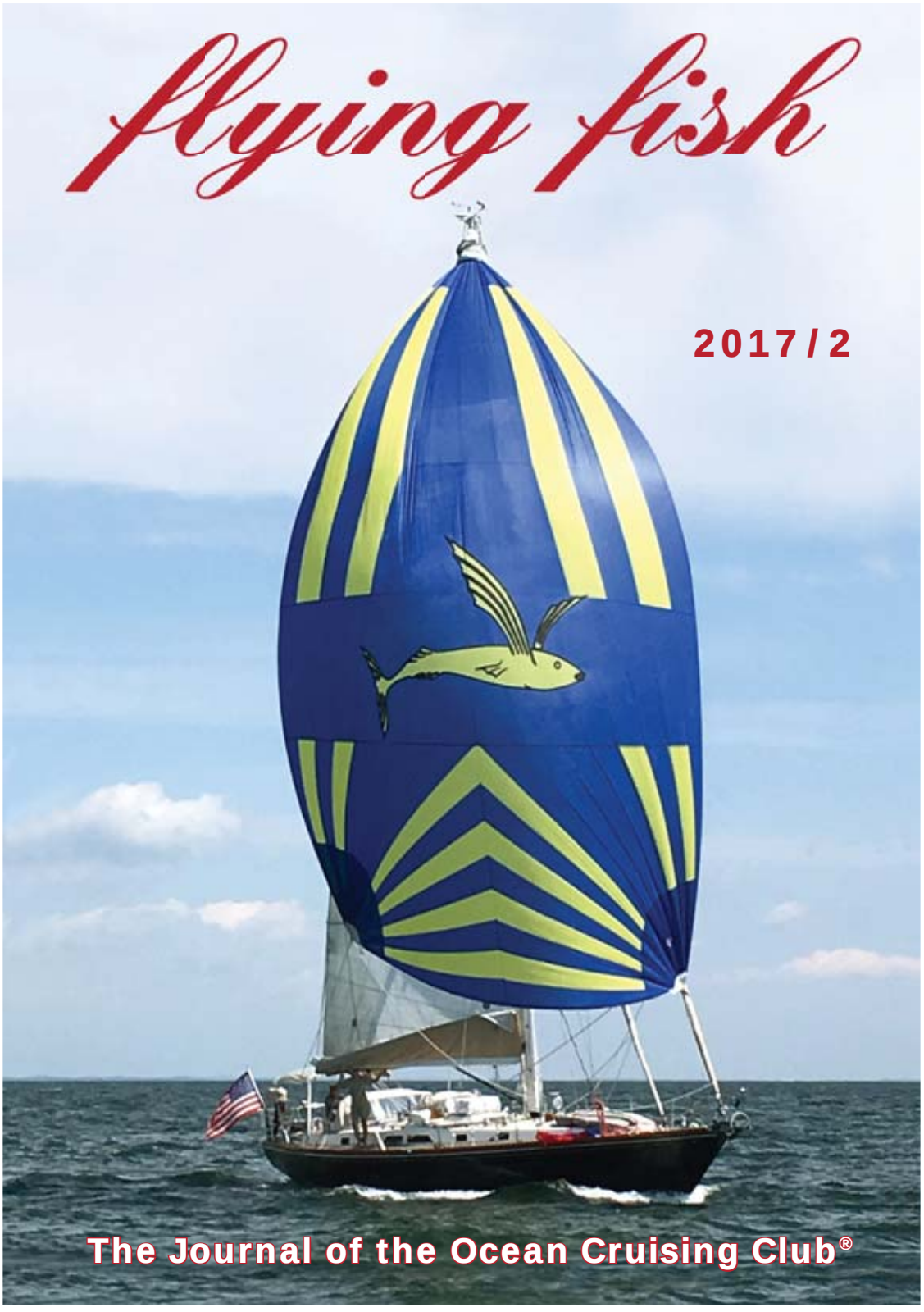
Flying fish



2017/2

The Journal of the Ocean Cruising Club®

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HEALTH WARNING

The information in this publication is not to be used for navigation. It is largely anecdotal, while the views expressed are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily shared nor endorsed by the OCC or its members. The material in this journal may be inaccurate or out-of-date – you rely upon it at your own risk.

If this issue's cover photo of *Dragon Run*'s handsome flying fish spinnaker made you envious, Bill and Lydia Strickland – and their sailmaker – would be happy to pass on details. E-mail them on wjstrick64@gmail.com. The Board and General Committee would be delighted for other, similar sails to be seen around the world, but only if the 'fish' is based on the approved artwork, drawn for us many years ago by Founder Member Colin Mudie. Please don't be tempted to design your own version!

Closer to home, if you're thinking of writing for *Flying Fish* – and if you have a story to share I hope that you are – could you be sure to read the *Guidelines for Contributors* on page 174. They really are intended to ensure smooth passage on both sides. They should save you the wasted effort (and disappointment) of sending in a contribution that's far too long, which misses the deadline by a couple of weeks – though see the last paragraph below – or which shouldn't have come to *Flying Fish* at all ... though maybe *What, Who, Where and When* on page 92 is more relevant there.

On my side they save time sorting out all kinds of problems, most often to do with photos and captions, not to mention one of the editor's worst nightmares ... duplication. With *Flying Fish* and the *Newsletter* going out in the same mailing but edited on opposite sides of the globe, if a contributor overlooks the request to 'tell me if you're sending the same piece (or photos) elsewhere, inside or outside the OCC' it can result in a lot of extra work for Jeremy and me at the very last moment, as one of us drops everything to change the layout, remove or replace a photo, or otherwise put things right. It might sound obvious, but it's easily overlooked.

So what do we have in this issue? Well, an awful lot of book reviews for a start – and my thanks to all those who assisted with them. It'll probably be a bit late for buying Christmas presents by the time you receive this *Fish*, so why not just treat yourself? Reviewers normally get to keep the book(s) they're allocated, and there were several among this crop that I was really sorry to part with.

Among our own members' writings there are cruise accounts from the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean (if not actually in a yacht), illustrated by hundreds of fabulous photographs. To return to where this began, Sid Shaw tells me he took the cover photo on his wife Rebecca's phone – amazing to those of us who grew up with film on a roll ... but never, ever, enough of it!

Finally, the usual reminder – the **DEADLINE** for submissions to ***Flying Fish 2018/1*** is **Thursday 1 February**, though I really do appreciate not having a dozen articles – and their 250 or so associated photos – all arriving on deadline day. Even less a week or two later!

Cover Photo: Bill and Lydia Strickland's Dragon Run displaying her unique flying fish spinnaker during the 2017 Chesapeake Cruise (see the top paragraph above). Photo Sid Shaw

SWEET CAROLINES
Graham and Avril Johnson

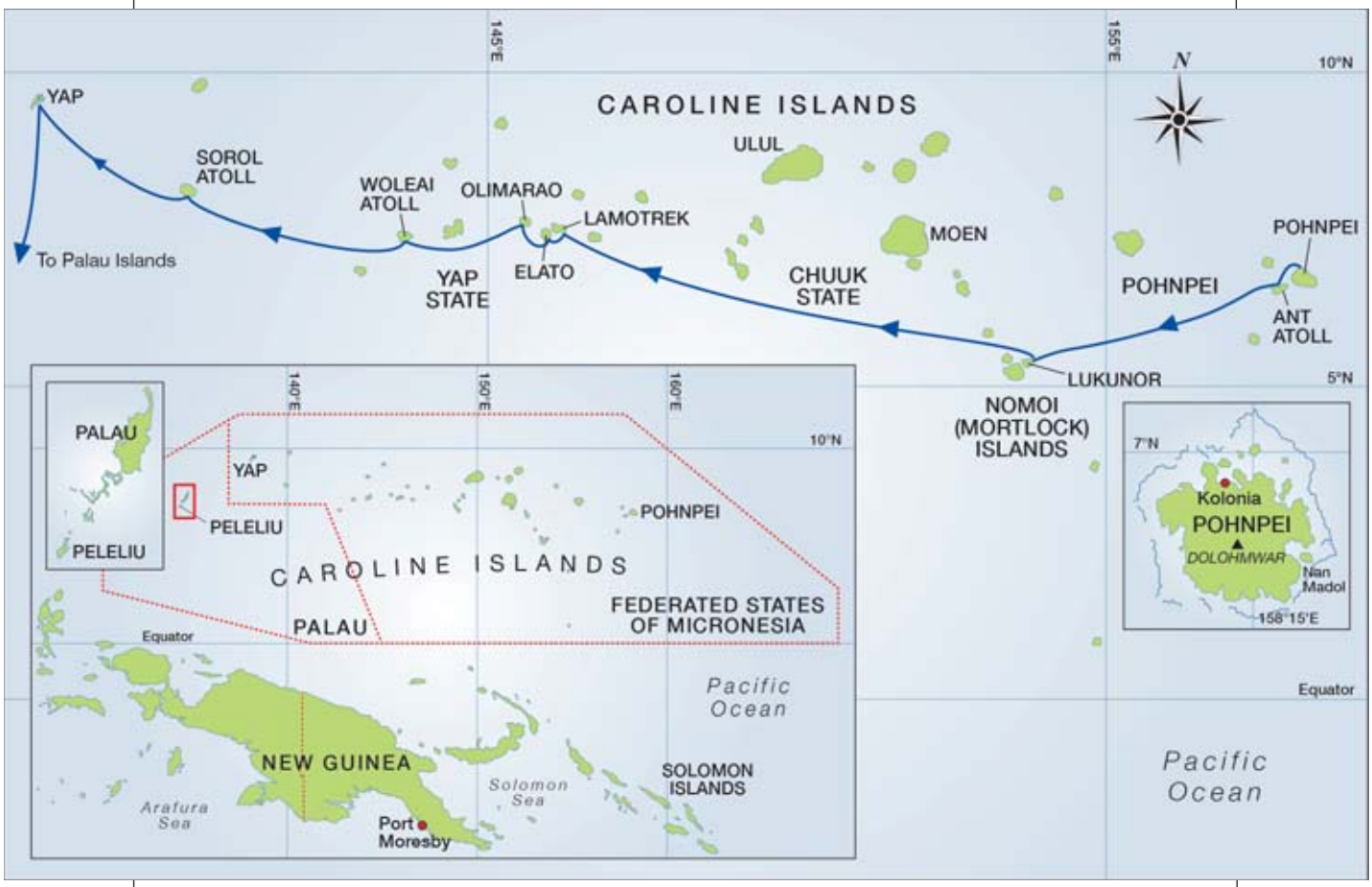
(*Graham and Avril have been prolific contributors to* Flying Fish *since departing the UK in 2002 aboard their 44ft cutter* Dream Away *to circumnavigate. Fifteen years later they were around 146°E – another ten years, maybe?*

All the excellent photos were taken by either Avril or Graham, except where indicated.)

The Caroline Islands in the North Pacific encompass the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau. They are rarely cruised, being a significant diversion from the classic European coconut-milk run and ignored by most North Americans in favour of the South Pacific islands. We arrived in Pohnpei, the seat of government for the four states comprising the FSM, and after clearing in with the pleasant port officials, anchored at the head of a bay off a new small marina. The town is a sprawling, busy, bustling home to a large number of sizeable shops, and the range of predominately US goods to replenish our depleted stocks was the best since leaving NZ. Pohnpei is home to the ancient site of man-made islands at Nan Madol, with massive buildings constructed from gigantic horizontally-laid basalt columns, one of the Pacific's wonders. Inside the fringing reef the large,

An ancient dry stone construction at Nan Madol

The entrance to Pohnpei lagoon and port facilities


145°E
155°E
N
10°N
CAROLINE ISLANDS
YAP
SOROL ATOLL
WOLEAI ATOLL
OLIMARAO
LAMOTREK
ULUL
MOEN
POHNPEI
To Palau Islands
YAP STATE
ELATO
CHUUK STATE
POHNPEI
ANT ATOLL
LUKUNOR
5°N
NOMOI (MORTLOCK) ISLANDS
140°E
150°E
160°E
10°N
PALAU
YAP
PELELIU
POHNPEI
CAROLINE ISLANDS
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
PALAU
Equator
Pacific Ocean
NEW GUINEA
SOLOMON ISLANDS
Solomon Sea
Arafura Sea
Port Moresby
7°N
Kolonia
POHNPEI
DOLOHMWAR
Nan Madol
158°15'E
Equator
Pacific Ocean

Japanese tanks, relics of World War Two

lush, vertiginous island is noted for its prodigious rainfall, but even so Japanese war relics still litter the hills, including tanks and complete gun emplacements, which provided interesting distractions on a good hike.

We considered spending Christmas at nearby, privately-owned Ant Atoll, so purchased our permit and sailed the short passage. After a couple of days in a breezy anchorage with an endless procession of tourist boats coming and going we felt restless, so sailed on to Lukunor in the Nomoi (Mortlock) Islands, a few days away. Anchored in a beautiful crescent-shaped bay off the main village, we were greeted ashore by the inevitable gaggle of giggling kids. After presenting a small gift to the village chief we were welcomed into the community. It was a lovely peaceful place to enjoy Christmas.

Lukunor is part of Chuuk State, whose similarly-named capital island has a fearsome reputation for unfriendly, sometimes violent, locals and difficult, obstructive officials.

Christmas Sports Day at Lukunor

Its attraction is the numerous World War Two wrecks, making it a diver's paradise. Yap, the westernmost state, has a reputation for vigorously reintroducing and maintaining the traditional lifestyle, particularly on the remote, rarely-visited outer islands. We are not divers so it was no contest – we sailed a four-day, 500 mile

Inter-island transport at Lamotrek

passage to Lamotrek in Yap State, entered the lagoon through a winding entrance, then anchored in crystal-clear water in perfect shelter at the southern end of the village. Behind the white-sand beach were all manner of huts and shelters, with villagers immersed in daily life looking up to wave. Lovely outrigger canoes lay quietly at the waters edge, with a couple of large, ocean-going versions hauled ashore. From the noise it was apparent a school was close by, hidden by trees, and soon the shore was lined with waving, excited children.

Joe paddled out to greet us, a fascinating character – chief of one of the three villages, master mariner, master boatbuilder and the local medic! Dress code for men was a loin cloth, for women a wraparound skirt woven on a back-strap loom. The population was about 500, each family group living in huts around their own compound.

The Yap government had decreed that a visitor fee of US $20 could be charged, but the islanders waived this for those prepared to offer help. Top of Joe's list was the disintegrating transom on his *panga*. Fortunately Graham had a stock of GRP mat and resin, so made a good job of it. Given the island's adherence to tradition we wondered on the rationalisation for fibreglass *pangas** and Yamaha outboards. Apparently, following a devastating cyclone in the late 1990s, aid had poured in to build 'solid homes', but the locals preferred their traditional natural materials, and spent the money on

* *Pangas* are small, outboard-powered, fishing boats, usually of between 20ft and 30ft overall, with a high bow, narrow waterline beam, and a flotation bulge along the gunwale. The original design is said to have been developed by Yamaha in the early 1970s, and to have taken its name from the panga fish.

A young man collects tuba from the treetops

boats instead. With declining fish stocks they facilitated more efficient and reliable fishing to sustain the population, enabling them to remain in their little bit of paradise.

Av was taken to meet Joe's wife Katherine, who didn't speak English, then on to see Micaela, who did. Here she was presented with a beautifully woven wraparound skirt. She wore this religiously, finding it cool and comfortable, and spent many a happy hour meeting various village women. There is a clear demarcation between women's and men's work – women weave, tend the gardens, gather crops, catch small land-crabs, cook, and look after the home and children; men fish, look after the animals, build homes and boats, carve, produce coconut-fibre rope and sit around drinking. Late every afternoon the men's circles form and *tuba* (palm wine), which has been collected over the day and comes ready-fermented at about 13% proof, is drunk in prodigious quantities. G, of course,

Weaving a skirt on a back-strap loom takes about a week

The birthday boys

was invited to join in! The day's activities and accomplishments were discussed and a plan formed for the next day. Women are barred from the men's circle, although exceptions are made for visiting foreigners. Av was invited, but it was obvious that everyone felt more comfortable when she decided to join the ladies elsewhere.

Coincidentally, Manuel the dentist and past chief shared a birthday with G, so a double celebration was planned with a special meal. It was huge fun, and the 'birthday boys' were covered with talcum powder and yellow turmeric and bedecked with flowers. There was singing and dancing, and Av produced a super birthday cake (the ubiquitous banana cake) complete with candles.

At 66 G was considered quite old – most men don't make 70, invariably dying of liver or kidney failure due to alcohol abuse. Lack of access to medical care is possibly the greatest downside to remote island existence. There is no airport and Yap, 500 miles away, has the nearest hospital – linked only by an unpredictable and irregular ferry service (once a month if you're lucky). An ill islander would approach Joe, who has basic medication for simple ailments. For anything more complicated he talks to Yap on the SSB, where his diagnostic skills are highly regarded by the hospital medical staff. They may send out drugs on the next ferry, which if ineffectual would result in the patient eventually being ferried to Yap. Upon reaching Yap they are often so ill they need to be transferred to the Philippines; the outcome is usually sad.

Master boatbuilders were overseeing the construction of a couple of large ocean-going craft and several fishing canoes in a shady shoreside work area. Nearly all work is done by adze, with teams of up to half a dozen men working on a single hull plank on the large craft. There are no plans, everything is done by eye, the hull shapes are asymmetric to compensate for the outrigger, and the high prow has a sighting-notch to enable the navigator to line up with the stars.

Alongside, schoolboys were being taught to build their own small canoes. In school they were learning star charts and traditional navigation from master mariners like Joe, who had made many extensive passages using only those traditional skills. For both boys and girls up to 14 years all the traditional skills were taught alongside a more recognisable curriculum of numeracy, literacy, etc. It was fascinating to learn how much you need to know to survive successfully in paradise. Classes were taught in English and/or 'vernacular', and there were a few computers – all used by the staff. Equipment had been delivered to set up a satellite-link for internet access and wifi, but it had been sitting in the boxes for quite a while awaiting the expert to arrive to commission it. A recent EU initiative had offered every household an individual solar-powered electricity supply, which most had accepted. Times are changing, technology is encroaching, and its impact on the next generation will be interesting.

Whilst G was off in 'boy world', Av visited the school and was invited into various classrooms to observe. With the older children, she was asked to talk about our trip. It's difficult to fit 15 years into 15 minutes. During break time, she got out her tablet to show how we navigate on the computer. With Google Earth KAPS she could show what the island looks like from space. Inevitably she subsequently spent time installing the programs and charts on several staff-members' computers, explaining how everything worked.

At 0·8 miles north to south by up to 0·5 miles west to east, Lamotrek is a large island by local standards, with plenty of opportunities for good hikes to isolated bays and sandy coves. On the ocean side the Pacific swells crash in across the reef and there is good

Amazing precision is achieved using a simple adze

lobster hunting. On the lagoon side all is tranquil clear water, abundant with seafood and fish. In between, the thick tangled jungle is home to delicious coconut crabs.

Inevitably the mending list had grown, but with it our sense of community with the islanders. It was going to be hard to leave. Our departure coincided with a village festival with men's and women's dances in full island costume. The grass skirts take several days to prepare, and it's a work of art getting the body painting, arm bands, head bands and associated foliage all in good order. What fun it was, a feast to finish and a mountain of food to take on our travels. Av was presented with another skirt in some of her favourite colours (orange and purple) and G received a great skein of hand-made coconut fibre rope and a lovely model fish trap made by the school kids.

Four *pangas*, two outboards, an HF radio and a host of smaller items later we sailed the few miles to the adjacent atoll of Elato, population 100, where we knew an outboard awaited our attention. We were immediately drawn into village life, starting, as usual, with a welcoming ceremony. Kevin, the outboard owner, whom G had met on Lamotrek, was designated our host, taking us off to meet his family and many other villagers. Island pride decreed it necessary for Av to be wearing a skirt woven in their community, not the Lamotrek one. A quick change ensued.

Kevin and G wandered off to inspect the outboard (blown head gasket), and devise a solution. The major stumbling block was the absence of any tools beyond an ancient, rusting box spanner whose end needed beating into shape to remove spark plugs. Yamaha engines can be largely dismantled with one size of spanner, however, so it was easy for G to gather enough tools. Kevin worked well with G, learnt quickly, and with the engine running was overjoyed when presented with the toolkit.

A traditional departure dance

Lunch is prepared for the kindergarten children at Elato…

In the men's circle the story was told about G mending Joe's *panga* and, amazingly, they had one also requiring attention. It was a real mess. Not just the transom, but serious gunwale damage and broken bottom ribs and stringers. "What have you been doing?" G asked. Downcast eyes, shuffling feet and somebody mentioned turtle. Ah, so that was it, a big one has the capacity to inflict serious damage when hauled over the side and left to thrash about in the bilge. Just like on Lamotrek you never worked alone – men and boys would watch, and G always took time to talk, explaining what he was doing and encouraging people to get involved. The locals made new wooden frames (which fitted perfectly) for G to glass in; the job went well but finished the resin. It's amazing what you can fix with a tube of sealant and epoxy glue, however. Av, in the meantime, had got the sewing machine out and was busy building a sail for a *proa*.

…who gather to wait for it

Kevin views his island as seen from space

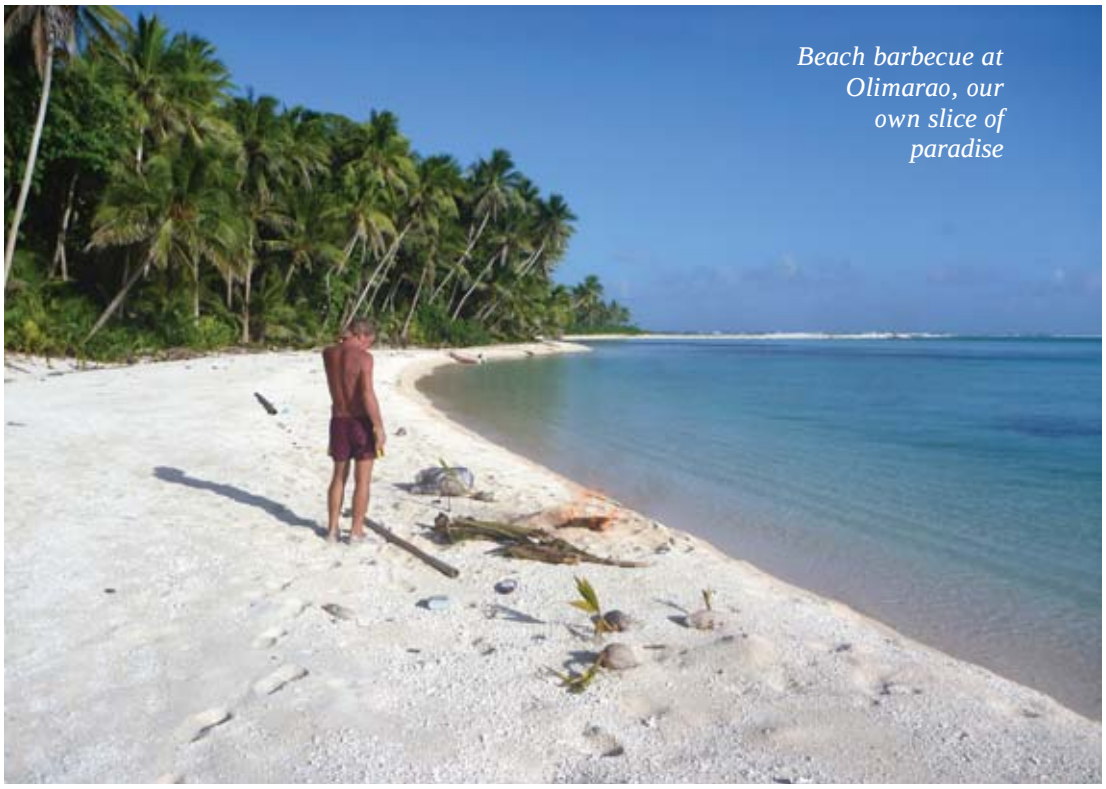
Inevitably kids were always around, eager to 'help', clambering over everything, and just being kids. Their highlight was our arrival or departure in the dinghy – a swarm would carry it up or down the beach, and a ride was a fiercely-contested treat. Even the youngest could secure the dinghy safely and we never worried about anything disappearing.

We lived well. There was always a coconut to slake one's thirst with cool fresh milk, we received our share of the daily catch distributed on the beach, and fresh vegetables were supplied from 'the garden', a large area of soil raised up on a bed of volcanic rock. The old garden had become untenable due to rising sea levels, however, and the villagers were anxious and asked what they could do. We had little advice to offer – they are victims and, unless the world changes, their outlook is bleak.

Breakfast arrives

We loved it there – a tiny island that you could walk around in an hour, home to wonderful people in a setting of unimaginable beauty. We knew everyone and lived an easy, relaxed lifestyle completely cut off from the outside world. Kevin had taught G how to milk the palms for *tuba*, the free booze, counselling him that it would be wise to let the younger guys climb for it. The night before we left they threw a party, presenting us with a mountain of food to take away including lobsters, octopus, turtle and tuna, plus taro and breadfruit cooked in different ways. We were given gifts of a hank of rope and another *lavalava* (skirt) for Av. As these items are the islanders' only means of obtaining hard currency, we were deeply touched.

With permission from the island chief our next stop was Olimarao, an uninhabited atoll just a 30 mile day-sail away, another picture-perfect little white-sand island offering complete protection from the steady trade winds. We spent several days lazing



Beach barbecue at Olimarao, our own slice of paradise

about, feasting on the goodies from Elato, walking around 'our' island, gathering some astounding shells, and basking in the warm waters of a Pacific island dream. We found several turtle nesting sites and saw a couple in the lagoon, lobsters were washed up along the shoreline and fish were abundant, but with our Elato food mountain there was no need to trouble the wildlife. Often moonlit evenings were spent ashore around a fire and barbecue, never being troubled by mosquitoes or other bitey things, watching busy crabs scurrying about and fruit bats flying overhead beneath the stars.

Some of the enthusiastic students after our presentation. Photo Stan Rett

Our next destination was Woleai Atoll, 130 miles downwind in a steady breeze. It's a large atoll, more than six miles wide, with several sizeable islands and a lot of reefs that require close attention. The main centre is on Falealop, the northeastern island, which provides a large, sheltered bay in tranquil, clear water. It's altogether a more organised and busy place, still living the traditional lifestyle but with a much larger population (over 1000). The main secondary school for the region is based there, and the men's circle nearest our landing place included several of the staff. We were invited to visit, which led on to 'can you give a presentation?'. It was well received, to the extent that we were asked to come back and present to the whole of the senior year. That evening we frantically put together another Powerpoint talk as we had a shrewd idea some of the audience might have seen the first one.

Promptly at 0900 next morning we faced a room packed with students and staff. The girls had been busy, and we were bedecked with garlands of vividly colourful flowers. It was a unique experience to be so delightfully welcomed before giving a talk, and we certainly smelled divine. Afterwards G went to watch the boys' culture class under the 'men's' hut they had built. Some were rolling fibre rope, which twists in opposite directions depending on whether it's intended for boat use or housebuilding – nobody knew why. Av in the meantime was ensconced in the staffroom, demonstrating and downloading a variety of software.

Av was presented with another *lavalava* – this time woven with fibre from banana and hibiscus leaves – the traditional materials (dyed orange and purple). It is very difficult and time-consuming to produce, and highly valued. It transpired the boys were most put out that the girls had made us something and they had not thought to do so. We had to return for the presentation of a lovely carved wooden canoe paddle. The tip is specially shaped to make a distinctive sound if the stroke is correct, a unique gift.

Micronesia became a Japanese colony following the defeat of Germany in 1918, and until the start of World War Two hostilities the islanders claim a harmonious accord, the Japanese instigating many improvements in island life. During the war the Japanese denuded Woleai of vegetation and constructed a long, heavily-defended runway; now derelict artefacts of war including several aircraft lie haphazardly in the jungle. It was another fine place for walking and exploring. Plans were afoot to repair the runway following an earlier, disastrous, attempt when the company broke up a section of reef for landfill, resulting in flooding of gardens and other unpleasant side-effects. This time an immense ocean-going barge that had mysteriously washed up on Yap reef was to collect landfill from Pohnpei, 1200 miles away. It's going to be a long job – don't make any immediate plans to fly there.

Yap is 380 miles northeast of Woleai, with uninhabited Sorol Atoll lying just south of the rhumb line. We broke our passage there after an exhilarating reach across some boisterous trade winds. The entrance to the lagoon was more a depression in the reef than a clearly defined pass, and an extensive reef shelf kept us some distance offshore. Nevertheless it was easy to land in the dinghy to explore. The island is overrun with large monitor lizards, introduced by the Japanese to hunt rats, but we were hunting for coconut crabs. The perfect peace did not last long, however, as a couple of days later another yacht arrived – nice folk who anchored away from us and had been making some interesting passages. Even so, when another yacht anchored nearby it was time to move on.

Yap is a large, mountainous, volcanic, verdant island with extensive cultivation battling the ever-encroaching jungle. It is not as high as Pohnpei, so not as wet. It's a place where nothing really happens, there are no great attractions, yet it holds you with its calm, peaceful welcome, easy laid-back lifestyle and convenient harbour anchorage. We shopped for the first time since Pohnpei. Only a few days remained on our three month

Our old mainsail was just the right size for an ocean-going proa

Stone money used to be legal tender in Yap

visa, but we found an extension was possible if we wrote a letter explaining why. We wrote we liked the place and wanted to stay longer, which worked! The islanders were delighted to see Av wearing her *lavalavas* and always knew which island each one came from. In the hills, various enclaves of outer islanders exist, some settled permanently, others working for a season or simply visiting family. In one village we were welcomed and shown around. Guess what! They had this HF radio ... sounding familiar?

Sharing the anchorage were three other cruisers and the aforementioned giant barge. Having foundered on the reef, it had been towed in to become the centre of a dispute

Sheltered moorings at the Royal Belau Yacht Club

Narrow channels and hidden anchorages abound in Palau's rock islands

over ownership. Everyone wanted a slice of the action, including the boat that had towed it in, the chief who owned the reef, various government departments – and, of course, the original owners rather wanted it back. It is going to be a long time before Woleai runway is operational!

At the end of February we made for Palau, an independent state whose main source of income is tourism based upon its excellent diving and famous rock islands inside the huge lagoon. We had a fast 260 mile day-and-a-half sail, downwind with a fair current, arriving early off the long entrance channel which winds through the reefs to the main harbour. Following a pricey check-in we proceeded to the Royal Belau Yacht Club. Picking up a mooring in the lovely sheltered lagoon, our base for the next month, we met up with friends aboard *Carina*, last seen ten years previously in Panama.

Peleliu is a small island at the southern extremity of the lagoon, the scene of fierce fighting between the US and Japanese forces in World War Two. Much of the old battlefield remains as it was left, providing an interesting visit despite its depressing history. We found where a small company of Japanese stayed hidden for 2½ years following the end of hostilities before surrendering. There is still a terrifying amount of 'live' ordnance lying about, and it doesn't pay to stray from the cleared paths.

The towering, verdant karst islands appear like emeralds strewn across the bright blue lagoon. We enjoyed wonderful days pottering through a maze of channels with many spectacular anchorages. The reef snorkelling in crystal clear waters was superb, viewing incredibly beautiful coloured corals and a myriad of stunning reef fish. The busiest locations, where an endless procession of tourist laden boats rush about, were easily avoided or simply visited early in the morning.

We departed the Caroline Islands having enjoyed months of fabulous sailing, wonderful, welcoming islanders and unrivalled, unspoilt, tropical beauty. Given the opportunity, don't miss them!

LIVING ON BITTERN
Rosemarie Smart-Alecio

On 27 October 2015, 200 miles southwest of Madagascar, Alfred and I had to make the terrible decision to abandon *Ironhorse*, our wonderful home for the previous 22 years (see *Flying Fish* 2017/1). Thanks to the magnificent efforts of Captain Bondar and his crew we made it safely onto the massive deck of MV *Bittern* which, at 200m long, 30m beam and 20m above the ocean, felt like *terra firma*!

The first mate on this Ukrainian-crewed bulk carrier led us through a labyrinth of pristine corridors to an amazingly luxurious suite of rooms with large windows overlooking the ship and ocean – the absent Owners' Cabin – where we were offered a most welcome, and perfectly brewed, cup of tea! Happily for us, the officers and several of the 20 crew spoke good English. They were bound for Singapore – almost 4000 miles back east and 16 days away – back to where we'd stopped a couple of months earlier as we sailed down the Malacca Straits.

Alfred then met the delightful Captain Yuriy Bondar, who retained our passports – as for all crew – prior to contacting the ship's owners for advice. Because Alfred had moved them from bags to his pocket, our passports, credit cards and cash were the only things which survived intact. Sadly, all four of our 'waterproof' bags had leaked and, in spite of frantic flushing with fresh water, our cameras, all Alfred's expensive lenses, computers, hard-drive copies, iPhones and iPads were write-offs. Even our brand new 'Iridium Go'!

With Captain Bondar and some of his 20 crew on the bridge

Commanding views from our (the owner's!) cabin

Taking exercise on deck

By then both official and unofficial wheels were in motion. To enable Captain Bondar to change his scheduled course we had been required to trigger our EPIRB to initiate an emergency. This sent our information to many rescue centres around the world, including Falmouth Coastguard in the UK whose responsibility it was to alert our contact person immediately. Thus our very good friends Bill and Cherrill, who have coped with most of our affairs throughout our 22 years of cruising, were woken with the news at 0700. Sensibly they waited until they knew we were safe before they contacted our families (and insurance company – third party only!) after which poor Captain Bondar was inundated with e-mails of appreciation which he allowed

us to acknowledge. Aware that our cruising cohort would be concerned for us, he offered us the use of the ship's HF radio that evening so that Alfred could check in to the net, on which he had that morning expressed our concerns about being able to continue.

Friends from our local sailing club in Exmouth who had a son well-connected in Singapore (although now working in Hong Kong) had also been busy, and next day we had an e-mail from Keith offering help on arrival. The day after that he informed us that the generous committee of his (Changi) Yacht Club had arranged free chalet accommodation for us, that a laptop and a loan-phone would be at our disposal, and that someone would pick us up when the ship docked.

Alfred revisits the pilot point, our arrival spot

Aboard MV *Bittern* it was clear next day that Captain Bondar had been considering how, without any English reading-matter on board, we could be usefully occupied for the next 15 days. Realising I enjoyed writing, he produced notebooks and also lent his laptop so that I could record our experiences. Whilst we continued absorbing the daily routine he gave generously of his time towards our comfort, making us aware of the facilities on board – which included a gym. He also invited us to visit the bridge whenever we wanted – what a treat and an experience! It was amazing just how quickly the hours passed and it was a good respite for Alfred when he found sleep difficult. The bridge was a spacious and businesslike area 25m above the ocean with a commanding view, its large, square windows cleaned with fresh water sprays and windscreen wipers! The array of instrumentation was mind-boggling, every piece duplicated.

'Our' rescue ladder stowed on deck

By now we were much refreshed and our minds dwelled on the reality of our future. Although relieved – and how! – that our lives had been spared, losing our home and almost everything we had hit hard. I'd also lost every diary and over 140 accounts I had written, recording our experiences over the years. And Alfred still ponders possible solutions to those rigging and steering issues. Our settled routine continued, with me finally producing an acceptable account of our rescue which Captain Bondar allowed us to print out, asking us to leave a copy on the bridge for others to read.

We were to leave MV *Bittern* in Singapore, where she was scheduled to re-victual, but it was not a matter of simply being delivered safely ashore to make our way home. For all the relevant Singapore authorities – Maritime Port Authority, Immigration, Police Coastguard, NEA Port Health Authority and British High Commission – as well as *Bittern*'s agents we were 'survivors' and, as such, were to be the subject of considerable extra administration – about which Captain Bondar up-dated us daily.

Stowed sern-lines and 'free-fall' liferaft

In spite of reporting that he was happy we were in perfect health, we were required to prove it to Immigration with written verification that our vaccinations were up to date (documentation still on *Ironhorse*!) as well as recording our temperatures daily. In fact, Alfred was in considerable pain, having broken a rib during our rescue, but since nothing could be done anyway he opted not to mention it for fear it would add to the complications. In the UK our friend Bill asked our GP to release the required medical information, which certainly smoothed our entry into Singapore.

On 2 November, the agent phoned Alfred and confirmed that we had an official limit of six days in Singapore, and required details of our flight back to the UK. Again with Bill's help, by day's end we were booked to fly out on the 18th.

Rosemarie dwarfed by anchor chain and winches

When he had time, Captain Bondar gave us guided tours of various parts of the ship, taking us out onto the different decks and explaining everything to us. He started at the muster deck, with the 'free-fall' lifeboat and communications aerials on the stern. The sandbags visible in the photo are anti-piracy and always in place, together with stacks of steel window shutters ready for use if required. (*Bittern* had carried several armed guards for much of her previous passage from the Red Sea down the East African coast to Brazil). Large rolls of galvanised razor wire, also for anti-pirate use, were kept in the bosun's store, together with two very realistic mannequins in orange overalls which are lashed on deck with 'weapons' when in or near pirate areas to increase the apparent number of armed guards!

The muster deck also held a neat garbage area, with colour-coded containers for stowage of various types of waste for collection at the next port. Everyone seemed very diligent about this. Also on the stern deck was the hospital, but unless very seriously ill or injured a patient normally remained in his own cabin.

With the deck 20m above sea level being showered with heavy spray, it was hard work battling 25 knots of wind and outside work had to be rescheduled – although one morning we changed course 45° to port for half-an-hour so that important forehatch checks could be made. (Days later, in our first tropical downpour, the Captain calmly ordered a brief change of course for its duration, in order to get the full benefit of a wash-down!) These sea conditions also delayed our tour of the fo'c's'le but eventually, having turned northeast towards the Malacca Straits, conditions improved, allowing not only for our tour but for deck-maintenance to resume.

The captain explained the water-ballasting system and how, when 'in ballast', the hatches must be ventilated before anyone entered for checking and maintenance. This was essential, because any rust sealed inside would have absorbed all the oxygen. Also along the main deck he told us how they must regularly monitor the cargo holds, which were then at capacity carrying 52,150 tons of corn from Brazil to Vietnam. The deck fittings at the bow were overwhelming, with winches as tall as we were, ropes the girth of, and anchor chain links the length of, my arm!

The engine room, on three levels, was simply 'WOW!' and very noisy, requiring ear protectors. It, too, was spotlessly clean and the engine alone was at least as big as *Ironhorse*! The statistics were mind-boggling, with an output of 8,700KW (11,666·9hp). We were moving at 10 knots, and at this 'economy speed' she used 26 tons of fuel per day – or 35 if running all out! Also in this area were the three main, magnificent diesel generators, and the steering room, with spares for everything. What an amazing area, responsible not only for propulsion but for all onboard power, air-conditioning, and fresh water production – interestingly not via reverse osmosis but via evaporation

In the engine room with the chief engineer

The reverse side of the engine with walk-in inspection hatches

and vacuum, efficient enough to provide the crew with their requirement of 15-20 tons per day! Later we saw the office shared by the first mate and the chief engineer, with its array of monitors mostly relating to the cargo sealed in the holds – checking its security, temperature, air state and stability.

One evening the genial chef showed us his voluminous galley, complete with refrigeration and storage areas where meat, fish, vegetables and dry goods were all kept separately. His budget was US $5000 per month for a crew of 20 men, and if in a port with good prices and good quality he stocked up as much as space allowed – the current meat supply had been loaded in Durban en route to Brazil. It was obvious the captain also cared for his crew, organising two birthday celebrations as well as a 'Crossing the Line' ceremony for the newest young officer, breaks in the ship's routine much enjoyed by all.

After a night of lightning, Sunday 8 November dawned calm and pleasant (but much hotter outside by now). The clock continued to advance another hour every three days as we moved east. In mid-morning an alarm sounded, and we found ourselves participating in a fire drill followed later by an abandon ship drill – a monthly requirement.

