fishing with jigs resulted in a codfish dinner. When Gus told someone about catching our dinner in just ten minutes, he was asked 'why did it take you so long?' A two or three mile hike northward took us along a path profusely lined by wildflowers to another beautiful, secluded lake.

Wings in the outer cove at Gullvika

Further west in the Lofotens we visited Svolvær – the area's largest city with a population of around 4000 – and nearby Kabelvåg, where we hiked, visited the aquarium in Bagenkop (one highlight was seeing a three-day-old harbour seal tended by its mother), and took a bus to the reconstructed Lofotr Viking Longhouse and museum at Borg. It was fun to watch forty tourists trying to row the replica Viking ship, with no two oars in synch! (Fortunately there was a motorised push-boat controlling the ship.) In the Eljøp electronics store in Svolvær we purchased a Netcom 3G dongle. Although we found wifi in most villages, this allowed us to obtain much easier and more secure internet access, and worked in all but the most remote anchorages during the rest of our time in Norway.

A fortunate night of calm weather allowed anchoring in the tiny, picturesque cove on the small island of Æsoya, though we barely had room to anchor with a stern line ashore. It would have taken very little wind from the south to make the cove untenable, so that is one place we would not anchor again. Henningsvær, a fishing village and tourist spot, is very scenic. We secured to a hotel dock, and heard an interesting lecture on marine mammals in the Lofotens given by a German researcher who is conducting acoustic studies of pilot whale communication.

Our last stop in the Lofotens was perhaps the most spectacular. Reine lies in a complex of fjords completely surrounded by numerous high and imposing mountains. We tied to the floating dock by the red tourist cabins, with fuel on the dock and a grocery store just a few steps away. A dinghy ride to the east is a larger supermarket, with its own dinghy dock. We took our dinghy on a trip of 8 or 9 miles through the fjords, stopping to hike a mile to overlook a broad sandy beach backed with clear water all the way to the North Pole. We drove in a rental car to Nusfjord, a restored fishing village, and to the tiny village Å – named for the last letter in the Norwegian alphabet – which marks the end of the east-west road through the main Lofoten Islands. (There are other isolated islands further west.)

While in Norway we both read a book of Norse myths – tales of landscapes created by giant forces and creatures, of a complex multi-layered world, of conflicts between

Next stop the North Pole – seen across the wide beach on the north side of the Reine complex. The group of people at bottom left (arrowed) show its size

The sun began to set earlier, giving beautiful colours many evenings but also telling us it was time to head south

gods and giants (with humans occupying a lowly position) in a land encircled by a giant sea serpent. Surrounded by the immense landscape, dwarfed by gorgeous, high mountains and deep fjords, and seeing the land often shrouded in mist, it was easy to understand the origins of these myths – powerful forces hard to comprehend, violent weather, thunder caused by Thor heaving his magic hammer in frequent conflict with the giants.....

Now the forces which formed this spectacular landscape are better understood. Coarsely crystalline anorthosite, dominated by feldspar crystals rich in calcium, crystallised deep in a young earth, in some cases three billion years ago. Later these rocks were altered and forced upward into complex structures during multiple episodes of the formation and collision of continents, and shaped most recently by episodes of glaciation during the ice ages. Still, the imagination of the Vikings and their forebears has left us with a rich explanation of the origin of their land.

Now into August and the sun was beginning to set, telling us it was time to head south. Deep shadows reached into the fjords and there were spectacular, lengthy sunsets. But it was hard to leave. We had been enchanted by the Lofotens. And we were resentful of the encroaching dark – it had been so nice to sail in 24-hour daylight. Nevertheless we set off on a broad reach in moderate winds to sail the 430 miles south to the mid-coastal city of Ålesund, said to be Norway's most beautiful city. Destroyed by fire in 1904, it was rebuilt in art deco style, with colourful buildings lining the narrow city harbour.

A day sail through the Hjørundfjord and Norangsfjord, bounded by the jagged Sunnmør Alps capped with snow and glaciers, brought us to the village of Øye. This lies in a green glacial valley with farms and a 19th century hotel, frequented in the past by Roald Amundsen, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and various kings and queens. Not far away to seaward is the island of Runde, with sea cliffs and thousands of nesting seabirds, but the 40,000 puffins had already left and only gannets, shags, and aggressive greater skuas were still around while we were there.

We waited for good weather to round the Stad Headland, a notoriously dangerous place in the wrong wind and tide conditions. We rounded easily in the early morning, but later that day winds were much stronger and it would not have been so nice. Good weather was forecast for several days so we hurried south, docking briefly in Bringsinghaug, Kalvåg, and Bulandet for blurred overnight stops. We lingered around Bergen, however, in the nearby Strusshavn harbour. A woman carrying grocery bags told us where to find the supermarket. The next day, on the bus towards Bergen, the same lady told us how the ferry from the transfer point was a slower but nicer trip. In Bergen we went to an optician for a minor glasses repair, and found the same friendly woman working in the shop!

South of Bergen we were, for the first time, in waters familiar from our summer cruise in 2009 and stopped briefly in Mosterhamn, Skudeneshavn, and Tanager. Our last harbour in Norway was Egersund, to visit Per and Gunhilde, OCC, who had greeted us as we docked in 2009 and treated us to a four-hour auto tour. Their recommendations in 2009 served us well sailing along Norway's south coast, and again in 2010 sailing the coast of Jutland.

In strong following winds we sailed overnight to Skagen, the northern tip of Denmark, arriving on 27 August to find the small harbour packed with 300 or so Swedish boats, in port for an end-of-summer party. Party they did, with music, singing and instruments, combined with a 'few' drinks, but all was festive and good-natured. We rented bicycles and rode around the many bike trails. Down the east coast of Jutland we continued, often with strong following winds, stopping in Hals, Grenaa and Begtrup Vig, all

The village of Øye, in Norway's Sunmøre Alps

A sudden cold rain shower on the Elbe was our reintroduction to sailing on the North Sea

picturesque. In Middlefart on Fyn we rented a car and drove to visit Niels and Merete, whom we met in Præsto in 2010. They welcomed us warmly, with crossed Danish and American flags by their driveway in Næstved, made us a delicious dinner, and the next day gave us a lovely car tour to Stevns Klint, a spectacular chalk cliff exposing the razor sharp Cretaceous-Tertiary contact, the instant 65 million years ago when life on earth was drastically changed by an asteroid impact, opening a clear evolutionary pathway for mammals, and eventually, us.

We waited out nine days of foul winds in sheltered Cuxhaven marina on the Elbe, with its free bicycles and access to the city and beach. Since 2009, a self-service and easily accessible fuel dock has been added near the entrance. Entering the marina across the swift Elbe currents can be exciting, but the large clear area just inside gives ample room to get organised before searching for a slip with a green tag. Good wifi is available with purchase of a card in the office.

An overnight sail to Vlieland in the Dutch Frisian Islands was followed by day sails to Ijmuiden (Amsterdam's seaport), Scheveningen (The Hague's seaport), and Oostende in Belgium. We waited in Oostende until we could motor southwest to near Calais, then cross the English Channel and make our way back to London over the following few days. Near the Belgium border we were boarded by the Dutch Coastguard, who gave *Wings* a cursory check. Off Calais, the French Coastguard gave us a more serious look. During their 1½ hour stay aboard *Wings* they carefully cross-checked our log against our verbal accounts of our previous two years, asked to see our Norwegian marina receipts, and scrutinised our passports carefully.

We sailed or motored 3500 miles by the ship's log during our 2010 summer cruise, and stopped in 51 places. We were very lucky to have so much time in the midst of such a beautiful land, though humbled when we compared *Wings*' size (and ours) to the scale of the mountains and fjords. We were grateful to have both the *Norwegian Cruising Guide* and the *Havneguiden* series to help us along the way. (See *Flying Fish* 2010/2 for reviews of both the *Norwegian Cruising Guide* and the *Havneguiden* series.)

BEWITCHED IN BEAUTIFUL BALI!
Misty McIntosh

(After ten years spent exploring the South Pacific by both sea and land, Peter and Misty turned the bow of their 43ft Oyster Tamoure *north and west, for southeast Asia and beyond…)*

We always said that ten years in the South Pacific would suffice, so in March 2010 we bade farewell to New Zealand, our southern summer base for seven of those ten, and set off on the next stage of the adventure. First came the 1300 mile 'hop' across the Tasman Sea to Bundaberg, from where we began the long march up the coast and round to Darwin. Australia is a very big country! We didn't sail every single day, but it still took 66 of them to cover 2000 miles. Contrary to expectations it wasn't unpleasant at all. The route, on paper and electronically, looks nerve-wracking, winding through reef-strewn shallows, constantly dodging big ships, but the reality wasn't so bad. Channels were well marked and ships well behaved, though we did have one amusing experience, on a day on which the log records: 'Hideous, awful, ghastly day! 100% cloud cover + squalls. Sailing blind amongst reefs + shipping lane'.

Unable to hold our course for long we gybed and gybed and gybed again, relying on our new chart plotter to tell us when to do so. This is something we never do – put all our eggs in one electronic basket! – but the reason for not being able to lay our course initially has been the source of much laughter ever since.

Coming in from the outer shipping channel on a northwesterly course was a very large ship, heading straight for us instead of altering course to keep to starboard, as we expected. Growing concerned, Peter called the ship and received a reply we've certainly never heard before – this to be read with a Chinese accent: "Cannot change course. The Pilot is in the toilet ... Pilot in toilet ...!". Ten minutes later we are feeling a bit like 'the toilet' ourselves, so close is he to our position. We call again, and receive the same reply from an impatient Chinaman: "Wait, wait, Pilot in toilet ... Pilot in toilet ...". This is better in the telling than in the writing, but eventually the Pilot finished his business and the ship altered course to clear us safely. Not a good moment to be caught, literally, with your trousers down!

On another occasion we motored for six extremely hot hours to our chosen stop at Howick Island (Scots names crop up everywhere!), anchoring just out of the shipping channel, expecting to be rocked and rolled by every passing wash. Neither of us had the stamina to continue in the heat, and it was a recognised anchorage. No sooner was the anchor down than we heard on the VHF: "*Tamoure of Lymington ... Tamoure of Lymington ...*". Oh my goodness – no one refers to us by our full name! "Peter, you get it!" I squeaked, convinced it was a big ship about to round the corner and mow us down. (In the narrowest channels ships broadcast their intentions about half an hour in advance, so we knew there was 'someone' coming up behind us.) We must have done something very wrong and were about to be in big trouble, compounded by the fact that both of us had flung off most of our clothes! Sounding very apprehensive

A truly beautiful water temple

– and deferential – Peter returned the call, only to discover the Pilot's cousin comes from ... Lymington! He'd picked up our AIS signal giving our full name, and just wanted to talk.

Nervous moments apart we had some great downwind sailing, with *Tamoure* recording speeds as never before. She'd had a big refit in New Zealand in 2009 and we could almost hear her saying, "Mum, Dad – this is what I'm good at!" as we regularly tore along at 8 knots. That's fast for us!

Our philosophy – not 100% successful, as we were to experience once closer to the squall-ridden Equator – is to avoid stressful situations whenever possible. 'Stress will find you anyway,' proclaims the Skipper, 'no point in seeking it out.' With this in mind we probably sailed more overnights than most, and avoided the obvious shortcuts, bypassing both the Escape River and the Gugari Rip. Surely there's a hint in those names!

Three weeks of shop-till-you drop in Darwin and we were off to Indonesia with Sail Indonesia 2010, which would be better named Motor Indonesia since that was what most of us did most of the time. All cruisers claim not to be Rally people – ourselves included – but we joined, like others, to ease our path through the bureaucracy for which the country is famous. Thanks to the number of islands and choice of anchorages we never saw more than four to six boats at any one time, except in Bali where the fleet came together to activate the third and final month on our visas.

Our three months cruising through Indonesia exceeded all expectations: fabulous scenery, smoking volcanoes. Komodo dragons. After the 'sameness' of the South Pacific (after ten years one pretty little palm-tree fringed bay looks very much like the next!] it was wonderful to find no two islands the same. Haggling is expected in daily markets, and I became quite good at knocking the price of a bundle of beans down from 35 to 27 pence. Most of us were apprehensive about this – funny how the men were always somewhere else at haggling moments! – but the main thing was not to take it too seriously. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. I had to remind myself occasionally that it wasn't an exam – failure didn't matter!

Having been enthralled by our first two months in the country, we expected to hate Bali, but fell totally in love. We'd expected to find tourism of the worst kind – being hassled by touts, ripped off, and overcharged wherever we went – but actually it wasn't too bad and, at the end of the day, we are tourists also! On our first venture ashore three delightful local ladies approached us: "Welcome to Bali! Is this your first time? What is your name?" Boy-oh-boy, these women certainly know how to weaken one's resolve! "Misty – do you need laundry? Vegetables? Come and look at my dresses ... I give you special price ...". They behaved as if we'd all been pals for years. Very good selling trick!

After that we were always greeted by name – they never forgot! – and even though they quickly launched into the sales pitch, it was done with such charm and politeness that it was hard to take offence. With a large number of yachts in town for less than two weeks you could hardly blame the locals wanting to rent you a car or a taxi, sell you dresses, souvenirs, bananas... It did get a bit tiresome, but once away from the landing area you were generally left alone.

Bali is a Hindu island in the middle of a vast Muslim country, and very different from the rest of Indonesia. Everywhere you look there are temples, adorned with fabulous carved statues frequently depicting the struggle between Good and Evil. Hindus are very into this, and are fond of appeasing the gods in the hope that Good will triumph. Wherever you look you will see little offerings, nestling inside a basket of woven leaves.

Looks like Evil's winning this one!

Laundry Man pops out mid-morning to appease the spirits

There might be some flowers, a few grains of rice, some incense burning. Peter once saw an offering topped with a Ritz biscuit!

I've since learnt that the positioning – and quality – of the 'spirit house' is important: not so near the main house that the spirits are hanging around the back door causing trouble, and sufficiently attractive for them to want to stay there. We wonder if perhaps *Tamoure* needs a spirit house to reduce the time spent mending things. Sometimes we question just how 'inanimate' our inanimate objects really are. Too often they remind us of the toys in the cupboard under the stairs, coming out at night when the children (that's us!) are asleep and creating mischief of a mechanical kind. Maybe we just haven't made the boat comfortable enough for the 'spirits', and they are showing their displeasure!

Preparing the offerings, a serious business

Hindus are for ever lighting things and having celebrations and cleansings. On our last day I had difficulty getting my laundry back at the agreed time, and when the laundry lady finally opened up her shop she was full of apologies for being late, explaining there had been a ceremony in her village. When I enquired what they were celebrating, she rather shyly replied: "Cleansing ... for the body ...". Goodness knows what that was all about!

They do like their ceremonies – and if it helps smooth the day's path, why not? It's such a gentle way of life, it appeals to me a lot. And you'd better watch out for those gods. They have power. They can send gale force winds and zero visibility (bad) – or a sunny day with 15 knots abaft the beam (good). I'd be placating them too if I thought it worked.

A well-stocked spirit house

One day we witnessed a very peculiar ceremony taking place on the beach – our first experience of cleansing, possibly to do with the new moon. After a lot of mumbo-jumbo and swinging of incense by fairly serious and religious-looking men, gathered under a makeshift gazebo, the participants proceeded to throw a whole lot of 'stuff' – rotting veggies, wilting flowers etc – into the sea. But what also goes along with the load? A fully-fledged duck and a tiny little chicken! Mr Duck quickly swims to the shore where he is grabbed none too gently and tossed back into the water. This happens twice and then the 'rescuer' takes him away by the scruff of the neck. I suspect duck was on the menu that night.

As for the chicken – a fluffy wee bundle – it struggles and flaps and tries with great difficulty to make its way to the shore, but it also receives the rough treatment. Whenever it reaches dry land someone throws it back in again. Poor wee thing gets weaker with each attempt, and the last we see of it, it's struggling up the beach in a very disoriented and bedraggled manner. All its tormentors have now gone, but we suspect little chook wasn't long for this world. A very strange performance – especially from a culture known for its gentle nature, for whom animals are just as important as people.

The highlight of Bali, however, was the music and dancing – absolutely stunning! The nightly performances alone were worth the Rally entry fee. We would never

10am in a field, and still she weaves her spell

have come across such fabulous entertainment on our own – front row seats, on the beach, night after night, to a standard of the kind you might expect in a theatre or top-class hotel.

The first performance was put on by the local orphanage, something we didn't realise at the time, it was so professional. Tiny graceful girls, who start dancing at a very young age not least because, in order to be able to do the elegant hand movements, they need to practise daily, bending their fingers back (that's back as in away from the palm). By adulthood they have a suppleness denied the rest of us. We non-Balinese

Waiting backstage, not quite so magical …

… but when the performance begins …

folk can't bend our fingers up much beyond the horizontal, but a Balinese dancer has been practising this since early childhood and has almost 90° flexibility.

Then there is the jerky head movement and the weird, slightly spooky, rapid eye movement to left and right. This all follows a pattern and has meaning, but to the observer it is just part of an amazingly artistic and supple performance. The costumes – of the musicians as well as the dancers – were beautiful. Layer upon layer of gorgeous coloured fabric, with intricate head dresses and accessories. They must have been hot but you never saw even a bead of sweat!

Each performance told a story, none of which we understood except the finale, which was a 'lesson' in the dangers of polluting the ocean. A strangely incongruous tale in a country which appears to have no policy at all and a very gung-ho approach to waste disposal. That was Indonesia's biggest letdown – pile upon pile of festering rubbish, visible everywhere, usually being worked over by scavenging dogs or cattle.

The band tuning up…

The *gamelan* music was quite different from anything we'd heard before – except from Evelyn Glennie, renowned Scottish percussionist. The musicians sit low to the ground, cross-legged, in colourful, co-ordinated clothes, and although to my inquisitive eye there seemed to be no leader, apparently there is such a person who controls the tempo with a drum. The pace starts slow, rhythmic, hypnotic – first loud, then soft, then loud again – gradually getting faster and faster to reach an ear-splitting crescendo. The whole thing was just fabulous!

Unfortunately the end of every show brought the dreaded audience participation. Apparently it's a Balinese thing – to 'share' your performance and involve the spectators,

They start 'em young!

which didn't feel right as it broke the spell the dancers had woven so successfully up till that moment. There's nothing attractive about a bunch of badly dressed yachties making fools of themselves on a public stage!

Our time in Bali was very special and seemed to mark the 'end' of something, but it was nowhere near the end – we still had 1000 miles to go to Singapore. After ten amazing days we left with heavy hearts, and pushed on towards the Equator, crossing into the northern hemisphere on 10/10/10. A good omen and nice, after so many years, to be back where winter comes in January, not halfway through July!

A tourist remains an outsider throughout his visit; but a sailor is part of the local scene from the moment he arrives.

Anne Davison

LETTERS

Jens Bagh, Calgary, Canada **July 2011**

The cover of Flying Fish 2011/1 reminded me of an experience I had when sailing my 35ft Lyle Hess-designed Cutter *There You Are* off the west coast of Panama a few years back. This is how it went...

Are You Listening?

Singlehanded sailing is to many a fool's game, and it is not without its hazards. On the other hand having a crew on board brings on its own problems as well as increasing the requirements for water, supplies and fuel. Some people thrive on solitude, while others find it hard to survive without the continuous excitement and change which company brings. Most modern humans seem to thrive amid lots of noise, and nowadays it is hard to go anywhere without being exposed to music or noise in one form or another. But by adopting this lifestyle we may no longer hear what nature is prepared to tell us if we just keep silent and listen for a while.

One of the reasons I like to sail is because the noise level under most conditions is quite tolerable, with just the wind in the rigging and the water lapping against the sides of the boat. However, there are times when it is necessary to use the auxiliary engine, when coming into harbour or anchoring in a confined space, and then of course the noise level increases considerably.

I had been cruising all day in moderate winds and in a fairly heavy swell, and towards nightfall I approached an anchorage which, according to the sailing directions, offered a sandy bottom and clear water. Hence I had no qualms about steering into a very sheltered bay and putting the anchor down in the dark waters, as from both the chart and the water colour I assumed ample depth for my 5ft draught. In most places one can hear some sounds from the denizens of the deep in the form of clicks of varying loudness and frequency, and here I heard these noises very loud and very clear. Shortly thereafter the boat gave a sort of a bump and I immediately realised the water was too shallow and she was aground.

I went on deck right away and with the anchor and capstan tried to haul the boat out to deeper water, but to no avail. The tide was going out, and soon *There You Are* was inclined at an angle of more than 20°. I checked the tide tables and found it

'There You Are' back in her element

would be another couple of hours before it would turn, and meanwhile there was little I could do except to make sure the boat rested evenly on the sandy bottom. This I did and then took to my bunk, resting in the angle formed between the bunk and the side of the boat. Around midnight she was again on an even keel and I motored out to re-anchor in deeper water. I have since then been acutely aware of noises coming through the hull, and should I again hear loud clicks I shall immediately check the depth and the tide status for nature may well be telling me that my boat and I are out of our depths – if we will only listen!

Reese Palley, Philadelphia, USA **July 2011**

Fiction is stranger than truth

I hove into Horta in June of 1976 aboard my 32ft Westsail, *Unlikely V*. It was my first ever ocean crossing, and took us 23 days from Bermuda – hardly a record, but having made my first ocean landfall I felt saltier than a Bismark herring. We were the only yacht in the harbour. Peter from the Café Sport welcomed us with hot showers, hot towels and hot bread. The Great Wall which protects the harbour had already begun to sport a few names of the yachts which had passed through and, not to be outdone, we inscribed *Unlikely V, Atlantic City*. After a few weeks in what was then a very quiet corner of the sailing world we sailed off on our 18-year circumnavigation.

Now I must make a confession. In order to 'spice up' my first book, *Unlikely Passages*,

I invented, out of whole cloth, the story that vessels who did not leave their record on the Great Wall of Horta sailed off never to be heard from again. The story became a salty tale, and then transformed itself into an indelible myth, the latest incarnation of which appeared in *Flying Fish* 2011/1 in Dick Moore's account of his time in the Azores some 35 years later.

I offer no apologies, since all of the years of warding off future dangers by leaving marks on the Great Wall of Faial has created a true work of art filled with colour and excitement and gallant images of yachts gone by.

Editor's note: While not disputing Reese's story, I do wonder whether he was the sole source of this legend. On my first visit to Horta in 1979 we were firmly told that we must leave a painting if we didn't want to offend the sea gods, and were even provided with some rather gluey paint. I'm not sure when *Unlikely Passages* was published, but it would have been quick work for word to get around so fast. Does anyone have an older memory of this tradition?

SEASICKNESS
Caroline Charnley

It is stealthy. It creeps up on you, infiltrates your body and sows the germs of illness long before you are aware of it. Even when your body is beginning to succumb, your ego refuses to acknowledge the enemy; refuses to accept that it is a threat or has any strength. The ego becomes totally dominant, forcing the body to respond, to fight back, willing the mind to consider anything but. But then experience joins the battle, pouring doubt on the ego.

For a while there is a state of limbo: mind, body, ego, soul, all aware of what is happening, all trying their best to do the best for you. You keep busy, eyes scanning the horizon, gulping in the fresh air, humming a tune, holding a smile of hope and self-reassurance – anything to delay what is becoming inevitable. Yet in the end you have to admit to it : seasickness. From that moment you change from independent spirit to patient. You have to accept what is going to be dealt to you and have no option but to wait for recovery.

The mild headache turns from a dullness at the front of the brain to a solid brick that dominates your head. Gradually the pain and discomfort become more fluid, seeping through the brain, drowning all parts that had hoped to be free. Then it turns to heat, burning from the core, the very centre of your head, pulsing out to the edges, each pulse accentuating the pain, highlighting it as it hits the skull. You are dizzy. The only way out seems to be to lie down and close your eyes, yet it does not release you.

At the same time your vulnerable underbelly starts to react, to portray the classic symptoms of seasickness. First the diaphragm feels that it will split. A searing heat stretches it taut as a drum, the edges burn with the strain and the middle is acutely sore. Acid burns your oesophagus, yet your stomach takes on a deep chill, for which a warming hand is not enough. The malady grasps your gut, squeezing it tight and weighting it down.

Now the demon has got you, dragging you down, making you unable to stand, consuming your energy until every movement becomes a considered effort. All you can do while you wait for the inevitable is to be motionless, to find a place of stillness. You know you want to be sick, as if this will rid you of the terrible onslaught, but no, the demon wants to torment you more, to make the anguish last longer and for the symptoms to be still stronger.

At last your body fights back. It vomits. Release!

Although your stomach is sore and your legs are shaky, your head has cleared. Your mind starts working again and ego drives you to get on with things. But unless the sea changes or the voyage can stop, the whole thing starts again. You have had a brief respite, but seasickness will come and get you again.

The boat and crew must be safe – that is your absolute priority when you are watch-keeping. Seasickness, however awful, cannot, must not, take away from that premise; it has to be overcome. Somehow you have to will yourself to bother, even though you are not sure that you can. Your whole being just wants to shut down, to escape and recover, and yet you must stay awake. The most dangerous part is that seasickness plays tricks on your judgement – surely that flapping sail or banging halyard will be okay for a while? That ship is a long way off – I'll just lie down for a few minutes before I alter course...

So how do you cope? I cannot 'stand' a watch and for much of it I cannot sit. I have to lie down, yet it would be disastrous if I went to sleep. I divide a three-hour watch into 12½ minute intervals; 24 of them. That way I have to be exact, to work out the next interval, which helps to keep me alert. If necessary I set an alarm clock to ensure that, as a minimum, every 12½ minutes I scan the horizon and check course and sails. During those 12½ minutes I try to focus on something for the first ten. One night there were three insects crawling about the deckhead and I followed their progress intently. If I am in the early stage of the seasickness cycle I can use the concentrated light of a head torch and read, although it ruins night vision. For the last 2½ minutes I focus on getting my body to stand up: getting my head to convince my legs that they do want to move and that my stomach will be just fine when I do.

When moving from within the cabin to the cockpit that strategy works, but what about the rest? What about when I should be recording data in the log book, need to use the heads or to wake the next person on watch? That involves going further from the stern rail or my trusty bucket, and it takes longer to get back to them. Any of those things may make the seasickness worse. I just have to give myself a talking to and work up to it: get through that moment, that chore, and then I am a stage closer to being off watch.

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

Steve Pickard

(*Steve's photo of 'Dolphins in Aspic' appears on the front cover of this issue.*)

For many years I entertained the ambition of contributing something significant to one of the Imray pilots that guide us across the seas. By that mysterious serendipity that permeates ocean cruising, one day I found myself the inheritor of the late John Lawson's opus, *South Biscay*. My joy knew no bounds and for several years my duties were slight and the RCC Pilotage Foundation lunches magnificent.

There was a small cloud on the distant horizon, and that was the necessity of actually exploring this distant shoreline from the deck of my own boat. But even for this risky undertaking I was well prepared. I live in the south of France, and my home and that territory which constitutes *South Biscay* are connected thanks to the foresight of M Riquet who, foreseeing my future need, caused the Canal du Midi to be opened in 1681. *Hobo*, my 36ft Westerly, had been chosen for its shallow draught, so imagine my chagrin when I discovered that the canal had been quietly silting up and currently had water for boats of 1·35m draught or less.

After a good deal of lateral thinking, which included such ideas as taking the keel off and putting it in the cabin, inflating an old liferaft around the keel, and putting *Hobo* inside an old barge I had at the time, I decided that I had to do the manly thing and sail her round. My plan was simple – sail to La Coruña leaving Africa to port, explore South Biscay, then continue to the UK to visit friends. I would then leave Paris to port on my way home through the deeper canals which connect Le Havre with Beaucaire.

Hobo

Stage 1: Agde towards La Coruna

My voyage began well – a light refit at Allemands on the Grau d'Agde had me afloat and on my way by 20 May. I cannot say that I was not apprehensive. The previous year's cruise had found me having my heart accessorised on day one. What a short cruise that had been! Possibly for this reason I had agreed to take a crew. By day three I was once more alone and the holy trinity of Sea, Man and Ship once more ruled the waves.

Eight days after leaving Agde, Gibraltar hove into view. I had found a way of getting some sleep on overnight passages thanks to my Smith's oven timer, so managed to waste not a second once I got ashore. A day off followed, then once more it was time to put to sea and from now on there would be some north in the course.

On the way to Cape St Vincent there were two events of note. Off Cadiz I encountered a small fishing boat signalling for aid. After having towed them the best part of ten miles to the Cadiz breakwater their engine sprang back into life – I think they were merely trying to save petrol. Then, in the small hours of the next morning, while anchored in the Huelva River, I was boarded by Customs. Why dress like American SEALs and rush about in black rubadubs merely to politely fill in a form, I cannot imagine. Cabo de São Vicente loomed ahead, and with it the problem of how to get north on the Portuguese main. I had a plan. I would wait at Sagres, in the lee of the cape, until I had a clear twelve hours and then make a dash to Sines. From there to La Coruña I would leave early each morning and sail 30 miles or so, and be tucked up in port before the *nortada* kicked in.

None of these things happened. I arrived at the cape mid-afternoon to find a fair wind and a smooth sea. Hey ho for Sines then! Sines was abeam far too early the next morning, so first Cabo de Sines and then Cabo Espichel fell astern before I finally anchored at Cascais.

Next morning the rising sun found me heading for Cabo Raso in a fresh northwesterly

Gibraltar at last!

Cabo de São Vicente, my nemesis

breeze. I wasn't keen, and when I spotted a British yacht returning with dire tales of the cape I tucked myself astern and started to think of breakfast. This convoy of two fell in with a covey of three yachts heading for the cape. Reasoning that I had not actually seen what lay beyond the headland, our twosome joined the threesome and sailed out into open water. It was horrible, so for the first time that day I exercised a little moral courage and waved them goodbye and ran back to Cascais.

Two days later the northwesterly still blew, but there was due to be a 36-hour calm before it returned. A hard day to Peniche was followed by a day/night/day run which took me to within 25 miles of Bayona. A leap to the *rías* of Galicia was followed by a fast reach of 90 miles in daylight to arrive, at last and in good order, at La Coruña. It had taken 23 days from the French Med, with a wholly different form of cruising in the offing.

Stage 2: The Reconnaissance of North Spain

My task was simple. I must examine the entire coast from La Coruña to the Dordogne. I must nose my way into every port, bay, river and anchorage. I must disregard most of the things I read in the pilot – how else would I know if what it said was true?

It would have been wiser to start from the east. Not for nothing are most of the fishing ports hidden on the eastern sides of promontories and headlands. Finding them while rock hopping round capes can be difficult when they are so coy about disclosing their whereabouts.

Finisterre, nearly there!

I left La Coruña on 15 June and by the 20th I was a nervous wreck. The first day out had been pleasant enough, a gentle ramble around the *rías* to reach El Ferrol for the night. My notebook swelled with new ink and juicy facts. Day two had me in and out of windswept bays before arriving at the bar to Santa Marta de Ortiguera. My timing was perfect, HW –1, and the directions correct even down to the slightly less than 1m on the bar itself. I swept up to the town of Santa Marta, found a brand new and as yet un-christened marina, found the harbour master who filled in the details, then dined amid the happy villagers in the setting sun.

Before dawn I was filled with a great uneasiness. The wind had come in from the southwest and, though not strong, had a menace about it. In minutes I was on deck waiting for the pre-dawn light to give me an idea of where the unlit marker buoys lay. By the time I reached the bar the wind had freshened and a 2m swell from the north crashed on either side of the channel. With one eye on the echo sounder and the other on the marks I worked my way through, seeing at one point only 1m under the keel. Then I popped into Espasante, where I had some difficulty freeing *Hobo* from the harbour wall, before reaching at high speed across to Carina where I dropped into the only and well-fendered berth minutes before a gale arrived, which proceeded to blow all day. It was only 0800!

Over the next days and weeks a pattern emerged. Before retiring I would study what lay ahead, then wake with nervous apprehension as I thought of the tiny harbours I must visit that day ... the rock infested approaches, the receding tides and the endless swell that dashed against walls and shoals. As previously mentioned, finding these little holes in the wall was the first problem. The second was to offset the depth against the swell. Almost invariably the swell would disappear as the harbour grew close, a testament to the skills of the early Spanish fisherfolk. If I still had a metre or more under the keel I

Warships in El Ferrol, repainting overdue

would nose my way in, in several cases only to reverse out because of the impossibility of turning round once inside. Some were magic, some were dismal, but by the end of the day, in whichever anchorage, quay or marina I finally stopped, I was exhausted!

My wife, Deirdre, joined ship in Santander and for the next two weeks we worked our way to the Gironde. She was surprised to find me in long trousers. I realised that since Cascais it had been too cold to air my extremities. Once in Paulliac we hired a car to explore the Dordogne and thus wrap up the reconnaissance for the new edition of the pilot. All that remained was to sail the boat to England and then canal cruise home, but first a little home leave was called for.

A new ship just clears the bridge at Ribadeo

Stage 3: The Gironde towards Le Havre via Beaulieu

When I returned on 2 August *Hobo* was much as I had left her. The beer was reassuringly cold in the 'fridge, and a cosy warmth below decks seemed to suggest a pleasant passage north. High water next morning was at a civilised 1000 and five past saw me slipping downstream. By 1400 the Pte de Grave was abeam, but was there enough ebb to see me clear of the Gironde? I hurried on. In the lee of the infamous Corduan lighthouse French yachts clustered in perfect tranquillity. The sea was rough around No 5 buoy, but from this point I could bring the wind abeam and step out onto the open sea. I considered a night passage, but there was too much north in the wind so retired to a buoy off St Martin d'Oléron for the night.

The warmth of the previous day had me in shorts the next morning. A freshening breeze from the southwest had me well reefed and doing 8 knots before breakfast. When Les Sables d'Olonne came abeam in the thickening weather the density of yachts greatly increased. One slipped under my stern, and my eyes took in the oil-skinned figures replete with lifejackets and harnesses. I glanced at myself, the slippers, shorts and amusing T-shirt spoke well of my cockpit shelter but suggested that perhaps I was not taking things seriously. By 1500 temptation loomed up through the murk in the guise of Port Joinville on the Île d'Yeu. But I was sailing well and Le Croisic in Brittany was a real possibility.

2100 and I had run my distance. The last glimmer of daylight had just expired. 500m to starboard was the Pte de Croisic and 500m to port was the west cardinal of the Basse Castouillet. At least I assumed so – I could not see a thing. About to move

Menu del dia (four courses and a bottle of wine) 8 euros

The author makes new friends in Bermeo, Spain

off to a safer spot I suddenly made out an alien violet glow where the shore should be. Encouraged, I sounded my way to the Basse Hergo and once again could not see it at 100m, the clag was so thick. Having rounded the breakwater, the leading lights suddenly came on and all was well with the world.

