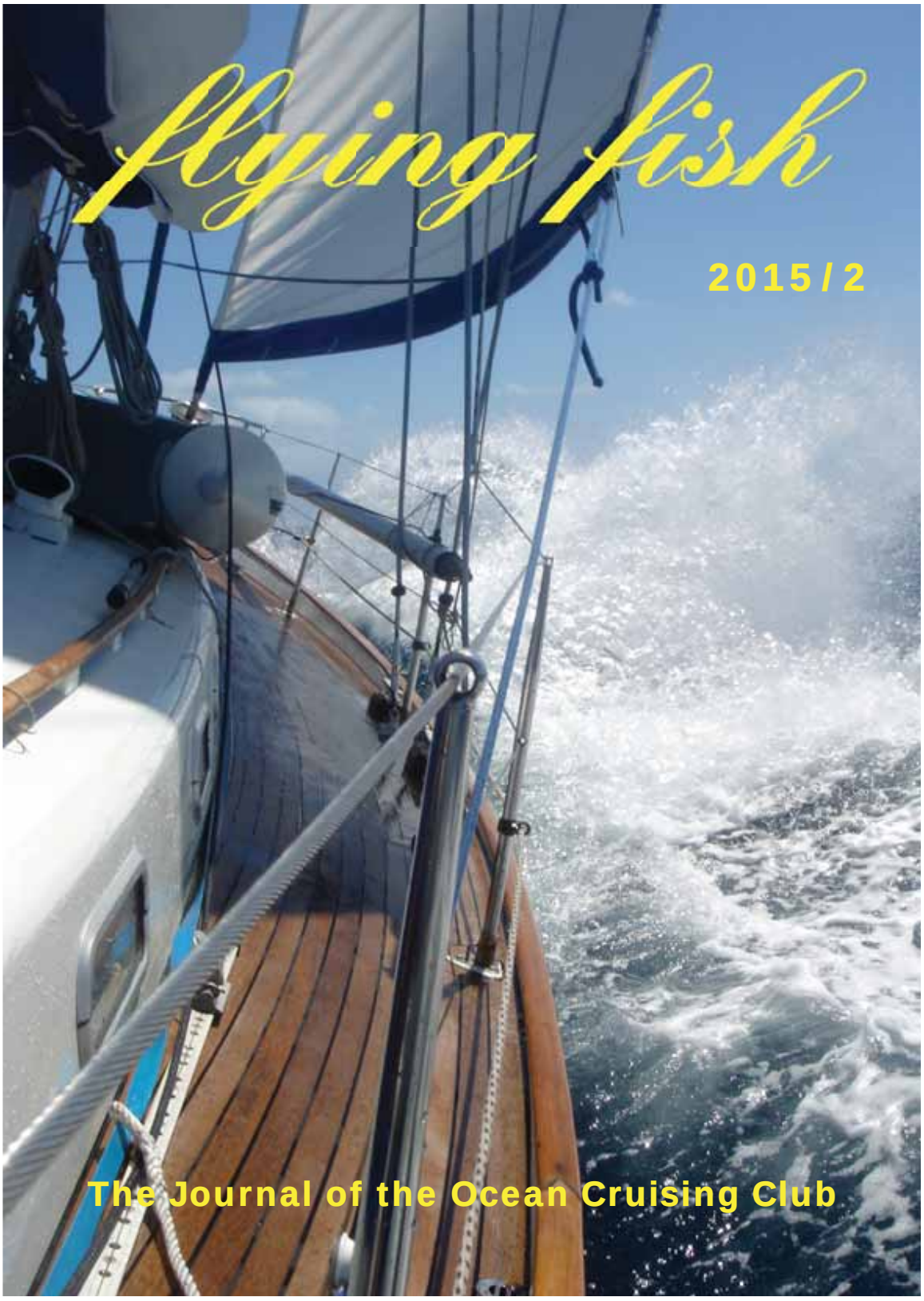
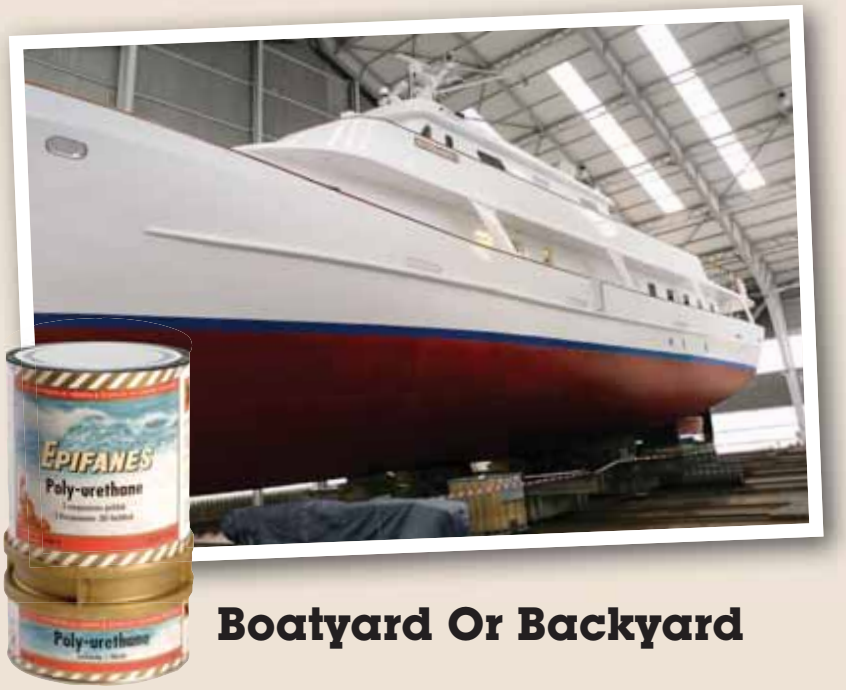


flying fish

2015/2

The Journal of the Ocean Cruising Club



Boatyard Or Backyard

Rolling and Tipping with Epifanes Delivers Exceptional Results.

Professional or amateur, once you've rolled and tipped a boat with Epifanes two-part Poly-urethane, it will be your go-to strategy for every paint job. The results are stunning, and Epifanes' tech support is unsurpassed. Still great for spraying, but Epifanes roll-and-tip is the proven shortcut to a durable, mirror-like finish.

EPIFANES® Yacht Coatings

AALSMEER, HOLLAND ▪ THOMASTON, MAINE ▪ ABERDEEN, HONG KONG

+1 207 354 0804 ▪ www.epifanes.com

FOLLOW US

A special thank-you to the owners of *Moonmaiden II*. Beautiful paint job.

OCC officers

FOUNDED 1954

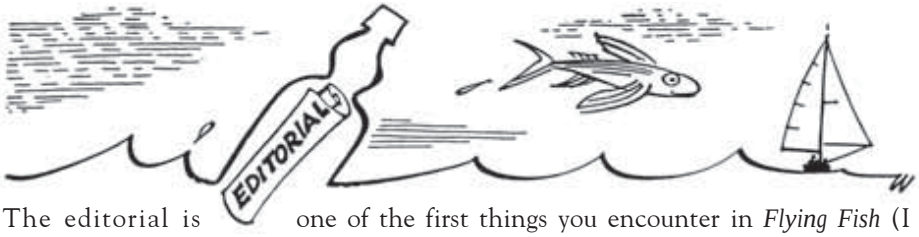
ADMIRAL	Mary Barton
COMMODORE	John Franklin
VICE COMMODORES	Tony Gooch
	Anne Hammick
REAR COMMODORES	Dick Guckel
	Peter Paternotte
REGIONAL REAR COMMODORES	
GREAT BRITAIN	Jenny Crickmore-Thompson
IRELAND	John Bourke
NORTH WEST EUROPE	Claus Jaeckel
NORTH EAST USA	Pam MacBrayne & Denis Moonan
SOUTH EAST USA	Bob & Janellen Frantz
WEST COAST NORTH AMERICA	Ian Grant
NORTH EAST AUSTRALIA	Nick Halsey
SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIA	Paul & Lynn Furniss
ROVING REAR COMMODORES	Scott & Kitty Kuhner, John & Christine Lytle, Chris Cromey & Suzanne Hills, Simon Fraser & Janet Gayler, Martin & Elizabeth Bevan, Rick & Julie Palm, David & Juliet Fosh, Jack & Zdenka Griswold, Alan Franklin & Lynne Gane, Franco Ferrero & Kath McNulty
PAST COMMODORES	
1954-1960	Humphrey Barton
1960-1968	Tim Heywood
1968-1975	Brian Stewart
1975-1982	Peter Carter-Ruck
1982-1988	John Foot
1988-1994	Mary Barton
1994-1998	Tony Vasey
1998-2002	Mike Pocock
2002-2006	Alan Taylor
2006-2009	Martin Thomas
2009-2012	Bill McLaren
SECRETARY	Rachelle Turk Westbourne House, 4 Vicarage Hill Dartmouth, Devon TQ6 9EW, UK *Tel*: (UK) +44 20 7099 2678 *Tel*: (USA) +1 253 802 0530 *e-mail*: secretary@oceancruisingclub.org
EDITOR, *FLYING FISH*	Anne Hammick Falmouth Marina, North Parade Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 2TD, UK *Tel*: +44 1326 212857 *e-mail*: flying.fish@oceancruisingclub.org
OCC ADVERTISING	Details page 240
OCC WEBSITE	www.oceancruisingclub.org

CONTENTS

	PAGE	
Editorial	3	
In Search of our Northwest Passage	5	Steve Brown
SV *Flying Fish* in *Flying Fish*	19	Jack Bassett
Beating for England	27	Murray Longmore
Lightning Never Strikes Twice!	33	Bob & Elaine Hazell
Atlantic Alone	43	Bruce McKenzie
Voyage of *Egret*: Fast-Tracking, Part 2	55	Scott & Mary Flanders
The Astilleros Lagos Centenary Rally	61	Tony Fiske
Winter Sun to Midnight Sun	71	Stuart Letton
Project Vanuatu	80	Martin and Elizabeth Bevan
Book Reviews	88	Alfred Mylne, The Leading Yacht Designer 1896-1920; Cruising The Wild Atlantic Way; Seamanship In The Age Of Sail; Chile: Arica Desert To Tierra Del Fuego; Ocean Drifters; The Ian Nicolson Trilogy; Voyaging With Kids; Merlin's Voyage; Ultimate Classic Yachts; Dead Reckoning
From the Galley of... (also on pages 146 & 180)	98	Gemma Nachbahr; Murray Longmore; Kath McNulty; Niki Phillips; Suzanne Hills & Chris Cromey
Three months in Southern Brazil	101	Paul & Rachel Chandler
Bermuda to the Azores in 1986	112	Chris Burry
The Northwest Passage: Two Difficult Ice Years	118	Michael Johnson
Yacht Clubs in Galicia	130	Steve Pickard
Sailing adventure ~ Cape Town to Cabadelo	137	Jolien van Cranenburgh
What Cruisers Do...	147	Alex & Daria Blackwell
A Visit to the North Coast of Cuba	148	Ron Heyselaar
Indian Ocean Crossing	159	Chris & Fiona Jones
Las Palmas to Barbados, 1965	172	Gerry Wright
Maeva!	182	Lynne Gane & Alan Franklin
Sailors in the Atlas	187	Kath McNulty
Brazil	199	Laurent Debart
Northern adventure, Lofoten 2014	208	Peter Owens
Sending Submissions to *Flying Fish*	218	
All's Well That Ends Well...	219	Niki & Geoff Phillips
Obituaries	225	
Advertisers' Listing	239	
Advertisement Rates & Deadlines	240	

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.



The editorial is one of the first things you encounter in *Flying Fish* (I won't flatter myself by assuming everyone reads it) but it's always one of the last pages to be finalised, partly because I often can't think what to write, and partly because I never know quite how many articles will fit into the issue until I've laid them out. And 'fitting things in' was not an easy task this time around, because so many excellent submissions arrived, many within days of the 1 October deadline.

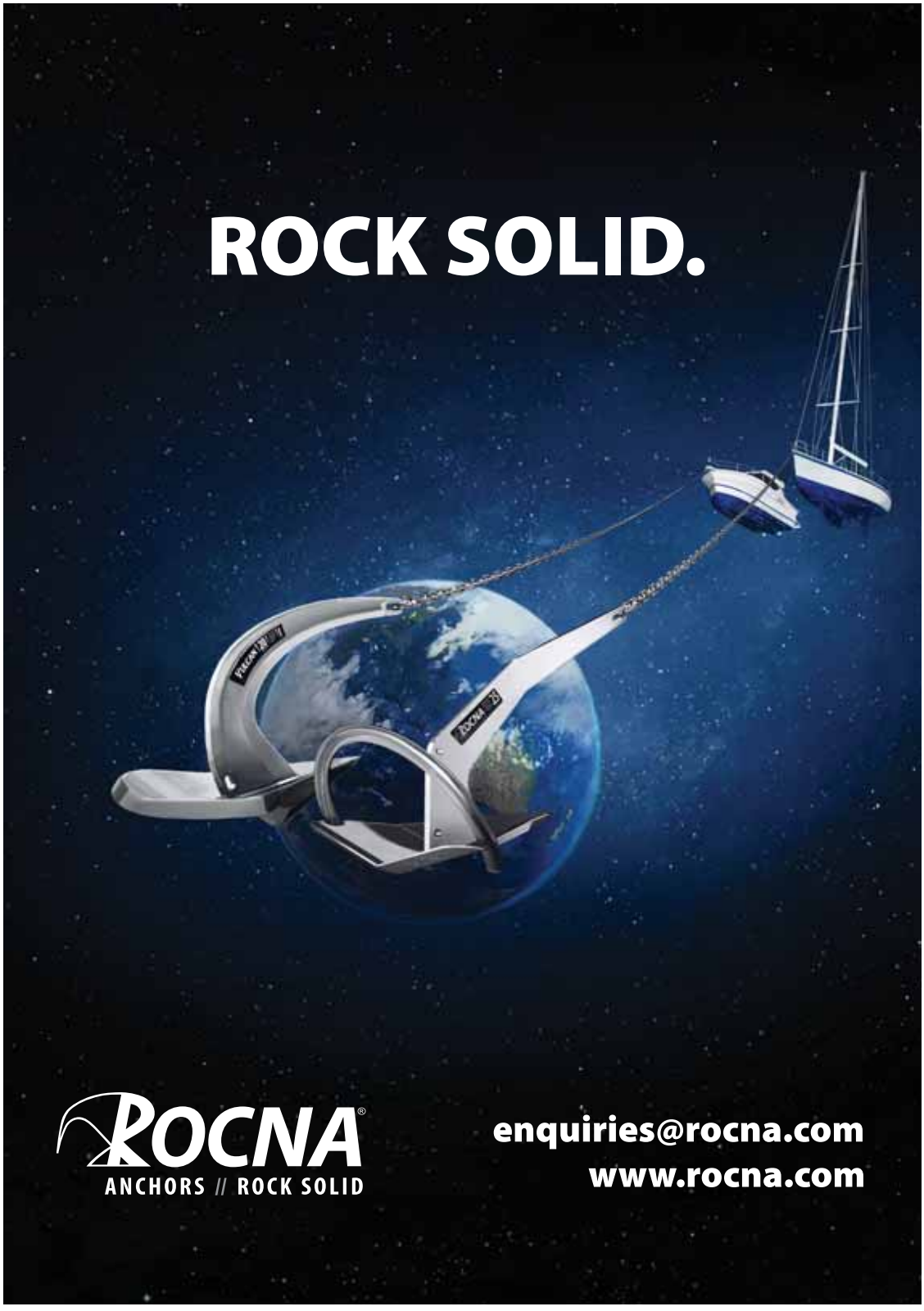
Flying Fish has a finite budget which, although generous, dictates the maximum number of pages. It was obvious that some articles would have to be held over, but which? Should I stick to my usual first-come-first-served rule? Or perhaps give priority to new members and/or those who'd never written for the *Fish* before? But surely space should be found for the dramatic and demanding passages which may receive awards next spring? In the end I did a bit of all three, but even so nearly a quarter of the pieces submitted for this issue will have to wait for *Flying Fish* 2016/1. If yours is among them, please be assured firstly that it *will* be published, secondly that the delay is no reflection whatsoever on either your sailing or your writing abilities, and thirdly that it will, if applicable, be forwarded to the Awards Sub-Committee for consideration together with the published pieces. (This is particularly relevant to qualifying passages, which the rules require to have been 'submitted for publication' – as these have been).

Among the articles which you will find in the following pages are two Northwest Passage transits; several impressive singlehanded passages; visits to venues from the Atlas mountains to Vanuatu via Brazil, Cuba, Galicia, Norway and more; three or four qualifying voyages; several very unpleasant gales; a lightning strike; a mid-ocean rescue; and last but by no means least Jack Bassett's account of building and sailing his beautiful wooden Vertue named, by happy coincidence, *Flying Fish*.

Back to practicalities and, like most facets of the OCC, our *Flying Fish* relies on a good deal of volunteer help, one of the most important posts being that of Advertising Manager. After a year during which Alex Blackwell valiantly held the fort following the departure of Simon Williams, Mike Downing has now taken over the role on a permanent basis. Although a few members have criticised the amount of advertising that *Flying Fish* carries – or even questioned whether it should contain any at all – advertising brings in considerable revenue, and without it we'd either be looking at a much thinner, cheaper *Fish*, or subscriptions would have to rise to cover the shortfall. So thank you first to Alex and now to Mike for helping us avoid either of these unwelcome scenarios.

Finally, the usual reminder – the **DEADLINE** for submissions to ***Flying Fish* 2016/1** is **Monday 1 February**. With the amount of material held over from this issue there's bound to be competition for space, however, so best not leave it until the last moment. If you've not written before please consult *Sending Submissions to Flying Fish* on page 218 before putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboard, and e-mail me, Anne Hammick, on flying.fish@oceancruisingclub.org if you have any queries.

Osprey 'beating hard but heading east' (see page 43). Photo Bruce McKenzie


ROCK SOLID.
ROCNA
ANCHORS // ROCK SOLID
enquiries@rocna.com
www.rocna.com

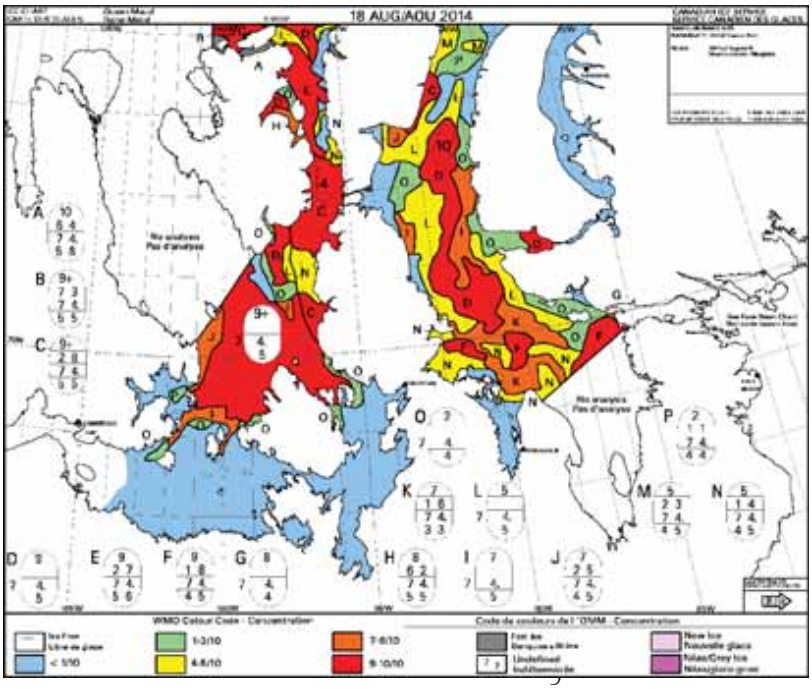
IN SEARCH OF OUR NORTHWEST PASSAGE
Steve Brown

(Flying Fish 2015/1 *traced* Novara*'s route northwards from Camden, Maine via Labrador and Baffin Island, reaching Arctic Bay in late August 2014. Despite all agreeing that it was a 'difficult year' for ice, the decision was made to press on westward…*

Novara *is an aero-rigged Bestevaer 60C schooner, designed by Gerry Dykstra and built in aluminium in Holland to serve as a 'scientific research vessel' specifically intended for high latitude cruising.*)

In reality there are not just one but seven alternative routes that can be called the Northwest Passage. Six of them can be considered variations on a theme, as all cross the Arctic Circle in the Davis Strait and re-cross it in the Bering Sea when headed westabout. The exception is the Hecla and Fury Strait that heads from Hudson Bay via the west coast of Baffin Island and is the most difficult of the routes, its shallow, shoal-strewn waters remaining ice-bound in most years despite the impact of climate change.

With 2014 considered a 'difficult year' it would be the ice conditions beyond Pond Inlet that dictated the route we would attempt for our Northwest Passage transit. Much to the chagrin of our Norwegian crew member Terje Lokken, we would not be alone in our search for a route through. The excellent tracker on our blog, created by ice-man and techno whiz Fred, had shown as many as 17 boats attempting the Passage, plus a French kayaker and a French rower, not counting the ice-strengthened 'expedition' cruise ships that we would also encounter en route.



Victoria Island Ice Chart for 18 August 2014

Although a number of the early arrivals had left after spending weeks waiting for the ice to recede, there were still at least six others attempting an east-west transit and four coming the other way!


N
Novara
Gitana 2013/14 page 118
150°W
65°W
75°N
40°N
Arctic Ocean
Chukchi Sea
Bering Strait
Bering Sea
Pacific Ocean
Beaufort Sea
Point Barrow
Eluitkak Pass
Cape Halkett
Cape Bathurst
Barrow
Point Hope
Kotzebue Sound
Port Clarence
Nome
ALASKA USA
HERSCHEL ISLAND
Tuktoyaktuk
Mackenzie River
Amundsen Gulf
Dolphin and Union Strait
Kugluktuk (Coppermine)
Coronation Gulf
Cambridge Bay
VICTORIA ISLAND
KING WILLIAM ISLAND
Dease Strait
Queen Maud Gulf
Simpson Strait
Resolute
SOMERSET ISLAND
Peel Sound
Bellot Strait
Prince Regent Inlet
Fort Ross
BOOTHIA PENINSULA
Gjoa Haven
Shelikof Strait
Homer
Sand Point
Kodiak
KODIAK ISLAND
Unimak Pass
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
CANADA
Hudson Bay
GREENLAND
Graham Harbour
Lancaster Sound
Baffin Bay
Arctic Bay
Pond Inlet
Admiralty Inlet
BRODEUR PENINSULA
Hecla and Fury Strait
Arctic Circle
BAFFIN ISLAND
DISKO ISLAND
Disko Bay
Ilulissat
Davis Strait
Labrador Sea



The Motley Crew: Terje, Phil, Me and Ding

With bad weather forecast, our decision to leave the exposed anchorage at Pond Inlet and head to the more sheltered Arctic Bay settlement on the northwest corner of Baffin Island looked to have backfired, with strong westerlies driving ice across the entrance to Admiralty Inlet and blocking our exit. We would just have to wait ... but it was now 19 August, and the settlement of Resolute in Lancaster Sound was still ice-bound. Prince Regent Inlet, Peel Sound, Larsen Sound, the McClintock Channel, and the Prince of Wales and McClure Straits were all still choked by ice, blocking our way to the west, and time was running out before the onset of winter and the return of the big freeze.