Now officially clear of the piracy area, at dawn on 9 November Alfred woke me with "Land Ahoy!" as *Bittern* entered the Northern Malacca Straits. We had come full circle, having left there with *Ironhorse* in March! Back in familiar territory, but in one of the busiest shipping bottlenecks in the world, and until *Bittern* was anchored in Singapore it was total concentration and 'all hands on deck' for safe navigation. VHF activity increased hugely as we closed Malaysia's biggest port, Klang, which serves its capital, where the radar showed 37 ships within a six mile radius.

The chief engineer and a colleague explain engine room monitors

Captain Bondar had hardly appeared the previous day, confining himself to his cabin to apply himself to all the administration required for arrival, and confirming arrangements for replacement parts, repairs, stores, and exchange of crew. Soon he would be in contact with Singapore Port, to arrange for the pilot who would guide *Bittern* to anchor.

Before docking we were touched to receive from captain a personalised Russian calendar he had prepared for us using photographs of us with *Bittern*'s crew – a delightful memento of our time on board. It had been an exceptional and unforgettable experience which very few people would ever have. We could not have asked for a more comfortable situation in which to consider our circumstances and ponder our future. There was also no doubt that it was a positive distraction from the reason we were there.

By early afternoon *Bittern* was finally at anchor – frustratingly close to Changi Yacht Club where we were to spend the next few days. Whilst the crew immediately turned to loading awaiting supplies, we were introduced to the company's agent who had been in constant touch with everyone involved, even those standing by to meet us. He had certainly covered all eventualities on our behalf.

Bittern's lengthy administration began in earnest with ours commencing many hours later, involving finger-printing, questioning, and all our papers checked. Only then could clearance with the British High Commission be completed, after which we could leave *Bittern*. This took another two hours. Finally we were led down the ladder to board the agent's launch. What a great pang of sadness we felt as Captain Bondar and his crew waved goodbye. They had become almost family to us, yet realistically we would be unlikely to ever meet them again.

How we counted our blessings as we were whisked away from the sturdy, memorable MV *Bittern*.

THE ATLANTIC FROM A TO Z
Rachel Westwood

(*Rachel made the 2830 mile passage from Tenerife to Antigua with her parents, Steve and Sheryl, aboard their Aphrodite 42* Emma Louise. *By March 2017 Steve and Sheryl had reached Tahiti and were about to continue west to the Cook Islands. They hoped to be in New Zealand by the end of the year.)*

Arriving in Tenerife on Saturday 24th November 2012 I was greeted by my disgustingly brown and healthy-looking parents who, to add insult to injury, had both lost weight since I last saw them in September. Apparently the cruising life was treating them well, and their separation from their dearly beloved children (the youngest of whom is a very tender 24 and liable to suffer issues in later life concerning abandonment) were clearly not causing them the heartache and trauma that any self-respecting offspring would expect. Gripes aside, it was pretty good to see them, especially given that I'd left a miserable, grey London that was getting steadily colder and wetter by the day. That having been said, there isn't much that's wetter than the Atlantic Ocean ... but it's all relative, at least the water wasn't falling from the sky and I didn't have to contend with miserable, bedraggled commuters on the tube. Rather than a blow by blow account (too much to remember and not sure how interesting 'saw lots of sea, had corned beef hash for tea, Dad a bit annoying' would be) I give you instead the Westwoods' A-Z of sailing the Atlantic. Read the bits you want, don't bother with the rest.

Atlantic Ocean: Westwoods 1 – Atlantic Ocean 0! Taking a route approximately halfway between the middle and southern, we headed southwest from the Canaries for five days, and then routed west at about 21°N for the rest of the trip. Twenty days, 2800 miles sailed and an average speed of just over 6 knots – not bad going and what made the skipper especially happy was that a 54ft Oyster took 22. He had to restrain himself from rubbing his hands together with glee.

Briefing: The safety briefing was pretty straightforward – 'don't fall in and if you do, yell like hell' and 'avoid getting a shark up your arse', were the wise words of Dad and Mum respectively, and filled me with confidence that this was going to be smooth sailing. In the skipper's defence he also showed me how to set off the EPIRB and probably would have briefed me further if he thought either (a) I'd have paid enough attention for it to be of any use, or (b) there was any chance I could have been helpful had anything happened to him. As it was, we'd have been helpless. And he knew it.

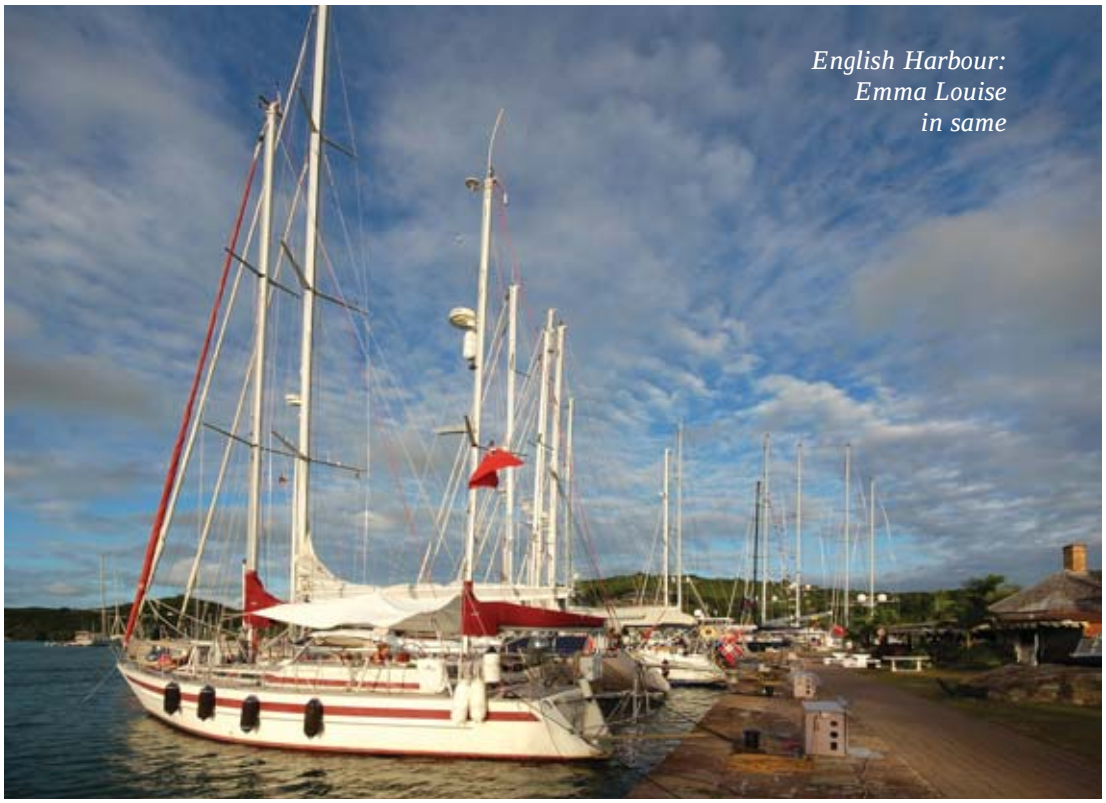
Culinary Matters: The crossing was predicted to last 2½ to 3 weeks, so of course they needed to stock up accordingly. Instead they had catered for the nuclear holocaust and then some. It opened a whole new (unwelcome) world of the variety of foodstuffs that can be tinned or pickled. Ingeniously, and in order to keep track of everything, Mum had stuck a yellow sticky note on the inside of every cupboard door with a list of the culinary treats that you could find within – 'mystery meat' being a favourite, categorised by either white or red variety. As you diminished the tin supply you were obliged to cross it off from the list. Failure to do so could result in quarrelling (see separate entry).

Culinary Matters: Stocked for sea

Given the rolling (see separate entry) motion of the crossing the skipper took all cheffing duties on himself. This impressively included fresh bread, pizza from scratch and even cakes, to the delight of the crew. The skipper maintained that good food was crucial for keeping up morale and a good way to organise the day. The crew were not going to argue with that.

Dolphins: Seen on one occasion at sunset, when they swam alongside for twenty minutes keeping us entertained. True show-offs, when we stopped paying full attention (drinks had arrived) they started leaping clear of the water in the style of an attention-seeking child.

English Harbour: Our first port of call, the historic Nelson's Dockyard in English Harbour, Antigua. If you want to know more, Wikipedia will oblige. This isn't a history lesson.



English Harbour: Emma Louise in same

Flying Fish:
The author's father
with the catch of the day

Flying fish: As well as being a spectacle to watch, they make good eating! The only positive to come out of 'disaster Friday' (see Mishaps) was that the out-of-action sail, now tied to the foredeck, proved an effective net for trapping flying fish as they whizzed over the boat (typically at night). The skipper tried to claim that this was a successful fishing attempt. The crew weren't having it. He did, however, fry them up with a bit of ginger and served them on fresh bread and butter. Delicious.

Green Flash: Reported to occur on a clear evening with the sun setting into the sea, the green flash was keenly awaited as we supped sundowners (see separate entry) but always managed to elude us. Most of the crew are now convinced that it may actually be just a myth, but the skipper remains convinced (and reports to have seen them on numerous occasions since then).

H_2O: We were surrounded by the salty variety and had to ration the fresh as we could only carry 500 litres. Which meant three showers in just under three weeks (eugh) and hair that defied gravity given its salt content. Unfortunately, despite my whining, the skipper was proved justified when, on the last morning while approaching English Harbour (see separate entry), we ran out. Had the worst happened we could have drunk the water from the multitude of tinned vegetables – I'm sure pea juice would have been both hydrating and tasty. Or not.

I Spy: The skipper was unsure how much diesel we had, so films were a no go. After two weeks of continuous reading there are few things that will keep you amused, and Mum and I decided to try 'I spy'. 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with ... S'. 'Sky' – 'No' – 'Sea' – 'No' – 'Sun' – 'Yes'. We felt we had the game sorted until

Dad asked whether he could play. 'I'm going to try something different – this could be metaphysical'. We didn't know what metaphysical was ... got bored ... the game ended and was never played again.

Jumpers: were not required (ha, ha). Bar a couple of nights at the beginning, days were spent in shorts and T-shirts. Perfect apart from the tan lines that make you look like you've been dipped in brown paint up to your thighs.

Kindles: The saviour of the first mate and the deck hand, who managed to avoid hours of threatened boredom. The skipper kept himself amused by constantly finding things to do on the boat or playing with his drum kit (all drinks cans were bashed flat to save space). Likened to a puppy, he found endless enthusiasm for a thousand jobs and a constant need to be moving around. And like a puppy a pat on the head often led to a wag of the tail.

Learning: Ever the educator, the skipper was keen to show me the ropes (excuse the pun). Overhand, round turn and two half-hitches, reef, figure-of-eight and bowline (kind of) are now all part of my knot-tying repertoire. Not sure how handy being able to tie a reef knot behind my back will be in my London office job, but should I ever join the Scouts I'll be golden. Star constellations and nautical terms (see Official language) were also favourite topics.

Mishaps: Despite the trade winds behaving as expected there were a few incidents that we could have done without. 'Disaster Friday' was six days in. The skipper was

Learning: The author learning the ropes

trying to get the (brand new!) jib down and hadn't noticed that it had got jammed, and when it came free it flew backwards, tangling itself in the wind generator on the mizzen mast. The sail ripped so as not to be usable and we missed the best sunset of the trip. As if we hadn't had enough, about an hour later (after a subdued dinner) the wind generator started making a lot of noise. By then it was dark, so the skipper got a torch to investigate. It turned out that in the sail/generator fight, and despite the rip, the wind generator had come off worst and was now hanging from a single bracket and threatening to fall at any moment. And so, safety lines attached, the skipper scaled the mast, in the dark and amid rolling seas, to secure the bugger (both wind generator brand name and apt for the occasion). Pretty darn impressive for an old bloke – put me in mind of an ageing action man.

Mishaps: The broken wind generator

Our other notable mishap occurred in the 24 hours in which we also made the most progress, averaging over 7·5 knots. But the wind proved too much for the sail configuration and the pole holding out the genoa during the night watch. 'Less haste more speed' was the lesson of the day.

Night shifts: All watches were split into three-hour shifts, starting at midnight. During the day it was informal, but at night you were on your own. The skipper woke me, I woke the first mate, etc – which meant I hated skipper, the first mate hated me, etc. Apart from being woken up, night shifts were a great opportunity to star gaze. The Milky Way was visible if the sky was clear, and a meteorite shower produced so many shooting stars we lost count. It also provided a sense of perfect solitude and the opportunity to reflect and be truly introspective if the mood took you. Fortunately for you, it didn't.

Official language: When on a boat (yacht) speak like you're on a boat. No more left/right, it's all about port/starboard. No more upstairs/downstairs, it's above and below deck to you, missy. No more 'Dad', it's 'Mister skipper, sir.' Okay, so the last one not even Dad tried to implement. He'd have faced either mockery or mutiny from his crew, neither being desirable, best to understand the limits of your authority. Conveniently forgetting the nautical terms: 'can you grab my sunglasses, they're downstairs in the lounge to the right in the desk' is an entertaining version of Poke the Bear (see next entry).

Sundowners

Poke the Bear: A great game to pass the time in a confined space. Pick a topic you know will wind one of your crewmates up and start to 'poke'. The rules are very simple, if they rise to it you win. Of course they don't know that you're playing, and the threat of violence in response to your goading is always a possibility (see next entry).

The author's parents, Sheryl and Steve

Zzzzz: The author 'on watch' (see overleaf)

Quarrelling: Surprisingly little, given the confined space and proximity of a small family group. Dad only threatened to stab me (he was careful to emphasise with a knife) once. Given the circumstances I think that's pretty good going, and that he didn't carry out his threat, even better.

Rolling: The biggest cause for complaint for transatlantic crews is the motion of the ocean (not a euphemism). The almost continual rolling makes it difficult to move, cook, eat and sleep, as well as being responsible for a myriad of bruises and the grumpiness of the crew.

Sundowners: An alcoholic beverage to be consumed as the sun goes down. Beer and wine both get a mention, but the ever trusty G&T as usual comes up trumps. Being ever vigilant and not being advocates of drunk driving quantities were kept modest, but it's a ritual that I'm going to bring home with me, albeit one that has to be restricted to the summer months unless I'm going to keep a hip flask under my desk at work.

Tenerife: Our port of origin and last view of civilisation – not to mention the last opportunity I had for rethinking three weeks at sea with only the parentals for company. As it faded into the horizon I had to question my sanity. At least I knew I wasn't going to starve.

UHT Milk: My parents tried to poison me with it.

Vomming: Official term for being sick, vomiting, chucking your guts up, etc. Thankfully incidents were low (a dodgy olive put Mum off for the rest of the trip) and kept to the first couple of days. After that, and once sea legs were acquired, business went on as normal.

Celebrating our arrival in Antigua

Whales: 'thar she blows' was called just once during the trip, exactly halfway across, when a pilot whale and her calf joined us for over three hours, providing unofficial encouragement. After doing the official recce Mum stayed a couple of hundred feet away, but baby stayed close to the boat, popping up every now and again for a quick hello.

X marks the spot: We didn't find any treasure but there's bound to be some. It's a pretty big ocean.

Yacht: The old girl did us proud. She kept us warm, dry and safe for the duration with only the occasional protest if we pushed her too hard. She's named after two pretty impressive women though, so she did have something to live up to.*

Zzzzz: Napping is key to any successful trip when you're running shifts, and I was the undisputed queen. Golden blanket striven for and achieved!

* Editor's note: one of the women in question is the author, Rachel Emma, and the other her sister, Heather Louise.

I know who you are, but you'll have to wipe your feet.

Captain Richard Brown of the schooner *America* to Prince Albert of England, 1851

THE OCEAN CRUISING CLUB – how it began Admiral Humphrey Barton

(*Mrs Pat Pocock, daughter of our founder Humphrey Barton – who was elected the Club's first Admiral in 1960 – came upon some notes her father had made about the beginnings of our Club and thought current members might be interested to read them.*

Towards the end of the Inaugural Meeting, Hum (as he was always known) asked those present "to enlist all the new members they could, and said that if everyone put into the Club a little more than they took out of it, it was sure to be a great success". Sixty-three years later the message remains unchanged!)

In 1953 I had nearly finished writing a book entitled *Atlantic Adventurers*, which was published twice in England and once in France. It was about the small craft which had crossed the North Atlantic, starting with *Red White & Blue* in 1866. It took me three years to collect the stories and I kept down the overall length of the boats to 30 feet.

It then occurred to me to start a club for those who had crossed the North Atlantic in small craft but, after some thought, I decided that this would not be fair to those who had made remarkable voyages across other oceans and I finally decided on a minimum distance of 1000 miles in a craft with a maximum length of 70 feet. I arrived at the latter figure as the 70ft yacht *Latifa* had crossed the North Atlantic and several of my friends were on board. I then wrote to the English yachting magazines asking anyone who had qualified and was interested to write to me, and I received 30–40 replies.

I did not then quite know what to do next, but one day when in Southampton I met my old friend, and publisher, Adlard Coles, and told him about my idea. He thought for a moment and then said, "I suggest you write to the Secretary of the RNVR Club at 38 Hill Street, London, and tell him about it and ask him if you can have the big room upstairs for one evening. It has a bar attached."

So I wrote to the Secretary and hired the room for the evening of 27th January 1954, and sent a letter to all those who seemed to be interested. I also wrote to the Editors of the *Daily Telegraph* and the yachting magazines, telling them about the meeting. The former sent Mr Dickin, sub editor, and Edward Haylock, the editor of *Yachting World*, whom I was so pleased to meet once again, was also kind enough to come. I knew I would need these two as scrutineers. My lady typist and I drove to London from Lymington. She took a typewriter with her and I explained to her what I expected to happen and what I wanted her to do.

It all went according to plan. Having made a brief speech I asked if those present were keen that a cruising club for amateur ocean voyagers should be formed, the qualification to be a 1000 mile non-stop passage in a craft not more than 70 feet overall, and to this they all agreed. I suggested the name should be the Ocean Cruising Club, but no definite decision was made. I asked if anyone had any ideas as regards a burgee and someone put forward the idea of a flying fish. That was agreed and I asked Colin Mudie to draw one. I suggested a yellow fish on a blue background with a yellow fly, and this colour scheme was approved, but it was to be confirmed in due course by the Committee.

I then said that we would have to form a Committee, and proposed that 12 should be the number and asked for volunteers. Eight offered their services and my secretary took down their names. I went on to say that I was a member of about six English and Irish yacht clubs, that I had carefully perused the Rules of each and had extracted what I thought would be a suitable set for our new Club. I thought that we could leave the finalising of the Rules to the next Committee Meeting, which would be in about a month's time, followed thereafter by one every month during the winter and none in summer. This was agreed.

"We shall need three Flag Officers", I said. "A Commodore, a Vice Commodore and a Rear Commodore, and you have the eight members who have already volunteered to serve on the Committee from whom to elect these officers. This is to be a secret ballot and my secretary is now typing out the voting slips. You will soon get one each and on them please mark your choice. The scrutineers will be Group Captain Haylock and Mr Dickin, the sub editor of the *Daily Telegraph*. It will take a few minutes and, in the meantime, the drinks are on me." I opened the door to the bar and a steward came in and took their orders.

Within ten minutes or so the scrutineers were going through the voting slips and soon Group Captain Haylock got to his feet and announced the results. I was elected Commodore, and my good friends Lt Col Scholfield and Colin Mudie Vice Commodore and Rear Commodore. On returning to Lymington I asked my old friend, Mostyn Williams, who for several years had been Secretary of the Royal Lymington Yacht Club, if he would like to take on the job of Secretary of the new Club which I had just formed, and this he was delighted to do.

So that is how it all began. Now there are members of many nationalities, and I have been proud to fly my Admiral's flag at a very large number of ports on both sides of the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean since I was promoted from Commodore in early 1960.

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Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Ocean Cruising Club held at the RNVR Club, London on 27th January 1954

Mr Barton took the chair and explained the aims and objects of the proposed Club. A proposal was made by him that such a Club should be formed with the aims and objects as set out in the draft Rules, and this was passed unanimously. The name was discussed but no definite decision was arrived at.

A copy of the proposed Rules was handed to members. They were passed in principle, with the exception as regards the name. They are to be carefully considered by the Committee, who will seek legal advice if necessary, and be re-submitted for final approval at the next Annual General Meeting.

The following members offered to serve on the Committee:

Mr WIB Crealock	Mr C Mudie
Lt Cmdr AG Hamilton, RN	Lt Col RGF Scholfield
Mr WB Howell	Mr HI Hughes
Mr GB Heywood	Mr HDE Barton

As the number did not exceed the fifteen allowed by the Rules no ballot was necessary.

A secret ballot was then held to elect the three Flag Officers, the scrutineers being Gp Capt E Haylock and Mr Dickin (both non-members). The results were announced by the former and were as follows:

Commodore	Mr Humphrey DE Barton
Vice Commodore	Lt Col RGF Scholfield
Rear Commodore	Mr Colin Mudie

The Commodore thanked the members for electing him. He said that it was a great honour and that he would do his best for the Club. He asked members to enlist all the new members they could, and said that if everyone put into the Club a little more than they took out of it, it was sure to be a great success.

The question of the design for a burgee and tie were discussed and the matter referred to the Committee.

The Commodore then thanked the RNVR Officers Association for allowing the use of their Club and granting temporary membership to all those present. The official proceedings then terminated.

GREENLAND 2017
Rear Commodore Simon Currin

(Shimshal II *was launched in 2006, commissioned by Simon and Sally to take them around the world in comfort and safety. Built by CR Yachts Sweden AB, she is a 48ft (14·6m) cutter, with 14ft 8in (4·5m) beam and 7ft 3in (2·2m) draught.*

She left Scotland in 2015 and spent the next two winters in Iceland, with future plans including further time in Greenland before continuing to Canada and the USA. Follow Shimshal's *travels at https://voyagesofshimshal.blogspot.pt/p/blog-page.html.)*

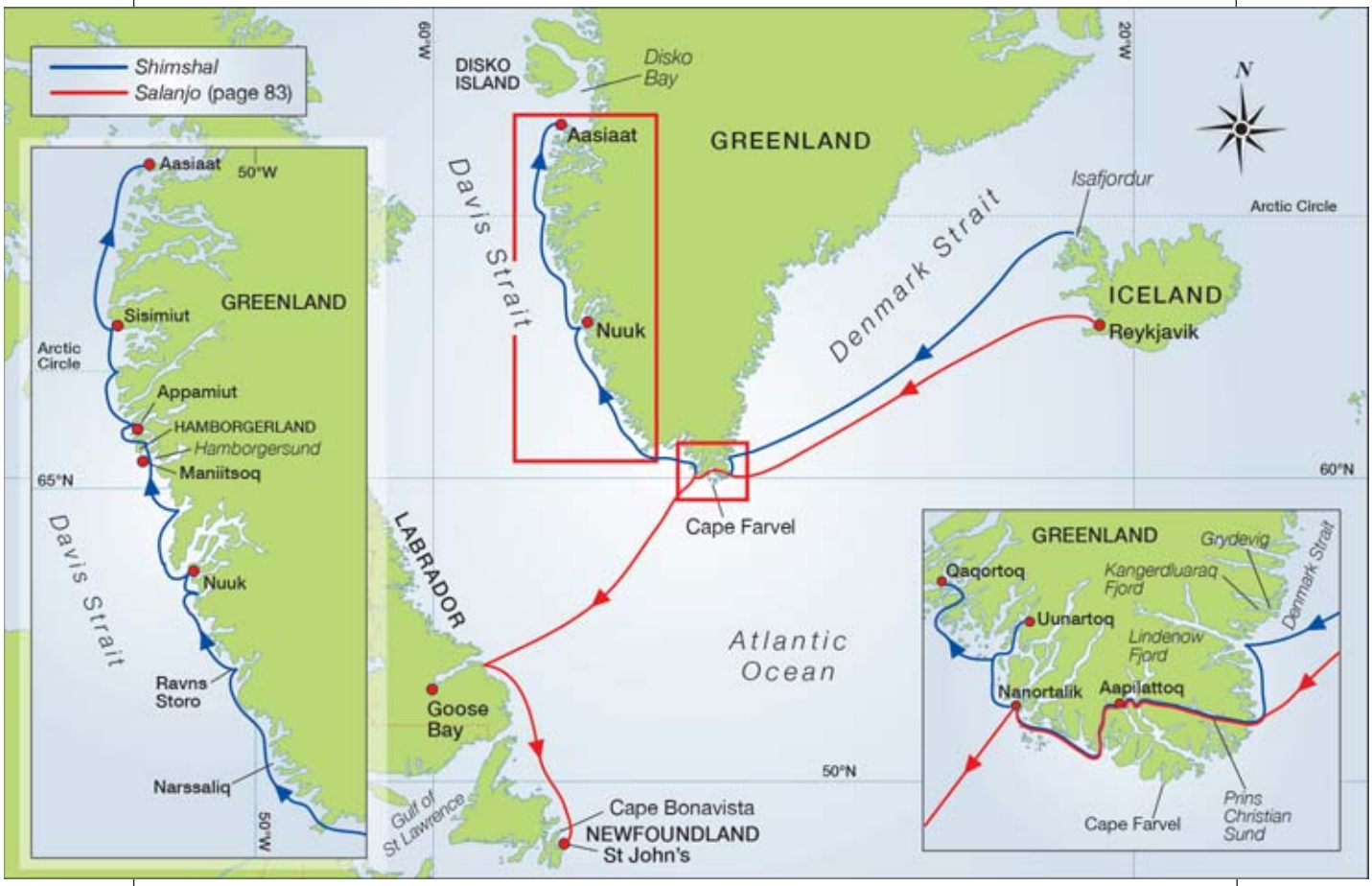
We always knew that the ice would ultimately determine the nature of our 2017 Greenlandic cruise, and had hoped for a repetition of the previous summer when the whole coast of East Greenland was ice free by mid July. We had calculated that with the seven weeks we had available we might do a grand tour of Greenland's east and west coasts, leaving *Shimshal* in the care of Aasiaat Shipyard on the southern shores of Disko Bay to endure an arctic winter at 68°42'N.

Rear Commodore Simon Currin

However, close scrutiny of ice charts in June and July revealed that 2017 was going to be a return to more 'normal' ice conditions. We rejoined *Shimshal* in Ísafjörður, Iceland, where a handful of rugged, high-latitude boats were mustering for their own Greenland adventures. Amongst them was the beautifully crafted SV *Destiny* and her OCC owners Andy and Janice Fennymore-White. Between them they had lavished extraordinary care and attention into building their deluxe, aluminium, go-anywhere home in the Arctic.* Our plans had initially coincided with theirs but, with more time available, they could afford to await better ice conditions on the east coast.

We decided to aim for a direct passage to Prins Christian Sund and forgo our cherished trip down the east coast. Before cruising south, though, the crews of *Destiny* and *Shimshal* took their polar bear self-protection guns to a hilltop rifle range and blasted

* See *You're not Sailors, are you?* by Andrew and Janice Fennymore-White, page 191.


Shimshal
Salanjo (page 83)
60°W
DISKO ISLAND
Disko Bay
Aasiaat
GREENLAND
20°W
N
Isafjordur
Arctic Circle
Davis Strait
Denmark Strait
ICELAND
Nuuk
Reykjavik
60°N
Cape Farvel
LABRADOR
Atlantic Ocean
50°N
Goose Bay
Gulf of St Lawrence
Cape Bonavista
NEWFOUNDLAND
St John's
50°W
Aasiaat
GREENLAND
Sisimiut
Arctic Circle
Appamiut
HAMBORGERLAND
Hamborgersund
Maniitsoq
65°N
Davis Strait
Nuuk
Ravns Storo
Narssaliq
GREENLAND
Grydevig
Qaqortoq
Kangerdluarag Fjord
Denmark Strait
Uunartoq
Lindenow Fjord
Nanortalik
Aapilattoq
Cape Farvel
Prins Christian Sund

Shimshal at Grydevig

away at some targets. As with boat preparation, the crew of *Shimshal* was considerably outgunned by the crew of *Destiny*.

Our ice-enforced change of plan happily meant that our cruise was now synchronised with that of SV *Alchemy*. Dick and Ginger Stevenson had chosen to sail back to North America via Greenland and were awaiting a weather slot for the crossing of the Denmark Strait some 200 miles south of us in Reykjavik. Independently, we both chose the same promising weather slot for the 620 mile passage southwest, even though both crews knew that Prins Christian Sund was still closed by ice. Both boats had near-perfect conditions, with a northeasterly breeze pushing us along that dropped away to nothing for our arrival on Greenland's remote, icebound coast.

And from shore level…

Simon and Sally (Shimshal), and Ginger and Dick (Alchemy)

On passage we received daily ice updates by e-mail from our long-suffering friend on vacation in Mallorca. By day he built sandcastles with his kids but by night, with a glass of merlot in hand, he sat by the swimming pool culling the internet for satellite photos and ice charts and sent them on to us in a suitably compressed format.

With a couple of hundred miles to go it became evident that our hoped-for improvement in the ice wasn't happening as fast as we could have wished – we had received a helicopter photograph of the eastern end of Prins Christian Sund that clearly showed it clogged with 9/10 ice. On *Shimshal* we pondered whether to turn south and abandon any attempt at a landfall on the east coast, heading instead for a distant waypoint 100 miles south of Cape Farvel. But poring over the plethora of fresh images and charts we had on board, we spied a 15 mile ice-free section of coast about 30 miles north of Prins Christian Sund, so altered course for a little-known anchorage in Kangerdluaraq Fjord called Grydevig.

The wind disappeared as we closed the fabulously spectacular coastline, just as PredictWind had said it would. Sadly fog rolled in minutes before we entered the fjord, so we went 5 miles back offshore and hove-to ... where we had to endure being drifted south with the icebergs at 2 knots by the frigid East Greenland Current. A glorious sunrise was our reward as we motored north to regain the miles lost to the current overnight. Tentatively we poked our nose into the uncharted fjord and dodged our way through a conveyor-belt of icebergs all marching, like gleaming warriors, against us. This was picture-perfect Greenland lit up by the early morning sun.

The anchorage was strewn with ice and it was a struggle to manoeuvre ourselves into

Towing away icebergs

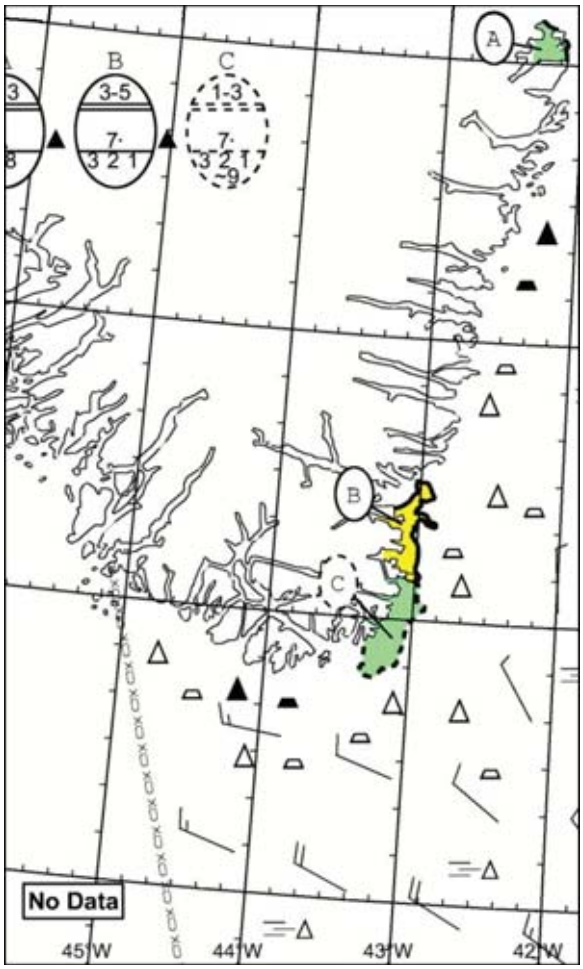
a suitable spot. In the end we dropped the anchor in 26m and reversed into a narrow, stony gap, stopping ourselves from swinging with four stout lines ashore. These created a perfect web to lure in passing ice, and we spent much of our time in the following days dealing with these over-friendly beasts. We invented new ways of taming them, the most successful of which was to lasso them and haul them, with improvised block and tackle, to a nearby rock where we tied them off until they slipped their noose and came back for more of the same punishment. One iceberg, which we named Houdini, escaped three times before we let him go on our last day. A bit of him lived on in our deep freeze though, to cool the drinks aboard – an icy remnant and reminder of a slippery customer whom we now think of with affection. Cheers, Houdini!

Poling off Houdini

Sally prepared for the elements

Nursing our mosquito bites, and exhausted by the long passage and the uncertainty of such a challenging landfall, we collapsed into our bunks. Our sleep however was broken by the VHF which proclaimed, "*Shimshal*, *Shimshal* this is *Alchemy*". We had e-mailed Dick and Ginger news of our safe arrival and they were following us in. Thus began an impossibly remote and impromptu OCC rendezvous and cruise in company. For six days we enjoyed perfect weather in that wonderfully spectacular fjord whilst we got daily

Fog and ice on Greenland's southwest coast



1-3/10 ice around the entrance to Prins Christian Sund on 6th August

ice updates. Finally both crews figured that, by going offshore, we could avoid the 2-4/10 ice blocking the Lindenow Fjord, and then squeeze in through the less dense 1-3/10 ice obscuring the eastern approach to Prins Christian Sund.

We left the anchorage with *Shimshal* in the lead and *Alchemy* close behind. There was now much less ice around than when we had arrived a week earlier, but nevertheless, as we passed the southern shores of Lindenow Fjord, it presented a seemingly impenetrable barrier. Our hearts sank. Were we, after all, going to be forced to do that long haul south to clear the icy and infamously stormy Cape Farvel?

We persevered, and gradually the ice thinned a little until, with our hearts racing, we turned at right-angles into the pack-ice towards the weather-smoothed rocky ramparts of the Sound's eastern approach. Mercifully the wind and the seas did not complicate our passage and we were able to dodge and weave our way through to gain the entrance. It was with considerable relief that we dropped the anchor off the famous weather station. Ice prevented us docking, so we went ashore by dinghy and enjoyed internet and coffee with the resident work party. The lonely station has not been permanently manned since 2016.

Harebells

Maniitsoq

Meanwhile, emboldened by their recent icy encounters and with airline connections to make, Alchemy raced ahead with the tide through the narrows at considerable speed. Shimshal caught up with her again in fog-bound Nanortalik and then again in Qaqortoq before finally parting company. We still had to negotiate 700 miles of intricate pilotage up the west coast to Shimshal's icy wintering spot, while Dick and Ginger had a narrowing weather slot to cross to Newfoundland. It had been an enchanting and memorable encounter.

Sadly the fog dominated the next few days of *Shimshal*'s voyage. There were memorable sunny spots such as the delightful and spectacular hot springs at Uunartoq and the wonderful morning we spent ashore at Ravns Storo. Mainly, though, we were threading our way northwards through the plethora of rocks, islands and islets that make

The Eternal Fjord

Anchored at Appamiut in Hamborgersund

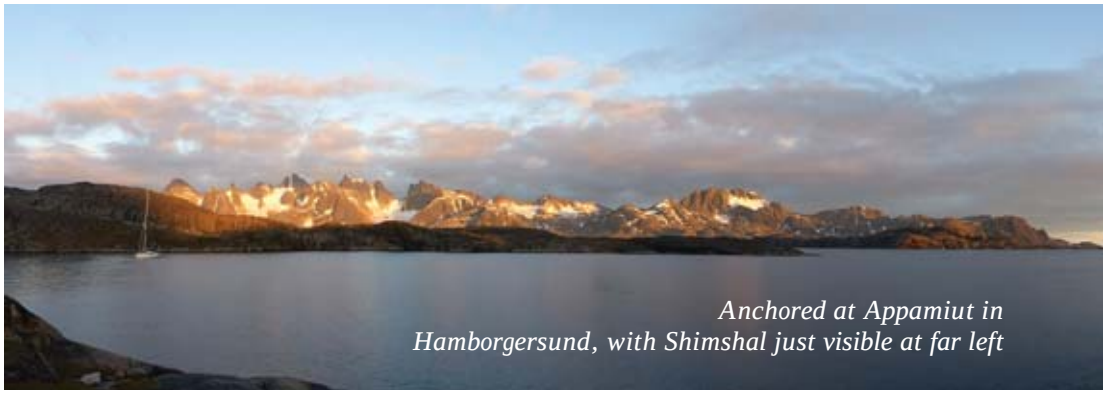
up Greenland's inner leads. Often the visibility was less than 100m, which tested our nerves and our concentration. Mostly the charts were pretty good, but our voyage was punctuated by periods of intense anxiety when the sounder, unpredictably, shallowed to dangerous and uncharted depths. Cruising here is not for the faint-hearted.

In southwest Greenland our nights at anchor were usually disturbed by a nudge from an inquisitive growler. This would inevitably evoke a response with our jousting pole and comical scenes according to the night attire worn! Often the mosquitoes also chose these moments of preoccupation to pounce, leaving the skipper's bared legs peppered with bites.

The ice from the east coast gets pushed around Cape Farvel and then back up the west coast. The big calving glaciers in the northwest send their ice north, whereupon it spins south to the coasts of Baffin Island and Labrador. As we gained Greenland's middle latitudes the icebergs, therefore, became scarce and so we were emboldened to make some overnight passages a few miles off shore, albeit at a reduced speed for fear of collision.

We paused at Bangs Havn, Narssaliq and the ruined Faroese fishing station at Ravns Storo before a glorious dawn approach to Nuuk, with swirls of mist streaking the sunlit mountains. After a couple of days of internet, museums and rest we pressed north again to Torvqussaq, Maniitsoq and the Eternal Fjord. Whilst keen to explore the massive network of fjords reaching deep into Greenland, we had to keep an eye on the advancing season as we had flights booked home – and to work – on 2 September, and had to allow time to put *Shimshal* to bed in Aasiaat for the harsh Arctic winter. There she would be ashore but frozen-in until May at the earliest.

The scenic feast really began as we sailed through Hamborgersund and tucked into the stunning anchorage at Appamiut. Ashore we were rewarded with the perfect panorama of glaciated rocky peaks that was Hamborgerland, glistening in the afternoon sun. At last the drone was deployed and we made a spectacular video of this breathtakingly beautiful place. It is claimed to be Greenland's most beautiful anchorage, but those of us lucky enough to have been to Scoresby Sound could probably just about trump it with Jettys Havn on Bear Island. Nevertheless, that sunlit evening was a highlight of our summer's cruise.



Anchored at Appamiut in Hamborgersund, with Shimshal just visible at far left

Our final port for the season was Aasiaat, the capital of North Greenland. We crept into the shipyard's dock at low tide with a minuscule amount of water under the keel. We were booked to haul out for the winter, and were delighted to meet Martina and Michael Haferkamp whose exquisitely-prepared high-latitude cruiser *Polaris* was also booked to overwinter in the yard. They are veterans of ten seasons in Greenland, and Michael has made some astonishing drone video and photographs of their arctic adventures. Remarkable people in remarkable places.

Our 2017 cruise had been wonderfully remote, challenging and spectacular but, as is usual, it had been made all the more memorable by the boats and their crews we met and with whom we shared some of those experiences. We had only come to know about the presence and plans of fellow OCC boats through the OCC Fleet Map and Forum. We had used the Club's Facebook page to source charts, and we had searched the Club's database to compile a comprehensive dossier of OCC writings, wisdom and experiences to inform our cruise. Having spent so long working on the Club's digital resources, it was very satisfying for me to see them add such zest to our summer cruise.

