

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Although most Founder Members qualified during the decade preceding the Club's formation in 1954, a few put forward qualifying passages from much earlier decades. One of these was Frederick B Thurber of Rhode Island, USA, who cited a 1100 mile voyage from New York to Havana in 1910 aboard a yacht named *Pole Star*. Sadly there is no record of that voyage in the Club archives, but he made good the omission with the following account of the first leg of a passage from Providence to Rome made the following year, which appeared in *Flying Fish* 1966/2 with an introductory paragraph written by then-editor David Wallis.

It seemed logical to reproduce this account from 52 years ago in as near facsimile as possible, hence the slightly different typeface, the different editing conventions (eg. indented paragraphs throughout, 25-foot rather than 25ft, etc), and the lack of what today would be considered a proper title.

All the (rather small) images were sourced online for this reprint – in 1966 *Flying Fish* carried no illustrations of any kind – and a few explanatory notes added at the end.

FREDERICK THURBER and SEA BIRD

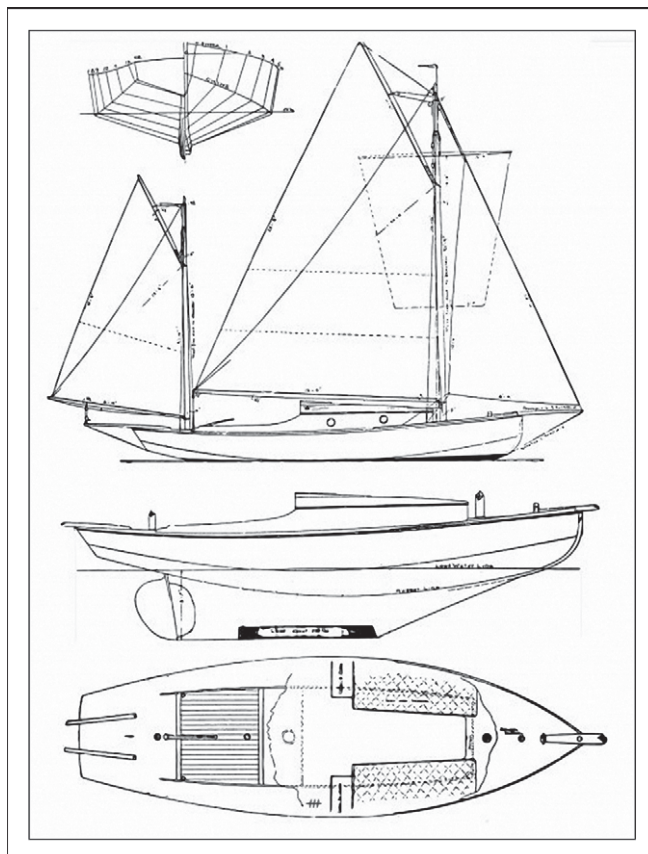
In 1911, when 'Sea Bird' and her three-men crew started on their voyage to Rome via the Azores, long ocean passages in relatively small boats were an almost unheard-of yachting practice. This voyage marked the beginning of deep water cruising by yachtsmen in small boats. 'Sea Bird' was a 25-foot yawl with a draft of 3 feet 8 inches¹.

Thorough preparations were made in getting the *Sea Bird* ready for sea. These



included stocking provisions for 40 days as well as ordering new sails and new running and standing rigging. All of the latter was of extra strength. We also installed a 3 h.p. Knox engine which consumed 15 gallons of either gasoline or kerosene in 24 hours and gave the boat a speed of 3½ knots in smooth water. Two 20-gallon fuel tanks

Sea Bird under sail



Sea Bird's lines. She carried 700 lbs of ballast on the keel (shown shaded) and another 1000 lbs of internal ballast, though some of this may have been replaced by stores. Her simple, single-chine hull was designed for easy – and often amateur – construction

were installed under the transom and a reserve tank holding 10 gallons was placed in the cockpit. Our drinking water was carried in two 15-gallon tanks, in addition to 12 two-quart bottles.

We carried enough fresh food for the first three or four days, while our canned food

consisted principally of soups, corned beef, salmon, beans, fruit and sardines. Other stores included jams, pickles, 48 packages of crackers, five pounds of pilot bread, ten loaves of bread, three jars of butter (over which paraffin was poured), onions, potatoes, several pounds of tobacco and a dozen quarts of liquor.