We had met up with the expedition cruise ship *Silver Explorer* at Pond Inlet and her ice-pilot, Mark, a Canadian and ex-icebreaker skipper. They planned to leave Pond Inlet and force a way through Bellot Strait to meet up with an icebreaker that was to escort them through Larsen Sound and Victoria Strait to Cambridge Bay. Some days later we were somewhat chastened to learn that both icebreaker and cruise ship had become trapped in Larsen Sound and had taken four days to break free!

My experiences in the mountains have taught me that if you waited for the right conditions you would never climb anything – you have to get yourself into a position to maximise the brief weather windows that present themselves. Even so, there was some debate regarding the best time to leave Arctic Bay, head around the Brodeur Peninsula, and attempt to force a way through to Fort Ross. One boat left 24 hours before us and another 12 hours before, but both had to find shelter on the northeast coast of Somerset Island. Our view was that we would avoid both headwinds and ice coming our way if we left a little later. We blasted out of Arctic Bay, broad-reaching in 15 knot southwesterlies, and ran into the ice tongue that stretched out from the top of the peninsula. We picked our way through this and, after judging that the central area of Prince Regent Inlet had blocked, changed our plans and headed south west and across to the east coast of Somerset Island towards Batty Bay, where we considered stopping overnight before trying to force a way south, along the coast to Fort Ross and the Bellot Strait.

A cold, wet and miserable night with poor visibility throughout and snow falling at times gave way to a brighter, more hopeful day, and it seemed that our judgement had been vindicated. Ice conditions along the coast were much easier than expected with no more than a few bands of 2/10ths ice and open water between. We hoped to get updated ice and weather information verbally from Fred, to confirm our view that the way was relatively clear down to Fort Ross and the entrance to the Bellot Strait, the gateway to Peel Sound and beyond.

We made excellent progress down the coast of Somerset Island in relatively clear water. Conditions were such that we did not waste time stopping at Fury Beach but continued on overnight direct to Fort Ross. Initially the only difficulty we had was a few wide bands of packed ice stretching out from Fury Point and the back of Cresswell Bay ... until we hit the ice off Cape Clara that was thought to have dispersed. Not so: 'come into my parlour said the spider to the fly', and before we knew it we were surrounded by a huge area of 4–6/10ths pack ice.

Weaving through the ice



Once again *Novara* came into her own and we were able to barge our way through towards the coast some 10 miles distant. Phil and Ding did a great job of navigating through the pack, picking out the small patches of open water and crunching through the thinner ice between. It took four hours before we managed to get into slightly clearer water and then close to shore where there was less ice, and so south to Depot Bay where we anchored just after 0230 some 285 miles and 45 hours after leaving Arctic Bay. An exciting couple of days!

We spent much of the day exploring around the old Hudson Bay Company's trading post. Two buildings remain – one the old living quarters with much of the interior intact, if a little weather beaten; the other the old storehouse, which has been maintained

to provide an emergency shelter complete with bunks, stove etc, plus some basic supplies left by passing boats. The walls are covered with the names of boats that have visited, many of them known to me. Phil used his artistic skills to draw a picture of *Novara*, and we added our names to the new visitor book put there in 2013 by our friend David Scott Cowper, a veteran of six Northwest Passage transits.



Surrounded by history

Having committed ourselves to the Bellot Strait route we had no option but to sit, wait and watch for a change in the ice conditions that would allow us onward passage or, more seriously, block our route back the way we had come. Only a few days earlier Bellot Strait had been completely ice-free although blocked at both ends, so Terje and I took a long walk along the south coast of Somerset Island to take a look at the central section of Bellot Strait. With ice coming into Depot Bay overnight we suspected that it was being driven through the strait from west to east (not good news for us) and so it proved, with the strait at Zenith Point choked with 9/10ths ice and a sea of white beyond. Our only chance to get through the strait and into Peel Sound was for the wind to change from westerlies to strong easterlies and blow the 9/10ths ice away and allow us to creep down the coast and on to Gjoa Haven.

Later in the day the expedition cruise ship MV *Bremen* came into the bay and anchored, giving us the chance to talk to her captain who invited us on board to get the latest weather and ice information. What followed seemed somewhat surreal. One of the *Bremen*'s large RIBs came over to collect us and take us back to the ship, and after lengthy discussions with the captain and his officers on the bridge we were given a cabin to use to shower and then invited to stay, first for afternoon coffee and cakes and subsequently for a five-course dinner. Sitting in the saloon area answering the many questions from the passengers, I had to keep pinching myself as it seemed so unreal. Dinner was excellent, and the bottle of French Medoc that accompanied it went down well after two months drinking 'chateau cardboard'. We left taking with us the good wishes of the passengers and crew as they waved us goodbye from the ship's rails.

The *Bremen* left Depot Bay to head through the Bellot Strait, and as she departed the Bruce Roberts-designed *Arctic Tern* sailed into Fort Ross having been held back for a couple of days by the ice in Cresswell Bay. We had confirmation from her of the whereabouts of the Norwegian tug, the *Tandberg Polar*, towing its large steel barge, and a few hours later this unlikely Arctic traveller also sailed into the Bay and anchored.



The Tandberg Polar

We dinghied over to *Arctic Tern* to exchange G'days and met up with skipper Les, his partner Ali and their crew, Nick, Nicky and Randall. Les and Ali had made it as far as Fort Ross the previous year but were turned back by the ice in Bellot Strait and beyond, so had sailed all the way back to Newfoundland to sit out the winter before trying again. As is the cruisers' way the world over we invited them over for sundowners later that evening. After an exchange of information on conditions, the use of the icebreaker, etc, the crew of the *Tandberg Polar* were also invited over for drinks. One drink became two, and with five Norwegians aboard two became lots. By the end of the evening our precious supply of beer, wine and rum was a shadow of its former self!

Sundowners in Depot Bay





A wind shift to the south forced ice into Depot Bay overnight, and we had great difficulty extricating ourselves before heading six miles south to a more sheltered anchorage in Levesque Harbour. En route we passed a young male polar bear who allowed us to drift gently with the current until we were almost alongside the large ice floe on which he was sitting.

As promised, the captain of the *Bremen* called us on VHF as they came back through Bellot, and told us that conditions in the Strait and over in Peel Sound were bad, difficult for him with icebreaker escort and impossible for us. He also gave us an update on weather for the coming week and once again this was not good news, with light westerly winds continuing to drive the ice into the Bellot. In these conditions the Canadian icebreaker *Pierre Raddisson* would not escort the tug and tow to Cambridge Bay.

We felt pretty secure in our new anchorage, tucked behind a spit of land right at the back of Levesque Harbour, but a change in the wind to light northeasterlies combined with a west-going current drove more ice floes into the bay and around our protective arm so, accompanied by *Arctic Tern*, we had to up anchor and leave.



Novara and Arctic Tern leaving Levesque Harbour



The upside was a good view of a mother and two polar bear cubs taking a short cut across the bay by walking across the ice floes. So back to Fort Ross and Depot Bay, where the previous night's ice was now beginning to head out into open water.

As we were no longer in Fort Ross when he passed by, the captain of the *Bremen* left two small rucksacks in the care of the *Tandberg Polar* to be collected upon our return. One contained an assortment of goodies and the other some bananas, lettuce and tomatoes, but the real treasures were the ice charts and GRIB files which held out some hope for our onward journey. The ice charts showed that the ice in Peel Sound and the Franklin and Victoria Straits was continuing to melt and thin out a little, and even better news was the prediction that the wind would switch into the northeast for two days, blowing 15 knots or more in the Bellot Strait and 20 knots plus on the other side.

Sure enough, in the afternoon the wind began to move into the east and increase in strength. Initially this gave us more problems with the ice, as the floes that had driven us out on their way in now wanted to do the same on their way out. But anticipating this we had anchored closer to shore in much shallower water and were able to fend off the ice until the last of it cleared the bay at around 0200. With the ice charts showing only a slight improvement but the wind continuing to blow in our favour, Terje and I took another walk along the Bellot Strait to see what conditions were like. It was clear that the northeasterlies had cleared some ice from the Strait, but there was still a choke point in the narrows and a lot more ice at the western entrance.

We had been joined in the anchorage by a third boat, the Canadian-flagged *Gjoa* with Anne and Glenn on board, who planned to wait for the tug to head through and then follow it, to overwinter in Cambridge Bay. Neither *Arctic Tern* nor *Novara* had plans to overwinter in the Arctic, however, both preferring to get down to Alaska before the ice closed Cape Bathurst and Point Barrow. Of the 14 boats that had posted their intent to transit the Northwest Passage from east to west in 2014 only four remained, and of these four, three were OCC members.

The ice charts that evening gave more encouragement, showing that the winds had created a lead down the west coast of the Boothia Peninsula which we could use

to make our way south. We would leave the next morning to head south along the west coast of Boothia Felix and try to get to Gjoa Haven. That night all three boats took up the offer of dinner on board the *Tandberg Polar* – for some of us it was our first taste of Arctic (seal) stew, and very nice it was too. The six Norwegians on board were great company and the engineer, Erik, is the great-grandson of the famous Norwegian explorer Frijdtof Nansen and shares his grandfather's surname.

We had seen first-hand how quickly things change in the Arctic – winds and current affect the ice in ways that cannot be imagined. We timed our departure from Fort Ross to give us the best chance to get through the Bellot Strait and reach Gjoa Haven and on to Cambridge Bay, but had one eye on the ice conditions further west at Cape Bathurst and Point Barrow, knowing that if we got there too late it could stop us in our tracks and force a retreat to Cambridge Bay and a winter in the ice. Over cautious and we could miss the window, too gung ho and we could get stuck in the ice. We also had to take account of what was happening behind us, potentially blocking off our line of retreat back to Pond Inlet and all points south. The latest ice chart showed that the route we took down Prince Regent Sound to Fort Ross and also from Bellot south down Franklin Strait to Gjoa Haven was now blocked again by drifting ice.

We decided to delay our departure until 0600, when we could use the last of the west-going current to punch our way through any ice we encountered, and this proved to be a useful tactic which helped us to get through the choke point. The ice build-up at the western end proved far more formidable, with 4/10ths or more stretching across the entrance. Once again *Novara* proved her icebreaker credentials, and by using the strong west-going current we were able to pick out a narrower section and punch our way through. The journey south was not without excitement – now at the end of August we had six hours of darkness, plus a considerable amount of ice to pass through before we could round King William Island and begin our long journey west.

Novara heading south under full sail after transiting the Bellot Strait





Charles Heydrich – rowing the Northwest Passage

As we approached Gjoa Haven in the fading sunlight we saw a strange sight ahead. As we edged closer it became clear that it was the French rower Charles Heydrich, who was attempting to row the Northwest Passage. We exchanged greetings, asked if he needed anything, and gave him an update on conditions in the Bellot Straight and beyond. Peter Ustinov always said it was a fine line between genius and madness, but in the case of those that attempt the Northwest Passage it is a fine line between adventure and lunacy!

Gjoa Haven is where Amundsen spent two winters carrying out his primary task of taking magnetic observations, and where he learned much from the Inuit that was to stand him in good stead when he made his successful attempt to be the first to the South Pole. With open water between there and Cambridge Bay, our next port of call, we were confidant of making further progress and, with the exception of a spectacular show from the Northern Lights, the passage proved uneventful. On arrival in Cambridge Bay we were able to collect the spare parts required to repair our damaged steering, and with open water ahead all the way to Point Barrow and beyond were able to rest up for a couple of days before starting on the 3500 miles to Homer in Alaska.

We awoke to snow overnight and ice on the decks. It was now 6 September, and for some days we had been watching geese flying south as winter approached the Arctic. With the gale force westerlies abating overnight we left Cambridge Bay at 0600 with a good forecast for at least five days ahead, our first target Cape Bathurst and the first of the remaining ice gates some 550 miles away. With sleet and snow blowing all day we were particularly glad to have fixed the steering so we could use the autopilot and, without any ice to worry about, *Novara*'s snug, warm pilothouse came into its own. 162 miles were covered in 24 hours as we sailed west along

Amundsen Gulf, followed by a two-day slog against headwinds up the Dolphin and Union Strait before we could round Bexeley Point.

We finally got the strong easterlies that were forecast for the 10th and made good progress westward in 20–25 knot winds and 10ft seas. The wind continued to build to 30 knots and we steadily reduced sail until we were running under twin storm sails in big following seas with both daggerboards down to aid steerage. The seas were spectacular if uncomfortable, with sleep difficult at best in the rolly conditions, but we rounded Point Barrow at 1230 in 30 knot winds and big breaking seas. Gybing the boat in these conditions took some care but went without any hiccups, and we broad-reached south in 25 knot winds with 8ft seas. We had now sailed more than 1250 miles since leaving Cambridge Bay, and had put the last of the ice obstacles behind us.

The storm force winds and big bouncy seas had taken their toll on the boat. *Novara* had withstood the pounding incredibly well, but some of the ancillary items had suffered. The wind generator lost one of its blades as we bounced our way up Dolphin and Union Strait, but fortunately it hit Phil on the shoulder and we were able to save it. The foghorn was less fortunate, coming loose and hanging by its wire, and we were unable to climb the mast to save it before it decided to abandon ship and disappeared over the side. Nuts and bolts appeared mysteriously and we could not find where they came from, but later as we walked the deck checking the rigging etc we saw that the radome had come loose, spun around 30°, and would have also disappeared over the side in the next big storm. This sailing lark is tough on the crew but even tougher on the boat.



Shake rattle and roll



Novara in winter quarters at Kodiak, Alaska

Novara re-crossed the Arctic Circle at 66°33'N 167°52'W as she headed south towards Nome. Since she had crossed heading north in the Davis Strait at 66°33'N 61°16'W we had covered 3380 miles in 42 days, successfully completing our 2014 transit of the Northwest Passage. Even so, we still had some way to go before we reached our winter quarters. Nome was interesting and the people helpful and friendly. The Beaufort and Chukchi Seas were lively, but the passage down the Bering Sea was notable for blue skies and abundant wildlife and we chose to play safe and make our way through the Aleutian chain via the Unimak Pass and stop at Sand Point until a front had passed safely by before heading north to Homer.

With a succession of gales forecast we had to pick the best of a series of less than perfect weather windows. As always where boats are concerned plans are subject to change at a moment's notice, and so they were as we headed out from Sand Point and north up the Shelikof Strait into gale force winds and 12–15ft seas! Both the boat and the crew were feeling the strain after more than three months and nearly 7000 miles, so I took the decision to go for plan B (or was it C?) and turn east and through the pass between Cape Trinity and Aiktalik Island and up the east coast of Kodiak Island to the port of Kodiak, where *Novara* was to spend the winter. It had been an amazing adventure, living up to our expectations and giving us memories that will stay with us forever.



But now a breeze came up for us astern – a canvas-bellying land breeze, hale shipmate sent by the singing nymph with sun-bright hair; we made fast the braces, took our thwarts, and let the wind and steersman work the ship with full sail spread all day above our coursing, till the sun dipped, and all the ways grew dark upon the fathomless unresting sea. Our ship ran onward toward the Ocean's bourne, the realm and region of the Men of Winter, hidden in mist and cloud.

Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by Robert Fitzgerald

360°/24/7

Any course. Any time. Anywhere.

Since 1998, Voyager has provided rugged, reliable self-steering to 300+ cruising yachts the world over. A modern classic, the Voyager is capable of steering both responsively in light air and powerfully in high winds and heavy seas.

- Steers any heading
- Lightweight, resilient
- Slim, smart profile
- Fully accessible from deck
- Detaches and stows easily
- Easy owner-installation
- Expert customer support



All components are precision machined, high-grade, hard-anodized aluminium, minimizing corrosion and giving Voyager the ruggedness deep-water sailing demands.

Request a quote from us today. And discover the high performance peace of mind only Voyager has to offer.

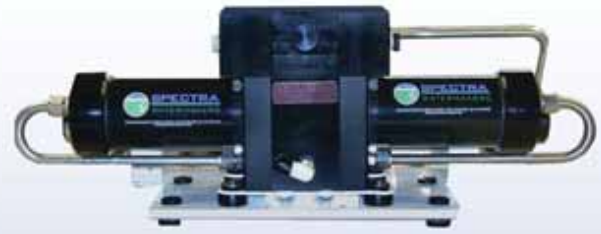
VOYAGER
SELF STEERING INC.
VOYAGERSELFSTEERING.COM
+1 705 528 1629 · MAINSTAY@CSOLVE.NET

Furneaux Riddall
www.furneauxriddall.com

Presents...

SPECTRA WATERMACHINES™
EFFICIENT DC WATERMAKERS

Fresh Water On Tap



- **Worldwide service and warranty**
- **Lowest DC power consumption**
- **Rugged reliability and easy operation**

The Spectra units are by far the most energy efficient on the market. This combined with ease of use, a worldwide service network and frugal DC power consumption that blue water cruisers demand. Spectra make units for all applications so for more information, pricing or spares please contact us or visit our website.

+44 (0)23 9266 8621
sales@furneauxriddall.com
www.furneauxriddall.com

SV 'FLYING FISH' IN FLYING FISH
Jack Bassett

I suppose it's only natural that I should contribute an article about my boat, SV *Flying Fish,* to the Ocean Cruising Club's publication of the same name. To further the coincidence, *Flying Fish* is a Vertue design, a craft mostly associated with Humphrey Barton, a partner of Laurent Giles and founder of the OCC in 1954.

I chose the Vertue partly for its proven track record. The design has endured for more than 70 years and has demonstrated its mettle in numerous long distance passages and circumnavigations. In addition, I have always valued the concept of doing a lot with a little, an opportunity that *Flying Fish* has certainly afforded me. She is an offshore boat capable of taking two people over the horizon in reasonable comfort and safety, all in a 25ft 6in package (or 7·8m). I also chose the design for the eye appeal. She suggests a delicacy of line and a stoutness of form.

Boat building using wood in one way or another has been my passion and my profession for the past 35 years, and I have worked in numerous locations around the USA and in the Caribbean. While building *Flying Fish* I tried to adhere to a general style of building that would seem appropriate for a British craft of the 1950s and '60s, as this was the heyday of Vertue construction. She is fitted with bronze hardware, a paraffin cooking stove, and a Blake head. I wanted to stay true to the style of her times and tradition.



The hull of Flying Fish takes shape

In a notable departure I chose to build the hull in cold-moulded fashion with laminated frames and backbone. The hull was constructed in typical inverted fashion around temporary moulds to





Turning the hull over

which an iroko backbone and mahogany frames were added. Four layers of planking were ultimately used to cover the frames and bulkheads. The first layer consisted of edge-glued pieces of Alaskan yellow cedar that were $^{9}/_{16}$ in thick and 2in wide with tongue and groove edges and a 'V' detail. The resulting glue-up formed an air tight shape to vacuum bag down the remaining three layers of diagonal cedar planking, each being $^{1}/_{8}$ in thick. Vacuum bagging is a rather time consuming technique in which a plastic sheet is sealed down over the glued-up planks. A vacuum pump is used to remove the air from the plastic sheet envelope and atmospheric pressure creates an even clamping over a compound shape. After adding two layers of biaxial fiberglass cloth, the hull became 1in (25mm) thick.

Moving the finished boat



The decks, cabin sides and top were created in a similar fashion. I crafted the mast in a hollow oval shape using sitka spruce. The double spreader rig was stepped on the cabin top and given a belt-and-suspender rigging. The interior cabinetry, sounding a bit like a fruit salad, was constructed of contrasting cherry and walnut timbers.

Vertues are a heavily ballasted craft. At 4200 pounds (1·88 UK tons, 2·1 US tons), the lead ballast keel is roughly half the total weight of the vessel which makes her quite stiff. In certain sea conditions she can generate a lively snap roll.

Despite far more optimistic predictions, it took me eight years of primarily part time labour to build *Flying Fish*. I put after work hours, weekends and vacation time into the effort. But it was all worth it. We finally launched her in May of 2010 on a cool, grey, rainy day. With only a couple of months after launching to shake down the boat, my mate Carolyn and I left Maine and struck out for the Azores on 4 July 2010. After 23 days of passage, three of them spent hove-to in stormy weather and contrary winds, the Azores were, as it is said, a sight for sore eyes. After three weeks of a blue panorama, these verdant and rugged islands seemed impossibly and beautifully green.



Jack with Horta's famous seawall – it seems there's more than one boat out there called 'Flying Fish'…



Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting six of these islands over two months – Faial, Pico, São Jorge, Terceira, São Miguel and Santa Maria. It was wonderful to meet the island inhabitants and fellow sailors and to spend time hiking the varied countryside. We marvelled at the extraordinary Portuguese architecture, much of it dating back to the 15th and 16th centuries.

By the end of September we were poking around the southern coast of Portugal, the Algarve, following the coast to the Spanish border. We continued to follow that border on the Rio Guadiana, with Portugal on one side and Spain the other. We stopped for a time at the charming twin towns of Alcoutim, Portugal, on the west bank and Sanlucar de Guadiana, España, on the east bank. Then we pushed *Flying Fish* as far upriver as we dared to the town of Pomarão, some 30 to 40 miles from the ocean. The river is lightly populated, but evidence abounds along the banks of things the Romans and later inhabitants left behind.

Below the lifting bridge in Lagos, Portugal



Having to don sweaters was nature's way of pulling us loose from the charms of the river, sending us south to the Portuguese islands of arid but striking Porto Santo and on to the lush mountainous island of Madeira. December found us cruising the Spanish archipelago of the Canary Islands, finding out how truly small our *Flying Fish* home was by taking on crew in the form of son, Karl, over his college break. After a lovely interlude in the Canary Islands, January pushed us farther south to the Cape Verde Islands. These are striking, cinder-dry, volcanic islands off the coast of West Africa. Although the Canaries are technically closer to the continent, it was clear that these Cape Verdes had an African identity that was blended with traces of the colonial Portuguese past.



Landfall on Porto Santo, northeast of Madeira



Leaving the Cape Verdes to cross the Atlantic again we took off in light airs, but soon encountered a downwind roller-coaster ride with strong winds and large seas. Most of the trip was covered flying only a double reefed main. We slid into Prickly Bay, Grenada, after covering 2300 miles in 19 days. Quite a quick trip for our heavily laden Vertue.

Spring found us on a leisurely cruise through the sparkling turquoise waters of the Windward and Leeward Islands, stopping in the Grenadines, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Antigua – where a highlight was enjoying the Classic Yacht Regatta – before continuing to St Barts, St Martin, St John in the US Virgin Islands, and





Beautiful turquoise water….