Berthed alongside Polaris ready for haulout at Aasiaat (with a wreck protecting our stern)

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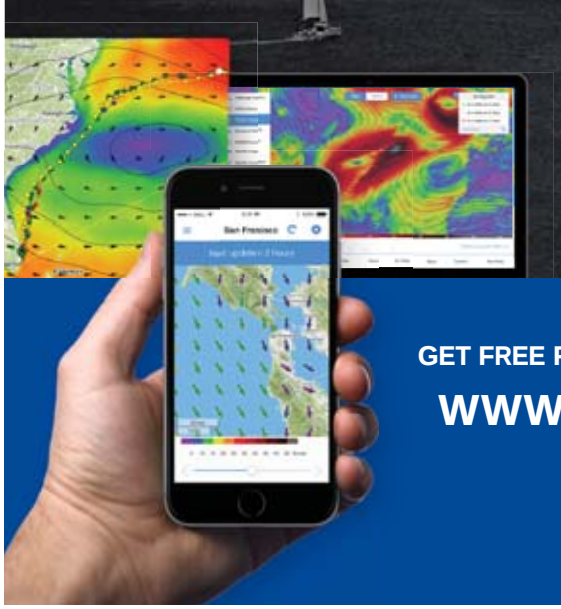

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TALEISIN'S TALES – Lin and Larry Pardey. Published in soft covers by Pardey Publications [www.landlpardey.com] at £14.53, US $18.95 and NZ $35.00. 189 150mm x 229mm pages, with many colour photos, chart excerpts etc. ISBN 978-1-9292-1411-2. Also available for Kindle

Having written several cruising narratives during their circumnavigation aboard *Serrafyn*, after they built and launched *Taleisin* Lin and Larry concentrated mainly on how-to-do-it books and videos. These included *Storm Tactics Handbook*, *The Self-sufficient Sailor*, *The Capable Cruiser*, *The Care and Feeding of Sailing Crew* and *The Cost Conscious Cruiser*, all still in print and nearly all reviewed in these pages over the years. Then in 2011 Lin returned to the narrative genre with *Bull Canyon*, the story of how the 29ft *Taleisin* was built 60 miles inland from the coast. It concludes with her truck-ride to Newport Beach for launching.

Probably more a book for dipping into than for reading from cover to cover, *Taleisin's Tales* picks up where *Bull Canyon* left off, with the launching of *Taleisin* on 31 October 1983, and follows the three of them as they head south to Mexico, then across the South Pacific to New Zealand where they established a permanent 'home-base' – all without the security-blanket of an inboard engine. The Pardeys have always been champions of the 'keep it simple' mode of cruising, while also enjoying attainable levels of comfort – a philosophy which comes through in Lin's description of showering in the specially-constructed tub beneath the companionway, complete with foot-pumped hot water. In the same way, and without any attempt to preach, advice on sound seamanship is unselfconsciously included in passing whenever relevant.

Each of the nine chapters, other than the first, carries a section from the relevant chart, with *Taleisin*'s track clearly marked in blue though some of the chart details are necessarily so small as to be almost illegible. It's necessary to turn right to the back, however – pages 188 and 189 – to see her entire route, together with her later passages including her 16-year circumnavigation concluded in 2010. Scope for several more volumes there!

Lin has a gift for lively writing, which does full justice to the islands they visit and, particularly, to the many people they meet along the way, both local and fellow cruisers. There is no doubting their gift for friendship and empathy with people of all ages and from very different backgrounds, who invariably welcomed them with open hearts. It's very good to know – see *Sweet Carolines*, page **5** – that at least in the less-visited archipelagos this is often still the case. That Lin and Larry always kept comprehensive logs and journals is clear from the detailed descriptions of incidents which occurred well over thirty years ago, though one assumes the many verbatim conversations must have been largely reconstructed.

Taleisin's Tales is very definitely a 'feel-good' book, illustrated by many colour photos, all of which must have been digitised from prints or transparencies taken at the time. Unfortunately many have come out rather dark, which is a great pity as the scenes they depict are often fascinating. Sadly they do let down the otherwise high quality production.

Taleisin's Tales will be of particular interest to those either planning to follow the same route or already familiar with it, and for the rest of us it perfectly fits the age-old description of 'a jolly good read'. I look forward to further volumes!

AOMH

SURVEYING METAL CRAFT and SURVEYING WOOD CRAFT – Ian Nicolson. Both published in soft covers by the International Institute of Marine Surveying [www.iims.org.uk] at £25.00. 64 and 54 148mm x 210mm pages respectively, including 21 and 12 full-page diagrams. ISBNs 978-1-9110-5812-0 and 978-1-9110-5804-5

These twin volumes are published by the International Institute of Marine Surveying for their members and intending surveyors. Any prospective metal or wooden boat owner can learn from the accumulated experience of a lifetime of owning, sailing and surveying these craft. Successive chapters review tools used (rather more complex for steel craft), the limitations of any survey and the pitfalls of litigation.

The construction of wooden and metal vessels is dealt with in a logical sequence, with tips and wrinkles abounding on every page. The first 20 or 30 pages will hold no surprises for those familiar with Ian's books – immaculate line drawings which easily orientate the novice to the basics of construction.

The author rightly stresses that the vessel must be soundly built initially, and suggests a blueprint for this based on strength and prevention of deterioration of the structure. She must have been well-maintained, and the rule that the more awkward it is to get at, the less likely it is to have been maintained, is stressed.

Wooden boats will often be old, and many traditional aspects of construction – ie. wooden masts – are covered in surprising detail, refreshing to a traditionalist but initially frightening to a prospective owner only familiar with alloy spars.

Electrolysis can kill steel boats, but gets little mention in the metal volume and rather more in the wood! Almost all the headings could merit a book on their own, but Ian has covered all the basics well. His philosophy comes through on every page – the surveyor's responsibility to owners to prevent unsuitable or unseaworthy vessels going to sea. The warning to surveyors is to prevent litigation; the warning to those commissioning surveys is that they are not infallible. Thirty years ago my boat was surveyed and a short report typed: 'Me and me brother think she's alright.' I'm pleased to say that, coming from experienced boat builders, it was accepted by my insurers! Clearly times have changed.

I see these books as essential reading, allowing further detailed study of specifics.

There are no indexes, but a comprehensive contents page and useful suggestions for further reading. Perhaps the cover price is a little high, but if prospective owners or surveyors read them and put all Ian's words into practice it could be good value indeed.

PBF

MEDITERRANEAN FRANCE & CORSICA PILOT – Rod and Lucinda Heikell, 6th edition. Published in hard covers by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson [www.imray.com] at £45.00. 400 A4 pages, in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-8462-3849-9

It's hard to find good things to say about Rod Heikell's Mediterranean guides that have not been said before. Always returning to the Med after sailing elsewhere, Rod and Lucinda's *Skylax* is back there again after a circumnavigation, and Rod and Lu are back at work updating their books.

This 6th edition of *Mediterranean France & Corsica* contains substantial changes from previous editions and is an essential reference for anyone sailing the western Mediterranean. It covers territory from the border with Spain to the Alpes Maritimes and Italy. Divided into six sections, it gives detailed information about Languedoc-Roussillon, Provence, Côte d'Azur (West and East), the French Riviera and Monaco, and Corsica. Most important, although not much has changed about the infrastructure in this region, the authors cover what has changed in the rules and regulations governing mooring and anchoring in the bays and along the coast, where protecting the environment and managing marine reserves has become of vital importance. This will continue to be a major concern to cruising sailors as marine reserves are established, restricting access to safe anchorages.

There is a substantial section on the southern inland waterways, including the Canal du Midi from Port-la-Robine to Les Onglous, La Nouvelle, Etang de Thau, Canal du Rhône à Sète, Beaucaire, Le Petit Rhône and the Rhône (from Arles to Port-St-Louis-du-Rhône). Advice is given on licenses and documentation, hiring boats, mooring and negotiating locks, and there is a reference page showing the signs used on French waterways. Many plans show the channels and places to tie up along the way.

The authors spent the summer and autumn of 2016 cruising in Corsica, then worked their way northwest to the Golfe du Fos-sur-Mer, stopping in many harbours, collecting new information and taking photographs, and adding details to the text. There are many more aerial photos than in previous editions, and important information as to the predominant wind patterns for each harbour and stretch of coast is given.

Naturally, after spending two recent seasons in Corsica that section has been seriously updated. I particularly like the Quick Reference guides, which for Corsica show on one page all the ports and anchorages in order, starting from Calvi and continuing in an anticlockwise direction and providing visual reference as to shelter, moorings, fuel, water, provisions, eating out, plan and charge band (cost). When the wind shifts or a *meltemi* blows, it could be very helpful to quickly locate an alternate anchorage.

The Appendix, completely up-to-date, offers useful addresses, associations, books, charts and guides, as well as a brief glossary of common French words, including translations of French terms found on charts.

DOB

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN'S EREBUS AND TERROR EXPEDITION – Gillian Hutchinson. Published in soft covers by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £18.99. 176 245mm x 192mm pages, copiously illustrated in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-4729-4869-4. Also available for Kindle

The Arctic has always fascinated me, so when the opportunity came to review this book, I leapt at it. Our last unknown frontier... To read about the ghosts of our past added an extra frisson, especially as the main protagonist bears the same name as our previous Commodore.

The book itself is beautifully presented for a softback, printed on glossy paper and full of evocative imagery. Written by Gillian Hutchinson, Curator Emerita at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, it reads as though an expert is taking you from room to room of an exhibition on the subject, filling in the history as you go. As such, it serves both as a wonderful introduction or highly informative follow-up to the first major exhibition about the attempts to find the North West Passage since the discovery of Sir John Franklin's two expedition ships – HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror* – an exhibition that is due to run until 5th January 2018 and that I for one certainly will not miss.

The author carefully sets the scene prior to the ill-fated expedition of 1845, outlining previous attempts made to find a northern route through to the Pacific and the reasons for its trade and naval importance. The cartographic use of globes from that time is atmospheric and the reproduction of portraits of the various protagonists brings to life the explorers of the day. The inclusion of paintings inspired by the various expeditions adds to the richness of the book as a cultural publication as well as an historic review.

Sir John Franklin's Erebus and Terror Expedition is devoted to the men and ships that took part in the expedition. A short biography of Sir John illustrated with personal objects, and a detailed description of the two ships he was to command, is followed by an account of the officers and crew. Reproductions of early daguerreotype photographs of the officers – commissioned by Sir John Franklin's wife Jane – provide a haunting aspect to the book as we gaze at the men who were all lost. This section is also enhanced by the personal stories that Hutchinson has pieced together from the archives.

The expedition was expected to last at least two summers up in the frozen wastes, although they provisioned for three years. Hutchinson draws on reports from previous expeditions, and letters and reports sent home from Greenland and further west, to describe in vivid detail how the men spent their time, and uses photographs of everyday artefacts and artistic renditions of typical scenes to bring the experience to life.

The second half of the book covers the numerous searches that were undertaken

to discover the fate of the expedition over the next 40 years. Lady Franklin herself sponsored seven expeditions, and eventually more ships and men were lost looking for Franklin than were lost in the expedition itself. (Her actions inspired many authors to examine her role, and her efforts to find out what had happened to her husband prompted the composition of *Lady Franklin's Lament*, a ballad which has been recorded by over 40 artists including Bob Dylan. Reading about her tenacity has certainly inspired me to find out more about her.

Whilst traces of the expedition were found, and various theories about what had happened were reported in the journals of the time, it was not until 2014 that HMS *Erebus* was finally located and a team of Parks Canada archaeology divers were able to work on the wreck, bringing up some of the many artefacts that Hutchinson has used to illustrate her work. HMS *Terror* was found the following year, and the final chapter describes their findings and conclusions.

This book is a great read and will undoubtedly prompt a desire to know more, and the bibliography suggests how to go about this. Finding out about our maritime adventurers is always inspiring – such extraordinary stamina and bravery in the face of the unknown. But it is also fascinating to find a little nugget of information that brings a connection with today's world: who would have thought that Sir John Franklin, whilst he was governor in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) prior to returning to the UK in 1844, would have sailed to Melbourne in a schooner called *Flying Fish*!

APC

THE BALTIC SEA AND APPROACHES – RCC Pilotage Foundation, 4th edition. Published in hard covers by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson [www.imray.com] at £45.00. 448 A4 pages, in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-8462-3689-1

Having just completed my fourth summer cruising in the Baltic (with a well-thumbed 3rd edition of this book) I was delighted to be offered the opportunity to review the 4th edition of *The Baltic Sea and Approaches*.

The first question is, 'Why go to the Baltic?'. Here are just a few of the reasons:

- The summer weather is generally far warmer than might be expected in those latitudes.
- The days are long, so there is little need for night sailing. For Scandinavians, the season starts around 21st June and lasts for approximately six weeks, but cruising his perfectly possible from May until the end of September.
- Apart from a few easily avoidable hot-spots in high season, the Baltic is generally, relatively uncrowded.
- There are no tides.
- There are hundreds of beautiful anchorages and a huge variety of harbours with good facilities, and which are generally much cheaper than the UK.

- In the sheltered archipelagos there is relatively flat water, very little swell and short distances between anchorages. This makes it ideal for sailing with young children or less experienced crew.
- All the Baltic countries have rich and eventful histories, with a great number of castles, churches and interesting towns to be explored should the weather turn nasty.

The 4th edition of *The Baltic Sea and Approaches* has been completely revised in order to cover the many changes that have taken place since the previous edition was published in 2010. Each country has been researched by a different editor who has first-hand knowledge of their area, and they have drawn on the experience of many others. Should you decide to explore the Baltic, this book is an indispensable aid to getting there and, once there, deciding where to go. It provides a general introduction to the surrounding countries, capturing the flavour of the places and the people, and because in one volume it would be impossible to cover such a large and varied area in detail, it acts as a reference to more detailed pilot books and charts. While not a comprehensive pilot book it includes, in great detail, the main harbours and their approaches, and is invaluable as a planning guide to a fairly confusing cruising area. It also includes information directly relevant to us as 'foreign' cruisers which would not normally be included in a local pilot book.

The Introduction covers some of the history of the Baltic, has a section on how to get there, and another describing navigation – with a relevant comment on how surprisingly small some of the buoys are. There are several beautifully illustrated pages showing the various methods of securing a boat. Due to the lack of tides, some of the berthing systems, such as tying up to a rock, are quite different from those in tidal waters.

Following this are ten sections covering the countries which border the Baltic. The Key Information for each lists, among other things, available pilots and cruising guides, formalities and regulations, public holidays, and useful websites. Then there is a section giving information about the country, its history, the cruising area, and practicalities such as shopping, yacht services and chandlery, diesel, gas availability, alcohol limits and health. The bulk of each chapter covers harbours and marinas. Everything is beautifully illustrated with excellent photos and large-scale chartlets. Where appropriate there are pilotage notes, followed, for each harbour, by a general description – including, importantly, how to pronounce the name. Who, for instance, apart from a Pole, would pronounce Trzebież *Chehbyeh*? The harbour approach is described, and there is information regarding berthing and the facilities available.

The Appendix gives addresses for the suppliers of charts and publications, Abbreviations used on Russian charts, information of firing practice areas (of which there are a great many in the Baltic Sea), search and rescue, radio and weather, and lastly chart coverage of Russia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

If you are considering cruising in this beautiful area – which I would thoroughly recommend – then you should definitely invest in a copy of *The Baltic Sea and Approaches*. It will make interesting winter reading, and later be invaluable on the chart table.

AMB

SAIL THE WORLD – Erick A Reickert. Published in soft covers by CreateSpace Publishing and available via Amazon at £29.00. 286 216mm x 279mm pages, with a sprinkling of good quality colour photos. ISBN 978-1-5441-2143-7

This is most definitely a book about a particularly 21st century style of bluewater sailing. It describes the purchase and fitting out in 1996 of an Oyster 55 *Escapade* and, in great, indeed exhaustive detail, the author's experience of worldwide cruising aboard her including a circumnavigation. It will intrigue and I suspect infuriate (or maybe just amuse) many sailors with bluewater experience. The author has some very definite views about how to go about sailing around the world and evidently very deep pockets. Parts of the account will bring the reader up short. On his Atlantic crossing east to west, he tells us that all six crew members had a hot shower every day. He later tells us that during the 14 years the book covers he flew back to his home in the USA four times every year and always for Thanksgiving and Christmas. He also tells us that during the circumnavigation he had a full-time, paid, qualified crew member aboard and a chef 'most of the time'. Another example of his approach to cruising is that on a passage northwards on the East Coast of the USA he paid a student to shadow the trip by car and meet him with it at the dockside for each stop.

The boat itself seems to redefine the description 'lavishly equipped'. She carried, amongst many other things, three air-conditioning units, a washing machine, microwave oven, powered winches, in-mast power furling of the main, a collection of communication and navigation instruments to outshine the USS *Nimitz* and a tonne of diesel (enough for 1000 miles). The power required to run all this would give many yachtsmen nightmares, but we are assured it was ably coped with by a separate diesel generator and a very large battery bank.

The book has a tedious amount of detail, including a year's log entries transcribed verbatim, a challenge to read. It reveals that, in the year 2002, 1289·9 hours were spent underway, the main engine running for 780·32 hours or 60·49% of the time. The precision of these figures illustrates the author's meticulous approach, but leads the reader to question whether this qualifies as cruising under sail.

However, fair's fair, you might say – the author is an engineer by profession and has had a successful career at a senior level in the automobile industry. He's entitled to spend his cash how he likes and indeed to sail his boat how he likes. He is also clearly skilled and industrious enough to maintain all the machinery in good working order and effect complex repairs without outside help. All admirable, one might say ... or at least one might accept that if it were not for the fact that he seems to believe that his way is the only way to do it. He maintains that 46ft is the minimum safe size for an offshore boat and six the safe number of crew.

Just a few years before the cruise of *Escapade*, I set out on a similar venture in my old Moody 36. Over a period of about ten years I covered a similar area of the globe including Alaska (although I omitted the Mediterranean and did venture around one of the Great Capes). I shudder to think what Erick Rieckert would have thought about my venture had we met, especially as most of the time I was on my own. I managed with just a VHF radio and, when they got cheap enough, a couple of GPS sets, and paper charts. I had great fun position-fixing with a plastic sextant and two cheap digital watches. I even suffered my sundowner warm after my fridge packed up!

The author was evidently sufficiently senior in the motor industry to name-drop Henry Ford himself, who is reputed to have declared, 'History is bunk'. The reader is entitled to wonder whether the author shares this belief, and how familiar he is with his compatriot Captain Joshua Slocum who first had the idea of sailing around the world for fun in the ancient and engineless 37ft *Spray*, and whose navigation equipment consisted of sextant, compass, log and an old alarm clock with the minute hand missing. If there were any justice in the world, Erick Reickert's dreams would be haunted by the spirits of Eric and Susan Hiscock and their beautiful 30ft sloop *Wanderer III*, who did so much to awaken land-bound sailors to the thrill of bluewater cruising.

The author's view about minimum levels of equipment is easier to forgive than his apparent indifference to the importance of the psychological barriers which these pioneers overcame. Were it not for them and many others (including many OCC members) who caught the imagination of the world, Erick Reickert would probably never have considered the notion of sailing around the world in a pleasure boat and been quite happy spending his declining years on the golf course.

Nevertheless I would recommend this book, mostly because of the questions it raises about what bluewater sailing and the OCC is about. If you are lucky enough to have a couple of million to spend you will find lots of good advice here. If you have a tighter budget it's probably prudent to look for advice elsewhere.

JSN

ROGUE WAVES: Anatomy of a Monster – Michel Olagnon. Published in soft covers by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £20.00. 160 234mm x 156mm pages with 125 colour photos, paintings and diagrams. ISBN 978-1-4729 -3621-9. Also available for Kindle

I approached this book with some trepidation, almost akin to that experienced when crossing the Gulf Stream from Bermuda to New York in some very lively seas, or crossing the Agulhas Current from Reunion to Richards Bay in 30+ knots of southerly winds – it was dark so we could not see the height of the waves, but we could feel them. The author is a recognised expert in the field, and founder of the International Conference on Rogue Waves – he is a scientist, mathematician and statistician, hence the trepidation.

Rogue Waves addresses the definition of a rogue wave; the difference between a rogue wave and an extreme wave; the effects of rogue waves; measurement, statistical and scientific analysis of rogue waves; and, importantly for mariners, how you can manage the prospect of a rogue wave without a forecast of their appearance.

It starts by defining a rogue wave as of 'a size and severity which one would not expect given the prevailing conditions', but this requires further explication – is the definition based on a minimum height which also assumes severity, or is a wave 'rogue' because particular characteristics distinguish it from a population of predominantly 'normal' waves? The author chooses the notion that 'a rogue wave is a wave whose severity, in

relation to other waves in the same place at the same time, surprises the expert', and notes some experts may be 'more surprised than others'.

A discussion of tsunamis absolves them from being rogue, as their formation and propagation are sufficiently known to enable prediction. Similarly, the highest wave recorded, at 524 metres, was the result of an earthquake-induced landslide in Lituya Bay, Alaska – already known to have experienced tsunamis. Other unlikely waves such as standing waves, tidal waves and storm surges are also examined but do not fit the bill.

A chapter addresses Legends and True Stories, emphasising that 'a proper rogue wave results from a storm, more or less in the vicinity, and the combination of waves created in it by the wind', and describes a chilling incident that resulted in the cabin boy being consumed by the survivors of the resulting shipwreck. It also reckons the credence of 'Beware the 100 fathom line' is largely based on experiences when approaching the Continental Shelf and in the Agulhas Current, rather than science. The author has amassed many other detailed stories about ships and yachts encountering rogue waves and their consequences, and these are spread throughout the book to keep the reader's interest aroused.

A third of the book addresses the problems of collecting and analysing data, and the theory behind rogue waves – those with an engineering, scientific or mathematical background will find this easier than those of us who struggled in these fields. If you can see the inner beauty of Rayleigh distribution or Schrodinger's non-linear equation then you will be at home – the rest of us just wonder at your erudition.

Rogue Waves is beautifully illustrated, with photographs and paintings of waves and their impact on ships and shorelines (curiously, shore walkers and shore anglers are more likely to encounter a rogue wave than those at sea) adding to the lustre of the book.

All in all, *Rogue Waves* delivers what the mariner wants to know – can rogue waves be predicted and what precautions can you take to prepare for meeting one? Well, without writing a spoiler, first get to know what significant wave height means, and know that a rogue wave will be twice that height, and that an extreme normal wave can become rogue in a sea state whose severity grows rapidly. The author helps us understand the where and when.

PH

OFF THE DEEP END: A history of madness at sea – Nic Compton. Published in hard covers by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £16.99. 264 153mm x 224mm pages including eight pages of colour photos. ISBN 978-1-4729-4112-1 Also available for Kindle

This book tells of tragedies at sea and attempts, through these accounts, to explore how madness relates to seafaring. In some instances there is an obvious cause for mental problems aboard, such as alcoholism, delirium tremens, scurvy or syphilis. Among survivors of shipwreck, starvation, thirst and drinking salt water might send men

mad. But in many cases the sea did not send these poor souls mad, it simply magnified their problems. It has been suggested that people with poor social integration – the misfits – may be more likely to go to sea, and so explain the incidence of mental issues in some sailors.

Among those who emigrated or were transported to the colonies, the incidence of mental illness was high. But it was not necessarily the sea or the voyage that caused this. It was easier for the authorities to send their 'pauper lunatics' away than to care and pay for them at home. Some even went straight from the docked ship to a mental asylum. In 1873 the New Zealand Imbecile Passenger Act (no euphemisms here) allowed for immediate repatriation of such cases.

Starvation leading to death and, on occasion, cannibalism is unendurably awful, but is it madness? In 1884 three men drifting in a 13ft dinghy murdered the fourth, a young deckhand, to save themselves. The court dismissed their plea of insanity and found them guilty of murder.

There is so much suffering, gore and death in these pages that it is a book to dip into, not to read at a sitting. The gruesome statistics keep mounting. On the *Cospatrick* 470 drowned, in HMS *Defence* 900 were lost, from the *Medusa* only 15 survived from 146 seeking to escape on a raft, in one year 838 British ships were lost – and so on and so on and more. One can only take so much.

Despite the title, the theme running through the pages seems thin. The madness here is often just a peg on which to hang another tale of dreadful disaster at sea. Many celebrated maritime stories and their famous vessels are recruited to illustrate this ghoulish theme of madness at sea. Names include *Bounty, Beagle, Sharon, Medusa, Essex, Titanic, Spray, Grimalkin* – the list goes on. For several, such as *Grimalkin*, it is difficult to see what role madness played, and yet *Grimalkin*'s story takes six pages to tell.

Some good came of all this misery when caring and empathetic people recognised the desperate state of seamen and sought to help. The Royal Navy recognised the problem and in 1818 moved sailors with mental issues from appalling asylums to purpose-built facilities at Haslar Hospital. This was a decade before the Madhouses Act for civilians. The Marine Society was founded in 1756, followed by the Sailor's Society, the Seamen's Hospital Society and, in 1856, the Mission to Seamen – still going strong as the Mission to Seafarers, as is also the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society. Although these charities dealt then – and still do now – with poor and destitute sailors, a significant part of their work has been with sailors suffering mental health issues.

Off the Deep End is well written, Nic Compton's prose embracing the reader's attention and clipping along at a pace. Although some of the stories are well-known and even well-worn, there is new and fascinating material. If considering it as a stocking filler at Christmas be sure the recipient is robust, however, as much misery resides in these pages.

MHT

ARIADNE'S LAST VOYAGE
Iain and Meg Buchanan

(*After cruising the Atlantic islands for several years, in late 2012 Iain and Meg decided it was time to sail their 45ft Bruce Roberts cutter* Ariadne *across the Atlantic, a tale they told in* Capricorn and Back *– see* Flying Fish 2016/1.)

As with the death of a relative or friend, so with the loss of a boat – the event should not be allowed to cast a deep, dark shadow, at least not for too long. Rather, the positive memories, the good times and the shared experiences should come back to the fore. In that spirit we recount some highlights from our final years with *Ariadne*, starting where we left off in our last article – July 2013 in French Guiana.

South America

French Guiana is not a colony but an Overseas Department of France, using the euro and with the full services of the mother country. The port at the capital, Cayenne, has silted up but there is a dredged channel into a commercial port in the next river to the southeast, Dégrad des Cannes. Yachts do stop there, some using pontoons shared with fishing boats and liveaboards, and there are no marina fees, but the general rundown look led us to anchor in the river. Public transport outside the capital is pretty well non-existent, with locals and visitors reliant on hitchhiking. We did this twice, to get to car hire, and found the locals welcoming and helpful. The highlights of our stay were a visit to a remarkable zoo set in the rainforest, the bird life on the river, and the proximity of two Carrefour supermarkets stocked with French food and wine. Flocks of hundreds of red ibis and white egret roosted in the trees on the east bank of the river, and caught in the evening light gave a good impression of a decorated Christmas tree. We went to the Space Centre at Kourou, but there were no launchings.

Swinging at the turn of the tide in the river at Dégrad des Cannes

Caymans – in a cage – French Guiana

Our last stop on the South American mainland was Suriname, previously Dutch Guiana, a relatively short sail further west. Again the ports are in rivers, and in mid-August we anchored off the capital, Paramaribo. This is a remarkable city, a World Heritage Site, with many large wooden houses and other buildings left over from the colonial period. The authorities were discouraging yachts from using this traditional anchorage, so we caught the flood and set off for Domburgh, about 20 miles upriver. There is a small village with some shops and, on Sundays, a range of Javanese food stalls. Living in Suriname was generally very inexpensive. A bus into town cost about 50p for an hour-long ride, local car hire was 12€ per day, five good local grapefruit cost £1, and Iain had a haircut for £2.

Ariadne had not been berthed alongside for some time, and wishing to have shore power and running water we settled into a small marina at Waterland about 10 miles further upriver. This is a new 'resort', the pet project of a Dutch businessman, and has been done very tastefully with landscaped grounds and friendly staff. The area is rich in birds, monkeys and frogs, and several of the latter adopted the boat as their temporary home. The only down-side to this

Part of the Old Fort, at Paramaribo capital of Suriname

The Wooden Cathedral at Paramaribo

was the surprise of a small, wet amphibian appearing suddenly at dusk, hopping skilfully around the boat and anyone who happened to be sitting there. With a car we explored some of the colonial relics, such as the riverside forts guarding passage from seaward to the capital.

Our time in Brazil had been restricted to the littoral, and Suriname offered the opportunity to venture deep into the rainforest. We booked a trip to Palumeu, about 270 kilometres inland. Access was by small plane to a grass airstrip, with accommodation in wooden lodges alongside an Amerindian village. The guides were excellent, taking us on the local rivers to walk in the forest, climb a large rock outcrop with views to other 'inselbergs' all the way to the border with Brazil, and visit the nearby village and its crop fields. We stayed in Suriname for our maximum visa time of three months, which dovetailed nicely with our timing for entry to the hurricane box, and in mid-November set off for Trinidad, about 550 miles away.

A galimule mother and chick. Their wide feet and light weight allow them to step across lily pads

Our guide demonstrating the creation of fire using a camphor branch

In the rain forest, an 8cm (3 inch) insect is not too worried about camouflage

Children in a traditional canoe at Palumeu

Ginger the cattle egret becomes more relaxed

The Eastern Caribbean

On some passages *Ariadne* had been home to sea birds for a few days, and occasionally small land birds and insects. On this trip we were visited by a cattle egret, not the most oceanic of birds. It arrived soon after we left Suriname and stayed until we sighted land at Trinidad and Tobago. At first it stayed forward of the sprayhood, but it gradually got nearer the cockpit and eventually favoured the lazarette, pacing to and fro like an admiral on the poop deck. It had a distinguished quiff and became known as Ginger.

We hauled out in Chaguaramas Bay, making good use of the trades and chandleries of which we had seen little for more than a year. Our first objective for 2014 was to make the OCC Anniversary Meet in Dominica – our first event since qualifying. It was a great introduction to what became our favourite island in the Eastern Caribbean. Jolly Harbour, Antigua was to be the boat's home for the hurricane season, and by the time we caught our flight home our trip, which had started in the Canaries, had lasted for 22 months during which we had spent only three nights off the boat.

Given the length of our pre-season job list an early return to Antigua was called for, and this was when we experienced Hurricane *Gonzalo*. The day before it hit in October 2014 we had no internet connection, though we saw a forecast on BBC World which showed a lively weather system heading for the islands, but the forecaster spoke of a 'wet and windy' spell in the Eastern Caribbean and there were no keywords used, such as storm or hurricane. Around 0900 the wind rose quickly with heavy rain. At our rented villa the windows and doors started vibrating, and

Walking the poop deck

The site of the OCC 60th Anniversary Meet, Prince Rupert Bay, Dominica

eventually two large glass patio doors were blown out, followed by a complete bedroom window. Rain and wind came howling through the house, though by this time we were sheltering in an internal bathroom which had no windows. Apparently the Met Office did forecast a tropical storm, but the system stalled offshore, picked up more energy, and hit Antigua with gusts up to 100 mph. The damage we suffered was quite local and probably due to a small twister within the storm itself. Boats in the yard and marina were relatively unscathed, but some at private berths were damaged or even sunk. Some crops on the island were destroyed, but there was no loss of life. Islands further north were badly hit, especially St Martin.

A private pontoon in Jolly Harbour, Antigua after Hurricane Gonzalo

Moving On

Wishing to leave the eastern chain, we reached agreement with our insurers that Curaçao was an acceptable place to leave the boat for the next hurricane season. While heading south we re-visited some favourite places – including the Îles des Saintes for superior food – then headed southwest to Bonaire, the nearest of the ABCs. It was about 400 nautical miles, with a brisk following wind and little use of the engine. The ABCs are renowned for their marine reserves, with opportunities for diving and snorkelling. The islands take great care of their marine environment and Bonaire does not permit anchoring anywhere. The harbour authorities have laid buoys off the town and there are a couple of dinghy docks for landing, but usually with some surf running. We hired a car and took a trip round the island. With reasonable roads it would have taken about two hours, but many of the roads are effectively unpaved and the hire 'car' was more of a small truck. The south of the island is one large salt pan with a jetty where large ships can load, and by the pans are tiny shelters built for the slaves who once worked there. They are only large enough to accommodate two adults lying down. The north of the island is a national park – a craggy desert with cacti and spindly bushes. Walking into the interior there is a natural spring which attracts mammals and birds, as well as large iguana-like lizards easily 2m long. In Curaçao we visited Spanish Waters, before moving the short distance to Wilhelmstad and the yard at Curaçao Marine.

A very large iguana at Bonaire

Family business and recovery from an injury kept us from sailing for almost two years, but in February 2017 we 'splashed' and made preparations for sea. Our plan was to head for the Dominican Republic and then sail east to Antigua, where we had booked to lift out, with a view to returning to Europe in 2018. We lost some time fixing an intermittent fault with the instruments but failed with the autopilot. Our main concern was to have a working echo-sounder – we could manage without the rest.

On leaving Wilhelmstad conditions were blustery in the lee of Curaçao, but as we cleared the coast the wind settled to 20–25 knots on the beam, with a boisterous but steady wave pattern. We connected the windvane which took us effortlessly 400 miles

to Marina Zar Par in the Dominican Republic, a few miles to the east of the capital, Santo Domingo. The marina is well-run and welcoming. Power boats outnumber yachts, but there were a number passing through, generally heading west to Cuba. The Dominican Republic – the eastern section of Hispaniola – is larger and more populous than the countries of the eastern Caribbean. We did not take much time off to explore, but did enjoy a visit to the capital where there are many buildings from the earliest colonial days. Supermarkets are some distance from the marina but there is a free bus service there and back.

Our EPIRB failed on test – for the second time. A couple of years earlier, in Antigua, it had failed with two years still to run to the replacement date. A local agent had provided a new battery, and now this also failed two years short of the replacement date. We later managed to get all the equipment back to the manufacturer for test, and were told that the first battery, with a replacement date of March 2017, was 'low' when tested in July 2017. The second had a label of a design which had not been used since 2012 – the conjecture is that 'the expiry label must have been added by a third party'. Chandlery and support in the Dominican Republic is fairly thin on the ground and we were unable to source yet another replacement.

Last Voyage

Early on the morning of Sunday 30 April we left Marina Zar Par, waved on our way by the assorted authorities. Our plan was to sail east, possibly taking in some islands we had not previously visited such as St Kitts. The weather forecast was easterly 15–20 knots, though it was gusting well above that, dropping to 10–15 knots by Tuesday. There was a veer forecast, and we set a course to the southeast to take advantage of it. We set the main with a single reef and the full yankee, trimmed the windvane self-steering to take over the helm, and settled down to watch-keeping. It was going to be a long beat, but the boat was very comfortable with it.

At the 0600 handover on Monday we checked around the boat and found a lot of water in a bilge forward of the mast. We inspected all the through-hull fittings and found them sound. We checked the anchor and sail locker hatches on the foredeck, and the security of major items such as the anchors and windlass, finding nothing amiss. Down below there was no sign of damage to the hull, and water appeared to be coming from ahead of a bulkhead between our accommodation and the sail locker where there are no skin fittings.

For the next twelve hours we bailed the boat. We carried a collision mat of our own making, but in the prevailing conditions it would have taken both of us on the foredeck to try and place it over a damaged area which we could not identify. A change of tack did not affect the water ingress. When we took a break for some food it appeared as if the situation was stable, but returning from our break it was clear that the water level was still rising. It was time to make a distress call. Two rocket flares and a VHF call brought no response – nothing was close by. We had seen only one yacht and one merchant vessel since leaving Zar Par. We started working through the distress frequencies on the MF/HF radio, got an acknowledgement on 6MHz and established voice contact. As a precaution, we prepared the liferaft in its cradle for possible use.

A US Coast Guard plane flew overhead about two hours later, established VHF contact, and indicated that a Coast Guard cutter was due shortly. We dropped the

The Coast Guard find time for a selfie aboard **Ariadne**

sails, checked that no lines were over the side, and fired up the engine ready to motor and manoeuvre with any support vessels. A RIB came over from the cutter and three men came on board. They rechecked all the areas that we had looked at and like us could find nothing amiss. At first the Coast Guard captain wanted us to leave the boat and try to tow her, since they would not allow anyone to stay aboard while towing. We preferred to stay aboard and continue trying to save *Ariadne*, and eventually it was agreed that three men should stay and help us take the boat to the nearest port, meanwhile monitoring the water intake.

During much of this Meg had been on deck and was cold, wet and tired. With a man on the helm, Meg went below for some rest, found some dry clothes, and promptly fell asleep as we made 5 knots towards Puerto Rico. Eight hours later, at first light, it was clear that we were losing the battle. *Ariadne* was going down by the bow and the water had nearly reached the engine and batteries, so we abandoned ship to the Coast Guard cutter taking with us three grab bags which we always have packed. *Ariadne* was still afloat but with her stern well out of the water. The Coast Guard Captain checked with his base for orders and we departed for Puerto Rico, having broadcast a 'hazard to navigation' message. We doubt she floated for much longer.

What had happened? Water was coming into the boat forward of what we could see from inside. Towards the end we inspected the sail locker again and found a high water level. There is no opening from that locker to the sea and there is a solid bulkhead separating it from the rest of the boat. There was a manual bilge pump in the locker but it could not keep up with the rate of water ingress. We think we must have hit a submerged object which penetrated the sail locker and the forward section of the boat, probably spanning the bulkhead and damaging it. The conditions were boisterous and noisy enough that any sounds of impact would have been muffled by the wind and waves.

The commitment and seamanship of the cutter crew were exemplary, especially their boat handling of the RIB when transferring people and kit to and from *Ariadne*. Once on board the cutter they were very helpful, finding hotels, flights and offering lifts. We had checks from a paramedic once on shore, and the Coast Guard arranged for us to meet an immigration officer (we had not been planning to enter the US and needed visa waivers). Our landfall was on the southwest coast, near the Mona Passage, so the Coast Guard are practised in assisting vessels in distress.

After the formalities, the Coast Guard paid for a taxi to take us to a nearby hotel. That evening we arranged flights home and by Thursday lunchtime we were back in Glasgow.

Lessons Learned and the Aftermath

- Without some form of long distance communication we would probably have ended up in the liferaft in a sea area with little transiting traffic. In future we would not be without some suitable system in addition to the EPIRB (see overleaf). We have long had packed grab bags on our pre-departure check list and one of these contains hand-held items such as GPS, VHF and other electronic items. In electrical storms this bag is put into the oven, in the hope that it will act as a Faraday cage. Had we not had passports, credit cards and other personal items, the immediate aftermath would have been much more complicated and drawn out.
- Staying with the boat was absolutely vital – you have shelter, food and communications.
- Unless you are willing to take a sizeable financial loss, good insurance is essential. Before leaving the cutter we acquired an e-mail address where our insurers, Pantaenius, could ask for a report on the incident. Eight working days after posting

Sinking tidily in a dull morning light, navigation lights on and OCC burgee flying, but the windvane self-steering rudder is a bit distressed

Rescuers and rescued on arrival in Puerto Rico

our claim we had an e-mail from them indicating that they were meeting the agreed hull value and personal effects cover in full.

At the time, we thought we would not have another boat after *Ariadne* – a friend remarked that 'we had put a lot of our lives and love into that boat'. We had not been put off sailing itself, but it seemed to have lost its central position in our lives. But after a couple of weeks we began to sense that something really was missing. By late June we were looking at boats, first on the west coast of Scotland and shortly thereafter on the south coast, starting in Falmouth and finishing in Chichester, where we found our new boat, a Rustler 36. We are getting reconciled to the loss of space – *Ariadne* was 45ft – and while the new boat is in very good condition we are enjoying the task of making her our own, even taking in a trip to the Southampton Boat Show to catch up with developments. Our cruising plans are not yet formed, and we have the pleasure of speculating on the nature of future voyages. As for communications, while we have been great fans of SSB, it looks like we will move over to satellite for the new boat.

Should you find yourself in a chronically leaking boat, energy devoted to changing vessels is likely to be more productive than energy devoted to patching leaks.