I had not slept well the previous night and had great hopes for this one. I anchored carefully and celebrated my arrival in Brittany. Shortly thereafter I fell into a deep sleep. Shortly after that I was woken by the pressure cooker crashing onto the cabin sole. I felt slightly paralysed and found it difficult to get to my feet. It is strange how heavy one feels when the boat is lying on its side! I had been betrayed by a gust which put the keel on a bank when the ebb should have held it clear. Quality sleep was difficult after that.

On my passage to La Coruña the engine had been used a great deal, but during the passage to the UK the wind was always fair, one short day apart. In this manner I sailed to Camaret and from there a long day to Guernsey, anchoring just before dawn in Havelot bay. Some friends blew in the next day aboard *Island Swift* and much fat was chewed that evening. John and Wendy were bound for Morlaix, and thus weather-bound the next day as a strong southwesterly kicked up a bit of a sea. This was fair for me, however, wishing as I did to dine in Alderney. At 0600 I was hoisting the mainsail and by 0900 was firmly attached to a buoy in Alderney. The Swinge, surprisingly, had been the smoothest part of the passage.

Deirdre in Bermeo

I slipped at 0600 next day and, accustomed as I was by now to fast passages, was slightly disappointed not to have the Needles abeam by 1400. This was probably just as well, however, because on arrival at 1700 I rushed up the Solent on a fair tide and was tied up in the Beaulieu River by 1900. Mid channel I was astonished to see a fishing buoy awash with the 3-knot tide rushing over it.

My time in the Solent passed pleasantly enough. After several days enjoying the bucolic calm of the Beaulieu River I slipped over to Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, berthing on the corporation pontoon – isolated, but oh so economic.

My wife Deirdre flew in from Boston, so I popped over to Southampton to pick her up. *En route* for the Beaulieu River, so engrossed were we in conversation that, despite its size and hazardous nature, I did not see one of those large green things that purport to be aids to safe navigation! I was well heeled and doing about 8 knots when I did catch sight of it, and uselessly grabbed at the wheel. The autopilot is stronger than me and drove us square onto target. All the forward facing drawers in the cabin shot forward and on the bows the anchor formed the first line of defence, deforming its deck housing in the process. The stem, to my astonishment, suffered only lightly.

Shortly afterwards we arrived in the river. All went well at first, sailing by, luffing up, that sort of thing, but when it became time to prepare the anchor for deployment I found the pin that secures the stock could not be opened. Observers, and there were many, had their afternoon peace disturbed as, with increasingly heavy implements, I

tried to free the pin. I could read their thoughts without psychic powers. "How many years has that chap's anchor been rusting in its bower to require such force to free it?" It was a lovely weekend, particularly for those who like a good strong wind.

Deirdre went ashore on business and I waited in Cowes for the remnants of Hurricane *Katrina* to pass. I should really have waited another day, but on Tuesday a light wind led me out onto open water at first light. The wind quickly became force 6, and with reefs fore and aft I sliced across the Channel. Unfortunately the reach was a little close and the autopilot's meanderings caused the headsail to flog badly so I was obliged to steer by hand. It was hard work, and lots of spray and the occasional wave came aboard, especially on the ebb. The right side of my face became encrusted with salt.

It wasn't all bad news, however. Le Havre showed up before dark but there was still a problem. Just before I had left Bembridge astern the engine had stopped pumping seawater. It is fresh water-cooled so could run for a while like this, but clearly could not be run for long. The wind had veered a little to the west, so I gave the autopilot another chance and tried to locate the fault. I could not and still the engine ran dry. Shortly before arrival at Le Havre I had an idea, and primed the system with the inlet valve off. I started the motor and sprang to the seacock. All was well, or nearly so. The navigation light on the pulpit failed as I sailed into port, giving me a clandestine air – an effect the *Gendarmerie* were quick to pick up on. So, framed as it were by searchlights to starboard and waves breaking over the breakwater to port, I found a safe berth. Before eating, or even drinking, I retired to the heads for a long shower, removal of salt from my right ear being top of the list.

A Spanish letter box. Where did Royal Mail go wrong?

Stage 4: Le Havre towards Beaucaire

The rising sun found *Hobo* and me up and about as the tides were perfect for a run up to Rouen. Careful navigation is required – to avoid the lethal shoals hereabouts and to reach the Seine one must first head out to sea. By 1700 I was nearly 80 miles up

river and by 1800 the removal of my mast had been arranged for the next morning. At a similar hour the next evening I was tying up at Poses, just above my first lock and outside a house but with a lane between it and me. A chap in night attire enquired how long was my stay. A similarly clad woman looked anxiously on. How strange the shore seems after a while on the sea!

My arrival in Paris was not without incident. Just outside the Arsenal I picked up a rope around the propeller and just managed to secure to a pontoon. Attired in wetsuit and mask and armed with a large dagger I was about to plunge into the murky Seine when the *Gendarmerie* hove alongside. Any form of aquatic activity was, I learned, forbidden except by the *Gendarmerie* and licensed divers. I eyed their aqua-lung in a meaningful manner but to no avail. Very kindly I was given a shove into the lock which gives access to the Arsenal, and on the far side I sailed very slowly into a vacant berth where, while admitting nothing, the rope became detached from the propeller.

Deirdre once again joined ship, and after several days in Paris we left for the cross-country event that is the long journey from the Seine to the Rhône.

The third day out was very trying. We had already learned that the Canal du Centre was closed due to lack of water, but had decided to press on and take a break when forced to a halt. This led to a gloomy start. The night-time activities of the nearby sugar beet processing plant had not helped. It had been a cold night and I had fronted up the €5 for electricity, so was very disappointed when my power supply could not be induced to work. We had some low bridges to negotiate, but due to the heaviness of the mast and the difficulty in arranging height reduction this I did by degrees, the degrees being prompted by the clipping of bridges. Shortly before the last two locks of an already long day, vibration began to rattle the woodwork. I examined the engine mounts carefully and found one broken. Oh dear! Pushing on to Chatillon-Coligny, I rigged the extension cable to run lights etc and received a severe shock! I still cannot explain why. By 1100 next morning all was put to rights, but we were going nowhere and the day was spent in pleasant (and harmless) idleness.

Uneventful, thank heavens, days followed until, on Thursday 29 September, our watery road ran dry and *Hobo* found a safe berth in Digoin. It is proposed to open the Canal du Centre for a week from 17 October and, if the *Voie Navigables de France* manage to find enough water for our 1·5m draught then, by the grace of God, we may well find our way back to Beaucaire, from where I began this voyage on 15 May.

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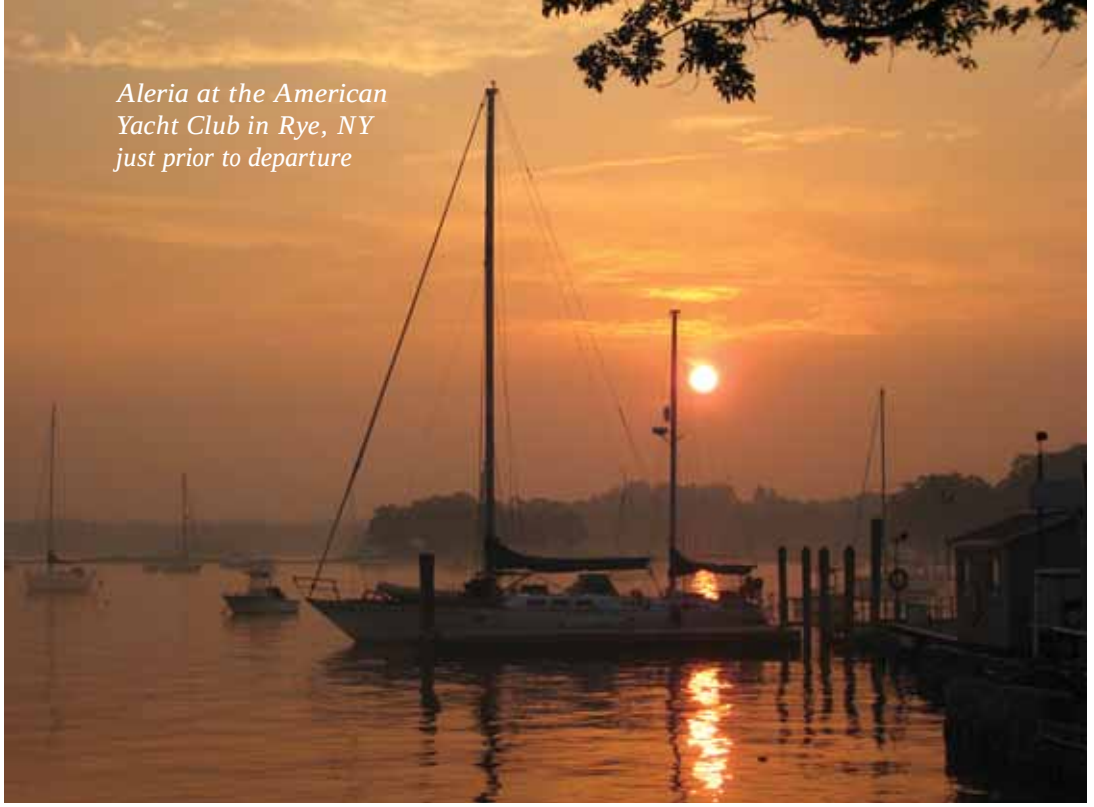
In mid November Steve sent a progress report: "The *Voie Navigables de France* postponed the opening until 24 October, so when I returned to Digoin the frost lay deep and crisp and even. I got the reluctant engine to start by setting fire to the air cleaner (a useful tip). Only three boats were making the run to the River Saône. Day 1 took us to Montceau, day 2 to St Leger and by the end of the third day *Hobo* lay on the Saône at Tournon. It took a day and bit to get to Lyon, then three long days to Beaucaire."

ATLANTIC SPIRAL, Part I
Daria Blackwell

Although only one leg of our Atlantic spiral served as my qualifying voyage for the OCC, the entire spiral was one great adventure encompassing three Atlantic crossings. To tell the whole story of places seen, experiences had, and friends made would fill too many pages, so I will focus on the lessons we learned about ourselves, our ship and the oceans around us.

In 2008 my husband, Alex, and I bade farewell to family and friends, boarded our Bowman 57 ketch *Aleria* at the American Yacht Club in Rye, New York, and set sail to vague destinations as cruisers must. As we had no set itinerary other than a stopover to supervise delivery of our possessions from America to Ireland, to which we were relocating, we saw it as an adventure to be defined – we'd get underway and see where it took us. So it took shape, not by planning but by circumstance met along the way. We sold our home and left our careers in the States behind us, sailed to Ireland via New England and Nova Scotia, completed building our house and, because the weather was so awful, decided to spend the winter in the Mediterranean. Unfortunately, in 2009 it wasn't shaping up to be much warmer there, so we ended up in the Caribbean instead. Such is a cruiser's life. After a year in the islands we made our way back home in 2010, via our third Atlantic crossing in as many years.



Aleria at the American Yacht Club in Rye, NY just prior to departure

Our three Atlantic crossings were very different. The first, across the North Atlantic in July 2008, was by far the most intense. We reprovisioned in the tiny hamlet of Hubbard's Cove where friends live, then moved on to Halifax where we refuelled and took on water at the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron while awaiting arrival of a hurricane. Herb Hilgenberg was our daily companion, keeping an eye on the iceberg reports in the Labrador Current (ice flowing farther south than usual so late in the year) as well as the weather (downgraded Tropical Storm *Cristobal* delayed our departure). When we finally saw a weather window with five days of favourable forecast, we jumped at the chance to go.

We departed from Halifax in dense fog and light airs, and sailed the entire coast of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland under fog so thick we couldn't see from the cockpit to the mast (and *Aleria* has a centre cockpit). We were sailing by brail and electronics, constantly on radar watch, thankful for the limited ship traffic.

We left under main, mizzen, yankee and staysail, and that was the most canvas we flew for the duration of the trip. We steadily reduced sail area as the wind increased, until we settled onto jib and jigger for the remainder of the voyage. The reason? We encountered six gales and avoided one strong storm *en route*. We hove-to twice, for 36 hours each time, to let gales pass over us. I was prepared for being terrified, but I was not prepared for the intense frustration. Here we were, going every which way except northeast, rhumb line long forgotten, zigzags drawn on the chart in testimony to an 'interesting'

Stowing gear before our first Atlantic crossing

ocean crossing experience. What would we have done without a great library? During one of those times I was so frustrated I wanted to just get off at the next stop. Then Alex mentioned we had forgotten to bring cookies, so I settled down and baked a batch of peanut butter cookies that lasted the entire way home. I munched while reading the most gripping novels I could find onboard, to get my mind off the frustration alternating with terror when I had to go on deck to check our status during my watch.

Then the sun came out and the wind calmed down to a steady 25 knots from the west. We flew towards Ireland, dolphins playing in the bow wave, and we wondered what the fuss had been about. We even tried fishing, but the instant we laid line in the water, birds attacked and got tangled. We took care to release them so they could continue on their way, but where had they come from? We tried again when there were no birds in view, and within minutes they were on the line again. We had thought birds were only sighted near land. We were a thousand miles from anywhere, feeling very alone in a vast and easily stirred ocean. We gave up on the fishing. The seas were still huge and one day, as I went below to make a log entry, I looked up to see two dolphins in the wave high above the stern looking down into the cabin and seemingly saying, "So that's how you live down there". I considered that an extraordinary experience until I mentioned it to a friend who said, "That's nothing. I had a hammerhead shark

in the wave above us ready to jump aboard".

Then we received word from Herb that a gale coming up on us had intensified into a storm packing survival conditions. Our only safe choice was to turn back and sail west as fast as we could to get out of its way. We had glorious conditions – beautiful sunshine, clear skies, favourable winds. Once again we were frustrated. We decided that Herb must be wrong, so Alex decided to turn north. In no time at all we were in the worst conditions we had seen yet. Wind 45 knots gusting well into the 50s, seas 30 feet with crossing waves breaking along the surface of the main swells. It was hell. We hove-to, again, and made it safely through. We never doubted Herb again. (We also never told him.)

There were few ships with which to make contact, though we had one singlehander keeping an SSB radio schedule with us. He didn't have an anchor on board so he'd sailed through *Cristobal* – after that, the gales were but a nuisance. He made it to Ireland and, the last we heard, he is still celebrating.

As we approached the coast of Ireland, Herb told us that someone had called the Irish Coast Guard having heard a report of a vessel foundering off the coast. The Irish Coast Guard called Nova Scotia Coast Guard who called Herb, who had just spoken with us and knew our position was 500 miles off Fastnet. Alex's sister had raised the alarm as we were a day or so overdue, but Herb promptly contacted the authorities to let them know we were fine and on our way, just slightly delayed by weather. In fact, another gale was brewing right behind us. We had a choice of waiting it out, or trying to beat it in. We went for it, practically flying in on the tail of the gale ahead of us and just making it into Clew Bay before the next one hit. The weather had been rather wet

Rough seas during one of the six gales encountered in the North Atlantic

Baking cookies while hove-to for 36 hours during a gale

Dramatic sunset and unsettled weather on the passage across the Celtic Sea and Bay of Biscay

A sparkling toast awaited us on arrival in Clew Bay, Ireland – at 0700!

and wild most of the way, yet when we sailed past Clare Island at the mouth of the Bay and made our way between the shores with the holy mountain Croagh Patrick on one side and Achill and the Nephin mountains on the other, the sun broke through the clouds. In a single dramatic stream it spot-lit our route home betwixt the 365 islands in the Bay. God was showing us the way home where we belonged ... for now.

What an amazing experience it was to arrive home and drop anchor in our inlet, off our shore, in front of our house, and not to have flown there. For years we had flown back and forth between America and Ireland, where family tugged at us on either end. Here we were on our own boat having taken the slow route. There was no jet lag and no shared germs, only family and friends streaming out to meet us in a parade of boats, guiding us in with the tide, welcoming us with champagne toasts at seven o'clock in the morning. None of us had ever had champagne that early before, and not having imbibed at all at sea we were feeling rather happy rather quickly. We raised our Q flag and called customs and immigration, having pre-cleared before departure from America. Our first Atlantic crossing and we had made it home safely. We learned later that it had been the wettest August in recorded history in Ireland, and we knew why. We weathered all the storms that were borne along with us from Canada to Ireland.

Coming ashore, we faced the usual adjustment to *terra firma*. It takes me longer than Alex to rebound on land. Standing on a dock is tricky – I have to start by crawling on hands and knees. My first shower usually involves bouncing off walls. Alex, on the other hand, takes longer getting used to being at sea as he is prone to seasickness and I am not. We complement each other well in so many ways.

Alex admires the view from the castle at Bayona in northwest Spain

It is amazing how quickly one gets sucked into life onshore. Whereas we had had no television for weeks and never missed it, suddenly we needed it, had to have it, NOW! The global economy had collapsed while we were at sea. America was being blamed for everything. It seemed that we had picked a really good time to sell and sail.

Our container arrived a week after we did. Suddenly, we had a whirlwind of activity. The car drove out, and the furniture was unpacked and stored. There were rumours flying around town for weeks that we had sailed over with the car on the boat. Tourists came down our little shoreside lane to see our yacht on the mooring, while we got to work on completing our home.

The quick way down via toboggan through the streets of Funchal, Madeira

It's chilly at the top of Tenerife's Mount Teide!

Post Celtic Tiger, progress was made quickly and we were soon living comfortably in our new home by the sea. The weather was terrible that winter. Sleet, unrelenting freezing rain, darkness, and damp cold made us dream of warmer climes. So we packed up *Aleria* and set off to cruise the Mediterranean.

We left Ireland on 1 October 2009 and headed vaguely south. After a rather boisterous crossing of the Celtic Sea and the Bay of Biscay, we spent a glorious month exploring the *rías*, villages and cities of Spain and Portugal. We were cruising again, the weather was fine, and life was good. We'd have loved to have spent more time there, but we had left Ireland later than we wanted to. (It had taken months to schedule my driving test for a European driving licence, which is notoriously difficult to pass in Ireland. I passed on the first try and then didn't drive at all for the next year while we sailed.) Then we learned that the weather in the Mediterranean was not likely to be favourable that winter, so we made the decision to turn right instead of left and head for the Caribbean. That's how our second crossing of the Atlantic came about.

We left Lisbon and headed for Madeira, stopping first in Porto Santo where we fell madly in love with the place. Life was so simple. People gathered to talk in cafés and walk along the beach. We loved living there for the brief time that we became part of the landscape. Yet, somehow, the bug to continue and experience more kept infecting us. So move on we did. Funchal, then the Canaries: Tenerife, La Gomera, and Gran Canaria. We fell in love once again, this time with La Gomera. We made cherished friends among the cruisers there, and together explored the island by bus, ferry, bicycle and on foot, creating lifelong memories.

(The concluding part of *Aleria*'s Atlantic Spiral will appear in *Flying Fish* 2012/1.)

FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Mark Holbrook, aboard *Rain Again*

Barracuda with Maracuja (serves six)

Ingredients

- 1 large barracuda
- lots of butter
- six small green bananas or plantains
- a generous piece of fresh ginger
- one red (bell) pepper, shredded
- the pulp of three passion fruit or maracuja
- black pepper to taste
- a dash of cream

First catch a 3ft, bone-ugly barracuda (mine was caught using a cedar plug with a daisy chain of three squid/muppet teasers). Try to force alcohol into its gills before it can bite off your fingers with those dreadful teeth, but end up beating it to death with a winch handle. Rest (a glass of wine is helpful here).

Take the head off, gut and clean all the 'black kidneys' off the backbone. De-scale before removing the tail and fins. Divide into three, cutting the flesh down to the backbone and then snapping it. Fillet, starting the incision either side of the backbone axis and paring the flesh off the ribs. Divide each of the six fillets into two along the long axis. Consider the possibility of ciguatera. Take local advice, and if all seems okay lick the raw fish and see if your tongue tingles. (It is best if your dinner guests do not see this part).

Melt the butter in a large pan. Halve the bananas or plantains along the long axis and fry with the fish, adding a generous piece of fresh ginger. Start the fish flesh-side down and turn after a minute. Season with copious quantities of fresh ground black pepper. Finish cooking the fish with the skin side down to crisp it (more black pepper). Do not turn the bananas, but instead try to keep them whole. Two minutes before finishing add shreds of red pepper for colour and the pulp of one passion fruit or *maracuja* per pair of fillets and a dash of cream.

Serve with salad once the cream has cooked and fused with the melted butter. Wonderful with white Frei Gigante wine from Pico!

Give a man a fish and feed him for a day. Give him a fishing lesson and he'll sit in a boat drinking beer every weekend.

Alex Blackwell

HARD TIMES
Rosemarie Smart-Alecio, Roving Rear Commodore

(*Rosemarie and Alfred left the UK aboard* Ironhorse, *their 38ft Colin Archer-type steel gaff cutter, back in 1994 and have been exploring the world ever since. The following incidents took place at Langkawi Island on the west Malaysian / Thai border, where* Ironhorse *has spent the past three Southwest Monsoon seasons.*)

"*If they could see me now, those little friends of mine...*" Shirley MacLaine's *Sweet Charity* song circles my mind, for I'm partly gagged by my mask. I add the negative and the emphatics ... "*NOT eating fancy food NOR drinking fancy wine*". I'm doubled up in the lazarette, knees under my chin, one either side of the rusted rudder stock I'm in there to spot-treat. I'm trying to juggle with chipping hammer, powered wire brush (my imagination runs riot at the possible damage THAT could do to me if it slipped!) and the assortment of 'toys' which any self-respecting owner of a steel boat always has to have to hand. I have nowhere to rest them except the afterdeck above. How many times have I wiggled my way up through the 50cm^2 hole, either to exchange 'toy' or take a gulp of fresh air? Outside temperatures will reach 30°C again today, so I've compromised with the protective gear, opting only for the mask and visor to add to the 'knees' and leather gloves which have surely saved me from serious injury enough times to be MUSTS in my wardrobe.

Today I'm Lazarette Lil, but in her life a boating girl plays many parts. More often I'm 'The Bilge Queen' (having to squeeze down through the tiny hatchway in the saloon floor), 'The Scrubber' or 'The Rust Rebel'. The list seems infinite. Being on the hard is a necessary evil and, after five months of 'hard grind' – excuse the pun – I'm vowing never to be in this

Lazarette Lil wields her wire brush ...

Applying 'Rust Rebel' to the damaged paintwork behind the newly-welded chainplates

situation ever again ... just as I did the last time and the time before that! Yes, "*It's Hard on the Hard*", fellow cruiser Eileen Quinn sings to me via her CD *Degrees of Deviation*, to console me as I work. I could give her 100 more ideas if she wanted to add to those verses!

Of course there have been light-hearted moments. I'll probably recall quite a few when I have time to relax and reflect. One of our best occurred when I was off the boat for the day – an exceptional occurrence in any case.

The welding of new chainplates on *Ironhorse* would take two days. Her old chainplates were of mild steel, which proved difficult to maintain when rust began appearing, so we decided to replace them in stainless. The skipper ordered me to stay away after I'd become a nervous wreck anticipating the outbreak of fire (ever the optimist) within the insulation during the process. Horror stories from various places abounded – and, during a previous haul-out, we'd actually witnessed a devastating fire on another steel vessel, almost an hour after welding had ceased. But our team today was reputedly the best.

When they broke for lunch on day one I returned for a quick cup of tea, leaving my mug with the skipper's unwashed lunch dish in the galley sink. In time, the team returned, setting to work before I could disappear. They stopped for me to climb off and it was consoling to observe that one of them had sole responsibility for holding a fire extinguisher at the ready. So far so good. The job itself was coming on well. The

skipper stood by throughout, double-checking alternately on deck and below, for both precision and safety.

I returned at the end of the afternoon to a completed job, and Alfred grinning sheepishly. "Looks OK", I commented. "You missed an exciting moment", he said. "I was glad you weren't here". He then recounted how at one stage the cabin had filled with smoke and he'd raced outside, ordering them to cease immediately. They did so, the fire-fighter speeding towards the companionway and moving below, extinguisher at the ready. His colleagues also moved, peering within, the smoke becoming thicker by the second. The silence was deafening, and then was suddenly broken by a tentative voice from one of the team: "Your frying pan's still cooking, Skip".

Alfred (bless him!) had decided he would wash up 'between times'. His habit – to assist the de-greasing process – was to place a little water with washing up liquid into his frying pan and warm it up before washing it properly. He'd started the process and completely forgotten it! "What a plonker!" he declared, embarrassed. The boys politely made no comment.

THE PERFECT SUMMER CRUISE
Beth A Leonard

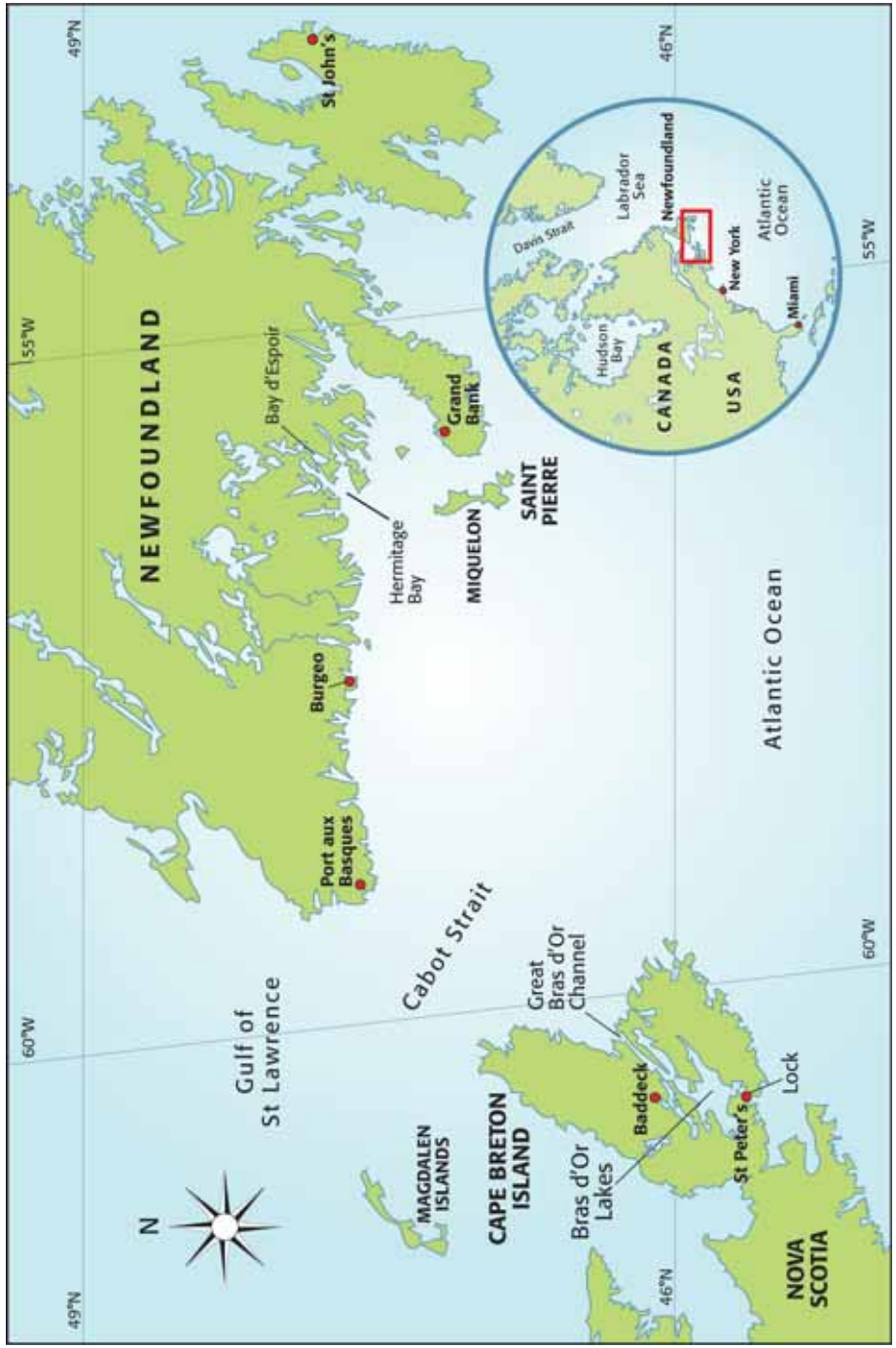
This summer's OCC jaunt in the Canadian Maritimes included every ingredient necessary for the perfect sailing cruise. Take 24 sailing boats, put aboard crews of six nationalities, mix well with challenging cruising conditions, expose to exotic locations with hospitable people, throw in lots of storytelling, and don't forget some fearless leaders to bind it all together. The recipe is nearly perfect. All that's missing is one big power boat. Yes, much as we sailors hate to admit it, we were grateful to have a 65ft steel trawler with us this summer. As Jenny Franklin of *Al Shaheen* so aptly put it, "What every sailing rally needs is one big power boat".

Exotic places

The OCC Newfoundland cruise kicked off on 7 July with an earlybird party sponsored by OCC friends Betty and Henry Muggah at their house in Baddeck on the Bras d'Or Lake. It ended three weeks later, on 30 July, with a gala French meal arranged by OCC member John Van-Schalkwyk (better known as Van-S) at a restaurant on the French island of St Pierre just south of Newfoundland. The fleet came together for three other events at Port aux Basques, Burgeo and Grand Bank, and between them participants explored Newfoundland's rugged and remote coast. All three cruising destinations – the Bras d'Or Lake, the south coast of Newfoundland and St Pierre – are unlike any others in North America.

The once-French island of Cape Breton makes up the northeastern third of the province of Nova Scotia. The locals refer to themselves as 'Cape Bretoners' and the rest of the province as 'the mainland'. The island retains a rich mix of French and Celtic heritage, with the French language almost as common as English. The Bras d'Or Lake all but bisects Cape Breton Island and is entered via either Great Bras d'Or, one of two large ocean inlets stretching into the island from the northeast, or St Peter's Lock at the lake's southern end. Once in the lake the fog, strong currents, large tidal ranges and cold water of the coast give way to moderate tides and currents,

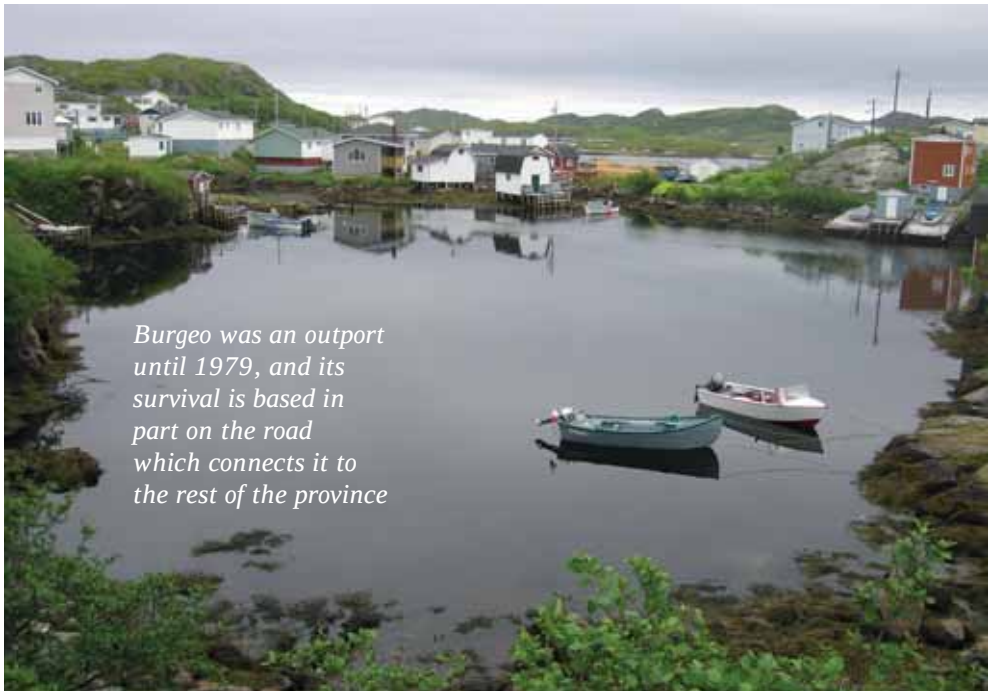
Massed members of the OCC before the earlybird party at Betty and Henry Muggah's house on the Bras d'Or Lake



sunshine, blue skies and brackish water warm enough to swim in. It's as if a magical piece of summer had been set down inside the grey, fogbound coast.

From Baddeck, we sailed for Port aux Basques on the western end of the south coast of Newfoundland. Newfoundlanders call their island 'The Rock' with equal parts pride and humility. Their ancestors carved out tiny communities at the feet of towering, bald-headed cliffs connected to the rest of the world only by sea. These outports were completely isolated for entire seasons; their residents totally dependent on one another and what they could eke out of the hard land and the fruitful waters. Over time the roads cut through muskeg and granite, and the power lines running alongside them tied most of the larger communities to the rest of the province. But many small settlements remained, and in the 1950s the Canadian government began a forced resettlement to create larger communities that could be modernised. Today the south coast of Newfoundland consists of a mix of mid-sized fishing towns, still isolated outports, and abandoned settlements where small wooden houses cling precariously to the rocky shore.

After our last gathering in Newfoundland, at Grand Bank, the fleet set sail for France. The tiny island of St Pierre with its 5000 inhabitants and its larger but largely unpopulated neighbour, Miquelon, represent the last enclave of what was once an extensive French empire in north America. France has held St Pierre and Miquelon – with more than a few interruptions – for nearly four centuries, and in all that time this tiny outpost has remained determinedly, delightfully, French. Les St-Pierrais lift their noses in disdain at the Canadian French spoken in nearby Cape Breton. They savour *café au lait* and flaky *pain au chocolat* at the many *patisseries*, and carry baguettes home on their Vespas from the *boulangeries*. At the *boucherie* long *saucissons* hang from huge hooks, and pigs' heads and trotters are displayed next to delectable cuts of veal



Burgeo was an outport until 1979, and its survival is based in part on the road which connects it to the rest of the province

and marinated legs of lamb. Delicate lace curtains frame every window of the steep-roofed, brightly-painted houses which line the narrow streets.

Any one of these destinations would have made for a memorable cruise. This summer, we were treated to all three in just three weeks.

Adventurous people

Bring together a couple of dozen OCC boats and you're guaranteed an interesting group of people – even more so when they've sailed hundreds or thousands of miles to an out-of-the-way place to be part of an OCC event. The 25 boats that participated in the rally carried 60 people (plus three cats and two dogs) including eight English, three Germans (one of whom is now a Norwegian citizen), three South Africans, two Scots, two Canadians and two Kiwis.

All of the participants were accomplished sailors well prepared to cruise these challenging coasts. Those who had been here before shared knowledge of anchorages and hazards, and those who went ahead passed news back through the daily nets to assist the rest. When things broke, as they always do, hardy OCC members willingly turned out to find the right spare and fix broken bits.