Culebra. We left the Antilles for South Caicos, and on across the thin water of the Caicos Bank to Providenciales, a trip not only of distance but one of third world to first. At the suggestion of a fellow sailor, we trudged up a hill overlooking the harbour to find limestone inscriptions from shipwrecked sailors dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

We entered the southern-most point of the Bahamas and day-sailed and gunk-holed our way north to exit through the northerly limit in the Abacos. We crossed the deep purple flow of the Gulf Stream to re-enter the United States at Charleston, South Carolina, during a record-breaking heat wave. Despite the heat, we enjoyed our stay in this unique city, marvelling at the architecture, the gardens and the abundance in stateside supermarkets.

We moved with the summer northward, inside and outside the Intracoastal Waterway, transiting the Great Dismal Swamp Canal and the length of the Chesapeake Bay. We saw much of the beautiful coast of the southern US and northward. The flowers and the birds were magnificent and the history came alive.

Nearly home, and within a day's sail to the point of departure of Boothbay, Maine, we were about to be overtaken by hurricane *Irene*. Seeking shelter, and with the companionship and help of other cruising OCC friends, we pushed *Flying Fish* up the Piscataqua River past Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Kittery, Maine, as far as our draft would allow. After weathering the storm we sailed back along the Maine coast to Linekin Bay, where we had begun our cruise 14 months earlier.



Flying Fish in Brooklin, Maine, photo Dave Tew

(US magazine *WoodenBoat* featured a six page article about *Flying Fish* and the Vertue design in their January/February 2013 issue.)

Imray

Nautical books & charts



www.imray.com

BEATING FOR ENGLAND
Murray Longmore

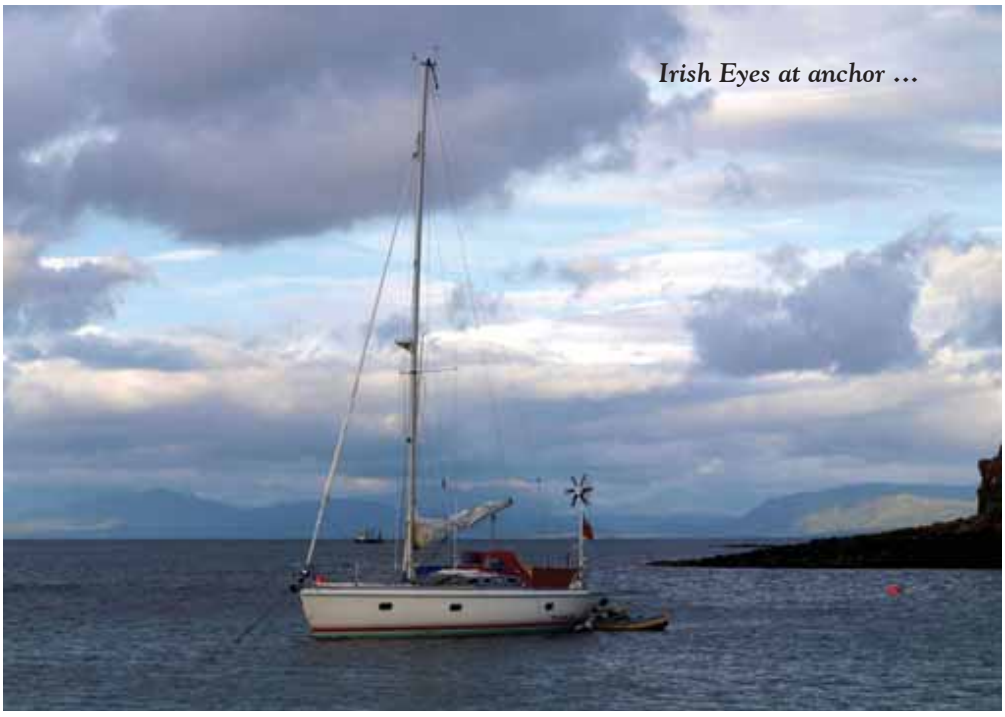
(*An account of a singlehanded qualifying voyage from Las Palmas, Gran Canaria to Bembridge, Isle of Wight, made in April 2015 by the author aboard his Etap 32* Irish Eyes.)

"Tomas," I said to the French sailmaker in the Canaries, "I have these two bullet holes in my mainsail ... can you repair them, as well as the jib?"

"Yes Murray," he said fixing me with his soft, frank eyes, "but bullet holes? Where have you been *mon ami*? Somalia? You should be more careful!"

I explained, as best I could, without giving too many details. In truth I was more worried about the jib, which had split on my last, much shorter, solo trip, and now I was about to tack back from the Canaries to England, against the prevailing northeast trade winds. I explained all this to Tomas, and a short while later he handed me my sail and said, "Now Murray, you can beat for England…"

Of course it would be more glamorous to 'bat' for England, and push the ball beyond all boundaries. But 'beating for England' sounded nearly as good, and I was pushing myself beyond my usual boundaries, having never before singlehanded beyond the range of the forecast. When sailing alone I find it is conversations such as these which come to mind, not images. Voices are more powerful for me than anything else, especially when I am alone. And it is these I am offering OCC members, who will have to do without more than a minimum of glossy, colourful images. After all, this is just a sail to Bembridge. A lovely village to be sure, but not the exotic, photogenic destinations beloved by true voyagers into the unknown.



Irish Eyes at anchor …



… and under sail

Another voice ringing in my ears throughout this voyage was that of Dan Hogarth, OCC, of *Eschaton*, first heard at the start of a shorter solo voyage from Terceira in the Azores. He had come down from the bar to see me off: "Dan, I can cast myself off," I claimed. "Yes Murray, I know you can … that's not why I've come". He had come to wish me luck, and to pat my hull in his affectionate manner and then to cast me off. Up until then, and left over from my landlubber days, my favourite phrase had been 'Lunch time!'. But from this trip onwards, and for always, my favourite phrase is now 'Cast off!', and it's always spoken in Dan's voice.

The last conversation to ring in my ears was at the fuel dock in Las Palmas. Just minutes before I departed, I heard a voice from some way above me ask, "Why are you so thin?" How far I was already into the psyche of my upcoming voyage can be gauged by the fact that I thought this friendly German was referring to my beam, which at 3·4 metres is not all that small for a length of less than 10m. But he was a large German, and I realised there was an equally large ice-cream in one of my hands, and in the other a can of some fizzy drink. He went on, "You eat all that … why don't you put on weight?" I explained that this was my last meal before setting off that very evening for England. Saying this made me feel like I was verbalising a bad omen, as if I were a prisoner eating a carefully-chosen last meal before execution. "To England?" he enquired "in … in *that* boat? No … I must go and tell my captain." With that he lumbered off. I craned my neck upwards to his deck and saw his white socks disappearing down the polished companionway into the caverns of an enormous saloon. Minutes later the captain appeared with a crew of six. "You are going to England? No! Alone? No … No. And your boat less than 10 metres? No …". This huge yacht had come to Las Palmas "all the way from Tenerife", and they had just made it okay they said. "And you are going in your small boat? This evening? Why are you sailing into the dark? Are you sure?"

This seemed like another bad omen, especially as I reflected that 'sailing into the dark' was how Iris Murdoch, with her last traces of insight, described her own one-way journey into dementia. But as if to defy these omens, I tucked into my ice-cream with renewed relish. I explained that on a long voyage it doesn't really matter what

time of day you set off, and the evening has much to commend it, because, by the all-important second night, you are well away from the land and all its complications and a rhythm of sleep can be instituted. And, anyway, I had had a good forecast. Not a favourable wind, or anything like that, but nothing too strong. And I would rather have two bad omens than a single bad forecast. I think all sailors are superstitious; my superstitiousness shows itself by a compulsive scotching of superstitions. At this moment in my voyage, if I could have found a ladder I would have sailed under it.



So is this an account of an arduous voyage? In many ways, no. The distance was nothing special, just less than 2000 miles even with all that tacking. Were there arduous meteorological events? No, just the usual gale, in the usual place (off Ushant). Was I terribly seasick? Nothing, after the first week. Did I have trouble with ice, a giant squid or sirens? No! And, on landfall, were the natives of Bembridge hostile? No! Were there significant failures of equipment? Yes, of course – early on, all the navigation instruments failed on the bridge, but with a spare chart-plotter and a few telltales this didn't seem too serious. I never got those instruments going, and as the voyage progressed I minded less and less. So what if I had to guess the true wind and its speed? The watermaker failed, and the freshwater pump from the tank failed too, so I was thirsty for a while until I mended the watermaker. None of these events made this voyage any more arduous than average. Even all that tacking wasn't too bad, no worse than the typical voyage when Sod's Law is operating properly.

What was arduous will become apparent as the narrative unfolds. All voyages start with leaving something behind. A memory, a heartstring, or, in my case, some Tiffin* and an anchor. On the voyage out I had anchored in a small bay on the Ilhas Selvagens, between Madeira and the Canaries, and in breaking out my lovely Rocna anchor I bent its shank. Readers may be interested to know that Rocna's Lifetime

* Also known as 'fridge cake' Tiffin is made of crushed biscuits, sugar, syrup, raisins (or Murray's preference of dried cherries) and cocoa powder, often covered with a layer of melted chocolate. It is set by chilling rather than baking. Murray's recipe will be found on page 146 of this issue.



No scurvy on this ship!

Guarantee really does work. They came to Tenerife to collect my anchor and to give me a new one in time for this voyage. So the old bent anchor was something gladly left behind. Less easy to say goodbye to were the friends in La Gomera and Gran Canaria, and the happy times eating Gustavo's and his brother-in-law's paella. A good paella is an all-day Sunday event of gargantuan proportions. I could not eat all of mine, so it was lovingly put away in a container for me to take aboard. Now a good container is not to be given away lightly, so I resolved to return it on the day of departure. And I couldn't return it empty. So this is where the Tiffin comes in. I had just sufficient Tiffin to fill Gustavo's container. And with this ballast removed, I cast off, with scarcely a second thought.

The German voice was the last I heard on land, but I took another with me – that of Ulysses, voiced by Alfred Lord Tennyson and occupying my mind all through the first week of seasickness:

"…my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die ..."

As the seasickness unfolded, dying seemed ever more attractive. I had expected this, and I knew it would pass. What I had not expected was that the return of appetite would coincide with a brief period of sleeplessness so that, too tired to cook and with almost hallucinatory intensity, I began to think about that absent Tiffin. I knew I had to confront my hallucinations head-on. Again the voice of Tennyson came to me, this time the *Charge of the Light Brigade*, but slightly altered, as my mind created in front of me a solid wall of Tiffin, guarding my hallucinations:

"Tiffin to right of them,
Tiffin to left of them,
Tiffin in front of them ..."

My ship never grounded on Tiffin and soon sleep came, and then I began to cook, and then I discovered that if one has a huge cooked breakfast there is nothing one cannot

accomplish. Soon the miles sped by. The grand strategy of the voyage was simply to avoid land at all costs. So I gave Finisterre and Ushant a berth of at least 150 miles and aimed for Falmouth. A berth of 150 miles allows thinking time if things go wrong (the reader will understand that, if I think at all, I think very slowly).

One advantage of all my upwind sailing was that I had plenty of energy from my wind turbine – known respectfully as Lucifer, partly because he is dangerous (stretch upwards too far and more than your fingernails will be clipped) and partly because he is the bringer of light. Lucifer sees only apparent wind, so is rather torpid on downwind passages. But for most of this trip I was upwind. So although I have only one small service battery, most of the time I had plenty of energy, and I hardly ever needed my towed generator.



Was my boat too small and lightweight for such a long upwind passage? Another conversation with Dan reassured me, "Dan, why is my boat smaller than everyone else's?" I asked him once (I think he is used to my stupid questions). "Don't worry," he said, "you'll be fine". I reflected that all boats are small compared with the sea and, when the sea calls, you meet it in the boat you have, not the boat you would like to have.

I was enjoying it all so much that I bypassed Falmouth and pressed on ... where to? With full batteries (thank you, Lucifer), full diesel and water tanks (unused in view of the mended watermaker), and with plenty of dried food and more than a month to the summer solstice, I felt I had world enough and time for infinite voyaging, especially when each star seemed to be an inviting waypoint on some Ultimate Cruise. But as soon as I heard family voices on my phone I knew I was bound for my home waters in the eastern Solent, and so it was that I dropped anchor at Priory Bay outside Bembridge at midnight, 16 days out from Las Palmas, and my shiny new anchor had its first taste of delicious Solent mud. When I extricated it next morning much of that mud was left behind, but much adhered, and was about the consistency of the Tiffin – the abandonment of which, I now appreciate, was the most arduous part of my beautiful voyage.

And those bullet holes? That story belongs to another voyage, which must await its telling.

Acknowledgements

Francis (*Samphire*, *Plainsong*) for my first voyage;
Ian (*Springhill Lady*) for fantastic generosity in offering to babysit me at least as far as the Azores;
Dan (*Eschaton*) for letting go my lines and telling me I could do it.



Parasailor



Parasailor – The Passage Maker

A short-handed crew on a long-distance voyage. The big dream. Endless blue water, a moderate following breeze. And the good-natured Parasailor steadily pulls the boat along mile by mile. The autopilot has control. Those on watch can relax as the Parasailor is self-trimming, balancing out wind shifts without the need for crew to steer or trim. The Parasailor can also handle stronger winds. Its opening acts as a safety vent, cushioning gusts and reduces rolling and yawing. Performance drawbacks? None at all! The wing does not only pull upwards but also forwards. And it provides so much stability that a spinnaker pole is not necessary. Invented and developed in Germany, the Parasailor is at home on all downwind legs. In short, the Parasailor is the ideal companion for your sailing passages. It is more forgiving than a conventional spinnaker, and more versatile than an asymmetric. This is not only the opinion of cruising legend Jimmy Cornell who has sailed thousands of miles under Parasailor. In fact many participants of the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) choose the wing-integrated downwind sail year on year: about one third of all downwind sails are Parasailors.



ISTEC The Downwind Company

www.istec.ag

LIGHTNING NEVER STRIKES TWICE!
Bob and Elaine Hazell

(Since leaving the Hamble in June 2008, Bob and Elaine have sailed over 37,000 miles aboard Pipistrelle*, their Wauquiez 48PS. At the time of writing they were in Madagascar, heading for South Africa and Cape Town by the end of the year and the Caribbean by May 2016, where they will complete their circumnavigation. Follow their journey at www.yachtpipistrelle.wordpress.com.)*

Lightning never strikes twice ... or so the saying goes. But in our case this is not quite true! Three times is the score for *Pipistrelle* – once in Curaçao in the Caribbean, once in Fiji and now in the Maldives. But whereas the first two were electromagnetic pulses, this was a direct lightning hit to the top of the mast. Read on ...

The tropics are renowned for frequent lightning, and nowhere more so than Malaysia and Thailand. We had investigated installing a lightning protector in New Zealand but, with a quoted cost of NZ$15,000 and no guarantee it would work, decided not to go ahead. So we were relieved to move on westwards from Thailand, and away from the frequent electrical storms. Our first stop was Trincomalee in Sri Lanka, where we were one of the first yachts to visit after the civil war. This stopover was infinitely preferable to Galle in the south, both in terms of the anchorage – which was protected – and cleanliness, plus it was easy to visit Kandy and the tea plantations at hill stations 'up country', which are beautiful.

Pipistrelle at anchor in the Maldives, April 2015





Looking over at the anchorage at Trincomalee, Sri Lanka

We then made for the northernmost of the Maldivian islands where we could check in, and were made really welcome in Uligan, where the agent brought us a present of ice cream! Sailing south through the Maldives was uneventful, but we did enjoy seeing the many atolls and anchorages. The snorkelling was stunning.

Our next major stop was the capital, Malé, for re-provisioning and refuelling, after which we left for Gan. An overnight passage between two atolls was needed on the night of 6/7 April 2015, but while the weather forecast predicted rain, there was no mention of lightning. In the early hours, while Elaine was on watch, the radar showed cumulus nimbus ahead and we saw lightning, but it was moving away from our path. After the change of watch at 0300 Bob continued to monitor developments by radar, and saw with concern a huge bank of cloud behind *Pipistrelle*, moving against the wind and catching us up. He altered course towards a nearby atoll, but as the cloud went overhead there was a huge bang, crack, and simultaneous flash of lightning. We had suffered a direct hit to the top of the mast.

Though Bob felt the shock of the impact, and Elaine's off-watch slumbers were severely curtailed, we were both unhurt if a little shaken. But there was a strong smell of burning in the aft area of *Pipistrelle* (one cause could have been the PCB for the autopilot or the earth wires to the P bracket). As there was very little wind associated with the cloud we were motor-sailing at the time. We lost all instrumentation, autopilot and engine controls, as well as having no charge from the alternators and no VHF. With the engine cooling fans eating 10 amps, we shut the engine down manually to conserve power. We have electronic engine controls as the engine could be controlled from the saloon or the cockpit but, once stopped, the engine could not be started again! We were out of mobile phone range, but used the satellite phone

– our only means of communication – to advise our Maldivian agent and sailing friends in the vicinity of our situation by e-mail.

At the time of the strike we were making our way south outside Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, about 15 miles offshore. With no wind and no engine we were drifting, and the current was taking us northeast towards Kolamaafushi. We were helpless, with no idea whether wind would appear before we were swept onto a reef, a worrying situation. Eventually we had one bar on the mobile and were able to call our friends Neal and Ruthie on *Rutea*. As luck would have it they were anchored only 10 miles from our position and motored out to meet us with crew from two other yachts. Shortly after they arrived so did the wind, and we were able to sail towards their anchorage, where Tom from *Pakea Tea* strapped his dinghy alongside and used his outboard to drive us into the anchorage.

Once anchored we heaved a sigh of relief, had a relaxing lunch, and then began checking the damage – a tedious and difficult job, trying to identify the precise cause of electrical failure and whether there was a workaround. We found that the generator started but created no AC, and that both the 12 and 24 volt alternators were also wiped out, so we were unable to charge any of the batteries. Fortunately our new solar panels kept them partially charged, with the fridge and freezer turned off overnight (not ideal in that latitude). The following day Neal and other yachties came over, and between us we bypassed the Micro Commander which controls the main engine electronically. Neal found a spare switch on *Rutea* to start the engine and made a clever lever to act as a throttle, so with a floor hatch open by the companionway we were able to change gear and increase the speed of the engine by manually moving the cables.



The improvised engine controls

We could now move *Pipistrelle* carefully, but hoisting the mainsail using the electric winch depleted the batteries, so it was hoisted by hand (curiously, the anchor windlass and all the electric winches still worked). With 72ft of mast and a very heavy sail this was not as easy as it sounds. Manoeuvring was not straightforward either, with Bob down below on the engine controls and Elaine on the wheel calling engine instructions as he popped his head up into the cockpit.



Seenu or Addu Atoll

Gan – a blue dot marks Pipistrelle's position



Helmut and Kerstin on *Lop To* kindly offered to buddy boat us to Gan on Addu Atoll, which we thought made sense, rather than returning to Malé on our own. They led the way to a couple of anchorages in between, before the final 60 mile overnight leg to Gan. Following another yacht's tricolour is far easier than steering a compass course, providing one checks the chartplotter frequently! On arrival we anchored between Gan and Heydhoo, and all repairs were undertaken in the lagoon or at anchor outside, in 35m of water.

The following equipment had been taken out by the strike:

- VHF and masthead aerial, which was split
- AIS and AIS B
- Tricolour and anchor light, which still smelt of burning two weeks after the strike
- All navigation, depth and wind instruments including the main GPS
- Autopilot

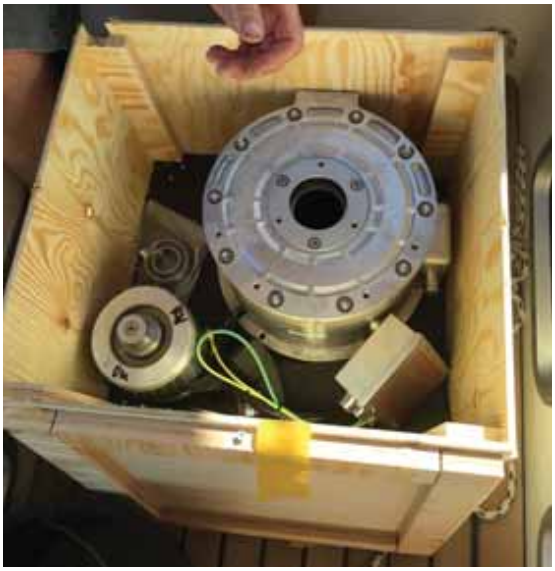
- 12v and 24v alternators
- Micro Commander engine controls
- Generator AC supply
- Timer delay switch for grey tank
- Galley lighting
- BEP DC voltage and amp meter
- Victron 24v DC to 12v DC converter

The mobile phone, sat phone and e-mails were heavily used to advise our insurance company, Admiral Marine, and the providers of the affected equipment of our plight. One of these calls was to Steve Gilmour of Category 1 Marine in New Zealand, who had replaced the Kubota motor on our FP generator in 2012. An extremely competent marine engineer and sailor himself, he took such an interest in our problems that he became our natural choice to ask whether he would consider flying to Gan to help us replace the equipment. The answer was 'yes'. With the quick agreement of Admiral, flights and accommodation were booked. Between them, Bob and Steve very successfully project-managed the ordering, transport and arrival at Gan airport of all the necessary replacement kit, which arrived from NZ, Australia, Germany, the US and the UK.

The Maldives are probably one of the worst places for the import of spares and, because of the complexity of most of our electrical and electronic systems, we did not want to rely on local labour. DHL is by far the best shipping agent, and fortunately our agent in Gan charged us only for his time. We also discovered that local replacements such as alternators are not like-for-like and would not fit: don't waste time, order the precise part needed from a reliable source.

Pipistrelle at anchor in Gan





The new generator windings arrive – all 80kg of them

Steve flew in on Saturday 25 April and by Saturday 2 May everything was working except the generator. Whilst we had taken the manufacturer's advice that the windings were probably affected, no mention was made of the PCB in the control box. The windings weighed 80kg and were shipped from Germany. Steve split the generator, removed the old windings and replaced them with new windings and the armature.

The burnt out top of the VHF antenna



Countless tests and checks were to no avail and eventually, to save time, we contacted Fischer Panda in Germany direct to order the parts for the new AC control box. When they finally arrived the PCB bore no resemblance to the old one, because FP in their wisdom decided that all the components would be okay, they just needed transferring from one board to the other, which was a complex and time-consuming task.

There is little one can do to avoid a lightning strike – we were very lucky it did not happen during an ocean passage and just hope that this was the last occasion for *Pipistrelle*. Our fellow yachties could not have been more helpful or supportive – the international sailing community is quite remarkable at times like these, and we know of so many instances when yachties have gone out of their way to assist others in trouble.

We were also extremely fortunate to have an outstanding and understanding insurance company in Admiral, who did not quibble once. Once our claims manager, Bob Samuels, understood the problems and what we were doing to overcome them, could not have been more helpful and supportive. He even monitored and replied to e-mails at weekends ... added to which their premiums are highly competitive.