Warren Buffett

FROM *THE BOAT COOKBOOK* by Fiona Sims (see page 115)

Smoked mackerel kedgeree with spring onions and crème fraîche – serves four

Ingredients

- 25g butter
- 1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 fat clove of garlic, peeled and crushed
- 2 tsp mild curry powder
- 300g basmati rice
- 1 litre fish stock or vegetable bouillon
- 4 eggs
- 350g smoked mackerel fillets, skin removed and flaked
- 2 tbsp crème fraîche
- 4 spring onions, trimmed and chopped
- Ahandful of flat parsley, chopped

Melt the butter, then add the chopped onion and fry gently for a few minutes until soft. Add the garlic and curry powder, and then the rice, giving it all a good stir. Add the stock and simmer for 12 minutes or so, stirring frequently. Meanwhile, boil the eggs for 7 minutes, peel and cut into quarters. Add the mackerel, creme fraiche, spring onions and half the parsley to the rice, and heat through for another couple of minutes. Spoon into bowls, place the egg quarters on top and sprinkle the remaining chopped parsley on top.

Salted caramel and banana crunch – serves four

Ingredients

- half a 260g jar of salted caramel sauce*
- 150ml extra thick Greek yoghurt
- 5 digestive biscuits (graham crackers)
- 2 bananas
- mint (optional)

Mix the salted caramel sauce with the yoghurt in a bowl. Crush the biscuits in a plastic bag (using a bottle of wine, or whatever weight you have to hand). Divide half the crushed biscuits between four tumblers, slice over half the banana slices, then pour over half the salted caramel mixture. Repeat, saving a few crumbs to scatter on top, along with some mint leaves.

* I'm not suggesting you start boiling up condensed milk to make your caramel sauce on board, rather that you buy a jar of ready-made supermarket sauce – Marks and Spencer does a salted toffee sauce that works just fine.

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TAKING THE NORTHERN LINE
Jim Little

(*Jim, a boatbuilder from Devon, UK, has cruised the Baltic and western Med with his wife and two daughters, adding an Atlantic Circuit in 2008/9. He is currently yachtless while his daughters are at school, but intends to return to serious cruising in the future. The following passage took place in September 2016.*

Turn to page 46 to follow Salanjo*'s route.*)

Safely aboard in Reykjavik, about to depart for Greenland some 600 cold, grey miles away, I looked at the GRIB files with the skipper and thought: 'Wow. You call that a weather window?'. I'd known when I'd signed up for this trip – helping crew a 48ft Grainger catamaran from Iceland to Newfoundland via Greenland – that the four of us could expect some bumpy weather, but I didn't know that we'd be deliberately aiming for it.

Our skipper, New Zealander Geoff Thorpe, had sailed *Salanjo* nearly 45,000 miles from his native New Zealand, around much of the western Pacific, up to Thailand (from where she was shipped to Turkey in 2012 to avoid pirates), through the Black Sea and the Med, around the Baltic and Scotland, and then to Iceland. He wanted, despite the warnings of doom he had received, to take her across the Atlantic on the northern route so he could cruise eastern Canada and New England before sailing south for the Caribbean.

There was nothing gung-ho about him, but he was very confident about our journey. "I think we'll be fine," he said. "If we shoot off from here right now on the northerlies at the back of this system, when we hit the next one we'll go over the top of it on the easterlies. We'll get some wind but she ought to take it in her stride." I didn't get

Salanjo in warmer climes

much time to ponder whether or not to take his word for it. I'd only been in Iceland for about four hours before we left Reykjavik in the gathering darkness, with the northern lights in the sky and 25 knots blowing out of the north, and within minutes I was experiencing the conditions that would typify the whole of the trip.

This would be my third Atlantic crossing but the other two were made in a monohull, nearly all the time in a T-shirt and shorts. This journey, it was obvious, would be hideously cold, and no matter how many layers were crammed on, they melted away to nothing in the gale that usually seemed to be blowing on deck. This near-constant strong apparent wind was a fact of catamaran sailing that friends had told me about. They had also correctly predicted that watch-keeping indoors would be a wonderful luxury and that the boat speed on a cat like this would be dazzling. That first night, looking aft, I couldn't believe the view. We were doing 14 knots and it felt like even three waterskiers and a grand piano tied to the stern would barely have slowed us down.

What I had not been warned about – and struggled to get used to – was how hard it would be to get any sleep when the boat was flying along like this. Under my three blankets and duvet, wearing my thermals and woolly hat and with a hot-water bottle between my feet (still in thick socks), I'd eventually get warm enough to nod off. But the motion in my bunk at the aft end of the starboard hull was phenomenal. We seemed to be hurtling out of control across the face of every wave, or leaping from peak to peak in a series of calamitous crashes. It was like being on a tube train going off a cliff.

This was especially the case when we sailed into the second system, about halfway to Greenland. The wind picked up to 35 knots, and though we were well reefed down we began to really shift off the top of the swell. A train of bigger waves came through, the boat roared down the face of one and we were suddenly making over 23 knots. The leeward hull threw up a vertical wall of white water. I remember hearing whooping from one of the younger crew, but was pleased to see that the skipper didn't look in the least bit delighted. Within minutes the headsail was off, we rounded up a little and the boom-furling main was reduced to something about the size of a Laser sail. We were still making 10 knots. The seas were about 15 feet, we guessed, but not steep and spaced well apart. Reefed down like that, *Salanjo* just trucked on. It was awesome.

On our fourth evening at sea, in decreasing wind as we moved away from the system and with the snow-covered mountains of Greenland in sight, we stopped on the edge of the 100-mile iceberg limit and spent the night lying to the sea anchor so we could see the bergs in daylight. It was a welcome chance to take it easy and play cards with the skipper and the other crew, Geoff's 28-year-old son Mike and John King, an old friend of both Geoff's and mine who had asked me along on the trip. During supper we noticed the recovery buoy for the anchor drifting past the saloon window, the glue attaching it to the anchor having failed. This would make recovering the parachute the next morning quite a challenge.

During the night the wind rose to about 25 knots from the north, and though *Salanjo* was generally remarkably comfortable lying to the sea anchor, being perched at the bow while Geoff tried to motor up to the parachute next morning was a different prospect. We hauled on the rode to try to steal as much in as we could before the bows were blown off once again and the line went bar tight in a flash. The boat was dropping into some

Making landfall in Greenland

deep troughs, it looked like we were on the verge of getting a proper soaking, and we seemed to be fighting increasingly hard for every inch. We were also using up precious daylight with a long trip still to make to the Greenland coast, where we definitely did not want to arrive in the dark. It seemed to me to be a losing game, but Mike insisted on a bit more time before we gave up and, to my immense surprise, when I thought we still had about 50m of line to go, the parachute materialised in the water before us. Sprawled on the trampolines and hauling for dear life, we were able to collapse one side of it and drag it on board.

Back at the wheel, Geoff was just about dancing with joy. When I said we'd won because Mike wouldn't give up he shouted, "Of course he bloody wouldn't – he's a bloody Thorpe! Never say die! Where there's breath there's life!". Geoff said later that the loss of the sea anchor would have been a huge blow to him. It was the cornerstone of our heavy-weather tactics, and he had every reason to suspect we would need it when we were among the weather systems in the Davis Strait.

The previous evening, in the last of the light, we had glimpsed what we took to be icebergs on the western horizon. As we gradually closed the coast these revealed themselves as enormous snow-covered mountains. It was only in the late afternoon, arriving at the entrance to Prins Christian Sund which cuts across the southern tip of Greenland just north of Cape Farvel, that we saw bergs in the dying sun and, between them, intermittent fountains of spray from blowing whales. This combination of sunset, icebergs, whales and mountains set in almost limitless solitude made that evening the most wonderful landfall I've ever experienced. I think everyone was a bit breathless and freaked out by the splendour of it all.

That feeling just didn't let up over the coming days. Having spent the night off an unmanned weather station we motored west through the Sund. By making the

One of the larger bergs in Prins Christian Sund, calved from the end of a glacier

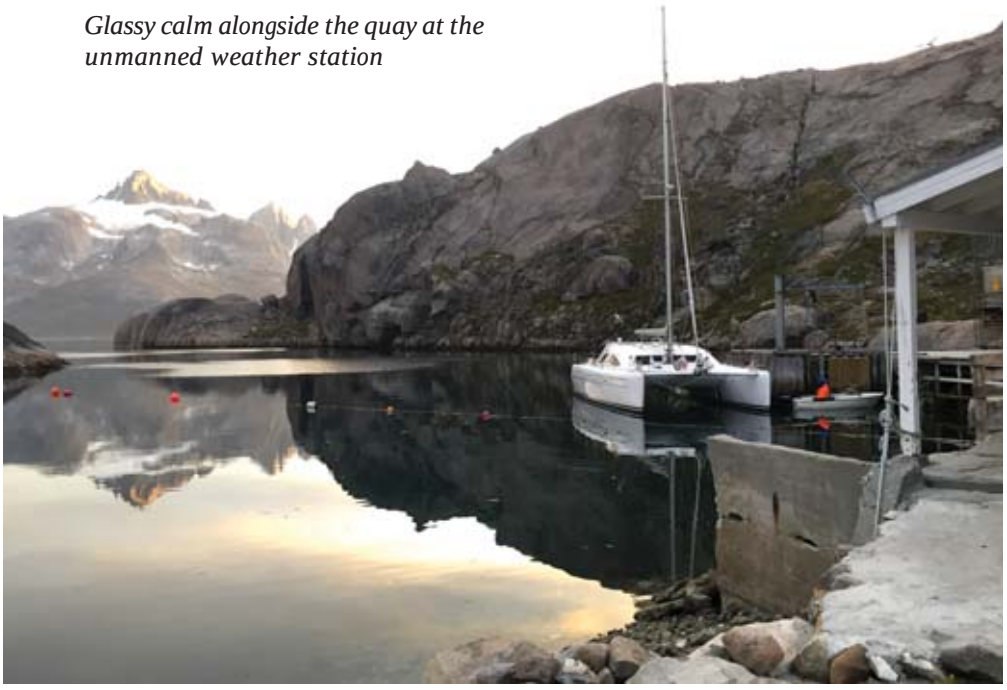
trip in September we were leaving it slightly late in terms of the weather – the incidence and depth of depressions were both greater – but it gave us much better prospects regarding ice. Earlier in the year Prins Christian Sund would typically be blocked, but now we just had to avoid the bergy bits that calved from the glaciers that we passed, some of them crashing into the water as we watched. These 'small' pieces were sometimes as big as a car, though even something the size of a dining chair could do serious damage to a GRP yacht if you hit it at speed. Standing on the port bow with a long piece of timber bought in Iceland for the purpose, with John doing the same to starboard, I tried to fend the ice off as we crawled past the heads of glaciers, realising why most boats that sail up here are metal.

Before we left Iceland Geoff had explained that we couldn't have even tried this

The author supposedly on ice-watch

Geoff, Mike and the author in Prins Christian Sund

journey if the ice hadn't been forecast as mostly clear in the Sund. At Cape Farvel the currents gather the bergs along the coast and the wind blows very hard from the west nearly all the time, and the later in the year you leave it, the worse it gets. To visit Greenland at all without coming through the Sund would involve some grisly sailing to windward in any boat – in a cat it would be pretty much impossible.



Glassy calm alongside the quay at the unmanned weather station

Left and below: Spectacular Prins Christian Sund

All was calm inside the Sund though, as we motored under vast cliffs and snowfields perched a thousand metres up in the sky with tendrils of water cascading down the rocks. We tied up in the midst of this wonderland at the village of Aappilattoq, home to 130 permanent residents and a gang of Danes smashing out bare rock to accommodate oil tanks. We got to stretch our legs properly here, climbing the hills behind the village to get an absurdly wonderful view of the hamlet, the Sund and the mountains, and meeting a Greenlander who had recently shot one of his annual allocation of polar bears. He told us that he had only once left the island, to go on a language course in Exeter! He'd liked the fish and chips, but had been understandably unimpressed by Dartmoor.

Aapilattoq receded astern next morning as we continued west, a tiny imprint of humanity on Greenland's vast wilderness. The town we were heading for, with its 1500 people, represented an entirely different order of conurbation. It had a laundry, a café, three supermarkets and a long-anticipated bar. Tied up in Nanortalik, having been to the laundry and the bar, where there was a fight (not involving us), we made

Jim and Mike hiking above Aapilattoq

some minor repairs and filled up with water and diesel. We then turned our attention to the chart table and pondered our departure for Newfoundland. Looking at that day's GRIBs for the Davis Strait, we saw an unexpected window opening up. We'd have to wait for a big blow to go through (which meant another chance to go to the fight pub) but could ride out on the back of that and, in theory, endure nothing worse than a day of close-reaching in 30 knots heading due west. We would then make landfall in Labrador, and hop down the coast to Newfoundland in between the more awkward bouts of weather. The Strait, which had been lurking at the back of our minds as a potential ogre, now looked benign.

So it was a cheerful and optimistic *Salanjo* that left Greenland the following evening. We motored through the moonlight with a vast iceberg glowing on the southern horizon, then the wind filled in and we got our 30 knots on the beam for the next 24 hours. We made superb time without any dramas, save the odd wave that broke against the starboard hull with a stunning crash. Two days later the wind decreased as we sailed into an extended ridge of high pressure, and from then until our arrival in Labrador 36 hours later we had tradewind conditions (apart from the cold), with the wind well aft, glorious sunshine and moonlight, an easy rolling sea, and making 6 to 7 knots in 12 knots apparent. The younger members of the crew thought it a little dull. I thought it was heavenly.

We made landfall at dusk in an anchorage in Labrador a few miles south of Goose Bay. By first light we were away again heading south, motoring into a gentle headwind until the breeze filled in strongly from the northwest and gave us 30 knots again. We flew across the mouth of the St Lawrence, motor-sailed through the night in dying wind, and on the evening of the next day went into Bonavista, our first Newfoundland

landfall. On our return from the pub, however, we soon sobered up when we found that the holding tank in the port hull had backed up and leaked about 100 litres of liquid sewage into the bilge, a sobering experience.

We were now only a day's sail from St John's, where the boat was to spend the winter, and the skipper smelt the finishing line more strongly than he smelt the sewage so, despite the horrific stench, we were off early in the morning. With 25–30 knots from the northwest once more, crashing along in big, ugly seas to get around Cape Bonavista, it was hard to decide which was worse – outside in the rain with the thermometer at about 4°C, or inside with the stink. I voted for the stink, and passed the journey thinking that this was not the final day's sailing I had dreamed of. Even after we'd motored through the narrow passage between the cliffs into the long, thin harbour and tied up among the oil-rig servicing ships and the trawlers right in downtown St John's, there was the grim and time-consuming bilge-defouling operation to be got through. But after that, and a blissful shower, armed with the heroic hunger and thirst of successful ocean navigators, we went out and made merry.

I landed back in London after 16 days away, a pretty short time for such a voyage. That was partly due to good luck with the weather, and partly due to the terrific speed of the boat – we averaged about 10 knots – meaning we could get past deteriorating conditions that would have hit slower boats. It was great that we could spend so much of our night watches inside – I wouldn't have fancied much more than half an hour at a stretch in the cockpit of a monohull in those temperatures. On the whole though, the weather gods treated us kindly – we always got the conditions forecast by the GRIB files, and didn't suffer any of those unexpected escalations in wind speed that can put a boat and crew under sudden and dangerous pressure.

I was lucky to make the journey with an excellent skipper and two superb crew, and while I hope my next long cruise features the occasional leap into the sea from the afterdeck of a boat at anchor in the tropics, our brief glimpse of Greenland was a stunning experience and I'd love to go back. The harbour master at Nanortalik said he'd never seen as many yachts as had visited that summer: "I think 20 of them just this season". It might be a good idea to go there before that becomes 2000.

(Parts of this article first appeared in the February 2017 issue of *Yachting World*. Visit salanjo.blogspot.com to catch up on some of the yacht's previous passages.)

> Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street and methodically knocking people's hats off – then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can.
>
> Herman Melville

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WHAT, WHO, WHERE AND WHEN

OCC members are the club's lifeblood, and we rely on you for contributions to all our publications, both paper and electronic. With nine separate inboxes, however, it can be difficult to know where and to whom your submission should be sent, and when the deadline falls for the next issue – always assuming there is a deadline. Neither do we all work from the same office, the same country, or even the same continent.

We hope the following will be useful, but if your submission isn't easily pigeonholed please send it to the publication which looks closest and we'll take it from there. If sending to more than one publication **please** inform all concerned of the duplication.

General club business – initial contact, subscription and membership matters, committee and flag officer nominations, deaths, and anything else not covered below – should be directed to Club Secretary Rachelle Turk at secretary@oceancruisingclub.org. Brief details of forthcoming events should also be sent to Rachelle, with copies to the *Newsletter* at newsletter@oceancruisingclub.org and the *e-Bulletin* at e-Bulletin@oceancruisingclub.org. Nominations for club awards should be sent to Awards Nominations at awardsnominations@oceancruisingclub.org.

Many thanks, and we all look forward to hearing from you!

FLYING FISH (twice a year)

- **Editor** – Anne Hammick
- **E-mail** – flying.fish@oceancruisingclub.org
- **Snailmail** – address on the first page of each issue
- **Membership** – space in *Flying Fish* is limited, and is normally restricted to articles by members (full or associate) or their spouses, partners or long-term crew. Please make it clear at the outset if none of these apply
- **Subject matter –** cruise and liveaboard accounts (including humour), technical articles, recipes, letters, book reviews, obituaries. Please contact the editor prior to submitting the latter two
- **Length** – articles usually between 1000 and 3500 words, though longer pieces are sometimes accepted. Length as required for other items
- **Illustrations** – up to 20 captioned photographs per article (high resolution, though thumbnails or embedded pics are fine in the initial submission). Also professional standard drawings and cartoons. Consult the *Guidelines for Contributors* and/or *Sending Submissions to Flying Fish* for further details
- **Chartlets** – please include a rough chartlet if relevant, for professional re-drawing
- **Cover photo** – eye-catching photographs of high resolution and quality, preferably with fairly plain areas top and bottom to take the wording
- **Deadlines** – 1st February for June publication and 1st October for December publication, though an issue may be closed earlier if it becomes full

NEWSLETTER (quarterly)

- **Editor** – Jeremy Firth

- **E-mail** – newsletter@oceancruisingclub.org
- **Subject matter** – news from members: cruise progress, cruise plans, meetings with fellow members, snippets of *news*. Event reports, whether large organised rallies or three boats getting together: short report plus photos. News from Port Officers: members passing through, changes to your area (berthing, regulations, navigation etc). Details of future events, including dates, venue and contact information
- **Length** – from 50 to 800 words for members' news, up to 500 words for event reports, and up to 800 for Port Officer's reports according to content
- **Illustrations** – High resolution and/or large size photographs, as nearly 'straight from the camera' as possible, with captions identifying who, what, where, when and why. Send as attachments to multiple e-mails, or via WeTransfer or Dropbox
- **Deadlines** – 20th of month: January, April, July and October

E-BULLETIN (monthly)

- **Editor** – Dick Guckel
- **E-mail** – e-Bulletin@oceancruisingclub.org
- **Subject matter** – urgent announcements, notification of events, requests from Committee members, website tips and updates, Port Officer and Port Officer Representative update information, location of members' vessels, free OCC Dockage, commercial discounts, welcome to new members, associate members who have qualified for full membership, names of recently deceased members, contact details for club officers and officials, items for sale or wanted, crew needed, advertising for the Forum
- **The *e-Bulletin* does NOT include** – communications from the Commodore except in special circumstances, technical articles, full-length obituaries, Facebook-type information (who's where etc), commercial advertisements
- **Length** – generally less than 200 words
- **Illustrations, graphics** – occasionally
- **Deadlines** – 22nd of month from May to September inclusive, 24th of month from October to April inclusive, for publication at the end of that month

ADVERTISEMENTS

- **Advertising** – Mike Downing
- **E-mail** – advertising@oceancruisingclub.org
- *Flying Fish* – about 34 pages of commercial advertisements are carried in *Flying Fish*. Details of rates, page sizes, deadlines etc will be found at the back of each issue
- *Newsletter* – a small number of commercial advertisements are carried in each issue – e-mail advertising@oceancruisingclub.org regarding rates, page sizes and deadlines. Members wishing to sell items commercially, or to promote books, seminars etc, will also be charged and should contact the same address. Members wishing to sell yachts or used cruising equipment should contact the editor on newsletter@oceancruisingclub.org. No charge is made for these advertisements, which are normally quarter page or smaller and are included only if space is available

- *Members Handbook* – a limited number of commercial advertisements are carried on the inside covers and in the centre – e-mail advertising@oceancruisingclub.org regarding rates, page sizes and deadlines
- *E-Bulletin* – no advertising is carried in the monthly e-Bulletin other than the (free) 'for sale' and 'wanted' listings. Contact the editor on e-Bulletin@oceancruisingclub.org

WEBSITE – Homepage

- **Editor** – Daria Blackwell
- **Web address** – www.oceancruisingclub.org
- **E-mail –** PR@oceancruisingclub.org
- **Subject matter** – general news items of interest to cruisers (changes in country regulations, docking facilities, discounts available etc), brief stories about members and events, short notes on recent achievements and/or accomplishments, notices regarding major upcoming events, requests (for crew, info, assistance etc), comments on club events not covered in the *Newsletter* or *Flying Fish*, snippets from Port Officers, and anything that doesn't fit elsewhere
- **Length** – any length. The Home page shows only the first few lines, often with a photo, and provides a link to the full article elsewhere on the website. Ideally, you could send a short story to the newsletter and the fully embellished article to the website
- **Photos –** one or two good photographs, preferably in higher resolution (min 700 px width) should be included with stories. The new website has photo galleries for events and personal favourites, and additions are welcome – see www.oceancruisingclub.org/Galleries. Please send photos via Dropbox or WeTransfer if sending more than one; jpg, jpeg, png, bmp and gif files are accepted
- **Illustrations** – high quality illustrations are welcome in pdf, eps, jpg, or png format
- **Videos** – the new website can accommodate videos posted on YouTube or Vimeo and any to do with cruising or club events are welcome. YouTube video links must be in the format https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxxxxxxxx and Vimeo video links in the format http://vimeo.com/xxxxxxxxx, where xxxxxxxxx is the unique ID of the video
- **Deadlines** – none. News articles are normally posted at least once a week but there is no formal deadline

WEBSITE – Forum

- **Moderator** – Simon Currin
- **E-mail** – simon@medex.org.uk
- **Data entry** – any member can post messages directly to the Forum by logging on with their usual log-in details
- **Subject matter** – a wide range of topics is actively discussed, and more will be added if any member has further suggestions. Current topics include: electronics and electrical, best practices, cruising plans and reports, chart and book exchange, crew exchange, various technical issues, radio nets and members' blog sites

- **Length** – no formal restriction, but for a lengthy submission it may be better to post a short introductory text and then attach a PDF. Links can be inserted to other websites. The Forum does not accept Word or Excel attachments for security reasons
- **Illustrations** – image files, typically jpgs, and of no more than 10MB, can be either attached or inserted into a post. A single post can accommodate multiple images
- **Cruising Information** – the old Cruising Information website has been migrated across to a dedicated section of the Forum. This can be navigated by region or by country, and includes recommended online and paper cruising guides, local regulations, local privileges for OCC members, out-of-the-way anchorages and places where yachts can be left for a period of time. If struggling to find what you want then use the search function in the Forum and, in case of difficulties, e-mail Simon at the above address
- **OCC Fleet Map** – members who wish to can have their boat's position displayed on a live, interactive map on the public part of the website. If you require help in registering your boat for this map please e-mail Simon at the above address

FACEBOOK

- **Administrators** – Frances Rennie and Jenny Crickmore-Thompson
- **E-mail** – fgrennie@hotmail.com
- **Ocean Cruising Club** – a closed group accessible to members only
- **Subject matter** – anything of interest to other members, queries requiring a quick response, short (very short) sailing comments with photos
- **Ocean Cruising Club News & Events** – a news feed from the website which is open to the public. Subscribe to both to receive news and post your own

TWITTER

- **Administrator** – Daria Blackwell
- **Twitter handle** – @OCC_org
- **E-mail** – PR@oceancruisingclub.org
- **Subject matter** – follow to receive notifications of when something new is posted on the website; tweet to @OCC_org to share information

PRESS RELEASES

- **PR Officer** – Daria Blackwell
- **E-mail** – PR@oceancruisingclub.org
- **Subject matter** – member achievements or club activities that would be considered newsworthy to sailors globally. We can assist in creating releases for regional/local distribution but please note that all press releases about the OCC must be centrally approved by the PR officer. Please forward clippings about the OCC appearing in regional publications, preferably by e-mail attachment

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CONCENTRATED CRUISING: GALICIA's RIAS BAIXAS

Rear Commodore Daria Blackwell

(*In 2008 Daria and husband Alex left the US aboard their Bowman 57 ketch* Aleria, *criss-crossing the Atlantic three times before returning to settle in Alex's native Ireland. Both work hard for the OCC, as joint Port Officers for Westport, Co Mayo, Alex as Regional Rear Commodore Ireland, and Daria as a full Rear Commodore and member of the Board. It's amazing they find time to go sailing!*)

Alex and I have medical conditions that make it difficult for me to take the heat and for him to tolerate the cold. So high latitudes and tropics are out, making temperate zones our practical targets for cruising. After three Atlantic crossings we debated whether a circumnavigation was in order, but family matters were pressing, so we thought we'd try a different approach. For the last few years, we have concentrated on one area at a time seasonally.

A few years ago we spent some time in Scotland, and thoroughly enjoyed getting to know some of the many anchorages and harbours with enough to spare for a return trip. The weather was brilliant the entire time we were there and the tides were not too challenging to master. Last year we were heading to Spain when gear failure caused us to turn back and sail the 'Costa del Cork'. We have absolutely loved sailing the south and west coasts of Ireland and have explored many tiny coves and hidden anchorages others would pass by. In remote harbours on the west of Ireland very often we were the only sailboat at anchor, with archaeological remains of many past civilisations to ponder. We even wrote a book called *Cruising the Wild Atlantic Way* to share our discoveries with those wishing to venture here.

The OCC raft-up at Enseada da Barra in the Ría de Vigo

This year we again went south to Spain. It took us only three days to sail from Crookhaven to Portosín in the Ría de

Muros y Noia, and included our first 200+ miles in 24 hours run in *Aleria*. We spent five days dealing with 'engine issues' and the next 12 days sailing in company with 60 boats from the Irish Cruising Club (ICC), something we had a bit of trepidation about. It turned out to be great fun and a huge success. And as so many members of the ICC are also members of the OCC, we even took part in an OCC raft-up on a lay-day for the ICC fleet – see the December 2017 *Newsletter*.

Once the ICC rally was over we continued to cruise among the Rías Baixas, attending a classics regatta here and a festival there. Mostly we just lived among the local people, dropping anchor wherever we found sand or mud and heading ashore to the local *tapas* restaurant for a meal. We started to pick up some of the Gallego language and felt more comfortable making friends. The temperature was a lovely 25°C, and although the water was too cold for frequent swimming snorkelling was fine with a wetsuit. There are hundreds if not thousands of white sand beaches interspersed with rocky outcrops.

We transformed from being cruisers on a schedule to being semi-locals with a boat. By the end of two months we had visited many anchorages, walked the islands of the national parks, and spent a week anchored in Corcubión just because we loved it. We fell in love with the people, the food, the attitude, the climate, the sailing, the land and the lore. After all, Galicians are a Celtic people. We felt right at home among them.

Here are a few things we learned this year. Plenty has been written about the Rías Baixas in recent years so I'll recount only our favourite stops.

Spain in General

The northwest corner of Spain is very different from the rest of the Iberian peninsula in almost every way. The people are Celtic in origin, temperatures are moderate, it rains quite a lot (just not while we were there), fog is common, it may be the best place in the world to eat seafood, and they prefer to speak Gallego rather than Spanish.

Aleria anchored in Ría de Corcubión

The author in front of the waterfalls at Ezaro, between the Ría de Corcubión and the Ría de Muros y Noia

You won't find flamenco or bull fights. You will find Celtic art, music and archaeological remains. The Rías Baixas, as the region is known overall, have even achieved their own *Denominación de Origen* for the wines of the region, particularly the fine whites known as *albariño*. Most shops, including supermarkets, are closed on Sundays, but prices are amazingly reasonable.

Over the past ten years the government and private enterprise have invested a lot of money into a string of marinas that facilitate cruising in every way, whether as a destination, a stopover en route to the Caribbean or the Med, or for charter holidays. It's a good place for crew changes, or for leaving the boat either in the water or ashore. Transportation is good, with regular flights from airports in Vigo and Santiago de Compostela and trains and buses to both. Because so much has changed, it is critical to have the latest edition of the RCC Pilotage Foundation's *Atlantic Spain & Portugal* aboard.

Each of the *rías* is a contained cruising ground, and the *rías* in total provide enough diversion for a full season. The Spanish love their *fiestas*, and it's worth looking up the *fiesta* schedules for two reasons: (1) to see some of the great spectacles, and (2) to avoid the crowds in marinas and anchorages during the events. In the summer the predominant winds are northerlies, which tend to be light in the morning and a bit breezier in the afternoon. Travelling north to south is preferable, and using the afternoon *siesta* time for sailing makes it easier to do some shopping in the morning and have shore time in the evening. Think Scotland with finer weather and *tapas*.

Ría de Corcubión

This is a small *ría* just inside Finisterre. There is no marina in the town of Corcubión, but with the right anchor there is plenty of room to anchor in mud (with weed) and find shelter from the northerlies. There is a smallboat pontoon for access to the town,

which is ancient, non-touristy and charming. Restaurants and cafés line the waterfront, and there's an exceptional butcher as well as a small convenience store and a market. There are some lovely walks around the town, which is a stopover for pilgrims travelling from Santiago on to Cape Finisterre. The church on the hill is worth a visit.

A longish walk or a short bike ride away is Cee, a modern city with a waterfront park, a small hospital, an excellent *ferretería* (hardware store), a large fresh market and an indoor mall with a giant Carrefour supermarket. The *fiesta* in August features spectacular fireworks displays over the water best seen from Corcubión.

Ría de Muros y Noia

The next *ría* south is the Ría de Muros. On the eastern shore is the delightful marina and Real Club Náutico de Portosín. With notably friendly and helpful English speaking staff, and a 25% discount for OCC members, it is a worthy stop. The village is small, with several good restaurants, a *ferretería*, bank, convenience store and a large Eroski supermarket that delivers to the marina. The marina itself has excellent laundry and shower facilities, and a fabulous terrace on the upper level for cocktails and dinner. There are exceptional beaches on both sides of town and fine walks over the hills above the town. Portosín is also a good place from which to take a side trip to Santiago de Compostela, and the marina staff will help arrange it for you. They will also organise mechanics and electricians, and translate their findings.

Noia, which was once the main mariners' route from the British Isles to Santiago, is now untenable for yachts as it has silted in, though shallow-draft vessels can gunkhole its limited waterways. It is an interesting town to visit with two lovely churches, one of which has been turned into a museum of carved stone slabs and crosses. We took a bus tour to Noia and Santiago from Portosín.

We found Santiago itself to be over the top with tourism. The old town is interesting but loaded with street vendors, cheap souvenir shops and cafés. The new town is

Galician musicians at the Real Club Náutico Portosín

Big crowds in Santiago de Compostela

post-modern and industrial. The Pilgrims' Mass in the cathedral was standing room only, even though we arrived 20 minutes early. The front of the cathedral is under renovation and closed; the interior is Romanesque and plain, except behind the altar where it is overpoweringly ornate. The queue for walking past the altar and touching the statue of Saint James was appallingly long, so we opted to just visit the tomb through the tiny underground passage, which was a much more intimate experience. We stayed for mass said by four priests from different corners of the world, but left before they swung the *Botafumeiro**.

Muros, across from Portosín, is also a lovely stopover, with a new marina in the heart of an ancient village with a tree-lined walk, shoreside restaurants and shops, and plenty of ambience. The *marinero*-style church on the hill is fascinating with more statues per square foot than we've ever seen. The protected anchorage outside the marina has good holding and the slipway is a convenient dinghy landing place.

Ría de Arousa

The largest of the Rías Baixas has much to offer. A Pobra do Caramiñal on the western shore has an excellent marina, its ambitious development still in process. The anchorage is ample and nicely protected with good holding, but one must skirt the mussel rafts in the approach. The town has an old centre, with a lovely old church and high-walled private estates, as well as the usual amenities such as shops and restaurants. There is a convenient Gadis supermarket at the beginning of the long beach which runs south from the town, and another huge Gadis about halfway down the beach. *Supermercado* heaven!

* The massive *Botafumeiro* – Gallego for 'censer' – is probably the best-known symbol of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. It hangs below the main dome and is swung toward the side naves during the Cathedral's main liturgical solemnities to disburse the smoke from the incense through the building.

Meeting up with friends in Muros, including Stanton Adair, Commodore of the Irish Cruising Club

There are several really nice anchorages in the *ría*, including one off llla Arousa inside Punta Cabalo where the lighthouse is now a high-end restaurant. The Varadoire (boatyard) de Xufre, run by Nito – a lovely man who speaks excellent English and offers a car to clients for their occasional use – offers a 10% discount off haulout and storage to OCC members, and an additional 10% for payment up front. The place has an excellent reputation.

The Castillo Museum overlooking the anchorage in Illa de Sálvora

There is another good anchorage at Illa de Sálvora, an island at the mouth of the *ría*. The barrier islands are part of a national park, and permission is required to anchor and visit – apply online to get a permit valid for two years to print out and keep aboard. Then it's necessary to apply online for each day you wish to spend there, for which you receive a confirmation within minutes. In our opinion Sálvora is the most interesting of the islands. Few tourists, lovely walking trails, interesting rock formations, wild horses, a *castillo* museum, and an abandoned village. Lovely beach, too. Oh, and the sword in the stone. Really.

The ancient city of Cambados, home of albariño wines

We were not impressed with the marina at Vilagarcia, which appeared run down, but Cambados was charming despite the shallow depths requiring us to anchor a half mile out (we have 8½ feet draught). It is the home of *albariño* wines and has two excellent churches, many restaurants and wine bars, a lovely square with a *castillo* turned into a winery, and stately medieval homes. The new harbour is home to a vast fishing fleet, and a yacht marina is promised but not yet completed. There are vineyards nearby that make for good day trips.

Ría de Pontevedra

At the mouth of the *ría* are the Illas de Ons, also in the national park and requiring permission to anchor. Ferries bring many passengers to visit, but most leave by nightfall. There are nice walks on the island, but the ferry terminal is the main stopping point for the majority, with restaurants and a church. Ons has a small population living there

The beautiful beaches of San Vicente

full-time, and from that perspective it is interesting. The anchorage in the north is lovely, but the walk in is uninteresting. The moorings near the ferry dock are a better bet for a nicer walking experience.

Just inside the peninsula which divides the Ría de Arousa from the Ría de Pontevedra is San Vicente, with a reasonable anchorage and a small *club náutico* and marina. It's a gem of a place with a decent restaurant and access to some of the most beautiful beaches in the *rías*. In August they hold a Classics regatta, which is a fun event in which the former king is normally a participant with his Six Metre. Unfortunately, this year the class did not race as it was shortly after the terrorist attack in Barcelona.

The marina in Combarro, full of Irish Cruising Club members

No trip to the *rías* would be complete without a stop in Combarro. The marina has 3m depth at the outer pontoon – concrete and massive. The town is charming, and a good section of it is ancient. Shops, restaurants and bars are carved into the rocky hillside and a large number of the distinctive Galician *horreios*, or grain storage buildings, line the waterfront. Touristy, but great fun and interesting.

Ría de Aldan

At the mouth of the Ría de Pontevedra is the Ría Aldán, a favourite anchorage with the locals. Excellent in southerlies, it is exposed to the north and full of mussel farms. This part of Spain is the largest producer of mussels in the world and the rafts are everywhere, but navigating through them is quite easy as the anchors and heavy chains go straight down from the rafts and they are usually in 60 feet of water. The rafts also tend to smooth out the water. The best anchorage in the Ría Aldán is off the abandoned shellfish plant, near the head of the *ría* on the west side, but beware of an unmarked rock which only appears as an asterisk on the charts even though it shows at low tide. Bring the dinghy inside the stone pier and tie up by the second set of stairs.

The water is the warmest of all the *rías*, because the white sand beaches go out a good distance and when the sand heats up in the sun it warms the incoming tide. There is a beach bar near the smallcraft harbour, a small supermarket, a butcher, a bakery and several nice restaurants, including a special one near the commercial dock and boat slip.

Above the town of Aldán is O Hío, a small village with spectacular views down the *ría*. It also has a church with the most beautiful *cruceiro* in all of Spain – carved from three sections of granite, it depicts the story of Christianity from creation through to crucifixion. There are some 30,000 *cruceiros* in Spain marking the pilgrim paths to Santiago de Compostela.

The magnificent cruceiro in O Hío overlooking the Ría de Aldán

Ria de Vigo

At the mouth of the Ría de Vigo are the Illas Cíes, also part of the national park and requiring permission to anchor. Millions of tourists visit the islands annually and it can be daunting to deal with the crowds on the beach – named by the *Guardian* newspaper as the best in the world. But if you anchor in the southern anchorage, between the central and south islands, you can land your dinghy on a tiny beach and walk from there to places distant from the ferry landing – the further one gets from the ferry, the fewer the people. A beautiful island with interesting topography. Ask any of the Lagos family about summers at their grandfather's house on the Illas Cíes – lovely, lamenting stories.

The anchorage at Ensenada de Barra, on the north shore just inside the entrance and a famous nudist beach, is delightful and very protected in northerlies. There are nice walks around the anchorage and several beaches to the east which are not nudist for swimming. The water tends to be cold, however. Further up the *ría*, Cangas has a nice marina, a long beach to anchor off, and a lovely town with a lively market. The main market days are Tuesday and Thursday, but it is partly open on Monday, and there's an excellent fruit and veg shop near the church.

Alex assists Flor Long, OCC Port Officer for Cork, aboard Miss Demeana into a berth in Cangas

The colourful streets of the old city in Vigo

Vigo itself is a true destination – an old, romantic town despite industry and modernisation, with the Club Náutico de Vigo right in the heart of the old city. It's a tight little marina but they were great, finding space for our 17m. There are restaurants, shops, museums, and the best *lavandería* (laundry) anywhere, and you can feel right at home. There are at least three other marinas in Vigo, including Marina Davila Sport in Bouzas, southwest of the city, which caters more to superyachts and is in the middle of a huge industrial estate a long, long distance from anywhere. There's a great chandlery in Bouzas, and of course Astilleros Lagos has been a friend to the OCC since it was founded. Honorary Member Alfredo Lagos, now 91 years old, is still welcoming to his friends, or call Alfredo Jr or Alberto – who has recently taken over from his father as our Port Officer Representative – if you need anything done. Trust is absolute.

Punta Lagoa, northeast of the city, is one of the newer marinas but unfortunately has no real services. The showers and toilets are in a container far from the docks and there is no restaurant or bar. The closest village is about 20 minutes' walk up, up, up a steep hill. It has supermarkets, a launderette, butcher and bakery, but Vigo is about a 15 minute taxi ride – as is the airport, which makes this a good place to overwinter or make crew changes. They have in-water and haul-out facilities.

Baiona (Bayona in Spanish) is technically not in the Ría de Vigo but a place unto itself. It is truly extraordinary, with a huge fort on the hill, now a *parador**, and the

* A top-class hotel, one of a number recognised nationally for their historical and architectural value.

Monte Real Club de Yates below it. The MRCY was once very exclusive but has in recent years become receptive to visitors. It has expanded, and is now huge with an excellent fuel dock, restaurant and marina. It is more expensive than the town's other marina, the Puerto Deportivo de Baiona, but its facilities are worth the difference (their wifi extends all the way out into the anchorage).

The town circles the bay and the views from the walls of the fort are extraordinary. It has some really nice restaurants in the old part, but does get very crowded in August when Spaniards flock to Galicia for their holidays. There's a super bike path all round the harbour front and a decent chandlery. Within (uphill) walking distance is an amazing statue of the Virgin Mary – the Virxe da Rocha – looking down over the harbour and greeting mariners to her home waters. An early arrival was the *Pinta*, which made landfall in Baiona following Columbus's first voyage to the New World. There's a replica to visit, of course.