Ralf Dominick of *Imvubu* had come the farthest to participate, having sailed almost direct from Cape Town, and he and his crew, South Africans Lucrecia Rodrigues and Frans Wentzel, departed early to head even further north. They have since passed safely through the Northwest Passage and are making their way down the US west coast. Veteran sailor and 2007 CCA Bluewater Medalist Peter Passano rounded Cape Horn aboard his Wittholz-designed cutter *Sea Bear* and also made an impressive

Doug and Dale Bruce's Bluewater greets the fleet at Baddeck

Peter Passano and Evans Starzinger discuss boat design in Burgeo

singlehanded voyage to South Georgia*. New members Charlie and Heather Lalanne completed a circumnavigation aboard the 56ft wooden schooner *Appledore* in 2001; they joined the cruise aboard their Hinckley 49, *Nellie*. Barbara and Steve Seide had also circumnavigated in their Hallberg-Rassy 46, *Sidereal Time*, as had Evans Starzinger and I in our aluminium Van de Stadt Samoa *Hawk*.

There were many 'small world' stories as people rediscovered others they had met in distant harbours years earlier, or uncovered common sailing friends. But one of those stories went beyond the close confines of the cruising community: last year Jenny and John Franklin left their Pocock-designed aluminium cutter *Al Shaheen* in Canada and drove a Land Rover from England to South Africa. After 24,500 kilometres, at the very end of the trip, they fell into conversation while refuelling with a young man who had made the same trip on a motorcycle. That young man was Frans Wentzel – crew on the South African yacht *Imvubu*. A very small world indeed.

Challenging – and rewarding – cruising

Newfoundland's south coast dished up plenty of material for good sea stories. In the first week, two nor'easters brought gale force winds, and more than one anchor came adrift from the rocky, kelp-covered bottom. In between, a big swell and very light winds had too many of us motoring too much of the time. The near-constant dense fog made navigation a matter of hopping from one rock or buoy to the next. The large contingent of British sailors felt right at home!

* See '*Sea Bear doubles the Horn*' and '*Sea Bear in the South Atlantic*', in *Flying Fish* 2002/1 and 2002/2 respectively.

Despite the poor visibility, crews with sharp eyes got glimpses of whales, dolphins and puffins. Several of the narrow fjord entrances proved challenging to find in the dense fog and gave a thrill when all that could be seen was whitewater breaking on the cliffs to either side. After entering a fjord and motoring a few miles inland the clouds would lift, and we would find ourselves in breathtaking rock-walled canyons surrounded by waterfalls, all under bright blue skies. Hikes ashore provided much-needed exercise and fantastic views, but required careful preparation to avoid being eaten alive by the voracious insects. Many of the anchorages were in tiny coves too small to hold more than one or two boats, and between the major events at Port aux Basques, Burgeo and Grand Bank everyone was free to cruise where and with whom they wished, allowing ample opportunity to get to know fellow OCC members.

Hospitable people

Everywhere we went, we were met with extraordinary hospitality. At the Muggah's earlybird party in Baddeck we were introduced to Grosvenor Blair, the great-grandson of Alexander Graham Bell. Bell spent much of his later years in Baddeck, where he built a magnificent country home called Beinn Bhreargh (Gaelic for 'beautiful mountain'). The house is never open to the general public and only occasionally to small groups, but Grosvenor invited us to tour the house and the grounds. Literally overnight, Van-S organised a bus so we could spend several magical hours wandering the old estate.

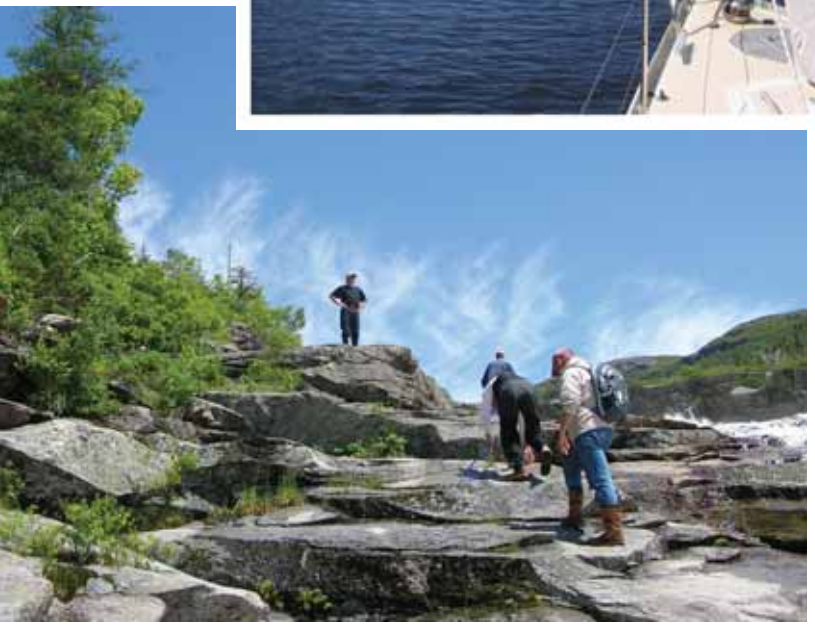
In Burgeo, June Hiscock, manager of the marine centre, put together a dinner at the fire hall with several dozen townspeople, a band, and a local minister famed for his dry wit. Reverend Childs told us about how, when he was a boy out fishing off the coast with his uncle one fall, a fast-moving black cloud approached their boat, "That cloud turned out to be no cloud at all, but a swarm of mosquitoes heading south for the winter. When they went by, they took our sail with 'em". The following spring, another fast-moving cloud approached from the south, "Those mosquitoes were coming back, and every last one of them wore a little canvas jacket".

Alexander Graham Bell's country home, Beinn Bhreagh

In Grand Bank, where the harbour hadn't been so full in years, locals promenaded along the pier and reporters from the local newspaper and television stations wandered from boat to boat. While we were there, David and Tamsin Kidwell in *Twice Eleven* got word that they were now official OCC members. That night, after a play at the local theatre, the theatre company welcomed them into the OCC by making them honorary Newfies. They were 'screeched in', a tradition involving Screech, the Newfoundland native liquor made from rum and molasses, and a codfish. In broad Newfoundlandese they were asked, "Is ye a Newfoundlander me son?", to which they had to reply, "Indeed I is, me old cock, and long may your big jib draw". They paid for each mistaken reply by gulping down another round of Screech, and when they finally got it right they had to kiss the codfish on the lips, much to the delight of the spectators.

New OCC members Tamsin and David Kidwell are 'screeched in' as honorary Newfies

Hawk passes through the canyon-like fjord of Hare Bay, heading for the open ocean



Climbing the waterfall at Hare Bay. Photo Wendy Richards

Most touching of all was the way we were greeted by those who lived in the remote outports on Newfoundland's south coast. Tying up to the docks in front of tiny communities with a few hundred inhabitants, we would be treated like long-lost friends and offered generous hospitality. We left Newfoundland with new friends and a lasting respect for the people who live along its shores.

Wonderful stories

Doug and Dale Bruce made storytelling a central theme of the three-week cruise. At our first dinner in Baddeck, Doug kicked off a challenge by reading Humphrey Barton's take on "17 Bottles of Rum". He asked cruise participants to recount their favourite stories, with the best to be shared at the final dinner in St Pierre. The storytelling ended up taking most of the night.

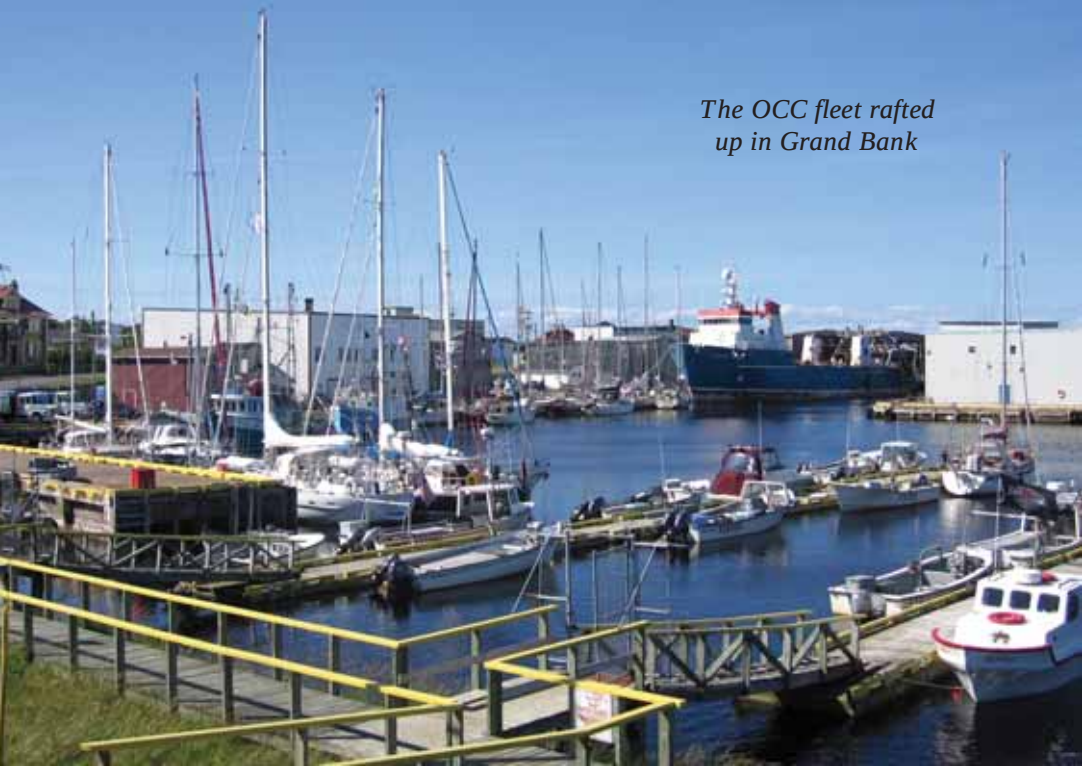
Most of the stories were funny. Jenny Franklin from *Al Shaheen* described her very first sail with John, after answering his magazine advertisement, which culminated in her pulling up the chain and finding no anchor at the end of it. "What have you done with my $%*@ anchor?" the skipper yelled. David Kidwell regaled us with his hilarious letter to his insurance company detailing the multiple injuries received when he and Tamsin attempted to take *Twice Eleven*'s radar off the mast in a situation reminiscent of the bricklayer who cannot keep his feet on the ground.

Some of the stories were deadly serious, including the terrifying description of how Bob and Ami Green lost their first *Scallywag* while lying to a buoy off Statia. A freak wave rolled the boat and carried it ashore – they barely escaped with their lives. Heather Lalanne then shared the devastating experience of believing she had lost her son at sea. And there were new stories from the cruise. John Richards from *Windermere* gave a hilarious account of a hike at Hare Bay, led by a local fisherman who had no mercy on out-of-shape foreigners who couldn't handle a few voracious bugs. By the time John had finished, everyone in the audience was panting, sweating and itching.

Fearless leaders

This summer's cruise began and ended with Doug and Dale Bruce. They literally wrote the book on Newfoundland, having edited the CCA guide to the province and visited its shores over six summers. They wanted to share a place they had come to love and the friends they had made there, so they dedicated several months to organising and managing the cruise. Their unfailing enthusiasm, unstinting generosity and helpful advice convinced many to visit an area they might never have reached otherwise.

Cruise organisers Doug and Dale Bruce –
Dale in her 'duck' sweater and Doug in his OCC Newfoundland Cruise shirt



The OCC fleet rafted up in Grand Bank

Part of being a good leader is being a good delegator, and Doug and Dale delegated well and wisely. John Franklin of *Al Shaheen* ran the morning and noon nets which kept the fleet organised and (mostly) in the right place at the right time. John Van-S and his crew in *Morning Watch* managed the complicated logistics of refuelling in Burgeo, and handled all the organisation for Baddeck and St Pierre. When the French, at the very last minute, declared "C'est impossible!" he smoothed the waters and unruffled the feathers, and the events in St Pierre went off without a hitch. Others were deputised as and when needed, and they all rose to the occasion and contributed to the event's success.

Plus one big power boat

Ah, yes, the power boat...

On Sunday 24 July the light air, big swell and fog we had been experiencing for nearly a week got blown away by a strong northwest wind. Many of the boats were underway, trying to make some miles towards Grand Bank before Tuesday's events. Pam MacBrayne in *Glide* was running the regular noon net while Denis Moonan sailed through Hermitage Bay. Pam dropped off the net in mid-sentence.

Wolfgang and Gabi Schilling in *Rasmus* were sailing near Bay d'Espoir when they heard three words on their VHF radio: "Dismasting ... Hermitage Bay ...". Wolfgang immediately contacted the Canadian Coast Guard and the OCC boats in his vicinity. He was too far away to reach the area, but Brian and Sandy Duker in *Moonshadow Star* and Ken and Heather Baker in *Faring* responded. *Moonshadow Star* found *Glide*, who had lost her mast just above the first spreader.

Glide under tow, with Moonshadow Star behind. Photo Wendy Richards

The Coast Guard had no boats in the vicinity and did not know how long it would be before they could reach *Glide*, but John and Wendy Richards in *Windermere* had heard the distress call on VHF and asked if they could assist. *Moonshadow Star* and *Faring* stayed with *Glide*, while *Al Shaheen* kept the rest of the fleet informed of the situation. *Windermere* pounded more than 25 miles at full throttle into 20–25 knot headwinds to reach *Glide*. Denis floated a light line down to John, and *Windermere* took her in tow on 400ft of line secured around the base of her mast. The Richards then towed the dismasted boat 15 miles into Hermitage, the closest downwind port.

The fleet's 'big power boat' – the 65ft Cape Horn trawler Windermere

Glide safely anchored at Hermitage. Photo Wendy Richards

Faring stayed with *Glide* at Hermitage, where the entire town turned out to help. They cut away the broken mast and took the stump out of the boat to see if the two parts could be welded back together. After exploring their options and talking to their insurance company, Pam and Denis decided to leave the mast in Hermitage and get the boat back to Nova Scotia. *Faring* and *Glide* rejoined the group in St Pierre, and their stories figured prominently in the final storytelling event. We were all grateful for the 'happily ever after' ending to what could have been a disastrous incident, and to the trawler in our midst for coming to the rescue.

Newfoundland has always been a harsh and challenging place. Survival in the outports entails a contradiction – the inhabitants are both stubbornly self-sufficient and totally reliant on their neighbours in their small communities. Sailors understand this as few others can. In the very highest demonstration of what the OCC aspires to, Ken and Heather Baker in *Faring* accompanied *Glide* for more than 400 miles until Denis and Pam reached Mahone Bay in Nova Scotia, where they shipped *Glide* home to Maine. The Bakers are neither OCC members nor Newfoundlanders, yet they personify the best of both.

And so we come to that very last, most important ingredient – camaraderie. For a perfect summer cruise, what more could anyone ask?

Faring and Glide in the raft up at St Pierre after rejoining the fleet

SALTY MEDICINE
Bill Marden

(*"You can't build a reputation on what you're going to do", Henry Ford once said. In terms of survival Bill has no need to – he will be 90 later this year.*)

My previous stories in *Flying Fish* have all revolved around *Fancy Free*, my 52ft, heavy displacement, Bill Garden-designed yacht. It took six months to build her in Taiwan back in 1979, after which I found myself alone for her maiden voyage from Taipei to Hong Kong in January 1980. Since this first singlehanded trip, it has been 31 years of using and abusing my magic carpet to roam the world. This 'shoestring' travel is mostly funded by my Social Security, and is not a high on the hog living. My boat hogs most of the available cash for fuel and maintenance.

When I give a talk, one of the most frequently asked questions is, 'What do you do when you get sick?', so this time my topic is sailor's medicine – the maintenance and care of the crew.

Out of sight at sea, preventative medicine is your best therapy. It is essential to maintain one's immune system at maximum. While I can't prove it, my personal belief is that these days many babies, especially in America, are kept much too clean, and this does not allow them to develop the best immune system possible. Of course any seagoing boat must have a good mini-pharmacy, but keep away from it unless you really need it, especially antibiotics. Pathogens do not thrive at sea – in fact salt water and sun appear to wipe them out. Around 100,000 patients in the USA die each year from things they pick up while in hospital, something you totally escape if you never go near a hospital. When you do have a problem alone at sea, you're the doctor and it is all up to you.

I have had only two emergencies while on my yacht which I would class as serious. The first occurred while tied up to a boatyard dock in Venezuela. It was really my stupidity trying to open a heavy metal espresso tank which had become totally blocked – I did not realise that it was still under high pressure with super-heated steam. It came apart with a bang like a hand grenade while I was holding it about 4 inches from my rib cage. In a flash, the skin was ripped away from an area about the size of an American football*, but it was not broken. Adrenaline took over; then one, two, and three, in rapid succession. One: a bucket of water by my feet was picked up and poured on the burn. Two, a tube of sunscreen was lying on the table, which I plastered over the now collapsed burn. Three, into the mini-pharmacy I dived, and grabbed four tablets of Tylenol Codeine No 3. Next I crawled into my bunk in great pain, but under this sedation I was soon dead to the world.

I did not wake until next day, to find myself in a strange predicament: I could not get out of my bunk – I was in a human straight jacket and could not move. After about

* which measures 12 inches by up to 7 inches (30·5cm by up to 18cm)

an hour, which seemed like forever, I got my feet on the floor. Now it was necessary to devise a treatment for this large burn. I was determined to stay on board and not let anyone come near me. I did not think all the epithelial cells had been ripped away, and if I could prevent infection from removing what was left, no skin grafts would be necessary. It was a wait-and-see approach. For the first week or so treatment was to apply hydrogen peroxide to the whole burnt area several times a day and paint the outer borders with mercurochrome (still available in Venezuela). I was determined to keep the burnt skin in place for as long as possible.

I spent the first three or four days in the cabin, and no-one knew of my accident. When I did venture out on deck, people came running, took one look, and were determined to take me to the hospital immediately. My reply was absolutely '**NO**, and don't come near'. After several days a very thoughtful system was worked out. The wife of the boatyard owner went shopping in the town every day, travelling the first mile by boat to where she kept her car. On her return she brought a small paper bag of fresh food, which she dropped on my fantail as she went by. This was my only contact with the outside world.

Now all my efforts were to get healing by first intention – that is, by persuading the edges of the skin to reattach to each other with a minimum of interference. I took no antibiotics at all, although they were there in reserve should any serious infection start to develop. As it turned out, none were ever used. Neither were any bandages ever applied. The burnt area, from which the skin had been completely torn away, was about 6 inches wide and 11½ inches long, and covered the entire left side of my chest from below the bottom rib right up to my collar bone. I left this burnt skin entirely open to the air, and after the first week it had formed a semi-flexible barrier to infection. By day ten it had hardened into a massive scab. I continued to wash this protective barrier two to three times a day with hydrogen peroxide, and swab the borders with mercurochrome.

The entire burnt area remained hard with no infected patches. Marvel of marvels, it looked like some epithelial cells had not been destroyed and were still viable under this large scab – I was now well on the mend. I continued this treatment for about three weeks, until the scab started breaking up at the edges. One incident is worth describing – one night I awoke feeling some sort of grating on the edge of the burn. Carefully, I reached up and switched on my reading light. There to my surprise, was the largest cockroach you ever saw having a high-protein supper at my expense. In the confusion, he got away!

By the end of the third week the new skin was well formed and there had been absolutely no infection. It was approaching a month since the accident when, one Sunday, a Venezuelan doctor from Cumana came to work on his yacht. Everyone told him to please take a look at that *gringo* who hides in his boat and won't take any help. The doctor came over, took a good look and summed up the whole thing in one word, '¡*Fantastico*!'

I know I was very lucky, and must have a strong immune system. The French have a saying, 'It is better to pay the butcher than the doctor'. Why not give your body a chance to cure itself before demanding metabolic-altering drugs from the medical profession?

The only other life-threatening problem I have had while alone at sea was a completely blocked colon – and it was my own fault. It happened on my voyage following in Columbus's wake to the new world. It was a slow voyage, and the fresh food had dwindled to a few onions. However, I had was a plentiful supply of was unsweetened condensed milk, along with white sugar. As there was less and less to eat, I made up my calorie intake with milk plus more and more sucrose. Slow dehydration gradually took over. My kidney excretion of raw sugar went higher and higher, along with the lowering of total body fluids. To put it simply, I was slowly embalming myself with sugar, and setting up conditions for type two diabetes. Normal cell fluids were migrating from the body tissues to the kidneys and urine. It was lucky that I spotted the condition before any PH shift occurred, which would have led to my demise.

It was slow dehydration – my entire colon had shut down, peristalsis had ceased, the crew was in a bad way. What to do? The nearest island was Dutch Bonaire, about four days away. My pharmacy was not equipped to treat such a condition. What could I do to turn things around? I had no strong laxatives aboard and the only thing available was some very old mineral oil which had been aboard since my daughter was showing sheep as a school project. It had gone to China on my first yacht and came back from China on *Fancy Free* ... it must have been on a boat for 25 years. One tablespoon every six hours, along with all the coffee and water I could drink. An enema was in order, but I only had copper tubing which I thought too dangerous, and besides, there was no satisfactory way to deliver the necessary volume under enough pressure. My problem was to get to Bonaire as fast as possible. Having no large scale chart of Bonaire my general planning chart had to make do, even though Bonaire was only an inch or so in diameter. I would be approaching from the north – the town and harbour are on the southwest coast.

The four-day sail to Bonaire was spent in rehydration, along with a tablespoon of mineral oil every few hours and condensed milk, NO sugar. Visibility was poor, haze and mist making it hard to find the island before I was on top of it (this was before the days of GPS with one's position instantly available at a glance). The northeast coast of Bonaire is barren and dry with little or no development, very much like the southern edge of the Sahara. It was Thursday and it was imperative to get to civilisation and find a pharmacy. Visibility improved as the sun rose higher and it became hotter.

By 0900 I was off the village with its hole-in-the-wall marina. On entering, I found a completely built-up area with a marina office to starboard and a large house with an empty dock to port. No-one answered my calls on Channel 16, or came out to help me, take my lines or give directions, so I tied up at the empty dock, right outside the big house. There was quite a bit of surge, pushing *Fancy Free* up against the dock. My largest fenders were deployed, and these held me off temporarily. Further in on the other side were two fuel pumps which had to be outside the marina office.

To get to the office I had to work my way through the backyards of the private villas which surrounded the little harbour, but the whole place was empty, not a person to be seen in the tropical heat. However one door was unlocked and I found the marina manager. He looked across at *Fancy Free* and told me I had to move immediately, but

could come over to the marina dock for US $52 a day. He explained that I was tied up to the nudist colony's private dock and they did not like visitors. I asked if I could come over and get diesel but was told, "No, the pump is out of order, its computer board burned out". Repairs were expected to take several weeks.

"Where can I anchor?" I asked. Reluctantly he said he would come out in his tender and tie me up to one of the moorings off the beach for US $72 per week. That was It. Did he offer to take me back? No. It was back to the nudist colony, the way I came. After a while, out came the dinghy and we went to a long line of moorings outside, just off the beach. Customs and immigration were about a mile away in the centre of town. Leaving the Q flag up, it was hard work walking to town in the soft sand. Immigration was in one office, customs another and the police a third. Everything was closed. Finding immigration and customs locked up, my only alternative was to go to the police headquarters where I found one senior officer on duty. It appeared that I had arrived at the beginning of a four-day holiday. Nothing would be open until Monday morning, supermarkets and convenience stores included.

There were only two pharmacies on the island and both were closed until Monday, though one had been open until 1100. What to do? This was a real emergency – someone had to help me save myself, now back outside in the hot tropical sun. As a last resort it was off to the hospital in the heat of the day, fortunately not very far. The hospital was in holiday mode, but it had one doctor on duty and to talk to him would cost US $152. This really got my temper up, and I refused to move until someone would help. It was not a doctor I needed – I knew what the problem was, and all I needed was the hospital to fill in for the closed pharmacies and give me my first draft of a powerful colon stimulating laxative. It was impossible to wait four days. "Please, I need help and I need it now!" Between French and English, I explained how I had sailed into Dutch hospitality. If they would not help me before Monday I would be in their hospital. The nurse I was bothering had come from the delivery room – births do not take four-day weekends. She returned to her lair and some minutes later returned with a small plastic cup of medicine. I wanted to pay her but was told that it had never happened.

On Monday morning at 0800 the town pharmacy opened and a very helpful pharmacist prescribed some effective medicine. I will not go into further details, but it was not easy and took a week. To this day, I have not put a single spoonful of sugar in my coffee, and will not as long as I live.

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Editor's note: Knowing little about medicine, and concerned that Bill's methods might prove fatal if followed by other members, I thought it wise to ask the opinion of Past Commodore Martin Thomas, an ocean sailor and highly-respected surgeon. He replied:

> "I read this with interest. The main problems with burns are pain, loss of fluid and infection. Bill took pain killers which is sensible, the area was not so large as to cause a huge fluid loss and he managed to avoid infection. He is right that the burnt or blistered skin can be left undisturbed and used as a dressing, which is essentially what he did here. If the burn is superficial (first degree burn in old terminology) so that the deep layers of skin are preserved then the skin will re-grow.
>
> I also agree that antibiotics are over-prescribed. This is why we recently had an epidemic of MRSA and C.diff. It was correct of Bill not to use antibiotics unless or until infection occurred, which it did not. Usually in such an environment infection will occur (he was not exactly in a bespoke burns unit). His judicious use of antiseptics (hydrogen peroxide and mercurochrome) helped avoid infection. He was also helped by the burnt area being 'immobile' and not over a joint, for instance, such as the shoulder area which moves.
>
> Bill's remarks about the colon are also essentially correct. He is describing being dehydrated by an osmotic diuresis from sugar. I am not sure that imbibing a 25-year-old medicine is wise, but not administering an enema with a copper pipe certainly was – rectal damage could lead to death."


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ARABIAN SEA DILEMMAS

Graeme Mulcahy

(*Graeme and Gillian left the UK in 2006 aboard their Starlight 39* Kathleen Love, *and reached Sydney three years later. In* Flying Fish 2010/2 *they wrote about* Land Diving in Pentecost Island, *and later that year turned* Kathleen Love*'s bow for home. But it was a worrying time to be heading for the Red Sea...*)

Towards the end of 2010 we were planning our onward passage from Thailand to the Mediterranean. We were, of course, very aware of the piracy problems in the Gulf of Aden and the desirability of joining a group for that part of the journey. Some research on the net via various yachtie websites revealed several possibilities of informal groups meeting in Salalah, Oman and convoying to Aden, but all these seemed very vague arrangements. We also came across the Thailand To Turkey convoy/rally (TTT), for which a fee was to be charged – which would demand an encouraging degree of commitment from the potential participants. The convoy was billed as non-profit making and the fee – €250 per boat – was not unreasonable, any surplus going to the Chandlers who had not, at that stage, been released.*

Organiser René Tiemessen of SY *Alondra* had put together a reasonable-sounding plan and provisional timetable which suited us, so we signed up and paid our fee. The scheme was to meet in Phuket, cruise loosely in company via the Maldives to Salalah, form a tight convoy from there to Aden and then loosen up again through the Red Sea. Yachts were free to join or leave at any point, the only firm commitment being the Gulf of Aden convoy. We were initially hesitant as *Alondra* is 60ft and we thought her pace might be too fast for us, but the convoy speed was set to be 5 knots and the list of participants showed most yachts to be compatible with us.

As we had flown home for Christmas, and decided to go via the Andaman Islands to join the TTT in the Maldives, we missed the introductory meetings in Phuket. However we were given a booklet with details of routing, convoy disciplines, information on proposed ports of call and a list of participating yachts. An SSB net was set up so we could keep in touch with some of the other yachts, though not all had SSB. We departed for the Andamans comfortable with the arrangements that we made.

These islands, Indian-governed but with several areas occupied by indigenous peoples, are not visited by many yachts. The paperwork on arrival was the most we have encountered in nearly five years of cruising, but the reward was a taste of India and some pristine anchorages, although the tribal areas are out of bounds. A principle tourist attraction is the prison in Port Blair, a monument to the brutality of British colonialists towards Indian freedom fighters in the early 20th century.

From the Andamans, ten days of mixed sailing took us past Sri Lanka (which seemed

* See pages 95 and 96 for a review of *Hostage*, the account of Paul and Rachel Chandler's thirteen months in captivity in Somalia.

to generate extra strong winds around its south end) to reach Uligan in the Maldives by the end of January. The island, although undeveloped, was lovely and the people very helpful, arranging diesel and water supplies and passing around a dongle so that we could access the internet via the local phone system. They also put on a Maldivian feast for us, which went a long way to relax the atmosphere amongst the yachties. Shopping was limited, with only two very small shops, but we were able to buy some fruit and vegetables, eggs and frozen chicken. There is a single, part-built, resort on the island with little evidence of further work in progress, so perhaps they see welcoming yachts as a way to earn an income.

We found about thirty yachts at anchor, all agonising over the next move. Pirate activity had obviously become much more extensive with smallcraft operating from mother-ships over all the Arabian Sea, though concentrating largely on the major shipping routes. Clearly, it was prudent to reconsider plans for crossing the Arabian Sea. Some of the yachts were from our TTT group, which had become somewhat fragmented with René, the leader, stuck in Sri Lanka with engine problems. This led to poor communication among the group, and lack of knowledge of route plans for the TTT in view of the changed circumstances. There were daily meetings to discuss developments and potential plans, including a question and answer session with a British official via a mobile phone with a speaker facility. Possibilities for the next stage were:

- to sail a more or less direct route to Salalah, either solo or in convoy;
- to sail as far as possible up the Indian coast, perhaps even to Pakistan, before crossing to Oman (but this incurred up to 1000 extra sea miles, much of it upwind, and possible visa difficulties with Indian and Pakistani immigration officials);

- to return to Thailand / Malaysia and hope the situation will have improved in a year's time;
- to have the boat shipped to Turkey (at US $650/foot, or $25,500 for a 40ft boat);
- to sail round by South Africa (nasty seas and an extra 12,000 miles to get home).

In view of our uncertainty about the Thailand To Turkey rally plans we, together with nine other yachts including two other TTT participants, chose a slightly modified version of the first option, skirting south of what appeared to be the main areas of pirate activity and sailing in convoy. This convoy was put together at short notice by the skippers of two Canadian boats, *Chocobo* and *Seeamia*, who provided a spark of decision and leadership which was entirely appropriate at the time. Other small groups of similar boats followed our example, and some took the direct route solo. We took encouragement from the fact that all the recent pirate attacks had been on commercial vessels and there had been no attacks on yachts in this region for over a year (tragically this was to change).

A significant proportion opted to have their boats shipped. Those who chose this option had a long wait until the end of March, two weeks more than originally scheduled. They had to pay US $650 for local cruising permits and were discouraged from anchoring at some of the islands, particularly those with expensive resorts. One boat we kept in touch with told us that some resorts would ask for a $150 'landing fee' which could be redeemed against meals purchased in the resort. Later, loading was a fraught process and fees of several hundred euros were added in Marmaris for importation into Turkey.

Anxious cruisers meet in Uligan to discuss tactics

Several boats – including the TTT leader – chose the Indian coastal option and went north until they felt they had a relatively short ocean passage to cross to Oman. However it seemed to us that the extra miles sailed did not put any greater distance between the yachts and recorded pirate activity than our route. Others either returned to Thailand / Malaysia or decided to cruise India for a while.

After a thorough briefing we set out. The proposal was to take a route which skirted south of the area where most of the recent attacks had been, their positions marked on the chart. Each boat (with a code name – we were Eagle 3) had an allocated position in the convoy which we stuck to as closely as possible. Lights at night were to be kept to a minimum – weak stern lights only. A schedule of VHF channels was determined, changing each day, and one boat acted as liaison with the authorities via satphone giving daily position checks to UKMTO* with reference to previously notified waypoints. The planning owed much to the guidelines published by Tom Samson the year before, though we have since seen a suggestion from him that a convoy over this more open sea area may simply provide a larger target for the pirates, which is quite possible.

Within a couple of hours of leaving one boat had a severely overheating engine and had to return, leaving nine to continue. These were all crewed by couples, other than one singlehander and a family boat of four, and of seven different nationalities. They comprised the singlehander, an Austrian, aboard his 36ft gaff ketch *Anima*; a 28ft Polish boat call *Asia* whose lady skipper has now completed her third (mainly

* The UK Royal Navy's Maritime Trade Organisation, which has set up a voluntary reporting scheme for vessels of all nationalities traversing the Red Sea, the northern Indian Ocean and the Arabian Gulf.

Convoy sailing by day …

… and in the evening

singlehanded) circumnavigation in six years; *Amante*, a 51ft American ketch; *Chocobo*, a 40ft catamaran from Canada; ourselves in *Kathleen Love* from the UK; *Glide* from the US; *Margarita* from Denmark; *Seeamia* from Canada and *Tiku Moye* from Switzerland.

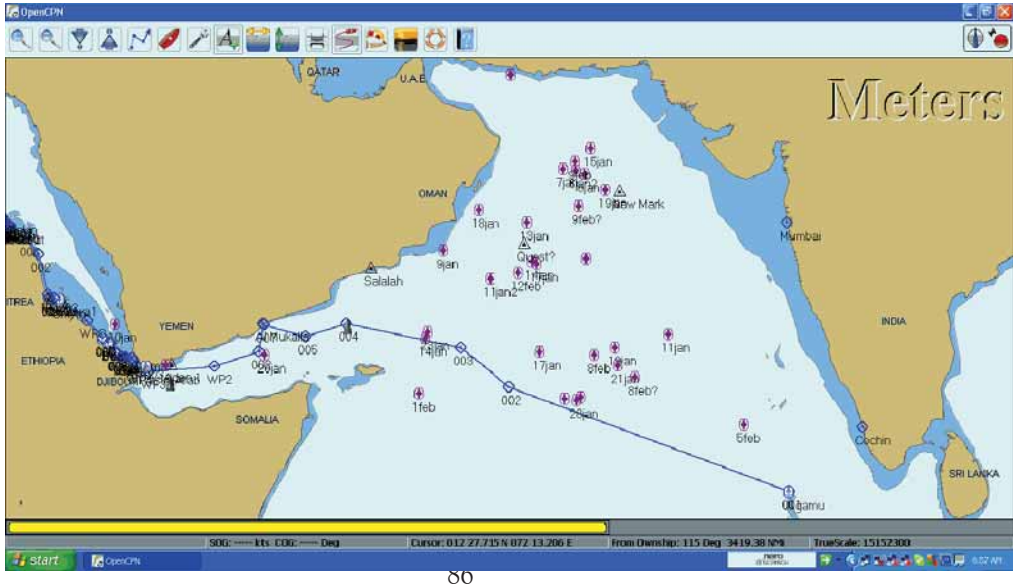
The varying sizes and performances made keeping in position tricky, particularly at night, and we found we had to spend much of the time reefed in order to stay with the slower boats. During daylight hours one of the leaders would occasionally suggest better order by VHF; at night the crew of *Margarita* kept watch on the radar display in their cockpit and warned any boats who were getting too close or too distant. The two Canadian skippers who had brought us together and organised the convoy did an excellent job in diplomatically keeping us all in order, and as time went on the discipline of keeping position improved as we tried to stay within 250m or so of our neighbours. We practised a manoeuvre to take close order in the event of suspicious vessels approaching. We did not, however, perfect 'formation gybing at night'! Speed targets were set periodically by the slower boats according to what they could manage under sail or with motor assistance. Keeping in formation did require a high degree of concentration, particularly at night, so on most days 'happy hour' was celebrated only with tonic water!