Our thanks also go to Steve, who worked like a Trojan for eight hours or more each day in very hot, cramped conditions, and was a tower of strength. When the additional issue with the generator manifested itself, he extended his stay by two days hoping he would be able to resolve the problem.



Steve accessing the main engine from Aladdin's Cave

We finally sailed from Gan on 27 May, the B&G autopilot getting us to the Seychelles. We plan to have the remainder of the repairs undertaken in South Africa and until then, and maybe longer, the insurance claim will remain open.

Home sweet home!





A dolphin jumps for joy – before the lightning strike

Lessons learned

For other cruisers, this might be a useful checklist:

1. If, like ours, your engine controls are electronic, learn how to insert a switch from a relay, so that you are able to start the engine;
2. Use the lever on the side of your diesel engine to stop it;
3. Learn how to remove the cables from your control box, and then use them to change gear and control the engine speed;
4. Alternators are susceptible – carry spares, and ensure they fit the mountings;
5. You will probably need a puller to remove the pulley for the drive belts on the alternator;
6. Any printed circuit board is susceptible. Whilst carrying spares is probably not feasible, bear in mind that any of them could be affected;
7. The AC control box on our generator was damaged, meaning that even a month later we still had no method of creating AC other than from a small inverter we had acquired;
8. Our 24 to 12 volt DC converter, which provided the power for all the nav instruments, was taken out. This is one thing which is small enough for a spare to be carried;
9. We were lucky that our SSB and sat phone were not damaged – plan for how you would communicate following a lightning strike;
10. Place all small items like laptops, tablets, sat phones and handheld GPS units in the oven, which acts as a Faraday cage.



SANDERS

10% discount for OCC members

Cruising sails that set beautifully and are built to last

Sanders Sails - the OCC preferred supplier

visit us at
www.sanders-sails.co.uk
for the full story

Alcedo
sails, upholstery and covers by Sanders

SANDERS SAILS BATH ROAD LYMINGTON HAMPSHIRE SO41 3RU
t 01590 673981 f 01590 676026 e peter@sanders-sails.co.uk

mailasail
satellite communications

Clearer Communications?

MailASail are Specialists in Wifi, 3G and Satellite Onboard



Unbeatable Prices on Wifi & Satellite Comms

- Iridium 9555/9575 Handhelds
- Inmarsat FleetBroadBand FB150 / FB250
- Iridium Pilot
- Wifi Boosters

World Class Backup & Support

- Friendly after sales service
- Global delivery and technical support
- Who else will you call mid-Ocean?





Joining the Dots

- Email Compression Services
- Blogging and Position Tracking
- Weather Services
- Firewalls to control spend

Buy from the Market Leaders in Communications

(Don't forget to ask for your OCC Discount!)



Top Rated Provider for 2 Years Running!

Yachting World

2/3rds of ARC 2010 participants chose MailASail

*"95 yachts selected MailASail and rated it joint highest in user satisfaction, making Ed Wildgoose's service (and Las Palmas support) **once again by far** the **most popular** marine-based e-mail provider"*

+44 20 70432832
www.mailasail.com

ATLANTIC ALONE
Bruce McKenzie

(*Bruce's action-packed photo of* Osprey *'beating hard but heading east' appears on the front cover of this issue. I hope he has a waterproof camera*!)

After a couple of seasons in the West Indies I had promised the Chief Mate that we would return *Osprey*, our Rival 36, to the Greek islands for a change of variety and culture. She does not like the privations of life on long voyages in a small boat and sensibly flew home from Antigua. All my other sailing contacts had other commitments and so it was that, in the first week of May, I found myself in Jolly Harbour, preparing the boat for an Atlantic crossing to the Azores and contemplating that, at the age of 68, I would have to do it alone. With all my preparations completed, I checked the arrangements with our offspring, Duncan and Helen, for them to send me weather forecasts via sat phone. Having decided to sail the next morning, I dined in the convivial company of two other crews also about to depart.

I slept well but woke early, keyed up from the start. After completing a few last minute tasks, I spoke with various friends over a final coffee, then cast off my lines. I motored *Osprey* down the dredged channel, hoisted sail and, clear of the offshore islets, set the Hydrovane self-steering gear. I spoke to the Chief Mate – poor reception in the marina



Osprey ready to depart



First sunset at sea

had prevented a call earlier – and with the comfort of her voice, settled on course to pass to the west of Barbuda. Late afternoon, and only six hours after last speaking to people ashore, the enormity of the journey ahead and the length of time without human contact hit me and, for a while, I felt very alone.

The moon rose at 2130 to find us, *Osprey* and me, sailing serenely in a gentle southeasterly breeze with an easy swell. I started a 20 minute sleep pattern which I intended to maintain until I was well away from inter-island shipping. During the night the wind freshened on the beam so we made better progress. A fine dawn broke to find us well on course to pass to the east of Bermuda, at which point, 700 miles north of our present position, I could expect to pick up westerlies.

Osprey made fair speed all day under a near-cloudless sky. At dusk a pair of dolphins, mother and calf, visited for a short time. Soon after that we ran into a patch of disturbed water with swells from three directions, and our speed slowed for a while as *Osprey* plunged and rolled. I altered course for a large merchantman around midnight and another vessel passed about three miles off, reminders that I needed to maintain a vigilant watch. The breeze picked up to 18-20 knots and we surged over the lumpy sea with a reef in the main. Lightning flickered in the far distance just before dawn and, as daylight broke, I saw a large and ominous cloud a few miles ahead. Concerned about a lightning strike, I hove-to for half an hour while the cloud moved away from our course.

I picked up the regular morning forecast, together with a bundle of lovely messages from family and friends which lifted my mood as we ploughed on over a lumpy sea with occasional light rain squalls. After dinner, feeling clear of coastal shipping, I decided to extend my sleep pattern to 45 minutes, using a kitchen timer as an alarm. The wind increased to 20+ knots, requiring a reef, and shifted ahead of the beam. More lightning during the night was alarming at first until I realised it was cloud-to-cloud stuff and I could relax and enjoy the show. I settled quickly into my new sleep pattern and awoke at dawn, refreshed and hungry. With the wind now abaft the beam I eased sheets a little in bright sunshine and altered course more to the northeast. A wash,

shave and clean clothes, followed by a good breakfast, improved matters considerably and I relaxed in the cockpit with a mug of fresh coffee enjoying the lovely tradewinds. The wind fluctuated in strength throughout the day, and I was kept busy with the reefing lines in between checking for wear and tear. The evening meal was enjoyed in the cockpit, lit by a fine sunset.

Just before dawn I carried out one of my regular AIS checks and made a sweep of the horizon before returning below. Half an hour later I woke again feeling uneasy, There was nothing on the AIS, but when I went on deck I was alarmed to see a large merchantman passing about 400m astern. I had clearly sailed close across her bow. The AIS alarm sounded and I found that there was now an image on the screen, which stayed there until the vessel was six miles away, then disappeared again. I later checked all the connections to the AIS and found them in order. So a lesson learned: be on deck at dawn and dusk when ships' lights are indistinct, and don't assume they'll have their AIS switched on!

We enjoyed a fast sail all day under a grey sky, passing the second imaginary waypoint 450 miles out from Antigua. I had broken down the passage into manageable chunks so that I would have regular 'wins' to celebrate – it was a boost to move on to waypoint 3. There was no sunset, and by dusk visibility was less than five miles. The breeze dropped to force 3 and began to fluctuate, so that during the night I came on deck to find us heading northwest and twice almost due east, so I was kept busy with sail alterations and adjusting the self-steering.

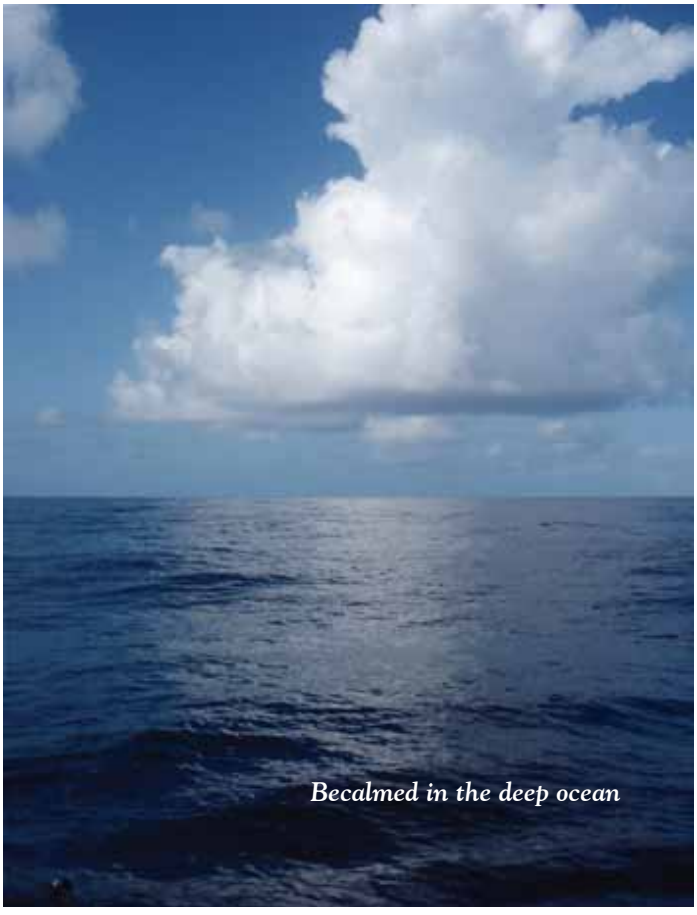
Tradewind sailing at its best



The fluctuations were a sign that the Azores high was drifting northwest, and as the wind fell off through a hot sunny morning I cleaned the boat and enjoyed a call home to pick up family news. By mid-afternoon we were becalmed with sails furled and, for a while, the engine running to charge the batteries as the towed generator would not operate. Still becalmed at midnight, the silence in the deep ocean was profound.

An hour before dawn a few light puffs heralded the returning wind, and within a few minutes I was on deck in the dark hoisting sail. Half an hour later I was hard at work putting in reefs as the wind settled in the northeast at 22 knots. *Osprey* rode the rapidly rising waves comfortably but, unfortunately, 45° off course, heading north-northwest. The sky ahead was black with rain clouds and the wind moaned in the rigging.

The morning forecast suggested that the Azores High would drift north over the Grand Banks and I would have the northeast winds for at least 48 hours, so it was better to gain northing rather than head southeast where I would be becalmed again when the High drifted back. I plugged on through a wet, grey day, buoyed up by good e-mails from home. During the evening I altered course for a large merchantman. The northeast breeze continued through the night but began to slacken after dawn, and we made slow progress during the morning with a 2m swell on the bow. After lunch the wind backed, allowing us to resume our course northeast, now in bright sunshine. The evening forecast warned of a new low pushing in behind the retreating High, with strong winds 50–100 miles north of my position. The wind freshened after dark, and I was kept busy through the night reefing the main and genoa as it picked up to 25–30 knots. After dawn it backed east-southeast and settled down to a steady force 5 which held all day, the rain clouds cleared away, and we had a glorious day's sailing at 7 knots. As darkness fell we were still reaching fast under a brilliant starry sky, the Milky Way very prominent.



Becalmed in the deep ocean

Refreshed after a good night's sleep (I slept through a couple of alarms) I cooked a hearty breakfast and ate in the sunny cockpit as we passed the first 1000 miles of the passage. Our noon position showed we had



Atlantic greybeards chase us down

sailed a respectable 150 miles in 24 hours. The southeast breeze held, gusting to 15 knots, and we maintained good progress through the afternoon and another fine night, though a large eddy from the Gulf Stream to the north meant a 2 knot foul current for some hours. The next forecast advised of a new low forming behind us, with force 7 winds down to 35°N. I was now at 37°N so decided to head south of east, giving up my hard-won northing to avoid being caught by stronger winds than forecast. I hardened sheets until *Osprey* was on a close reach, and settled down to more windward work. We plugged on through another starlit night – fortunately the waves were not large and we maintained good boat speed. By 0600 we were just north of 35°N, so I eased sheets until we were 50° to the wind and we continued our good progress through a lovely sunny morning. The lunchtime messages advised that a yacht about 50 miles astern, part of the ARC Europe Rally, had collided with a whale, been holed and the crew picked up by a freighter.

Grey cloud spread in during the afternoon and the wind was flukey, but the shifts were generally favourable though I was kept busy trimming the Hydrovane. Just before dawn the wind picked up to 22 knots and I put in a reef. After breakfast, while on deck sewing a minor tear in the mainsail, we were hit by a sudden squall and I was quickly drenched. The squall passed and we were left wallowing in the swell, but within half an hour the wind returned and we resumed course. A ship passed six miles ahead to remind me to maintain a good watch.

A weather front passed through in the afternoon with light winds behind, and at around 1700 we saw the birth of a new breeze from the southwest. Fitful and uncertain at first, within an hour it was a lusty youngster, pushing us firmly towards Horta through a dark night. Dawn broke fair, the first forecast of the day predicting lighter winds as the Azores High drifted north again, so I gybed onto port tack to head up to 38°N to avoid the calms. A bank of rain clouds swept in early in the evening, with a big wind shift into the northeast, so I was back between a rock and a hard place. I took the northerly option again in the hope I would find westerlies, and began a long slow plug to the northwest, slamming occasionally as we beat into the lumpy swell.

It was a dark and chilly night, but dawn heralded sunshine and a fair wind shift allowed us to head east of north, albeit slowly as the breeze was inconstant, and finally failed altogether in the afternoon. Becalmed, I dropped the sails to avoid them slatting, and caught up with the endless maintenance tasks. It was not until 0100 that the breeze returned, light but steady, and we slipped across the smooth swell at 4 knots. The morning exchange of emails revealed that the ARC boats to the north had endured a rough night with confused seas and many wind shifts. Once again, I thanked my weather routers for steering me round the worst of it, even if I had dipped into a zone of little wind. Be patient, I was informed, it will pass!

An hour later I noticed we were following a trail of bubbles, and soon saw a 6m false killer whale close under the bow. Spotted dolphins visited for a while, amused at my attempts to gybe the genoa pole, slipping around the foredeck braced against the swell. Gradually our speed picked up, freshening enough in the night to require a reef, which I shook out again at dawn as the wind settled to a steady force 4.

The morning forecast suggested a new trough heading our way and I needed to get back down to 37°N to avoid near gale-force winds at my current latitude. With a crew aboard I would have stayed put; singlehanded I decided to be prudent, so altered course to the southeast with the poled-out genoa pulling well. I dismantled the bimini as the air was cool and I needed the sunshine in the cockpit to keep warm. The wind began to fluctuate as dusk approached and continued unstable through the night, requiring frequent adjustments of the self-steering.

A cold, grey dawn and the moan of the wind in the rigging made my position feel remote. The advice from Duncan was that I was probably far enough south to escape the worst of the trough, so I hardened sheets and brought *Osprey* round on a course due east. The wind freshened to force 5 and we galloped through the afternoon. Heavy dark clouds began to mass and the wind veered west, then northwest. The anticipated wind shift to the northeast came after midnight, accompanied by sheets of rain and heavy gusts. I struggled in the dark, wet night to put in the second reef and roll in the headsail until *Osprey* was well-balanced. Cross-swells hit us before dawn, reducing boat speed to little more than 4 knots, and dawn was merely a feeble light in the heavy rain.

By late morning the wind had eased and swung into the southeast, and sunshine arrived in the afternoon as I let out the reefs, to be followed by a welcome forecast of westerly winds which arrived at 0300 and required another reefing spell in the dark. Another yellow dawn, with big Atlantic greybeards bearing down from the northwest. The log showed we were 500 miles from Horta, the sea temperature was 17°C and the air was distinctly chilly. The morning forecast warned of a deepening low passing through our area on Wednesday – in two days' time. I calculated that I could reach Horta no

earlier than Wednesday evening, so decided to make for Flores, 100 miles nearer. We sailed briskly into the dark but unfortunately, around midnight, the wind fell light as we ran downwind under twin headsails. By dawn we were 270 miles from Flores, but a wind shift forced me to drop the smaller sail and we broad-reached steadily through a grey morning. Duncan advised me that the low was moving rapidly and was expected in our area in the early hours of Wednesday, with winds of at least 40–50 knots. This put Flores out of reach and I realised I would have to ride out the storm at sea.

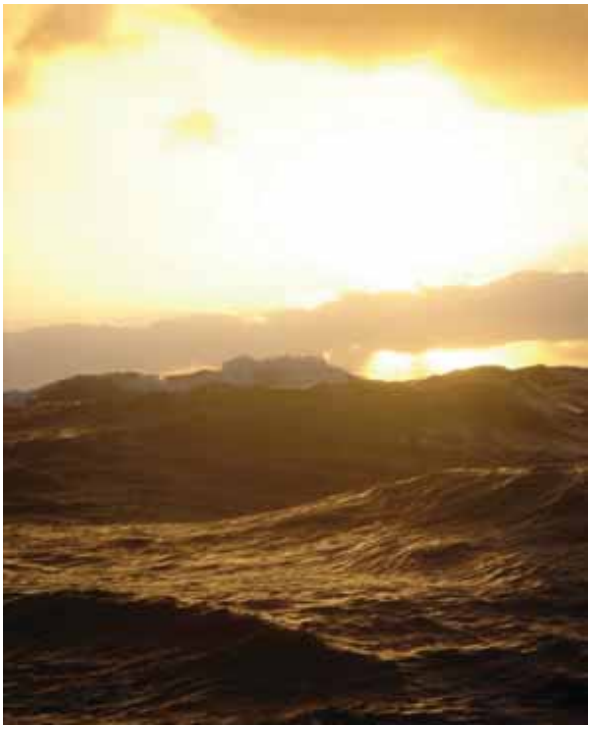


Bad weather approaching

We ran on steadily through an afternoon of high cloud and occasional light rain. Heavy rain clouds moved through during the night, obscuring the moon and stars, and I rolled in some of the genoa as the wind hit 25 knots. It did not last, however, and dawn found us rolling heavily with a light northwest air. Gradually the breeze improved, and we picked up speed again as frequent showers passed through, creating a gloomy prospect whenever I peered round the sprayhood to check the limited horizon for ships. I prepared a meal, then checked deck and cabin to make sure all was secure. The wind stayed ominously quiet, the swell rolled by, and the sky was a flat, uniform grey. It was a tense wait for the storm to break.

The opening shots in the battle were fired before midnight, when heavy rain arrived with a rise in the wind. We surged into the black, wet night under double-reefed main and a scrap of genoa, the glass falling rapidly. At 0200 the storm arrived. The wind jumped from 25 knots to 35 in two or three minutes and continued to rise, the moan in the rigging increasing to a whine, then a shriek. I rolled up the last of the genoa, then hove-to under the reefed main. Normally *Osprey* will lie at 45° to the wind with this rig, but instead she lay stubbornly beam-on to the rapidly rising seas. I was concerned at the risk of a knock-down as the storm developed, so decided to tie in the third reef, which necessitated going on deck.

There followed one of the hardest struggles I have ever had, up on the heaving deck, lashed by horizontal spray and rain, buffeted by the fierce wind, now over 40 knots. I managed to tie off the reefs, but hoisting the reduced sail became a huge problem as the wind flogged it behind the shrouds or the mast-steps. Three times I had to climb onto the boom to free it and was knocked off several times, my harness with short tether saving me from injury or worse. Eventually I gave up, lashed the sail to the boom and retreated to the cockpit – the waves were already 5m or more and growing all the time. We were still beam-on, although *Osprey* seemed to be riding the seas well.



Dawn after a stormy night

I hauled the sea anchor out of the sail locker and crawled up to the bow, dragging the bag behind me, then it took half an hour to sort out the warp and get the sea anchor overboard without it fouling anything. I paid out 50m line and the anchor opened at once, with an immediate strong pull on the warp as the bow came up into the wind. I crawled back to the cockpit, tidied up loose ropes and gear, then looked overboard to check the sea anchor. To my dismay we were again lying beam-on, and in the glare from the deck light I could see the anchor warp streaming back off the starboard quarter. I do not carry a riding sail, but tried to rig up a small piece of spare canvas off the backstay, fighting the flogging fabric until I had it taut. It made no difference.



The afternoon following the storm

Exhausted, I went below for a change of clothes and was surprised to find all this effort had taken three hours. After warm food and drink I lay in my bunk, listening to the wind howling in the rigging, the spray drumming on the deck, and feeling the boat lurch with every passing wave. *Osprey* seemed to be riding the waves fairly comfortably and gave me much confidence. I got up frequently to check the situation – sleep was out of the question. At daybreak the scene outside was chaotic: huge grey seas with steep faces and foaming crests were marching past, spray was being blown across the surface like snow in a blizzard, and looking to windward I could see the waves, 6–7m high, bearing down on us frighteningly quickly. *Osprey* would give a big lurch and I would look down the steep back of the wave as it passed, or at the green water visible through the cabin windows. I forced myself to heat up some cans and enjoyed the food.

By late morning the wind had eased a little. I waited a while, then decided to get moving again, recovering the sea anchor first when I found it had split in two. I set a well-reefed headsail as sunlight skittered over the rough sea and the wind dropped to 25–30 knots, the Hydrovane working fine as we flew over the waves on a broad reach. We raced on through the bright afternoon, delighted to have survived the storm. Helen advised me that the worst was over, but in the evening we ran hard for three hours in 35 knots before the wind decided to relent. We pressed on into the night, a brilliant moon lighting up the chasing waves.



Landfall on the south coast of Faial

I caught up with lost sleep and woke as dawn broke, fit and well. The miles ticked away all morning, while I got on with boat cleaning and preparing for harbour. I spoke to Pam on the sat phone – she had flown into Horta, now 50 miles distant, that morning and was mightily relieved to hear my voice. Just after lunch I spotted Pico's famous volcano reassuringly on the bow, the wind was steady through the afternoon,



Approaching Horta marina. Photo Pam McKenzie

and at 1800 I passed Ponta do Castelo Branco, the southwest headland of Faial, which loomed up out of a heavy rain squall. An hour later I entered the outer harbour of Horta, stowed the sails, and motored over to the marina reception quay where I could see Pam waving frantically.



Osprey and I had covered 2781 miles in a shade over 23 days. She had behaved beautifully throughout and never once gave me cause for concern, even at the height of the storm. It was a rare privilege to have experienced the passage, to have enjoyed the sense of adventure crossing the ocean, and to arrive in Horta, where so many OCC members have made their landfall.



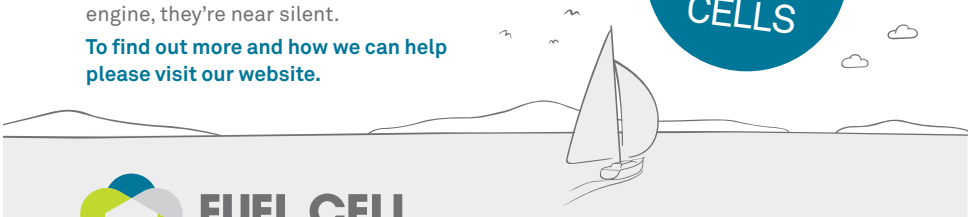
QUIET, CLEAN
ON-BOARD POWER GENERATION

You've been out sailing all day and you arrive in a lovely bay with only a few other boats. You drop the anchor, switch on the anchor light and settle down for a well deserved drink when you hear the battery alarm go off. The wind has dropped and the sun is setting so your wind generator and solar panel are useless. Your only option now is to run your engine for a few hours, ruining the relaxing atmosphere and disturbing your neighbours. Sound familiar?