Spectacular view over Baiona from the Virxe da Rocha

Future plans

Our intention is to leave *Aleria* in Spain for the winter and fly over for a few shorter cruises as weather permits (many British and Irish yachts are permanently berthed in the *rías*). Next summer we may head into the Mediterranean via the Azores as part of the 2018 OCC Azores Pursuit Rally – the Azores have a temperate climate, too. Or plans may change ... it's a cruisers' lifestyle, after all!

A SEA MONSTER'S TALE: In Search of the Basking Shark – Colin Speedie. Published in hard covers by Wild Nature Press [www.wildnaturepress.com] at £18.00. 296 162mm x 242mm pages, with a limited number of drawings and colour photos. ISBN 978-0-9573-9468-1

When I agreed to review a book about basking sharks I anticipated a well-researched but relatively slim volume full of photos and drawings with explanatory captions, covering the usual details of life-cycle, worldwide habitats, preferred diet, etc etc ... but relatively little text. Other than the 'well-researched' aspect I could hardly have been more wrong. Although fascinating, with more than 260 pages of punishingly small text *A Sea Monster's Tale* could not be described as a quick read. Colin Speedie cheerfully admits to being addicted to basking sharks and anything to do with them, and by the time they finish his book the reader will either have caught at least some of his passion, or feel they know far more about the species than they ever wished to. Fortunately Colin is an entertaining writer who keeps the narrative moving at all times.

A Sea Monster's Tale leads off with a very brief introduction covering most of the points outlined in the previous paragraph. This is followed by chapters on 'The Early History', 'The First Hunters' (up to the late 19th century) – both illustrated with clear, black-and-white line drawings – and 'Changing Views', covering the early years of the 20th century, when basking sharks came to be seen, in some areas at least, as a threat to local fishing industries.

It was not until the late 1930s that the species began to be hunted commercially in the UK, mainly for the high-grade oil which could be obtained from its liver. But it was not a simple undertaking, as first Anthony Watkins, and then Gavin Maxwell, discovered the hard way. Both attempted to establish fisheries on the west coast of Scotland and both were, eventually, defeated. Watkins appeared to be on the verge of success when the Second World War intervened – he was an officer in the British Army's Supplementary Reserve – and when he returned to the hunt in 1945 it was to find that he had competition from Maxwell (who sounds to have been a great deal less organised). The central part of *A Sea Monster's Tale* comprises detailed accounts of both men's efforts, apparently based largely on their own two books – *The Sea my Hunting Ground* (AW) and *Harpoon at a Venture* (GM), both now long out of print. It is ironic that Maxwell is remembered largely for being an early proponent of animal conservation due to his later, and much better-known, *Ring of Bright Water*.

From Scotland, Colin Speedie moves on to post-war shark fishing on the west coast of Ireland and around Vancouver Island in the Pacific, where sharks were killed in great numbers – mainly by ramming and shooting – at the behest of local salmon-fishermen,

who blamed them for damage to their nets. This was so 'successful' that the species was virtually wiped out, with no real sign of recovery some 50 years later.

Only on page 168 does the author enter the story in person, first as a small boy fascinated by these giant fish, and then as a young man with his first cruising boat, who fortuitously encounters a small group of basking sharks on his first cross-Channel trip. This was the start of a lifetime of study and on-the-water research, much of it in the same Scottish waters fished by Watkins and Maxwell more than 40 years previously, as well as around the southwest coast of England. It seems likely that Colin Speedie has made more basking shark sightings than anyone else alive today, mainly from the decks of his own yachts, the 11·7m *Forever Changes* and his current boat *Pèlerin*, an Ovni 43. He has also planted many electronic tags in an effort to learn more about the life-cycle and migratory habits of a species about which, even now, relatively little is known. With little formal training but limitless enthusiasm and determination, he is the classic 'citizen scientist', willing to fight the elements in pursuit of data and the authorities to put that data to good use – in this case to get basking sharks added to the CITES list of endangered and vulnerable species, finally achieved in February 2003.

A Sea Monster's Tale concludes with an assessment of continuing threats to the species, from unintentional harassment by commercial shark-watching boats to wind farms, tidal turbines and the effects of climate change on the sharks' food supply. Absolutely nothing of relevance is omitted from this book, which is rounded off by a 14-page source list and a useful index. Also very near the end are the only colour photographs – eight pages, the majority taken by Colin himself. It would have been good to have had more.

Reading *A Sea Monster's Tale* requires time and some concentration, but repays them in full. Most cruising yachtsmen are interested in the marine environment, and reading this book will open a window on a creature which is widely known but rarely seen ... though thanks to Colin and others like him this may not always be the case as, very slowly, their numbers begin to recover.

AOMH

WINDSWEPT TO THE MED – Annie Busch. Available for Kindle from Amazon Media EU at £5.47. 452 pages, file size 7671kb.

At 7560 pages on my iPad, this is not a quick afternoon's reading! In fact, *Windswept to the Med* deserves to be read slowly, with attention, as there is a lot of valuable insight and thought contained within its pages.

It is divided into six sections, each one covering a different part of the journey in detail – beginning with searching for and purchasing the right boat, then taking her to Scandinavia, around UK and Ireland, across to France and finally into the Mediterranean. There is much good information and detailed planning contained herein, and much we can all learn from Anne and Walt's carefully considered decisions.

Each section could, in fact, be read on its own and used as a blueprint for that specific operation (deciding on a boat, fitting her out), or a guide for the passage undertaken (Scandinavia, round Britain and Ireland, down to the Med, western Med and eastern Med). The only problem I foresee is that it all took place in 1989 and 1990 so some of the places may have changed dramatically –- but then again, many of them will hardly have changed at all, though certainly prices will have!

As a possible guide, there is vast detail about what was available then. Coupled with current guides, it could prove interesting to follow in their footsteps and explore the many anchorages and bays they found, away from the madding crowd. The tale of two years' travel reads at the same pace as an enjoyable sailing season – this is not a page-turner novel but a bedside companion book, one which cruises along, taking time to explore, discover the surrounding history and venture into unknown waters, every now and then meeting up with boats and previous companions, every now and then erupting into an altercation with boats anchoring too close, irritating ski-boats or drunken grockles!*

All in all a delightful read – but more than that, an insight into what cruising was like almost thirty years ago and an encyclopaedia of passages to make and ports to visit.

JC-T

TALES FROM THE CAPTAIN'S LOG – The National Archives. Published in hard covers by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £25.00. 304 205mm x 255mm pages, richly illustrated with maps, drawings and facsimile documents. ISBN 978-1-4729-4866-3. Also available for Kindle

Every day, often every hour, over hundreds of years, in every ship on the Seven Seas, someone has made an entry in the log. Much of this vast mountain of information is preserved in the National Archives and housed on its 126 *miles* of shelving. *Tales From The Captain's Log* contains snippets, tasters, samples from these logs chosen by archivists each with a particular area of expertise.

The book is divided into five chapters: Exploration and Discovery, Mutiny and Piracy, Science and Surgery, The Navy, and Emigration and Transportation. Within each chapter are five or so essays. The first essay in the book is on Grenville Collins, who systematically charted the British coastline. Of Falmouth, home to our Commodore and guarded by Black Rock, he says in 1677: '*You may sayle in or out of either side of the Rock…which Deepe place is called Carrack Road and is the place for Great Ships to ride att*'. Still true 340 years later.

The logs quoted are carefully chosen, most written by celebrated sea dogs or relating to famous voyages and events. So in Chapter 1 we read of Samuel Wallis in Tahiti discovering that his men were exchanging the ship's nails for sex and consequently

* A slightly derogatory word for a tourist, thought to have originated in England's westcountry.

worrying about the integrity of his vessel. When Captain Cook later found syphilis among Tahitians he, of course, blamed the French. When William Parry was iced-in and wintered aboard HMS *Fury* while seeking the North West Passage, he staged theatrical productions but also wrote in his log '*a school was established for the instruction of such of the men who were willing to take advantage of this opportunity of learning to read and write*'. James Clark Ross charted much of the Antarctic coastline and in 1839 took with him tinned food. We learn in his log that, while a fan of the new technology, he complained that they should be '*of a much stouter tin*'.

The mutiny on the *Bounty* is so well known that the account here, excellent if brief, tells us little new. But it is still interesting to review a facsimile of Bligh's log, to see his neat handwriting and to read his personal explanation of what occurred. By contrast few people will know of the mutiny on HMS *Hermione* in 1797. Hugh Pigot had risen by patronage, and once a captain became a savage and unstable sadist. He started the irrational practice of flogging the last seaman down from the yard; men died falling from the spars trying to descend in time. When his ship collided with an American vessel he flogged the American commander, which started an international incident. He was finally hacked to death by his crew and thrown overboard – a certain justice one might think. 1797 was also the year of the mutinies at Spithead and the Nore, which at least led to improvements in conditions for Jack Tar.

I was drawn to the medical essays. The horrors of yellow fever are described in fearful detail by those very men, the naval surgeons, who witnessed them at the time. '*Of more than 200 persons sent from the Alfred to Port Royal Hospital, not a third survived the day*'. An attempt to help victims by blood-letting recorded '*extreme debility followed and death soon after*'. Similarly, a case of pneumonia was treated with vigorous blood-letting with the inevitable fatal result. Apparently a tarantula bite caused '*a sedate melancholy accompanied with nausea*' and was treated by applying rum and oil to the affected part.

Chapter 4 provides descriptions of four famous battles including Trafalgar and the Battle of Navarino Bay. The latter, fought in Greece in 1827, was the last naval engagement between fleets of sailing vessels.

In Chapter 5 we read of the First Fleet, the name given to the six convict transports that left Portsmouth for New South Wales in 1787. Of nearly 1000 people aboard, only 28 souls succumbed. Later, conditions on ships deteriorated and many died on passage until, in 1815, a Royal Navy surgeon was placed on board every transport ship with significant improvement.

Tales From The Captain's Log is well produced on fine paper between hard covers, and the illustrations are beautifully presented. Astonishing paintings and drawings of flora and fauna, charts, coastlines and diseased men adorn the text. The facsimiles of the log entries add authenticity. Most are handsomely written with no crossings out or ink blots – line upon line of neat handwriting like the ripples of sand left by the ebbing tide. They were often set down at sea so the detail, of weather and gales, of battle plans, of disease symptoms, of treachery, is remarkable. It is a shame but inevitable that some of the logs are difficult to read – a magnifying glass helps.

The essays are short so the informed mariner will learn little extra about the celebrated people and events (Cook, Nelson, Trafalgar) but they contain sufficient lesser-known detail to make delving worthwhile. Multiple archivist authors has led to some repetition especially on Cook's first voyage and in the chapter on emigration.

Tales From The Captain's Log is too superficial to be a history text, but deserves more than the coffee table. With the advent of air travel we have lost a sense of our maritime heritage and its importance in the history of nations, especially Britain's. This book helps to reconnect us to our maritime past. I recommend it to any sailor, you will not be disappointed.

MHT

IONIAN: Corfu, Levkas, Cephalonia, Zákinthos and the adjacent mainland coast to Finakounda – Rod and Lucinda Heikell, 9th edition. Published in soft covers by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson [www.imray.com] at £19.95. 270 246mm x 189mm pages, in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-8462-3868-0

The new 9th edition of *Ionian* has been thoroughly revised. The authors, Rod and Lucinda Heikell, have updated the text and plans, and added helpful new photographs. Like the companion guides *West Aegean* and *East Aegean*, *Ionian* contains detailed information on many of the smaller harbours and anchorages which cannot be covered as comprehensively in Rod Heikell's major guide, *Greek Waters Pilot*. *Ionian* covers the coasts and islands south from Corfu to Finakounda and eastwards to Mesolongion.

The Heikells' style is full of ease, and the details of history, religion, geography and food make it so much more than a pilot book. It has, of course, essential and up-to-date sailing information, but also delightful asides about places to visit ashore and insights into travelling around Greece. Cruisers will find valuable additional pilotage when cruising the area, and much more about what they will find when they arrive in a port or anchorage, or even in a smuggler's cove.

Ionian is also coloured by the commentary of a man who has had a love affair with the region for decades and is the acknowledged expert on the area. His notes on how things have changed over the years, and anecdotes about such topics as the 'The Captain Corelli Effect' add a personal touch which makes the places come alive. The background about earthquakes, wars and migrations provides insights beyond what one can see. Together with the detailed sailing instructions and stunning aerial photography, every page beckons one to go there now.

DOB

THE BOAT COOKBOOK – Fiona Sims. Published in soft covers by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £16.99. 160 187mm x 559mm pages, in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-4081-9200-9. Also available for Kindle

Mealtimes on any long cruise, especially an ocean passage, take on an importance which

is rarely matched at home where work, chores or other activities keep you busy, so a yacht's library is almost certain to contain several recipe books. Going through them on night watch, trying to get inspiration for the next day's lunch or dinner, is a useful way to pass the time. But depending on the size of your boat, what stores you have, and how 'high tech' you are – fridge? freezer? neither? – complicated recipes requiring recently-bought ingredients are often challenging or impossible. Fiona Sims makes it clear from the beginning that she's a weekend sailor, with access to supermarkets and fresh ingredients, but she does cook on a 29ft Westerly with a modest galley. (I'm glad to see that she's a fan of pressure-cookers – mine is still in almost daily use, ten years after coming ashore from extensive ocean cruising).

Apart from the actual recipes, this book – subtitled 'Real food for hungry sailors' – is packed with interesting anecdotes and useful tips, with colourful illustrations and photos. Even if you lack the necessary ingredients, the pictures of some quite exotic dishes should inspire you. Cruising yachties are masters of improvisation – it's amazing what you can do with a can of Spam.

The Boat Cookbook starts off with breakfast ideas and snack lunches (with instructions on how first to catch, kill, and fillet a mackerel, plus two pages of illustrated steps). Fiona likes to use plenty of herbs and spices, particularly sumac, which I hadn't come across before – it sounds interesting! – and *chorizo*, which does amazing things for the flavour of an otherwise rather boring bean stew. She is a big supporter of sustainable fishing, and includes plenty of vegetarian recipes. There are several delicious-sounding desserts using various fruits including peaches and cherries, and the Salted Caramel and Banana Crunch – see page 80 of this issue – is truly decadent!

The last third of *The Boat Cookbook* contains recipes mostly intended to be cooked or baked at home and taken on board, including a savoury pumpkin tart to keep the Brits happy – for non-Americans, sweet pumpkin pie takes some getting used to – a new slant on the ever-favourite flapjacks, a new brownie recipe, and a chocolate fruit cake. There's a section on booze (and ideas for making use of an empty wine-box bag) followed by a selection of mixed drinks, covered much more extensively in *The Boat Drinks Book* by the same author (see *Flying Fish* 2017/1). The anecdotes keep coming, on almost every page, from recommendations for 'great boating novels' to weather forecasting, seasickness remedies to nice places to anchor around the UK, so even if some of the recipes are impractical while you're at sea, *The Boat Cookbook* should entertain you nevertheless.

EHMH

METALS IN BOATS – Vyv Cox. Published in hardback by The Crowood Press Ltd [www.crowood.com] at £22.50. 126 250mm x 175mm pages with over 100 colour photos and drawings. ISBN 978-1-7850-0262-5

Don't go afloat ! It's dreadfully dangerous. Propeller shafts and rudder stocks break, anchor chains snap, while standing rigging sneakily comes apart inside the swages

where no-one can see the burgeoning disaster. And as for anchors ... some are made of metal-coloured toilet paper. All these crises are described in this book, which is great because it warns us about the numerous problems lurking in all those many metal parts which are scattered throughout our boats. It is also excellent in that it describes clever tricks such as doing amateur low-cost metal hardness testing at home.

The author can be described as the technical grandfather to the whole world of boat owners. His contributions to *Yachting Monthly* have saved a lot of boats from sinking. He makes it clear, by inference, that the old Lloyd's Register Rule about taking all seacocks right off the hull every four years (or more often) should always be followed. Once off the boat the fittings should be dismantled so that they can be checked thoroughly.

He is also sound on such matters as the danger of using C-links to join two parts of an anchor chain. It is almost always better to use a tested shackle, which has its safe working load marked on it. Such shackles will not go round a windlass gipsy of course, but that is where the two chain hooks and tackles come in. It's astonishing how many otherwise well-equipped yachts do not have this essential equipment. These chain hooks and their gear are needed to take the anchor chain load off the windlass so that it can be transferred to a strong point. Anyone who anchors leaving the chain tension on a windlass is likely to find the yacht ashore, because few windlasses have full reliability. Their casing splits under severe loads, or the axle breaks, or the gypsy peels apart. It is always sensible, even for a lunch-stop, to secure onto a massive mooring bollard.

If there is a small quibble, it is in the caption of the photo on page 24. This shows a traditional folding fisherman anchor *and* a 'big ship' stockless anchor. The caption says the fisherman is also called an Admiralty type, whereas it's the stockless one which was developed by the Royal Navy's old organisation, the Admiralty. And very horrible this ugly anchor is, with its stumpy shank and thick blunt flukes which dislike digging into the seabed. When first produced many years ago this anchor was tested in the black, soupy mud beneath the Clyde, outside my office window. Of course it worked there because the unusual sea bed suited it. It should never be used by a yachtsman, except perhaps by one who has a boat so big the stockless anchor may work by its sheer weight. If your yacht is over 100m (300ft) overall maybe you can get away with this sort of inefficient ground tackle ... but the Royal Navy have moved on in this department.

Metals in Boats may frighten an owner, but the way it scares is sensible and helpful. It's packed with valuable information and the price could easily be recouped 80 times over by preventing an accident.

IN

MEDITERRANEAN SPAIN: Gibraltar to the French Border – RCC Pilotage Foundation & Steve Pickard, 10th edition. Published in hard covers by Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson [www.imray.com] at £45.00. 408 A4 pages, in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-8462-3650-1

There was a time when, if you needed a pilot, you would either pay one to come along with you or, in more extreme circumstances, persuade one, possibly at the point of a sword. Later the process became more polite, with pilots racing out from scarily difficult entrances to win business from vessels whose skippers were anxious to protect their no claims bonus. Move on to global maritime trade and global gunboat diplomacy and pilots became books of sailing directions. Turning pages was so much easier than dealing with the grumpy, unhygienic, overpaid sort of pilot. I imagine, if it hasn't been done already, it won't be long before you click on a port on a GPS plotter to access pilotage, harbour information, images etc.

Meanwhile the latest addition to the book variety is a new pilot covering the coast of Spain from Gibraltar eastward to the French border, from the RCC Pilotage Foundation charity. This one volume supersedes the previous two volumes, one of which covered the Costas del Sol and Blanca, the other the Costas del Azahar, Dorada and Brava.

So first question: what's been left out to combine two into one? Well, this is no intellectual method to critique a pilot, but the simplest answer is this: the two volumes amount to 408 pages, including two lots of preamble like weather, history, culture, index etc. The now single volume is 400 pages. So there you are, one book instead of two, about the same size. There have been no short cuts of pictures, chartlets or information. This is a mere rationalisation. And a good thing too. These pilots have been indispensable since their inception, giving really invaluable insight into this coastline, and the authors and publishers have avoided any temptation to radically alter something that already works, and works well.

The region is a firm favourite with sailors the world over, but particularly with Brits. In the past fifty years facilities for visiting yachties have proliferated all along Spain's Mediterranean frontage, and are still being built. A new, massive, long-overdue marina will shortly be opening at Gibraltar, and at Adra the pontoons of a new marina will soon be vacated by seagulls (and the inevitable results of their presence) and occupied by cruisers.

Although at first glance the new edition seems very similar to its predecessors, a good deal of thoughtful tweaking has been done to hone an already user-friendly layout. There is more about Spanish import tax rules, which could easily trip up the unwary, although British-flagged owners will have alarm bells ringing anyway following recent democratic decisions.

To gauge the sorts of changes, let's look at a couple of ports chosen more or less arbitrarily (Gib was excluded as being unfair since the new marina does not appear in the new edition). Estepona's entry has been revamped. Harbour charges appear in the first details list. The chartlet remains in the same glass-clear format, but now without the unnecessary entry waypoint. The entry advice has been completely revised and made more relevant, but the most helpful change is the provision of more and better images, both aerial and from sea level. They really are worth the thousand words that save skippers a new port-related nervous breakdown and a relapse into alcoholism. The next door port of José Banus also now sports three photos of the vital lumps, bumps and arrival pontoon, instead of just one.

Further up the coast is the port of Denia, deep in the British enclave there and a good setting-off point for the Balearics and the eastern Med. Here the basic information, especially about the different marinas, is much clearer and easier to read. There are

three sea-level photos instead of one. The loss of the aerial view is a pity, but the chartlet remains a good size and simple to translate into what you see over the bow.

Altogether the amalgamation of the two pilots is an improvement on the two already comprehensive and highly thought-of pair. It is a surprisingly difficult trick to impart an enormous amount of information in a simple format. The changes in this pilot have been subtle yet effective in making it even more easily digestible to someone salt-caked, hungry, thirsty and tired.

Author and sailor Steve Pickard readily acknowledges that in this update he stands on the shoulders of those who have previously helped create these pilots.

MEP

YACHT WERE YOU THINKING? *An A-Z of Boat Names Good and Bad* **– Jonathan Eyers. Published in hard covers by Adlard Coles Nautical / Bloomsbury Publishing [www.adlardcoles.com] at £9.99. 160 120mm x 180mm pages, with a few mono drawings. ISBN 978-1-4729-4437-5. Also available for Kindle**

I must admit that my heart sank when I saw the title of this book and took note of the author's previous publications. Humour is very much a matter of personal taste and few jokes take long to progress from grin to groan.

The introduction reassured me – Jonathan Eyers clearly believes that naming a boat, any boat, requires serious consideration. The perennial popularity of books listing names and their meanings for application to babies shows that many people feel the need for information and support when it comes to this important choice. The changing fashion in names is faithfully reflected in classroom registers a few years later, and it is apparently true that there are similar league tables in boat names! Whether striving for originality or preferring the comfort of fellowship, the important things to remember are to keep it short – and, as with a child, that a boat may be part of the family for many years to come.

This is a book to dip into according to mood, and the various sections have introductions giving fair warning of content. It is evident that a good deal of research has gone into the tradition of boat names before the explosion in boat ownership gave the topic general relevance.

This nicely-produced volume has been issued in time for Christmas, and doubtless many copies will be bought as presents. Whether or not looking to name a new purchase, there is much to interest anyone who has ever had occasion to wonder how and why that particular moniker came to be chosen for someone's pride and joy.

FASF

VIRGINS IN THE VIRGINS
Phil and Norma Heaton

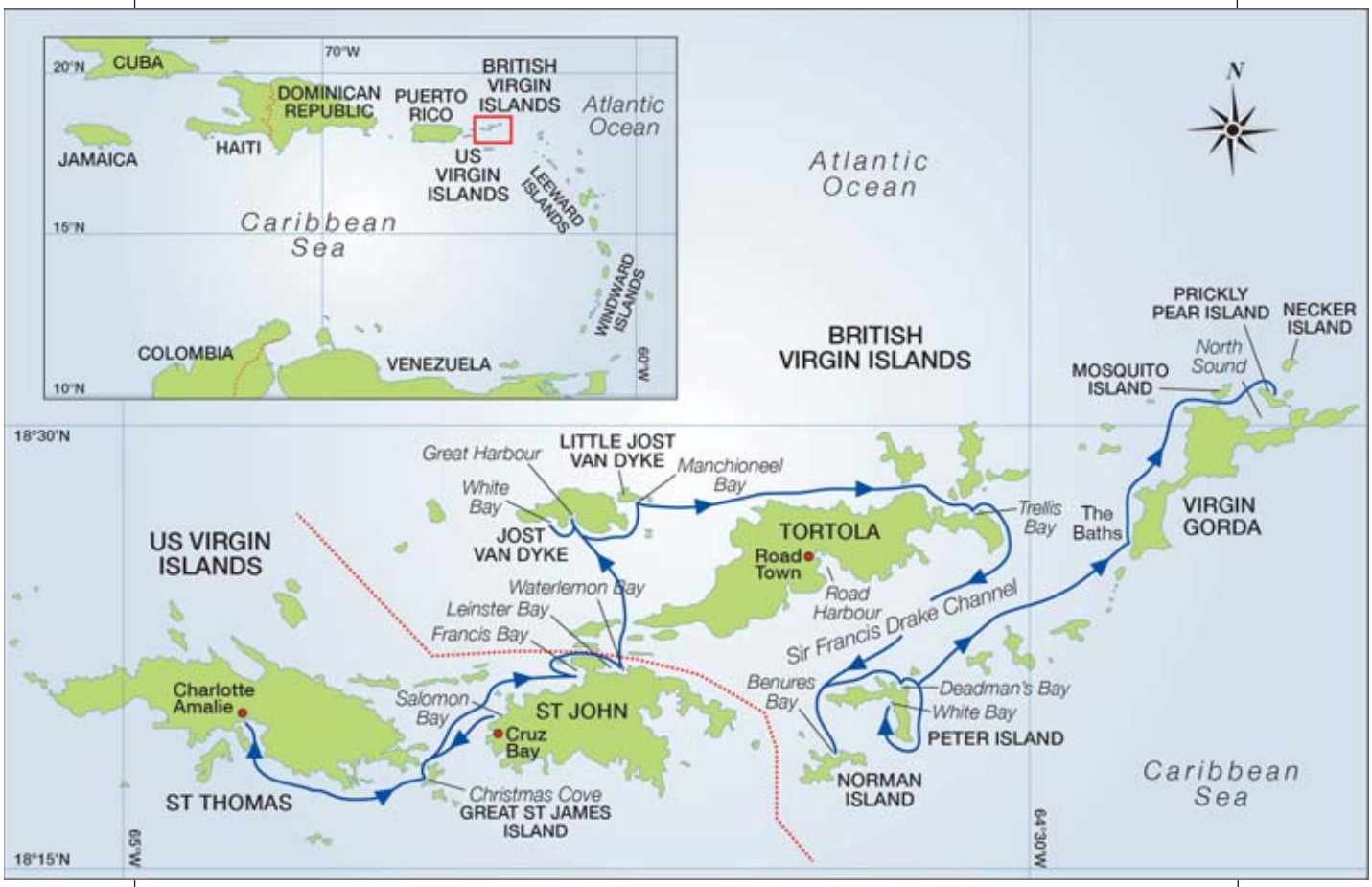
(*Phil and Norma left Northern Ireland at the end of May 2009 aboard their Ovni 395* Minnie B*, and completed a circumnavigation in 2016. Follow their blog at www.sailblogs.com/member/philandnorma.*)

> The tale we relate here is of a visit to the Virgin Islands in early 2017, before Hurricane *Irma* brought devastation and the death of seven people in September 2017, and shows what the islands can again become.

'Oh, everyone's been to the BVIs'. These words from one of the stalwarts at our yacht club were still fresh in our ears some eight years after they were spoken in 2009, before we left Northern Ireland on our extended cruise – and we had still not joined the ranks of 'everyone'. So, visiting the Virgin Islands was a top priority for our Caribbean cruising in 2017, as we had passed them by when heading for the USA in 2011.

We had taken advantage of some light winds to visit Montserrat, Nevis and St Kitts, then with a forecast for some decent wind on Thursday 26 January had departed the anchorage at Ballast Bay, St Kitts at 0905, leaving the islands of Statia and Saba for another occasion. The wind remained at a steady 15–18 knots and we had a fabulous overnight sail, beam reaching and broad reaching, to St John in the US Virgin Islands. We picked up a mooring at Salomon Bay at 0710, having taken 22 hours to cover the 143 miles at an average speed of 6·5 knots. Then a short dinghy ride to Cruz Bay to clear in – Customs and Border Protection were very friendly and helpful, so it was quite painless. What was not painless was finding wifi.

Charlotte Amalie, St Thomas


70°W
20°N
CUBA
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
PUERTO RICO
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS
Atlantic Ocean
JAMAICA
HAITI
US VIRGIN ISLANDS
LEEWARD ISLANDS
15°N
Caribbean Sea
WINDWARD ISLANDS
60°W
COLOMBIA
VENEZUELA
10°N
N
Atlantic Ocean
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS
PRICKLY PEAR ISLAND
NECKER ISLAND
North Sound
MOSQUITO ISLAND
18°30'N
Great Harbour
LITTLE JOST VAN DYKE
Manchioneel Bay
White Bay
JOST VAN DYKE
Trellis Bay
The Baths
VIRGIN GORDA
US VIRGIN ISLANDS
TORTOLA
Road Town
Road Harbour
Waterlemon Bay
Leinster Bay
Francis Bay
Sir Francis Drake Channel
Charlotte Amalie
Salomon Bay
ST JOHN
Cruz Bay
Benures Bay
Deadman's Bay
White Bay
PETER ISLAND
NORMAN ISLAND
Caribbean Sea
ST THOMAS
Christmas Cove
GREAT ST JAMES ISLAND
65°W
18°15'N
64°30'W

The tourism office said there was free wifi in the park near the ferry dock – not working. The lady in the yoghurt and coffee place offering free wifi said she only knew how to turn on the music – wifi not working. We tramped the streets looking for somewhere to buy a mini SIM card … no, no, not open. Eventually we saw a sign for a café with wifi, so went in. It turned out the café had closed down and it was now an estate agency, but on explaining our predicament, the very kind lady showed us to a meeting room and signed us in to their wifi.

Our original plan had been to visit the BVIs before the USVIs, so, why were we here? Well, the watermaker had decided to spring a leak (temporarily fixed with epoxy putty) and we needed a replacement part which was available in Charlotte Amalie, St Thomas on Monday. So we spent the weekend in Christmas Cove on Great St James Island, doing boat maintenance and relaxing. Our first impression of the USVIs was that it is very busy – but it has compensations as, moored in our cove, was *Pizza Pi*, a boat fitted out as a pizza kitchen. You call 'em up on VHF Ch16, order your pizzas, and dinghy over to collect them 20 minutes later. A great idea!

We got our watermaker parts from Reefco in Charlotte Amalie, the main town of St Thomas and a cruise ship destination. The Reefco people were very helpful with tips and advice, which saved us a lot of time and trouble with removal and replacement. There was plenty of space to anchor in the harbour, and we could watch the cruise ships and their 'fun' tug zooming around. We completed the repair on Tuesday 31 January, then provisioned at the nearby and very reasonably-priced supermarket before heading back to Christmas Cove, where we had a very pleasant evening with fellow OCC members Alastair and Esther from *Cranstackie* who came aboard for sundowners.

The 'fun tug' at Charlotte Amalie

Virgin Intacta – in parts!

Then it was back to St John and Francis Bay, where we met up with old friends and fellow OCC members Mike and Sue on *Infini* and Tom and Barbara on *GOSI*, enjoying walks through the woods and quite mighty craic. We were all heading in different directions, so after two nights on a mooring we moved to Waterlemon Bay in the east part of Leinster Bay (some pronunciation coaching was required to get North Americans to say 'Len' instead of 'Line'). There was supposed to be good snorkelling on the reef around Waterlemon Cay, but if it had not been for a few rays gliding about the viewing was a bit thin. Reef damage was much in evidence, albeit we saw one sea cucumber which was a good sign … maybe …

Minnie B in Francis Bay, St John

We decided on a six mile round-trip hike via Brown Bay to Coral Harbour for lunch at the renowned Skinny Legs restaurant – good hamburgers. Going was great, but we were not anticipating the near-vertical road on the return leg over the ridge. It was a tad tougher than expected and the second beer at lunch was probably an error. Anyway we got back and all was well.

St John has very lovely bays with limited development. Much effort is made to protect the natural environment, as most of the island is a national park and offshore is declared a marine park – though as far as marine life is concerned it seems to be a bit late. Moorings are required to be used, and these have been installed with sensitivity to potential damage, although the price for non-US citizens is US $26 per night. The

Waterlemon Bay, St John

An old sugar mill on St John

islands' history is told in the ruins of the old sugar plantations, with derelict windmills and refining vats, along with ruins of schools where the children of plantation slaves were taught to be useful contributors – classes were strictly divided by gender.

Charter boat capital of the world

OMG – just to be with the zeitgeist – so many boats, so many people.

On Monday 6 February we left the comparative tranquillity of St John for Jost Van Dyke and the British Virgin Islands. Clearing in was straightforward at Great Harbour and we picked up a mooring – now US $30 per night – and we soon saw why. We visited the world-famous Foxy's Bar, and even had a chat with Foxy himself, who recited some of his poetry about England for us and described his Buckingham Palace visit to receive the MBE from Princess Anne. An alleged must-do is to anchor in White Bay and swim ashore to the Soggy Dollar Bar for a drink (the name needs no explanation). However, we'd taken a look on the way to Great Harbour and did not fancy the idea of being anchored as if in a multi-storey car park, so we walked there instead. It was a bit of a revelation.

Foxy with Norma, Jost Van Dyke

The BVIs' Premier and Minister for Tourism is proud to declaim that the islands are "the yacht chartering capital

The Bubbly Pool, Jost Van Dyke

of the world and home of the world's largest yacht chartering fleet". White Bay was almost wall-to-wall charter boats. So it's party time … all day … every day … and the Soggy Dollar Bar epitomises the holiday spirit, engendered by copious amounts of their signature drink, the Painkiller. The holiday spirit is also one of generosity. So, as we walked back to Great Harbour, a young couple in a hire car stopped to give us a lift – very kind. Similarly, on arrival some charterers had dinghied over with all their surplus food and beer as their charter was ending that day. Nice.

After one night we moved east to Little Jost Van Dyke and anchored in Manchioneel Bay just off the B-Line Beach Bar, which had excellent wifi. We ate at Foxy's Taboo Bar and Restaurant (run by Foxy's daughter) and walked to the Bubbly Pool, where a break in the granite rock creates a sea water pool, and then the sea comes rushing through the gap in a torrent of white water … bubbly then.

Manchioneel Bay, Little Jost Van Dyke

Full Moon Party

Despite all our travels we had never been to a Full Moon Party, but our chance came on Friday 10 February with a visit to Trellis Bay on Tortola. We had a pleasant sail in 12–14 knots despite it being a beat, and arrived in good time to get a mooring (pay for three nights and get the fourth free – if you get a red mooring buoy). Early arrival is recommended, as Trellis Bay became jam-packed with boats as they squeezed in among the moorings.

The party strung out along the beach, and we were in company with more OCC members – Adrian and Clare of *Flyin' Low* and Ben and Glenys of *Binkertoo*. The beach had bars and restaurants, Moko Jumbi dancers atop very tall stilts, and 'Aragorn's fire sculptures' – fire balls, as well as an iron Moko Jumbi placed in the sea, filled with wood, and lit. With lots of music and dancing the atmosphere was of great fun and far less raucous than we'd anticipated.

Full Moon Party, Trellis Bay, Tortola

In with the In Crowd

Our next BVI stop, on Sunday 12 February, was Benures Bay on the north coast of Norman Island, which lies south of Tortola. We managed to sail for just 30 minutes of the 12 mile trip, but on arrival found a good anchoring spot close to the beach at the eastern end of the bay where we could snorkel. We'd chosen this bay as there were no moorings – and what does no moorings mean? It means fewer boats, particularly charter boats. Well it was delightful, and the snorkelling was good with rays, turtles and a barracuda, as well as the usual skittish reef fish.

Norman Island is very popular, though, for three features – the nearby Pelican Island and some rocks called The Indians; the caves near Treasure Point; and the

A green turtle, Benures Bay, Norman Island

Willy T in the Bight – a former topsail schooner converted into a bar and restaurant. All were within dinghy distance of Benures Bay, so we visited. A Park pass is required to use the yacht moorings at The Indians, but there is free dinghy mooring. The guide books describe this place as providing some of the best snorkelling in the Virgin Islands ... not any more. There were quite a few reef fish about, but it is so busy that they have become habituated to humans snorkelling around and the coral is only average. We cut our losses and headed for the caves.

Bad timing eh? There were a couple of day-tripper boats there, with novice snorkellers who had not been advised to look ahead and around, resulting in a lot of handing off to prevent collisions. For a second time we cut our losses, and headed for the *Willy T* for a beer. Hmm, so this is where the raucous crowd hang out that we were expecting at the Full Moon Party. We had one beer and retreated to the tranquillity of Benures Bay, which seemed even better after our Norman foray.

White Bay, Peter Island

Lion fish

Next day we headed for Deadman's Bay on the north coast of Peter Island, but when we got there the view was across to Road Harbour and three enormous cruise ships. So we went round to the south side and anchored at White Bay which is truly delightful, but it took us two attempts to get our Manson Supreme anchor to set in the sand and grass.

A lion fish, with a blue tang beyond, at Carrot Rock, Peter Island

Carrot Rock at the south end of the island is also described as providing good snorkelling, so off we went in the dinghy. As there was no dinghy mooring and we seek to avoid damaging reefs, we just towed the dinghy as we snorkelled. Almost at once we saw a lion fish – natives of the Pacific which are spreading throughout the Caribbean and seeing off indigenous species. Not having a means to capture or kill it we reported our sighting to the environmental protection authorities at the first opportunity. The trip was worthwhile, and we enjoyed having the fish and the coral to ourselves.

The Baths at their busiest, Virgin Gorda

Big Day, Big Woman

Wednesday 15 February was a big day for us as we were heading for the famous North Sound at Virgin Gorda (incidentally, it is true that from a certain angle the island has the profile of a reclining lady with generous proportions in her middle – hence the name 'Fat Virgin'). On the way we would pass The Baths, probably the BVIs' most famous site. For some reason we were a bit sceptical about the hype, given the gushing descriptions of other places that turned out to be, well, a bit ordinary. So our plan was to motor through the mooring field for a close-up view and take some photos using the telephoto lens. We were not disappointed – it was a zoo. The yacht moorings were full, with large powerboats anchored behind and day-tripper boats as close in as possible. Buoys marked swimming areas everywhere, dinghies galore were tied up to dinghy moorings, and the population of a small city was spread out on the beaches and in the bays. Okay, we thought, we have some photos and we have been quite close, so on to the North Sound.

Tortola from Virgin Gorda

Again there was a whiff of cynicism in the air, but our expectations were confounded and it turned out to be delightful. We anchored in the lee of Prickly Pear Island, from where we could dinghy to all the hotspots – Bitter End Yacht Club, Saba Rock, Gun Creek and Leverick Bay. En route we had a close up of Richard Branson's Necker Island and his new development at Mosquito Island – the latter is intended to be a showcase, environmentally sensitive development, but there was a lot of heavy-duty equipment moving large quantities of earth. We applauded the good intent.

A very good tour

Our friends Bob and Elaine on *Pipistrelle* (also OCC) arrived, and we hired a car for a day. The walking trail to the top of Gorda Peak provided spectacular views around the island; the copper mine ruins evoked a time long past; and lunch over the water at a restaurant near Fort Point earned more plus points for the island; and finally we revisited our first impressions of The Baths.

Oh, hubris, hubris – they are truly amazing rock formations, which have been eroded or tumbled to create passageways and caves with pools and small bays accessing the

An old copper mine, Virgin Gorda

sea. The shoreside view is so different to that from the sea. We also benefited from an afternoon visit as the day tripper-boats were not there, and the sea was up so quite a lot of surf was reaching the shore keeping dinghy-borne visitors away. So, yes, The Baths are a must-visit site, and once again experience warned us against rushing to judgement based on first impressions. On our return to Leverick Bay we stopped at the Hog Heaven bar and restaurant for a drink, and with the sun behind us we looked down on a truly magnificent view of North Sound and Necker Island.