The pity is that we enjoyed some of the best ocean sailing conditions we have ever experienced – moderate winds, flat seas and almost unbroken sun. But we settled into the routine that the convoy needed and plodded on, committed to sticking together, a tall order for a passage of 1500 miles. At some periods it was necessary to motor to keep up a reasonable speed, when we might have been content to sail slowly had we been on our own. One morning, as others motor-sailed, we executed a perfect spinnaker

It was reassuring to have naval ships nearby

hoist having checked that we were going to stay on the same course for some time – 45 minutes later a course change was called, so down it had to come! The cat developed a rigging problem one morning, so we all hove-to while they fixed it. Another boat's transmission cooling failed, and they were taken in tow for 24 hours by the largest yacht while a replacement system was put together.

Our track, plus waypoints and 'contacts' – both known and unknown



Kathleen Love is checked out by a helicopter

One morning a warship appeared on the horizon and diverted to have a look at us, before heading off back along our route, possibly to check on other small groups of yachts which we knew to be following. We were also overflown by a couple of helicopters and reconnaissance planes. A French helicopter conversed with our French-Canadian co-leader and made it clear that they would much prefer it were we not in that part of the ocean. The presence of the military was reassuring but, realistically, it is unlikely that any real protection could be expected. At one stage we were told that a pirate mother ship was only 50 miles away ... but not on a converging course.

Quite late in the passage we decided to change our destination from Salalah in Oman to Al Mukalla in Yemen, saving significant mileage and following close north of the protected shipping corridor through the Gulf of Aden. One night we encountered a large convoy of commercial vessels eastbound, accompanied by two warships. An extra complication had entered the equation, as we heard that political disturbances in the middle east had reached Oman and Yemen, and Aden in particular would be a very ill-advised stop. Closing the Yemeni coast in the early hours we saw the flashing lights of small fishing boats and their markers – three yachts got caught on fishing gear in quick succession, so we hove-to until daylight to make our final approach after 13 days at sea. It is a tribute to the leaders and participants that such a diverse group managed to stay so closely together over 1500 miles.

We were all relieved to have reached Al Mukalla safely

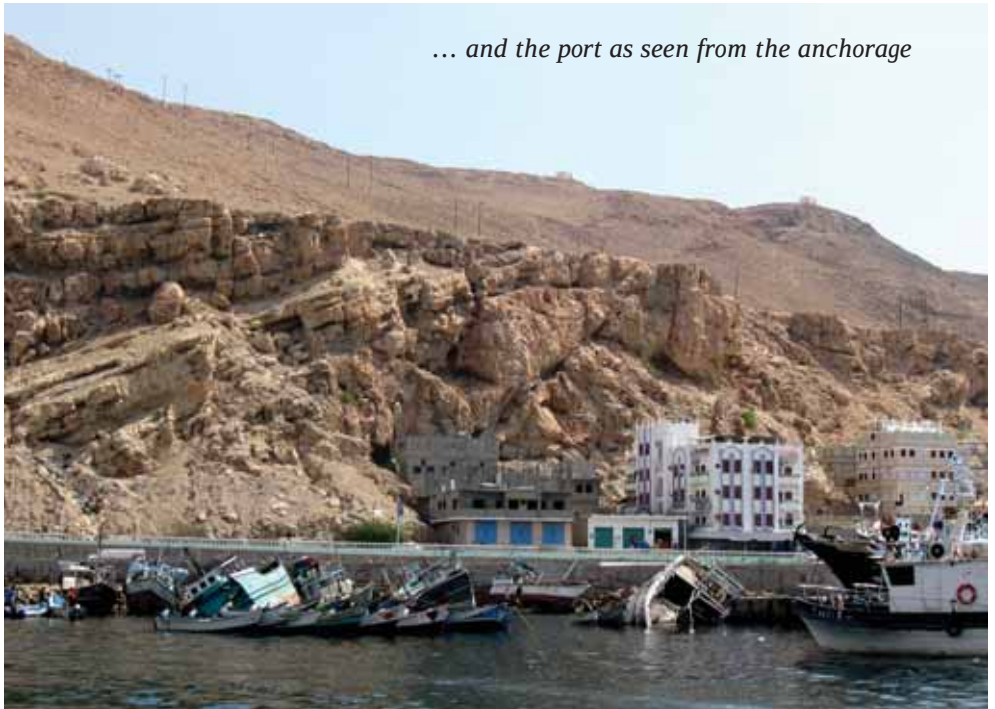
During our two days in Al Mukalla we were able to refuel, provision and catch up on the news, which sadly included that of the American yacht *Quest*, sailing alone, whose crew were all killed several days after being taken by pirates. A very helpful (and inexpensive) agent organised the fuel and water, as well as transport to the city. Our final visit to the city coincided with a political demonstration accompanied by some gunfire, after which our agent took us back to the port via a circuitous route to avoid the troubled area. We all decided it would be wise to leave without delay and head direct for the Red Sea, bypassing Aden which we were told was a hotbed of revolutionary activity.

Another four days in convoy saw us enter the Red Sea, which greeted us with increasing winds which characteristically funnel between the land masses. The last night before passing through Bab el Mandeb was again disturbed by a couple of boats fouling fishing gear, leaving us short of sleep and desirous of a good night's rest. Having reached the end of our commitment to one another, and in view of the increasing winds, four boats chose to head into Assab for a much needed rest and thence to Massawa, whilst others decided to continue on. In spite of US State Department warnings, we found a warm welcome in Eritrea. In Assab we found a friendly bar in which to enjoy a few cold beers and a local lunch. In Massawa, there was a good market and some small shops.

Meanwhile, what of the Thailand To Turkey group we had originally intended to sail with? The convoy from Salalah to Aden comprised ten boats, including *Alondra*,

The convoy at anchor in Al Mukalla …

of which only six were from the original 26 signed up before Christmas. Due to continuing technical problems with the lead boat, and the extra mileage, their schedule was overdue by nearly three weeks. In view of the release of the Chandlers and the number of boats which withdrew from TTT, we and others asked for an account of where our fees had gone; this was declined.



… and the port as seen from the anchorage

Margarita, Amante and Kathleen Love in convoy *Right: Beer break in Assab*

It was a mark of the success of our convoy that, unlike other convoys, many of us chose to sail loosely together in variable sub-groupings as we progressed up the Red Sea. Having read the Red Sea Pilot*, there seemed much to commend taking our time over the passage. However, it was a decision taken out of our hands as, once north of Eritrea, the weather took over. Lengthy periods of strong northerlies had us holed up in a series of ports, dashing north whenever windows opened. It was with some relief, therefore, that we eventually emerged from the Suez Canal and headed for Cyprus, back to first world supermarkets, beer and wine!

Would we do it again? If the *Quest* and *Ing* incidents had occurred before we left the Maldives, we would most likely have headed back to Langkawi, and thence across the Indian Ocean to South Africa and then Brazil. Whether a convoy or sailing solo is the right answer remains an open question – one that could only really be answered by asking the pirates! – though psychologically it was certainly preferable to be in a group.

We would certainly not consider giving advice on the best course. Any crew contemplating the passage must to weigh up the options in the light of whatever relevant situations there are at the time and decide their own best course of action. We, and many other boats this year, were relieved to have arrived in the Mediterranean without undue incident and look forward to cruising with only the usual sailing stresses (what to mix with the rum, etc?).

* *Red Sea Pilot* by Elaine Morgan and Stephen Davies, published by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson.

HAPPY HOOKING: The Art of Anchoring – Alex and Daria Blackwell (second expanded edition). Published in paperback by White Seahorse Inc [www.whiteseahorse.com] at £13.00. 226 pages including many line drawings and photographs, but no colour. ISBN 978-0-9815-1710-0

Anchoring is a subject which is of interest and importance to all sailors, especially cruising yachtsmen and the authors, both of whom are OCC members, have set out to produce a complete textbook on the subject.

Happy Hooking is divided into six parts: the first is concerned with anchors themselves, part two deals with the anchor rode, part three is devoted to the technique of anchoring, part four covers permanent moorings, part five deals with tying up and rafting, and part six with anchoring etiquette and manners.

The first section describes all the different types of anchors available and the advantages and disadvantages of each design. The authors have made a very thorough investigation of the research and tests carried out in various parts of the world by authorities including Coast Guards, the American Bureau of Shipping and yachting magazines, and also draw on their own extensive experience. They explain the classification of anchors into High Holding Power (HHP), Super High Holding Power (SHHP) etc. They resist the temptation to recommend one particular anchor as the best, but anyone thinking of buying a new anchor would be well advised to read this section. It is also very interesting reading for anyone wondering whether the anchor they already have is the most suitable for their particular boat or for their usual cruising ground.

Part two discusses in some depth (excuse the pun) the pros and cons of using rope, chain or a combination of both for the rode, and deals with snubbers, kellets (chums), triplines and the avoidance of chafe, as well as the all-important matter of the length or scope of the rode.

The section on anchoring technique covers everything from selecting an anchorage, dropping the hook, using two anchors and recovering them to how to deal with a dragging anchor. It also includes chapters on weather forecasts, sea anchors and drogues which might be considered outside the scope of a book entitled *Happy Hooking*.

The discussion on anchoring etiquette describes the annoyance that can be caused in a peaceful anchorage by excess noise, smelly barbecues etc. It goes without saying that OCC members would never be guilty of such behaviour so that chapter will be wasted on them.

Happy Hooking is well written and makes a very pleasant, easy read, and is well illustrated with plenty of photographs and drawings. It should be essential reading for anyone fitting out a boat for cruising, and will be of interest to all cruising sailors. It may well become the definitive textbook on the subject.

CSD

OFFSHORE SAILING – Dick McClary. Published in paperback by RYA Publications [http://www.rya.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx] at £16.99. 176 240mm x 170mm pages, with full colour photographs and line drawings throughout. IBSN 978-1-9064-3549-3

The title *Offshore Sailing* should cover a very wide range of topics, and indeed OCC member Dick McClary's book does so. It is primarily aimed at those who are preparing for bluewater voyages, rather than the racing yachtsman's understanding of 'offshore' which may include a weekend beating up and down the English Channel. It is a primer both for those who have not yet bought a boat for long distance cruising and for those who wish to refit a coastal cruising yacht to go further afield. In fact the title might more properly be 'Preparing to go Offshore Sailing'. That said, for me (as an old dog) it was rather like going onboard someone else's boat. You are always on the look-out for something you had not thought of for yourself. The book is easy to read and the more complex subjects are supported by clear diagrams.

The first, longish, chapter is about the ideal offshore yacht. It contains very clear discussion on the compromises all offshore yacht owners must make between seaworthiness, performance, sea-kindliness, living conditions below and cost. Having read the book, the prospective owner could have a sensible discussion with a yacht designer about the formulae that affect this compromise – the angle of vanishing stability, the dynamic stability index, speed / length ratio, predicted hull speed, prismatic coefficient and sail area / displacement ratio. It is a pity that the publisher omitted a square root symbol from the hull speed / waterline length formula – that printed in the book gives my 27ft waterline sloop a predicted speed of 36 knots ... I wish! The chapter concludes with a clear comparison of the pros and cons of heavy displacement, light, ultra-light, water-ballasted and multihulls. It mentions the tendency of catamarans to slam, but does not go on to warn that the rig must be strong enough in an offshore cat to absorb the metal fatigue that prolonged slamming might cause when the wind is forward of the beam.

Here I digress a bit, to say that this book would be great material to support the OCC Mentoring Scheme for those contemplating their first 1000 mile voyage. Because of that, I have taken the liberty of mentioning a few topics such as chafe, fatigue and corrosion which should be of particular concern and which did not strike me forcibly enough from Dick McClary's pages. Chainplates, bow fittings and backstay fastenings are particular areas to watch for the ravages of metal fatigue and corrosion.

To continue through *Offshore Sailing*, there is an excellent chapter on sails and rigs, setting out the options for cloths and designs of sails together with reefing and furling systems. I might also suggest to those contemplating long downwind passages that they consider the 'Simbo' rig (see *Flying Fish* 2005/1 and 2010/1) with twin foresails on a single bolt rope. This is followed by comprehensive chapters covering the deck, accommodation, self-steering, water conservation, crew comfort and preparing for the tropics, but the book really excels when discussing electronics, communications and the energy equation. The range of power-hungry gizmos described here might reinforce a decision to leave the 'fridge and freezer ashore in the constant battle to keep batteries charged.

The book also covers mooring, anchoring, going aloft, spares, safety and emergency equipment, and passage planning. It was in the mooring section that I found the good idea you look for on someone else's boat – a rope-chain-rope mooring line to reduce chafe on any mooring buoy or ring to which you might attach your boat. I will make one up this winter!

Offshore Sailing concludes with an appendix on risk assessment. This assessment produces a prioritised list, starting with things you had better do something about before you sail, and concluding with things that might happen with a bit of bad luck but wouldn't affect you much if they did. From this the author generates a formidable, if necessary, list of spares and tools. I support his methodology but might expand the list of risks to include rope or net around the keel and propeller, lightning strike, and knock-down. The latter caused OCC member Bill Marden to break 100 eggs, as related in *Flying Fish* 2008/1! Perhaps too much consideration of this sort of thing dissuades people from setting out in the first place?

In conclusion, I would thoroughly recommend this book to those contemplating long distance cruising – and even to those more experienced – as a reminder of what proper preparation is all about.

AGHC

HOSTAGE: A Year at Gunpoint with Somali gangsters – Paul and Rachel Chandler, with Sarah Edworthy. Published in paperback by Mainstream Publishing [www.mainstreampublishing.com] at £9.99. 384 pages plus eight pages of colour photographs. ISBN 978-1-8459-6795-6

On 23 October 2009, Paul and Rachel Chandler were boarded by Somali pirates only sixty miles from the Seychelles, on passage to Tanzania. For six days they were forced to motor-sail their Rival 38 *Lynn Rival* at gunpoint towards the Somali coast, until they were taken onto a hijacked merchant ship and then to Somalia. *Lynn Rival* was abandoned, but later recovered by a British warship and brought home. The Chandlers were held for over a year while their captors tried to extort millions of dollars from their family. At no time did the British government hand over any money.

Late one evening, soon after receiving this book, I thought I'd have a quick look

at it – two hours later I was still reading. The Chandlers' abduction and the days that followed, while still aboard *Lynn Rival*, were horribly, shockingly vivid for this reviewer – we had made a similar, uneventful, passage from the Seychelles to Kenya fourteen years earlier, also in a Rival 38. *Hostage* captures the sense of violation as the pirates take over *Lynn Rival*, the ever-present rifles carelessly waved around, the oily mess in the galley, the water tank emptied as the intruders all took showers, the toll on the engine as they demanded ever more speed. The Chandlers' feelings of despair and confusion – will it never end? – are tempered by determination not to give in. One's admiration for their courage and tenacity increases by the page.

Rachel and Paul were forced to abandon *Lynn Rival* without knowing her fate – apparently losing her was their worst moment, something other cruisers will understand. The following year spent in captivity, including three months when they were separated, the worst time of all, is told in fascinating but sobering detail. The African landscape is vividly described, along with the many camps where they were held. As well as feelings of frustration, anger, fear and discomfort, the Chandlers coped with hours of boredom, using an ingenious variety of yoga exercises, home-made crosswords and Scrabble games to pass the time. They showed remarkable resilience and were impressively self-sufficient – if this terrible situation has to happen to anyone, maybe ocean cruisers are among the best able to cope?

The reader shares the frustration when the kidnappers refuse to release their captives after the first ransom is air-dropped, paid by their extremely supportive family in England, and one feels huge relief when the rescue operation, organised by brave British Somalis, shamed by the situation, finally succeeds. It was the good news we were all hoping for.

The Chandlers had a tight deadline to complete *Hostage* and wisely enlisted the help of a professional writer – Sarah Edworthy weaves their story together very effectively. This sobering but compelling book ranks among the best for an account of human endurance. Highly recommended.

EHMH

HOW TO DESIGN A BOAT – John Teale (fourth edition). Published in paperback by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £14.99. 137 A5 pages, with 70 two-colour line drawings. ISBN 978-1-4081-5205-8

The late John Teale wrote this book in 1992 when computers were only knee-deep all over the world. Back then they were not used universally to design everything that floats. Now that computers are so thick on the ground and at sea that we cannot see past them, they are widely used for boat design. They save a lot of tedious work, but they sometimes blind beginners to the basics of design, which may explain in part the startling ugliness of some modern yachts. An elegant sheer is not too difficult to design using traditional tools but less easy on an illuminated screen.

It's a pleasure to delve into this simple book, which explains traditional boat design with little maths and no electronic complications. How sad and how ironic that updating for the fourth edition appears to have been done by a mega-dumb computer. The book in its original form was fault free. Now we find that what was originally written in the first edition as a 'flat transom' has become a 'rat transom' – we all know some transoms designed by lesser naval architects are inelegant, but has anyone seen one with a tail? On figure 54 the 'floors' have become 'doors' and Gaboon ply has become Gabon ply. Then on page 129 we learn that steel stanchions are 'deep, strong and simply fabricated'. Somewhat baffled, I checked the original edition and found 'deep' was the computer's substitution for 'cheap'.

Things get more serious when the brackets are omitted from the formula for working out Thames tonnage. It may be argued that few people still use this historical calculation, but that is an excuse for omitting it, not mutilating it. The essential brackets have also been left out on Figure 69, making the formula wrong. All this is sad, because this slim volume is packed with handy advice on subjects such as working out the best size of propeller for a wide range of craft, scantling tables for the commonly-used boatbuilding materials, and handy hints such as the correct mast rake for two-masted craft and such-like useful notes.

Yacht designing is one of the few professions not yet ruined by a proliferation of regulations. And a yacht is the nearest human creation to a living, vibrant animal. So a book which tells how to get involved in this magic trade deserves close attention. Starting with a simple design, the various stages for producing a complete set of drawings are shown to be straightforward. Certainly there is some maths, but most of it is basic adding, subtracting and multiplication.

People who want to go ocean cruising rightly worry about the thin 'skins' of many modern mass-produced craft. One good answer is to get a steel or aluminium boat, and this books explains how to design one.

IMN

SAIL FOR A LIVING – Sue Pelling. Published in paperback by Wiley Nautical [www.wileynautical.com] at £14.99. 190 210mm x 170mm pages in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-0-4709-7564-0

My first reaction to this book was 'Why has no-one written it before?'. It is a mine of information covering full-time and part-time career opportunities available over a wide range of boating activities – everything from being a lowly deck-hand to skippering a Round-the-World Race yacht. The individual chapters cover working in the charter business, setting up your own charter business, superyachts, teaching and coaching, professional racing, expedition yacht work, sailing support jobs, media opportunities and yacht delivery.

Where *Sail for a Living* really scores is that, apart from explaining the opportunities,

qualifications needed and other requirements of each job, Sue gives an indication of the likely salary levels that can be expected. As with so many attractive careers in the leisure industry there are tales of some very high earners – skippers of superyachts, both sail and power, and top racing skippers of Round-the-World or America's Cup yachts. However, while some enjoy large salaries exceeding, in some cases, £100,000 (US $ 160,000) these are the exception rather than the rule. For the majority of jobs remuneration is modest and long hours of work at anti-social hours are often involved.

Sue Pelling is an experienced sailor, having raced successfully in dinghies and especially the National 12 class. She has also raced in Dragons and sailed offshore including the Fastnet Race. Her journalistic career has taken her from editorial assistant at *Yachts and Yachting* in the early 1980s (where your reviewer was the editor who employed her!) to writing for many major yachting magazines. She has covered many events worldwide, which has enabled her to gain first-hand knowledge of job opportunities in yachting. These have included interviews with many leading professionals in different fields including three-time circumnavigator Dee Caffari and three-time Olympic Gold Medal winner Ben Ainslie, together with many other 'Tips from the top' (as they are called in the book) from other leaders in their particular fields.

An excellent book and definitely one for OCC members wishing use their particular experiences to gain a bit of part-time cash or even gain full-time employment.

PJC

MANOEUVRING AT CLOSE QUARTERS UNDER POWER – Bill Johnson. Published spiral-bound between card covers by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £14.99. 128 A5 pages, with many diagrams and some photographs in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-3211-1

My first impressions of this book were that it is targeted more towards the weekend sailor who is less 'spatially' and 'relative motion' aware of the way situations can evolve on the water, than towards the more experienced cruising sailor who will tend to handle his or her boat like an extension of themselves and so react more naturally to the characteristics and nuances of what, after all, is their home on the water. Having said that, the cruising fraternity does tend to be more nervous at times of arrival and departure and when within the confines of a harbour environment – and justifiably so, as there are rather more hazards to be considered when manoeuvring in the confined space of a marina than on the open waters of the ocean.

In many of the examples Bill Johnson explains manoeuvring astern with the emphasis on 'prop walk', which is fine for the modern fin keel boat which has the ability to turn in little more than its own length. However the long keel yacht favoured by many ocean cruising enthusiasts will tend to have a mind of its own when asked to go astern, and in my experience rarely conforms to what the textbooks say.

At risk of being too critical or pedantic I would mention just three omissions which

occurred to me while reviewing this book. The first is the use of a midships cleat to secure a short line to a point on the shore, should there be one available. This will hold the boat roughly in position while the permanent lines are deployed. I have found this technique to be especially useful when berthing singlehanded in a wind which is trying to blow the boat off the pontoon. There is no mention of this method in the text (pages 43/45, 'Arriving at a pontoon'). The second omission is the need for a roving fender near the stem or stern when springing off a berth. The only mention of an additional fender is for an up-wind approach to a pontoon (page 60+, 'Springing Off').

Finally, in the section on departing from the centre of a raft, no specific mention is made of the fact that departure should nearly always be down tide or, if there is no tide, then down wind. Although it is shown in the illustrations, and an explanation is given of the possible catastrophic result that may occur if departure is in the wrong direction, it is stressed in the previous section that departure from the outside of a raft should always be up tide. This omission could lead the inexperienced to believe that one should always depart a raft in the up tide direction, which is very definitely not the case (page 66+, 'Departing from Raft Centre').

There is great satisfaction in completing a successful manoeuvre, especially in full view of an audience on the dockside just waiting for it all to go wrong. However it can be very humiliating if the envisaged plan does, as on occasions it inevitably will, go disastrously wrong. My own advice is to always leave yourself an escape route – a 'get out of jail free' card – which may go some way towards saving the blushes and the inevitable round of drinks in the marina bar or clubhouse.

Having made these observations, I must compliment the author on the clarity of the illustrations, the overall soundness of the advice, and the logical approach to what can be an emotive subject, where all experienced boat handlers have their own pet way of manoeuvring a boat in a close quarters situation.

PJM

THE SPLICING HANDBOOK – Barbara Merry. Published in paperback by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £16.99. 246 A5 pages with many diagrams and some black and white photographs. ISBN 978-1-4081-4197-7

This is a book for those interested in rope and ropework, rather than for those who merely wish to carry out the occasional splice aboard their boat. Most splices are described, including those in three-strand rope, in many varieties of braided ropes, from eight-plait to chain, and some in wire. The descriptions are clear and there are good diagrams, though the photographs are in black-and-white and would perhaps be clearer in colour. The terminology is American.

There are a few inaccuracies – early on it is stated that a knot reduces the strength of a rope by 50 percent whilst a splice 'retains the full strength of the rope'. The Royal Navy did extensive tests some years ago and the results showed that a well-made knot

/ bend / hitch reduced the rope's strength by about 20 percent. A splice made by a professional rigger reduced it by roughly 30 percent. The short splice is described as 'the strongest method of joining two lengths of three strand rope together'. In fact the long splice, whilst far more time consuming to make (and not mentioned in this book), is stronger. Similarly the Liverpool wire eye splice is described as the 'king of splices'. Actually it was devised by Liverpool dockers as a quick and easy way of making an eye – the traditional wire eye splice is far stronger. I was also disappointed not to see more mention of seizings. Racking seizings are not described at all, and a series of these is the way to make the strongest of eyes (which is why they were used for the shrouds of the last, enormous, steel square-riggers).

Despite these minor criticisms, this is a valuable book. The author is obviously a splicing enthusiast and the subject is comprehensively covered. Some of the splices described are esoteric – not many cruisers do wire to braid rope splices these days. However, if you are 'into' rope and splicing this is a good reference book to have.

GHMcL

ATLAS OF OCEANS: Exploring this Hidden World – John Farndon. Published in hardback by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £25.00. 256 A4 pages in full colour throughout, and including some stunning photographs. ISBN 978-1-4081-3111-4

It is important to read the name of this book carefully – it is *Atlas of Oceans*, not *Atlas of THE Oceans*. Anyone expecting charts, maps and the like will be disappointed; anyone looking for interesting facts about the world's oceans and larger seas, their margins and their varied inhabitants, will be fascinated. Written with a clear conservationist agenda, *Atlas of Oceans* begins with 'Oceans in Peril', and moves through 'Ocean Geology' and 'The Moving Ocean' to 'Ocean Life Zones'. This is followed by 'The World's Oceans and Seas' (logic might have suggested the opposite order?), before concluding with 'Ocean Future' and Endangered Marine Species'. 'Further Resources', a very useful Glossary and a comprehensive index round things off.

Atlas of Oceans is a handsome book, beautifully produced and containing some stunning photographs well suited to its coffee-table size. However, unlike some of that genre it is written with notable authority throughout – according to the end-papers the author studied Earth Sciences at Cambridge University and has written more than 300 books on related subjects for both adults and children. Even so, and while it may be the modern fashion, after a while I found the recurring format of a single spread (ie. two facing pages) devoted to each topic not only repetitive but distinctly limiting. I frequently got the feeling that the author would have liked to say more; occasionally that photographs were being used simply to fill up space.

Topical issues such as rising sea levels are explored, and though experts on the subject might consider the coverage superficial, for the general reader it provides a

clear introduction supported by an equally clear (and sobering) graph. In fact graphs and occasionally pie or bar charts are frequently used by the author to reinforce his points, most often the damage which man's activities are causing to the marine habitat. And neither are all the photographs pretty – to balance the appealing Weddell seals on page 117, the majestic fin whales on pages 184 and 185 (it takes two pages to do a whale justice!) and the deceptively delicate Arctic tern on page 121, we are witness to a dead turtle (the product of fishing bycatch) on page 111, a dolphin entangled in a plastic six-pack mesh on page 167, and an oil-covered pelican on page 151. Sobering stuff, and all 'our fault'.

Much of *Atlas of Oceans* in concerned with places few yachtsmen will ever visit, but that is no reason to ignore its message. Both a celebration of what our 'blue' planet contains, and reinforcement of the message that we should be caring for it so much better, it cannot be dismissed as simply another heavy hardback to be glanced through, admired, and relegated to the bookshelf ashore – though sadly its size and weight mean that it is unlikely to find a home aboard any but the largest cruising yachts. Plainly intended for dipping into rather than cover-to-cover reading, *Atlas of Oceans* makes absorbing reading and would be a perfect present for anyone, young or old, blessed with an enquiring mind and an interest in the oceans and all they have to offer ... but in some cases, sadly, soon may not.

AOMH

AND HOT OFF THE PRESS ...

The following books were due for publication as this issue went to press. Full reviews will appear in *Flying Fish* 2012/1, but in the meantime more information can be found on the publishers' websites:

*SAIL AWAY: Escape the Rat Race and Live the Dr*eam – **Nicola Rodriguez.** Published in paperback by Wiley Nautical [www.wileynautical.com] at £19.99, ISBN 978-0-4709-7976-1. Turn to page 167 for Nicola's article, *Sailing Home*.

CORNELL'S OCEAN ATLAS – Jimmy and Ivan Cornell. Published in A3 spiral-bound format by Cornell Sailing Ltd [www.cornellsailing.com] at £69.00, with a £10 discount available to OCC members, plus free postage within Europe, if ordered before 1 March. E-mail info@cornellsailing.com for further details. ISBN 978-0-9556-3965-4

ATLANTIC ISLANDS – Anne Hammick (5th edition). Published in A4 hardback by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson Ltd [www.imray.com] at £40.00. ISBN 978-1-8462-3336-4. Particular thanks to the many OCC members who have contributed information and photographs to this edition or to its predecessors over the past twenty-five years.

DELMARVA CIRCUIT
Art Ross

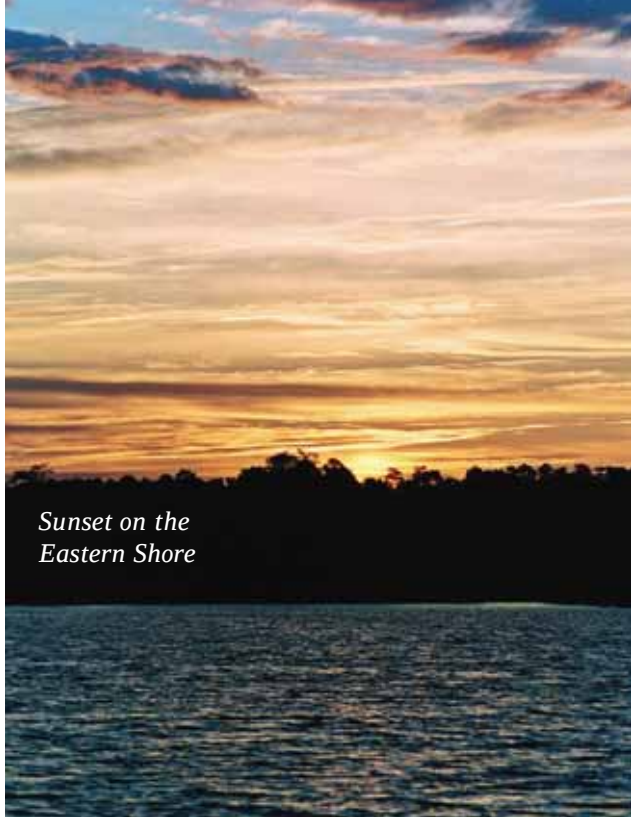
(*Art, from the delightfully-named town of New Hope in Pennsylvania, is a USCG Licensed Captain with extensive experience of the waters of the eastern US and Caribbean. The cruise that he describes took place aboard* Odyssey*, an Island Packet 35.*)

Lately I've found myself dreaming of where I've not been, and how I'll get there in my dreams as that's the only way it seems it will take place. When I do travel to the Grenadine Islands each winter and meet new and old friends they always comment about the wonderful sailing and cruising around my home on the Chesapeake Bay. I've been on the bay for over 20 years, sometimes feeling I've seen it all and been everywhere, other times wondering just what's up 'that' river, one of about 55 that lie within a day or two's sail from my slip – like the Potomac and Susquehanna. So last March, when two young(er) mates asked me if I'd join them for a cruise around the Delmarva Peninsula – **Del**aware, **Mar**yland, **V**irgini**a** – as we languished over a rum in a bar in Philadelphia, it seemed like the right thing to agree to. In early June we got underway for a week's cruise.

The Crew: Tony, Mark, and me

Both guys were very good sailors, eager, smart and strong, but with little cruising experience, no offshore work and no night sailing experience. I was able to be 'crew consultant' by request, meaning not a lot of grinding and heavy lifting for me, and they both heartily agreed.

The Eastern Shore is a narrow, 135 mile-long peninsula. The words remain capitalised as an unofficial practice to this day. It has been called the Eastern Shore since the Jamestown colonists first looked across the Chesapeake; John Smith mentioning it in his writings. It was our intention to head north from our port of Oxford, Maryland to the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, east through that 14 mile ditch, southeast in the Delaware Bay to Cape Henalopen, and then south offshore by way of the Atlantic to the Bay entrance at the bridge tunnel and Cape Charles. Finally we would cruise back north to the mouth of the Choptank River and the last leg to the Tred Avon River and Oxford, thus completing the circle.



Sunset on the Eastern Shore

Rock Hall and its lovely Swan Creek became our first anchorage, already half way to the C&D Canal. Good southerlies astern drove us up the middle of the Bay, *Odyssey*'s two headsails set wing-on-wing as the boat felt like an old Desoto* with both front doors open, pushing forward. The next afternoon we made the Canal, which links the waters of the Chesapeake Bay to the Delaware River and its bay. The canal was an early idea from about 1650, though it wasn't dug until 1804 and not completed until 1829. As larger ships were built it has taken on its current configuration, 450ft wide and 40ft in depth. The current was a blessing at the end of a long day, delivering us to the eastern side in short order and another lovely anchorage behind Reedy Island overlooked by a nuclear tower – it was a mixed viewscape.

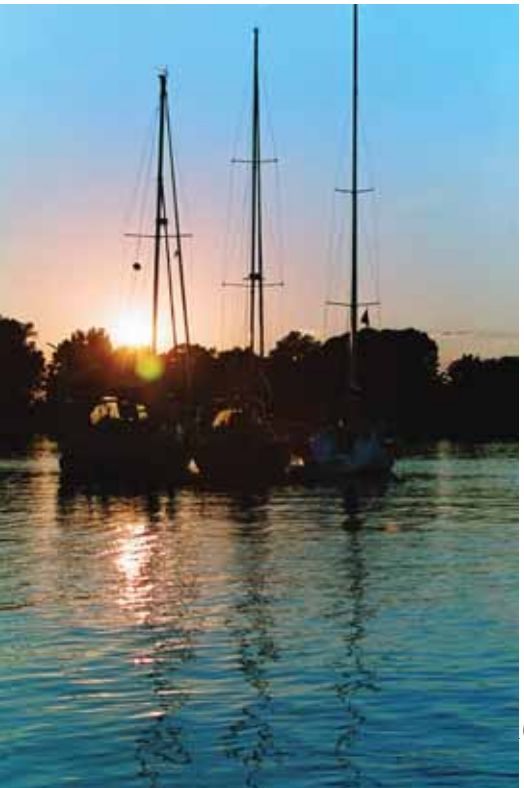
Ship John Shoal light, in the middle of Delaware Bay

The Delaware Bay has none of the gentleness of the Chesapeake. It's all business, with plenty of shoals and, when the wind is against the tide, steep and choppy seas which make it universally disliked among cruisers. I've sailed it many times, for a few years even moored in one of its rivers. But being underway with crew (having always sailed singlehanded) on a favourable tide, with a pretty summer day, flat water and porpoises aplenty, all was good with the cruise and smiles were contagious. At our day's destination, the town of Lewes at Cape Henalopen in Delaware, there were few

* Built by the Chrysler Motor Company from 1929 until 1960, later models appear to be all bonnet and chrome radiator grill. Some are said to be still in use in Cuba.