The cabin, which was to be our home for 40 days, measured 8 by 6 feet and had 4 feet 6 inches headroom. The transoms had hard cork cushions; one transom was built out a foot or so so that one could recline on it without having to lie under the side deck. As the other was almost entirely under the deck with less than 12 inches between the deck and the cushion, one could turn over only with difficulty! The engine was under the bridge deck aft where there was less than three feet of height between the floor and the deck. In the after part of the cockpit was a box, one side of which was used for tools, lashings and other deck gear, while the other contained a three-gallon kerosene tank. A five-gallon kerosene tank was also installed in the forward end of the cockpit. With all this additional weight, besides that of the crew, the *Sea Bird* floated three inches below her lines and, as her freeboard was anything but generous, this made her look very low in the water.

We had set Saturday, June 10th, for our departure, as we wished to arrive at Rome by July 20th, the date on which the competing motor boats were due. This gave us but 40

days to reach our objective and *Sea Bird* must average more than 100 miles per day, as a sailing vessel is often obliged to cover much more than 100 miles in distance to make 100 miles on her course. As 100 miles a day is a fair average for a large sailing ship, we were aware of the task before us. It is a well-known fact that June is the best month for crossing the Atlantic, for at that time of year the prevailing winds blow from the south and west. Hence we anticipated little head wind. We also realized that the Gulf Stream would favor us with 15 to 30 miles of current per day.



Sea Bird with crew and guests

A letter was given us by Mayor Fletcher, of Providence, to deliver to the Mayor of Rome, and this we carefully put in an oiled silk envelope. We also carried a Bill of Health but we were not successful in obtaining ship's papers as we were of only 3½ tons register and the government does not document vessels under five tons. However, the Collector of the Port at Providence kindly gave us a certificate adorned with brilliantly colored seals, which we knew would please the Portuguese and Italian officials.

By noon of the 10th everything was aboard. There was a great deal of handshaking and well wishing by the crowd of yachtsmen who had assembled at the Rhode Island Yacht Club to see us off. At 1:55 p.m., five minutes before the start, the crew went aboard. Commodore Massie then stepped to the edge of the dock and made a farewell speech and presented each of us with a gold mounted pipe. Captain Day² replied appropriately and, at the conclusion of his speech, a gun was fired as a signal to start. We slipped our mooring lines, started the engine and, under sail and power and with the American and Italian flags flying proceeded down the bay.

Sea Bird arrived at Newport at 5:30 p.m. and, as there was no wind, we proceeded out through the Narrows under engine. The sea was smooth outside and scarcely had we cleared Brenton's Reef Light Vessel than a hard shower approached. Our first night at sea was neither exciting nor pleasant, with little wind and frequent rain squalls. Our course was ESE 17 miles to Vineyard Sound Light Vessel, which was passed at 11:00 p.m., and at 5:45 the next morning we reached Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard where we were to secure an additional compass belonging to Captain Day and take on more fuel. Thirty gallons, in five gallon cans, were obtained of which four cans were placed in the cockpit. This reduced the area of that space to four feet wide by 18 inches long. Two other cans were lashed between the mizzen shrouds. In addition, we carried a can each side in the main shrouds and 21 one-gallon tins were lashed on the starboard side of the house. This made a total of about 100 gallons of fuel or sufficient for six days' running.

At 9:30 a.m., we cleared the harbour. Full of the importance of the occasion, the harbour master saluted us with a shotgun, with the result that in a few seconds buckshot

rained down on and about us like hailstones! As the wind was light, the engine was kept going and at noon Sunday we took our departure from Wasque Point, Martha's Vineyard. By one o'clock, we had reached the smooth water beyond Muskeget and headed ESE for the light vessel some 60 miles away. At 4:00 p.m., when well south of Nantucket, we picked up a nice sailing breeze and stopped the engine.

With three in the crew, our schedule of watches gave us four hours on and eight off when the weather was pleasant. However, if squally, we were called out to shorten sail as many as three or four times in a watch. The sensation of being suddenly awakened out of a sound sleep to come on deck, where you would be drenched by spray, into a night as black as your hat, is not conducive to a genial temper.