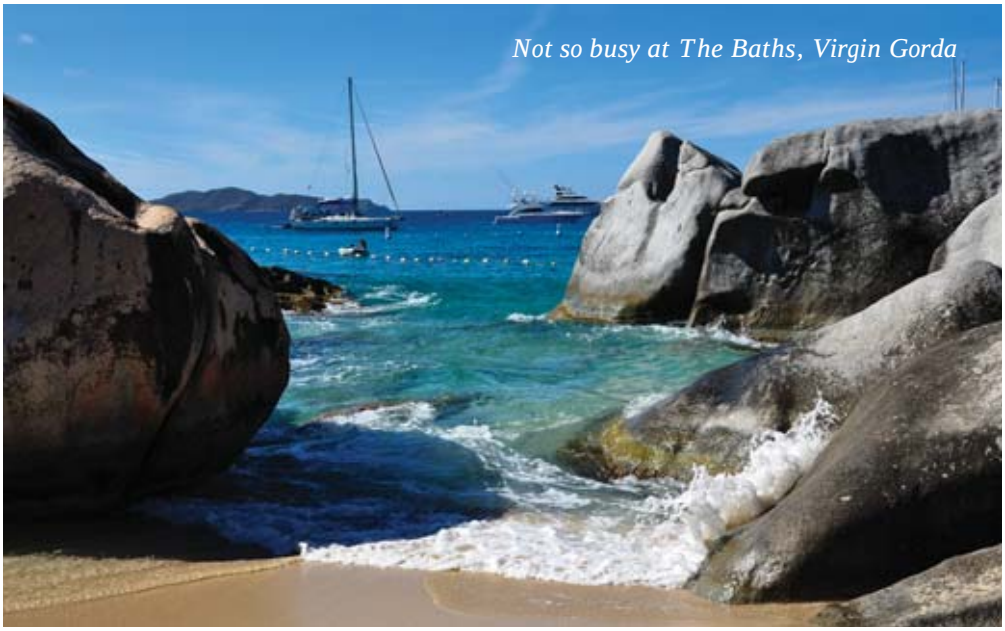
The southern end of Virgin Gorda,
with Ginger, Cooper, Salt and Peter islands beyond

North Sound, Virgin Gorda

We had been keeping a close eye on the weather forecast as at some point we would have to start our trip back south. First, this meant heading 120° to St Martin/Sint Maarten. A quirk in the weather was coming up and the normal trade winds would be disrupted to give winds from between southwest and northwest – too good to miss as the 81 miles cannot be guaranteed to be completed in the 13 hours of daylight. Also, as neither Marigot Bay on the French side nor Simpson Bay on the Dutch side offer much protection from wind in the west, and there are a limited number of bridge opening times to enter the Lagoon, morning arrival was indicated.

We therefore departed Virgin Gorda at 1700 on Monday 20 February for an overnight sail. We felt we had given the Virgin Islands a reasonable go, albeit with many places unvisited. We left with an acknowledgement that they really do provide one of the best cruising grounds in the world – and we plan to be back in 2018 to explore some more.

Finally, we would like to thank OCC members Ken and Judith Brook of *Badgers Sett* for sharing with us information on some of their favourite places in the Virgin Islands.



Not so busy at The Baths, Virgin Gorda

Parasailor

Parasailor – The Passage Maker

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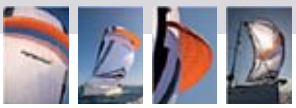

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EXPERIENCES, AND THE PEOPLE WE MEET

Judy and Bob Howison
Roving Rear Commodores

(*After 25 years living in Singapore, in 2010 Judy and Bob – who are Australian and Scottish respectively – moved aboard their Elan Impression 434* Kinabalu *for some long-term cruising. They have no plans to circumnavigate, preferring to go 'wherever the wind may chance to blow'.*

In September they were taking part in the Sail 2 Indonesia Rally, which they describe as 'three months of absolutely amazing cruising!'. During November and December, with Bill and Lydia Strickland (RRCs SE USA) aboard, they plan to participate in Malaysia's Raja Muda Regatta and the King's Cup in Thailand. I hope we'll be hearing more from them!)

I remember Rebecca Shaw (past joint Regional Rear Commodore SE USA and winner of 2015 Vertue Award) saying some time ago that for her it was the experiences she'd had whilst cruising that were the most memorable, and not necessarily the sights. I relate to that wholeheartedly! Experiences with people we meet, 'our new best friends' – sometimes just for a short while – can create enduring memories.

Fifteen-year-old George, paddling out in his small canoe to greet us and to see if he could help, is one such memory. In December 2010 we had sailed from Rodney Bay, St Lucia as fully-fledged members of the OCC, after crossing the Atlantic with the ARC, and were approaching the northern tip of St Vincent at dusk when we caught a rather large tuna.

Caribbean sunset from Rodney Bay, St Lucia, December 2010

Our Greek crew partying at the Ionian Regatta. Left to right: Dimitra, Nicko, Eva, Judy and Bob the skipper

Hauling it in, taking down the sails, and motoring in darkness into an unknown bay where there were no other boats was rather more than we could handle at that stage in our cruising life. After all, we were in the Caribbean islands and hidden dangers lurked in some of these anchorages. What we didn't know was that Chateaubelair Bay had had its fair share of trouble over time. Bob shouted to me at the helm, "head for that wee orange light in the distance while I deal with this bloody fish". The small orange light turned out to be George in his canoe, who confidently confirmed that we could anchor in relatively deep water in the northeastern part of the bay. He said he would come back in the morning and, true to his word, he was alongside with a book of photos and a certificate with his name on it from the St Vincent Ministry of Tourism. He had odd-looking misshapen oranges for us, and wondered if we could donate some money to his quest for an anchor so that he could lay a mooring close to town. We were enthralled by this young man's entrepreneurship and gave him what we could. (See *Noonsite* entry for Chateaubelair Bay)

Another experience which was quite remarkable unfolded in the Greek islands in 2012 and 2013. We had sailed back across the Atlantic via the Azores, passed through the Strait of Gibraltar, and transited the Corinth Canal to make our way to Samos for the Aegean Regatta. Yacht racing was supposed to have been in our past life, but *Kinabalu* had already done three regattas in the Caribbean and was ready for the Med. Samos to Rhodos, racing each day to islands in between, was a dream come true for the crew and friends on board. There were no other foreign entries, but the Hellenic Sailing Federation and the competitors welcomed us with open arms. We were encouraged to join the Ionian Regatta out of Corfu the next season, following our cruise in the Adriatic and 'sailing into Venice'. For this regatta we had a full Greek crew and hospitality second to none at the Corfu Sailing Club. *Kinabalu*'s cockpit was continually filled with charming Greek sailors as we ate and drank into the wee hours of the morning. What fun we had with them, and what memories!

The cottage we were lent in Deltaville, Virginia

"We have a cottage, would that do?" was an offer we'll never forget! We had met Bill and Lydia Strickland in June 2014 when we were 'blown' into the Chesapeake on passage from the Abacos, Bahamas to Newport, Rhode Island. We joined the hugely successful OCC 60th Anniversary Mid-Chesapeake Rally and decided, on recommendation from Bill and Lydia, to winter *Kinabalu* at Chesapeake Boatworks in Deltaville. We had looked for rental accommodation on the internet to no avail, so

Joint OCC and Fishing Bay YC Rally
Judy and Bob are at front left, with Bill and Lydia plus grandson just behind

asked Lydia if she knew of anywhere. Not only did we stay in their cottage while we worked on the boat, but we had the use of their truck as well! Best of all, they became firm friends and we had a wonderful time with them when they cruised with us in the San Blas islands and helped us through the Panama Canal in early 2016.

A much more recent experience was with a family in Santiago de Cuba. Not allowed into the marina, Pedro, the head of the family, offered assistance to cruisers with shouts and whistles. Pedro didn't have much luck with his offer to purchase rum for us, nor to provide taxi services via his network of friends, but he and his wife Rosa, son Porchito, and two daughters Roxanne and Clara, endeared themselves to

Porchito (centre) at the restaurant in Cayo Granma.
On the left is the banished guide!

us. We ate with them at their meagre dinner table – a wonderful meal of chicken, black beans and rice with a tomato, cucumber and onion salad, which we were to learn later is a staple meal throughout Cuba. Bob found his way to their front door through our laundry, which was hung outside in every conceivable inch of space (their twin-tub washing machine had been wheeled out onto the street from the living room). Pedro quoted us for fruit and vegetables, which was confirmed by Rosa, and he went out next day to procure them on the black market for a fraction of the price that we would have paid.

Porchito escorted us by local ferry, loaded with fuel drums, to Cayo Granma, a little island guarding a traditional fishing community close to the entrance of the harbour. We were given a fairly reasonable deal at a small local restaurant where we ate swordfish and octopus washed down with local beer. In contrast, an American who had chanced his luck with a 'guide' when he arrived on the island was ripped off, having been asked to pay the agent's commission. The American was angry and the proprietor asked the 'agent' never to bring anyone to his restaurant again.

We negotiated a good price for the ride from Cayo Granma to the Castillo del Morro

We negotiated for a small fishing boat to take us across the water, and trudged up the hill to the legendary Castillo del Morro. In parting, I was sad to say goodbye to my Apple computer which had housed my previous life of MBA modules, business files and 'death by power point', but know it will be treasured by Porchito and his sisters who can now do their school assignments. Gone too is an old iPhone which froze when we were deleting the contact list, but Porchito assured me that in Cuba they can fix anything!

In our new capacity as OCC Roving Rear Commodores, we'll report on our mission for www.daysforgirls.org as we sail north back through the western Pacific islands in 2017.*

* *Days for Girls* is a charity devoted to providing health education for girls worldwide, enabling them to make the best use of educational and other opportunities and contribute fully to their local communities.

A LIFE-CHANGING OPPORTUNITY
Michael Maggs and Jamie Crickmore-Thompson

(*As Jamie and Michael both mention, the first leg of their voyage was supported by the* OCC *Youth Sponsorship Programme – see www.oceancruisingclub.org/Youth-Sponsorship.*)

Jamie: My family's mantra is 'take every opportunity that comes your way, no matter what else is happening', so that is exactly what Michael and I did in October 2016 when we suddenly got the chance to go ocean sailing with the support of the OCC Youth Sponsorship programme. Having spent only a few weekends fooling around on Lasers on the South African dams previously, we took a three-day RYA Competent Crew course in Langebaan, then embraced the adventure with open arms. Just two months later, after postponing our university studies, we arrived on our host boat – the space we would call our home for the next six months – and met our skipper, Hugh Pilsworth, for the first time. It was only two weeks before we were due to leave for St Helena, so it was a leap of faith for both our inexperienced selves and our experienced skipper!

Michael and Jamie aboard BlueFlyer in Cape Town

BlueFlyer is a 49ft Jeanneau Sun Odyssey, in which Irish/Australian owner Hugh Pilsworth was completing a circumnavigation started some eight years previously in Ireland but interrupted by a long stay in Australia. She was beautiful – and a lot larger and more complex than our training boat in Langebaan! However, Hugh is also an accredited sailing instructor so we knew we were in good hands.

Michael: The course in Langebaan was the first time we had actually experienced offshore sailing. The course started with basic theory, and incorporated the practical side on an L34 in Langebaan lagoon (a small town northwest of Cape Town). For me, the best part of the course was when we broke free from the protected lagoon and headed out to the local seal island a few miles from the coast. I got to helm the boat in windy waters, which made me feel like a true sailor! Despite the fact that I only had four days' experience, I was very confident when I finally stepped aboard *BlueFlyer*. Later events showed it might have been good to have had more experience before attempting a 12-day passage from Cape Town to St Helena! But for now I was ready to start our big adventure.

Our departure was delayed due to weather constraints, so we landed up having an extended family farewell in Cape Town over Christmas and New Year. But finally it was time to move aboard *BlueFlyer* and settle in. First job was to stow the gear we had brought. We thought we had packed small – but small when living on land is different to small when stowing stuff on a boat. We then had our first experience of provisioning a boat for a possible two-week sail – we knew there would be some restocking available in St Helena, but had to assume this would be limited as the supply boat that usually called monthly was currently in dry dock in Cape Town, and the airport built at huge cost by the British was unusable. *BlueFlyer* had been in the V&A Waterfront Marina in Cape Town for some time, so Hugh and his existing crew had eaten through most of the provisions, but restocking was simple, if a learning curve. Fortunately both Jamie and I come from scouting and camping backgrounds, so working out a provisioning list was not too difficult.

The day of departure could not come soon enough, but finally, very early one morning, we slipped the lines and watched the beautiful city of Cape Town slowly fade away in the distance as we pointed our bow towards Saint Helena, about 2000 miles away. It looked a very tiny dot on the chart.

Michael and Jamie's St Helena montage

With Jonathan tortoise, St Helena's oldest resident

For the first four days both Jamie and I were very sea sick. Throwing up over the side, I questioned what I was doing on this boat when I could be registering to go to university with the rest of my friends, enjoying life on the land. Fortunately the weather was fairly good, and Hugh and the other crew member (another Michael) were able to keep things going until we recovered. The tablets I was taking did nothing to stop the motion sickness, but we did eventually 'get our sea-legs' as on the fourth day I started what was going to be my job for the next six months. Cooking!

I quickly learnt that cooking while sailing is nothing like cooking on land – it's quite tricky to keep your boiling pasta in the pot while moving up and down like a yo-yo. You also have very limited ingredients and you have to make the best of what you have on board – no trotting out to the corner café for some missing ingredient. Surprisingly, I managed not to poison anyone, and the cooking skills I acquired while sailing will be useful for the rest of my life.

Every day we learnt something new about sailing – we quickly realised how little we actually knew, even after the Competent Crew course. Hugh instructed us how and when to adjust the sails to get maximum performance from *BlueFlyer*, and we thoroughly enjoyed seeing her speed through the water increase as we trimmed correctly. After a few days sailing downwind with a poled-out jib we reached St Helena – it looked like a huge rock in the middle of the ocean. That's not far from the truth, but when you've seen nothing but ocean for twelve days in a row, watching that rock rising up out of the sea was a true blessing.

We were welcomed in by majestic dolphins playing at the bow – what a truly wonderful sight! We found a mooring, picked it up, and had our first encounter with customs officials. They were helpful, polite and laughed at the huge bag of night-time snacks we had packed for night watches! After clearing in, we climbed aboard a water-taxi and made our first landing, once again an unexpected experience. The procedure for landing on St Helena is not for the faint-hearted. You have to grab a rope hanging off the side of the jetty and swing to shore, all the while moving in co-ordination with the boat and waves. No easy pontoon landing here.

We were made welcome by the lovely people of St Helena (population only 4000) and organised a half-day tour of the island for the next day – the reason it was a half-day is because it only takes half a day to travel the whole island! But first we had to stretch our legs after being cramped in the boat for 12 days, so Jamie and I took a

'brisk' walk up Jacob's Ladder. Jacob's Ladder is 924 feet long, has a total of 699 steps with an average rise of 11 inches per step, and rises to 602 feet above sea level. It was wonderful to run up as much as we could – we were told we were the first to do this within minutes of making landfall. Then it was time for a milkshake – unbelievable bliss to slurp cold sweet milk and ice-cream again!

The tour the next day included a visit to the governor's house, a friendly visit to Jonathan the tortoise (who is 185 years old), Napoleon's house and his grave. We ended up at the infamous airport, built at a cost of some £280 million and unusable because the wind-shear makes it too dangerous for planes to land – a white elephant for sure. Eventually we all ended up in Anne's Place, the only location in Jamestown, the capital, where you can get wifi. Phoned home – wonderful to connect with family again: we had missed that. The next day was one of the best of my life, because we got to swim with whale sharks. Whale sharks are huge – and very scary when they swim towards you – but their throat is only the size of a golf ball, so no danger there! It was an incredible experience, and I would recommend a trip to St Helena just to swim with whale sharks.

Only too soon it was time to sail, and I found to my surprise that I was excited to get moving again. Sailing is more than raising the main and trimming the sails. It's linked to many aspects, such as navigating a passage, working out a course, braving the storms (as well as sitting through the boring bits when nothing's happening), avoiding reefs and shipping, keeping everything shipshape, and keeping the boat clean. But over the following months what made my trip so memorable was meeting people and sharing stories. From St Helena onwards we sailed in loose company with many of the World ARC boats we had previously met in Cape Town, as well as several other OCC boats, meeting up at opportune places along the way.

The trip was a life-changing experience for me, as I gained lifelong skills and made new friends. It gave me an added maturity, taught me responsibility and accountability, and helped me communicate better. It enhanced all those skills that I had before the trip, developed and encouraged by family and my wholehearted involvement in the Scouts (I am a Springbok Scout, the highest South African Scouting accolade), and has given me a broader understanding of and outlook on the world.

A green turtle in the Tobago Cays

Michael has talked about the beginning and later describes the end of the passage – now Jamie fills in some of the gaps.

Jamie: On this unexpected adventure we got to meet many amazing people, both young and older – although Michael and I were always the youngest in any group – people with whom we will be lifelong friends. We

Visiting St Pierre, Martinique

have been to places most people only dream about. We have millions of memories and enough stories to last a lifetime. It is impossible to share all that we saw and experienced in this six-month, 10,000 mile passage – I could fill the whole magazine more than once! – so instead I will describe my top three...

First on the list, as I am sure they are for many people, are the Tobago Cays. Even before we arrived, I was excited to see sea turtles and swim with them - it was all we talked about! On the day we arrived we anchored in about 10m and could still see the bottom, which blew my mind. The waters around South Africa are pretty murky even on a good day! The small islands all around us were the most picturesque I had ever seen, and with the whitest sand, the bluest water and the swaying palm trees, I felt I had been transported into another world. Without eating lunch (and unfortunately forgetting sun cream) we headed off to meet our friends on *Wishanger II* (OCC). We all had a great time swinging off the boat and into the warm water on a big red buoy attached to the main halyard. After a few flops and some red marks we tried to swim back to the boat, but the current was ridiculous and we had to swim for almost

Making friends with a parakeet in Guadaloupe

Sunset in Guadaloupe

25 minutes before getting back aboard. After a quick lunch and a dinghy ride to the shore we went swimming with the turtles. They were so close you could touch them, the most majestic and graceful animals I think I have ever seen. Together with the other fish and the rays it was just awe-inspiring. I think I was the happiest and most at peace I have ever been. It was magical.

While the Tobago Cays were definitely the most beautiful and breath-taking place we visited, for me by far the most interesting was Cuba. We reached Santiago de Cuba late in the afternoon, the first place where we had to have medical check-ups. In reality it was not much of a check-up – it just consisted of a doctor taking our temperatures and asking if we felt sick! – but it was the first time it had happened so was a bit strange.

During our one-week stay we made friends with a Cuban family who lived down the road from the marina. They adopted us, and we became part of their extended family. We spent almost every night there for a home-cooked dinner and did a few tours around Santiago de Cuba with them. These were not the usual 'touristo-tours' but were organised by our 'new family'. Perhaps the most memorable was when we decided to go to the mountains for the day. We left in the morning, all six of us piled into the back of a small truck-type thing where our heads touched the roof. They said it would take about two hours – but just

Dominican waterfall

Salt mountains at Great Inagua, Bahamas

8 km outside of the town, in the mountains, the rear axle snapped. It was now close to lunchtime and we were all starving, but luckily a big bus came to our aid and towed us into town. However, once in town we still had to push the car down the road to the restaurant – and to make the experience even better, it began to rain.

Eventually we got the car into the parking lot outside the restaurant and ordered food. We ordered a mix of lobster and chicken, which was fantastic and unbelievably cheap as we were given 'local prices'. All the time we were eating, the driver was away. It turned out he was at a friend's house, where together they were welding the axle. After lunch was finished and the axle was back in once piece, we decided it was time to go home as we couldn't go further into the mountains because of the rain. Driving back down the road we heard numerous shouts and saw some very funny faces as we drove past. It turned out that they had welded the axle on skew, so surprise, surprise – every 20 or so minutes we all

Santiago de Cuba, with one of the country's famous 1950s cars

had to get out while the driver tightened the wheel before it came off the car. As if that wasn't enough, we ran out of petrol half way back! But no problem – our driver went to a stranger's house and asked for some, which thankfully they were kind enough to give to us. Our driver paid for the petrol with his T-shirt!

Cuba was full of strange people – but wonderful, gracious, friendly people we will never forget. Writing in September I'm so sad to see the damage that Hurricane *Irma* has done, and feel for those wonderful people we got to know. We will be assisting where we can.

I think my favourite part of sailing is being so close to the water, and the feeling of freedom that this huge expanse of ocean gave us. I don't believe anyone truly knows what freedom is until they have sat on the bow, legs over the side and in the water, watching the dolphins prancing and dancing below. That being one with the world is indescribable. Sitting all by myself in the cockpit at 0200, with just the stars and the waves to keep me company (and sometimes the occasional boat) is a feeling I will never forget. Being able to decide where to go next and how fast to go was something I had never experienced before – the excitement of waking up in the morning and not fully knowing where you will be tomorrow.

We left *BlueFlyer* in July 2017 having done three OCC qualifying passages in the Atlantic Ocean (1693 miles from Cape Town to St Helena, 1796 miles from St Helena to Cabedelo, Brazil, and 1971 miles from Cabedelo to Grenada), cruised the Caribbean including Cuba and Jamaica, and finally helped take the boat through the Panama Canal and into Panama City to greet the Pacific Ocean – 10,000 miles in six exciting months.

Michael: Panama is a very busy place. When we arrived our AIS System was overloaded with targets. After being on the open ocean with very little traffic actually seen, suddenly there were so many boats around it was mind-boggling. And the size of some of them!

Bocas del Toro, Panama

We spent a fabulous, lazy week at Red Frog Marina, a lovely island off Panama. The island has everything from mangroves to mountains, from forests to white sandy beaches, and is a place we would love to return to. We reached Colón a week before our intended transit date through the Canal, so were able to take some time to explore. The marina has a bus that

takes you into town to the local mall, but to do this it has to cross the Canal by either a drawbridge or a ferry, which takes forever because of the Canal traffic. Panama is currently building a huge highway over the entrance to the canal in the hope of avoiding this problem.

On the day we started our Canal transit we left the marina around 1500. As small craft we were grouped together, rafted up with a catamaran in the middle and another monohull on the far side. We were on the starboard side. Aboard our *BlueFlyer* we had our usual three crew (Hugh, Jamie and myself) plus two Kiwis as extra line-handlers. I was placed at the bow to make sure the bow line was given to the Panama line handler, to pick up or release the slack depending on the situation, and to make sure that we did not hit the side wall. Once the water started to fill each lock we rose very quickly, and were able to get through the three locks and to the overnight point in Gatun Lake before dark.

We started early next day and I helmed all the way to the second set of locks. Going down was a different experience – much faster than going up as gravity was on our side. We went past the viewing point and waved nonchalantly at all the tourists gawking at us. I loved how the system worked and was really keen to learn more about the Canal, so made sure we visited the Panama Canal museum.

Finally through, and in the Pacific Ocean, we headed off to the marina. In many ways this was a relief, as we were all very tired not to mention somewhat stressed, but at the same time it was a sad moment as it was our last sailing leg before flying back home to South Africa. The end of this adventure, but the beginning of a lifetime more!

Jamie: For all of this and so much more, for giving us this opportunity to improve our talents and skills, learn a hundred life-lessons, meet friends from all over the world and expand our horizons, I would like to thank the Ocean Cruising Club and Hugh Pilsworth.

Michael: I have now been to 21 counties, crossed the Equator by both sea and air, and swum with turtles and whale sharks. I would like to thank everyone who helped make this experience possible, with special thanks to Hugh Pilsworth, our patient skipper, for accepting us on *BlueFlyer* – despite our inexperience and shortage of money!

FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Judy Howison aboard *Kinabalu*

Chocolates! Delicious, dark, to die for ... and yes, made on board!

It has taken some time and lots of tasting to perfect this recipe, and still it depends very much on the quality of the ingredients, so don't scrimp when purchasing! Cadbury's rich dark pure cocoa powder tastes better than expensive Dutch powder. Samoa and other Polynesian islands are exporting pure coconut oil with no additives which is also good. I find an American cup measure on my Tala measure makes a good batch of chocolates.

NB: they can only be made in a cool/cold climate or if you have a freezer.

Ingredients

- equal parts PURE cocoa (or cacao if you can get it) and PURE coconut oil
- a few glugs of PURE maple syrup
- vanilla powder or essence

Melt the coconut oil by standing it in hot water and sieve in the cocoa powder. Use a whisk to mix the ingredients to a smooth consistency. Add the maple syrup and vanilla. If necessary heat carefully over a low heat.

I've experimented with silicone moulds but still find common old ice cube trays the best, though I do use a small silicone pourer to fill each mould neatly. Fill the moulds with fillings of your choice – soft figs, ginger, walnuts, Craisins® (dried cranberries), pink salt flakes, etc. Pour the chocolate over the fillings and place in the ice-making compartment or cold section of a fridge or freezer.

Extract from the moulds and transfer to Ziplock bag or plastic box. ENJOY!

As with most fine things, chocolate has its season. There is a simple memory aid that you can use to determine whether it is the correct time to order chocolate dishes: any month whose name contains the letter A, E, or U is the proper time for chocolate.

Sandra Boynton

OUR GREEK ODYSSEY
Mike and Helen Norris

(*Mike and Helen do get around! In our last issue Mike was sailing their Wayfarer dinghy around the Isle of Wight, and before that we heard about visits to latitudes as far apart as the Lofoten Islands and the Canaries aboard* Island Drifter*, their 37ft cutter-rigged Countess ketch, which they have owned since 1999.*

Follow their travels at www.islanddriftermediterranean2017.blogspot.com.)

We'd always intended that our 2017 six-month cruise would include both a decent-length passage sail and the start of our three-year cruise of the Greek Islands. So on returning to Lagos, Portugal in June 2016 after a six-month winter cruise of the Canary Islands, we again left *Island Drifter* in the excellent Sopramar boatyard. We returned to Portugal at the end of February 2017 to recommission, launch and trial her before heading off for Greece, combining our sea trial with visits to a couple of anchorages along the Algarve and to Albufeira marina, none of which we had visited before.

Portimão anchorage in the Algarve, behind its large eastern breakwater

Our subsequent 200 mile passage at the end of March took us east across the Bay of Cadiz, past Cape Trafalgar, and through the Strait of Gibraltar on a broad reach in a force 5 – perfect conditions! Alcaidesa Marina in La Línea in Spain, where we halted, is adjacent to the Gibraltar airport runway. There we awaited a favourable weather window into the Med. Alcaidesa is less than half the price of the Gibraltar marinas, and one can still stop in Gib to buy duty-free fuel at 58p a litre.

A fast, 24-hour broad reach from Gibraltar east and then northeast along the Costa del Sol and Costa Dorada took us to the Balearic Islands, where Santa Ponsa bay near Palma provided safe refuge when we were headed by a strong easterly as we approached Mallorca. The anchorage is said to be one of the best in the island, and at 108€ per night we were not tempted by the adjacent marina. Two days later we left at midnight to catch a northerly front to, down, and around the south of Sardinia. Thereafter, the wind steadily dropped and we ended up using the iron genoa and autopilot.

Aerial view of Alcaidesa Marina and Gibraltar. Photo courtesy of the marina management

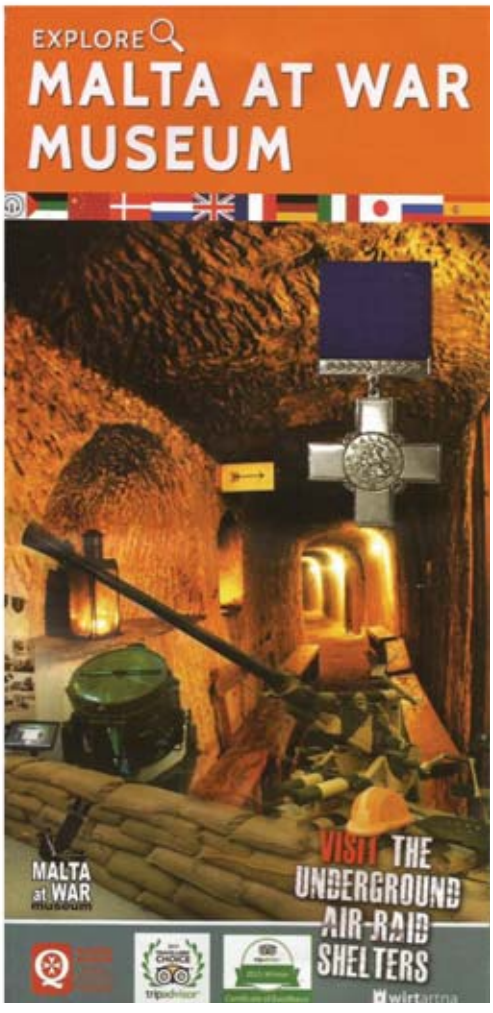
Thirty miles from Sicily the motor of our 16-year-old autopilot ground to a halt, so we pulled into Palermo's old harbour and berthed on a pontoon in one of the port's several small boatyards. We were told it would take four to six weeks to repair or replace the motor, so Helen flew back to Stansted with the 12kg motor in her hand luggage, and drove to Lewmar's factory in Havant, Hampshire. She was back in Palermo, problem solved, in four days. Then it took us an hour to fit and test the motor, before heading off east to catch the tidal gate through the two miles of overfalls in the Strait of Messina for our 300-mile passage to Malta.

Our third crew member, steering downwind in a very fresh breeze


Bay of Biscay
FRANCE
ITALY
Adriatic Sea
CORSICA
Rome
Barcelona
COSTA DORADA
BALEARIC ISLANDS
Istanbul
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
Palma
MENORCA
IBIZA
MALLORCA
SARDINIA
GREECE
Aegean Sea
TURKEY
Cala Santa Ponsa
Palermo
Portimão
Lagos
Albufeira
COSTA DEL SOL
SICILY
Strait of Messina
Athens
LEROS
KOS
DODECANESE
Cadiz
Gibraltar
ALGERIA
MALTA
Grand Harbour
Valletta
RHODES
Atlantic Ocean
CRETE
Mediterranean Sea
MOROCCO
TUNISIA
LIBYA
From Albufeira
6°W
Bay of Cadiz
SPAIN
Cadiz
La Línea
COSTA DEL SOL
To Balearics
Cape Trafalgar
Gibraltar
36°N
Strait of Gibraltar
Ceuta
Tangier
Mediterranean Sea
Atlantic Ocean
MOROCCO
From Malta
Suda Bay
Aegean Sea
To Rhodes
Malemie
Suda
Spinalonga
WHITE MOUNTAINS
Rethymno
Heraklion
Samaria Gorge
CRETE
Agios Nikolaos
35°N
24°E
26°E
Mediterranean Sea
44°N
10°E
28°E
N

Overfalls in the Strait of Messina

We'd always intended to visit Malta, to explore Valletta's enormous natural harbours and medieval fortifications and to acquaint ourselves better with the island's siege history.



Malta's George Cross, which was awarded to the population of the island

By contrast with our passages thus far, the 450 mile sail from Malta to Crete was in light variable winds. Crete is the largest and most important island in the Aegean and is dominated by a mountain backbone which reaches 2489m. The north coast is fertile and well populated, but the south is barren, drops steeply into the sea and has only isolated hamlets.

Walking the Samaria Gorge was on our bucket list – and apparently on many other people's too. The scenery was striking, but one could only enjoy it fully during the 16 mile hike from the White Mountains to the sea after the initial crowds had spread out along the route.

Helen hugging the cliffside at the narrowest part of the Samaria Gorge

Visiting the Commonwealth War Graves in Suda Bay and the German Graves at Maleme were moving experiences. The adjacent airstrip at Maleme was where part of the German airborne forces landed to establish a bridgehead during their successful invasion of Crete in 1941. Both sides suffered heavy casualties, but learnt different lessons from the engagement. The Germans never again used parachute forces on a major assault, while the Allies dramatically expanded their airborne forces and used them effectively with major drops on D-Day, at 'Market Garden' (Arnhem) and the Rhine Crossing.

We felt obliged to visit the old Venetian town and small harbour of Rethymno, described somewhat euphemistically by Rod Heikell in his pilot book as 'one of the most attractive spots in Greece'. Unfortunately, while we were authorised to stay in the old harbour, the restaurateurs who dominate the quayside wouldn't let us 'park' – so we left!

Further east it was fascinating to sail in the enclosed lagoon at Spinalonga and watch the seabed slipping past, sometimes no more than a metre under the keel. Anchoring is permitted anywhere in the lagoon – depending, obviously, on wind direction. While there, we visited the lagoon's island to see the old Venetian fort and the abandoned leper colony

Commonwealth War Graves at Suda Bay, Crete

The old Venetian harbour and town of Rethymno

that still housed inmates as late as 1957.

Eight miles south of Spinalonga is the town and marina of Agios Nikolaos, setting for the 1970s TV soap *The Lotus Eaters*. We had thought of leaving *Island Drifter* there for the winter, but were disappointed by the marina and boatyard's lack of security and the number of long-term liveaboards.

The Dodecanese Islands

These islands, close to the Turkish coast, were passed as reparation from the Turks to the Italians in 1919 and from the Italians to the Greeks in 1947.

The prevailing northwesterly winds were ideally suited for our 30 hour northeasterly passage from Crete to Rhodes, where we moored bows-to in the old harbour of Mandraki in Rhodes town. The entrance to Mandraki is said to be where the 105ft Colossus of Rhodes stood for 65 years from 290BC until it and a large part of the city collapsed in a massive earthquake. In its time, the Colossus was one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Bounded by a moated wall breached by eleven gates, the Old City of Rhodes is generally considered to be the best-preserved medieval fortification in Europe, and is an UNESCO Heritage Site. The town's defences were constructed by the Knights of St John, who

Our route through the Dodecanese Islands

Part of the wall whch surrounds the Old City of Rhodes, viewed across the inner harbour for local boats

moved to Rhodes after giving up their aspirations in respect of Jerusalem. The fortifications proved a formidable barrier to invaders, and in particular to Turkish ambition. It finally took a six-month siege by 200,000 Turks for them to take the city, which had been held by 290 Knights and 6000 Greek soldiers. At the end of the siege the Knights negotiated a formal withdrawal to Malta, where they built the fortifications we had seen in Valletta's Grand Harbour.

The anchorage in Lindos Bay, on the east coast of the island, is as good as you'll get – well protected from the elements, good holding, and with a view of white cubed houses clinging to the surrounding hills beneath an ancient fort and acropolis.

From Rhodes onwards we had to contend with the prevailing northwesterly wind as we made our way north through the southern Dodecanese. Our next stop was at Simi, which is tucked well into the shadow of the Turkish mainland, being only 2 miles from it. The island is very barren and rocky, and its lack of water has traditionally been its most pressing problem – albeit, in retrospect, possibly its saving grace since it has never been able to develop a tourist-based hotel industry. Instead, local traders and restaurateurs concentrate on relieving day-trippers of their money before returning them by ferry whence they came.

Testing our aft tape rode and lightweight Danforth anchor

Simi's golden age was from the 17th to the 19th century, when its shipbuilding and sponge-fishing industries flourished, and the neoclassical mansions which surround the port are said to have

Lindos Bay, Rhodes

changed very little since that time. Painted in warm shades of ochre, powder blue, cream and rose, the mansions climb up the steep slopes around the harbour and create an amphitheatre of fine, local medieval architecture.

We gave Tilos, the island immediately south of Nisiros, a miss as although it would have been a pleasant enough sail on a beam reach, it was in the wrong direction – we wanted to keep moving north. In any case, we weren't desperate to see their principal attraction – a museum housing ten bones from a supposed 4ft foot tall European pygmy elephant.

Nisiros is a semi-active volcanic island 20 miles south of Kos. Its small harbour at Mandraki, the capital, is the island's ferry port, and each morning day-trippers arrive, are bussed around the island, shown the volcanoes, fed, and shipped out again at 3pm. We moored in Pali, the island's only other harbour. There was only 0·2m under our keel at the entrance, hence it does not cater for ferries, commercial shipping or superyachts. On arrival, in 40°C, we simply berthed, jumped ship,

Island Drifter moored bows-to in Symi harbour

Celebrating Mike's birthday in the Afrodite Taverna at Pali

and walked 15m to the nearest *taverna* where we had cold beers and *mezes* for lunch. Another day we celebrated Mike's birthday with fellow cruisers, enjoying a lunch which lasted from 2pm until 10pm. Suffice to say it was a memorable occasion – insofar as the attendees can remember it...

Rod Heikell's statement that, 'Large areas of the island, in fact anywhere there is anything vaguely resembling a beach, have been turned into some of the tackiest resorts in Greece' put us off going to Kos. Kalymnos to its north, by comparison, is sparsely populated and generally unspoilt. It is a long, high, craggy lump of rock that appears to grow out of the sea like some prehistoric monster. It has several good anchorages, and we pulled into Palionisos on the east coast. It is well protected from the elements, being at the end of a small fjord enclosed by steep cliffs, and free mooring buoys have been laid by the two local *tavernas* at the head of the bay. The anchorage is, by any standard, a stunningly picturesque location. Once the centre of the Greek sponge-fishing, Kalymnos had a sponge fleet numbering hundreds of boats. Some of the grand villas in Pothia, the capital on the south coast, bear witness to the considerable wealth accumulated by local merchants at that time.

Leros lies close north of Kalymnos, and in antiquity the two islands were referred to as one – the Kalydnian Islands. Now they are separated by a shallow, narrow channel, which can quickly become very rough in bad weather. The large well-protected harbour of Lakki is the main ferry port of the island. It also contains two marinas, a boatyard and a free anchorage. In the 1930s, when the island was under Italian rule, Mussolini chose Lakki as the main base for the Italian navy in the Dodecanese and built a new town at the head of the bay, in art deco style with wide boulevards.

From Lakki we sailed the ten miles north to Agmar Marine's Partheni boatyard. There we picked up a waiting buoy, on which we stayed for five days decommissioning

Palionisos anchorage at dusk seen from a nearby taverna

Island Drifter ready for lift out. We then spent a day and a half in the boatyard effecting a few repairs and sorting out those jobs that can only be completed ashore. The boatyard is adjacent to the island's small airport, served by Olympic Airways which flies from various UK locations via Athens. Very convenient – particularly so if the yard is as secure as it appears to be and its claims to be able to take on 'any' work prove valid.

In total we covered 2500 miles this summer on our cruise from Lagos to Leros, and visited 35 locations. Next year we hope to visit many more. Thereafter, who knows?

Agmar Marine Boatyard at Partheni through a fish-eye lens.
Photo courtesy of the management

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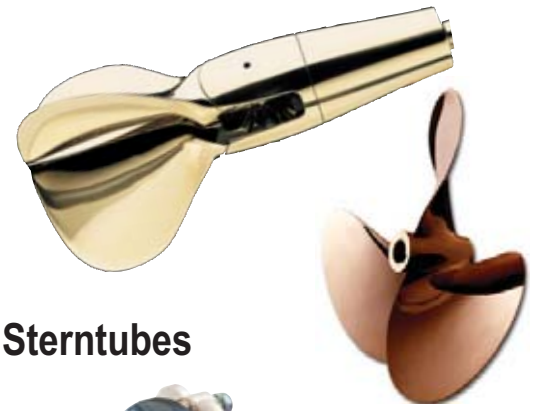

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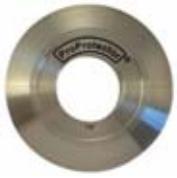

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TAHITI – THE HARD WAY
Alan Leslie

(*Alan only joined the OCC in 2016, but has sailed all his life having been taught in dinghies by his father in New Zealand. Then family life intervened, until in 1989 he bought a 24ft GRP hull which took him two years to complete. Six years later he sold that to buy* Diva *– see below – in which he cruised NZ waters until retirement in 2008 permitted longer cruises, initially to Tonga in 2010.*

Following the conclusion of this cruise in June 2014, Alan and Elyse *returned to NZ, then in 2016 sailed to Fiji and New Caledonia. At the time of writing she was moored in Gulf Harbour Marina, Auckland, ready to hit the South Pacific again next year.*

All photos are courtesy of Gunilla Peterson.)

Most people sail to Tahiti from Hawaii or the Galapagos, downwind, but from New Zealand it's a bit different. It's upwind to the northeast and it's certain that there will be bad weather somewhere, usually near the beginning or the middle. The trick is to head due east until a longitude of about 165°W and then turn north to take advantage of the trade winds from the southeast. Since meeting my friend Peter Russell-Green it had been my dream to sail to Tahiti. He had done it twice – in the '70s with his 34ft Alan Hooper-designed sloop *Milanion*, and then again in the '80s in his Whiting 40 *Southern Cross*.