The Kalmar Nyckel, the State of Delaware's very own 'tall ship'

A raft-up in Island Creek, off the Choptank River

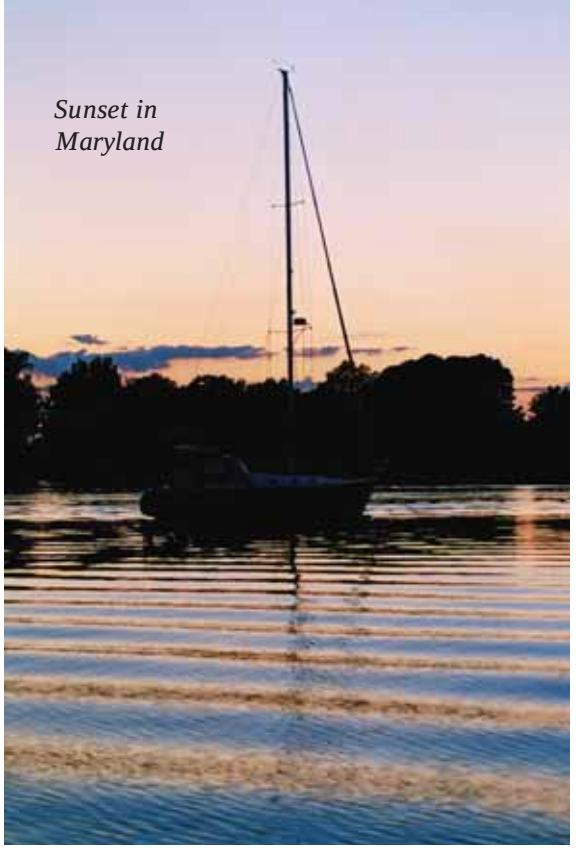


services but we did manage to get some diesel. Then we left the narrow canal for a harbour built of a stone breakwater and a spit of sand, with the Atlantic thundering on the other side.

The next day we were heading into nice big, square, ocean swells and later, as the sun set, I was back steering by the stars in motion and the crew began with navigation by radar and charts, all the while the smell of burning timber wafting past as a North Carolina pine forest was engulfed and winds forward brought us the scent from afar. We passed Maryland's Ocean City; then Assateague Island, famous for its herds of horses and ponies which have roamed the island's beaches, pine forest and salt marsh since the 1600s. Assateague Island National Seashore has a combined total of over 300 wild ponies in Maryland and Virginia. Some people believe they arrived on Assateague's shores when a Spanish galleon sank offshore. The first known landing on the Eastern Shore took place here when Verrazano, sailing for King Francis of France, made landfall

and reported meeting an Indian boy on the island.

In the morning the seas flattened, the breeze freshened and all things previous that were uncomfortable were forgotten. We began observing pods of porpoises circling fish heads to capture their breakfast, which would have been entertainment enough, but the sailing was terrific and into the Bay's southern end we came, passing under the bridge tunnel. The previous day sailors had spotted a whale at this same fix. The 17·6 mile Chesapeake Bay Bridge and tunnel, completed in 1964, took 3½ years to build. The first idea was to build a huge bridge to Norfolk but the Navy objected, citing the possibility that if the bridge were bombed the ruins might prevent the fleet leaving. So a system of 12 miles of bridges, two tunnels (both under channels), and four islands was built to connect it all together.



Sunset in Maryland

We enjoyed a day's rest in Cape Charles, moored next to the historic reproduction of the *Kalmar Nyckel*, the state ship of Delaware, which provided an awesome atmosphere by its presence. We were sad to cast off from this pleasant little town, rarely visited by cruisers, but made our way north to the mouth of the Little Choptank River and the lee of James Island. This provided us a pleasant anchorage and a great spot to have a champagne toast to a fine cruise, and next morning we let *Odyssey* gently bring us home to Oxford.

Mark and Tony now have some navigation and night cruising experience to refer to when needed, and are happy with the results of their first 'cruise'. Meantime I was able to cross an item off my bucket list.

Ospreys nesting at the entrance to our home port of Oxford, Maryland

FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Misty McIntosh, aboard *Tamoure*

Cold Compress Chicken

Ingredients

- slab of defrosted chicken (or pieces of cooked chicken)
- tin of condensed mushroom or chicken soup
- milk / yogurt / cream / wine / sherry (or a combination)
- tin of sliced mushrooms
- tin of sweet corn (optional)
- nutmeg
- rice
- painkillers (optional)

This recipe has two stages. Stage 1 is optional and not recommended. It tastes just as good if you go straight to Stage 2.

STAGE 1: Return to unlit boat on dark dock on dark night, forgetting that cockpit floor and contents of chasm beneath have been removed for cleaning/drying. Plunge, painfully, downwards, catching leg on a 'brace bar' thoughtfully left in position as a warning. Retreat below. Stare in disbelief at tennis-ball-sized swelling now appearing on leg. Finding no ice in freezer, apply slab of frozen chicken and secure with bandage. Keep chicken (and leg) in elevated position for at least 8 hours. Remove bandage; place chicken in fridge.

STAGE 2: When ready to cook, cut chicken into bite-sized pieces and fry. (Cooked chicken works well too.) Add a tin of condensed mushroom or chicken soup, depending on preference and availability. Thin with milk, yogurt, cream or wine – a splosh of sherry also goes down quite well (in the dish, not the cook). Add a tin of mushrooms (sliced looks better) and a tin of sweet corn (optional). Season with nutmeg. Serve with rice – and a couple of painkillers. Just what the Doctor ordered!

The beauty of this dish – apart from its healing powers – is that it's easy, filling, quantities are deliberately vague and adaptable, and there's not much washing up. Perfect passage-making food!

AND SOME GALLEY TIPS FROM ... Gavin and Georgie McLaren, aboard *Margaret Wroughton*

On a passage, not having any hot food or drink at all is unpleasant and may be dangerous, so make sure you have some form of 'emergency cooking' should something go wrong with the gas system. A small folding camping cooker (in a box about 12 x 8 x 3 cm) will do, along with a good supply of the solid fuel tablets it needs.

No cooker is any good without some way of lighting it. Plenty of boxes of matches are essential, some sealed in polythene, and stowed in diverse places around the boat so they

cannot all be soaked at once should disaster happen. A five pack of disposable lighters is handy, and as these normally come in a sealed package should survive almost any catastrophe.

Most boats carry a good deal of canned food, so it is impossible to have too many can openers. At least two really good-quality rotary ones should be aboard, one of them greased and stowed away in a sealed plastic bag. One of the very simple folding 'military' type can openers is a good idea too – these are tiny, pretty cheap, and available from camping shops. Stow safely hidden in your sock drawer for use in a real emergency.

In dire straits it is possible to get cans – after the tops have been punctured – adequately hot by securing them on top of the engine. Enjoy the added aroma of diesel! Food can also be heated over an oil lamp, if you have one on board, or even over a paraffin riding light.

A couple of ways of saving fresh water. Steam vegetables in a covered colander over a pan of salt water – the salt will not get to the vegetables. Alternatively pressure cook vegetables in containers over a trivet, again using salt water. If the trivet is not high enough to stop the seawater reaching the vegetables raise it by scrunching up some kitchen foil and putting the trivet on top of that. The foil can be reused.

THERE AND BACK AGAIN
Andrew Wilson

(Andromeda of Plymouth *is a Contest 42 ketch, commissioned in 1979 and currently – at least at the time* Flying Fish *was being compiled – in Trinidad awaiting a second season exploring the Caribbean with owners Andrew and Susan.*)

There is little that can prepare you for losing your forestay and roller furler, and for the sheer challenge and effort of securing it at sea – except maybe wrestling with a 5m crocodile with attitude and you on the menu.

We left São Miguel in the Azores in late July 2010 *en route* for mainland Portugal, a passage of 750 to 800 miles, and were making some 5 knots eastwards in a short choppy sea with 21 knot winds from the north-northeast. The seas were unusual in that they were very short and steep, not the long waves we had expected in the Atlantic. As was our usual practice we reefed down for the night, and had one reef in the main and three or four rolls in the genoa.

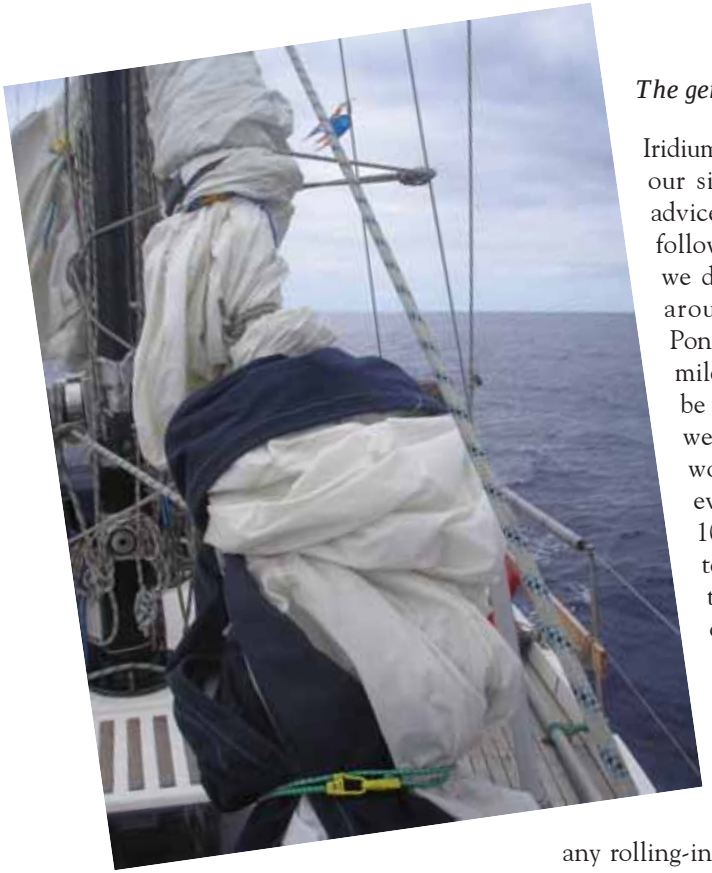
At 0500 on 28 July, our fourth day out, there was a tremendous bang from forward. Susan was at the helm and I was preparing to take over. As I sprinted out from the port side of the cockpit I could see the forestay and genoa swinging way out over the starboard guard rails. It was an awesome and frightening sight, and the noise of the flapping sail was dramatic. After what seemed an age (but was probably only seconds) the main blanketed enough of the genoa for it to swing in towards the side of the boat. We both managed to grab the forestay and genoa and bring them inboard whilst *Andromeda* bobbed up and down stern to the wind and waves. Thankfully we were fully dressed in our oilies, and had our lifejackets and harnesses on and attached.

Leaving Ponta Delgada

Grabbing any available line we roughly secured the furler/genoa to stop it swinging back out again. However the initial swing to starboard had also taken the furling line from its guide rollers, and this wrapped itself around the Aerogen blades and unit, tearing it from the deck along with 1·2m of stainless steel mounting tube. The whole lot disappeared into 2000m of Atlantic Ocean, something we weren't aware of until we looked up and saw that the wind generator had gone. In addition, four stanchions were bent by the force of the furling line being dragged from the guide rollers.

While Susan continued to tie down the forestay I took the spare genoa halyard forward and secured it to the anchor mounting, tightening it as much as possible on a winch to help secure the mast. Then I took the spinnaker halyard forward as well, and dropped the mainsail to reduce, as far as possible, any stress on the rig. We tried to get as much of the flapping genoa as we could under some degree of control, but quite a bit remained loose, flying about and making a racket. As there were several rolls of sail wrapped around the furler it was impossible to pull it down, so gathering it in was the only option. By this time the luff groove line had split in two places, increasing the difficulty of getting the sail down, and at least two tears had appeared in the fabric of the sail.

Once things were sorted to some degree we checked for trailing lines (this was when we noticed the absence of the wind generator), started the engine and then contacted Falmouth MRCC on our Iridium (satellite) phone to explain our situation and ask for their advice. They took our details and, following a short conversation, we decided to turn *Andromeda* around and headed back to Ponta Delgada, a distance of 293 miles, which would all have to be covered under power. We were concerned whether we would have sufficient fuel, even though we were carrying 100 litres in cans in addition to the contents of the main tank, so informed Falmouth of this possible issue. This was going to be the longest engine-only passage we had undertaken, so we were very cautious and decided to motor at 5 knots to reduce as far as possible any rolling-induced stress on the rig and to get the maximum range out of our available fuel.



The genoa was tamed in stages …

After about an hour it became fully light, and we could see that where we had secured the forestay to the boom it was rubbing against the starboard shroud. We had to swing the genoa/forestay and the furling drum out and around the shrouds to get it forward of the mast, otherwise we would have even more problems. To do this meant untying everything already tied down, then lifting the furler over the guardrails and back aboard once more forward of the shrouds – easier said than done, given the sea state. It took us an hour to get the mess stabilised enough to avoid the worst of the chafe, although the top of the forestay still flapped about to some extent and occasionally banged against the mast and spreaders. There was nothing more we could do while remaining safely on the deck. It was fortunate that we had so much line on board (just in case), and had never thrown away anything useable. We needed every last bit of it, as we gradually managed to tie more and more of the loose sail down. Even the bungee cords Susan had bought in the Chinese shop in Lagos played a part.

Falmouth MRCC transferred control to Ponta Delgada MRCC, and they arranged to contact us twice a day on the sat-phone to track our progress. We settled back into our watch pattern – four hours during the day and three at night – with our Raymarine autopilot, nicknamed Orion, performing magnificently. After the first 24 hours heading

F471, NRP António Enes

back to the Azores we topped up the fuel tank with the remaining 100 litres – not an easy task in the conditions – and estimated that we probably had just enough to get us back if we scraped the barrel. However Ponta Delgada MRCC had other plans. During that morning's 1030 call they asked us to change course to *rendezvous* with a Portuguese warship which would transfer some additional fuel to us. We changed course reluctantly, as we would now be heading slightly away from Ponta Delgada, and headed southwest to the *rendezvous*, due sometime in the late afternoon or early evening. We continued to make 5 knots, rolling a fair bit in the steep, short waves.

By 1645 we could see a blur on the radar to the west, and soon after were hailed by the Portuguese corvette *António Enes*, a Search and Rescue vessel stationed in the Azores. They announced that they had us on visual and would be in our immediate vicinity in about 20 minutes. After the previous couple of days with completely empty seas it was a real pick-up to see F471 and her crew approaching us. Several VHF conversations ensued in which we were offered any help and assistance we required, and then a RIB was lowered over the side. Her three-man crew very expertly transferred 100 litres of diesel to us in five cans. We thanked them profusely with waves, smiles and a pack of 200 cigarettes, and they returned to their ship which then passed *Andromeda* with what seemed like the entire crew on deck waving and acknowledging us. It took a great weight off our minds, as we now knew that we would not be stirring up all the stuff at the bottom of the tank in order to get back to São Miguel, and we resumed our northwesterly course for Ponta Delgada. Captain Da Silva was puzzled as to why we had altered course to the southwest, but we explained that it was at the request of the MRCC. When he mentioned that the ship would be in Ponta Delgada over the weekend we said we would like to meet him and his crew to say thank you in person. The *António Enes* then kept station for a while to make sure we were okay before resuming their patrol.

Returning to F471

Mission accomplished!

Approaching Ponta Delgada

Re-entering Ponta Delgada

During the night we only saw the lights of a couple of fishing boats miles away, but at 0830 the following morning the clouds lifted momentarily and we caught our first glimpse of São Miguel. Another great moment was when we rounded the end of the island into a really flat sea – truly a mill pond and such a relief after the rolling we had been experiencing. *Andromeda* kept on going at her steady 5 knots, but now we had a bit of a lift from the current so were making a little more speed over the ground.

At 1700 on our third day of motoring we approached the marina, where the staff allowed us to go straight to a berth and avoid the usual reception stop. Lesley and Andy Scott, OCC, from *Kodiak* were there to welcome us and take our lines, so we could finally turn off our hardworking engine and relax. We thanked *Andromeda* and Orion for sterling service, and let Ponta Delgada MRCC know that we had arrived and they could close the incident. Lesley and Andy then helped put *Andromeda* to rights – sail covers on, cockpit cover erected, electricity sorted, etc – whilst I went to clear us in. We then headed off for a meal, to unwind a bit and sleep without it all racing around our brains.

Posing either side of our not-very-tidy genoa

The battered forestay and luff groove

The next day, a Saturday, we washed *Andromeda* from bow to stern to get rid of the accumulated salt etc. After lunch Susan headed to Lesley and Andy's hotel (another story) for a long, long, long, hot bath. I stayed aboard, supposedly to unwind. Later that afternoon two men approached and asked if they could come aboard. I asked why they wanted to, distinctly nervous as neither was wearing uniform or had identifying features, and the marina pontoons are supposed to be secure. The older man said it was not often that they got to meet the people they helped and besides, I had his diesel on board. Sudden realisation – it was the Captain da Silva from the *António Enes*, accompanied by his Executive Officer. They had brought a bottle of port and a picture of the *António Enes* as a memento of the *rendezvous* – I was absolutely blown away with the kindness of this gesture – and invited us to visit the NRP *António Enes* the following day.

So, after another busy morning, we walked round the harbour to where F471 was moored and presented ourselves at the *passerelle*. The young man on watch contacted the officer on duty, and within minutes various members of the crew had come to greet us, their best English speaker being appointed as our guide. We had a great time seeing all aspects of the corvette from the flying bridge down to the engine room

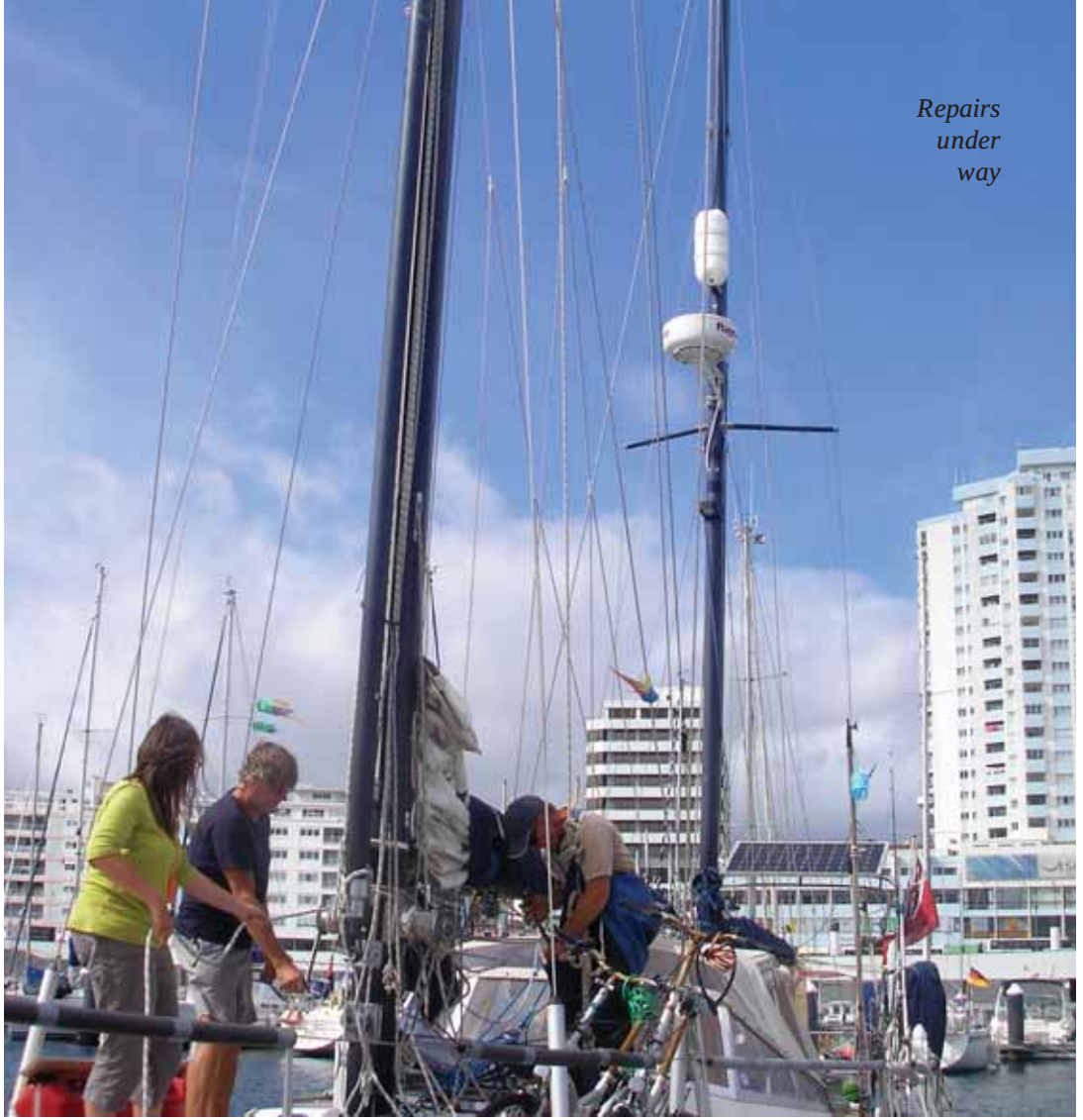
The point of failure

(two engines of 6000hp each – end to end probably longer than *Andromeda*). The crew were all keen to meet us, and we were taken to the wardroom and given tea. We had a long chat with the Executive Officer, and returned their kind gesture with a bottle of whisky for the wardroom and a picture of *Andromeda*. Captain da Silva joined us briefly, and told us that originally they had thought they might knock on our hull at 0200 on Saturday morning but decided to let us sleep – they had a wicked sense of humour.

We were fortunate to sustain only bruises and the odd sprain from this incident – we are acutely aware that it could have been very different and we could have lost the rig and potentially *Andromeda*. We are much older and wiser as a result, but with renewed faith in our trusty boat – she looked after us so well. We also have a huge amount of respect and gratitude for the Portuguese Search and Rescue organisation, and particularly the Captain, Executive Officer and crew of F471 NRP *António Enes*. When help was needed they were there. Our thanks also go to Pedro from the MRCC team who monitored and co-ordinated our return – we were grateful for his regular calls, and he has asked to stay in touch via Facebook.

The failed component

We stayed in Ponta Delgada for seven weeks while we waited for a replacement forestay and roller to be shipped from Germany and installed by Thomas Dargel of Boat & Sail Service, and by the time we left were sorry



Repairs under way

to say goodbye to some wonderful islands and people. We headed south to Santa Maria to make sure that all was okay, and then headed off to Madeira en route to Las Palmas to join the ARC fleet.

The fitting that failed was, we think, replaced in 2004 when the rest of the standing rigging was replaced, but we can't be sure – Thomas thought it was probably metal fatigue and that the fitting was older than we thought. The rig had been inspected before we left the UK in July 2009, but it failed in such a way that it was impossible to tell whether any cracks had been evident. Even so, visual inspections of everything are now part of our daily routine.

GATEWAY TO THE CARIBBEAN
Peter H Paternotte

(*Peter comes from Groenekan in the Netherlands, and had made extensive cruises in the Baltic, North Sea and English Channel aboard his Vancouver 34* Gateway *before heading south in 2010. Future cruising plans include the west coasts of both Scotland and Norway, and revisiting the Azores.*)

In early January 2011 I returned with my brother-in-law to Marina San Miguel on the south coast of Tenerife, following a 3½ month forced stay back home. We had sailed from my homeport of Enkhuizen in the Netherlands to Tenerife in the summer and fall of 2010, and had intended to leave for the Cape Verdes and Surinam in late November. However on arrival in Las Palmas I learned that my wife was seriously ill and needed an urgent operation, so we abandoned our plans and returned home, leaving the yacht in Marina San Miguel as Las Palmas marina was fully booked by the upcoming ARC.

Three months later things had turned out for the better. My wife was recovering very well and urged us to continue our cruise, so we flew back to Tenerife with a modified plan. We now intended to sail straight for Barbados and from there to the Windward Islands, skipping the Cape Verdes, Surinam, Tobago, Grenada and St Vincent.

Gateway under No 2 yankee, staysail and mainsail

Although my yacht *Gateway*, a Vancouver 34c built by Northshore UK, had proven her mettle in numerous North Sea, Baltic and English Channel cruises and even some races, we had never made a passage of over 500 miles. As the distance to Barbados was around 2650 miles this was clearly going to be a step up. Tradewind sailing was also new to us. We had taken every precaution possible in preparing the yacht and ourselves for the trip, but of course we were also embarking on something new in terms of personal experience.

Departure

We left San Miguel on 15 January, following five days of hard work cleaning the yacht, replenishing our food stocks, checking all our equipment and cleaning the underwater parts of the hull.

For the first couple of days, as expected, we experienced light weather and used the opportunity to experiment with our tradewind rig options. Somewhat surprisingly it turned out that the best option was sailing goose-winged with a poled-out yankee and (fully-battened) mainsail, taking in reefs as required. The (extended) pole was rigged with a block at each end, through which a line with a snatch-block was taken to control the sheet. In this way we could furl and unfurl the yankee leaving the pole in place, fixed by its topping lift and two guys. It was also possible to gybe and use the yankee without the pole on the other tack. The cruising chute was only used on a couple of days in very light weather. Although an effective sail in light conditions it was quite cumbersome, the rolling motion of the yacht requiring constant attention to

Gateway in Las Palmas Marina, Gran Canaria

Cleaning Gateway's waterline following her 3½ months in Marina San Miguel, Tenerife

the sheeting. We never used our second headsail (*Gateway* has a Profurl dual-headsail furling profile) and twin pole, as we managed to maintain good progress under yankee and mainsail. This combination also gave sufficient balance to use our Windpilot Pacific vane gear, even almost dead downwind. The boom brake was in constant use to maintain complete control of the mainsail. We did not use the staysail during the crossing, as it hardly provides any extra drive downwind and the self-tacking sheeting which is so effective upwind becomes a major nuisance.

Week one

In the relatively light tradewinds we experienced during the first week (mostly 10–15 knots) the other challenge was to get used to the rolling motion. The Vancouver 34's long keel dampens the motion to some extent, but nevertheless it took us several days – notwithstanding the fact that we are both immune to seasickness – to move around with some ease, the same for preparing food and sleeping. It's a kind of settling-in process and we were lucky in that we had a fairly gentle start.

Shaping a course for Barbados was very much influenced by the tradewind patterns and developments, which we studied carefully day by day using our SSB transceiver to download GRIB files and weather reports. It was clear that the stronger tradewinds were going to be further south for some time to come, and so the first week we aimed for a waypoint around 300 miles west of the Cape Verdes (roughly 20°N 30°W). Once the rig was more or less sorted out and we had established a kind of routine in downwind

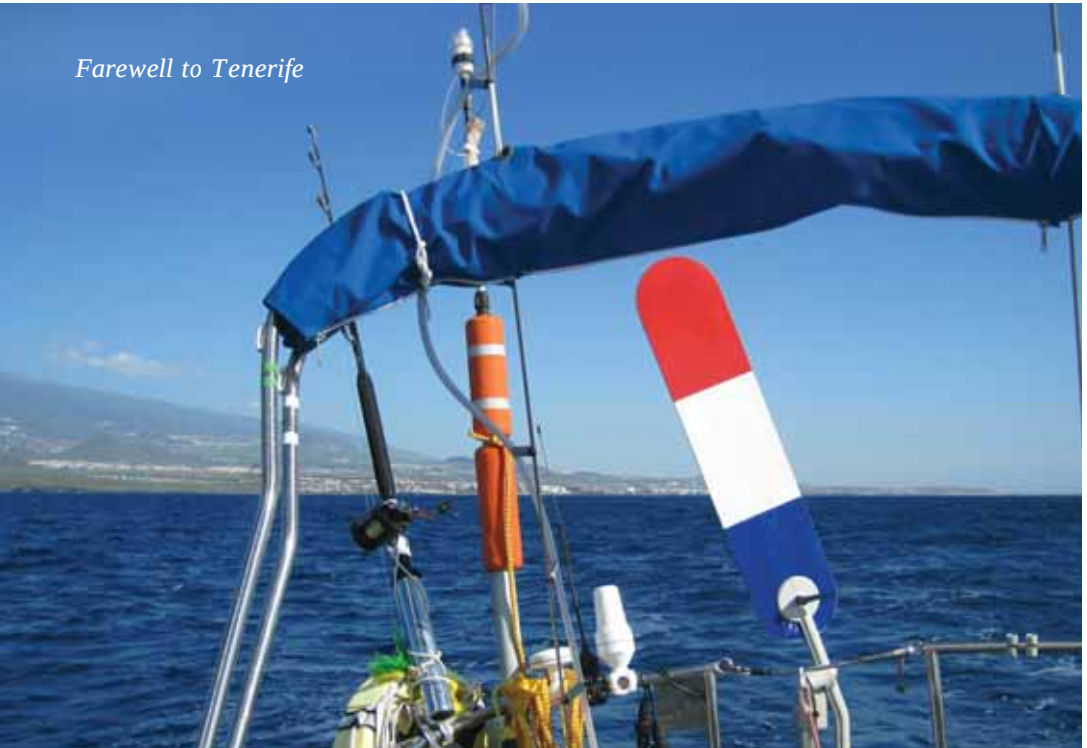
sailing, we kept ourselves busy with experimenting with cooking hot meals, checking the consumption of drinking water, checking our energy management and chatting with fellow ocean travellers over the temporary Dutch SSB radionet which we joined on the advice of some amateur radio friends in Holland.

Preparing hot meals initially took a lot of time. It taught us to plan well ahead, retrieving the ingredients from under the cabin sole and establishing the preparation sequence. Later on we became less ambitious in preparing meals, partly because our store of fresh fruit and vegetables emptied much more quickly than expected. Bell peppers* proved to be the most enduring and wholesome vegetables, lasting almost the whole crossing, followed by onions. Baking bread was made easy by our vast stock of bake-off rolls, a success story in itself.

Rig failure averted

With the increasing distance to a safe haven, our inclination to check *Gateway*'s technical integrity became a more and more rigorous daily routine, and indeed we spotted a potentially serious rigging problem early on. We were puzzled about the rotating movement of one of the backstays, which is used as an SSB antenna and has two insulators. The stay rotated constantly, the angle becoming wider as the following wind

* Also known in different parts of the world as sweet pepper, capsicum and (somewhat confusingly to many British cooks) paprika. Peter's recipe for Bell Pepper Risotto follows this article, on page 131.



Farewell to Tenerife

The author

grew stronger. This was visible, because the cable connecting the antenna tuner to the insulated section of the backstay is tethered to its lower part with plastic spacers which keep it about 10cm away from the stay.

Initially we thought that one of the terminals in the upper insulator had worked loose, but closer inspection with binoculars revealed the real cause – the stay had been made incorrectly, so that the middle part had a different direction of twist from the upper and lower parts. As a consequence the middle part of the stay tended to unwind under tension, which explained the rotating movement. It was clear that this couldn't last long, and that sooner or later the stay would break. For just this kind of eventuality we had replaced the standard mainsail halyard with a much stronger Dyneema halyard. We rigged this and another 8mm Dyneema braid line parallel to the stay, and when the pair were sufficiently tensioned with the sheet winch we reduced the tension on the backstay. The (oversized) topping lift was put to work as the new mainsail halyard, the boom brake being able to support the boom when reefing or lowering the sail. (We later had the stay replaced while in Martinique).

By the end of the first week we had covered around 770 miles, only on the last day seeing stronger winds from the north, accompanied by heavy showers but no thunderstorms. Our 4-4-2-2-6-6 watch routine was well established and it was seldom necessary to call the off-watch crew as the rig and steering were capable of handling most wind conditions. A daily routine was established of sleeping, navigation, weather data collection and related discussions, meals, happy hour, radio chats and of course

Setting up the tradewind rig … port

… and starboard

reading books with our e-readers (a Sony and a Kindle), highly valued pieces of kit. We kept our AIS transponder on, but very soon the screen stayed empty and the CPA / TCPA alarms didn't beep any more. (We spotted only five ships during the whole crossing – actually seeing two of them – but no yachts). The Iridium satphone was used a few times for brief chats with our families.

Week two

The second week started with a wind pattern that repeated itself for several days – shifting from north to northeast and varying between 15 and 25 knots. One day we were almost becalmed and had to take the mainsail down, using the engine to maintain our minimum 100 miles-a-day target, but the next day in similar conditions we decided to 'sail it out' and managed 86 miles in very light winds. Our new waypoint was now 15°N 40°W and we were still chasing the stronger tradewinds.

Flying fishes started to clutter the decks during the night, and dolphins became more or less regular visitors, apparently picking up on our engine noise. As always, the sight of these sea acrobats performing around

Our first flying fish!

the yacht lifted our spirits. Sometimes we heard them during the dark hours, a once frightening but now familiar sound.

We did our best to catch some seafood, with bait on a 70 foot trailing line. At first it worked fine, but our second catch – apparently a fairly big albacore – jumped out of the water with hook and line and over the impeller towline of the Ampair generator, the two lines becoming hopelessly entangled. It took hours to sort this out, and we had to take the mainsail down while we did so.

Week three and arrival

The third week started with both stronger tradewinds and line squalls, the latter increasingly during the nights. Initially these did not produce winds above 35 knots so did not require us to take in an extra reef; later we experienced stronger squalls, but we never had to take in a third reef or even lower the mainsail, only to temporarily furl the yankee. Of course our cutter rig does not carry a big mainsail, and the No 1 yankee has the same area as the main. The winds remained at around 20–25 knots, sometimes picking up to 30 knots, and the swell increased accordingly – an impressive sight, and also something to which we had to adapt both mentally and physically. The fact that *Gateway* was just taking it in her stride didn't mean that we too adjusted instantly to the new circumstances – it took a couple of days.

The tradewinds stayed with us the rest of the way to Barbados. The nights were spectacular in two ways: squall after squall hit us and, though we tried to avoid the worst by using our radar and changing course, we did not have much success – predicting their tracks was not so easy and they sometimes arrived out of the blue. Also lightning

became a regular part of the spectacle, sometimes going on for hours but seldom very close. When the sky cleared we had a fascinating view of the Milky Way, and the watchkeeper spent hours identifying stars and constellations, made particularly interesting because part of the night sky was new to us, including the magnificent Southern Cross. The moon cycle was closely watched, and also influenced decisions about taking in reefs early or not. In general, our awareness of the sun and moon cycles was much greater than we had ever experienced before.

On our final night at sea we decided to drop the mainsail in order to arrive in the early morning (we were making 130 mile noon-to-noon runs). At 0800 local time on 8 February we dropped the anchor in Carlisle Bay, the smallcraft anchorage on the west coast of the island near the capital, Bridgetown.

Getting ashore proved to be the last challenge of our crossing. Within the hour we had inflated the dinghy and rigged the outboard, donned decent trousers and polo shirts and were crossing the half mile to the beach. Yachtsmen who had been there before had told us that it was easy to get ashore, and the beautiful beach was very tempting. Only in the last 10m or so did we suddenly realised that there was still a considerable swell running and that we were in for a dousing. We just managed to prevent the dinghy from turning completely upside down but were both fully submerged in the process, contributing to the enjoyment of an early beach party watching our approach. We had to return to the yacht and change, getting ashore later in the Careenage, the small and almost historic harbour of the capital.