Fuel cells offer the perfect solution to the ever growing need for on-board power. Unlike solar and wind they run throughout the day and unlike your engine, they're near silent.

To find out more and how we can help please visit our website.

MARINE FUEL CELLS



FUEL CELL SYSTEMS

WWW.FUELCELLSYSTEMS.CO.UK

MULTIHULL WORLD

01243 377 333
sales@multihullworld.co.uk
twitter @MultihullWorld

EUROPE'S NUMBER 1 BROKERAGE FOR

OCEAN CRUISING MULTIHULLS



Visit our website and browse through our catalogue of over 200 used multihulls.

OUR SERVICES:

Brokerage
New Boat Sales
Technical
Project Management
Deliveries
Friendly Service

NEW BOATS SALES - UK agents for:

Broadblue Catamarans
Outremer Yachting
Maverick Yachts
Seawind Catamarans
Astus Trimarans
Corsair Marine

WWW.MULTIHULLWORLD.CO.UK

VOYAGE OF EGRET: FAST-TRACKING, Part 2
Scott and Mary Flanders

(Flying Fish 2015/1 *left Scott, Mary and their 46ft Nordhavn Flybridge Trawler* Egret *about to leave Walvis Bay, Namibia on the final stage of their westabout circumnavigation via the Five Great Capes – the first by a small powerboat. We rejoin them there...*)

Departing Walvis Bay the little lady rode the trades to St Helena. This island is an emerald set in bronze. The perimeter seen from sea is a bronze, barren landscape, in complete contrast to the lush, green interior. We picked up a mooring, called for a launch and went in to Jamestown to clear. After clearing, visiting the bank and lunch we decided to climb Jacob's Ladder. After more than a few days at sea this wasn't particularly bright. Mary and I hadn't had a car for years except in New Zealand so we walk everywhere, and we felt we were in pretty good shape ... or so we thought.



The infamous Jacob's Ladder above Jamestown has 699 near-vertical steps that tempt cruisers to give it a go. And then you have to go back down. Oh my!

The locals are called Saints, and are a mix of African slaves, British, French and Scandinavian stock. They couldn't be nicer. St Helena's only industry is government and a tiny bit of seasonal tourism. It has no airport*, so the only access is via a few yachts that arrive in the summer and the RMS *St Helena*, the last mail ship in the world. It used to have an island-wide industry weaving New Zealand flax into twine for the British postal system, until an English bureaucrat found it was cheaper to buy

* An airport has been under construction since 2012. It is scheduled to open in 2016, at which time the RMS *St Helena* will be retired



The lush interior of St Helena, reminiscent of South Island, New Zealand

synthetic twine and killed an entire industry, putting the island workers on the dole.

After a few days wandering around Jamestown we rented an ancient car and drove the island day after day. St Helena's roads are interesting. For the most part they are like a rope draped around the interior mountains, with occasional knots (wide spots).

Napoleon Bonaparte died in this room at the Longwood Residence, six years after being captured and exiled to St Helena after the Hundred Days War. All the clocks in the house are set to the time of his death





Mary and her tortoise friend at the Governor's Mansion. Like anyone, it loved a nice scratch, stretching its neck out and holding perfectly still to enjoy the attention

The inland roads are two-way, one lane except for the knots, but this isn't the problem it might seem. We couldn't get enough of the interior. It was beautiful beyond beautiful green, sprinkled with small villages here and there. It may be the remotest island in the world with a healthy population. One 'must visit' is Longwood, Napoleon's home during his second exile. Although Napoleon died on St Helena his remains were later exhumed and returned to France.

After fuelling from a barge, *Egret* headed north. The last connect-the-dot stop between St Helena and Tobago was Ascension Island – off-limits until recently, when its usefulness as a military listening post was usurped by satellites. Ascension is a barren, volcanic desert



The perimeter and most of the inland areas of Ascension Island are just as here, with very little growth in the volcanic soil



Scott and Mary enjoying a glass of champagne having just crossed the equator after more than four years in the Southern Hemisphere

except for a Lord of the Rings-type mountain in the centre of the island, the upper portion of which is covered by mist and tropical foliage – its own micro climate. Over the centuries, all the various military settlements at the top of the mountain were abandoned to cold and damp. Just a few structures remain today as testament to the past, together with a few feral cows and sheep that spend their lives in the green uppers never descending to the surrounding desert. We drove around the island for a few days, including to the top of the mountain. The flat volcanic areas are a study in antenna farms.

For us, the highlight of Ascension was watching green turtles come ashore at night to lay eggs. The turtles arrive from Brazil, the females reaching up to 900 lbs and the attendant males in the 250 lb range. The females mate at will, then come ashore to lay their eggs. They repeat this between four and six times, before returning to Brazil for four years until they regain their strength for the next trek to Ascension. The males never come ashore.

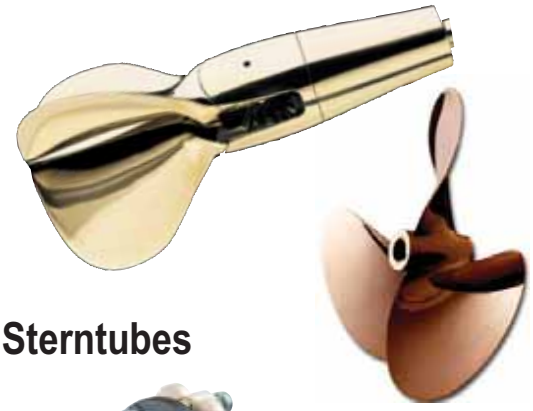
Filling everything with fuel once again, *Egret* departed Ascension for Tobago. A couple of days into the trip, Mary was on watch at night and was checking the C-Map chart. When I came on watch she said, "Do you know we are closer to the Canaries than Tobago? Would you like to go back into the Med?" ... so we did. *Egret* reached Grand Canaria on 11 February 2011 to complete her circumnavigation, having departed Fremantle on 1 September 2010. It was a fun, fast-tracking trip and another chapter in *Egret*'s Personal Voyage of Discovery.

www.nordhavn.com/egret is a cruising chronicle detailing *Egret*'s travels from spring 2006 in Turkey to date, containing a great deal of technical advice in addition to a showcase of Scott and Mary's stunning photos.

OVER 2000 PROPELLERS

IN STOCK

when you need a propeller in a HURRY



- 2 & 3 Blade
- Alloy & Bronze
- Fixed & Folding
- Shafts, Seals & Sterntubes
- Prop Protector
  Rope Cutter





STERN DRIVES & SAIL DRIVES



- 10 to 160 hp
- Custom Sizes
- Electric up to 8 Kw
- Cat Drives up to 37 hp

SILLETTE MARINE PROPULSION

sales@sillette.co.uk www.sillette.co.uk

020 8337 7543

Astilleros Lagos



Please, check our special discounts for OCC members in OCC Member Handbook and OCC Website.

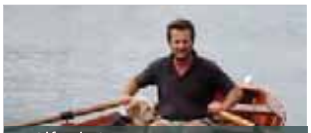
100 YEARS AT THE SERVICE OF SAILORS

EL VIGO, Robert Clark design, built by Lagos Boatyard in 1961, sailing in the Hebrides (photo: Colin Myers).

- ✓ ENGLISH SPEAKING BOATYARD
- ✓ COMMITTED PERSONAL ATTENTION
- ✓ SUPERIOR CARE FOR YOUR BOAT AT COMPETITIVE RATES
- ✓ INTEGRATED SERVICE FOR YACHT OWNERS IN THE RIAS
- ✓ NEED ADVICE WHILE OVER HERE? JUST CALL US
- ✓ SPECIAL DISCOUNTS AND OFFERS FOR OCC MEMBERS
  - CHECK OCC MEMBERS HANDBOOK AND WEBSITE
  - GO TO WWW.ASTILLEROSLAGOS.ES



Alberto Lagos
alberto@astilleroslagos.com
mob: +34 606840626



Alfredo Lagos
alfredo@astilleroslagos.com
mob: +34 680408549

Avda. Eduardo Cabello 2
36208, Vigo
Spain
Telf.: +34 986232626
Fax: +34 986291833

If you have any enquiry for your local Port Officer, Alfredo Lagos Sr., please contact: contacta@astilleroslagos.com

THE ASTILLEROS LAGOS CENTENARY RALLY, 12/18 AUGUST 2015

Tony Fiske

Photos reproduced courtesy of the Lagos Archive, Harald Sammer and Tony Fiske.

This year saw the centenary of Astilleros Lagos, the family boatyard business founded by Fernando Lagos at Vigo in northwest Spain. As part of the celebrations his son Alfredo – long-standing OCC Honorary Member and Port Officer for Vigo – held, together with his family, another of his celebrated Bayona rallies, the 13th he has organised in the past 40 years.





Boats under construction in the Astilleros Lagos yard circa 1960 (above), and as it is today, seen from the water (below)



Fernando's sons – Alfredo, Juan and Nito

Fernando Lagos learnt his trade in the UK from the age of eleven, studying initially at the International School. He graduated in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering from King's College, London and then in Naval Architecture from the Royal Technical College in Glasgow where he also worked in the technical office of John Brown shipbuilders. He returned to Galicia shortly before the outbreak of the First World War and started building smallcraft from a yard on the Arenal in Vigo, and thus Astilleros Lagos was created. In 1920 a fire destroyed this yard so the company moved to new premises, first in Bouzas, then for many years in Ganoy, then in López Mora, before in 1940 moving to their current waterfront site in Bouzas, which gave them direct access to the open sea and the opportunity to build bigger yachts. From the late 1940s onwards his sons Alfredo, Juan and Rosendo ('Nito') began to join the growing business, which became renowned for its design and craftsmanship of wooden boats. Fernando retired in 1968, leaving Alfredo and his brothers running the yard. They built a successful business and a very well-deserved reputation for innovation, quality and service.

Throughout this time Alfredo welcomed and encouraged sailors from all over the world. Through this he became affiliated to many clubs, including the OCC, and became a personal friend of our founder, Humphrey Barton. Alfredo's brother Juan retired in 1995, although he continued to advise the business until his death in 2008, and later Nito also died. This left Alfredo and his sons Alfredo Jr (who joined in 1992) and Alberto (who joined in 2006) to take the business forward. Alfredo Jr and Alberto have continued to nurture this family tradition, with new ideas and energy to sustain the business through the economic downturn and to adapt to the challenges of the 21st century.

A fascinating video marking the Astilleros Lagos centenary will be found on the web at http://www.astilleroslagos.es/index.php/en/noticias/item/225-video-centenary.html).



Alberto, Alfredo, and Alfredo Jr

As with previous Bayona rallies, Alfredo invited members of the yacht clubs with which he is associated along with several friends, which provided a very sociable mix of old timers and new recruits. As usual he had lined up a delightful programme of sailing destinations, shore visits and parties. Although several intended participants

Drinks reception at the Monte Real Club de Yates in Bayona





The Gala Centenary Party in the old boat shed at the Astilleros Lagos yard

had to withdraw for various reasons, seventeen yachts made the starting line – from Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Spain and the USA, several of whom had participated in previous rallies. Six were OCC yachts – British yacht *Penelope III* (John and Jane Espiner), Austrian yacht *Taniwani* (Harald and Beate Sammer), Irish yacht *Papageno* (Peter and Moira Haden), Spanish yachts *Onceta* (the Lagos family) and *Wind Rider* (chartered by Hugh Clay), and US yacht *Believe* (Rick and Julie Peterson). Following a day in the operating theatre of Southampton General Hospital at the end of June, yours truly was unfit to sail *Nyord* from the UK, but thanks to a very generous invitation from Harald and Beate to join them on *Taniwani*, Chala and I also made the event.



Astilleros Lagos boats have many uses!

The rally started at the Monte Real Club de Yates in Bayona, with an exhibition of a number of Astilleros Lagos boats in the marina and a drinks party on the club house lawn in the evening. The Galician weather, which had been fine for the previous few days, chose to turn wet forcing the event to be moved indoors, but despite the more cramped surroundings the party was enjoyed by all, setting the tone for the week ahead.

The star event of the week took place the following evening, after the rally boats had sailed in light winds and overcast skies to the Real Club Náutico in Vigo. This was the gala centenary party at the Astilleros Lagos boatyard, where around 180 guests assembled in the old boat shed and on the dock. Anyone who had seen the boatyard in its normal working state would have been amazed at its transformation for the evening – family and many other helpers had been hard at work for several days with brooms, dusters and vacuum cleaners; boats and machinery had been moved; decorations, seating and tables had been installed, and sparkling new toilets had been built. We viewed a display of artefacts from the boatyard museum and watched a film outlining the first hundred years, then enjoyed a very good buffet with plenty to drink, the evening being rounded off with a three-piece ensemble of traditional musicians and a *queimada* ceremony which encouraged much singing and dancing into the early hours. It was a fine centenary celebration of which the Lagos family can be very proud. It was impossible to talk to all the attendees, but neighbouring OCC Port Officers Anton Pellejero (La Coruña) and Rudi Burmester (Leixões/Porto) were among the guests.

On Day 3, still in overcast but dry conditions, the rally sailed further up the Ría and under the bridge to the new dock by the Battle of the Rande (Battle of Vigo Bay) museum for a lunchtime tour. This tells the very interesting story of how in 1702 the Anglo-Dutch fleet succeeded in destroying the Franco-Spanish fleet which had

Rally boats at the Battle of the Rande Museum Dock





Battle of the Rande Museum exhibit

holed up behind what were thought to be impregnable defences in the Rande. The artefacts and ship interiors were very impressive. We then moved on to the marina at San Adrián de Cobres, from which we took an afternoon catamaran tour of the Ensenada de St Simon before visiting St Simon and neighbouring St Anton island to learn about the latter's sad history. For many years home to monks Templar, the island then became a quarantine camp and leper colony, and during the Spanish Civil War was a prison camp for political opponents of Franco, where many died or were tortured. Today the islands are open to the public and are being converted into a centre for 'recovery of historical memory'.

On Day 4, again with overcast skies and light winds, the rally fleet free-sailed for the day, assembling in the evening at the Aldan anchorage, one of the regular Bayona Rally destinations. There we enjoyed a buffet dinner at the Torre de Aldan where, huddled under shelter from the rain which greeted our arrival, we were treated to excellent mussels, octopus, *empanada* and tortilla, followed by desserts and, of course, more *queimada*. Following the death of the Contessa de Aldan since our last rally visit the Torré is undergoing a facelift, with a very changed courtyard – new lawns replacing the gravel, and replanted borders – and much renovation in the gardens to the rear.

In the morning of Day 5 we moved on to Ría Pontevedra and the fishing harbour at Bueu, but not before Harald's reputation as the 'solver of all problems' was put to the test by a call for help from Peter Haden in *Papageno*, who reported his engine totally dead. Fortunately Harald traced the problem to a failed negative contact in the control panel circuit, so within an hour *Papageno* was on her way again and Harald's reputation was raised yet another notch! We arrived in Bueu just in time to join the rally visit to the Massó Museum, founded in 1932 as a private museum by the Massó family in an old canning factory, but re-opened in 2002 for the public. It tells the story of the

local whaling and canning industries, and also contains a collection of traditional nautical instruments and models of historical ships. With no wind for sailing, the rally fleet motored on to our evening destination, the marina at the picturesque old town of Combarro. Here, two of the Irish rally boats – *Orchestra* and *Wife of Pi* – laid on a pontoon party for all of us.

On Day 6 we headed inland by coach to visit the Palacio de Oca, known locally as the 'Galician Versailles' due to its magnificent setting and gardens. Early morning rain had given way to sun by the time we arrived, so we were able to enjoy the amazing and extensive gardens to the full before attending a talk about the palace's history and taking a guided tour. We moved on to a leisurely lunch at the nearby Pazo Vista Alegre restaurant before returning to Combarro for a lazy evening in which to recover.

Day 7 was the final day of the rally, and for the first time we had sunshine throughout. Most of the larger boats had been berthed on the outer pontoon in Combarro, but *Taniwani* had been placed on an inside finger, so with cross winds gusting up to 20 knots we were faced with a tricky exit. After much preparation led primarily by Beate – the repositioning of mooring lines and fenders, and with the deployment of a stern thruster (yours truly in the dinghy), which began to attract an audience – Harald executed a perfect departure. Once away from the marina the wind dropped to below 10 knots to give a very easy run to the Club Náutico de San Vicente marina at Pedras Negras.



In the gardens at Palacio de Oca

The evening started with a photo shoot of all of us proudly modelling our 'Astilleros Lagos' T-shirts and continued with a drinks reception and dinner at the yacht club. Dinner was a very sociable affair with much singing – this year the Irish being soundly



Above and next page: the Centenary Rally Photocall

defeated by the Spanish for their enthusiasm and performance (some may cry foul, for it appeared the Spaniards had been preparing in advance and arrived armed with song sheets for everyone). The evening was a good opportunity for me to propose a toast to the first hundred years of Astilleros Lagos, and for Peter Haden, representing OCC Commodore John Franklin, to thank Alfredo, his wife Margarita and the whole Lagos family for yet another enjoyable rally.

After the rally the OCC yachts went their separate ways. *Wind Rider* had left early to complete her charter. *Onceta* and *Papageno* remained in the Rías where they are based. *Penelope III* and *Believe* headed south, working their passage slowly towards the Mediterranean and joining parts of the OCC Eastern Atlantic Rally on the way. *Taniwani* returned to Vigo for some maintenance at the Astilleros Lagos yard, before sailing down to Lisbon and then on towards her home base in Madeira. Chala and I left *Taniwani* in Vigo to make our way back to England by road after a very enjoyable week on board.

This rally celebrated a very special family milestone for one of our longest serving Port Officers, and I think all from the OCC who attended felt that our presence represented all OCC members, past and present, who have come to know Alfredo and his family and to benefit from his hospitality, his local knowledge, his boatyard, and of course his very enjoyable Bayona Rallies. Long may Astilleros Lagos continue, and long may the Lagos family's relationship with the OCC endure.



Our Winning Combination



- Safe to use
- Easy to clean
- Low gas usage
- Perfect cooking results

Yachting Monthly **'best cooker on test'.**

Read full test report at

www.gn-espace.com



performance galley innovators

GN Espace
yacht galley systems

Tel +44 (0)1992 893713
info@gn-espace.com www.gn-espace.com





Assembled Size:
- length 275cm
- beam 145cm

Packed bag size:
- Hull 112x72x32cm, weight 33kg
- Rig 120x50x16cm, weight 17kg

***DinghyGo* is a Top Quality 9ft Inflatable Dinghy that can be Motored, Rowed AND SAILED.**

No other boat this size combines such huge carrying capacity and stability with the ability to plane under power, potter under sail... and then roll up into two compact bags for easy transport/storage.

She's quick and easy to set up... less than 15 mins from bags to sailing boat, and - whilst no racing machine - sails much better than you'd think.

More information, and DinghyGo UK Sales & Service:

NESTAWAY Boats that fit

www.nestawayboats.com
Tel: 0800 999 2535
mail@nestawayboats.com

WINTER SUN TO MIDNIGHT SUN
Stuart Letton

(*Experienced dinghy and keelboat racers, Stuart and Anne began ocean sailing in 2008 when they bought their Island Packet 45* Time Bandit *in Boston, Mass and sailed her home to Largs in Scotland. In 2011/2 they completed an Atlantic circuit, then based* Time Bandit *in the Med for a year.*

They headed west again last year, cruising the Eastern Caribbean before continuing north up the US East Coast as far as Maine. Plans are to head south again ahead of the winter, and go through into the Pacific in early 2016. Follow their travels at www.timebandit.co.uk.)

Okay, it wasn't the greatest passage plan in the world. However, if we were to sail from our 2012 winter base in Almerimar in southern Spain to Norway's Lofoten islands for the summer, and then back to the Canaries for the start of the 2013 ARC in November, we had to get going early in March.

The first challenge was to get out of the Med. Well, to be honest it was the second challenge. The real first was to tear ourselves away from the brilliant winter social life of Almerimar. Pretty much everyone there had made an offshore trip to get there, from John – who retired and singlehanded from Scotland, then re-discovered his youth and his Stratocaster entertaining us at the Thursday jam session – to Clive and Jane, back from a sixteen-year trip around the world. Clive in turn re-discovered his youth, joining the band with a set of newly-acquired electric drums. What with treks

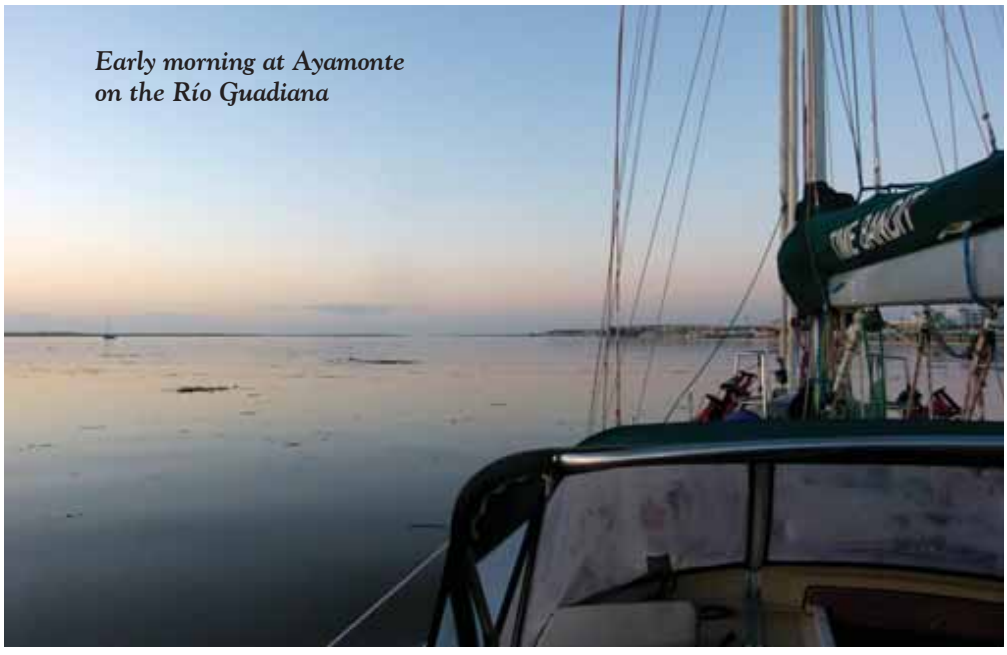
Almerimar distractions



around the stunning Alpujarras on Sundays, coffee morning on Monday, boules on Tuesday, quiz night Wednesday, jam session Thursday, yotties night on Friday, and a massage for €10, the winter's long 'to do' list remained pretty well unscathed, unlike my liver. In the end, pressing matters delayed our departure until 8 March. Firstly we were scheduled to host the quiz night, and secondly, having had the sunlit, snow-clad Sierra Nevada on our horizon all winter, we succumbed to temptation and went skiing. Its a tough life down in Almerimar, but the old magic was still there!

