

CAPTAIN BUNGLE'S ODYSSEY – Paddy Macklin. Published in soft covers by Podkin Press [www.podkinpress.com] at £16. 288 252mm x 178mm pages with a scattering of photos. ISBN 978-0-9559-4832-9

The full title of this book – *Captain Bungle's Singlehanded Round the World Odyssey* – gives the impression that the author is somewhat inept, but nothing could be further from the truth. Paddy Macklin may have lacked a certain awareness of what was to lie ahead when setting forth to cross the oceans, but what sailor doesn't on his or her maiden voyage? Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather before him, Paddy shows himself to have a true spirit of adventure as he progresses from being a pupil at a top English public school to sailing round the world on a shoestring.

Paddy is an intrepid adventurer who is self-motivated with a strong sense of self preservation. He has a wonderful off-beat sense of humour which he drops in at regular intervals, but he is also emotional, and this is brought out when faced with certain circumstances.

The scene is set with descriptions of his upbringing against a background of motor sport, Invicta cars and life in the fast lane, even as a youngster setting himself targets which he achieves against the odds but which at times he pursues to extreme lengths – precursors of taking on the winter storms of the Southern Ocean in a very modest boat, determined not to be beaten. As he regularly tells himself when he gets disheartened by the relentless storms, 'stop moaning, it was your choice, you didn't have to do it'.

Following the introduction, which gives an insight to his formative years, Paddy takes the reader through a series of adventures as he learns the ropes of bluewater sailing on a shoestring, learning the hard way. Describing himself and his lifestyle as a hippie, which is probably not far from the truth, he retains a strong link with his family who come up trumps when needed, and has a remarkable memory for the large number of friends he has collected along the way, some who have helped him and others for whom he has done a good turn.

After several years of promising himself a non-stop circumnavigation in his beloved and faithful *Tessa*, a 27ft Buchanan-designed sloop, he eventually sets sail from Falmouth to try and emulate Sir Robin Knox-Johnston's epic voyage of 1968. The second half of the book is a three-way description of Paddy's circumnavigation. Having set up sat-phone communication links with his mother and sister for two separate days each week – his only communication with the outside world other than a VHF – the reader gets different perspectives on his experiences. The family 'blogs' reflect their reaction to and interpretation of his communications and their perception of his highs and lows. They are followed by extracts from Paddy's log covering the same period, and one can feel the emotion coursing through each of them. One such entry describes a (very) near miss in the Southern Ocean when, sailing goose-winged, he has to alter course at short notice for a ship that is apparently unmanned on the bridge.

Paddy's description of the seas encountered in the Southern Ocean bring to life the way that sailors of yesteryears must have felt, with the size and shape of the waves making the Bay of Biscay seem like a millpond. There are plentiful photographs of the waves taken through *Tessa's* dome, hence the lack of clarity, but the effect is certainly there. He does not achieve his ambition to sail round the world non-stop, as he has to spend time in New Zealand making repairs, particularly to *Tessa's* charging systems, and to sort himself out for the second half of his odyssey.

Paddy Macklin is a memorable character, down-to-earth with his observations on life, kind at heart and, I think, would admit to being a bit of an eccentric. Despite his shoestring circumnavigation, done at times using school atlases rather than Admiralty charts, he survived to tell the tale of views of mountainous waves, knock-downs and roll-overs, and returned to Falmouth none the worse for wear, albeit rather later than intended.

Captain Bungle's Odyssey is a book to adorn the shelves of any bluewater yacht and should be read by anyone aspiring to sail the Southern Ocean in winter. If it seems like a challenge you would relish and this book doesn't put you off then the chances are that you will get what you deserve. But it can be done – Paddy Macklin did it.

PJM