Running before the trades

Approaching the small craft anchorage in Carlisle Bay, Barbados

Epilogue

A couple of days later we questioned ourselves: what went well, what went wrong, did we really enjoy it, what could we have done differently?

- Not much went wrong. Our preparations and experience paid off, and we never felt in danger because of threatened equipment failures or circumstances that we and the yacht couldn't handle. Nevertheless, the fact that we were really on our own with limited means for survival in case something did go seriously amiss created an extra dimension, challenging and frightening at the same time. But this awareness moves to the background, although it sharpens the senses in constantly checking for potential problems.

- This is to some extent also an answer to the like / dislike question – yes, we enjoyed it, it was almost an addiction, a way of life in an ever-changing environment. At the same time we were looking forward to our destination – a new experience as we had never been to the Caribbean before. So mixed feelings about the crossing being completed, but happy to explore the Antilles.

- As to what we would have done differently – mostly this comes down to simplifying meals by being less ambitious about preparing complicated dishes. Nowadays there is so much well-prepared and packaged food – even complete meals – that with the addition of some fresh vegetables and eggs and canned meat or fish, a healthy and tasty meal can be prepared very quickly. Even dairy products like fruit yoghurts are available with a 'fridge life of 30 days.

- Experimenting with watch-keeping taught us that our three-hours-on, three-hours-off North Sea routine was not good enough and that we needed at least a four-hour off-watch rest. We discussed dropping night watches altogether, given the absence of shipping, but couldn't convince ourselves of the wisdom of that ... more intuitive than rational. The same was true for burning navigation lights (a decision made easier by the low energy consumption of our LED tricolour masthead light).

The Careenage at Bridgetown, Barbados

- Our total distance sailed was 2695 miles, with an average speed of 4·8 knots. We did not sail a true Great Circle course, but were very much guided by the prevailing – and expected / forecast – winds. We used our sextant a few times just to get some practice and verify GPS positions, but relied for the navigation mostly on three independent GPS sets (chartplotter, AIS and handheld). Water consumption was never a problem – our rationing policy paid off and we did not need our small desalinator. The Ampair towed generator provided sufficient power to keep the 'fridge and all the systems going, including the SSB transceiver and its Pactormodem, and the onboard computer system.

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(Following *Gateway*'s Atlantic crossing, which was also Peter Paternotte's qualifying passage for the OCC, he and his brother-in-law cruised the Lesser Antilles as far north as the British Virgin Islands. They returned to the Netherlands by way of Bermuda and the Azores, arriving home in early August 2011.)

FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Peter Paternotte, aboard *Gateway*

Bell Pepper* Risotto (serves two)

Ingredients

- rice (we prefer Grand Italia pre-cooked rice portions, preferably Risotto al Funghi)
- one large or two small bell peppers
- 2-3 tbs olive oil
- chopped garlic
- chopped fish fillets, minced meat or shrimps (optional)

We love bell peppers. They are healthy (one bell pepper contains more Vitamin C than a cup of orange juice), tasty and, with some, care last several weeks when purchased fresh and undamaged just before departure. They come in various colours and tastes, red, yellow and orange peppers being sweeter than green ones. The latter is, in our experience, the longest lasting (because it's not actually ripe yet). We store them in the 'fridge, though away from the (Isotherm) cooling element, unwashed and as dry as possible in closed plastic bags. That way we achieved almost three weeks 'shelf life' before they started to become inedible, even in the tropics. We frequently use them in combination with pasta or risotto rice for a quick and tasty meal when the going gets a bit rough, and with our favourite, Grand Italia 'Risotto al Funghi' pre-cooked rice portions.

Cut the peppers into halves (one big pepper for two persons) and remove the seed stem by cutting around it with a sharp knife. Then slice through the ribs and cross-slice the pieces, to end up with 20 or 30 squares. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan (we use a rectangular 'Boaties Fry Pan'), add the pepper, and fry for 5-7 minutes together with some chopped garlic and, depending on availability, chopped fish fillets, minced meat or shrimps (in which case an extra 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil may be needed). Stir into the heated, pre-cooked rice, or into risotto rice cooked from scratch.

Using pre-cooked rice this takes only 15 minutes to cook (a little longer if using dry rice), plus another 15 minutes to prepare, and creates a fairly substantial meal for two people.

* See the comment on page 124 regarding the various names by which peppers are known throughout the world.

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

SUBJECT MATTER: absolutely anything which is likely to interest, inform or amuse other members. Technical articles are particularly welcome. By all means send the same piece or similar pieces to the *Newsletter* [newsletter@oceancruisingclub.org], and to *Flying Fish* [flying.fish@oceancruisingclub.org], but **PLEASE** inform us **BOTH** of the duplication. Printing the same article twice is highly embarrassing!

By the same token, while you have every right to send your article to the journals of several clubs it's courteous to tell the editors concerned – and if you hope to sell your work to a commercial magazine be warned that most will not even consider an article which has already been published elsewhere, even in a humble club journal. *Flying Fish*, on the other hand, is generally happy to print articles which have already appeared commercially, and can often feature them at greater length and with far more illustrations.

LENGTH: preferably no more than 3000 words. Longer articles are sometimes accepted, but only if they're of exceptional interest. I dislike having to cut other people's writing and more often throw it back to the author for amendment – so if your efforts are lengthy, please allow extra time.

FORMAT: the vast majority of articles now arrive by e-mail. Equally acceptable is an MS Word or similar text file on CD, formatted for PC rather than Mac. A hard copy following/accompanying the original is very helpful – files can and do get scrambled, while accents frequently come through as gibberish (if applicable, and not on the electronic version, please mark them in on the hard copy in **RED** pen). I'm willing to scan good quality typescript, but *Flying Fish* no longer accepts faxed or handwritten articles without prior agreement. Whatever your choice, please ensure that all place, personal and boat names are spelt correctly. I can't always check them and errors can offend!

Please don't spend time on fancy formatting – it won't import into InDesign, our layout programme, and in any case is not the *Flying Fish* style. Stick to a standard font such as Times New Roman and limit yourself to capitals, italics and bold.

Finally, **PLEASE BE ORGANISED!** If the text you attach is not intended to be your final draft please make this clear in your cover note. While I'm happy to read an early draft and comment if requested, it's frustrating to spend time editing only to receive a new, and very altered, version. Minor amendments or corrections are fine, however, either made using the 'tracked changes' feature in Word or typed into the previous version in **RED** and then **HIGHLIT**. Just don't expect me to spot minor, unmarked changes amongst a sea of text!

CHARTLETS: if relevant, please include a rough chartlet of your travels, showing your route and places mentioned in the text. Don't worry if the map on which you draw your route (on paper or computer) is copyright, or if your efforts are a little untidy – *Flying Fish* chartlets are nearly always redrawn for us, overcoming both of these problems. Google satellite images, as featured in *Flying Fish* 2011/1, are among

those covered by copyright, but their 'Permission Guidelines' (see www.google.com/permissions/geoguidelines.html) allow for limited reproduction in order to 'demonstrate product use'.

LAT/LONG POSITIONS: if your article includes cruising information useful to others, please include latitudes and longitudes where appropriate, preferably as a separate list. Although they are unlikely to be included in the printed version of *Flying Fish*, such positions will be very useful to those who access your article via the club's CIC (Cruising Information Community) website, where information about places is linked to maps of cruising areas and where *Flying Fish* articles are referenced by the areas covered.

ILLUSTRATIONS: most photographs are now received digitally in JPG format by e-mail or on CD, though I'm also happy to receive prints for scanning. Watercolour paintings or black-and-white line drawings make an interesting alternative should you (or your crew) have skills in that direction, in which case you may prefer to send a high resolution scan rather than parting with the original. If in doubt, get in touch in good time and we can discuss the technicalities.

Returning to photographs, the temptation is often to be over-generous, which creates something of a nightmare for your editor! So ... **PLEASE DON'T SEND MORE THAN 20 PHOTOS MAXIMUM**. Remember that while you're writing a single piece for *Flying Fish*, I generally receive at least 20 articles, which means up to 400 photographs to sort through!

To reproduce well, photographs need to measure at least 16cm wide at 300 dpi (118dpcm), or 67cm wide at 72 dpi (28·35dpcm), the default setting for most cameras. If the above means nothing to you, please send your photographs EXACTLY as they were downloaded from the camera – merely opening them and saving under another name will degrade the quality. Like nearly all professionals I detest times and dates embedded into photographs – of course they can be painted out, but it takes time – and even worse are embedded captions. The former are generally added by the camera, the second by a software programme, but both can and should be turned off.

If sending photos by e-mail, particularly from the more remote parts of the globe, please attach no more than three per e-mail, or just one or two if they're very large files. A label in the e-mail's subject line – "CAPE HORN article; e-mail 1 of 6; pics 1 to 3 attached", for example – makes life simpler for all. I know what I should be getting and you know what you've sent! Even so, a final e-mail (without attachments) confirming how many e-mails and photographs I should have received can do no harm at all.

A recent problem has been the proliferation of photo-handling programmes such as PhotoShop Elements, Picasa 3 and ACDSee, which include an 'attach to e-mail' facility. Very handy on the face of it, but what they don't point out is that they automatically downsize each photo to make it easier to send, often making it too small to print. The same goes for the 'web albums' from which I'm occasionally invited to choose and download. To send photos at the original size you need to create an e-mail in Outlook Express or your favourite Webmail program and then attach each photo manually – in

this case the old ways still are best. Finally, please try to send all your photographs within a few hours. If this isn't possible please let me know, and I won't make a final selection until they've all arrived. Many thanks.

CAPTIONS: please provide a list of captions in the order they relate to your article. Don't spend hours renumbering or re-titling the photographs themselves – I'd much rather receive captions in Word than have to extract them individually from each photograph. Something along the lines of:

Photo 1 (DCM 3285) Preparing the boat for sea
Photo 2 (DCM 3321) Leaving Horta, John at the helm
Photo 3 (DSP 00045) The whale! (photo Sue Black)

is perfect and gives me all the information I need. Some contributors also send a Word document or PDF showing where the photographs should fall. This can be very helpful, but please don't forget that I'll still need the photos as individual JPGs. Although pictures can be extracted from document files the quality suffers dramatically.

Much of the above also applies if sending prints, in which case each picture will need to be identified by a self-adhesive sticker on the back with a **PENCILLED** number (ball pen often smudges onto the next photo). To be doubly safe, prints are best separated by sheets of ordinary paper, then sealed in a polythene bag inside the outer packaging.

COPYRIGHT: Whatever your photographic technique, please ensure that you either own the copyright of photographs or have the photographer's permission for them to be reproduced, not merely in *Flying Fish* but also on one or both of the club's websites – see also the note from our Legal Team, below. I'm happy to include a credit if requested, but *Flying Fish* cannot pay reproduction fees. I take great care of prints and original artwork and return them after use, but neither *Flying Fish* nor the OCC can be held responsible for loss or damage. USB sticks will normally be returned after the contents have been downloaded, but CDs and hard copy will not be sent back unless specifically requested.

DEADLINES: The final deadline for inclusion in the June 2012 issue is **Wednesday 1 February**, though I may be able to offer extensions for individual pieces which I know are on their way. Otherwise, it really is a case of the earlier the better.

Anne Hammick, Editor

AND FINALLY, A NOTE FROM OUR LEGAL TEAM ...

You should not submit material for publication which is in any way confidential, defamatory or knowingly inaccurate. By submitting material for publication, you warrant that either you are the copyright holder or you have the copyright holder's permission to use the material without restriction and further, that you have the authority to and do grant to both the OCC and the CIC limited licences to publish the material in their publications and on their websites.

ENGINE: NAW! A Tale of Friends, Strangers and the OCC
John and Liz Gordon

(Jalan Jalan *is an Island Packet 380, bought by John and Liz in 2005. They crossed to the Caribbean with the ARC 2009 and have based her there ever since. Future plans include visiting the Bahamas, Cuba, and maybe the American East Coast before returning to Europe.*)

It was always going to be a tough passage, sailing northeast from Spanish Waters, Curaçao to Antigua to meet friends who were flying in. It is nearly 500 miles in a straight line, upwind and across the prevailing currents, and Island Packets are not renowned for their windward performance. We set off on 2 March with a fair weather window of five-plus days, which we reckoned would allow us to reach the Windward / Leeward Islands, possibly around St Lucia or Martinique. A bit further north would be a bonus; further south would mean almost doubling the total distance but, on the positive side, we love sailing in the Caribbean.

The first day out had its highs and lows. We made good progress towards Klein Curaçao, leaving it to port, and then tacked to head north towards Bonaire, to which we were close by 1400. The next two tacks were to give us a flavour of the challenge ahead as we beat southeast against the current. We skirted a huge rain squall; when we tacked again we judged we would be clear of the eastern side of Bonaire. We were

Jalan Jalan passing Mayreau on a previous passage

disappointed not to make it – a combination of the current and a wind shift had us heading back towards the bay at Kralendijk on Bonaire. We decided to take advantage of a good night's sleep, and headed in (in darkness) to pick up a mooring for a few hours respite. 80 miles of motor-sailing to cover 38!

The following morning we set sail again at 0515. The first 11 miles only got us to the southern tip of Bonaire, so it wasn't until 0730 that we turned the bows east towards our destination. Initially progress was quite good. The sea was calmer, the wind kindly, and we began to see Bonaire drop below the horizon – although it was not until very late in the afternoon that the tops of the island's relatively low hills faded from view.

Before we left we had agreed to talk via SSB radio at 0700 to Canadian friends Maurice and Sue Black in *Strider*. They were going to give us weather updates and generally check that things were okay. This was to prove hugely beneficial. Equally, checking in each morning with the OCC net brought good information. In view of the events to come both proved to be vital sources of advice and assistance.

On 5 March, some 280 miles out, I stopped the engine. It had been running for 26 hours and I wanted to check oil levels and belt tension. This was purely precautionary – it was running as sweet as a nut at around 1800/2000 revs to help us keep up good windward progress. After re-tensioning the alternator belt it was restarted. I put it into gear – nothing! The gear linkages etc all seemed okay and working as before, but there was no transmission of power to the prop. Not even a twitch as the gear lever moved between forward and reverse (it subsequently turned out that the torque limiter had failed.) Okay ... this was a serious problem, but we were safe. The weather was expected – albeit not guaranteed – to be settled until 9 or 10 March. *JJ* is a great sea boat, and we had enough provisions to last much longer than a few days. We had both the engine and generator to keep the batteries topped up, and had contact with our friends in Curaçao and with the OCC net so we could let people know about our extending timescales and changes in destination, not to mention our predicament.

The loss of propulsion was challenge enough, but fate was to deal us another problem – the fluxgate compass controlling the autopilot went AWOL. Now we were faced with the prospect of hand-steering until we could get it sorted. With only two aboard this was going to present a significant physical challenge, especially at night. However, at times the sea conditions allowed us to set the sails and angle the rudder into reasonable balance, so the wheel brake could assist in holding course reasonably well. It still required constant vigilance, but the hard work of continually steering was reduced. As the voyage progressed it became less easy to achieve that balance and we were always on the wheel. Also, the winds seemed to be stronger after dark and the seas higher almost every night. This meant sitting at the wheel exposed to the wind, rain and occasional breaking sea. We were surprised how cold we became as the nights progressed, and this had an additional debilitating effect. The wind shifts as we passed south of the Virgin Islands and the lulls suffered after squalls were particularly trying as we became more tired with each passing day.

The strain and the physical demands of continual steering were exhausting. We are reasonably fit, but we still suffered from aches caused by holding the wheel, making small

John and Liz Gordon at Shirley Heights, Antigua

adjustments and bracing against the motion of the boat. The concentration required also took its toll. I had forgotten just how exhausting constant mental activity can be. Sleep came in short snatches, and the resultant sleep deprivation created an additional physical drain. Eating was okay as Liz had prepared a number of meals, but getting them ready added to the physical effort.

As all cruisers know, night sailing can be a wonderful experience. Seeing the stars in all their glory, plus seeing your boat's track highlighted in phosphorescence, is terrific. We had these, but staying awake when so tired was still a huge task and one at which we frequently failed. However, we had no disasters, and only a couple of unplanned tacks when our minds wandered. What the journey did confirm is that we have no appetite for doing the Pacific or any other long passage on our own. I have to admire singlehanders, but wonder how they psyche themselves up for it mentally and prepare physically.

With the wind mainly easterly – it fluctuated between 80° and 120° – we set a northerly course towards Puerto Rico, approximately 150 miles away. It was not an ideal landfall, even if it became possible, as we didn't have visas. We hadn't expected to need these until 2012, when we intend to head north up the coast of America.

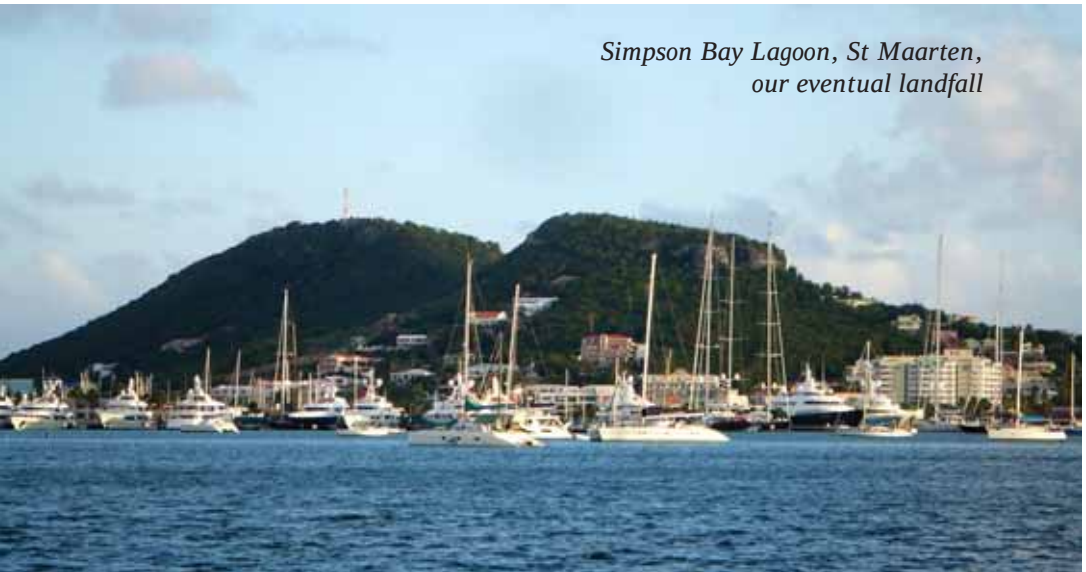
It was at this stage that Sue and Maurice Black in *Strider* and members of the OCC really came through. Sue and Maurice contacted us twice a day at 0700 and 1600 with weather news and assurances that our family knew what was happening and were reassured by the contact and the knowledge that we were safe and carrying on. That took a huge weight off our shoulders and helped us to focus on getting to land. Talking to our daughter afterwards, she said she had a pilot friend with a float plane based in the BVIs and had wondered whether she would have to phone and ask him to do a quick SAR!

The OCC net, headed by John and Chris Lytle in *Oriole*, was also a tremendous support. John made it a priority to make contact every morning, and the rest of the net were full of advice and encouragement. We were astonished at how everyone came forward with both practical and moral support – even to the extent of an offer of a gearbox, if needed, from Brad and Ann Willauer in *Breezing Up*.

Eventually, with the wind becoming more northerly, we decided to head for St Maarten as it has a reputation for being the place to get anything done/fixed. This avoided difficulties with the US Customs and Immigration in Puerto Rico, although we have since learned that they have a dispensation, should circumstances demand, to grant a 30-day visa. We did try to contact the US Coast Guard for advice, via both VHF and SSB, but were unable to get a response. Also, St Maarten is nearer Antigua so, if all else failed, our guests could fly to St Maarten to join us.

The final three days became quite drawn out as exhaustion built up. Falling asleep at the wheel would happen several times during a watch, momentary lapses usually ended with a jerk as one's head lolled backwards. The wind gradually became lighter, although generally from a good angle, and progress varied from 6+ knots to around 4 knots. We probably learned more about tweaking our sails in those three days than in the entire five years we had owned *Jalan Jalan*. (Our unwritten rule is usually '3 knots or less and the engine goes on', especially if it means we can't get settled in time for a G & T. Well, we're supposed to be doing this for pleasure – who needs the hair shirt?)

As we approached St Maarten the final challenge began to loom. How were we going to get into the anchorage and get the hook down? We would need to do it under sail, and the anchorage would probably be crowded. I had performed this manoeuvre once on *Jalan Jalan* – to pass my Yachtmaster. On that occasion I had two strapping guys for crew, and I was in familiar waters in winds of less than 10 knots. As a couple we hadn't even discussed it before, much less carried it out. Yet again the OCC network came to the fore, however. On the morning of 9 March John put out a call from *Oriole* for any boat in the area that might help us, and David and Lynn Wilkie aboard



Simpson Bay Lagoon, St Maarten, our eventual landfall

Moonbeam of Argyll (yes, fellow Scots) called to say they were on passage from St Barts to St Maarten and expected to be there by mid-afternoon – hopefully about the same timev as ourselves. They offered to tow us in if necessary. It was astonishing the effect that offer had on us – it was just the tonic we needed for the final slog. In the end we didn't get into Simpson Bay until around 1800, having tacked six or seven times to complete the final 11 miles as the frigate bird flies.

As we got closer we could see plenty of space, and began the detailed preparations for getting the anchor down and the sails stowed. Everything crossed that the anchor would hold first time! Just as we made our approach *Moonbeam* called us up on VHF. They thought we had arrived whilst they were ashore checking in, as they could see an Island Packet anchored not far from them. David kindly buzzed over in his dinghy and secured alongside, to give us the propulsion required to get closer in than we would otherwise have attempted. His years of experience running operations at Ardfern Yacht Haven stood us in good stead.

Once safely anchored he came on board and offered to take a look at the engine / gearbox. He was quickly into the guts of it all, looking for a quick fix. Regrettably there wasn't one, but he kindly offered to take the gearbox out for us if we needed to take it to the repair shop. From my point of view it was terrific to have assistance from someone with a working knowledge of the problem, and to know that the situation was resolvable.

Once safely anchored and recovered from the lack of sleep we were able to reflect on our journey.

We are so grateful to our friends, and to the users of the net, for the support given so generously and for their continuing concern that everything necessary was being done. It was reassuring to have this example of concern for fellow sailors in difficult or challenging circumstances. On this occasion we were the beneficiaries, but we had witnessed it in December 2010 when *September Song*, a 29-footer sailed by a couple in their 70s, was overdue from Trinidad to Grenada. Despite many attempts to call them direct and via the coastguards of Trinidad, Grenada and Venezuela, nothing was heard for more than five days. The relief felt by the Grenada cruisers when news of their PanPan and subsequent safe landing in St George's came through was palpable throughout the bay. It added to the sense of joy and wellbeing at De Big Fish Boxing Day potluck celebrations.

As one wag put it, Christopher Columbus didn't have an engine and also didn't know where he was going. If he survived, what had we to worry about? Ah! But he did have more crew.

Returning to the original problem, it turned out that the torque limiter plates were stripped, a much cheaper repair than we had feared. Simpson Bay Diesel was very helpful, and sorted the problem in fairly quick order after the spares arrived from America. It was completed on a Saturday morning, but we had a final hiccup when the prop shaft, cutless bearing and stuffing box overheated on the sea trial, due to the rope cutter not being properly relocated when the prop shaft was drawn back in. That was rectified the following Monday, and we reckoned we were then good to go.

The torque limiter showing the oil leakage …

Things were not completely to rights, however. Later, while *en route* from Antigua to Guadeloupe and motoring due to a complete lack of wind, the rebuilt torque limiter overheated. It was smoking, and the stuffing box and cutless bearing were also untouchable. On this occasion we were given tremendous help by Fred of FredMarine in Pointe à Pitre. *Jalan Jalan* had to be hauled out, and the cutless bearing replaced and stuffing box restuffed. The torque limiter is no longer. The moving elements were welded together so it is now a 'spacer'. This will be replaced during the hurricane season, and the old one retained for a future emergency. On reflection, we now suspect that the original failure resulted from the cutless bearing binding, but it was such a gradual process that we did not notice. We had noticed a slow decrease in speed under power, but had put that down to a heavy boat, underwater growth, a poorly pitched Max Prop or a combination of all or any of these. We are certainly much the wiser for these experiences.

… and after the repair in Guadeloupe

We hope this article helps underscore the benefits of the OCC and the cruising community as a whole, and hope at some time to be able to reciprocate the help we experienced. Despite the trials and tribulations we had some great sailing – it's just a pity it was marred by the problems!

My experience with engines is that if you depend on them they fail you, but if it just doesn't matter, they serve you.

Frank Wightman

Port Louis Marina – another great reason to visit Grenada

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CIRCUMNAVIGATING GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Mike and Helen Norris

(*Mike and Helen are dinghy enthusiasts who still cruise in their 16ft Wayfarer each summer. They 'graduated' to chartering yachts in 1996, before purchasing* Island Drifter*, their 37ft Countess ketch, in 1999 when Mike took early retirement. Since then they have covered over 30,000 miles with her, and Mike has skippered a further 60,000 miles on delivery trips.*
A plan showing the route of their 'circumnavigation' appears on page 154.)

During our second Atlantic circuit in 2009/10 we realised that we knew some of the Caribbean islands better than much of our own coastline. We therefore decided that our next cruise would be round Great Britain and Ireland. Winter was spent in Ipswich effecting a major refurbishment – the first in our twelve years of ownership. Since, unlike many Countess owners, we had not built the boat ourselves, the re-fit proved quite an education. We left Ipswich on 14 April 2011 and made good progress down the east coast and up the Thames to St Katharine's Dock, in order to watch the London Marathon. Afterwards we caught the first of the ebb, enabling us to make the 42 miles to Queenborough on one tide.

We used our cruise along the south coast, which we already knew well, to visit friends and as a sea trial. We had not, however, been to the Scillies before. There we watched the World Gig Racing Championships – very colourful with a vibrant atmosphere. Being keen gardeners, we went to the famous Abbey Gardens on Tresco, and the adjacent Valhalla museum of ships' figureheads recovered from local wrecks.

Preparations for gig racing in the Isles of Scilly

Moored in Drake's Pool, near Cork

With a strong southeasterly wind on our starboard quarter we had a fast overnight sail to Milford Haven in Wales, where we picked up a buoy off Hobbs Point near the Cleddau Bridge. (We'd been invited to stay overnight with Graham and Wendy George, whom we had first met in Ipswich when they took the lines on our return from our first Atlantic circuit in 2000.) With a gale forecast in two days' time we left Milford Haven, and sailed overnight on a beam reach to Crosshaven on the south coast of Ireland where we moored upriver in the small protected anchorage of Drake's Pool – his galleons are said to have hidden there while evading a larger Spanish fleet. We made good use of the facilities in the Royal Cork Yacht Club, and used the bus to visit Blarney Castle, the Old Jameson Distillery in Midleton where Mike was selected to join a whiskey-tasting group, and Cork City where we toured the famous English Market which the Queen formally visited a week later.

After the gale subsided we sailed south around the Old Head of Kinsale before turning and tacking our way steadily west to Baltimore, a small fishing village and yachting centre. Next day, on our way out, we passed the Fastnet Rock before rounding Mizen Head, the southwest corner of Eire, and then surfing 20 miles down Bantry Bay to Glengarriff, a sheltered and famously beautiful anchorage known as the 'Madeira of Ireland'. We noted that the local seals looked fat and happy – not surprising since salmon netting is now prohibited in Irish waters.

The anchorage at Glengarriff on Bantry Bay

Poled out … and rolling!

On the way north to Dingle we took a shortcut between Dursey Island and the mainland. As we were exiting the very narrow sound the engine stalled – and refused to restart. We immediately hoisted sail, and manoeuvred through the rocks and confused seas where the current from the sound met the Atlantic swell. Fortunately new fuel filters solved the problem. At the entrance to Dingle harbour we were surprised by Fungie, an enormous bottle-nosed dolphin which has been guiding boats in and out of the harbour since 1983. Dingle is also famous for having 52 pubs, in one of which we had our first experience of Irish music.

From Dingle we sailed the 130 miles north to Inis Mor, the largest of the three Aran Islands in the mouth of Galway Bay. It is a *Gaeltacht* island – one where Gaelic is the everyday language. Overnight we kept well offshore, to avoid the powerful ebb

Force 11 in a 'sheltered' anchorage

Heavy weather sailing

tide of the River Shannon where it encounters the Atlantic swell. On arrival in Kilronan Bay, an open but well-sheltered anchorage, we picked up a (free) yellow visitors' buoy. Ashore, we cycled to Dun Aonghasa, a prehistoric ring fort overlooking the Atlantic. The semi-circular fort is a World Heritage site, and sits on the cliff edge with a 300ft sheer drop to the rocks below. It is testimony to coastal erosion, since it used to be circular and inland! For the next two days we were marooned on our buoy in a force 11 storm which battered the west coasts of Ireland and Scotland. Fortunately one of our mooring lines has two metres of chain spliced into the middle to prevent chafe.

Once the wind died down we tacked west to Slyne Head, the westernmost peninsula in Ireland, before turning northeast and running into Clifden Bay, County Connemara. In the morning we were hailed by Damian Ward and his father Jacky, who introduced themselves as 'your meet and greet committee'. It was too rough to launch our own dinghy so they ferried us in a large RIB to get shopping, fuel and water. From Clifden we continued round Erris Head to the well-protected anchorage at Broadhaven in County Mayo. With the 4m Atlantic swell and a force 6 behind us it was an exhilarating sail. Broadhaven has a lifeboat station, a pub and a few houses. There is also a shop – six miles away!

With yet another gale forecast for 'later' we decided to push on north, across Donegal Bay, to a very pleasant and protected anchorage behind Calf Island in Arranmore Sound, Donegal. However, conditions deteriorated earlier than forecast and the wind on our quarter was force 7 to 8 all the way with a 5m swell. We surfed along with a spitfire jib and three reefs in the main. As we motored up to a visitors' buoy the engine alarm sounded and we discovered that the freshwater pump pulley had sheared off. Using our satellite phone we sourced a replacement from Holland, and arranged for delivery to Coleraine Marina in County Londonderry.

Along the spectacular north coast of County Donegal we were fortunate in having a favourable wind and getting the tides right around both Bloody Foreland and Malin Head, before turning towards the entrance of the river which leads up to Coleraine. By now the wind had died, so we lashed dinghy and outboard to the side of the boat as a power pack and headed into the narrow entrance between two training walls. The river mouth was very turbulent, and one particularly large wave almost swamped the dinghy. We managed, however, to get through at 1 knot over the ground, before making our way in the dark up the remaining 4 miles to Coleraine and its small, well-organised marina and beautiful rural setting.

Since the new pulley was not due to arrive for another two days we went to see the Giant's Causeway, Northern Ireland's only World Heritage site, and afterwards joined a conducted tour of the Bushmills Distillery. On the second day we travelled by train to Londonderry, a route described by Michael Palin as one of the world's most beautiful train journeys. We took a conducted open-top bus tour around the city before walking to the Bogside to visit the 'Free Derry' museum.

Helen manning the dinghy as we head up to Coleraine

Once the water pump pulley arrived, it took only 15 minutes to replace it. We then sailed across North Channel from Coleraine to Port Ellen on Islay, our first harbour in Scotland. Forty miles with a cross tide of up to 6 knots meant that we had to lay off by 30° in order to make our intended destination. Shallow patches in the channel combined with a strong tide and brisk wind created overfalls and small whirlpools that also made the trip interesting. Islay is an island steeped in history – and whisky! Generations of conquerors and settlers have left their mark. Today the island boasts its own malting plant and eight distilleries, and is the most concentrated area of whisky production in Scotland.

The Laphroaig distillery on Islay

As we sailed north up the coast, towards the anchorage in Craighouse on Jura, we soon realised that, compared to the gales and challenging seas we had experienced on the west coast of Ireland, the lee of the Scottish islands provides more favourable cruising conditions. The Jura distillery is right on the shore at Craighouse and has free visitors' buoys. No wonder it is popular with yachties.

Our main reason for making our next stop in Ardfern, at the head of Loch Craignish, was to collect replacement blades for the wind generator which had been couriered to friends who own a farm overlooking the anchorage. Early next morning we caught the tide north to Oban through the 25 mile tidal race which includes Dorus Mhor and the Sound of Luing. The tide can run at well over our boat speed in these sounds, so it was important to get our timings right.

Oban is a large natural harbour which offers good protection. Even so, eighteen boats

broke free of their moorings during 'The Storm' in May and three were still perched on the rocks. The town is constructed of their famous grey slate, enlivened by a large and colourful fishing fleet. Stalls on the dock sell superb quality wet fish and shellfish directly from the boats. The Oban distillery is conveniently located near the waterfront...

Tobermory, our next stop, is a very popular picture-postcard harbour, which we last called in at 12 years ago when delivering a yacht from Norway to Dublin. This time we came to meet up again with Geoff and Chris Reade at their farm where they produce Isle of Mull cheeses from unpasteurised milk. The cows' diet is supplemented with draff, the expended barley from the local distillery. No wonder their cheeses taste so good.

Deciding to give Skye a miss since we had been there before by road – and you can't do everything – we headed the 80 miles northwest across the Sea of the Hebrides and the Minches to the Outer Hebrides. *En route* we passed The Small Isles – Eigg, Rum, Muck and Canna – and had an outstanding view of the Cuillin Mountains on Skye.