From January to March there's usually 25 knots blowing right into the Med from the west. In each of the two years that we wintered in Almerimar we had periods of three or four days in February and March with steady force 10 winds. Therefore, when you want to leave it's a case of pick your moment, tear yourself away from the fleshpots of the marina 'village' ... and run. Which is what we did, motoring all night in a rare glassy calm to make Gibraltar by 0300 next day. We anchored in the dark inside the breakwater at La Línea, just north of Gibraltar, only to be woken at 0800 (how inconsiderate) by the deep, throaty grumble of the *Guardia* launch. These nice chaps told us it was no longer permissible to anchor where we were. Local cruiser opinion has it that this is simply a strategy to force cruisers into the newly built, over-priced and half empty marina. On the other hand, the 45ft yacht sunk on the breakwater may support their claim that the holding is poor, although we had no problem for three weeks the previous August. We were on a mission to get north, however, and after taking in one evening of the *Semana Santa* parades we upped and off'd, heading for the Algarve and our turn north towards the cold. Stops along the south coast of Spain and Portugal at Barbate, Ayamonte, Vilamoura and Lagos ticked off the miles in bright sunshine and mostly decent wind to Cabo São Vicente at Portugal's southwest corner.

In the weeks before we left the forecast had been showing steady southwesterlies up the Portuguese coast as it was still too early for the *Nortada* to have settled



Early morning at Ayamonte on the Río Guadiana

in. We therefore made good time up to the quaint town of Sines, an old Portuguese town with narrow streets, small cafés and, in March, seemingly very quiet. However, in common with most towns on the Iberian peninsula, if there's nothing doing at the weekend they have a *festa*. We climbed the hill



Dia da Juventude in Sines



No curly tails in Sines!

up to the town to find the *Dia da Juventude* (Day of Youth) in full swing – dancers, bands, balloons and a local lady walking her pig!

From Sines we headed up the rather featureless Portuguese coast, anchoring for the night off Cascais, another town well worth visiting. Despite all the tourist shops its narrow streets give it a historic feel, which is logical because it is. It has plenty of low key shopping and cafés, plus a frequent train service to Lisbon, handy for sightseeing and chandleries (to make a start on those winter jobs!). Pressing on northwards we reached Peniche in grey, declining weather. Having overslept next morning, we were woken by the boom of swell breaking on and over the



Hanging around in Baiona

substantial harbour wall. Knowing that Figuera da Foz, our next stop, was open to the swell we had in the back of our mind the prospect of an overnighter to Baiona. Neither Figuera nor Povoa de Varzim, our intended next stop, can be entered safely if at all in a swell such as we had. About two years previously a yacht had been rolled in the surf when attempting to enter Povoa in heavy swell, throwing the crew into the water and sadly resulting in fatalities. Tragically this episode was repeated pretty much in front of our eyes when the boat we'd been following over the previous few days was rolled in the surf trying to enter Figuera da Foz, even though the harbour was closed due to the swell and surf. While that's a different story, it impacted our decisions over the following few days.

After two days in Baiona waiting for a string of strong depressions to cross our path we tagged on the back of one to pull us across Biscay. Which, right up until 100 miles off Ireland it did in fine, 8–10 knot style, only producing a bit of a blow just as we closed the Irish coast. While the GRIBs were showing a maximum of 35 knots, this latest depression brought bright sunshine and winds that built slowly during the day. First 20 knots, then 25 (take in another slab in the main), then 30 (a few more rolls in the genoa), then 35–40 (down to three reefs in the main and just the staysail, but still blasting along, surfing and having a good thrash). Funny how conditions are always easier in the sun!

All day we'd been making great time and great speeds. The Island Packet, described once in the yachting press as a 'beige battleship', finds light winds a challenge but in these conditions – a large ocean swell and strong winds from the port quarter – we were scorching along, surfing at 10, 12 or even 14 knots. *Time Bandit*, with her long keel, sailed straight as a die down the waves and only once in many hours did the self-steering look like it might not cope with a high speed surf ... requiring a quick punch of the off switch and pulling the boat back on track down the wave.

It was pretty windy by this time, and I don't recall if it was this wave or a later one, but when I saw 17·4 knots SOG on the plotter I felt it was time to turn off the fun and get things under control. We had a steady 45 knots, gusting well into the 50s. As turning around to head upwind into large, foam streaked breaking seas wasn't really on the agenda it was a bit of a struggle to get the remaining mainsail down and tied up, but over 10 or 15 minutes we hauled it down inch by inch. With the main tightly lashed to the boom along its full length the only remaining job was the 'pole dance'.

We'd been goose-winged for most of the day, slowly rolling the genoa smaller and smaller but leaving the pole, braced fore and aft, in place. From the safety of the cockpit it looked just fine, and as I really didn't fancy the pole dance routine we left it where it was, hoping we wouldn't take a massive roll and stuff it into a wave. Our permanently-rigged storm staysail was keeping us bowling along, but even that had to go. It really was quite windy – lovely and sunny though!



Time Bandit – pushing too hard, but making great speeds

Back under control, yet still doing 7 knots under bare poles with a steady force 10 gusting force 11 on the instruments, we considered our options. We were well set up for the conditions, the waves were not overly threatening as long as we kept running with them, and we had only 100 miles to go. Unfortunately, those 100 miles would take us to the lee shore of Ireland and the relatively shallow channels through the rocks at the entrance to Cobh Harbour, our destination, at around midnight. With



Following seas

the memory of Figuera fresh in our minds we deemed the prudent course was to stay at sea. A gybe, if you can do that with no sails up, would head us towards southeast Ireland, its shipping lanes and Tusker Rocks in darkness. We would also be following the storm, and I quite fancied letting it go its own way.

So, finally, after having it take up valuable space in one of our lockers for five years, we hauled out our Jordan Series Drogue. We set up the bridle, each side getting a turn around an aft cleat before tying off on the main winch in an effort to spread the load. Having double-checked that it had a clear run out of the cockpit, we chucked the weighted end off the transom. Even though we were only doing 7 knots it shot from the cockpit like a breeches buoy, ripping off one of the cockpit locker latches in the process. You really wouldn't like to get your leg in the way! Instantly, the drogue did what it promised, slowing us right down and, with a bit of adjustment to the bridle lengths and lashing the wheel hard over we held our transom at perhaps 10–20° to the wind and waves. Our speed dropped to 2–3 knots and relative calm descended. Washboards in and locked, saloon lockers latched closed and everything that might move tied down, we called the coastguard, advised them of our situation and strategy, and agreed to call every two hours to update our position ... and then set the alarm and, well, we went to bed.

Thank Adlard Coles our force 10 didn't bring the nightmarish, disastrous waves the competitors in the '79 Fastnet experienced, but they were big – over 8m according to the coastguard – and breaking for 100–200m laterally across their tops, according to me. The



After the storm, and the drogue in tatters

Yachting Monthly editorial team, in Cork for their annual article on cruising southern Ireland, were instead tied up to the marina pontoon watching dustbins blow down the road and chimneys landing in the street. Back out at sea breakers filled our cockpit a number of times, the larger ones washing under the sprayhood and jetting through the gaps in the sliding hatch into the saloon. Occasionally the windows were 'greened-out' as solid water crashed over the top of the boat, but otherwise all was apparently well under control. It's testament to the Island Packet, long keels and the Jordan Drogue that through all this we dozed behind our lee cloths, calming music on the stereo and roused every two hours by the alarm reminding us to call the coastguard, update them, and make our All Ships 'drifting and not under command' VHF transmission.

Come daylight, with the storm on its way east and the wind down to 25–30 knots, we emerged into the daylight expecting carnage on deck. Somewhat to our surprise the only damage was one missing horseshoe buoy and a pile of wet towels from mopping up the saloon floor. Our next challenge was to recover the drogue. One reason we had left it so long before we deployed it the previous day was because of the many reports I'd read about the difficulties of recovery. Some users have simply given up and cut their Jordan free.



A single tattered cone in close-up

The Jordan needs a 20lb lump at its end to weight it. Like an idiot, I'd tied my very expensive anchor to the end, and no way was I going to cut adrift months of cruising budget in the form of both drogue and anchor. We therefore took position, Anne tailing and me armed with a winch handle. Anticipating a long haul we set about winching but, to our surprise, it came in with relatively little effort. For a fleeting moment I thought it was because I was supremely fit, but as it came aboard we saw that the cones, from one end to the other, were frayed, torn and tattered. If the storm had lasted another twelve or even six hours we might have ended up towing no more than a length of rope with torn bits of sail cloth and tape, leaving us vulnerable to the waves and a lee shore*.

Tidied up, we motor-sailed the remaining miles into Crosshaven to a warm and friendly welcome from the club members and customs officers who had been listening in to our coastguard calls during the night. From Crosshaven we coast-hopped along the south coast and up the Irish Sea, stopping at the small and pretty harbour at Kilmore East, round to the industrial river marina at Arklow, and on to Dun Laoghaire where we were once again reminded of the high, almost Mediterranean-level nightly costs of five star marinas. Pressing on, we arrived in Bangor, crossed the North Channel to Campbeltown and finally reached Largs on the Clyde, our home port and resting place for the coming two weeks, before continuing north to chase the midnight sun to Norway.

The concluding part of *Time Bandit*'s passage to the Lofotens will appear in *Flying Fish* 2016/1.



… and a new cone

* Not getting much positive response from the vendor I contacted Oceanbrake, UK Jordan manufacturer [http://oceanbrake.com] who have since upgraded the cones to heavier cloth with hemmed edges. The remains of the one-time use drogue have been consigned to the bin. The new improved UK spec Jordan is back in a locker and hopefully it will never see the light of day, but I do feel a comfort knowing it's there.

Join us for our latest news @BerthonGroup

BERTHON

UK OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

INTERNATIONAL YACHT BROKERS

Lymington United Kingdom
Phone 0044 01590 679 222
Email brokers@berthon.co.uk

Mandelieu La Napoule France
Phone 0033 493 636 680
Email brokers@berthonfrance.fr

Rhode Island USA
Phone 001 401 846 8404
Email sales@berthonusa.com

www.berthon.co.uk

WIND AND SAILS WERE MADE FOR EACH OTHER.....



HALLBERG RASSY 40'



MALO 45'



CONTEST 48'CS



DISCOVERY 55'

A small selection of blue water sailing yachts made for the wind available from Berthon.

SYNONYMOUS WITH YACHTING SINCE 1877

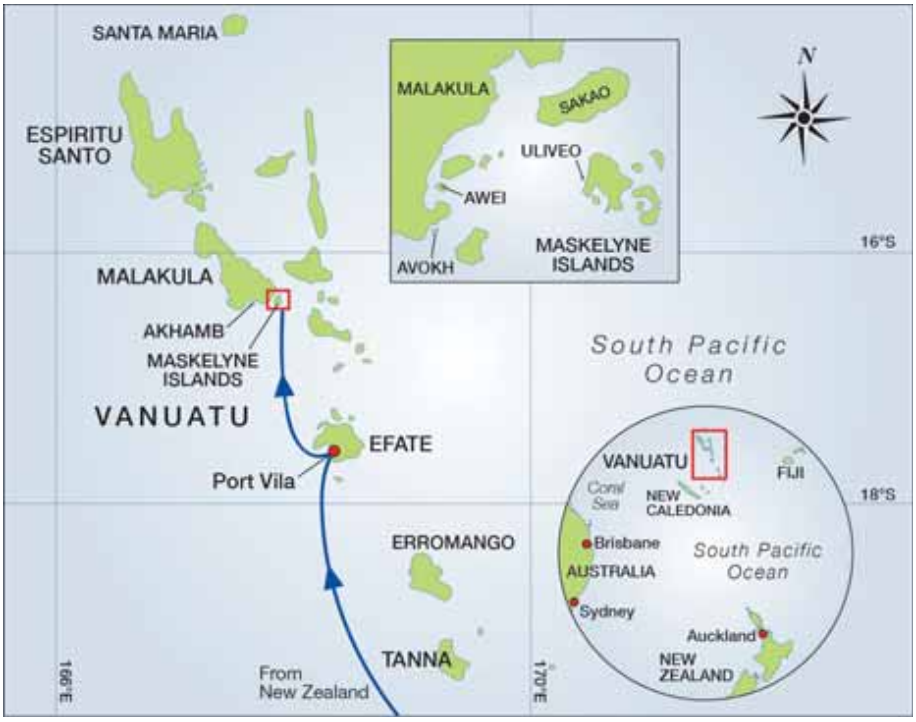
PROJECT VANUATU
Martin and Elizabeth Bevan
Roving Rear Commodores

(*Martin and Elizabeth left the UK in 2010 aboard* Caduceus*, their Amel 54, and spent time in the Caribbean and on the US East Coast before heading through Panama into the Pacific early in 2014.*

They spent the period from late May until early September 2015 in Vanuatu, assisting remote island communities recover after Cyclone Pam *by providing medical services and aid supplies and equipment. They worked closely with Lynn and David Colbert of the Butterfly Trust (www.butterflytrust.org) who, over the past seven years, have gained extensive experience in South East Malakula and the Maskelyne Islands supporting education and health.*

See the September 2015 OCC Newsletter *for further information about Martin and Elizabeth's time in Vanuatu.*)

Until 1980 Vanuatu was jointly governed and administered by the British and French, and known as the New Hebrides. It is an archipelago consisting of 83 islands spread over 300 nautical miles, the main islands being Efate, Espiritu Santo, Malakula and Tanna, and has a population of approximately 250,000. It is a country with a colourful history and rich, living culture. Each island has its own culture and traditions that are





Loading half a ton of rice, biscuits and milk powder

being carefully maintained, but this cultural diversity makes it a particularly difficult country to govern, especially given the lack of infrastructure, small population and even smaller GDP. Language is an issue, as there are many distinct local languages in addition to Bislama, the national language, and both French and English.

We sailed from New Zealand in late May, two months after Cyclone *Pam* swept through Vanuatu, heavily laden with bags of secondhand clothing, household equipment, old sails and rope, books for school libraries, and some medical supplies and equipment. Once in Port Vila, the capital, on the island of Efate, we were able to top up our supplies from various NGOs and charities as well as from the central pharmacy at Port Vila Hospital, an advantage of being officially 'on the books'. The Butterfly Trust were especially helpful in liaising with the authorities and with introductions in the Maskelynes.

Elizabeth had, after some frustration with bureaucracy, been accredited by the Vanuatu Ministry of Health to practice as a doctor. This proved most valuable as it allowed her to work closely with nurses and health workers in the islands. We were fortunate to receive donations totalling £5500 from family, friends, Masonic organisations in the UK and the World Cruising Club (organisers of the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers and the World ARC). In addition, Masonic friends made in Whangarei, New Zealand helped with a range of useful clothing, toys and books. The donations enabled us to purchase food – in particular half a ton of rice – water tanks, water catchment equipment, roofing tools and a myriad of other items that we had been asked for.

We had visited Vanuatu in 2014 and formed an attachment to the Maskelyne Islands, and it was there that we wished to concentrate our efforts. During two 'rotations' through the area Elizabeth was able to work with the nurses, assisting with clinics and seeing more seriously ill patients where diagnoses were outside the local skill set. The Maskelyne Islands are some 100 miles from Port Vila, and referrals to the Central Hospital with its very limited facilities involved an open boat journey at night to meet the ferry, followed by a 30 hour trip, all at the patient's expense. Many preferred to suffer



On the ground treatment of a badly infected stingray wound involving debridement under local anaesthetic, injections and advanced dressings. There was always an audience

and die rather than face that, a situation Elizabeth found difficult to deal with. The lack of basic drugs and repeat supplies for chronically ill patients was another issue that we had to cope with by taking, where we could, supplies from the Central Pharmacy in Port Vila and delivering them to dispensaries and individual patients.



There are no vehicles in the Maskelyne Islands or Akhamb, so it's a 'blue light' wheelbarrow for Matilda who subsequently made a complete recovery following treatment for a badly infected leg



Martin and Chief Soffran putting up guttering on Awei Island

There was a steady stream of more advanced diagnoses in areas of cardiac disease, diabetes and thyroid disease, to mention just a few. Elizabeth was also able to give joint injections, a speciality of hers not known in Vanuatu. There were other successes – she became an expert in curing badly infected stingray wounds, a not unusual injury amongst the young men who walk the reefs at low water fishing and then leave the wounds to fester before seeking assistance.

Water collection and storage is a major problem in many of the islands and was another area where we were able to help. We carried two 500 litre tanks on our aft deck on one particularly robust passage and, with the help of fellow OCC member Brian Wallace of *Darramy*, they were installed on the island of Awei together with guttering and pipework. Brian also repaired the existing concrete water cistern and two weeks later, following some heavy rainfall, the island had two full tanks and a half-full cistern where previously they had had to fetch water from the mainland by canoe.



Chief Soffran, Martin, Brian and the tanks. The nearest tank overflowed into the repaired cistern



Delivering a 'kindy bag' on the island of Avokh

The children of Vanuatu are an absolute delight, and visits to the various kindergartens prompted us to return with six large bags of supplies, one for each kindy in our area of operation. We also supplied a further four 500 litre tanks for installation at kindies under the direction of local Butterfly Trust committees, for drinking water and hygiene.

It was appropriate that Akhamb was the last island that we visited on our second rotation, as the dispensary was completely out of drugs and dressings, having been very low on our first visit. Hagrif Frank, the excellent and hard-working aid worker, is solely



Some of the contents of a 'kindy bag' – we distributed six of them



The Peskarus kindergarten sung us a song when we delivered their kindy bag

responsible for 1500 people on the island and nearby mainland and was in a state of despair at his inability to treat his patients. We were able to restock the dispensary and provide training on how to give penicillin injections, a vital skill in the treatment of the many badly infected wounds that we saw. One skill in great demand but which we were not able to provide was dentistry. We did, however, carry and deliver dental equipment from New Zealand to the Lamap Health Centre for the Butterfly Trust. Visiting dentists from New Zealand and Australia organised by the Trust will hold surgeries later in the year.



The dispensary at Akhamb with the resupply laid out

We were able to share the generosity of the World Cruising Club with Sherry and Denis Day of *Trillium*, also OCC members and participants in World ARC 2014, who concentrated their efforts on the island of Avokh, where they delivered a large amount of aid and training in construction, IT skills and organisation over a period of six weeks. In addition we received considerable assistance from Jonathan and Donna Robinson of catamaran *Chez Nous*, also OCC and World ARC 2014 participants, who were working with the US charity Sea Mercy. The early reports from Tom Partridge, OCC, who was in Vanuatu very shortly after the cyclone were most useful.

It was a sad farewell to our friends in the Maskelyne Islands, to Nurse Bambae on Uliveo, Hagrif on Akhamb and many others when we finally left. There was only so much that we could do to help, but we left with the genuine feeling that they and their communities had very much appreciated the assistance and support that had been given by ourselves and other visiting yachts.

Helping hands – offloading rice and other aid supplies at Uliveo



There is too much to describe about our experiences and not enough room in a short article, other than to give an impression of what we did during our time with the wonderful people that we met in the islands. Greater detail will be found in our web diary at http://blog.mailasail.com/caduceus.

The complete service for all yachts and commercial craft







Marina berthing and hard standing
70 ton travel lift
Refit and repair specialists
Joinery and teak decks
Spray painting and varnish
GRP and gelcoat repairs
Osmosis and epoxy treatments
Electronics supply and installation
Marine engineering and installation
Rigging for cruising and racing
Stainless fabrication – marine and commercial
Fox's Marine & Country store

10%
DISCOUNT OFF FOX'S LABOUR RATES FOR OCC MEMBERS
T&C APPLY

FOX'S
MARINA & BOATYARD
SINCE 1927

Fox's Marina Ipswich Limited
Ipswich, Suffolk, IP2 8SA

+44 (0) 1473 689111
foxs@foxsmarina.com

foxsmarina.com



ALFRED MYLNE, The Leading Yacht Designer: 1896-1920 – Ian Nicolson. Published in soft covers by Amberley Publishing [www.amberley-books.com] at £19.99, or available direct from the publisher at £17.99. 160 245mm x 168mm pages, including 118 illustrations including lines drawings, sail plans and construction details prepared from digitised copies of original drawings in the Mylne archive. ISBN 978-1-4456-4633-6; ISBN 978-1-4634-3 (ebook)

Alfred Mylne set up his yacht design office in Glasgow in 1896 at the age of 24, having worked previously with George Watson, a leading designer of the day. In 1945 he retired and handed over the design office of A Mylne & Company to his nephew of the same name, who died in 1979. It was then taken over by Ian Nicolson, who had joined the company as a partner in 1959. Ian retired from the company in 2007 when it was sold to David Gray of Ace Marine of Limekilns in Fife, Scotland who has since been responsible for digitising and cataloguing over 7000 drawings covering more than 600 Mylne designs.

Alfred Mylne, The Leading Yacht Designer: 1896-1920 covers a selection of Mylne archive designs of 19 sailing vessels from the 18ft Falmouth Restricted Class to the 75ft International 15 Metre Class *Ostara*. Also included are eight power boats, ranging from a 14ft 6in motor dinghy to the 127ft 'expedition' yacht *Sea King II*, fitted with a lift between decks as the owner was confined to a wheelchair. To this Ian has added a review of each design in his own inimitable style, with comments on aspects of the sailing and handling, construction, fittings, propulsion and other features and build.

The drawings selected include the lines, sail plans, general construction and detail drawings of specially designed fittings and other design and construction features, with many of Mylne's neatly handwritten notes giving scantlings as well as construction and layout details. Lines drawings, general arrangement, construction and sail plans are often published in yachting magazines and other publications, but it is unusual for the designer's detailed drawings of fittings such as chain plates and the construction of skylights and deck houses to be included. Although some of the handwritten annotations are a bit difficult to read with the naked eye, due to the reduction in size from the digitised originals, this can easily be overcome by using a magnifying glass. If the small print were to be twice as large the book would be four times the size, unwieldy and cost a disproportionate amount more.

This book provides an intriguing insight into some of the beautiful designs produced by Alfred Mylne between 1896 and 1920, with Ian Nicolson's professional reviews and comments greatly enhancing and adding to the enjoyment of the presentation. It is suggested that further coverage of later designs may follow. Watch this space!

PJC

NB: The entire Mylne archive is currently being put online, with previews of every drawing and a streamlined online purchasing arrangement. For further details go to www.mylne.com/archive.



