

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Following on from Humphrey Barton's account of the Club's Inaugural Meeting on 27th January 1954, which featured in *Flying Fish* 2017/2, we plan to republish a selection of pieces from early issues of our journal.

Although the name *Flying Fish* was not introduced until 1970, the first *Journal of the Ocean Cruising Club* to resemble our current publication was distributed to members in 1964, at a time when the annual subscription was either £1 or \$3, and a silk tie and a 24 inch burgee both cost 22/6d or \$3.40, plus 2/6d or 40c if airmail postage was requested. (22/6d = £1.12½p, 2/6d = 12½p)

It seemed logical to reproduce the account below from 54 years ago in as near facsimile as possible, hence the slightly different typeface and the different editing conventions (eg. indented paragraphs, F.3 rather than force 3, etc), though why the side-headings are sometimes given as latitude and longitude, and sometimes as longitude and latitude, I have no idea!

This extract comes from the very first proto-*Fish*. Amazingly, the 'Jillie' referred to in the entries for 13th and 22nd November is none other than Jill Baty, who joined a few years later citing this passage as her qualifying voyage. She has remained a member ever since.

Rose Rambler is a 35ft bermudan cutter, the first of the Rambler Class designed by the Laurent Giles Partnership. She was built by Porter & Haylett Ltd, of Wroxham, Norfolk in 1963, so was very new at the time of this voyage, and is still in commission on England's east coast.

EXTRACTS FROM HUMPHREY BARTON'S LETTERS DURING HIS 1963 VOYAGE FROM THE CANARIES TO GRENADA IN "ROSE RAMBLER"

11th November

We sailed from Santa Cruz, Tenerife, on November 6th, in company with *Primavera* and are now five days out. We have had no luck at all with the winds until today, when, at long last, we found the famous Trade Wind. By then we had covered 600 miles and run the engine for 85 hours. So we have had 475 miles of motoring and 125 miles sailing. I feel very sorry for *Primavera* as her cruising range is less than 300 miles. Ours is about 600 I think. Now we have the big Genoa hauled out on the spinnaker pole to starboard and are doing a steady six knots straight down wind. There is a big, long Atlantic swell 10-12 ft. high coming in on the starboard beam and we roll gently through an arc of 30 degrees.

We had fearful trouble at Santa Cruz getting fuel and water. The formalities were simply frightful and if it had not been for the very nice Spanish captain of a 600 ton ship we would have been in a jam. He spoke quite good English and organised everything and finally invited both yachts to lie alongside his ship. He even filled our water tanks for us. He carried 70 tons (?) so 70 gallons meant nothing to him. We had him and his wife, a dynamic woman, on board for drinks and to dine on our last night.



Humphrey Barton's Rose Rambler

They loved *Rose* and he would dearly have loved to have made this voyage. He gave us a splendid send off. A flag signal and three longs and three shorts on his siren. What a nice chap!

13th November. Long. 28° 4' W. Lat. 21° 15' N.

I am back in the tropics once more. It is cooking hot too, 84°F. below decks now at 16.00. The trade wind has not exceeded F.3 and has been between N.E. and S.E. for the last two days, but we are making very fair progress. Log now reads 826 so we have averaged 115 for seven days. This morning we hauled out the Genoa on the pole to starboard and rove the guy through another block half-way along the tiller. At the end of the tiller on the lee side I secured some

shock cord. After a little experimenting *Rose* sailed herself straight down wind. What happens is this. When she gets by the lee and the Genoa starts to fall in and the load decreases on the guy, the shock cord then pulls the tiller a little to port and the Genoa again starts drawing and pulls the tiller over to starboard. It seems to work very well and I am delighted with it and wish I had thought of it before. The tension on the shock cord has, of course, to be adjusted to the strength of wind. We were all able to have lunch below together – a splendid omelette with three veg. We are using the gross of eggs that I coated with Oteg months ago. This morning Jillie made some jolly good bread in the frying pan! I am busy teaching Robert navigation.

22nd November. Lat. 15° 30' N. Long. 45° 20' W.

Great excitement yesterday. At 10.45 I sighted a white sail on the starboard bow. We started the engine and went in pursuit but seemed to gain little. At 12.20 the other yacht was gaining on us and it seemed hopeless so I stopped the engine. Much disappointment. At 14.50 we seemed to have gained on the yacht ahead so I re-started the engine. By 16.00 we felt fairly sure it was *Primavera*. By 16.30 we were certain. At 17.00 we were close alongside and shouting to each other. They said they were heaving-to and coming aboard in their rubber dinghy. We said we would swap some paper backs. We handed the Genoa. They had handed theirs and hoisted a small staysail aweather. The two yachts lay abreast about 100 yards apart forging slowly ahead at about 1½ knots. There was an 8 ft. swell from N.W. and a slight sea running over the top of it from S.E. At about 17.15 the blow-up appeared from under the stern

of *Primavera* and to my astonishment the whole crew of four were on board. Progress was slow. The two yachts were going ahead faster than Mike Poke could pull the heavily loaded boat. I started the engine and went half astern (remembering the log line fortunately) and within a minute they were alongside and scrambling aboard. They had brought a bottle of gin with them, their log book and five paper backs. What an incredible meeting! What a wonderful mid-Atlantic cocktail party! We had so much to talk about. What were they short of? If anything. They were running out of onions, baking powder, cigarettes and tobacco. We were able to supply them with all they wanted. They did not leave until it was nearly dark and by arrangement shone a white light when they were all safely aboard and I signalled R back to them. Never before have I heard of two yachts meeting like that in mid-Atlantic and the entire crew of one going aboard the other yacht.

Then came a “night of terror” as an old friend of mine used to say. At 22.40 there was a severe squall of wind and rain and a sudden 45° shift of wind. The masthead light had failed and the pennant was tangled up. Jillie gybed her twice (anyone might have done so in such very difficult conditions), but the topping lift got caught round a crosstree. We had already handed the big Genoa. Wind was F.6, barometer down a tenth and it looked as if it was going to be a filthy night and I decided to have the mainsail down. After furling it we set the No. 2 Genoa and went tearing off west with the wind on the port quarter.

27th November

We are about 300 miles east of Grenada and for the past three days have been reeling off the miles, mostly straight down wind, under perfect conditions, except that it is rather too warm below decks at times—up to 88°F. The dynamo and/or the cutout of the aux. lighting set has packed up and the port battery suddenly went flat although fully charged by Perkins after more than 100 hours running. So now in the evenings we use the oil lights for the first time and there is no more reading in bed. It is 18.50 now and I write by the light of an oil lamp. It sits in the little hatch in the table that has a hole made specially for it. The swinging table is the best I have ever had. It is heavily weighted so that it has tremendous stability and one can cut up the toughest of meat without the slightest risk.

29th November. 23 days out

Have just sighted the island dead ahead. We should arrive about midday. Last six days have been perfect ocean cruising. In four days we ran 674 miles on the log. 165 per day plus 15 miles per day for the current 180.

30th November. St. Georges, Grenada

We arrived at 13.00 yesterday. Battery flat and could not start the Perkins, so had a splendid beat to windward from Salini Point right into the harbour—about six miles. *Primavera* arrived only 12 hours ahead of us and they were astounded to see us and full of congratulations. They had expected us to be 24-36 hours after them. I had not let on that this is a simply enchanting island with a lovely harbour and the crews of both yachts are simply delighted with the place. 