In the protected anchorage of Lochmaddy, North Uist, we picked up a blue Highlands & Islands visitors' buoy. The southern half of the Outer Hebrides chain, separated from

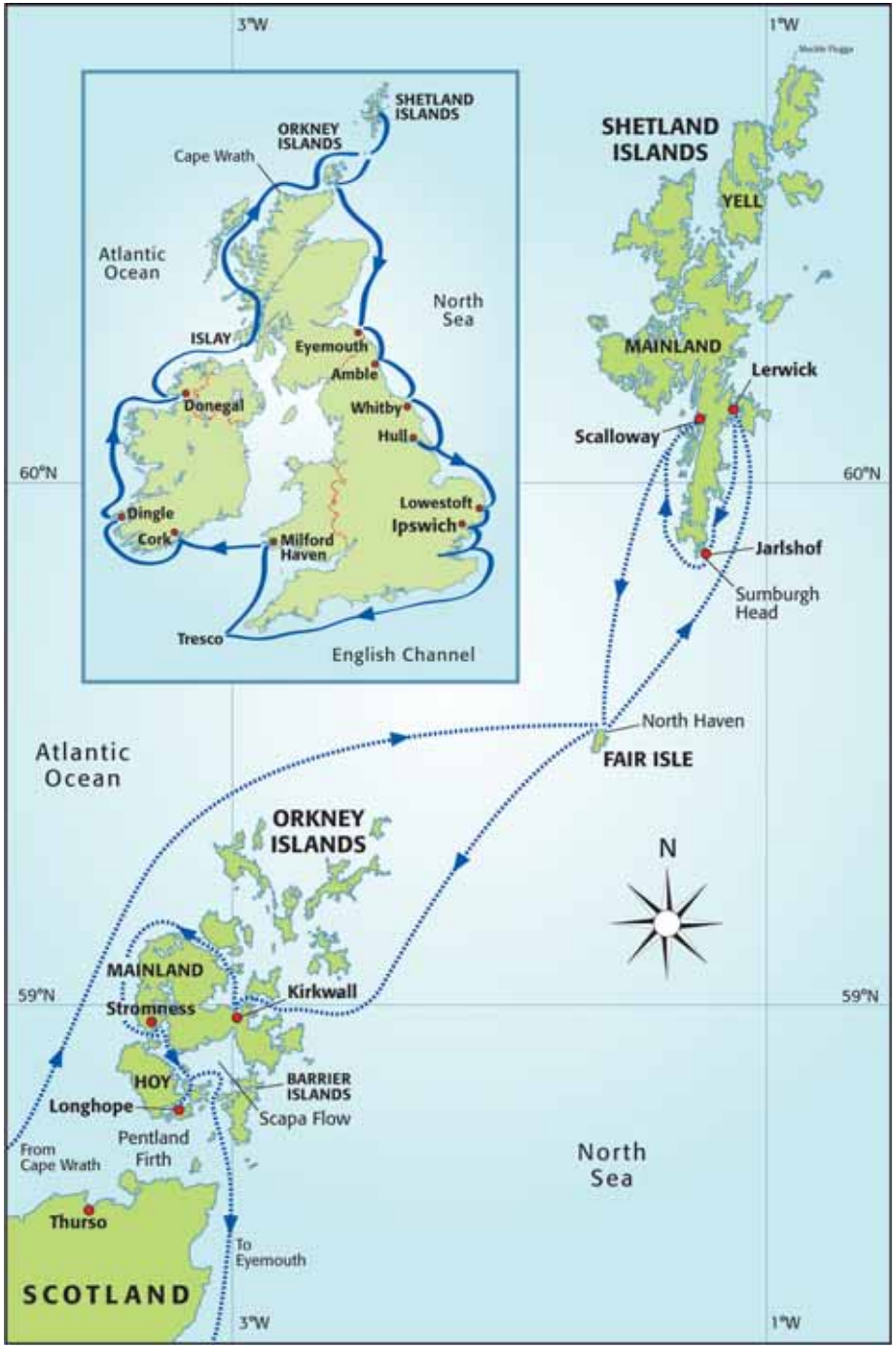
A mountain of scallop shells


The Lewis chessmen

the north half by the Sound of Harris, comprises four islands, linked by a single-track road and causeways. The small island of Barra to the south has a runway on a cockleshell beach, useable only at low tide. The scenery varies: freshwater lochs and peat bogs in the north, mountains in the south, superb white sand beaches along the west coast, and long deep lochs on the east. At the Kallin scallop-processing plant the buildings appear to sit on a pink mountain of discarded shells, through which gulls scavenge for scraps, causing a continuous clatter as they do. The wreck of the SS *Politician* is nearby at the south of Eriskay, the inspiration for Compton McKenzie's book *Whisky Galore* and the subsequent film.

Stornoway in Lewis, at the northern end of the Hebridean chain, was our next destination. It is a large natural harbour tucked behind the Eye peninsula and is the only town of any size in the whole of the Outer Hebrides. An exhibition of the Lewis Chessmen was being held in the town's museum. These extraordinary chess pieces, carved from whalebone, were discovered buried on a beach on the west coast of Lewis in the early 19th century and are believed to have belonged to a 12th century Norwegian king. The Lewis landscape is dominated by peat bogs, with fresh black scars showing where digging is current. In contrast, Harris, to the south, is very mountainous. There we visited the Callinish Standing Stones – a Scottish version of Stonehenge. Nearby we found a small croft where the weaver was happy to let us watch cloth being woven on an old Hattersleigh single-width treadle loom.

We continued northeast on an overnight sail to Fair Isle, passing around Cape Wrath and up the west coast of the Orkneys. In June at this latitude (around 59°N) there's nearly 23 hours of daylight – a night watch is a doddle when it doesn't really get dark! North Haven, Fair Isle, is a beautiful little sheltered harbour where we tied up against the wall behind one other yacht. The weather during our stay was positively balmy. It seems this is not usually the case – we were informed by a resident that the Northern Isles have only two seasons: 'June and July' and 'winter'! Lying on the intersection of major migratory paths from Scandinavia, Iceland and the Faeroes, Fair Isle is famous for the number of birds that both pass by and breed there. Fair Isle lies north of mainland Scotland, midway between the Orkney and Shetland Islands. Until the late 15th century these islands were part of the Norse empire, being only 200 miles from Norway. The islanders see themselves not as Scots, but as Orcadians or Shetlanders. In recent years, income from the oil industry, fish farming, fishing, agriculture, tourism and related industries has revolutionised the economy.



North Haven on Fair Isle

From Fair Isle we headed another 45 miles north to Lerwick in the Shetland Islands. The *Lonely Planet Guide* describes the Shetlands as 'one of the top regions in the world to visit' and 'the last untamed corner of the UK'. At 60°N it is certainly the most remote. We went to see Jarlshof, a Stone Age village which had remained perfectly preserved under a sand dune until uncovered by a storm at the end of the 19th century. We also visited Scalloway, the original capital of the Shetlands, with its monument to the Shetland Bus – the small fishing boats which made winter passages to and from Norway during World War 2 carrying agents and refugees.

On our way southwest to the Orkneys we called back into Fair Isle. Coming into the harbour we saw two Swedish boats which we had previously met in Lerwick. They were dressed overall, since one of the couples, Magnus and Catharina, were getting married later that day. We were surprised and delighted to be invited to the ceremony in the chapel and, because they had commandeered the only 'taxi' on the isle, they lent us their bikes. After a fast, uphill, three mile ride we arrived just in time, but somewhat out of breath! Almost a case of 'One Wedding and Two Funerals'...

We left early next morning to continue our passage to the Orkneys. With the notoriously fierce tides which run between the islands our arrival at Kirkwall, the capital, was timed for slack water. The city is built of grey stone and slate, apart from the magnificent

Alongside the pontoon at Lerwick in the Shetlands

cathedral of St Magnus which is made of red granite and dominates the city. Kirkwall boasts the most northerly Scottish whisky distillery – Highland Park – and also has an intriguing Wireless Museum. Among the many interesting exhibits is a World War 2 spy's radio suitcase (a two-man lift!).

It was a 45 mile sail round to Stromness. The exit from Kirkwall and the entry into Stromness can be horrific in the wrong conditions, so again it was important to get our timings right. On arrival in the small marina we purchased live lobsters from an adjacent fishing boat. We particularly wanted to see the Barrier Islands, which are linked by the Churchill Causeways. These were built during the War to protect Allied shipping, following the sinking of the *Royal Oak* in Scapa Flow by a German U-boat. The Italian prisoners of war who built the causeways also constructed a chapel out of two Nissan huts, which they transformed into a most remarkable and beautiful place of worship. The leader of an Irish demolition team, commissioned after the war to raze to the ground everything connected with the camp, refused to flatten the chapel on the grounds that he did not want to be answerable on Judgement Day for such an act of desecration.

To position ourselves to catch a favourable tide through the Pentland Firth – the fastest tidal race in the UK – we crossed Scapa Flow, where the German fleet was scuttled in 1919, to Longhope harbour on Hoy where we spent the night alongside a fishing boat. In light winds

The Italian Chapel on Lamb Holm

Alongside in Eyemouth

and with a fair tide the Pentland Firth proved a non-event and, given the conditions and the good progress we were making, we sailed on for 37 hours to Eyemouth, the most southerly Scottish port on the east coast. The town's fishing fleet is still very active, although in 1881 it was decimated by a sudden storm. Eyemouth's other claim to fame is its smuggling history, commemorated in a maritime museum and Gunsgreen House, an 18th century mansion overlooking the harbour, built for John Nisbet who by day was a respectable merchant and by night a smuggling 'Don'.

It took only four hours with the tide to reach Holy Island, where we anchored adjacent to Lindisfarne in a protected bay – although with the very strong tides we had to put out two anchors in opposing directions to cope with changes in the tidal streams. The island, which is connected to the Northumberland coast by a causeway submerged at high tide, is a major centre of Christian pilgrimage – and tourism. After an even shorter sail to the Farne Islands we anchored in The Kettle – a circular, enclosed bay with a single narrow entrance. At high tide the rim of the surrounding reef is almost submerged, but at low tide it acts as a protective wall. Tourist boats came and went all day, but from 1700 we had the anchorage to ourselves – apart from thousands of seabirds.

Our next port of call was Amble, an old mining port. While we were enjoying breakfast an old wooden boat two along from us had a gas explosion which blew it almost apart. To our amazement and relief, the somewhat dazed 82-year-old liveaboard owner was miraculously alive and standing up in the wreckage. We left Amble very early next day to catch the tide south to Whitby. Even so, with a head wind we struggled to get there in time to meet friends who had come over from the Dales to treat us to a fish supper at Whitby's famous Magpie Restaurant.

Entering Whitby harbour

The passage from Whitby to Scarborough was a simple sail with the tide. In 1996 we both completed the RYA Competent Crew course there and are still 'country members' of the yacht club. Adjacent to us in the marina was the *Princess Matilda*, a large barge belonging to the actor Timothy Spall and his wife Shane. They were also on passage around the UK, but accompanied by a cameraman who was making a television documentary about their trip.

In order to catch a train to our home town of Harrogate we sailed up the Humber to Hull Marina. The river is vast and busy, and tidal streams in the 26 miles from the mouth to the marina are so strong that there is no choice but to 'go with the flow'. After a day trip home, we left Hull on the ebb and made the open sea within three hours. We continued to sail hard overnight in strong following winds and a lumpy sea in order to catch the tide into Lowestoft and so avoid the worst of a northwesterly gale which was chasing us. We arrived at dawn in the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club's marina, with its impressive Grade 2 listed club house. Steve and Helen Grover who built, lived in and sailed *Island Drifter* to the Mediterranean and back, joined us for supper.

We left for our home port of Ipswich with a fresh following wind and a favourable tide. After motoring up the Orwell and berthing in Ipswich Haven Marina, that evening we celebrated our successful circumnavigation of Great Britain and Ireland with a bottle of (French!) champagne. It had taken us 103 days, during which we covered over 2500 miles and stayed in 44 different ports and anchorages. While we saw a great deal, we could in the time available obtain only an overview of our country – every reason to go back and explore selected areas in more detail.

RAT ON BOARD!
Rosemarie Smart-Alecio, Roving Rear Commodore

Tension was high aboard *Ironhorse*. It had been almost three weeks since we had hauled out in the busy commercial boatyard on the edge of the tiny fishing village of Ban Chebilang in southwest Thailand. It had taken us all of that time to prepare her for sandblasting, with a further delay caused by several days of heavy rain, the change of season having broken earlier this year. Would it happen today?

Bleary-eyed, Alfred and I dragged ourselves from bed. Ablutions, then breakfast, with half an eye on the clock in case we were given the signal for the go-ahead. As I reached for the fruit bowl I was horrified to notice there was a clear imprint of teeth marks in one of the bananas – AND in the next, AND in one of the mangoes! It took me no time to conclude that now we, too, had joined the ranks of the yachtie victims of having A RAT ON BOARD!

Par for the course, the others had advised – everyone finds them ... "What, actually INSIDE a yacht?" "Yes, inside!" Our yard neighbours had warned us of this real possibility when we arrived. "They always leave their 'calling cards' – small black droppings. You'll know if they've been around", said the New Zealanders. The Americans (launching the following day) had recounted their 'rat issue', having trapped several in the six months they'd been here. The Italians and the Aussies lived ashore and kept no food on board: "No food means no rats!"

In the few months that George had been in the yard he'd already caught five. Having trapped four during his haul-out a few months previously he'd just returned for a small amount of further work – and always had a trap charged. Even so, after launching he'd unwittingly carried one back to Malaysia with him, prior to flying back to the UK for several months. As always, he'd cleared his yacht of fresh food before leaving her. On his return he'd discovered that some electrical wires had been chewed through in his absence. Setting his trap yet again, that night he notched his fifth!

Having listened to horror stories from the couple of yachties we'd met in other parts of the world who'd had rats on board (difficult to track down amongst all the nooks and crannies of the bilges; chewing up electrical wiring with all sorts of dire consequences) we'd taken the immediate precaution of purchasing a rat trap, wrapped it in a greased cloth to maintain it in working order, then stowed it deep in the bilge, convincing ourselves we'd never need it! As do all yachties in the tropics, we'd become accustomed to the discipline of preventing/getting rid of the inevitable cockroaches and ants. We'd also had birds in the boat, found wasp nests, a gecko we'd welcomed for its insect diet, and even a snake whilst in West Africa – but had managed to avoid rats ... until now.

So much for our usual preventative measures whilst on the hard – greasing all the 'leads' from the ground (the fresh water hose, electric cables etc) so nothing could grip to climb – then ensuring that none of the ropes dangling over the side (for lifting and

Alfred taking our problem for disposal

lowering things) touched the ground. In past haul-outs, this had worked well. But here, *Ironhorse* was set up on a sturdy cart, the supporting frames of which led right up to the decks. A determined rat would find little difficulty in gaining access ...

We'd seen the little (and not so little) furry creatures, many only babies, running around beneath the gratings which covered the yard drains. Early in the evenings, just before sunset, they could be seen at the southern end of the yard (not far from us) near the rail system's engine room. They'd poke their heads up through the grids, out of which they'd niftily clamber to search for tit-bits, then dash back like greased-lightning at any disturbance. From the snack-bar near the yard entrance we'd be well entertained – at any time of day – watching one or two racing around the roof framework above us, marvelling at their agility and phenomenal ability to climb even the totally vertical struts.

But back to our immediate problem ... time was pressing on. The hanging bread bag had been chewed, as had the cereal packet, also in a suspended bag. WHERE WAS IT? I looked around in vain for signs of the rat's whereabouts, but there was little time now, for the workers 'start' siren had sounded and already a team of men was arriving with tarpaulins to begin preparing *Ironhorse*. The sandblasting was predicted to take at least two nights, so we had packed our bags to take up temporary residence in a hotel, but the distraction of this discovery meant that our final protection of the last few deck fittings and sealing of the companionway boards against invasion of the sand and dust still had to be effected.

We hurried out on deck to complete our own preparations before the men took over. In the cockpit, I noticed a couple of tiny black 'egg shapes' – rat-droppings, which I could not recall ever having seen before. Obviously 'the signs' we'd been told about. They littered the cockpit and the coachroof outside the doghouse. Tiny pieces of dense insulating foam were scattered around the area where, presumably, a rat had either tried it for food or had attempted to burrow through to gain entrance. We were at war!

"We MUST get on!" urged Alfred. "All we can do about a rat is to set the trap and hope". The popular local trap simply caged the live creatures. We heard that the locals then drowned them (perhaps only a rumour, since Thai Buddhists are not supposed to kill) but many of the yachties, rather than bring themselves to end the creature's life, carried their captive to the nearby rice fields for release, considering that killing the odd rat could hardly make a dent in the resident population.

I leapt down to the port bilge and quickly extracted our eight-year-old trap. But what to charge it with? "Peanut butter always worked for us", claimed Ann. "You only need the tiniest bit of Cheddar", advised George... "They'll go for anything", said Alfred, hurriedly, and promptly primed ours with 'tempting' dry bread before hurrying me out to complete the sealing process around the companionway. We descended the ladder,

Ironhorse ready to launch from the rat-friendly cart

leaving *Ironhorse* to be rolled to the 'sandblasting spot' away from the other yachts and fishing trawlers – and, in the process, forgot our rat completely.

The job began at dusk. It was very noisy and dusty – horrid work. "If there's a rat inside, it will be terrified," said Alfred, "better off if it HAS found the trap". The first session finished at 0230. The team of young men had worked very hard while we, watching and checking the procedures for most of that time, were glad to get back to our hotel beds before dawn. It had been a long 20 hours.

We slept late the following morning and took our time to breakfast. No point in getting to the yard early – work would not start again until the evening. It was past midday and very hot when we arrived. "*Ironhorse* will be like an oven inside", remarked Alfred ... and suddenly I remembered our rat! Presuming that one had been hiding inside and that it had found the trap, the terrific heat would be working on it by now. 'We can't unseal her now," stated Alfred, "we'll have to wait until tomorrow at the earliest". I fretted and fretted.

The team advised that a second night's work would still not see the end. Forty-eight hours and more – how would a dead body be after all that time in this climate? Luckily our own needs assisted my frantic dilemma, for if we were not able to return home when planned, there were things to check inside, surely? Finally Alfred gave in and, having investigated just how much mess there was around the companion way, decided that, with the help of one of the team to shift sand from the covers in the vicinity, they could open up temporarily without too much hassle or mess.

Carefully he re-sealed the companionway boards. He returned (very dusty himself) with the things we needed – and also, to my relief, with a plastic bag containing the entrapped perpetrator, covered in its own drying, congealed blood. "Poor thing!" I cried. "It would have been quick," he assured me. "Better than having suffered the heat and noise in there".

Our sandblasting was completed on the fourth day and we moved back aboard again several days later, after the clean-up had been completed. We concluded that, in spite of the oppressive heat, the only way to prevent a second coming would be to close the companionway at night. The wide hatch over our bed would have to provide sufficient ventilation, and the big fans would cool us. So far we have been reasonably comfortable, with no more signs of four-pawed visitors. Long may it last!

You can be at ease only with those people to whom you can say any damn fool thing that comes into your head, knowing they will respond in kind, and knowing that any misunderstandings will be thrashed out right now, rather than buried deep and given a chance to fester.

John D MacDonald, *Darker than Amber*

SAILING HOME
Nicola Rodriguez

At 0400 on 22 July 2002 John and I sailed from the Hamble, if not with ocean sailing credentials certainly with high hopes and chutzpah. Eight years (with two years off for babies) and 25,000 miles of cruising came to an end at 0920 on 14 June 2010 as we stepped ashore. The Indian Ocean was for us a no-go zone, the Pacific was too wide with boys aged 4 and 2, and after round-the-clock childcare for too long we were done in.

The last time I wrote for *Flying Fish*, in 2006/2, it was about *Two hurricanes and a Baby*. This has now become two hurricanes, two escapes from hurricanes, and two sons.

A brief resume of 2002–2006. John and I, newly married, sailed from the Hamble to Gibraltar where we joined the Blue Water Rally Antigua. During hurricane season in the Chesapeake 'we' – *Moonshine* our Westerly Corsair and us – survived Hurricane *Isabel*. On our way south we stopped at Conception Island in the Bahamas. Snorkelling was not our only occupation and five months later we flew home for the arrival of baby Jack, leaving *Moonshine* at St David's in Grenada, where she was seriously damaged by Hurricane *Ivan*.

Eight months later, on 7 July 2007, John, Jack and I set off from Ocean Village, Southampton aboard *Seraphim*, a Moody 38, for Gibraltar via the French Canals. One evening, as we stood at the end of the pontoon at Shepherds Marina with toddler Jack waving to the pilots in the planes taxi-ing across the way, John was seriously considering crossing the Atlantic. I told him we were pregnant again. We coast-hopped back to Denia and across to the Balearics, where we left the boat at Alcudia in northeast Mallorca.

A year later, James returned with us to the boat at the age of seven months. The Balearics

Cala de la Colobra, near Soller on the north coast of Mallorca

An impromptu picnic on St Anne's Beach, Martinique in February 2009, with British, American, Dutch, Germans and Norwegians among the party

were our nursery for sailing with young children. From May 2007 until November 2009 these beautiful islands offered stunning anchorages, challenging sailing and good facilities for young children – doctors, playgrounds and supermarkets. During our seasons there Jason and Fiona Harvey with baby Dylan, in *Trenelly*, joined us in Mahon, Menorca. (Like us, Jason and Fiona married and sailed away – we met them in Antigua after our crossing. Like us, *Trenelly* had had to return home, and despite all the challenges, like us they set off again.) *Trenelly*'s engine was disabled, and we assisted them as they sailed into crowded and busy Mahon harbour and onto a buoy. A jolly week or two spent with good friends with so much in common was a tonic. When *Trenelly* headed south to cross the Atlantic we had mixed feelings, but decided another winter in Europe would be best – and what a treat of a winter we had in the Real Club Nautico in Palma de Mallorca, followed by another season in the Balearics.

The decision about whether to sail or ship to the West Indies was obvious when we thought of the children and considered the cost of another winter in Palma de Mallorca. John and I had our Atlantic stripes and felt it was not worth risking our precious cargo. In November 2008 *Seraphim* was shipped by Dockwise from Palma de Mallorca to Martinique, whilst we flew from Southampton to Paris and onwards. (Paris to Martinique is a French internal flight, so comparatively cheap.) Once in the West Indies we received more accurate and immediate information concerning the unstable situation in Venezuela caused by Hugo Chavas's regime. (Not urban legend but direct – the friend of a man who had just returned had been shot.) I had hoped to take the boys to the Angel Falls but times had changed; instead it would be north to the USA. Visas were required. It was while crashing into the ocean easterlies *en route* to Barbados that I lost my inhibitions about potent seasick remedies for children. By the time we tumbled into Port St Charles baby James was floppy and dehydrated, though he popped up again within minutes of sitting on the dock.

Barbados is a gem, but not particularly cruiser-friendly. For boats over 150ft, yes, but under ... not so much. The island was a joy to explore – the Harrison Caves, the Orchid Garden and the Wildlife Reserve where a massive boa constrictor was kept in a cage of elegant ironwork and rabbits dwelt with iguanas in equally ornate cages. But the rolling anchorages off both Charlestown and Bridgetown did ornate things to my sleep. The Douglas family on home-built catamaran *Double Helix*, who had just arrived from the Cape Verdes, joined us as did our buddy boat *Seawalk*, and we continued in on-off company to Antigua. There we all went out on *Double Helix* to watch the start of the first RORC 600 race, including seeing the trimaran *Region Guadaloupe* fly from the grey, cloudy horizon across the start, from which she kept flying to victory. Recently we met the intrepid skipper and one of his crew at the Venice Carnival Party for the Friends of Bursledon Regatta – that is how the world turns for cruisers.

Looking back, I'm not sure how we managed to sail around the Balearics with a baby and a two-year-old, let alone the Caribbean, the Bahamas and the US Eastern Seaboard ... and back. Utter fatigue was countered by sublime beach after sublime beach; dinghy safaris in a mangrove river in Martinique; swimming into the Thunderball Cave on Staniel Cay in the Bahamas; building sandcastles with Jack on his own beach which came and went with the tide in Waderick Wells, also in the Bahamas; standing on deck with the children watching the Space Shuttle *Atlantis* take off; and, after dizzying nausea brought on by a fifth day of Disney, being joyful to see our sons enthralled by a manatee drinking water from the tap on the dock.

Then from Miami to New York there were the hours we spent in twenty children's museums and, second most amazing after the Space Shuttle, the thrill of watching the mist burn off the skyscrapers as we sailed into Manhattan. And of course Jack and James continued their survey, which Jack had started in Spain, of playgrounds specialising in swings and slides. Most of all there was time with the boys – time, our time, our agenda, our freedom. As John said, the best was that we had them twenty-four hours a day, and the worst was that we had them twenty-four hours a day. But that we had that time with them I now realise was worth every exhausted ounce.

Surrounded by the land-lubberly 'book early culture', I have fond memories of a group of friends suggesting, on a Thursday in Marin, Martinique, that on Sunday we meet around the corner in St Anne's for a picnic. Thirty people, northbound and southbound, of five different nationalities and aged from two to over fifty came together for a top picnic. Birthdays and celebrations are a well of good memories, including Jack and James' with Captain Manley, all dressed in pirate regalia, setting forth from Beaufort, North Carolina in search of clues and treasure in Blackbeard's backyard. My mother and I celebrated significant birthdays at the Admiral's Inn in Antigua in 2002. Six years on, a different and new group of friends toasted John's birthday before we headed to the Dockyard for cream teas by Gayle.

James, Jack and Nicola entranced by the iguanas at Allen Cay in the Bahamas

It is the new friendships, formed without the usual agendas and upmanships, made and built up over hundreds of miles, which come to mean so much – fellow travellers with whom you sail, navigate, shop, snorkel, share local knowledge, cocktail and hangover, and to whom you can offer superfluous advice when they swear at their outboard for its refusal to start, again. They help fix the windlass in the hot sun, sort the batteries in the sauna of the aft cabin or just have a lark in a spontaneous dinghy race.

Little can beat the thrill of the *rendezvous* from Camaret to Antigua, or Alcudia to St Lucia. In 2002 the Haynes helped lift our downcast spirits after our engine failed and our crew had jumped ship. A few months later they were in Gibraltar, to surprise us and take our lines. Six years on we wished our new friends, made in Alcudia, fair winds. A few months later, in the small hours, we caught *Seawalk*'s lines on their arrival in St Lucia. The reunion in St Anne's with our Blue Water Rally friends aboard *Odyssey*, whom we had last seen six years previously, was highly emotional. We recalled the routes we had both sailed from the Caribbean to the USA, and south again, and routes since then. The bond formed during the Rally, on the crossing and over the tropical miles, was rekindled regardless of the years between. Another friendship was formed in McDonalds in St Martin. It was not the fries but the wifi with the soft play area where, whilst parents e-mailed like crazy, the kids crazied in air-conditioned safety.

The epic laundry days will never take on a rosy glow, but I do remember the elation of securing five washers in a row in Marin, and again at Nassau in the Bahamas. As John can chart the maintenance, I can chart the laundries – Black Point, Bahamas, with a purpose-built laundry and chandlery which drew Americans new to cruising, lulling them into a false sense of 'soap-curity'; and Punta Cana in eastern Puerto Rico where we were one of three boats in a marina, and the bored *marineros* took my laundry and me by launch to the special laundry block while the boys splashed with the children from *Seawalk* in one of three swimming pools measured by the acre, with their own life guard.

We first met our OCC 'parents', Greta and Gary in *William Barron*, in St Martin in 2003. It was they who sprung us from Simpson Bay, where we had become stuck in maintenance. When our alternator died Gary gave us one of his spares, on condition we 'pass it on', a lesson that became our mantra. Further north, in the USA, our OCC 'home' on Greta and Gary's dock in Norfolk, Virginia was a favourite stop. We shall always be grateful for their kind hospitality and generosity of time and knowledge. During each of our several stays we were delighted by new OCC friends, and particularly by Greta and Gary's neighbours, Frank and Ronnie.

If not a mantra, then an oft-intoned phrase was, 'Just because it's not going to plan doesn't mean it's not going to The Plan'. After Hurricane *Isabel* in 2003 and *Ivan* the following year, we felt when we returned to where hurricanes happen we would be safe. Then in 2009 Hurricane *Bill* – the second hurricane of the year – stomped north to New York. *Seraphim* motored hard for the hills, the Catskills, 100 miles up the Hudson River. They were an unexpected surprise, one of scores which we encountered one way or another. Most yachts push through Hell Gate to Long Island, Mystic Seaport, Rhode Island and even Maine, missing this intriguing river journey. Breathtaking sunsets and sunrises, ospreys, pelicans diving, snorkelling through shining fish, thinking 'oooh' as a barracuda swam under the dinghy all became commonplace but never ordinary. I don't think we ever became too spoilt to appreciate our extraordinary surroundings.

A helicopter checks us out on the Potomac near Washington DC

Talking about the islands to folks back home can lead to glazed eyes, but once back with cruising people a minute's conversation covers the Caribbean or Pacific. A particularly special friendship was made with Peter and vKatharine Ingram at the OCC Dinner in spring 2005. They were new parents too. They were picking up (more) prizes after their extraordinary voyage in *Kokiri* from New Zealand to the Solomon Islands, Micronesia, the Philippines, Japan, the Aleutian Islands, Alaska and Vancouver, from where *Kokiri* was trucked to the East Coast. On their return to Canada with baby Robert they crossed the Atlantic to Spain.

In the frenzy of a home visit we made time to meet up with Peter and Katharine. One cynical friend quipped that we 'held court' at my mother's house with serried ranks of visitors coming and going. I sometimes compared our experiences with other cruisers who also ducked and dived through the delights and resentments of relations and friends – coffee, then lunch, then tea, then supper ... and if one meeting slipped the whole day unravelled. An attempt to come home in quasi-secret (when I was having early pregnancy tests) fell apart when John met his surprised best man in the supermarket.

During our second visit to the Caribbean we discovered heavenly new places as well as returning to our favourite anchorages in Martinique, the Saints and Antigua – Freeman's Bay and Five Islands, though we did not have time for Green Island. First time around we loved Big Sand Cay in the Turks and Caicos, on the second we

Seraphim sails past the Statue of Liberty in July 2009

Stairway to heaven – looking across the Gulf Stream from the beach on Bimini North Island in the Bahamas

discovered Plana Cay. Of course from the West Indies to the BVIs to the Bahamas superlatives are relative – sublime, exquisite, stunning, beautiful. Conception Islands was again a stop, but John kept out of my way.

Whenever John and I saw a carving, painting or glassware we particularly loved we would buy it, calling it 'bounty'. Several times it was too expensive, but now at home I am so pleased we overspent here and there. The prints by Willard Bond we bought at the Annapolis Boat Show are part of our life and far more than decorations on our wall, as are the Heron paintings of swans, parrots and dolphins transforming into various boats. The vibrant splashes and sweeps depicting yachts in full sail which I found in the back of a shop in Dominica take me back to our tour of the Trafalgar Falls and driving with Seacat on his extraordinary tour of 'his' island. And that in turn takes me to the magnificent day sail from Roseau to Prince Rupert Bay, where the children were intrigued by a shop which sold eggs in a plastic bag.

Of all the possessions acquired along the way, Jack's log created from the Balearics through to the Caribbean and USA and back is the most treasured. It contains stories from a child's viewpoint of ice creams, the Space Shuttle, play-dates on catamarans, rides on blow-up bananas pulled behind a dinghy, the fire engine at a show in St Martin hosing down the children, dinghy races home, the train across Mallorca, the train from Florida to New York, helicopters flying over the boat while anchored in the Washington Channel in the Potomac, meeting Buzz Aldrin (who was grumpy) at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, James being stung by a bee and the run across the car park to the hospital in Belhaven, North Carolina, Jack slicing his head open beside a swimming pool (fortunately the pool belonged to a top US paediatrician), swimming on the umpteenth floor of an apartment block overlooking Las Olas in downtown Fort Lauderdale, and dancing around the edge of a pirate party on Grand Bahama put on for a corporate shindig.

John (right) with Jonnie and Kate Harrison, who bought one of the first boats from his brokerage, John Rodriguez Yachts. We first met them in Marin as they were on their way from Newcastle upon Tyne to Australia

Of our hundreds of photographs we display *Seraphim* sailing past the Statue of Liberty; the view from the beach on Bimini North Island looking out across to the Gulf Stream through five shades of blue; our winter 'home' on the New River in Fort Lauderdale, and the Lacaya Beach, Grand Bahama. These photographs remind us of who we were, those people who sailed through high and low waters, and not to let those people become strangers. Framed pictures of our life of freedom remind us that it will not be too long before we step back through the frame into the cruising life.

Seawalk and *Seraphim* sailed together for many hundreds of miles and experiences from St Lucia to Barbados, then north from Martinique to Norfolk, Virginia, and thereafter on and off from Washington DC south again to Miami. We made our final farewells in West Palm Beach, but then changes in shipping arrangements meant our boats were on the same transport ship, a fitting end to a relationship started in Alcudia two years earlier.

As *Seraphim* was lifted off the rusty deck into Southampton Water, John negotiated the final details of our new home, a 17th century thatched cottage. After living on a boat the cottage seemed just about big enough – it is now referred to as the dolls' house. For some, returning home is about building a new home and gardening. For us the first year of transition has been a stretch, we have been literally seasick – sick for the sea – finding the change from living aboard to living ashore profoundly difficult. Walks with wide open horizons and heart-melty experiences with the children at school have eased us in, but we feel the loss of freedom keenly.

John and I had not explored the Solent extensively before we left. The first year back we re-learned tides and Solent protocol. Initially we did not grasp the delights of sailing to the Isle of Wight and back – we were used to sailing across the Gulf Stream to explore the Bahamas, or island-hopping from St Lucia to Bequia. Now we are learning the Solent ropes and being charmed by homeland horizons.

Even so, the need to 'go down to the sea again' aches. We, like so many OCC members, have lived the dream and know it is still there, over the horizon. It makes us restless. When feeling buried alive by the school run I count 'one year, ten months'

Sunset and Seawalk, our buddy boat for many hundreds of miles

until the hope-stimulated date we sail away, again. I'm not seeing our previous eight years through rose-tinted glasses, I remember how taxing and gruelling it was, but I still think it is a life better lived.

During our time away I wrote articles for various sailing magazines in the UK and US. My first article about our wedding list at a chandlery was published by Paul Gelder in *Yachting Monthly*. Miles Kendall, then Deputy Editor titled it, 'For Wetter or Worse'. Within a month of our arrival home Miles, now an editor for Wiley Nautical, had commissioned me to write a how-to SAIL AWAY book. As well as a huge amount of work, it was a catharsis or at least a panacea. I wrote the last chapter, 'Sailing Home', first, and wept over my keyboard. In addition to using previous articles, with the permission of the authors I have quoted from contributors to *Flying Fish*. 'From the Galley of ...' recipes such as Mor Tetley's Boat Cake, Lisa Bore's Cornbread, Misty McIntosh's Slapdash Chicken and Jo Wallace's Chocolate Mousse provide delicious recipes with stories of sailing. Stuart Ingram, Rosemary Smart-Alecio and Fay Garey were amongst Pacific veterans whose experiences I included – I was fortunate the book benefited from such expertise.

SAIL AWAY: Escape the Rat Race and Live the Dream, by Nicola Rodriguez, has just been published by Wiley Nautical – see page 101.