CRUISING THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY – Alex and Daria Blackwell. Published in soft covers by White Seahorse Publishing [www.whiteseahorse.ie] at US$40.00 (£25.67); Kindle price US$12.29 (£10). 304 203mm x 254mm pages, in full colour throughout with many photographs. ISBN: 978-1-5119-2265-4; Kindle B00Y6UXKB6

What is the 'Wild Atlantic Way'? At 2500km (or 1300 miles) in length, www.wildatlanticway.com describes it as the world's longest coastal touring route – and it runs down Ireland's Atlantic coast, starting at Derry in the northwest and ending at Cork harbour in the south. The development and promotion of this amazing route has only taken place recently, and has inspired Daria and Alex Blackwell to take a look at the same stretch from the sea. Their book, while primarily written for the cruising sailor, will also be a useful guidebook for anybody travelling the route by land, due to the level of detail it includes.

Cruising the Wild Atlantic Way is divided into three sections. Section 1 provides all the detail that a visiting sailor or holidaymaker would need to know – referred to as 'Getting Around'. It also briefly describes the history, heritage and culture of Ireland and the West. For any foreign traveller, the book is nearly worth its price for the information contained in this section alone. The opening paragraphs offer a very tantalising picture of the beauty of this part of the world, while at the same time painting a realistic picture of what to expect – eg typical weather and how quickly it changes. Tons of optimism here, but at the same time, no rose-tinted glasses!

An interesting inclusion in Section 1 is a list of birds and cetaceans commonly seen in these waters. Good detail on weather, tides and currents, and some navigation information is also provided, along with the more legal stuff – entering the jurisdiction, bringing pets, etc. Again, good thorough detail. Working into the second half of Section 1 we are briefed on what makes the Irish who they are – their history, culture and traditions – and why it's such fun to be with the Irish. (I know – being Irish I'm biased!) Interesting reading, without being overlong.

Section 2 explores each location along the route, and provides details on local history, current state of affairs, services available and things to do and see, even describing when various annual festivals take place. At the end of each location section there is a list of useful web links, which can be as diverse as B&Bs, tourist board info, local heritage sites, etc. The list of locations in this section runs to 34, starting in Lough Swilly and finishing in Crosshaven, Cork. Being a sailor who has cruised a lot of the locations described, I found the detail (for the places I knew) very good and even learned some interesting tidbits – eg 'there was a film made and it starred ...' or 'the name is the Irish for ...'. From my memories and knowledge, the info is pretty bang-on!

Section 2 also includes schematics of harbour layouts as required, and some basic pilotage info. It does not, however, provide all the information needed for safe pilotage

– this book was never intended to do that, and any sailor would be advised to carry the Irish Cruising Club's *Sailing Directions for the South and West Coasts of Ireland*, as well, in many cases, as charts for the relevant areas. (It is mentioned in Section 1 that there are few aids to navigation, and that chart datum may not equate with a WGS84 GPS reading.)

The final section – Appendices – provides what the Irish would describe as 'Founts of useless info', ie the stuff that's handy to know but may not be of too much value. For example, Irish flags and ensigns you may see, a lexicon of Irish place terms, etc.

Bottom line? I would absolutely recommend this book to any outsider visiting Ireland's Atlantic coast, as a 'must have'. It is a very comprehensive, useful and informative book which provides the sort of interesting and worthwhile info that the previously mentioned Irish Cruising Club's book cannot. I would also recommend it for local sailors, as there's a lot of topical detail in the book that one may not be aware of. It is well planned, well written and beautifully illustrated with stunning photos (sunset over Bofin being a favourite!) and elegant sketches. It is oftentimes a story of Daria and Alex's journey along the coast which, together with the stories of the different places, be they historical or folklore, makes it a particularly interesting read. Nice book!

JTP



SEAMANSHIP IN THE AGE OF SAIL – John Harland, illustrated by Mark Myer. Published in hardback by Conway Maritime Press / Bloomsbury [www.bloomsbury.com] at £45. 320 257mm x 302mm pages including many photos and 350 line drawings. ISBN 978-1-8448-6309-9

Two heroes have produced this superb book. Each has been backed by a stunningly patient wife and the artist also by two daughters. These lasses must have seen little of their men-folk recently, because the research and drawings for this tome certainly took a zillion hours.

A typical page has up to five delightfully accurate pen-and-ink drawings. If you want to know how a chain pump works, look at page 304 and be thankful we have easy-to-work diaphragm pumps which have vastly less friction and a lot more efficiency. What comes through when reading any page of this book is how skilled our ancestors were afloat, and how easy is our current sailing life ... most of the time. Next time I come across a yacht ashore and want to help get her afloat, this book tempts me to try and do the rescue under sail, without using my engine, just for the pleasure of achieving what my great grand-father did.

Next time your boat is hard aground and you need to jettison your cannons, the technique is described here. This book includes every sort of operation and emergency and how it was dealt with in the past by the British, the French, the Germans, the Dutch, in the USA and everywhere else. The author has trawled through masses of old books and documents, training manuals and magazine articles. The artist has studied marine drawings and paintings across the world. Did they ever have time to sleep or eat?

There are lessons for today's sailors. Page 141 shows a method of securing traditional reef points which is completely new to this reviewer, who has spent a long lifetime

studying this sort of technology. It could make sense on any ocean cruiser to tie down the reef points using reef lines with beckets ... what many of us would call wood toggles. Using these, the reef lines would be secured more quickly. Just as important, there would be no jammed knots to struggle with when the time came to take the reef out.

On a frivolous note, my boat needs more sail area and I have often wondered about setting studding sails. Now I realise that all I have to do is lash a boat hook to a crosstree to create an outreaching yard, and secure the sail to this. And if I have an American crew, I now know that the command they will understand, to set this light-weather canvas, is 'Out squilgee!'.

It's hard to know which is the most delightful part of this book, the fascinating text or the delightful drawings. Mark Myers does his innumerable sketches using pen and ink, combined with a true feeling for ships and boats of every sort. Here is a man whose ships are clearly afloat, with sheer lines that are precisely right. He would have made a superb yacht designer as he has a feeling for ship shapes. I would like to write many pages about this comprehensively researched book, but if you will excuse me, I am going back to browsing through it. So I'll end by saying this is a book which amateur and professional historians will love. So will a great many yachtsmen.

IN



CHILE: Arica Desert to Tierra del Fuego – Andrew O'Grady, 3rd edition. Published in soft covers and for iPad, by Imray, Laurie Norie & Wilson [www.imray.com] and the RCC Pilotage foundation [www.rccpf.org.uk] at £35 for the book or £14.99 per section for the iPad version. 232 A4 pages (book version), in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-8462-3442-2

Whereas the book is a single unit, the iPad version is published in a two-parts – CHILE NORTH: Arica to Golfo de Penas, and CHILE SOUTH: Golfo de Penas to Cape Horn. To order the iPad version one must first download the free 'Imray Nautical' app from Apple's App Store, then purchase the desired guides from within the app. The *Chile* guide consists of the above-mentioned two sections, about 44 Mb each, which should, of course, be downloaded when you have a good Internet connection, and well before setting off to sea. Once downloaded, Internet access is not required to use the guide.

Imray presents the iPad version as a complement to the paper book, rather than as a standalone pilot, but as one who prefers electronic books to paper ones I could readily work with the iPad version only. There does not seem to be any attempt by Imray or the RCC PF to publish versions for Windows, MAC or Android devices, which is a pity because any sailor relying on electronic cruising guides will want to have standby hardware. Most boats today have more than one computer aboard, but although the iPad app can be installed on five devices per licence, duplicate iPads are much rarer than duplicate PCs.

The electronic implementation of *Chile* has many good features that are superior to the paper version. It is easy to jump from chapter to chapter using the hot-linked table of contents, and pages can be e-mailed to friends. Probably the best feature is that the anchorage chartlets can be expanded to full iPad screen size with one touch.

The resolution allows zooming to about 2½ times screen size, for reading details or simply getting by without glasses. The quality of both the chartlet images and the photographs is excellent, and both can be expanded significantly for viewing or printing. Users can add notes to the guide, but sketching on the chartlets does not seem possible. Locations are all identified by latitude and longitude, avoiding confusion over inconsistent names.

In other respects the electronic implementation is disappointing. For example, each chapter has excellent overview chartlets of individual anchorages and ports, with each identified by number. To look at the description of a chosen anchorage in a paper book, one would note the number and flip through the pages to find it. One has to do the same in the iPad version whereas, with today's technology, hot links could have been built into the overview chartlets. Neither did I find any online help with how to use the features of the electronic version, though they are quite intuitive so this is not serious.

Leaving aside the electronic aspects and turning to content, the introductory section cover history, practical politics, formalities, weather, sailing seasons etc in some detail, and provides references for further reading. The sections on formalities are rather complicated, due to the complexities of Chilean administration and the discord between Chile and Argentina. Services in each anchorage are listed, although of course many have none on this remote coast. Where relevant, information beyond yacht services is described, such as airlines, potential land tours and local cultural events.

I was particularly impressed by the large number of descriptions, with chartlets, for remote anchorages – some even including diagrams on how to tie off to trees or rocks in tight locations. By my count some 300 separate locations are described, including all the significant coastal towns, unlike the many recent cruising guides which focus mainly on marinas and other commercial facilities.

NMcC



OCEAN DRIFTERS, A Secret World Beneath the Waves – Richard R Kirby. Published in hardback by Firefly Books [www.fireflybooks.com] at £19.74; Kindle price Kindle £6.60. Also available for iBook from Studio Cactus Books [http://www.studiocactusbooks.com]. 192 229mm x 229mm pages, including 150 colour illustrations. ISBN 978-1-5540-7982-7; Kindle B00X6GHKGM

Dr Richard Kirby, plankton scientist and an Associate Fellow of the Marine Biological Association, perhaps better known to OCC members as the organiser of the sailor/scientist Secchi Disk research study, has created a stunning visual book about plankton. These tiny creatures of the sea, invisible to most eyes, are critical elements of the food chain supporting all ocean life. Most people don't realise that plankton are among the most important creatures on our planet.

Plankton is derived from the Greek term *planktos*, the name given to all creatures that cannot swim against the current but must drift with it. They consist of phytoplankton, which are plant-like photosynthetic cells, and zooplankton, which are tiny animal-like organisms. Phytoplankton account for up to 50 percent of all photosynthesis on earth, as well as providing food for the herbivorous zooplankton, which the carnivorous

zooplankton feed on in turn ... and so on. 'Without the plankton there would be no fish in the sea or creatures that feed upon them', writes the author.

But they are even more important as integral elements of the earth's regulating ecosystem. The phytoplankton, which must live near the surface of the ocean to gain access to sunlight for photosynthesis, also give us half of our oxygen and play a central role in the global carbon cycle that controls the earth's climate. Plankton have been on this earth almost since life first evolved in the sea, and their remains have created the world's oil and gas reserves as well as distinctive features of the earth's crust, such as the White Cliffs of Dover. Clearly, as the earth's climate changes, the abundance and distribution of plankton is changing, with ramifications for the interrelated ecology of our entire planet.

Each amazing photograph of these tiny creatures of the sea, magnified through the eyepiece of a microscope, is accompanied by a brief and readily understood explanation of their characteristics and how they affects us in our daily lives. Want to know what is responsible for the smell of the sea? Interested in learning how by-the-wind sailors, *Vellela vellela*, actually sail across oceans and in different directions in the Atlantic and Pacific? These and hundreds more questions are answered through fascinating factoids, prose, and even poetry.

The iBook edition of *Ocean Drifters*, released in the spring of 2015, is full of dramatic images of which it has about twenty more than the print edition. The print edition, originally released in 2010 and reprinted several times since, is of high quality – beautifully designed, laid out and reproduced. It has received high praise and critical acclaim from the likes of the *Daily Telegraph*, *Wall Street Journal*, *American Scientist* and *Publisher's Weekly*. In addition to the usual sources, it is available direct from http://www.oceandrifters.org and through the author's website at http://www.planktonpundit.org. You can also view an *Ocean Drifters* film at https://vimeo.com/84872751. You'll recognise the voice of the narrator – Sir David Attenborough.

This beautiful book would make an exceptional gift for anyone who loves or is drawn to the sea. Budding young scientists, shore enthusiasts and sailors alike will learn to appreciate and gaze more deeply into the life around them, while armchair sailors will have many questions which might previously have eluded them answered with ease.

DOB



THE IAN NICOLSON TRILOGY – Ian Nicolson. Published in soft covers by Amberley Publishing [www.amberley-books.com] at £14.99. 352 156mm x 234mm pages, with the author's own line drawings and construction details. ISBN 978-1-4456-5196-5

OCC members will already be familiar with Founder Member Ian Nicolson's relaxed and entertaining writing style, and *The Ian Nicolson Trilogy* does not disappoint – despite the three books it contains having all been written in the 1950s and early 1960s. First published as *The Ian Nicolson Omnibus* in 1986, for those of us who missed that particular bus this is a welcome re-release.

The Log of the Maken tells how, in 1952, the 23-year-old Ian – already an experienced

Channel sailor and apprenticeship-served naval architect – joined the 45ft ketch *Maken*, an ex-sailing lifeboat designed by Colin Archer. The owner was looking for two crew to accompany him to Vancouver, BC, and Ian became one of them, qualifying for the OCC (not that it existed yet) in the process. The 14,000 mile passage in the heavy, slow and latterly weed-fouled *Maken* took nine months, and Ian takes us with her every inch of the way.

So what does a young, impecunious Brit do on arrival in Vancouver? Work, work, and more work, then hitch across the continent to Nova Scotia and start looking for a boat to sail home, as recounted in *Sea-Saint.*, first published in 1954. Within a few days of starting his search Ian had located a suitable 30ft 6in hull and was busy decking her, building the interior, and converting a local tree trunk into a mast – an opportunity for some technical details, illustrated by Ian's own drawings. (Many readers will bemoan the fact that *St Elizabeth*'s sail and accommodation plans lie undiscovered until one reaches the end of the 'book' – it would have been nice to have had them to refer to at this stage.)

Amazingly it was only a matter of weeks before St *Elizabeth* was ready to take on the Atlantic and, let down by his crew at the last moment, Ian took the decision to sail her home alone. His account of the crossing from Halifax to Weymouth, on England's south coast, is remarkably low-key, though never uninteresting. Sailing without either self-steering or engine, and with the inevitable fog and gales en route, Ian remains upbeat even when first one and then the other capshroud comes adrift – just another challenge to be faced, analysed and dealt with, all without drama.

As with the *Maken*'s voyage, we're reminded how different ocean sailing was 60+ years ago, not least in the field of communications. Passing ships are requested to report the yacht's name and position to Lloyd's, and though Ian is confident of his navigation by sextant, with no radio signal watch error is an ever-present concern – added to which, the towed log is sometimes inaccurate. Nevertheless, after 38 days at sea Ian makes a perfect landfall on the Isles of Scilly, putting 2576 miles under *St Elizabeth*'s keel by the time they reach Weymouth and home.

The third 'volume' in the trilogy, *Building the St Mary* (all Ian's many boats have been named for saints, including his current yacht, *St Foy*) covers slightly different territory. By the early 1960s he is married to Morag and living in Scotland, and building a yacht to be shared with his sister and her growing family. The *St Mary* is a 35ft ketch (the line drawings, sail and accommodation plans are positioned at the start of the action this time), her design drawing on Ian's 15 years of sailing aboard everything from ancient and suicidal tubs to some of the era's top ocean racers.

What follows is a detailed and fascinating description of planked wooden yacht construction, which at the same time gives scope for another of Ian's many talents – the ability to describe scenes and events which will have you grinning as you read, and quite possibly laughing aloud. Laying two 32ft lengths of Trackmark on *St Mary* 's decks is one of these (and would have made a great comedy sketch of the Keystone Cops variety), though others run it close.

So much for content – and there is so much! – and now for opinion. *The Ian Nicolson Trilogy* is a thoroughly enjoyable book, both to dip into and to read in full, though one might gain even more pleasure from it by reading its three individual volumes separately, alternated with other books, to avoid any feeling of *déjà vu* (an option not

always available to a reviewer). It should appeal to all ages, from youngsters in search of real-life 'ripping yarns' to those who cut their sailing teeth in the same era as did Ian but are no longer able to sail actively, and it will be a rare person who gleans no fresh knowledge from it. It goes almost without saying that it would make an excellent Christmas present – but buy two copies so you can keep one for yourself.

AOMH



VOYAGING WITH KIDS: A guide to family life afloat – Behan Gifford, Sara Dawn Johnson and Michael Robertson. Published in soft covers by L&L Pardey Books [www.landlpardey.com] at US$35.95 (£23.69); Kindle price US$30.50 (£21.72). 336 253mm x 203mm pages, with many photographs, tables and side bars. ISBN 978-1-9292-1433-4; Kindle B010XWRHU0

Voyaging with Kids is a beautifully designed and very comprehensive reference on cruising with children aboard. It covers everything from picking your boat to what to bring along, how to stay safe and healthy, provisioning in faraway places, and activities to pass the time or expose young crew members to new experiences. There is a full chapter on boat schooling which includes some very interesting suggestions, such as attending local schools while voyaging, and dealing with rules and regulations of the home country.

It also covers the transient nature of voyaging by boat, and how it influences relationships both aboard and ashore. It provides detailed advice on passagemaking, and even covers how to deal with the challenges unique to babies and teenagers aboard. Finally, it deals with the challenges faced when ending the voyage and transitioning back to a life ashore. Perhaps most important, however, are the insights from other contributors, placed in sidebars throughout, which provide varied first-hand perspectives from many experienced parents – and kids – and offer a truly balanced view of the experience. A lot of work went into this book, and I applaud the authors and editors who pulled it all together so expertly.

Voyaging with Kids ends with interviews with, and letters from, former cruising kids. They talk about their lives aboard and ashore, what they learned from both, and how they dealt with the transitions. It's really inspiring to read about the great experiences these former kids remember, and how those experiences shaped their future lives. Bottom line, you get the sense that they became better human beings as a result.

The book is rich with photographs of kids doing interesting things in exotic places. It also focuses attention on the ability of children aboard to take responsibility and contribute to the tasks at hand. They learn independence and self-reliance from an early age, very valuable traits in this passive world. They also learn what's important in life in general and what's important to them specifically, unlike many kids in routine lives ashore who just follow along with what everyone else is doing.

The appendices are particularly comprehensive – a six-page contributors' list, three pages of bibliography, and 13 pages of additional resources and references used in researching material. Finally, the index is very handy for looking up specific topics.

Voyaging with Kids is a really important addition to the cruising armamentarium for

anyone contemplating life afloat with children. What these authors have achieved is extraordinarily valuable. They've done enormous research to provide access to the information every parent needs before taking off, and they share real-life assessment of how everything actually translates into practice. This is destined to be a best-seller in the sailing books category ... the parenting bible for the cruising family. I believe it's the first book of its kind, and that is an accomplishment in itself.

DOB

(OCC member and publisher Lin Pardey is offering a 30% discount to OCC members who order directly through www.landlpardey.com (run by Paradise Cay) before 31 May 2016. Co-author Behan Gifford is also an OCC member.)



MERLIN'S VOYAGE – Emmanuelle Buecher-Hall. Self-published between spiral bound soft covers at £8.70; Kindle price £4.96. 48 216mm x 216mm pages, in full colour throughout. ISBN: 978-0-9925-2120-2; Kindle B00MVXF5O0. Also available in French

Children's resources that deal with living aboard a boat as a lifestyle are not easy to find, but Dr Emmanuelle Buecher-Hall has produced a story book to inspire kids to embrace the adventure that lies ahead of a family setting out to voyage the earth's oceans.

Dr Buecher-Hall is an accomplished marine biologist who trained in France and conducted research in South Africa, then set sail with her husband and their three young children aboard a catamaran they had built themselves. After crossing the Atlantic, Caribbean and Pacific they have settled now in Australia. *Merlin* is the name of their yacht, and the story is told from the boat's perspective. She takes them to exotic places where they have adventures – crossing oceans, on remote islands, underwater, and in foreign lands. It is an enchanting and instructional read for primary school children that instils lofty dreams of exploration they may one day fulfil. It also assuages any fear of the unknown.

Included are charts of the oceans with anchors drawn at all the places *Merlin* visited. There are many colour photographs of children at play, wildlife alongside, and villages visited, to accompany the simple story of what they experienced along the way. Nautical terms are highlighted in different colours and explained in a detailed glossary at the back.

Merlin's Voyage is a lovely little book that every aspiring young sailor should take to bed. It is sure to inspire dreams of adventure on the high seas.

DOB



ULTIMATE CLASSIC YACHTS – Nic Compton. Published in hardback by Bloomsbury [www.bloomsbury.com] at £30; Kindle price £19.38. 160 315mm x 237mm pages, with many colour photos and some drawings. ISBN 978-1-4729-1812-3; Kindle B0149HP9YQ

The author of this fine book, Nic Compton, was a shipwright for years before changing to the risky business of being a yachting author and journalist. Here he describes twenty yachts built between 1885 and 2012, mostly beauties and all interesting. He has a positive attitude towards classic yachts, and appreciates the much argued difference between a restoration and a rebuild. (The former involves extensive work on a tired vessel, the latter requires almost all the structure to be replaced because little sound material is left.)

We live in a golden age of yacht restoration, with so many projects going forward all over the world. This is a relatively new phenomenon. When this reviewer started building yachts – in the days when they were all made of wood – everyone in the boatyard was sure our products were going to last 100 years, not least because of the good standard of design and workmanship. We did not anticipate the decline in the quality and quantity of annual maintenance. This lack of care has resulted in so many good yachts going downhill to early destruction. Members of the OCC are in the minority in the world of boat maintenance, because they tend to do, or commission, plenty of careful work, so their yachts are usually ocean-worthy.

Relatively few lucky vessels have been restored and only then because someone with a deep pocket has appreciated what lies beneath the peeling varnish, the patches of rot and the rust. These days a sad number of boats of all types die before old age because it is not fashionable to spend all weekend, every weekend, through the winter repairing the ravages of the sea.

This book is a reminder that it takes dedication and determination to get an old boat back afloat after she has gone far downhill. What stands out is that these fine craft are wonderfully photogenic and the many colour pictures are a delight. In the modern manner the design drawings have been down-graded to a second – well actually a tenth – place. Faintly printed and over-splashed by the script, most are hard to read and appreciate.

Since Nic Compton has travelled vastly to collect the data for this handsome book he must be irritated by the editing. On page 96 the mast height of an International 12 metre racing yacht, 70ft overall, is given as 39ft 5in! The mistakes in the sail plan of *Lulworth* are too many to list here, and are just another example of what happens when someone who has never been afloat is let loose on a computer. Even so, this book is a must for anyone considering restoring a sailing yacht. One sentence which stands out reads: 'They mortgaged their house ... several times ... to pay for the restoration'. For those many of us who love looking at famous boats, beautiful yachts, and gorgeous interiors this is a delightful book. It would be a great Christmas present, to give or receive.

IN



DEAD RECKONING – Su Garcia. Published in soft covers by Baggatelle Publishers [http://baggatellepublishers.com] at ££8.99; Kindle price £2.99. (50% of net proceeds to *Save The Children*). 352 140mm x 216mm pages. ISBN 978-0-9932-1213-0; Kindle B00U48ZJTA

Dead Reckoning is OCC member Susie Baggaley's debut novel (written under her maiden name), and is set in Symi, Greece and on the waters of the Mediterranean.