With my previous boat, *Diva*, a 40ft John Spencer IOR Admiral's Cup design, I had sailed my first bluewater passage from New Zealand to Tonga and been hit by very bad weather. Peter assured me that I was blessed, as nothing would ever seem as bad again. Over the ensuing years I sailed *Diva* all around the South Pacific – Tonga, Fiji,

Elyse in New Zealand's Bay of Islands

Vanuatu, New Caledonia and back to New Zealand – but as the years wore on I found she was becoming increasingly hard for me to handle. She was built for racing. The large, non-self-tailing winches and big sails were a real handful in heavy weather, and whilst she was fast on the open ocean she was also very wet.

On numerous occasions, in different ports, I had seen Amel yachts and noted how well-protected the cockpit was. Amel owners are very proud of their boats, and it doesn't take much effort to be invited aboard and be shown why the owners think they are so wonderful. I was decided – I had to have one. So in 2012 *Diva* was put up for sale and I went on the hunt for a 53ft Amel Super Maramu. I found one in New Caledonia, after some negotiation arrived at an agreeable price, and took possession of *Elyse* in April 2013.

Because of the peculiar tax laws in New Caledonia I had two weeks in which to leave if I wanted to avoid paying local taxes, so with two young French crew aboard I set off for Vanuatu, where *Elyse* stayed for three months. I flew home to Australia, and later in the year flew back to Port Vila and sailed *Elyse* to New Caledonia solo – not a great problem in a boat that can be sailed entirely from the protected cockpit. Then in November 2013 I sailed her to New Zealand for the cyclone season, with the intention of preparing for the voyage to Tahiti the following year.

I had previously located crew via the Find a Crew website [www.findacrew.net] and one, Gunilla from Sweden, jumped at that chance to come. Two others, Lotti from Switzerland and Mark from the USA, were also found to be compatible and were interested in making the trip. We all met up at the Gulf Harbour Marina in Auckland in early May and spent a week provisioning and going through all the procedures on board, especially safety. Our voyage plan was to head due east, keeping at about 35°S until we were south of Raivavae in the Austral Islands, clear in to French Polynesia there, and then head north to Papeete.

Gunilla, Lotti and Mark aboard Elyse in Gulf Harbour

Taking on fuel for the passage. Those red jugs were stored in a locker, not on deck!

On 14 May 2014 we left Gulf Harbour at 0800 for Auckland City to clear customs and set off. We reached the customs wharf at 1100, accompanied by Peter Russell-Green in his 40ft Birdsall, *Focal Point*, and Peter Greacen in his Bavaria 42, *Viveka*. There was no-one at the wharf, even though we'd informed them by e-mail of the time we would be there, so Gunilla and I went wandering off to see if we could find someone.

Leaving Auckland with the two Peters in the lead

In fact they found us. We were in a Customs bond area and not allowed to 'just wander around', we were sternly informed, and then taken back to *Elyse* and told to wait. We didn't have to wait too long and a team of friendly New Zealand customs officials arrived to do all the paper work. We were cleared out and on our way by 1200, with the two Peters leading the way past North Head and Rangitoto Island, heading for the Colville Channel where we would turn right and head east. By evening we were off the northern tip of the Coromandel peninsula with 18–19 knots of wind dead behind us, sailing due east with main only, and going well.

With four of us aboard, our watch system during the night was three hours on and nine off, which is pretty civilised. The boat sails under autopilot all the time, so there's not much to do when on watch except to keep an eye on things, especially the radar and AIS, both of which are set up with alarms to warn if other vessels are near us. We sailed through the night on a broad reach with just the mainsail. The breeze had gone a bit south and was up to 30+ knots, and next day we found that we'd covered 170 miles from noon to noon. In the afternoon the breeze dropped quite a bit and we were doing only 5–6 knots under genoa, main and mizzen, although on a beam reach. But all was well, the crew were happy, and we had risotto and salad for dinner – we were living well.

By the 17th the wind had slowly backed from south-southwest through south to south-southeast. That pushed us slightly north as we tried to stay on a beam reach below 35°S. So we rearranged the sail plan to fairly close-hauled, with the staysail and two reefs in the main and mizzen. The breeze went up and down, as did our speed, but we generally managed about 6 knots, which was okay, and our course was much better. We couldn't afford to go north until we reached 165°W – only then could we lay a course to Raivavae, otherwise we wouldn't be able to lay it and we'd end up in the Cook Islands.

We found a slight leak from the gland at the top of the rudder shaft, but after adjustment it wasn't too serious and we could deal with it. A few days previously a big wave had come into the cockpit and over the stern. It had knocked out the plug in the aft cabin top where the emergency steering fitted, and before I could replace it water got in and soaked my bunk – I'd have to sleep in the main cabin. *La vie sur la mer*!

Two days later we were reefed down and ploughing along. We'd been caught out a little, as the wind was now southeast and we were almost laying Raivavae, but really a bit too much north. We decided to keep going and see what would happen the next day. At 0612 UTC (1812 LT) on 19th May our position was 33°28'·31S 167°37'·54W, our course 044°T and our speed 6·4 knots.

During the night we received an e-mail from Bob McDavitt, our weather router in Auckland, advising us to alter course to 020°T due to a deep low pressure cell that was moving south from Tonga. After two days, he said, the wind should go northerly and we should then be able to reach off to the east. So we kept that course all day, except when we hove-to for an hour or so to put some anti-chafe gear on the staysail sheets and alter their routing slightly. At about 1730 we ran off to have dinner in the cockpit on a more stable platform, but after dinner we came back onto a northerly heading again. The sea had worsened during the day and was getting a bit rough, with two swells, one about 1·5m from the southeast, the other from southwest and about 2·5m. When they got together things got a bit interesting ... and wet! At 0612

At sea in pleasant weather

UTC on 20th May our position was 33°38'·37S 166°32'·57W, our course 010°T and our speed 7·2 knots.

By the 22nd we were into our third day of pretty much gale force winds. Then the low passed and the wind went north and settled at around 35–45 knots, gusting over 50 at times. We were heading more or less east. The confused seas made the motion highly unpredictable and it was very wet, even in our well-protected cockpit. Moving around below was very difficult. We were well but tired, and the boat was handling it well which gave us all a lot of confidence. At 0612 UTC on 21st May our position was 29°48'·71S 164°50'·45W, our course 109°T and our speed 6·3 knots.

That night we hove-to in 40–50 knot winds just to get some respite from the constant banging and crashing. By the early hours the wind had gone down a bit so we set off again, heading east with a strong north to north-northwest breeze. At 0608 UTC on 22nd May our position was 30°24'·18S 162°54'·25W, our course 087°T and our speed 8·6 knots.

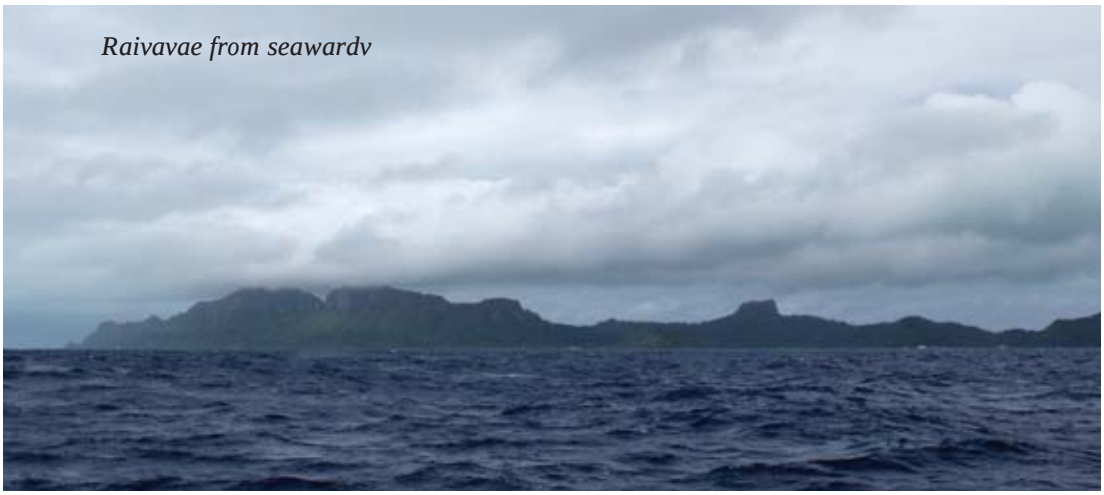
We'd been having chats on the radio with John Neal, who was about two days ahead of us and heading for Rururtu in the Austral Islands. He'd left 48 hours before us in his Hallberg Rassy 46 *Mahina Tiare* (with paying crew!), and went north to try to get round the low descending from Fiji/Tonga. His northerly plan worked, but like us he got a little hammered by the seas and by winds close to gale force, though we were on the other side of it.

By the next day it was all over. The wind had dropped and backed to the northwest, and we were broad reaching in 15–20 knots and sunshine. All would have been fine except that the skipper lost his balance in the cockpit while holding two plates of *chilli con carne* (lunch), which ended up all over the starboard sheet winch, the cockpit floor, and the skipper! It was soon cleaned up, however, and fortunately there was still some in the pot – Gunilla always made extra. It was very good.

The author on watch and clipped on

The sea had really abated and the breeze was still backing. It would go south sooner or later, and then southeast. The prediction was that when it went south it would die almost completely, and then we would have to motor east until we picked up the southeasterly and could lay a course directly for Raivavae. In a straight line we had just over 500 miles to go. At 0611 UTC on 23rd May our position was 29°12'·69S 159°41'·52W, our course 059°T and our speed 5·9 knots.

The wind died at 0100 on the 24th and the motor went on. The weather was beautifully sunny and the seas calm as we headed east, waiting for the southeast breeze to come. We brought a lot of damp stuff up into the cockpit to dry off in the sunshine. It was unlikely that we would get wind anytime soon, but *Elyse* was going well, the batteries were fully charged, the water tanks full and the Yanmar purring away below decks. All was good. We were also eating well – slow cooked salmon with saffron, cream, carrots and potatoes for lunch – and looking forward to getting to Raivavae. At 0423 UTC on 24th May our position was 28°51'·36S 157°10'·72W, our course 087°T and our speed 6·2 knots.



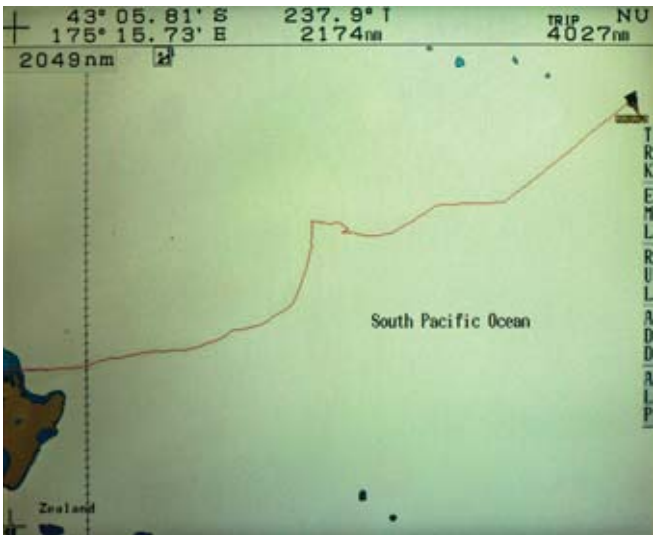
Raivavae from seawardv

The southeast breeze finally arrived at about 1500, just when Bob had said it would, and with 15 knots from just aft of the beam we were on course to Raivavae under full genoa, main and mizzen. We feasted on prawn stir-fry and rice for lunch, put chicken sandwiches in the fridge for later, and were generally very comfortable. We hadn't been able to get onto Far North Radio to report our position, but we knew where we were and everyone on the Sailmail list knew too, which at 0404 UTC on 25th May was 28°16'·86S 154°22'·77W, our course 057°T and our speed 8 knots.

Next day the wind increased a little and backed into the east, blowing at around 20 knots. We spent a quiet day, eating up the miles towards Raivavae – 260 miles to go, hopefully a day and a half. With the lift in the breeze we put the mizzen away, and with one reef in main and genoa were making good speed in the right direction. I was thinking that if the speed continued the next day we might have to reef down further to slow the boat so we arrived after daybreak. At 0405 UTC on 26th May our position was 26°26'·64S 151°35'·1W, our course 055°T and our speed still 8 knots.

The following day was similar. Having sent out e-mails telling everyone how well we were getting on, some commented that it sounded like we were eating in restaurants every day and not really sailing! Well, we were sailing, but it was very comfortable and we were well-prepared with a variety of meals for the trip. We all believed that there was no excuse for bad food! We still had about 120 miles to go, and expected to sight land early the next morning. At 0308 UTC on 27th May our position was 24°55'·08S 149°23'·73W, our course 058°T and our speed 6·8 knots.

Early next morning we saw Raivavae rising out of the dark sea to the east. We found the pass easily and negotiated our way through the calm lagoon to the anchorage. The entrance and the passage through the lagoon are clear and free from dangers, and the reef shields the bay from the ocean swell. At 1030 LT (0030 UTC) on 28th May we dropped anchor in Baie Rairua at 23°51'·94S 147°41'·33W. We had lunch before launching the dinghy and motoring in to the beach and the *gendarmerie* to register our arrival. It was all very pleasant, and we were proud of the 'Raivavae' stamps in our passports ... not many people have those!



Our track from New Zealand to Raivavae – not quite what we'd planned!

In French Polynesia they have a peculiar clearance system for yachts. You fill in all the

Clearing in at the gendarmerie at Raivavae

paperwork at the *gendarmerie* and then you have to go to the post office to buy a stamp to mail your arrival papers to Papeete – seriously! We might get there before they do, I thought, particularly as the Raivavae post office only opened in the mornings so it would have to wait till the next day. Duly cleared in, we dinghied back to *Elyse* to celebrate our arrival in French Polynesia with cheese and crackers and champagne. Peter Russell-Green had given us the bottle before we left Auckland with a note instructing us not to open it until we reached French Polynesia. Thanks Peter, it was rather special – 2367 miles from Auckland in 14 days almost to the hour. A good trip!

The following day we went to the post office to mail our arrival form to Papeete. It was a peaceful day in Raivavae – not much happens there – and we went for a long walk around the west side of the island along a paved road. There were a few houses

Raivavae, with the church on the right

En route to Papeete

and a few cars. The air was clear, the water cool, and the local people friendly with a *bonjour* from everyone. A woman told us about *le magasin* which was next to *l'eglise*, but we walked past the church twice and didn't see anything resembling a shop. We thought we must have missed it and decided to have another look in the morning. Our plan was to leave the next afternoon, in order to arrive in Papeete on Sunday, wait overnight and clear in on Monday morning. We weighed anchor at 1530 and were on our way in a light northeast breeze of 10–12 knots. At 0341 UTC on 30th May our position was 23°37'·75S 147°44'·1W, our course 345°T and our speed 6·6 knots.

The next day was spent quietly sailing slowly towards Papeete. There was a slight swell, 15 knots of wind from the east, and the sailing was easy, warm and sunny. Sunset was at 1730 LT with 212 miles to go. At that rate we would be off Papeete about midnight the following night, so decided to slow down to extend the arrival time to the early hours of Sunday morning. At 0400 UTC on 31st May our position was 20°56'·41S 148°32'·78W, our course 346°T and our speed 6·9 knots.

We covered 194 miles in the next 24 hours, a great day's sailing but too fast! We had two options – keep sailing and heave-to, or head for the west side of Tahiti Iti and anchor. We chose the second option, and anchored for the night in the Passe Tapuaeraha, off Fareena, at 17°47'·68S 149°17'·99W. We planned to head for Papeete the next morning, reckoning it would take five or six hours. Late morning saw us heading into the pass near Marina Taina, and being the weekend it seemed that most of the local populace were out on the water in some sort of craft or other. We motored through the crowds, past the marina and the airport, not realising that we should have called up the airport on the radio to request permission to pass.

Sunset in French Polynesia, land of dreams

By early afternoon on 2nd June we were tied up to the wall at Boulevard Pomare at 17°32'·42S 149°34'·33W. It was Sunday, so Papeete – in common with most French places – was closed! Next day we visited the Port Captain, who informed us that there was no more paperwork to do as everything had been done in Raivavae – we should just come and see him when we were ready to leave. So there we were, finally, in Tahiti, the dream fulfilled, almost. There was plenty more – Moorea, Huahine, Raiatea, Bora Bora – still to explore, of course, but that's another story.

Papeete at last

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

ELEGIBILITY: space in *Flying Fish* is limited, so publication is normally limited to articles written by members (including associate members), their spouses/partners, or their long-term crew.

CONTENT: anything which is likely to be of interest to other members – cruise and liveaboard accounts (including humour), technical articles, recipes, letters, book reviews and obituaries. Please check before to submitting the latter two, and also tell me if you're sending the same piece (or photos) elsewhere, inside or outside the OCC.

Finally, please ensure that all personal, boat and place names are spelt correctly, in both text and captions. I can't always check them and errors can offend!

LENGTH: no more than 3500 words and preferably under 3000, except in *very* special cases – and normally only one article per member per issue. I dislike having to cut other people's writing and generally throw overlong offerings back to the author for amendment, so if your efforts are lengthy, please allow extra time.

FORMAT: MS Word (any version) or PDF, with or without embedded photos (though see next page), sent as an e-mail attachment. With prior warning I'm willing to scan good quality typescript, but *Flying Fish* no longer accepts faxed or handwritten articles. If sending by snailmail a warning e-mail is helpful, and sets bells ringing if the envelope doesn't follow. (If posting in the UK, please check the thickness of your package – an ordinary letter must not exceed 5mm, which catches many people out.)

If place (or personal) names need accents which you aren't able to create in Word, please include a list at the end – something along the lines of 'the A in Mogan and the I in Bahia both need acute accents, and the N in Montana needs a tilde' (aka a squiggle above it) works well.

Please don't spend time on fancy formatting – it won't import into my layout programme. Stick to a standard font such as Times New Roman, Ariel or Calibri, and limit yourself to capitals, italics and bold.

Finally, **PLEASE BE ORGANISED!** If the text you send is not intended to be your final draft please make this clear in your cover note. It's frustrating to spend time editing only to receive a new, and very altered, version a month or two later. 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 **highlighted** – though note the deadlines near the bottom of page 176.

ILLUSTRATIONS: please send photos in JPG format by e-mail, WeTransfer, Dropbox or similar, though by arrangement I'm willing to receive prints for scanning (most often to accompany obituaries). If sending the latter, never write the caption on the back in ink or ball pen as it often smudges onto the next photo – a self-adhesive sticker on the back bearing a **pencilled** caption is much safer. 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.

Watercolour paintings or black-and-white line drawings (including cartoons) 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 to avoid parting with the original.

PLEASE DON'T SEND MORE THAN 20 PHOTOS MAXIMUM – while you're submitting a single article, I receive up to 20 for the average issue, which means around 400 images to juggle. My filing system is legendary, but it has its limits! 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 it's possible to extract pictures from document files, the quality suffers dramatically.

To reproduce well, photos need to measure at least 16cm wide at 300 dpi or 67cm wide at 72 dpi (the default setting for most cameras). If this means nothing to you, please send your photos EXACTLY as they were downloaded from the camera – even opening and saving under another name will degrade the quality. Like all editors I detest times and dates embedded into photographs, 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.

When sending photos by e-mail, **manually** attach no more than three per e-mail (do **NOT** use the 'attach to e-mail' facility available in some image programs, which compresses the file data). A label in the e-mail's subject line – 'CAPE HORN article; e-mail 1 of 6; pics 1 to 3 attached', for example, ensures that I know what I should receive and you know what you've sent. Then round off with a final e-mail, with no attachments, confirming how many e-mails and photographs are on their way. I try to acknowledge articles and photos within 48 hours, but like most of us I cherish the occasional day away from my computer, so don't panic and start resending until at least five days have elapsed.

If using WeTransfer or Dropbox please don't be tempted to send enormous TIFF or RAW files. I sometimes use mobile wifi, and the photos for one article can gobble up a month's quota in half-an-hour. If you work on your photos in TIFF (as I do), please save them as high-res JPGs before sending. Note also that whatever the order in which you upload your photos, they'll download in numerical or alphabetical order – not a problem so long as they tally with the captions ... see next paragraph.

CAPTIONS: please provide a list of captions in the order they relate to the text. 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 photo's file title. Something along the lines of:

Photo 1 (DCM 3285) Getting ready for sea
Photo 2 (DCM 3321) Leaving Lajes, Flores, John at the helm
Photo 3 (DSP 00045) The whale! (photo Sue Black)

is perfect and gives me all the information I need. For a five-star rating, indicate in the text approximately where each picture should fall – '...We arrived in Horta (pic 5) and promptly started our painting on the breakwater (pic 6) ...' etc. (Not necessary if you're also sending a PDF or Word documents with the photos in place, of course).

CHARTLETS: if relevant, please include a rough chartlet of your travels, showing

your route and the 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 are among those covered by copyright, but their 'Permission Guidelines' (see www.google.com/permissions/geoguidelines.html) allow 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 unlikely to be included in the printed version of *Flying Fish* they will normally be retained on-line. They can also be very useful in locating out-of-the-way harbours and anchorages if a chartlet is being drawn.

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Note that if you hope to sell your work to a commercial magazine you should do this first, as most will not consider an article which has already appeared 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 photographs.

DEADLINES: Final submission deadlines are **1 FEBRUARY** for publication in **June**, and **1 OCTOBER** for publication in **December**. An issue may be closed earlier if it becomes full, however, in which case the pieces last to arrive will be held over for the next edition. I always appreciate prior warning that an article is imminent – doubly so in the weeks immediately preceding a deadline – and though this won't guarantee space in a crowded issue it will certainly increase your chances.

Anne Hammick, Editor
flying.fish@oceancruisingclub.org

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

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FROM THE GALLEY OF ... David Blackburn and Julia Aspin, aboard *Daq Attack*

Hello Sailor Bread and Butter Pudding (serves four–six)

Ingredients

- 6 slices of bread
- butter
- ground cinnamon
- 2 or 3 bananas
- raisins and/or sultanas
- 1 lime or lemon
- 3 eggs
- 1 pint of milk
- 6-8 tbs rum (preferably Mount Gay)
- 3 tbs sugar

Butter the bread generously, sprinkle with cinnamon and cut into narrow strips. Peel and slice the bananas into a small bowl, add the dried fruit and the rind and juice of the lime or lemon and mix together. Crack the eggs into another bowl, add the milk, rum (we usually ensure that we have an attack of delirium tremens at this point) and the sugar and beat gently.

Smear the inner faces of an ovenproof dish with butter and line the bottom with a layer of bread and butter strips. Add a layer of the banana mixture, then another layer of bread followed by more banana and so on, finishing with a final layer of bread. Pour on the milk and rum mixture, pushing the top layer under the liquid until the liquid is absorbed. Put aside for at least an hour – the longer you leave it, the better it will taste.

Bake in a pre-heated moderate to hot oven for about 50 minutes or until the top is golden brown.

Serving with cream is an over indulgence!

(This recipe originally appeared in Kitty Hampton's *Sailing Cookbook* – which all good galleys should have – and has become a favourite aboard *Daq Attack*. Thank you Kitty!)

All animals are strictly dry:
They sinless live, and swiftly die.
But sinful, ginful, rum-soaked men
Survive for threescore years and ten;
And some, as anyone can see,
Stay pickled till they're ninety-three.

Anon

SHELDUCK'S CRUISE FROM AMERICA
Chesapeake to Cork, 2015-2016
Neil Hegarty and Anne Kenny

(Shelduck – *a Dufour 34 launched in 2003 – together with Neil and Anne, previously featured in* Flying Fish 2016/1, *which carried the story of her passage from Lisbon, Portugal to Norfolk, Virginia, via St Lucia and a multitude of other places. By 2016 it was time for her to return home...*)

When I first invited Anne Kenny to join me on *Shelduck* for a short cruise from Cascais to Sines and back in September 2009 she said, "Okay, but not more than 30 miles a day". I was a little surprised but obliged. The following year, as she gained confidence in *Shelduck* – and in the skipper as well – and remembering her 150 mile passages from Crookhaven to the Scilly Isles with her late husband Brian in their Chance 37, *Tam O'Shanter*, she was happy to do an overnight with me and increase *Shelduck*'s permitted passages to 150 miles. This quickly increased to 1000 miles and then 2000 miles. Anne's 2000 mile preference was a major influence on my decision, when returning *Shelduck* to Cork after eight years away from home, to plan a route via the US East Coast and Newfoundland.

Neil on New York's Hudson River

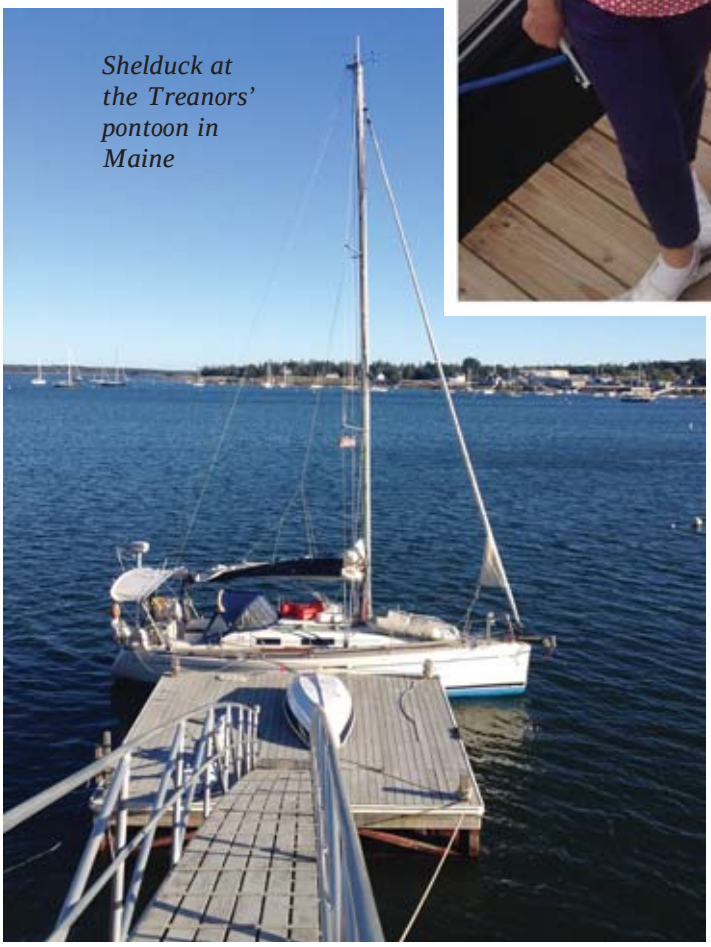
After *Shelduck's Cruise to America* recounted in *Flying Fish* 2016/1 she overwintered at Atlantic Yacht Basin near Virginia's Great Bridge. We returned there in May 2015 to cruise the East Coast of the United States as far as Southwest Harbor, Maine. It was a wonderful experience and, in


LABRADOR
Red Bay
Strait of Belle Isle
Cape Norman
QUIRPON ISLAND
L'Anse aux Meadows
CANADA
Port aux Choux
50°N
Cow Head
Tilting
FOGO ISLAND
BAY OF ISLANDS
South Head
Botwood
Lewisporte
WOOD ISLAND
QUEBEC
St Lawrence River
Gulf of St Lawrence
NEWFOUNDLAND
Cabot Strait
ST PAUL ISLAND
St John's
St Ann's Bay
Quebec
NEW BRUNSWICK
Dingwall
Long Point
Neil Harbour
Saint John River
Baddeck
CAPE BRETON ISLAND
Saint John
Reversing Falls
Bras d'Or Lake
Bay of Fundy
NOVA SCOTIA
Atlantic Ocean
USA
Halifax
44°N
Portland
Southwest Harbor
66°W
56°W

Anne with John Treanor

particular, we enjoyed our cruise of the Chesapeake, sailing into New York, Newport with its wonderful houses, and cruising Maine.

In early June 2016 we returned to Southwest Harbour and collected *Shelduck* from the Hinkley Boatyard spending a few days with OCC friends Mary and John Treanor, before heading off for Newfoundland and our Atlantic crossing via New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Some of the highlights were traversing the Reversing Falls into the St John River, having the Mayor of Halifax, Belfast-born Mike Savage, and his wife Darlene aboard *Shelduck* for lunch while at the marina of the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron, and cruising the Bras d'Or Lake.



Shelduck at the Treanors' pontoon in Maine

On Saturday 16th July the tide suited our 0530 departure from Baddeck, Bras d'Or, to take the ebb through the narrow 20 mile passage to St Ann's Bay and the Gulf of St

With Mike Savage, Mayor of Halifax, and his wife Darlene

Lawrence. The first two hours were in thick fog, but *Shelduck* just made it out of the passage before the tide turned against her and progress was slowed. We passed Neil Harbour and Neil Head, and rounded Long Point into Dingwall. This is another beautiful anchorage and hurricane hole, but the entrance is shallow with shifting sands and has to be dredged – the buoys marking the current channel are paramount.

Anne with Reg and Gord Hackett

West Newfoundland

Next day there was no wind so we motored towards St Paul Island. As *Shelduck* crossed the northern Cabot Strait traffic separation zone I decided to press on overnight to the Bay of Islands and we rounded Cape Cormorant at midnight – it protrudes 25 miles out from the mainland, a little like the Old Head of Kinsale, but with no light. We rounded South Head into the Bay of Islands at 1015, left Woods Island to port, and berthed at the Bay of Islands Yacht Club at 1400. I had chosen this club to get a wifi signal to send the blog, but more importantly to get diesel and treated water for our tanks. Both are in short supply in this area.

Cold weather cover-up

Shelduck departed at 1515 on the 19th and beat the 14 miles to the harbour at Woods Island under headsail in a fresh breeze. This entry is tricky but well-described in the CCA pilot *The Cruising Guide to Newfoundland*. We found the pontoon, which is owned by the Bay of Islands Yacht Club, with just one boat on it, a Crystal Waters Boat Tours vessel. This gave us confidence to go in, where we were helped to dock.

After dinner, at about 2100, there was a knock on the hull and I invited the two men there aboard. They had seen the Irish flag and were curious. They were native to the island and cousins, but had been relocated to the mainland as were all inhabitants after the burning of a church and a schoolhouse. They introduced themselves as Reg and Gord Hackett, of Irish ancestry but they did not know from where. I suggested maybe Waterford, and told them the story of the Sack of Baltimore and the Hackett who had guided the Algerians in. We enjoyed a glass of wine and a chat with them for an hour. At 2200 they invited us to their house for cards, but because of our 0530 start next day we reluctantly refused.

This beautiful bay had lived up to our expectations, but *Shelduck* needed to press on and we had a good run to Cow Head in 15–20 knots of wind. This harbour is well-protected with nice timber covered walls – no fender boards required. We had an early start again next morning, with an exhilarating broad reach of 56 miles in 20 knots to Port aux Choux. It was difficult to find a place to tie up, but the Coast Guard allowed us to berth at their floating dock for the night. We dined ashore at the Anchor Cafe and finished off with the local dessert, figgy-duff.

Shelduck at Red Bay, Labrador

Labrador

July 21st produced a light wind so we motor-sailed across the Strait of Belle Isle to Red Bay, Labrador. We saw one whale making its way west and three going east, and many dolphins followed us as *Shelduck* crossed the traffic separation zone. As we approached Red Bay fog came down and I found myself slightly on the wrong side of a port mark – having the fog lying on the water and the near land above on view was confusing. The water was crystal clear, however, and we could see 6m down. We docked at the government wharf in a hurricane-proof spot, tucked inside the south end. Even so, I had to come up once during the night – in very heavy rain – to adjust the fenders when the wind came up. Next day began with breakfast in the Whaler Restaurant, which was good with excellent sausages.

There was a thriving whale fishery in Red Bay for about 70 years, beginning in the 1530s. Whalers from the Basque region of Spain and France used the harbour as a seasonal base for hunting the whales and processing their oil, and four 16th century whaling vessels have been found in the harbour along with several smaller boats used by the whalers. Red Bay is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

North Newfoundland

On Sunday 24th of July we departed Red Bay at 0530 with no fog or rain – just another grey, cloudy day. *Shelduck* crossed the Belle Isle traffic separation zone to round Cape Norman at 0920 and Cape Onion at 1115, then on to Sacred Bay and into Médée Bay to berth at the pontoon of the Viking Museum at L'Anse aux Meadows. The weather was calm, so I decided to stay at the pontoon overnight and sail directly to Lewisporte, our departure point for the Atlantic crossing, over the next two days. An hour after leaving L'Anse, we saw our first iceberg. Then, as we sailed between the White Islands and Partridge Point, near Quirpon Island, there were so many whales near *Shelduck* that we began to worry for her safety, but none made contact with her. During the 30-hour passage to Lewisporte we sighted a further ten icebergs, but the night was clear and they looked beautiful in the moonlight.

We berthed in Lewisporte Marina, the largest marina in Atlantic Canada, at 1300 on 26th July. It is an excellent facility close to all services, and I decided to use its hoist to lift *Shelduck* out to check everything on the hull before another Atlantic crossing. Captain Peter Watkins, the prime mover in the publication of the *Cruising Guide to Notre Dame Bay* whom we met shortly after arrival, arranged with his friend, Rick Small, to let us have the use of a Jeep Grand Cherokee. We had planned to hire a car but Rick's generosity made this unnecessary. We visited Fogo Island, where I enquired about the location of the Irish community and was told 'turn right at the school'. Tilting, on the northeast coast of Fogo Island, was founded by the French in the early 17th century. Permanent settlement followed in the 1720s, and by the 1770s it had become a predominantly Irish community which is still inhabited by descendants of its early families. While continuing to evolve, this community contains an unusually complete range of vernacular building types. The arrangements and inter-relationships of traditional buildings and spaces have largely been maintained, and Tilting survives as a rare example of a once-common Irish-Newfoundland cultural landscape which is well worth a visit.

We went into the Dwyer House, a cultural centre, and the Lane House, a museum,

Icebergs off St Anthony

and finally discovered the famous Foley's Shed where we received a warm welcome from Phillip and Maureen Foley. There were pictures of a visit of *Northabout*, with Jarlath Cunnane, Mike Alexander and Paddy Barry featuring. None of *Shelduck*'s crew offered to sing, but Maureen entertained us with her guitar. The Shed was flying the Green, White and Pink, the flag of the pre-1949 Republic of Newfoundland – at first I thought it was a faded flag of the Republic of Ireland. We also drove to Botwood, the base for the world's first transatlantic flights to and from Foynes in Ireland. We enjoyed the Heritage Museum, the Flying Boat Museum and the crowds who were celebrating Botwood Day. The remainder of the week was spent aboard completing our lists of jobs.

The Atlantic Crossing

For both Atlantic passages I invited two younger people to join Anne and me aboard *Shelduck*, and for this one it was Charlie Kavanagh and my son Paul, who was put in charge of communication by sat phone to download GRIB* files, and keep in contact with his brother Tom at home for weather routeing. I chose Thursday 11th August as departure day. We were aware that August is a hurricane month and that icebergs might still be around – Don Street does not include wind conditions for August for

* For those unfamiliar with GRIB files, I can do no better than quote weather guru Frank Singleton's MailASail-sponsored website which states that: **GR**idded Information in Binary files provide a low-cost way of getting a great deal of weather forecast information. For more information visit http://weather.mailasail.com/Franks-Weather/Grib-Files-Explained.

this passage on the back of Imray's *North Atlantic Passage Chart*. We also realised that the northern part of the North Atlantic can be one of the most dangerous places in the world to sail.

Shelduck departed Lewisporte at 1330 on 11th August as planned, in a light southwesterly with Anne and me taking the first watch. The following day, about 100 miles from land, an exhausted goshawk found *Shelduck* and tried to land on the top of the mast, breaking the active radar reflector. On its second attempt it broke the Windex, and on its third damaged the VHF aerial, reducing our AIS warning of shipping from 15 or 20 miles to 4 miles. It then tried to settle on one of the crosstrees, before eventually dropping to the deck where it stayed for about two hours. Charlie tried to feed it but it wasn't interested.

On Saturday I was anticipating a northwesterly force 4–6, but by 1300 it was force 7–8. Earlier, at 1145, a big sea had dislodged two of the diesel cans on deck, but Paul and Charlie reattached them. We decided to heave-to for 24 hours with the No.4 jib on the inner forestay and three reefs in the main. We should perhaps have been down to the fourth reef and storm jib, and because of being over-canvassed suffered a small hole in the new main, which was not reinforced at the crosstrees.

The skipper and crew continued regular watches during the storm but from below, adding quarter-hourly lookouts for possible shipping in the area. We estimated the breaking waves at 6m, some of them hitting so hard it was like banging *Shelduck* off a concrete wall. They worked over the deck, pushing *Shelduck* sideways so that water was driven back onto the deck on the lee side. We were still in the Labrador Current, and in the 24 hours we were hove-to drifted 71 miles southeast, an average of nearly 3 knots. By 1400 on Sunday the wind had reduced to 25–30 knots, so we flew the No. 4 only, which we carried into Monday. At 1500 I noticed that the speed over the ground was slower than the speedometer in the cockpit, which meant that *Shelduck* was in an

Our visiting goshawk

area of contra-current, which she remained in until 0315 on Tuesday 16th. By 1500 that day the wind had gone very light, so the engine was started, and these conditions continued through Wednesday with the wind now light easterly.

That afternoon Tom informed us that a low was forming 200 miles south of Newfoundland, forecast to track from there to Scotland, and that we could expect to be in the middle of it by midday Friday if we headed southward. Tom suggested that we head for Biarritz, France, but later I decided to head for Pico in the Azores. It was a broad reach in a smooth sea, doing over 7 knots at times. At 1700 on Friday 19th we changed down to the storm jib and for the first time put the fourth reef in the main. Soon after that we were in the centre of the weather system and hove-to again for six hours.

Next morning at 0530 we turned the engine on to motor-sail east at 4·5 knots in dense fog. Then on Sunday 21st the northwesterly filled in, and while he was on watch with storm jib only Paul experienced the strongest winds yet, which our wind instruments recorded at 39·4 knots – the top end of force 8. The autopilot behaved very well in the 5m seas, with *Shelduck* only broaching three times in three hours and brought back on track each time without Paul's assistance. During the early afternoon about thirty pilot whales appeared, enjoying the waves and staying with us for about six hours.

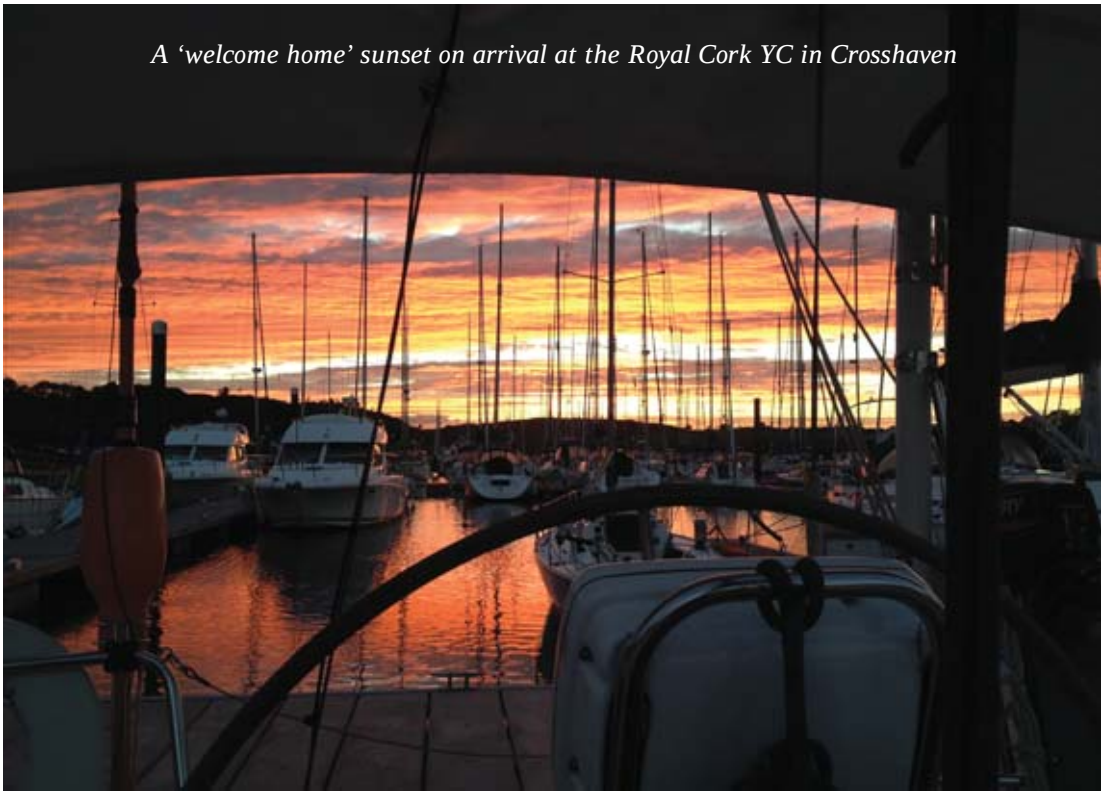
0430 on Monday brought a strong squall and a broach, after which I took down the main and settled *Shelduck* on a broad reach towards the Fastnet Rock, now 649 miles away, under storm jib only. By next day the low had slowed off Ireland and left *Shelduck* in a fresh northwesterly, which continued until land was sighted at 1930 on Friday 26th – The Bull, off Dursey Head. The wind then went southeast, so I altered course to come in north of Cape Clear Island. At 0730 on Saturday 27th, near the Mealbeg Rock off Turk Head, *Shelduck* met Paul's Rankin punt with his wife Nuala and their three children, and my daughter Patricia and brother-in-law Fergus aboard to welcome us home. *Shelduck* berthed at the village pontoon in Baltimore Harbour at 0800 and we opened a couple of bottles of prosecco. After breakfast Charlie left for home, and next day Anne was collected by her daughter Heather and returned to Tralee.