EVERYONE GETS A BASHING IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

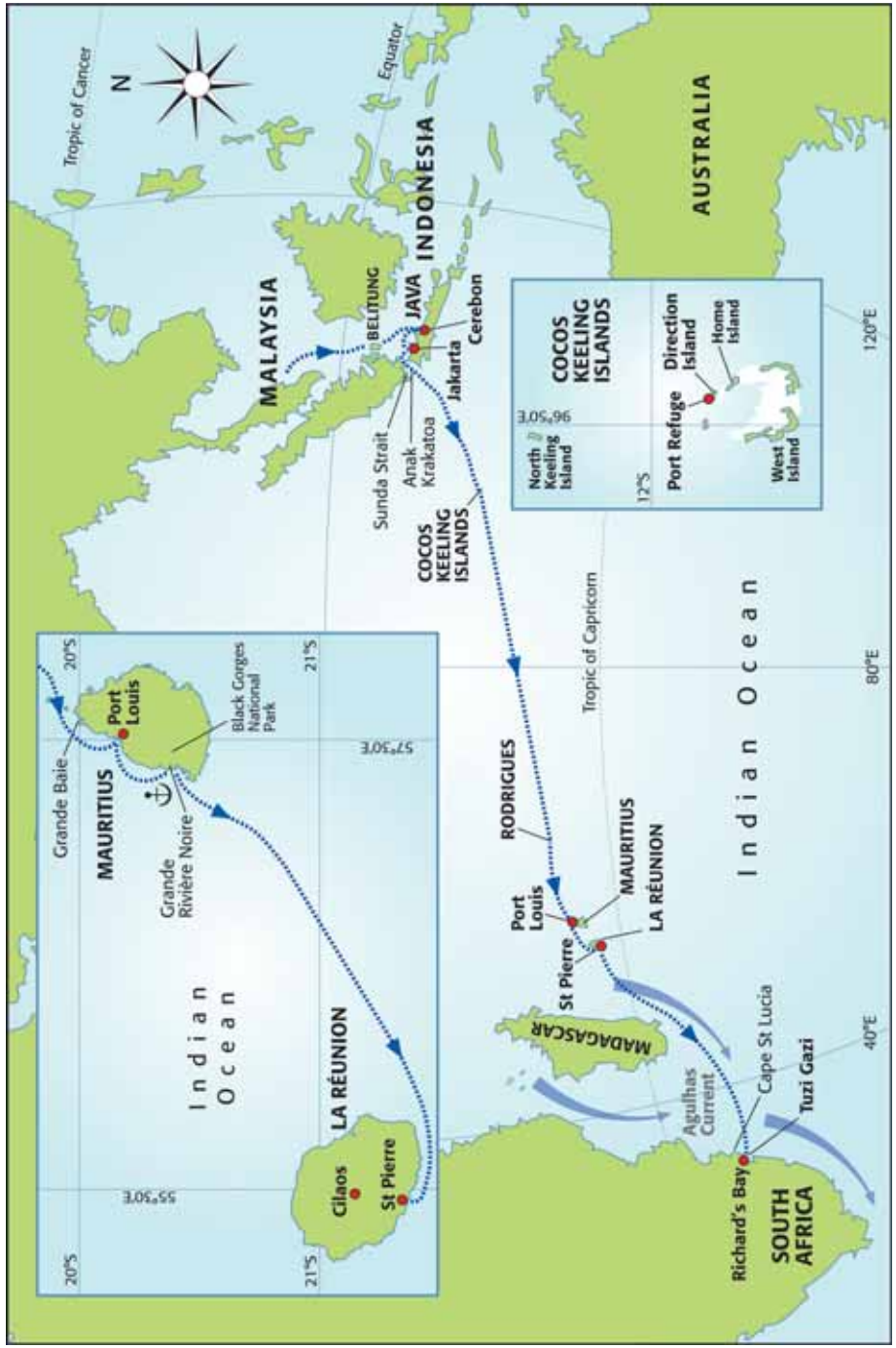
Linda Lane Thornton

(*Linda, Andy, and their Nicholson 35* Coromandel Quest *last appeared in* Flying Fish 2010/1, *when Linda wrote about their passage from Equador to New Zealand. By 2011 it was time to continue north and west...*)

Having motor-sailed down from Malaysia and through Indonesia, stopping at Belitung, Cirebon and Pantai Mutiara (Jakarta) on the way, we spent our last night in Indonesia anchored south of Anak Krakatoa – the volcano which blew up so spectacularly in 1883 that it gave rise to brilliant sunsets all over the world for the next three years. My ambition was to anchor on the island itself and walk up to the crater, but there was a lot of ash in the air, making eyes sore, so we elected to go to the south anchorage instead. The chart indicated that we would be in 30m, so it was an agreeable surprise when we found a spot with 5m and anchored there in good holding.

I cooked supper, we had our sundowners, and I was washing up when a spectacular bang, followed by a shout from Andy, sent me up on the deck in time to see a huge plume of ash and smoke shooting about 1500m into the air from Anak Krakatoa. For the next three hours it continued to blow out ash and smoke

In the marina at Pantai Mutiara, Jakarta



Watching Anak Krakatoa

– we were glad that we were not anchored in the lee of the island. By about 2200, though, it had quietened down again and we went to bed. The next morning was a real treat in terms of listening to a dawn chorus with no sound other than the shushing of the wavelets on the beach. However, we were both not a little alarmed to see bubbles rising from the water all around *Coromandel*, so we upped anchor as fast as we could and got away, noting only how shiny the anchor chain appeared to be!

After a quick burst of wind just south of the anchorage we were back to our usual Indonesian motoring, slipping out through the Sunda Strait in a flat calm, ferries occasionally appearing out of the murk. Then a nice little breeze sprang up and we sailed out past Java Head, meeting little except a thick raft of debris, mostly plastic bags, bottles and bits of rope. Andy caught a small tuna, so we had it fried in garlic butter for lunch.

It took just over four days to reach Cocos Keeling – 635 miles in 104 hours – in winds of up to 27 knots, though mostly in the 18–22 knot bracket. We arrived at Port Refuge just before sunset, so elected to anchor there for the night rather than negotiate the reef into the main yachtie anchorage south of Direction Island. After a quiet night we went over the reef and, as the water was gloriously clear, were able to find a nice big patch of sand in which to anchor, avoiding the occasional areas of coral rock. There were only two other yachts there, Reinhart and Marlene from Munich in *Adio* and Marc from France in *Aurore*.

The settlement at Home Island, Cocos Keeling

Helping Marc put up Aurore's sign on Direction Island

We stayed in Cocos Keeling for only nine days, finding it rather expensive – AUS $10 per day for anchoring. I love sailing, but I don't really like being *in* the water, no matter how clear it is, so Andy was left to snorkel on his own. I sometimes feel 'seen one fish, seen 'em all' – plants and trees are much more to my liking. So we left in a fresh southerly and made

Coromandel in Ireland in 2007. Photo Rob Thornton

good time towards Rodrigues. The wind continued to freshen and the weather became somewhat miserable. We hadn't experienced drizzle for a very long time, but the skies were overcast and a dull grey, and the seas confused with swells from the east, southeast and southwest.

The upside of the winds, which seldom dropped below 20 knots, was that we made a very fast passage indeed, one 24-hour period seeing us log 181 miles, which we had never managed before, while runs of 150 became commonplace. For 48 hours the weather was truly miserable, seas crashing against the hull and breaking into the cockpit, *Coromandel* heeled to starboard, and me having to get used to cooking at an angle again. Interestingly, we seemed to have up to a knot of current with us for two days and then against us for two days all the way across, so the sea state was a bit rougher when they were in opposition. Another surprising thing was the lack of thunder and lightning in the rain squalls. I had become almost used to these after spending the previous season motor-sailing between Indonesia and Thailand.

After a while, however, the nasty seas died down, the wind dropped to a pleasant 17–20 knots ("We could fly the spinnaker in this," said Andy. "No we couldn't," I replied, being a spoilsport), and things became much calmer, although our daily runs were still in excess of 150 miles. Just short of Rodrigues, however, the wind piped up again, and the thought of trying to negotiate the reef in 30 knots of wind was not attractive, nor was heaving to for the night, so we eased the sheets a little and headed for Mauritius, some 300 miles to the southwest.

We arrived off Port Louis at 0400 and called the harbour for permission to enter. "No,

A telephone pole in Mauritius, cunningly disguised as a palm tree!

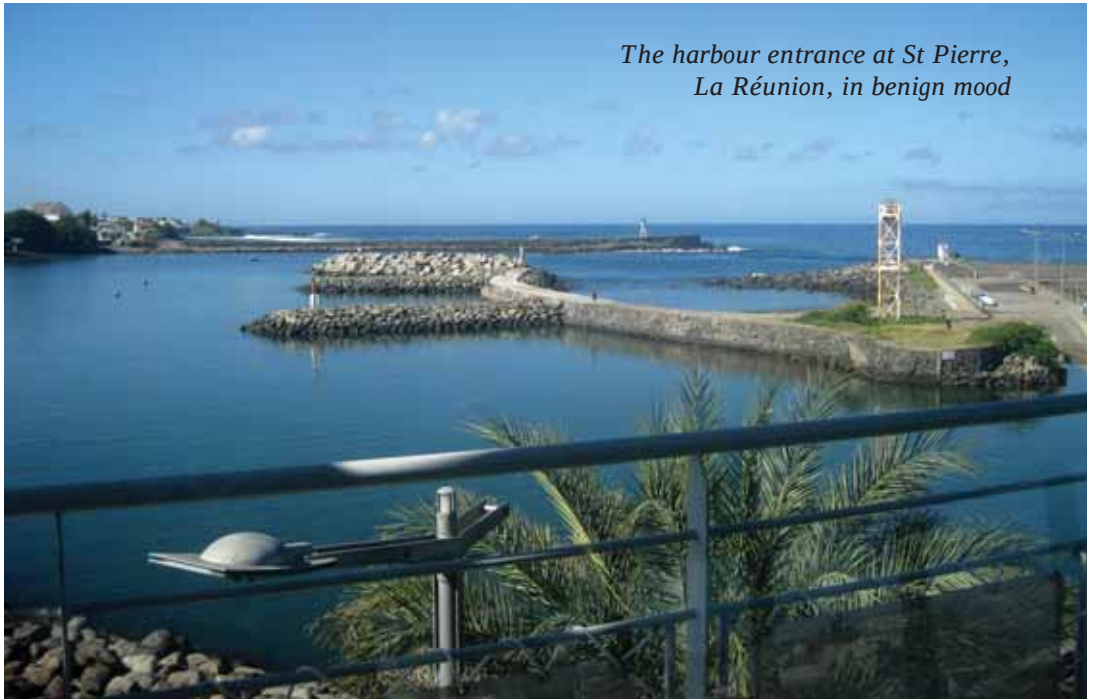
yachts can come in only during daylight hours," a voice answered, "Come back at 0630!". So we reefed down to a scrap of genoa, handed the main, and spent an hour drifting back northwards, before tacking and drifting back south again, in the meantime watching the cruise ship *Sun Princess* make her way slowly into the port. We'd logged 2392 miles in 15 days, giving us an average of 6·7 knots for the passage – rather better than the 3·6 knots we'd made across the Pacific.

Entry to Port Louis itself was relatively easy once the correct buoys had been identified. We motored to the Customs Wharf, tying up alongside with the help of a passing tourist, press-ganged into taking our breast-rope whilst I climbed up onto the wall, a foot above my head, in a rather undignified scramble. We were visited first by the Quarantine man who gave us *pratique*, then went into the office adjacent to the wharf where we were seen by the Port Authority chappie and later by Immigration. The Coastguard visited the boat, and then we were free to motor over to the Caudan Basin. There were no spaces available along the walls, but a local man called us over and we tied up alongside a steel boat whose owners were in Italy. They returned a couple of days later and told us in no uncertain terms to move – NOW! – as they never allowed anyone to raft alongside. So we moved, but declined to tell them that the previous week numerous boats had come and gone and rafted off their yacht.

Port Louis is a very pretty little town indeed, nestled in a valley and protected from the east winds by a pinnacled ridge which reminded me of Moorea and which gave it a pleasantly rural feeling. Its ambience is undeniably European – the official language is English, but the *lingua franca* is French and most people are bilingual. Pavement cafés line the waterfront, the harbour is clean and neat, the mood cheerful and we were relieved to find alcohol to be much cheaper than at the duty free bottle store in Cocos Keeling. The local population is a mixture of Indian and African, descendants of firstly slaves and then indentured servants brought in to work in the sugar plantations on which Mauritius's economy was based. The day after our arrival we took a walk up through the town to Signal Mountain, which overlooks Port Louis from the south. It was a gentle stroll up a metalled road to a viewpoint from which we could see the entire town, the racecourse, the harbour, the citadel, the multi-storey buildings of the city centre, and the little bungalows of the suburbs. It was good to stretch our legs, as the last really good walk we'd had was to the Big Buddha in Phuket the previous December.

We passed six glorious weeks in Mauritius, during which we met up again with Ruth and Angus from *Do It* whom we had last seen in Thailand, and who had reached Mauritius by way of the Andaman Islands, Sri Lanka and the Chagos Archipelago. Although most visiting yachts seemed to head for Grande Baie in the north of the island, we spent most of our time at anchor in Grande Rivière Noire on the southwest coast, because it is within easy walking distance of the Black Gorges National Park. The Le Morne Anglers' Club was most welcoming and allowed us to use its pontoon, showers, water and bar.

Although only 145 miles, the passage from Port Louis, Mauritius to St Pierre, La Réunion was abysmal! Despite the promising forecast, we found seas commensurate



The harbour entrance at St Pierre, La Réunion, in benign mood

with a 20–25 knot wind but only 6 knots apparent from dead astern, so we motored nearly all the way to stop the sails from banging, got rained on (rain? RAIN!), found squeaks that we'd not heard for a long time, and were generally quite relieved when La Réunion came into view, especially as the wind picked up and we had a beam reach all the way round the south coast and up towards St Pierre. Despite the drenching rain, we could see deep ravines, wooded valleys, neat little villages, and the results of the lava flows from the Piton de la Fournaise volcano.

We tried calling the Port Captain in St Pierre, but his VHF was evidently on the blink – we could hear static as he tried to call us back but nothing else. The next thing we knew was that a small sports fishing boat came up and indicated that we should follow him in. This wasn't really necessary, as the leading lines were quite straightforward and we had received guidance from Sue and Brian on *Sea Rose* and a chartlet from *Papillon* before we left Port Louis. Even so, the entrance was interesting. With a rock-strewn pier with a lighthouse on the end to starboard and a reef to port, over which surfer-carrying curlers were crashing, it was almost as great a leap of faith as the entrance to Eyemouth in southeast Scotland. However, there were very clear leading lines to follow in through the gap in the surf, and in no time at all we were tucked into a berth between two French liveaboards, the electricity was plugged in, the water hose was on, and we were suddenly back in France.

I adored St Pierre, and whilst in La Réunion we did a lot of hill walking: Piton de la Fournaise, Piton des Neiges (the highest point in the Indian Ocean), Bélouve, the Cirques de Cilaos, Mafate and Salazie. The scenery is spectacular, the range of forest types fascinating, and the walks range from short, simple strolls to rather more energetic climbs. I collected far more geological specimens than I could possibly keep on board (given my predilection for collecting things generally), but Piton de la Fournaise produced some

Linda with the Piton des Neiges ridge in the background

Moonset over Piton des Neiges

marvellous examples of lava, pumice and peridotite which just had to be taken back to *Coromandel* for a closer look. We found, too, that we could get to Cilaos very easily by bus, so we spent several days taking walks there before returning to *Coromandel* in the evening. Another seven weeks passed in a most agreeable fashion.

The passage to Richard's Bay in South Africa was the one we had been most concerned about, given the reputation of the Agulhas Current when affected by a southwesterly wind. We studied the GRIB files and other passage weather information to see if we could find a pattern which would give us fair winds for the whole of the passage, and found very useful information on the currents between La Réunion and South Africa

Andy in front of one of the glorious views in the Cirques de Cilaos

on www.oscar.noaa.gov. Based on this we plotted a course about 50 miles closer to Madagascar than our friends on *Adio* had chosen. Eventually we saw what looked like a likely weather window, only to be told that the harbour would be closed on the following day due to a large swell from the south breaking in the entrance – *la houle australe*.

We had encountered this phenomenon not long after our arrival in St Pierre. Basically it is the swell from a Southern Ocean storm which, although quite innocuous out at sea, wreaks havoc as it meets the reefs around the island. Indeed it had been awe-inspiring, with 10m swells hitting the reef and curling over the harbour wall. Along with other liveaboards, we had been advised to leave the boat and accommodation had been arranged for us in a local school. By that time, the water on one side of the pontoon was at least a metre higher than the water on the other side, and the subsequent swash and backwash meant that anyone falling in would have problems. I estimated that the water running under the footbridge to the pontoon was going at about 10 knots. So we spent the night on camp beds in the school, being plied with coffee, ravioli and salad. From the building, which was about 500m from the harbour, we could hear the swells crashing on the reef. However, returning to *Coromandel* next morning we found no damage other than a couple of squashed fenders.

So we left St Pierre on 4 September. Departure was interesting, as at 0930 it was still flat calm so we thought we'd wait until the afternoon. Suddenly, at 1000, a wind sprang up so we decided to leave. It was lovely – blue sky, a gentle 10 knots of wind from the southeast. Up with full main and genoa – for all of 15 minutes, when the gentle 10 knots suddenly became a rather more brisk 25 knots, so we reefed both main and

Mending the spinnaker

St Pierre entrance during 'la houle australe'

genoa. We carried that wind for about 24 hours before it went light, and then made good time towards our waypoint off the southeast corner of Madagascar. We were lucky to have light winds as we came round the south of the island – although we were in deep water the seas were quite confused, and it was easy to see how, in stronger winds, it could get very lumpy indeed. I couldn't help thinking of the catamaran that was dismasted and sank in these waters in July. We were lucky that the only damage we experienced was the breaking of the mainsheet ring on the boom – quickly fixed with a webbing strap – and a tear in the spinnaker, quickly mended by me!

The last 36 hours made me feel like a cat in a washing machine! The wind started in the east, then went round to the northeast and finally north, increasing to a steady force 6 (21–26 knots) with the odd force 7 gust. As it was just aft of the beam it actually wasn't too bad, but we took the occasional wave into the cockpit, where it seemed both hatches had decided to leak. From 0600 one morning to 0600 the next we logged 182 miles on the GPS – with the 8 or so knots we were doing through the water, plus up to 3 knots of favourable current, we often had up to 11·5 knots on the GPS – very exciting.

A forecast received by satellite phone from my brother David indicated that the wind would increase to 30 knots, so it was a relief when we picked up the light on Cape St Lucia, which allowed us to ease sheets a little and head more downwind. We'd been concerned that the Agulhas Current might take us south, so had shaped a course leaving Richard's Bay to leeward, but although we experienced some southerly component in the current most of it was onshore.

At 0800 on 13 September – exactly ten days since we'd slipped the pontoon in St Pierre – we tied up in Tuzi Gazi for Immigration and Customs clearance, both of which were completed by the end of the day. Both young men were charming. After spending the night at Tuzi Gazi we went round to the Zululand Yacht Club, and plan to stay here until it's time to move on to Durban and all points southwest. We'd covered 1446 miles in 240 hours, an average of 6 knots. Welcome to the Rainbow Nation.

OBITUARIES & APPRECIATIONS

Jack Clark, Founder Member

A Founder Member of the OCC, Jack qualified during an eventful 2450 mile passage from Cowes to New York via Madeira and Bermuda in 1948, aboard the 40ft *Green Lion*. It was a successful trip, despite losing the mast in a hurricane some 150 miles from the final destination, repairs to which had to be made by Jack as the lightest member of the crew. Earlier, *Green Lion* ran aground on a reef off Bermuda requiring the assistance of a Navy patrol boat, and at one point Jack disarmed one of the crew who, armed with a knife, was intent on attacking a fellow crew member.

Jack was born in Lancashire on 5 April 1921, but a few years later the family moved to the Isle of Wight, where his twin brothers Bob and Wallace later became well-known boat builders with a yard in East Cowes. The whole family was very much involved with the local sailing fraternity, as well as making international contacts, and in later years trips to the Island for Cowes Week (as well as to London for the Boat Show) were much anticipated treats for Jack's three daughters.

Founder Member Jack Clark

Jack's wartime experiences as a rear gunner in the Royal Air Force, including missions involving the dropping of supplies to the Special Operations Executive, gave him enormous respect for those who risked their lives in the resistance movements. Amongst the crew of the *Green Lion* were Hank Rynders who, as the Colonel commanding the sabotage section of the Dutch resistance, had rescued another crew member, Willy Van Beek, from a Gestapo prison. A third member was Sexta Hedemah, who had smuggled countless children out of Holland when their parents were taken to German concentration camps. Also on board was Barry Blumberg, an American who was to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1976. At least two of the crew subsequently appeared with Jack on a TV gameshow called *Tell the Truth*. Each of them had to convince the panel that they were the real Jack Clark!

On Jack's return to England in 1949 he was proud to be selected to crew on the International Dragon class yacht *Bluebottle*, representing Great Britain in the championships being held in Denmark. *Bluebottle* had been presented to HM the Queen and HRH Prince Philip as a wedding gift by the Island Sailing Club of Cowes, and was on display at Cowes Week 2011.

As with many of his generation, the war had a lasting impact on Jack. His values were very much shaped by his experiences and the bravery of those he met. Many of these men and women became life-long friends. After the war he was invited to join the newly reformed 21 SAS (Artists Rifles) regiment and was able to further his passion for parachuting. In the early 1950s he was again selected to represent Great Britain – this time at the World Parachuting Championships in Paris. This led to a short-lived career as a stuntman!

Jack died on 26 March 2011, at the age of 89. He was a much-loved family man who enjoyed life to the full. He was married to Joan for 55 years until her death in 2008 and will be sadly missed by his two surviving daughters Daryl and Heather and six grandchildren. His funeral was held on what would have been his 90th birthday and was a memorable celebration of his action-packed life.

Daryl Godfrey, née Clark

Walter Trent Flower, Founder Member

Walter Trent Flower of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, passed away on 22 March 2011 at the age of 87. Born in Passaic, New Jersey, he was a son of the late Walter Crawford and Elizabeth (Trent) Flower.

Walter Flower studied at Amherst College, but before graduation enlisted in the US Army and served in the 82nd Airborne Division, parachuting into France and Holland. He was decorated with high honours. After the war he returned to Amherst to complete his education, receiving a BA in 1949. Following graduation he then joined the family Electrotype business which had been founded in 1888 by his grandfather, Edwin Flower, and continued by his father.

An avid sailor, Walter was also a member of the New York Yacht Club, the Cruising Club of America, the Royal Ocean Racing Club, the Storm Trysail Club and the Off Soundings Club. He competed in many ocean races, both transatlantic and in Europe and South America, several of which set course records at the time. His qualifying passage for the OCC was an unusual one – Buenos Aires, Argentina to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – completed in 1953 aboard the 46ft *White Mist*.

Walter's ventures brought him to Lunenburg, and in the 1960s and l970s he and his children spent summers on Eastern Points Island. After retirement he became a full-time

resident and Canadian citizen, and lived year round in Stonehurst. Taking an active interest in the Town of Lunenburg, Walter was a member of the Lunenburg Heritage Society, Lunenburg Art Gallery and the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic.

Friends and family will remember Walter for his enduring strength and courage, his love of people and his enthusiasm life. He will be missed by all those who knew him. Walter is survived by Ruth, his wife of thirty years, three children and four grandchildren.

William T Flower

Dr John Stewart, Port Officer Medway, Kent, UK

John Owen Stewart was born in Kenya in April 1939, the middle of three children. In 1950 the family moved to Broadstairs, southeast of London, where he followed his elder brother Bill to Sir Roger Mamwood's School at Sandwich, gaining straight As in most subjects and becoming a star rugby player for the school. He was a keen member of the Sea Scouts and joined the Combined Cadet Force with the intention of a career in the Royal Navy, but failed due to bad eyesight. Instead he opted for medicine, studying at University College Hospital and then Middlesex Hospital where he specialised in pathology.

John spent his weekends racing at Burnham on Crouch, staying on an old barge owned by the Middlesex Hospital Sailing Club. In the mid 1960s he competed in the East Anglian Offshore Racing Association Championship aboard *Lora*, and soon established himself as a gifted racer within the EAORA and the Royal Ocean Racing Club.

After becoming Head of Pathology at Colchester Hospital early in the 1970s John moved to West Mersea, competing both with and against the then Prime Minister Ted Heath during the *Morning Cloud* era. Though based outside London he worked on forensic cases for both the Home and Foreign Offices including the infamous umbrella assassination of Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov in September 1978. He retired from the NHS in 1997 aged 58 and moved to Chatham in Kent, where he was appointed Port Officer for the Medway in 2003.

John joined the OCC in 1982, qualifying with an 1800 mile passage from Cabedelo, Brazil to Barbados in 1979 aboard the Oyster 39 *Morningtown*. He also made two transatlantic passages, competed in the Round Britain and Ireland Race, explored the Baltic as far as St Petersburg, sailed from Tromsø in Norway to Archangel on the north coast of Russia, circumnavigated Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and cruised the Caribbean and the east coast of South America. He also found time to explore the French canal system, and fitted in regular local sailing when voyages did not take him further afield.

John was a unique character who was totally unaffected by materialism or vanity and touched the lives of many people. He was a much-loved uncle to Nick, Penny and Trisha, and unwittingly navigated scores of directionless souls, including the writer, to find themselves and to live their lives to the full – as he did his.

Nick Stewart

Arthur Fenimore French Snyder

Arthur Fenimore French Snyder of Westwood, Massachusetts, formerly of Boston, one of America's leading venture bankers, died on 30 December 2010 aged 92. Among the first to recognise the potential of venture capital, Arthur Snyder played a central role in developing Boston's '128 miracle', backing entrepreneurs who created thousands of jobs in New England and throughout the United States.

From his early childhood Arthur had a great love of and respect for the sea. He and his twin brother Paul built their first boat when they were 12, by bending two boards together and adding a transom. With a sail fashioned from bed sheets stitched by their mother, they tacked their way up and down the New Jersey intracoastal waterway even though it 'leaked liked hell'. The following year their mother bought them an old Barnegat Bay sneakbox (a small dinghy which can be sailed, rowed, poled or sculled) for $35. After graduating from Swarthmore College, Arthur joined the US Navy in August 1940 'to do my part to help defeat Hitler and all he stood for'.

Arthur lived in and sailed from Marblehead with his beloved wife Jean. Ted Hood was his neighbour, and between them a friendship of 40 years was spliced. They loved talking 'the business of boats'. Art had the privilege of owning Ted's initial Hood 37 cruising yawl, in which the Snyder family joined the Eastern Yacht Club fleet for many family cruises. He also served with Ted on his board for many years.

A Cheoy Lee, Herreshoff, C&C, Bristol and other yachts formed part of Art's ever-changing fleet, but it was many years before he finally built a vessel to match his love of sail. In 1974 he commissioned the Concordia Boatyard in South Dartmouth, Mass, to build a replica of an 1815 revenue cutter – a 60ft LOA, 44ft LOD, gaff-rigged topsail schooner. Hearkening to his Philadelphia Quaker roots, Art christened her the *Welcome* after the ship on which William Penn arrived in Philadelphia. Art painstakingly crafted all the wooden dead-eyes, lanyards, belaying pins, blocks and tackles to support the rigging of well over 100 lines. He would sail *Welcome* solo through Woods Hole on

frequent visits to his best friend in Green Pond on Cape Cod. First mate Jean was not pleased when, in his 70s, Art was still climbing the ratlines!

In 1985 Arthur and his daughter Carrie formed the core of a crew which sailed *Welcome* across the Atlantic to Scotland, continuing in stages to France, Spain and Portugal, before returning to the Caribbean and eventually to their home port of South Dartmouth by way of Bermuda. This circumnavigation of the Atlantic was the realisation of a dream for Arthur and for Carrie a lifelong shared memory. The passage from Newfoundland to Tory Island off the north coast of Ireland constituted his qualifying passage for the OCC, which he joined the same year.

Arthur was also a member of the Cruising Club of America, the New York Yacht Club, the New Bedford Yacht Club, the Royal Northern and Clyde, and was a former member of the Eastern Yacht Club. He enjoyed the spirit of sail, respected the sea, and shared a lifelong admiration of the company of true sailors.

Arthur Snyder is survived by his twin brother, as well as three children and four grandchildren. His legacy includes the thriving businesses of entrepreneurs whose vision and character earned his steadfast support and confidence.

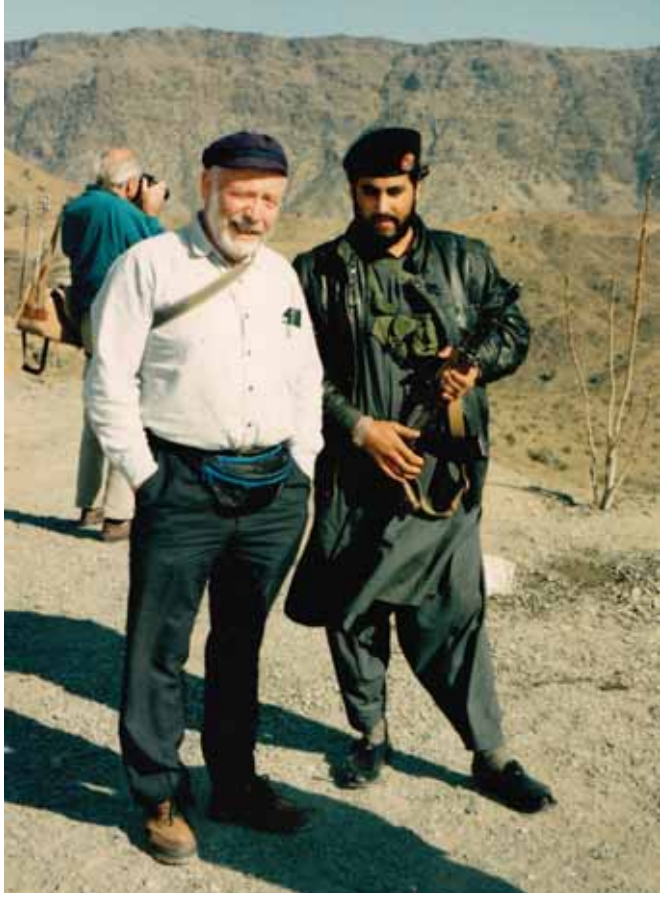
Carolyn Snyder Griffen

Stuart Nairn

Stuart Nairn was born and grew up in Glasgow, and although he lived in Ireland for many years of his working life and throughout his retirement no-one who heard him speak was left in any doubt as to where he came from. His lifelong love of the sea and sailing began in his teenage years when the family would holiday on the Isle of Arran. His first boat, *Marula*, was small and engineless, but he derived great enjoyment from cruising her in the Western Isles. Those of us who sailed with him in later years know that he never really liked or approved of engines in boats, and would only use one if absolutely essential.

A few years after completing National Service in the Royal Navy Stuart moved to London, and during his years working there sailed in a number of famous boats including Max Aitken's *Outlaw* and *Crusade*. It was on *Outlaw* that I first met Stuart, in 1967, when she won the Volunteer Cup night race from the Solent to Alderney. The weather was foul and a number of the crew retired to their bunks, but Stuart was a stalwart survivor and clearly a fine sailing companion in all conditions. The following year his racing on *Outlaw* took him to Bermuda for the Onion Patch series. He also took part in the Round Britain and Ireland Race aboard *Minnetaree,* a 36ft catamaran. In addition to his ocean racing activities in those years he acted as a watchkeeper on the Sail Training Association's *Sir Winston Churchill*.

Stuart was the most generous of people, but he loved using his strong Scottish accent to joke about the Scots' reputation for meanness. On one summer Friday afternoon in the 1960s he and I were planning to leave our respective offices early and catch a train south for a sailing weekend. I suggested he should take a taxi from his office to



Stuart Nairn on the Khyber Pass

mine and we could then travel on together to the station. "I'll contribute a couple of bob", I said. "Make it half-a-crown and you're on", he replied*. On another occasion we were sailing a friend's boat round from Harwich to the Solent, and Stuart had brought along his sextant. As he wedged himself in position and prepared to take a sun sight I realised it had no lanyard. "Careful," I said, "that could go overboard". "Och," he replied, "I'm no' gonna drop this – I paid twelve quid for it!".

In 1971 Stuart joined DeBeers as Pension Fund Company Secretary and with his wife, Janet, moved to Shannon in County Clare, Ireland. In due course two daughters, Aisling and Philippa, arrived to complete the family, and for the next 22 years Stuart balanced work with a broad range of sailing activities. He taught both daughters to sail, and was instrumental in starting a dinghy sailing club on Cullaun Lake, near their home. He owned a succession of boats – *Aurora*, a Pandora 22; *Revelation*, a 23ft Rêve de Mer; a Drascombe Lugger (for the young family!); *Armourique,* a 26ft Kelt, and finally *Maximum,* a Maxi 35. With the family and friends aboard, these boats cruised extensively in Irish, British and French waters. The maiden voyage of *Revelation* was from Cowes to Guernsey and on to Brest, where Stuart bought a sculling oar – so much more reliable than an engine!

During these years Stuart continued his ocean racing activities whenever possible. He joined Denis Doyle's crew aboard his Irish Admiral's Cup yacht *Moonduster*, and also raced on *Assiduous*, a One Ton Cupper owned by Clayton Love. In the fateful 1979 Fastnet Race he was aboard *Tam o' Shanter*, one of the smallest boats in the race, and went overboard (mercifully on a lifeline). He was hauled back aboard by an undertaker

* In Britain's pre-decimal coinage, a 'bob' was slang for a shilling and 'half-a-crown' for 2/6d, or two shillings and a half...

"who said I owed him a fiver and I wasn't going to escape so easily!". Further afield, in the mid-1990s he took part in the South China Sea Race and the Manila Series.

His cruising ventures also took him and Janet to the Caribbean. A return passage from Fort Lauderdale via Bermuda to the Azores in 1994 with OCC member David Nicholson aboard *White Shadow* served to qualify him for OCC membership (for which I was delighted to propose him, albeit not until 2001). In 1995 Stuart and I with two other friends cruised an Endurance 37 from Karachi, Pakistan, via Oman and Aden to Hodeida inYemen.

Stuart was a member of the Royal Cork Yacht Club, and was elected Commodore in 1997. He was also a member of the Irish Cruising Club and the Clyde Cruising Club. In retirement, Stuart and his family lived in Crosshaven, County Cork, where he enjoyed considerable racing success in *Armourique* and *Maximum*, as well as many happy cruising seasons. Stuart died on 11 September 2011, and on 1 October his ashes were scattered at sea from his beloved *Maximum*.

Anthea Cornell

Yves Alfred Gustave Parent

Yves Parent died on 9 July 2011 in La Trinité sur Mer, France after an eight-year battle with cancer. He was a world class sailor and veteran of a Whitbread Round-the-World Race and many singlehanded passages across the north Atlantic. Yves was also a noted marine artist, whose works hang in many galleries on the East Coast of the US as well as in France. He was a member of the American Society of Marine Artists and may well be the only marine artist ever to have sketched Cape Horn on location.

Yves Parent joined the OCC in 1998, citing a 1978 passage from St Malo in Brittany to Guadeloupe in the French West Indies aboard his She 36 *Shere Khan II*, a yacht which he owned for many years.

Al Boersma

Roger Francis Neal

Roger died on 26 August 2011 at the age of 68. He joined the OCC in 1991 following a passage from the Isles of Scilly to the Azores aboard his 32ft Tahitian ketch *Irena*. A modest, private man, Roger continued to cruise and live aboard until shortly before his death.

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