At 4:30 a.m., Monday, the steam chime whistle on the light vessel was picked up and at 5:45 we passed close aboard, and asked to be reported. Our course now lay nearly 1,900 miles due east, but it was our intention to sail SE until the 38th parallel was reached, thus getting across the Gulf Stream and into more settled conditions as quickly as possible. However, the wind headed us so that the best course we could then make was east. By 8:00 a.m., the sun threatened to come out but was soon obscured and shortly thereafter the fog came in as thick as mud. Before long, the wind had freshened so that jib and mizzen were all the *Bird* could carry. Crossing the westbound steamer lane was not particularly agreeable under such conditions and kept us on the alert every minute. By eleven o'clock the fog cleared somewhat, the wind shifted to the SW and we were enabled to make good our SE course.

In the afternoon the wind came in light from ahead with fog, giving us no sights that day. Fog continued thick up to midnight, and the lumpy sea made our going slow. As we approached the edge of the Stream, the fog was cleared away by squalls, preceded by thunder and lightning. During this time we lay to under jib and mizzen. We were now well in the Stream as was evident from the confused condition of the sea, and the ever present Gulf weed. By 8:00 a.m., the atmosphere cleared, enabling us to take a longitude sight, after which the wind came in fresh from S by E so that we were making a good six knots.

During all of Tuesday afternoon the wind held S by E and we ran along on an easterly course. *Sea Bird* was so heavily loaded that she made little progress unless the sheets were started. That day we obtained the first good sight since our departure and found our position to be 40°20'N. 68° 12'W. which placed us some 50 miles north of our course.

After midnight, we made fast time with wind on the starboard quarter and early in the morning we doused the jib and double reefed the main. Under this short canvas, *Sea Bird* tore along in fine style. By seven o'clock, we ran into more rain squalls, which were followed by short periods of calm. During this interval we took up the slack of the jibstay and went in swimming. The water of the Gulf Stream was beautifully clear and blue and delightfully warm and we decided that if anyone would be able to keep a supply of it at some resort, he would make his fortune. At 8:00 a.m., the wind again came in from the SSW and we logged six knots until noon.

That afternoon a fine quartering breeze was picked up but, in the evening, we ran into squally weather and were kept busy reefing and shaking out all night. Wednesday morning dawned with light air, calms and rain squalls. It was then that we discovered that the *Bird* was making water quite rapidly. Investigation found it

to be from the stuffing box around the shaft and, although we tried every means of stopping it, the leak persisted. We found, much to our relief, that it did not increase, but leaked about the same amount every watch. It was necessary to pump her every four hours and sometimes twice in a watch, a practice which had to be continued for the rest of the trip.

Having water continually in the bilge was most annoying, while a leak in the deck forward, which even the skipper's ingenuity could not remedy, kept the blankets and stores forward in a soggy condition. Kerosene, which leaked from the crankcase into the bilge, had by this time saturated nearly everything in the boat. It even found its way to the potatoes! However, we were able to use them by paring them down to the kerosene line and then adding plenty of salt. Another cheerful discovery was made in the afternoon. When drawing a glass of water from one of the tanks we found that salt water had leaked into it through the deck plate. At first we thought we might be faced with a scarcity of water but, after checking our other tank and bottles, we concluded that we had enough. Nevertheless we did use the salty water for our coffee, which did not improve the taste of it or appeal to the skipper.

Now a word about our sleeping accommodation. As expected, once on our way we proceeded on the starboard tack which we held for 20 days. The lee bunk was always the choice, hence if two were below during the same watch the unlucky wretch on the weather berth had his troubles. By lying flat on one's stomach, with arms and legs extended spread eagle fashion, one would be able to hold his position until the *Bird* took an extra heavy lurch, which would throw him on the floor or on top of the man on the bunk. After I had been precipitated in this manner several times in one night, I decided to lash myself in. This was done and the scheme worked admirably for about an hour when, without warning, the lashings gave way and I was rudely awakened by landing on the end of my spine on the opposite bunk. After that we discovered that the best place to sleep was on the floor between the transoms. This spacious place measured 6ft long by 18in wide, fitting one like a coffin. It did not permit turning over easily but had the advantage of wedging in the sleeper when once in place, which was a great relief.