After just one night sleeping on land I returned to *Shelduck* on Sunday 28th with my daughter Patricia, and Paul's children Daniel aged 14 and Francis aged 11. We were all out of our bunks at 0515 the following morning for the passage to the Royal Cork Yacht Club at Crosshaven. This gave the children the experience of sailing in the darkness and seeing the lights, including the Fastnet, and Daniel steering most of the way to the RCYC marina where *Shelduck* berthed at 1600.

Our three-year Atlantic circuit from Cascais to Cork had covered 11,568 miles. The cruise from the Chesapeake to Cork accounted for 4555 of them, of which 2032 were on the passage from Lewisporte to Baltimore. If I was crossing west to east again in a 34-footer, which I won't be, I would head for the Azores after leaving Newfoundland, until I was south of 48°N, then head east until conditions suited a northeast passage towards Ireland. This should help avoid storms, but maybe not hurricanes.

The stars of this cruise and Atlantic crossing were:

1. The welcoming, helpful and interesting people we met during our many visits to American and Canadian yacht clubs.



A 'welcome home' sunset on arrival at the Royal Cork YC in Crosshaven

2. *Shelduck* herself, a Dufour 34 which I bought off the plans in 2003 at the London Boat Show from Donal McClement of Crosshaven Boat Yard. She was designed by Umberto Felci and Patrick Roséo, and has a European Recreational Craft Directive certificate for Category A, unlimited ocean use. I have not had a moment of anxiety from her in over 20,000 miles of sailing.
3. After I met her, Anne encouraged me to fit an autopilot on *Shelduck*. I ordered a mechanical linear drive rather than the wheel drive normal for 34-footers. It has never skipped a beat on any point of sailing, no matter what the Atlantic threw at it.
4. The Facnor inner forestay roller-reefing system. This allowed us to change easily and quickly from the No 4 to the storm jib and back again in heavy weather.

Anne and I have been very lucky since becoming widow and widower on the deaths of our spouses in 2008. We met on Santa Maria at the 2009 ICC/RCC meet in the Azores, and since then have cruised over 24,000 miles together, in her *Tam O'Shanter* and in *Shelduck*, around the 5500 mile imaginary line from St Petersburg in the north to Grenada in the south. We don't intend to hang up our sea boots just yet, and plan to continue cruising both boats for as long as we can.

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YOU'RE NOT SAILORS, ARE YOU?
Andrew and Janice Fennymore-White

(*Since October 2013 Andrew and Janice have lived and worked aboard their 47ft aluminium Van de Stadt Samoa* Destiny, *but their journey actually started in 1998... Follow their travels at www.facebook.com/yachtdestiny. All photos by Andrew and Janice.*)

"You're not sailors, are you?" has been said to us many times. We are actually mountaineers and it was through this passion that we got into sailing. A photo in a climbing magazine of a rock wall caught our attention. Our next questions were: 'Where is that? It looks good?' 'Greenland.' 'Oh, how do we get there?' 'We'll need a boat ... we'll need to learn to sail'. In September 1998 we did our Competent Crew in a training yacht on the west coast of Scotland with all weathers, and enjoyed it. A winter of homework, further sailing courses, and in May 1999 we bought our first boat, *Samen*, a Vancouver 32. From Chichester we headed west round Land's End, up the Irish Sea, over to the east coast of Ireland, and then had a great sail all the way to Oban where we left her for the winter.

The next two seasons we collected *Samen* from Kerrera, Oban and sailed the beautiful west coast of Scotland preparing ourselves and the boat for a two month sail/climb expedition to southwest Greenland in July/August 2001. With five crew and two months' supplies *Samen* was well loaded, but she never faltered and throughout our entire trip she looked after us all, even travelling 20 miles in the right direction while hove-to in a force 9 on the return from Greenland to Stornoway. During a change of watch on that return passage, Andy and I sat in the cockpit one night watching dolphins playing in flashes of bioluminescence, with the Milky Way overhead and great sailing in force 5–6 on the beam. 'We could do this as a lifestyle change ... we'd need a bigger boat ... we'll build one'.

An autumn of research and several visits to 'boats for sale' convinced us that we wanted a Van de Stadt 47 Samoa to build in aluminium as Andy was a motorsport fabricator in this material. Our previous experience meant we already had items we wanted that did not come as standard, so we bought the plans for

Destiny flat-packed from Holland

Turning the hull

Hull 46 and had Van de Stadt design a lifting keel for her. We had the metal cut and pre-bent in Holland, and in 2003 it was delivered on a pallet to the farmer's barn we rented as a workshop in Helmdon, Northamptonshire – virtually the centre of the UK from the coast.

It took us eight years – four part-time, and four with Andy working full-time on the build and me part-time – to complete *Destiny*. We had a couple of contractors to help with the interior woodwork and exterior painting, otherwise we did everything ourselves. Andy had to re-programme me, previously a secretary, to spray paint and varnish, as well as do plumbing and, more importantly, electrics! I drilled thousands of holes, made tank gaskets and fitted headlining, while Andy did all the welding, grit blasting and priming, equipment research, purchase and fitting. As we wanted to do some charter work we had the boat CE (*Conformité Européenne*) coded as well as getting a Stability Book and MCA (Maritime and Coastguard Agency) coding. October 2013 *Destiny* was launched in Ipswich and our journey started.

Being mountaineers we have always fancied the colder climates, and *Destiny* was built with this in mind. We have 75mm to 100mm of sprayed insulation throughout the boat

Destiny in a remote Svalbard anchorage

Andy's first Norwegian cod!

to the waterline, including the forepeak and lazarette. We have no gas on board – previous experience had convinced us that changing gas bottles was always a task: the suppliers were invariably on the outskirts of towns, meaning a long walk with heavy bottles; different countries have different fittings; and when going to Greenland the smallest bottle we could rent had to be strapped to the stern and was finally donated to an Inuit when we left, still ¾ full. We had always planned to live aboard, so built *Destiny* with an 11kw Onan generator and put in a household induction hob with electric combination oven, grill and microwave. This works well. While charging the batteries we cook, heat water, use an electric towel rail and also, when we have guests with us, heat water for showers. We anticipated over-wintering in the high latitudes for a season, so as part of our build-plan sacrificed water tankage for extra diesel and bought a watermaker.

After launching in October 2013 we sailed along the south coast of the UK, round Land's End, and up the east coast of Ireland to Oban. In summer 2014 we started in the Outer Hebrides, but with no charter clients decided to start our personal journey and headed off to Svalbard for a couple of months, finishing *Destiny*'s commissioning period. We couldn't face a winter in Scotland so went to Tromsø in northern Norway and lived aboard on the pontoon in Tromsø harbour.

This was a great experience – the culture and scenery, as well as the Northern Lights and polar darkness (there is twilight from 1000 to 1400 during the middle of winter), plus the fantastic whale-watching and skiing. This proved particularly beneficial to us, with several sail/ski groups joining us. In the summer of 2015 we returned to the west coast of Scotland for a charter season, but the weather that year was particularly wet and windy and proved difficult to market. Whilst in Norway we had had a full cockpit canopy made, which was superb at keeping the snow out, for drying washing, and for keeping the crew and guests dry and warmer whilst whale-watching. We took it down for the return passage to Scotland, but on arrival in Stornaway the forecast

Orcas and humpbacks feeding off Tromsø (both photos)

was for three days of gales so we put it back up and it has not been down since. In good weather we can roll the sides and back up, turning it into a bimini.

For the winter of 2015 we decided to return to Tromsø. We had another excellent winter there and the whale-watching (humpbacks and orcas) was awesome from early December until late February. After completing our sail/ski season in Tromsø and Alta, we sailed to Svalbard (Spitsbergen). This time we arrived in early June so that we could experience the end of the winter as well as spring and summer, and watch the fauna and wildlife developments – time is short for breeding, but is assisted by glorious 24 hour daylight. This was our expedition and we did a full circumnavigation of Svalbard including Nordaustlandet and the Sjuøyane (Seven Islands) at 80·5°N, and out to Storøya at 28°E, taking 36 days.

We left Longyearbyen in mid-August last year and sailed to Akureyri on the north coast of Iceland where we spent the winter, but first we took advantage of superb autumn weather and went to Reykjavik for a couple of weeks, stopping in Ísafjorður on the northwest corner to do reconnaissance for our sail/ski season the following spring.

Destiny's track, 2013 to 2016 Stats: 13,838 miles; 10,781 litres of diesel; 1,821 engine hours; 575 generator hours; 43,586 litres of fresh water consumed; 3,553 litres of water desalinated. Millions of smiles, hours of laughter and a few tears

As I write this article in May 2017 we have just finished our sail/ski season and are taking the opportunity to get some last skiing in ourselves before the snow disappears. We will be circumnavigating Iceland from the end of May until early July before returning to Ísafjorður ready for our trip to Greenland, where we plan to over-winter 2017/18 in Nuuk.

We have now sailed over 20,000 miles, 14,000 of them in *Destiny*, and have built a boat that looks after us well and is a comfortable home for ourselves and our guests. We have had to work hard at the sailing, it does not come naturally and we both get seasick on ocean passages. I have learnt to prepare carefully for these, making bottled meals that can be cooked quickly in the microwave, accompanied by couscous which takes only three minutes using our Quooker hot water tap – the most useful item in the galley. I also make sure there is plenty of cake and savoury muffins, and that the cookie jars (three of them) are full before leaving

The captain off watch in the pilot berth

Summit contemplation for Janice in Svalbard

port, especially some with ginger in them. We have also found that music helps overcome seasickness and, particularly on night watches, we both use devices to listen to audio books. *Destiny*'s pilot berth is gimballed, and we added an electric blanket so that the bed is warm when the watch changes, ensuring you get a full three hours' sleep instead of coming off watch cold and spending the first hour trying to get warm – important in the Arctic. The electrical draw is minimal.

So we are sailors – professional sailors – now, living and working on the sea to help fund our personal journey. We live aboard all year and *Destiny* is our home. We are still mountaineers – they call to us, be it for climbing, walking or skiing, and the journey we are on is influenced by them. The Arctic has been our home for the last four years and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

B Q # K # Q B

> Let your boat of life be light, packed with only what you need – a homely home and simple pleasures, one or two friends, worth the name, someone to love and someone to love you, a cat, a dog, and a pipe or two, enough to eat and enough to wear, and a little more than enough to drink; for thirst is a dangerous thing.
>
> Jerome K Jerome, *Three Men in a Boat*

FROM THE GALLEY OF … Sarah Smith, aboard *Cape*

Bethany's Chocolate Brownies

These brownies are that ones that Bethany always used to make for birthdays and special occasions aboard *Cape* (see page 206). Quantities can be doubled.

Ingredients

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup flour
- ⅓ cup cocoa
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ½ cup oil (coconut or olive oil)
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- ¾ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips (or more if you dare – Bethany did)
- Splash of milk, if needed

Mix the ingredients well. This should give quite a runny batter – add a splash of milk if the mixture seems dry. Pour the batter into a greased baking tray.

Bake in a medium oven (350°F / 175°C, Gas Mk 4) for 20–25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Don't overcook, as the brownie will continue to cook once out of the oven. Allow to cool before cutting into squares.

OBITUARIES & APPRECIATIONS

W Redwood 'Red' Wright

Red Wright died at his home in Woods Hole, MA on 8th May at the age of 89. He was predeceased by his wife of 60 years, Mary Coffey Wright, just a few months earlier.

He was born in Philadelphia, where he and his three siblings were raised on a farm in nearby Glenside. During World War Two the family expanded to take in four more children, distant cousins from England. After attending Germantown Friends School he enrolled at Princeton University in 1945, but his education was interrupted the following spring when he was drafted into the US Army. He served as a radio operator in South Korea, returning to Princeton in autumn 1947 and graduating three years later.

He began his working career teaching at St George's School in Newport, RI, leaving after two years to become a reporter on a local daily newspaper. In 1954, he was hired by the *Providence Journal*, initially working in the newspaper's state staff offices in Newport but later joining the city staff in Providence as a general assignment reporter, working nights for the morning edition.

Red and Mary Wright were married in 1956 in Jamestown, RI, to which his parents and her father had retired. They lived in Providence and then Wickford. In 1960, after the birth of two daughters, they moved to Woods Hole, where he took a job as public information officer at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. A son was born the following year.

Participation in a couple of research cruises piqued his interest in oceanography, and he resigned his position to enrol in a master's degree program at the Graduate School of Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island. After a year of coursework, he returned to WHOI as an assistant in the Department of Physical Oceanography, studying deep ocean circulation. He received a master's degree in 1965 and went on to earn a PhD in 1970, writing his thesis on sources of energy for the deep sea circulation.

In 1976 Dr Wright moved to the Northeast Fisheries Center in Woods Hole, serving as in-house oceanographer. There he led a group that studied the circulation on the continental shelf, with his research focusing primarily on the North Atlantic, but also taking him to waters off Greenland, Brazil, and Japan. Six years later he resigned from the Northeast Fisheries Center to help found Associated Scientists, also at Woods Hole, doing consulting work on coastal oceanography. He was active in town government, and a speaker in the Woods Hole 'Conversations', an oral history project to preserve the life and character of the local community. In 1996 he gave a presentation on his lifelong love of catboats, having owned two in the previous 50 years, both named *Ferlie*.

Red Wright began sailing as a boy in Narragansett Bay, and joined the OCC in 1958 following a 3000 mile voyage from Newport to Santander in NW Spain the previous year aboard the 42ft *Alphard*. He also competed in four races from Newport to Bermuda and one from Newport to Annapolis, and for 30 years he and his family cruised local waters and the New England coast in their 31ft classic wooden cutter, *Mocking Bird*. In addition to the Ocean Cruising Club, he was a member of the Catboat Association and the Woods Hole and Quissett Yacht Clubs. At the time of his death he owned a 24ft sloop catboat – again called *Ferlie*.

Dr Wright was the author of some 20 scientific papers, two oceanographic atlases, and chapters in several books. In Falmouth he will be particularly remembered for his writings about local history and oceanography, contributing in the 1980s to *The Book of Falmouth* and *Woods Hole Reflections*. Later that decade he helped found *Spritsail*, the twice-yearly journal of the Woods Hole Historical Museum, serving as chairman of the editorial board until 1996 and continuing to write articles in subsequent years.

He leaves one son, two daughters, five grandchildren, two brothers and a sister.

Christopher Knox-Johnston

It is with great sadness that we inform members of the death of Chris Knox-Johnston, who died suddenly at his idyllic French home in Cercoux on 20 September. He is survived by his wife, Hilary, his two children Anthony and Paul, and his many grandchildren.

Chris was born in 1944 in Heswall, near Liverpool to which his family was evacuated during the war. He spent his formative years in Beckenham before moving to Downe where the family lived happily for many years. He attended Berkhampstead School before he and his elder brother Robin had a marvellous, if adventurous 18 months finishing the build of the now famous *Suhaili* in Bombay, and sailing her back to the UK from India, via Arabia and South Africa.

During the trip they ran out of money in Durban, and Robin went back to sea to replenish the kitty. One of their enduring memories of this trip was when Robin, returning to port in the ship in which he was working, suddenly heard a familiar voice on the radio doing an advertisement for shampoo. Because of the quasi American accent – "Your hair looks so lustrous, Honey" – it took him a minute or two to realise it was his little brother, who had managed to establish himself as the voice for such advertisements on the local radio station.

In 1968 Chris delved into local politics when he stood successfully for the council in Bromley. His time in politics was short-lived, however, as his brother Richard took over the mantle three years later. Chris always preferred the electioneering rather than the work of the council – an example of the showman he was at heart.

In the same year he was very lucky to find a woman who would put up with him for the next 50 or so years. Hilary was Dad's childhood sweetheart, and her patience and sense of humour were more than equal to the various schemes Dad thought up over the years, in which she supported him throughout. He founded and set up various companies involved in yacht insurance, the last being Haven Knox-Johnston – now MS Amlin. He quickly became an expert in the field and was always respected for his knowledge, integrity and passion for the sector.

He also found time to run fêtes and fundraising activities, and raised substantial sums of money for the NSPCC* through use of the gardens at The Rookery, Downe, for old car rallies and village fêtes. He once managed to persuade Great Ormond Street Hospital

* The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, founded in 1884.

to lend him *Chad*, their 16ft teddy bear, for one of his fetes. Initially he did not realise quite how big the bear was, and after a failed attempt to collect it in the family car got a local farmer to assist him with his tractor – apparently quite a sight in central London. The event went on to raise over £1500 which, in 1970, was no small achievement. Then came the Bus – the iconic brown bus which he used as a stand at boat shows for many years and which became synonymous with his brand ... which was always a little eccentric to say the least.

Chris could never be described as a sports fan, his one sporting strength being his swimming. His ability in this field came into its own when he was awarded a certificate by the Royal Humane Society for rescuing a girl from drowning in the 1970s. A true sign of his modesty was that he never really mentioned it, and only had the certificate on display at Hilary's insistence.

His main interests lay in more artistic pursuits, firstly acting and secondly music (with a large hint of overacting along the way). His many appearances with the Kemsing Singers, initially as a member of the choir and later as their conductor and musical director, were hugely theatrical and the flourish at the end of every piece of music was a sight to behold.

When he retired he knew what he wanted to do, and within months of his last day at work he and Hilary had moved into a new home in France – where his initially good grasp of French went on to become fluency as he dedicated the same passion to learning the language and to diving headlong into French culture and local society, including getting to know the local mayor. None of us were surprised when he took over another choir, losing none of his drive as he worked with them to create the music he so loved.

Whilst in France Chris continued to work in the insurance field as an expert witness, having built up a huge network of contacts due to his easy-going nature, integrity and knowledge. He also joined the team of *Flying Fish* proof-readers, the editor benefiting from his sharp eyes, depth of knowledge and humorous asides for more than a decade.

We are happy that he spent his last years at his piece of paradise in France, with his wife Hilary and his growing circle of friends. His endless sense of fun made him

so popular locally that there was standing room only at his funeral. His friend the mayor attended, and flowers were sent by the school where he taught music to the children. He would have been especially happy that the owner of his local vineyard also took the time to attend, although we did have to apologise for the drop in profits they should anticipate.

We all hope that wherever he is, the wine is good and whatever choir he has found are behaving themselves.

Paul Knox-Johnston

Ann Melrose

Ann Melrose, who died peacefully in her sleep the day after her 95th birthday, was our Port Officer for Ibiza for many years. She moved there from London in the late 1980s with her husband Denis, an eminent physician who played a crucial role in the design and development of the heart-lung machine still used in open-heart surgery today.

Ann joined the OCC in 1985, citing her 1981 voyage from the Cape Verde islands to Barbados in her ferro-cement Endurance 40 *Rosamelle* as her qualifying passage. This was also the trip on which I met her, when she advertised for crew on the tree in the town square in St George's, Bermuda. She and I sailed *Rosamelle* back to Plymouth via the Azores, which inspired the notion in her head of doing the 1986 Two-Handed Trans-Atlantic Race. So began a new project of selling *Rosamelle* and having a new, light 40-footer, *Mother Goose*, designed for the race, once again with me as crew. It turned out to be quite a tough race, with seven gales in the month it took us to reach Newport, Rhode Island, but it also served as a delivery trip to get Ann to the wedding of son Angus, who was to marry the daughter of the Newport harbour master!

Ann was the youngest of a family of eight and was brought up in Shropshire and Dorset. This rural upbringing with horses, hunting, fishing and the sea just down the road established an enduring love and appreciation of outdoor life, and it was during this time that she also developed her love of gardening. Ann passed the Cambridge School Certificate with honours, and was planning to go to

Ann awaiting the launch of Mother Goose …

… and in Ibiza in later life, proudly displaying her Certificate of Appreciation as Port Officer for the island from 2002 until 2013

university to read farming, but this was prevented by the outbreak of war. Instead, she initially became a Land Girl, but not for long.

When encouraged to look for something more interesting she soon found herself lodging in Keble College, Oxford, and commuting by bus to work at Blenheim Palace – recently taken over by MI5 after its London base was bombed. During this time she met her future husband, Denis, who was studying medicine at University College, Oxford. One day at Blenheim Palace the Director General unexpectedly invited her to a meeting, and much to her surprise she was asked whether she would like to undertake training for the 'Service' (Secret). She went on to have a period of active service which anecdote suggests was terminated by a blown cover. After that she spent time sitting at a desk in the corridor outside Mr Churchill's Office in the War Bunker at Admiralty Arch, before being posted to the American Embassy where she was secretary to Averell Harriman, head of the US Lend/Lease programme, but she was not happy with the task and eventually resigned. With her Service connections her next task was to become a news writer with the Allied Press Service, sending specially worded news reports to those countries still occupied by the German forces.

Full details of all these activities remain elusive, but we do know that she had an exciting time considering that she was still a teenager at their start. While she was working long shifts in dusty, bomb-damaged London her lungs suffered. She was sent for treatment to one Dr Denis Melrose, who was then a junior doctor at St Thomas' Hospital, and this time their paths crossed permanently, with a marriage proposal in Berkeley Square not too long after.

Denis had joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, however, and was transferred to Hong Kong where their first son, Simon, was born. After a few years in Sussex, during which second son Angus arrived, they all moved to Putney for the next 35 years. Denis continued development of the heart-lung machine at Hammersmith Hospital, and Ann did some work writing scripts for ITV and others. She then started her own import/export business, which included trading old British mining equipment with

companies behind the Iron Curtain, and selling modular operating theatres for which she travelled around in her bright red Alfa Romeo sports car.

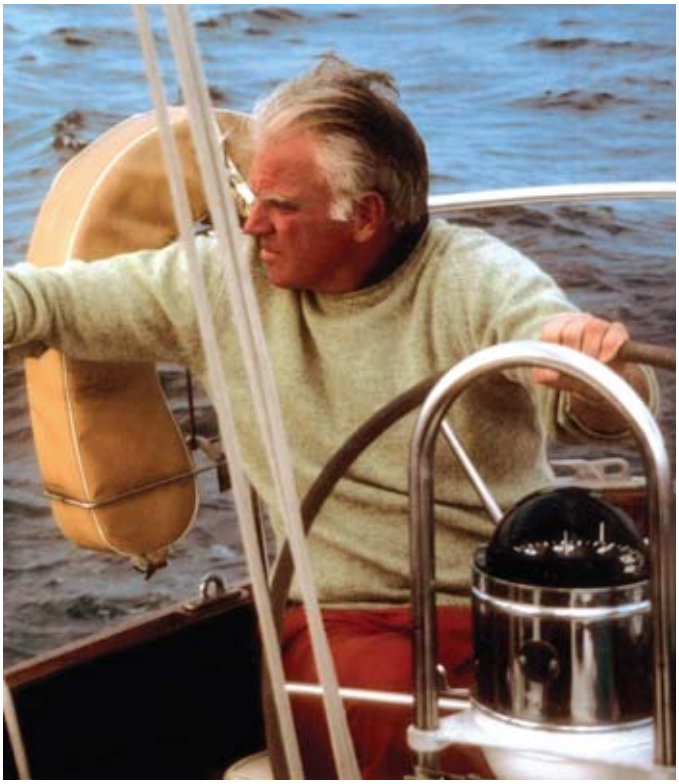
As well as these entrepreneurial activities, Ann managed to find time to become a watch-leader for the Ocean Youth Trust so she could teach young people about sailing, an activity she had converted to from horse riding with encouragement from her brother-in-law John Mitchell. In 1960 this led, with Denis's help, to them having a 32ft Arthur Piver-designed trimaran built. They sailed *Trinca* all around the English Channel, France and Ireland. The next boat they had built was the Endurance 40 which Ann sailed out to the Caribbean with a crew of four, one of whom was accomplished navigator Peter Corby (OCC), as Ann was dyslexic with numbers. As mentioned above, I joined her as navigator for the passage back to Plymouth, having just taught myself astro. This was followed some five years later by Two-Star (the Two-Handed Transatlantic Race), but by now there were occasional satellites to help us find Newport.

Ann spent her final thirty years living in Santa Eulalia, Ibiza, remaining there after Denis died in 2007, serving throughout this time as OCC Port Officer.

Angus Melrose and Erik Vischer

Sears Condit 'Nick' Winslow

Nick Winslow died peacefully at home on 12 February at the age of 89. He was born and raised in Boston, MA and attended Rivers Country Day, Brooks School and Nichols College before joining the Naval Air Reserve Training Program during the Korean War.



In 1952 he married Carolyn 'Cush' Crocker, making Manchester, MA their family home for over 50 years. His interest in business systems and new technology led him, with two partners, to form Systems Automation Inc, which provided companies in the Boston area with office automation, computer networking and training

during the very early years of computers. He also became a partner in America's oldest travel agency, Raymond and Whitcomb.

An avid Bruins fan and great skier, Nick was a former President of the Boston Madison Square Garden Club and the Ski Club, Hochgebirge, and was on the boards of Essex County Club and the New England Ski Museum. He served on the Executive Committee of the Manchester Yacht Club and played a major role in forming the Manchester Sailing Association, which was open to children from all over the area. He joined the OCC in 1995, having made a 2720 mile transatlantic passage from Gran Canaria to Grenada aboard the 60ft *Great Admiral* two years earlier.

Nick grew up summering in Gloucester, MA, where he started sailing and racing at a very young age. In 1974 he bought a Tartan 37, *Windsound*, in which for the next 20 years he and Cush cruised the coast of Maine and the St Johns River, often accompanied by their children and many friends. He also chartered in Tahiti, Baja California and the Mediterranean, as well as crewing for others on races to Bermuda and from Marblehead to Halifax.

Even after the onset of Parkinson's disease, Nick continued to spend time enjoying his favourite pastimes with family and friends – sailing, skiing and watching the moon rise over the White Mountains from their home in Franconia, NH. He loved a good party, and could find an excuse for having one at any time and often with a theme. In 2009, Nick and Cush moved to Edgewood in North Andover, where Nick was lovingly cared for until his death. Whenever he was asked how he was doing Nick would always respond, "nothing to complain about". He brought much joy and laughter to many in his lifetime, and will be remembered for his sound advice, business acumen, curiosity and a plethora of good-natured pranks.

He leaves his wife of 64 years, Carolyn Winslow, and two daughters, having been predeceased by both their sons. He also leaves three grandchildren, three great-grandsons and many nieces and nephews.

Josephine Sheard

Steve and his children Helen, Tim, Charlie and Richard are sad to report the passing of their wonderful wife and mother Josie Sheard in February, following a stroke.

For someone who spent a large part of her life on the sea, Josie was born about as far from the waves as you can get in the UK, in Burton-on-Trent. She spent her working life in midwifery, bringing thousands of babies into the world over her 28 years in the medical profession. Her family could not walk down the streets near their home without someone saying hello and showing off babies or growing children that Josie had delivered.

In addition to her work there were two other main parts to Josie's life – her family and sailing. The two went together, the family considering Swarkestone Sailing Club, on a lake south of Derby, their second home. Weekly club racing, the regional 'circuit' and annual holidays to Abersoch – camping and, of course, sailing – were part of family routine. Steve and Josie were very competitive club sailors, winning their

Josie and Steve in Peru

share of trophies in their Enterprise dinghy, and Josie was also the very proud winner of the 'Fastest Lady' in the Laser Class Club Championships in Poole in 1996. They also gained great pleasure from involvement in the vibrant Sailability programme at Swarkestone SC, enabling others to share the liberating and empowering feel of wind in the sail and water passing the hull.

Steve and Josie started sailing larger boats in the 1990s, completing their Yachtmaster qualifications in 1995 and buying their faithful travelling friend *Elysion*, a 41ft Formosa ketch, in Turkey two years later. Their westabout circumnavigation lasted for 17 years, including five years in the Med before crossing the Atlantic for another three years exploring the Caribbean. Then followed Bermuda, two years in the US (including a trip along Route 66), Central America, the Panama Canal, and visits to the Galapagos, French Polynesia, Australia, Malaysia and Thailand.

Elysion in the Caribbean in 2003

Many members will have shared the same experiences and challenges as they did – buying and wrapping Christmas and birthday presents months in advance,

Dutch barge Porthos, in which Josie and Steve planned to explore the European waterways

fitting in visits to the whole family on flying visits home, learning the many languages needed to 'fit in' with the locals and, for those who have families in cooler climes like Steve and Josie, putting up with the cold weather when back in the UK! The challenges and experiences of life afloat were shouldered and shared equally by their close partnership, and their adventures enriched not only their own lives but also those of family and friends, through visits to *Elysion* or simply chatting about their travels over a sundowner or drink at the bar.

Our collective memories of Josie will live on, both through the hundreds of shells and mementos which she brought back from around the world and the friendships that she and Steve made. Having sold *Elysion* in 2015, they had already started on the next leg of their journey, to explore the canals of Europe aboard *Porthos*, the Dutch barge they had bought in Holland in 2016. Steve is continuing with their adventure, and is currently over-wintering in Roanne on France's River Loire. If you're in the area, please do drop by and say hello.

Josie was a bubbly, lively, kind and gregarious person, who loved life and lived it to the full. We hope that you can join us in a toast to her at sundown wherever you are in the world, and to living life as free-spirited liveaboard adventurers, as Josie was herself.

Charlie Whewell

Bethany Smith

Bethany was born in Wrexham, North Wales, on 17 March 1998. Her early life was filled with playing with the family's three dogs and cat – and her beloved guinea pigs – at our home near Llangollen. She filled the house with singing and chatter, drawing and painting, Lego, and 'let's pretend' games with her younger brother Bryn, as time went on added recorder, dancing and swimming to her favourite things. When she was seven we bought our first boat, *Ariadne*, a 10m Carter sloop, and weekends and holidays were spent playing houseboat in Aberystwyth Marina, walking the dogs, cooking sausages or mackerel over beach campfires, belly boarding, and making good friends at the Aberystwyth Boat Club. We occasionally got to go sailing too – when the weather and tides were right, and when we headed to Ireland on holiday. *Ariadne* was fun but too small for a family of four, so we traded up to *Cape*, a 13m Oswald Berckemeyer-designed Gitana sloop, with dreams of selling up and sailing off. By April 2007 we had rehomed the pets, sold the house and cars, deregistered

the kids from school, started home schooling and sailed away from the UK. Bethany was nine and Bryn seven.

The next few years were spent exploring Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Italy, France, Greece and Malta. We wintered in Portimão, Portugal, where Bethany learned to surf; Cagliari, Sardinia, where she perfected a fast and effortless front crawl; and Messolonghi, Greece, where she found her singing voice and started playing penny whistles. Everywhere we went there were towns and villages to explore, beaches to play on, reefs to snorkel, dinghies to be sailed, and kayaks to be paddled. She loved the local food and was game to try everything – particularly prawns, cheese, and chocolate! After leaving the Med we headed to the Canaries for a year, where Beth and Bryn were absorbed into a gaggle of cruiser kids. Here she added beaded jewellery-making and self-defence to her hobbies, as well as becoming a PADI scuba diver. From the Canaries we headed south to The Gambia, spending a month in Lamin Lodge where we tied in with a local charity, First Aid 4 Gambia, and Beth and David visited numerous nurseries and schools to provide first aid training to teachers and parents. We then took *Cape* 150 miles upriver to spot crocodiles, hippos, warthogs and birds.

We left Banjul to cross the Atlantic on 28 February 2012, reaching Scarborough, Tobago on 24 March – a 26-day, 2700-mile passage and our OCC qualifying voyage – celebrating Beth's 14th birthday on the way. Over the next three years we explored the Eastern Caribbean, watching leatherback turtles lay their eggs, swimming with turtles in Tobago Cays, climbing Petit Piton in St Lucia, hiking through rainforests in Dominica and Trinidad – and tracking down other boat kids at every opportunity. She became an Advanced PADI diver, and learned to play the flute as music jams became a big part of family life. Sailing Optimists progressed to 420s and bigger boats, and Beth and Bryn were regular crew on *C-MOS*, a 13m sloop, sailing in local Trinidad regattas as well as making passages to Barbados and Grenada to compete there. At the age of 16, with the end of formal school looming, Bethany planned a career working on boats. Childish hobbies gave way to Carnival/*J'ouvert* in Trinidad and Grenada,

Bethany in Montenegro

limin' DDI (partying on boats 'down the islands' of Monos and Chacachacare), and wake boarding. Her passion for art intensified – tattoo design in particular – and she took up photography, documenting her adventures in GoPro videos.

An elegant, 60m gaff-rigged schooner arrived in Chaguaramas and Beth was immediately off in the dinghy to talk to the crew and to ask advice about working in the superyacht industry. She returned having had a guided tour and with instructions to get back in touch when her 18th birthday was approaching. It was a very determined Bethany who flew to France that summer to stay with a friend-of-a-friend in Antibes and look for day work on the superyachts. She scrubbed acres of decks and cleaned a lot of heads, got herself known as useful on a boat, and was invited to race on the famous *Rowdy* – a 20m, 1916 Herreschoff-designed New York 40 – first in Antibes and then in Italy. By the end of the season she had earned enough to travel to the UK to visit family and friends, before returning to the Caribbean to sail with the International Rescue Group to deliver aid to Dominica following Tropical Storm *Erika*. She stayed on for a while to work with teenagers who had left school without literacy and numeracy skills, then flew to Grenada to join friends on *Twentse Meid*, a 16m Beneteau, to sail to the ABCs and Jamaica. After a short spell back on *Cape* in Trinidad she completed her Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping qualifications and was offered a job as trainee deckhand on *Germania Nova* – the classic yacht that she had fallen in love with previously.

Transiting the Corinth Canal aboard Germania Nova

She joined *Germania Nova* in Antigua just before her 18th birthday. They sailed extensively in the Eastern Caribbean before crossing the Atlantic to the Med, participating in the Superyacht Cup in Palma, Majorca, undertaking a dry-dock refit in Tarragona, and taking charter guests to Croatia, Montenegro and Greece. When she wasn't working she travelled in Europe to catch up with friends in France, Spain, the UK and Ireland before flying back to Trinidad to spend time with us on *Cape*. Back in the Caribbean there was more sailing with *Germania Nova* – to the islands off the north coast of Venezuela, to Cartagena, Columbia, and back to Jamaica. Her interest in the genre of tattoo art continued to

grow and her plan was to work on superyachts until she could afford to put herself through art school and become a tattoo artist. Family, friends and fellow crew members have Bethany-designed tattoos, so her passion and art lives on.

Bethany was a 'people person' who never failed to keep in touch and travelled extensively to spend time with the people important to her. She loved unreservedly. She had tough times too, as we all do, but that never stopped her picking herself up, focussing on the positive, and moving on to the next adventure. She was happy – she had a plan and she was making it happen. She sent us a photo of herself just hours before she fell from the mast of *Germania Nova* in Port Antonio, Jamaica on 14 March, four days before her 19th birthday. She was killed instantly.

Bethany working on the mast of Germania Nova

We travelled to Jamaica to battle with officialdom, also spending time getting to know the crew of *Germania Nova* who had been her family for the previous year – and who were as devastated as we were about her death. The crew brought her ashes home to *Cape* in Trinidad, and together with other friends and family we scattered them in the anchorage in Chacachacare. Afterwards we celebrated her life with music, dancing, Trinidadian food, rum and beer aboard *El Zorro*, 31m ex-fishing boat turned superyacht. This was a party that had lots of tears but also lots of love and laughter, and included swimming and wake boarding – she would have approved. Bethany lived her life to the full, squeezing more into her too-short life than many manage in a full lifetime. We estimate that she sailed more than 20,000 miles in the ten years after we left the UK. Following her death we received messages from people all around the world – people whose lives she had touched, and whom she had inspired by just being herself.

Bethany was proud to be a member of the OCC and carried a Flying Fish burgee with her to fly when she sailed on friends' boats, introducing herself to fellow OCC members and joining OCC gatherings whenever she could. David, Bryn and I would like to take this opportunity to say 'thank you' for the kind donation made by the OCC to the Bethany Smith Memorial Fund. It is this fund that has allowed us to stay together as a family while we come to terms with losing such an amazing friend, sister and daughter.

Sarah, David and Bryn Smith

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mobile: 0790 199 8373

Printed by Bungay Printers, 4b Market Place, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 1AW
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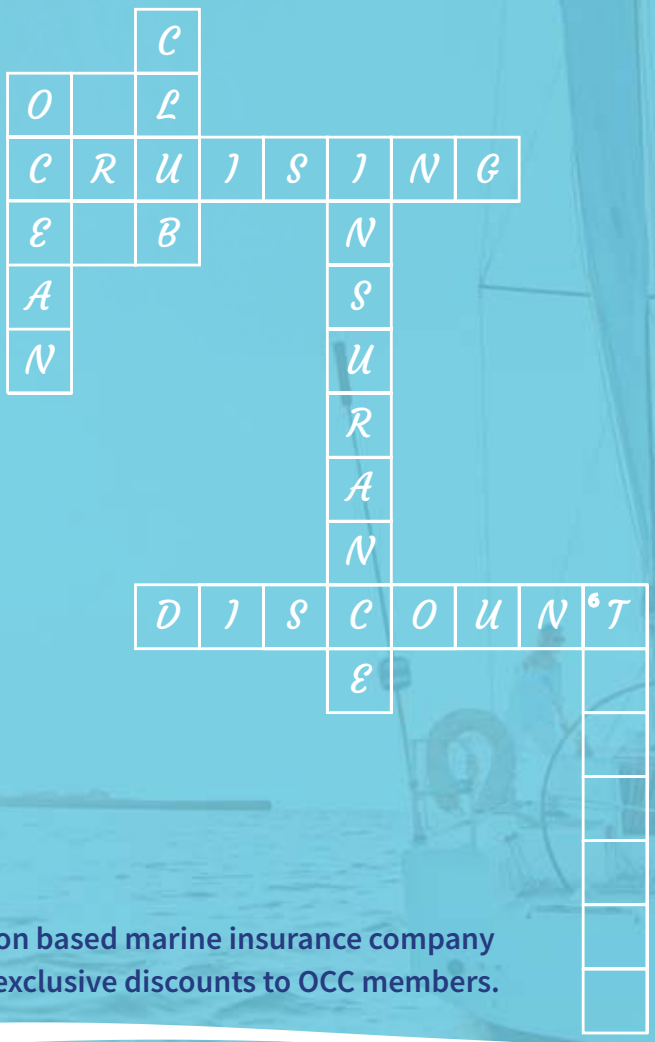

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