The wind freshened somewhat during the night but let up about two o'clock Thursday morning, to be followed by a succession of squalls. At 4:00 a.m., when I relieved the skipper at the helm, an unusually bad squall was making up. The sky was filled with dark clouds tinged with green, tufted and oily looking. The *Sea Bird* had been driving along under jib and jigger³ with lee rail awash, so the skipper decided to stay on deck and it was fortunate that he did. Suddenly, the wind shifted four points⁴ to the north'ard and blew hard. Goodwin tumbled up from below and assisted in lowering the jigger, receiving a nasty cut over the eye, which temporarily blinded him. Meanwhile, the skipper was lowering the jib, which came three-quarters way down and then jammed, owing to the halliards fouling aloft. It blew so hard that the tops of the seas were blown off and every minute we expected to see the jib torn into ribbons, but nothing could be done about it.

Sea Bird lay to under the head of the jib and made wonderful weather of it, shipping no solid water except what blew over her. It blew 45 to 50 m.p.h. for about ten minutes, by which time a nasty sea was running. The wind then moderated to about 40 m.p.h. and we put her off before it and, under head-sail alone, she fairly flew off to leeward.

She drove before it for three hours, riding the constantly increasing seas like a duck. By 8.00 a.m. the wind suddenly dropped out and for the next four hours we made slow progress, the heavy seas shaking the wind out of the sails. Eventually the sun made an appearance and at noon we picked up a fine westerly which was the wind we had been waiting patiently for during the past five days and, with all sails set, the *Bird* jogged along at five knots.

All the next afternoon the conditions were ideal. We had a moderate breeze, a long, easy rolling sea, a cloudless sky, and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. After mess we took an amplitude, that is, checked up our standard compass by the sun as it set, and found there was ½ point westerly deviation. During the evening the wind hauled more southerly and, as it was then a broad reach, we made fast time. With the exception of an hour or so about 3:00 a.m., when we lowered away for a squall, the *Sea Bird* averaged about 6½ knots until Saturday noon. After working up our sight, we were much pleased to find that we had covered 163 miles, which was by far our best day's run.

That afternoon the wind hauled into the south and increased to the extent that we shortened to jib, double-reefed main and single-reefed mizzen. Suddenly the wind increased in force to a moderate gale and we were obliged to take all sail off and heave to under trysail. All that night we experienced a succession of rain and wind squalls that almost took the heart out of us. Before sunset, we had again decided to heave to for the night but found that, by running off, we nearly fetched our course. So, under jib and reefed mizzen, we bore off to leeward, being careful not to broach to in the stiff sea that was running. I have seen some lightning in the six times I have crossed the Gulf Stream, but never anything to equal the display that night. From all sides, continuous flashes of sheet lightning alternated with jagged forks striking into the sea and served to intensify the blackness of the night. When dawn finally broke, it was a most welcome sight. The engine was run continuously and, as a result of a leaky petcock, it filled the cabin with a thin blue smoke from the burnt kerosene. Owing to the danger of a sea boarding us it was necessary to keep the hatch closed all but a crack, and an hour below was all that one could stand.

The afternoon of the 19th the wind came in fresh from the south, so the *Bird* went along comfortably without the mainsail. After a while, formidable looking clouds of the type that were always a sign of bad weather began to make up. We took all sail off her, started the engine, saw to it that the ports were screwed down tight, closed the sides, put a lashing round the helmsman and waited. It was not long in coming. Suddenly, the wind came out of the NW, catching the boat broadside on and



Sea Bird reefed down

putting her on her beam ends. She lay upon her beam ends for a minute or so as if paralyzed, the water from leeward coming into the cockpit and half over her house. Then she gradually righted and Goodwin and the Skipper got her off before it. The squall lasted only a few minutes but must have blown 75 miles an hour when it hit us.

Below decks, everything had collected in one corner of the cabin. The engine was still going but a heavy battery box was bouncing against the flywheel, which threatened to destroy it. Cylinder oil was brought on deck as quickly as a can could be dislodged from the general tangle and poured into the scuppers, and the slick thus formed kept the breaking seas from coming aboard. Later on, the wind hauled into the north and blew hard, so that jib and mizzen staysail were all the canvas she could carry. A nasty following sea, necessitating our using oil off the quarter, and a heavy sea from the west made the going lumpy.

Just before sunset, a rain squall was followed by what we all agreed was the finest rainbow we had ever seen; a double bow of immense span, with the most vivid spectrum. We ran her off to the south all night, hoping to make 100 miles or so to more settled weather. As the morning advanced, the wind decreased and the sky cleared so that, by noon, we were carrying a single reefed mainsail comfortably. Fortunately, we had made sufficient southing so that we were well clear of the axis of the Stream, for which we were all heartily thankful.

On the morning of the 20th, nine days after our departure, the wind was fresh and *Sea Bird* made good time all day long, logging almost seven knots⁵. At 8.00 p.m., it freshened and we double reefed the main; by early morning it increased to half a gale, causing us to heave to until daylight. By 4:00 a.m., there was no sign of a let up so, under jib and mizzen staysail, we got under way and scudded before the blow at a fast clip. Both the wind and sea increased during the morning and at one o'clock we took in the staysail. By 2:30, the wind was blowing with gale force. By careful handling, the *Sea Bird* had been making good weather of it and fast time but now, with the extremely high seas and the increase in wind, it became difficult to steer her.

It was exciting shooting down the long green slopes into the hollows below, where we would almost lose the wind, and then catch it again as the next big sea rushed by. While making such wonderful time towards our destination, we did not want to stop but, anxious as we were to make a record passage, we were not willing to take unreasonable risks. Therefore, as we were in danger of being pooped or of pitchpoling, we decided to heave to and put out our sea anchor. It required careful manoeuvring to bring her around in that sea. The jib was taken off, the anchor and rode were made ready, and oil poured freely into the scuppers. Following a couple of heavy breaking seas, a smooth appeared. The helm was put hard over, and *Sea Bird* rounded to as prettily as could be. The sea anchor was thrown over, the reefed mizzen set and the oil turned on.

The motion of a vessel riding to a sea anchor or drag is decidedly different from that when riding to an anchor on the bottom. In the former instance, as each surge strikes the craft, she is forced astern until it is past, with the result that her motion is wonderfully smooth and easy. When anchored on the bottom, the vessel fetches up with a sudden jerk on the cable as the surge lifts her, then she almost jumps off the top of the sea into the trough. A sea anchor such as we used consisted of an ordinary 20 lb. anchor and a piece of oak four feet long by eight inches wide by one and one-

half inches thick. Through the center a hole was cut large enough to go over the stock of the anchor, and notches were placed at either end for the flukes to fit into. The board was then firmly lashed to the flukes. The weight of the anchor would sink the board about 15 feet below the surface and the resistance caused by the board dragging through the water held the *Sea Bird's* bow to the seas. We had out about 50 fathoms of cable, which kept the anchor two seas ahead of us.

Conditions remained unchanged until afternoon. A few times, when *Sea Bird's* bow sagged off three points or more, she shipped solid water over her forward deck which struck against the forward end of the cabin house like water from a fire hose. The decks at other times were dry, except for occasional spray blown from the crests of seas. By 2:00 p.m., the wind began to moderate and, at three o'clock, we upped anchor and set the jib, which was all the canvas the *Bird* then wanted. Owing to the steep, heavy seas, which were still running, it required careful steering to keep her dead before it. I remember that late that afternoon one sea broke over her stern completely filling the cockpit, flooding the decks and nearly taking me overboard.

We had now been out two weeks and had had only two chances to dry our clothes. The cabin presented a sorry sight. Cushions, blankets, pillows and food were wet and mildewed; kerosene and engine oil were in evidence everywhere (we had become thoroughly seasoned to the odor and taste of the former). Therefore, we were not too cheerful, especially as the novelty of sitting cramped in the cockpit, wet and shivering, for a four-hour watch had long ago worn off. But, after getting a latitude sight at noon⁶ we felt much encouraged. It showed that we had covered 1,420 miles since taking our departure from Wasque Point, averaging 101 miles a day, which was right up to schedule. This left 570 miles to go before we would sight the Azores.

The wind came strong all afternoon and that night, as if we were not already sufficiently damp, a drenching rain storm from the low black clouds that scurried over had come down upon us. The weather broke, however, in the morning and soon the sun was shining and the wind moderated so that we carried full sail for the first time in over a week. It was such a beautiful day and so appreciated by us that we christened it the 'Tom Fleming Day'. There was still much spray flying which made it impossible to dry things. However, we hoisted our wet garments to the masthead by the flag halliards and succeeded in partly accomplishing our purpose.

During the night of the 23rd, we were kept busy shortening sail and shaking it out again and, to put it mildly, our 'rest' was somewhat broken. In one watch we were routed out four times. Early the next morning, heavy swells commenced to roll in from the south-east, the result of a storm some distance away, although the wind we were carrying held from the south-west. We were running under double-reefed mainsail at the time and the boisterous sea forced us to heave to and get our morning sight. All day long the going was heavy and during the skipper's watch on deck that evening the wind increased and the *Bird* had more sail than she liked to carry. But to shorten any more would have meant to lower the mainsail entirely; in which case she would be a little shy of canvas. Therefore, the skipper drove her and drove her hard.

The *Bird*, with the wind on her quarter and heeled over on her ear, travelled like a race horse. Down below in the lee bunks you would hear the roar of the water as she violently plunged along. Rising on the crest of a sea, she would leap off the top into the hollow below with a crash and a jar which made the inch and a quarter planking

seem none too thick. By midnight, when the watches were changed, we all agreed that four hours was enough of that sort of work and the mainsail was taken off.

It is anything but enjoyable to steer a watch under such conditions. Owing to the heavy pitching and rolling of the boat, the only safe place for the helmsman was sitting on the cockpit floor, as it was quite impossible to stand. Moreover, if he went overboard, there would be no chance of being picked up. Owing to the restricted dimensions of the cockpit, after one had fitted himself in place, there was no chance to change position and the helmsman would be so cramped after his four hours that he could scarcely move.

At eight o'clock, we put the reefed mainsail on her and, under the same conditions as on the day before, drove her hard all day long. However, by four in the afternoon the wind gradually let up, the sun came out and we carried full sail for the first time in days. As the water had been coming over her pretty steadily for the past 24 hours, our faces were caked with salt but our spirits were high, induced by a rising glass and a beautiful sunset, which was something we had not seen for many a day. The smooth water and light winds were a great relief as was the cloudless sky which, even without a moon, gave us visibility of several miles.

After figuring our longitude that noon, we found that Corvo, the most western island of the Azores, bore SE by E $\frac{1}{2}$ E ⁷ a little over 100 miles. That meant that we should reach the island between twelve and three o'clock the next day, June 28th. We were now enjoying real ocean weather, i.e., blue skies, light wind, smooth seas and a warm sun. For a number of days, the wind had blown from east of south, which prevented our working south of the 40th parallel. Here again, the pilot chart misled us, wind from the westerly quadrant being predicted. As we had made almost enough easting, our course had to be shaped considerably more to the southward and, with the contrary light wind at the time, the engine was continually requisitioned.

The *Bird* jogged along a bit under four knots and at four o'clock the next morning we witnessed one of the finest sunrises that it has ever been my good fortune to see. At 5:15, a tiny speck on the horizon, which appeared as a dark blue cloud, was sighted. After a look through the glass, a hail of "Land ho, two points off the port bow!" brought the watch below on deck in a hurry. There was no more sleep that morning, as we expected to reach land by seven or eight o'clock, yet we were somewhat puzzled at sighting the island so early in the day.

We had little kerosene left but, as the sea was like glass and there was scarcely any wind, the motor was kept going. Before long Flores, an island ten miles to the southward of Corvo, was sighted. At eight o'clock, the entire outline of both islands was plainly visible, though little detail could be seen except the mountains and valleys, the rest appearing as a deep blue haze.

It was 2:00 p.m. before we were within a mile of Flores and, owing to the wind heading us, we were unable to go through the passage between the two islands. Skirting along the western side, we were awed by the grandeur of the scenery and the majestic height of the island which rises some 3,000 feet almost perpendicularly from the sea. Soon a fisherman was sighted and we made for him. A young boy, born in San Francisco of Portuguese parents, acted as spokesman. They seemed greatly surprised when they heard where we had come from and looked at us with a great deal of awe. Noticing some fine fish in their boat, we soon made a trade, offering them chewing

tobacco, a copy of *Life*, and a novel entitled *Her Only Sin*, for a fine six-pound red snapper!

We rounded the southern end of the island at six o'clock that afternoon. Our course from there to Horta was 130 miles E by S. Under the conditions at that time, the chances of reaching our destination the next day seemed most doubtful. There was a smooth sea and little wind all night. A steamer's lights several miles away were made out early in the evening. At eight o'clock Friday morning, we had made only 30 miles, Flores being plainly visible astern. At 3:00 p.m., the island of Pico was made out as a speck of cloud on the horizon. This remarkable island rises to a height of 7,600 feet and was 60 miles away when first sighted. At dawn, Saturday, Fayal was plainly visible. During the forenoon, the ship was given a general cleaning up and made ship-shape. We hoped to reach Horta, which lay just around the Guia Peninsula, before six o'clock. With our code flags, we signalled the station on the hill top and asked to be reported to the *New York Herald*. To give variety to the last two miles of our passage, and to add to our misery, we felt a strong tide running against us. We had a little of our precious fuel left and with this expected to save the situation but, as if it were in sympathy with the adverse conditions, the engine kept stopping. In a most spasmodic way, we slowly gained distance and, just after dark, came about for the last tack which would take us into the harbour. To cap the climax, the blooming engine stopped when within 100 yards of our goal. We had been out just 20 days and six hours, sailed 2,004 miles, were in front of and within 100 yards of getting into the harbour — and were stuck!

Disgusted, discouraged and mad⁸, we tacked back and forth for ztwo hours and a half, and while doing so we indulged in some language of the deep sea variety. Finally, a pilot boat manned by four husky natives came alongside and attempted to tow us, but in vain. So they left us, but the tide soon slackened so that we were able to slip into the harbour where we were directed to a berth by the harbour master. Discovering that by routing out the cable operator our messages would go that night, they were hastily scribbled and then all hands were generously served with grog. Requesting the pilot to have the doctor down early in the morning, the entire crew of the *Sea Bird*, for the first time in 20 days, turned in for an all night sleep.

The next two days were spent in hauling out the *Sea Bird* to repair the leak in the stuffing box. In this labor we were greatly assisted by the boys from the English cable station who also entertained us in a royal manner. Fresh provisions, including delicious fruits with a bunch of bananas hanging in the rigging, and a good supply of native wine, were put aboard. On the morning of July 4th, we again set sail.

The course for Gibraltar was E½S. Light southerly winds took 'Sea Bird' half way, then she picked up a northerly which drove her to within 100 miles of Cape St. Vincent, where she met the usual stiff easterly. Under way again after heaving to for 10 hours, Cape Spartel was sighted on the 17th, and passing Tarifa under double reefed main, a double round of grog was issued in celebration. The passage was successfully concluded when 'Sea Bird' rounded to off Gibraltar mole at 6 o'clock the same evening.



NOTES

1. Information found online suggests she may have been nearer 26ft overall, and was undoubtedly hard chine with a very small cabin containing only two berths – referred to here as ‘transoms’. Although a term still used in the US, a more usual description would be ‘saloon settee’.
2. Thomas Fleming Day, who had founded *Rudder* magazine in 1891 and was one of the first to promote long passages in small, often home-built, boats. Online research indicates that *Sea Bird* was designed by Thomas Fleming Day and Charles D Mower, and built by or for the former in 1901.
3. The mizzen.
4. 45°, each point of the compass being 11¼°.
5. This was probably calculated from their distance made good over the ground, and included a knot or two of help from the Gulf Stream. An average of 7 knots through the water seems highly unlikely for a heavily-laden boat of perhaps 22ft LWL.
6. Presumably crossed with a longitude sight earlier in the day, as latitude alone would not indicated the distance travelled eastwards.
7. Close to 118°.
8. In the American sense of ‘really angry’, though some might consider the British sense applicable too!