Cruisers will appreciate the great sailing passages – it brings the drama of the Meltemi and Mediterranean weather into your sitting room. For those who love Greece, the delightful descriptions of the island of Symi and the numerous characters living there make you want to visit this little piece of paradise soon.

The action is up-to-date and topical, involving as it does the problem of illegal immigrants from Africa and the inability of the authorities in the West to deal with the problems effectively. At the same time, human emotions run close to the surface: a horrifically explosive start to the story leads the main character to abandon a successful career and try to face her loss far from the curtain calls and fame. But all is not as peaceful as it seems on the surface – the little seaside village is also the base for extensive crime and corruption, smuggling and murder.

The characters are well drawn and the plot skims along at a page-turning rate. All in all, a good weekend read and welcome escapism for those darker winter days.

NOJ





FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Gemma Nachbahr, aboard *Ru'ah*

Ru'ah Porridge (one full cup serves two people)

Ingredients if using a hand mill

- 1 cup oatbran
- 2 cups millet
- 2 cups barley
- 2 cups buckwheat
- 4 cups oats
- ½ cup ground flaxseed

Ingredients if not a hand mill is not available

- 1 cup oatbran
- 2 cups millet flakes
- 1 cup barley flakes + 1 cup pearled barley
- ½ cup roast buckwheat groats
- 1½ cups buckwheat flakes
- 4 cups oats
- ½ cup ground flaxseed

Soak in cold water overnight, then simmer for 5-10 minutes, adding water as needed. Add, in various combinations as desired, honey, cashews, sunflower seeds, sliced bananas, dried fruit, dates, butter, etc, to taste.

For the story behind Ru'ah porridge, see page 230.

ESSENTIAL READING FROM THE WORLD'S LARGEST NAUTICAL PUBLISHER



Bloomsbury Publishing is the home of Adlard Coles Nautical, Reeds and Conway.

As the world's largest nautical publisher we have books for all levels of expertise on all topics of interest, from invaluable almanacs, cruising guides and instruction books, to stunning large format photographic collections.

www.bloomsbury.com/nautical

CONWAY. BLOOMSBURY ADLARD COLES NAUTICAL



noonsite.com

the global site for cruising sailors

noonsite aims to provide a one-stop website featuring essential information on all matters of interest to sailors planning an offshore voyage anywhere in the world, whether already underway or still in the preparatory stages.

• **193** countries • **1785 por**ts • **Clearance For**malities • **Visa Requir**ements • Fees • Repair Facilities • Special Events • Weather • Marine and Shore Services

www.noonsite.com





Yacht watermakers and equipment for serious blue water sailors & livaboards

Schenker DISSALATORI WATERMAKERS · MACTRA Marine Equipment · KATADYN MAKING WATER DRINKING WATER

Mactra Marine Equipment Unit 20, Worle Industrial Centre, Weston-super-Mare BS22 6BX
Tel: 00 44 (0) 1934 517288 **Fax:** 00 44 (0)1934 520684 **Email:** info@mactrashop.co.uk **Web:** www.mactrashop.co.uk

THREE MONTHS IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL
Paul and Rachel Chandler

(*Paul has sailed since the age of two, while Rachel learned in 1981 in Qatar, where they lived after their marriage. They have owned* Lynn Rival*, a Rival 38A, for more than 25 years, holidays in the Mediterranean increasing in length until they 'retired' in 2005. In 2007* Lynn Rival *became Paul and Rachel's home and they ventured east to the Indian Ocean, culminating in their involuntary stay in Somalia. The Royal Navy rescued* Lynn Rival*, and they refurbished her before resuming their travels.*

Paul and Rachel's blog at http://blog.mailasail.com/lynnrival is highly recommended.)

In March 2013 our Rival 38 *Lynn Rival* completed her first Atlantic crossing, making landfall in Salvador da Bahíia. We spent some time cruising south towards Rio de Janeiro and lingered in the bay of Ilha Grande with its hundreds of islands. But we were running out of visa time: 180 days is not enough for such a vast and intriguing country with a coastline of over 4000 miles. Our passage down the coast was hindered by the long periods of southerly winds, common in the austral winter. Beyond Ilha Grande we had to rush past many interesting ports of call on our way to Uruguay.

In March 2015 we returned to Brazil. The winds in this region just north of the River Plate are affected by the position of the South Atlantic High, which tends to bring northerlies, and by depressions tracking across the deep south. Extended frontal troughs sometimes pull in heat lows generated inland, reinforcing the cold fronts, which can reach a long way north. These fronts, which are well forecast, bring southerly winds, often at gale force and regularly with squalls of up to 70 knots. Furthermore, the coastline of Brazil's southernmost states demands respect. It is low-lying and, apart from the port of Rio Grande, has no safe havens over a distance of 500 miles. Only recently an Argentine yacht heading north was lost in strong southerlies, never to be found.

At Punta del Este – the mouth of the River Plate – we encountered light to moderate southerlies so sailed as best we could, sometimes motor-sailing. On occasion we were accompanied by humpback whales making their way north for the winter. Often a solitary albatross would follow in our wake.

Rio Grande is a major port at the entrance to a large inland sea called Lagoa do Patos (Duck Lake). The channel is busy with shipping and has strong tidal currents. Having used the motor at times to ensure we arrived at the beginning of the flood tide, we were rewarded with enough wind to sail up (just outside) the shipping channel and past the main port area. It was dark by the time we reached the town but having been there before we were not intimidated by the frequent ferries crossing our path and the various shallows to be avoided. The town of Rio Grande has some interesting sights, including the Oceanographic Museum whose director, Lauro Barcellos, is renowned for welcoming foreign cruisers. We anchored off but were soon invited to berth alongside the museum jetty with electricity and water, all free. We were looking forward to reaching Florianópolis, almost 400 miles to the north, however, so as soon as the forecast was favourable we set out to sea. A cold front was coming. We wanted to make an offing before the wind

turned south and kicked up a nasty sea close inshore, and to make best use of the limited duration of the southerlies, so we set off while the winds were still in the north, with a speedy sail down the channel and out to sea. For a while we had to beat to windward, but the signs of the approaching front were obvious: lightning all around us! When the south winds came they were strong – force 7 for about 10 hours – but we were well-reefed and flew along, downwind sailing. We rediscovered the joys of spinnaker pole handling (to goose-wing the genoa) on a bouncy foredeck, something we'd not practised for a while. With lumpy seas and rain showers it was fast but uncomfortable.

The passage was quiet, and apart from a few fishing boats keeping us on our toes at night we didn't see much shipping. We were sometimes accompanied by seabirds – shearwaters and petrels if not an albatross – and as the wind strength reduced to force 5 we shook out the reefs to continue making good speed. We divide the nights into two six-hour watches. Although it's a long time to be on watch, it does mean we each get a good long sleep and it seems to work well. During the day we do three four-hour watches.

By the time we were approaching the tricky southern entrance – called the Bay of Shipwrecks – between the mainland and Ilha de Santa Catarina the wind had dropped further and started to veer. We were grateful for calmer seas to negotiate our way through the 14 miles of sometimes narrow and rocky shallows to the city of Florianópolis (locally known as Floripa). Ilha de Santa Caterina and the adjacent mainland is a good cruising ground, with plenty of wind for sailing (in contrast to Rio and the bay of Ilha Grande), many anchorages, and clear waters for snorkelling on the ocean side. Because the waters between the island and mainland are shallow, there is no commercial shipping. It's a



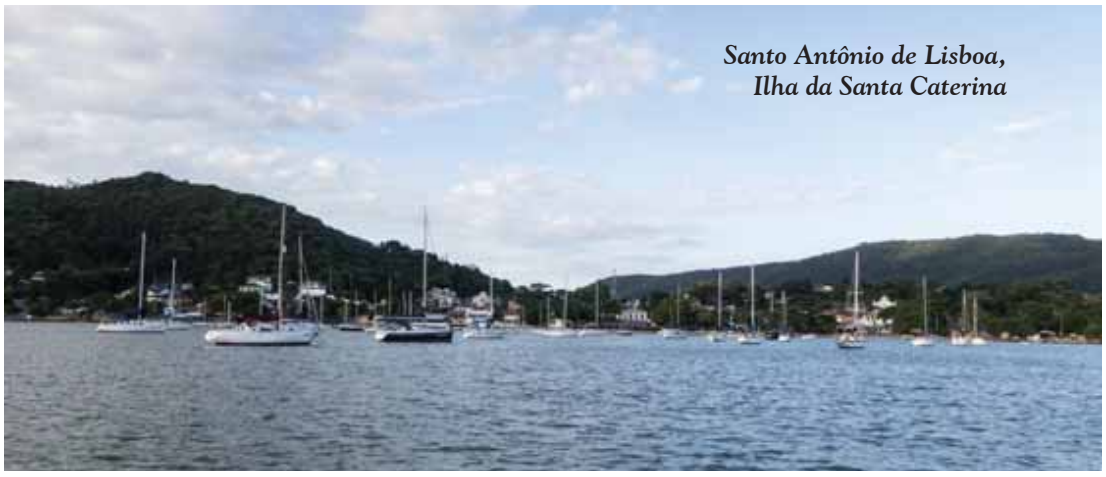


Bridges at Florianópolis, with new supports being provided for the old bridge

haven for wildlife, small-scale fishing and water sports. And Floripa has good restaurants – the seafood is excellent – and shopping malls to suit all tastes.

The yacht club is conveniently close to the city so we picked up a mooring for a few days while we carried out the formalities for entering Brazil. (We had chosen not to enter at Rio Grande so as to eke out the visa time a little.) We hired a car for a few days (very cheaply) and headed southwest to the grassy highlands of the Serra Catarinense. This area is unique in Brazil, with frost and snowfall in winter. The scenery is very lush, scattered with araucaria forests – a pine related to the monkey puzzle tree. It is also known for its *gaucho* culture.

In a spell of light winds we motored under the bridge linking Floripa with the mainland. With only 17m clearance we were fortunate that *Lynn Rival* just fits underneath. A short distance up the island coast – avoiding shallows and rocks – is the pretty bay at Santo Antônio de Lisboa, where many local sailors keep their boats, including Marco whom we had met in 2013. Approaching Santo Antonio our echo-sounder stopped working, which would have been quite worrying had we not been there before. There are many yachts on moorings and only limited room for anchoring before the bay gets too shallow. Fortunately we had the coordinates for our anchoring spot in 2013, so were able to head for the same place. After topping up the echo sounder's oil and replacing the wiring we concluded that it needed a new transducer. Marco helped us find a Brazilian supplier on the internet – all we had to do was wait a few days for delivery. In the meantime another front brought southerlies. It was strong enough to make the



Santo Antônio de Lisboa, Ilha da Santa Caterina



Baía dos Ganchos, Tijucas

shallow sea very choppy and our Rocna anchor plough through the soft mud rather too fast for comfort. Without the echo-sounder we made our way carefully to Jurerê in the north of the island – well sheltered from southerlies – until it was safe to return.

Once the new transducer was fitted we were ready to continue north. We planned to day sail, visiting some of the many anchorages along the coast. It was mid-April so winter was approaching, but we hoped to be able to swim and snorkel in some of the bays. Initially we ventured just six miles, to a small cove on the mainland called Magalhaes. Apart from plentiful mosquitoes and noisy fishermen coming and going in the dark (with no lights, as this is supposedly a conservation area!) it was an ideal anchorage with good shelter from both north and south. Next day we finally sailed into deeper water and followed the coastline into the large bay of Tijucas. As we headed out in murky weather we could just make out the S40 world championship racing taking place off Jurerê. The coast of Santa Caterina is a popular place for international races – the Volvo Ocean Race was also making a stop-over at Itajai, a mainland port to the north of Floripa.

After two days of unsettled weather, not venturing far and spending the nights in pleasant but unremarkable anchorages, we reached the scenic Porto Belo peninsula. Being a Saturday afternoon the very pretty and well-sheltered cove of Caixa D'Aco (Iron Box) was busy with stinkpots, so we continued on to Porto Belo town. There the water was muddy and the swell was entering the bay, so in the late afternoon we decided to try our luck again at Caixa D'Aco. At dusk the bay was emptying and as we stooged around looking for the best place to anchor we were hailed by the owner of one of the floating bars who offered us a mooring. The next day was sunny enough for a walk on land and swim in clear water.

From Porto Belo we sailed 70 miles to the next major river and the old port of São

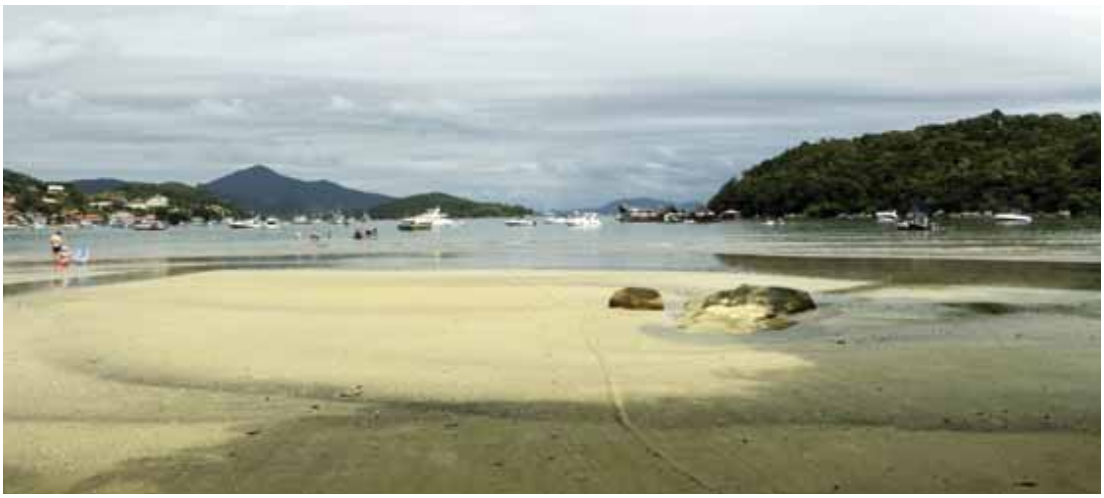


Lynn Rival in Caixa d'Aco …

Francisco do Sul. The wind was moderate southerly and the motion a bit rolly, but we made good progress, passing the high-rise resort of Camboriou and the busy modern port of Itajaí, after which the coastline is one long beach with just a few off-lying islands to avoid. A few big ships anchored off signal the entrance channel to Babitonga Bay. We arrived in the evening, in time to catch the flood tide, and made our way carefully up the river to the town anchorage, avoiding unlit buoys and moored boats.

It rained more on than off, and after a day of rest we caught the afternoon tide to go upstream towards the city of Joinville, an eight mile trip requiring careful navigation because the channel is narrow in places. The Joinville Yacht Club is on the outskirts

… and Caixa d'Aco at low tide



of the city, with modern facilities in a lovely setting, looking out over low-lying islands and mangrove swamps. Few foreign yachts visit and we were made very welcome. At weekends the club is a hive of activity and we were not short of company. Most of the boats on the jetty are gin palaces, but sailing boats of all shapes and sizes – kept on the hard – are launched for cruising and racing in the bay. When we left Joinville the sun was shining and (having arrived in the murk) we at last saw how beautiful Babitonga Bay is, a large expanse of mostly shallow water with many small islands and little development. There were just a few fishermen around using small boats and nets, and a large colony of frigate birds filled the sky.

It was still sunny when we arrived back at São Francisco do Sul. We anchored off the pretty, historic town and enjoyed a stroll along the waterfront. Apart from the attractive colonial buildings, there's an excellent Maritime Museum and (to satisfy our biggest craving) an ice-cream shop where you help yourself from a range of exotic flavours and pay by the kilo.

Our next destination was Paranaguá, another historic port on a major estuary 35 miles up the coast past endless sandy beach and a few off-lying islands. There was little wind so we motor-sailed all the way, watching the lights of ships anchored in the roads grow larger. The entrance to the river is a narrow dredged channel, surrounded by extensive shallows which kick up nasty seas in strong winds, so it was best that we arrived with little wind. The out-going current can reach 4·5 knots so it was also essential to arrive on the flood. Paranaguá is a busy port, but we only met one large container ship before turning off into a quieter backwater that leads towards the old town.

Palm Street, Joinville





Just south of the town, on Ilha da Cotinga, Paranaguá Yacht Club has an annex with moorings for visitors – the main clubhouse is near the old town, a mile further up the river Itiberê. The moorings at the annex are not very comfortable, being exposed to southerly winds and subject to strong tidal flows. This part of the river is also busy with tugs, tripper boats and small craft used by people living around the bay, so is not ideal. The yacht club staff spoke no English, making it a little difficult to communicate, but we managed to arrange a berth at the main club and a club workboat showed us the deep water route upriver.

Despite the major port operations, the environment around Paranaguá is very enticing, with the imposing Serra da Graciosa mountains inland, the eco-tourist hotspot of Ilha do Mel, and many remote islands, including the Superagui national park, home to rare rainforest flora and fauna. We headed inland for a couple of fine days, taking the bus to the pretty town of Morretes, then the Serra Verde express train which winds its leisurely way up through the Atlantic rainforest-covered mountains to the city of Curitiba.



Local craft on the waterfront at Paranaguá



The river at Morretes

On our return to Paranaguá the cloud and drizzle resumed. We had hoped to visit Ilha do Mel, but decided not to wait another five days for clear weather – southerlies were forecast, so we planned to leave the following day. We needed to wait for the afternoon ebb to make it down the river, but by the time we got to the bar it was dark and the wind had turned south against the tide making for rough and sometimes breaking seas, even in the deep channel. We also had three big ships to contend with, so had an anxious hour negotiating our way out to sea.

This passage took us past the longest stretch of untouched Atlantic rainforest and the biggest port in Brazil, Santos. We also passed two interesting islands: Queimada Grande (Great Burnt Island), which is infested with a unique and highly poisonous species of the pit viper; and Alcatrazes, which is reputed to be a superb diving spot but until recently was used by the Brazilian navy for target practice.

The southerlies eventually failed and we had to beat for the last few miles, reaching our destination, the little Ilha Montão de Trigo, just after dawn following a good sail of 202 miles in 38 hours. The reason for stopping here was to meet Silvio Ramos – a circumnavigator and now OCC port officer – whom we'd first met in Bracuhy in 2013. The anchorage at Ilha Montão do Trigo is quite 'rock 'n rolly', so after a few days we sailed to nearby Ilhabela, Brazil's largest offshore island. In 2013 we had passed inside the island, but this time decided to go around the outside, to the remote eastern coast where there are many pretty bays with beaches. We anchored at Saco do Eustáquio, a deep bay with just a few fishermen's houses ashore and a (closed) bar. Soon after anchoring a fisherman welcomed us and gave us some fish – much appreciated since we'd had no luck ourselves. Saco



Saco da Ribeira, with sailors' friend 'Uncle' Tio

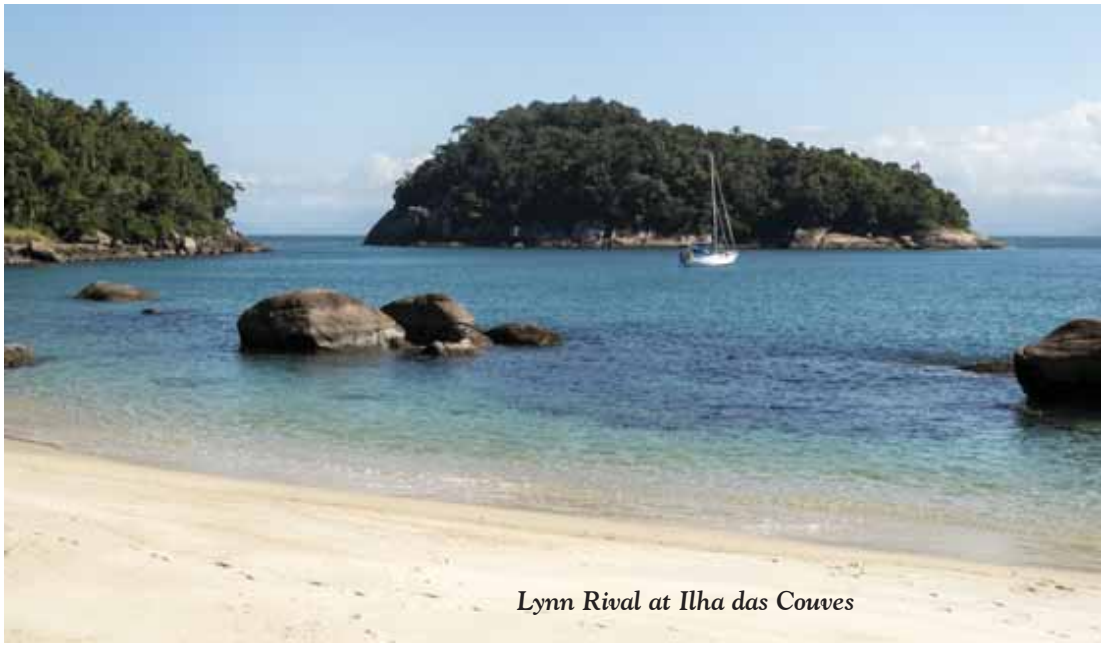
do Eustáquio turned out to be our only stop on Ilhabela, as when the wind drops the southeasterly swell makes the anchorages on the east and north of the island uncomfortable.

After a long rainy day under power we eventually found a comfortable anchorage on the main-land, in a bay with the unpromising name of Mar Virado (Upset Sea). With no road and just a small fishing community ashore, we spent two peaceful nights at anchor there. The São Paulo coastline, with its numerous beach-lined bays, linked by rocky headlands washed by breaking waves, and the backdrop of the Serra do Mar covered in Atlantic rainforest, is stunning. It does rain quite a lot and the winds are often light, but the one thing we were glad to leave behind were the sandflies of Ilhabela (known as *borrachudos*) whose bite causes a long-lasting itchy swelling.

Our next stop was Saco da Ribeira, a sheltered bay where many local cruisers from nearby Ubatuba keep their boats on moorings and some even live aboard. We enjoyed a reunion with 'Uncle' Tio Spinelli, who teaches sailing and diving and enjoys helping foreign cruisers. A week of fine weather was forecast, so we took our time filling up



Surf at Ubatuba



Lynn Rival at Ilha das Couves

with fuel, water and provisions before moving to nearby Ilha Anchieta, a popular anchorage but quiet on winter weekdays. Although the winds were light, the promise of another island anchorage just 15 miles to the northeast tempted us away. Ilha das Couves is just two miles long, with a few fishermen's houses onshore. The anchorage has clear water, with lots of sea urchins and colourful fish. Apart from the fishermen and a few weekenders we had the place to ourselves.

When the time came to continue east to the Ilha Grande region disaster struck. It's a long story, but our fuel injection pump stopped working so the engine wouldn't go – and we managed to water-lock it in our efforts to find the problem! There was only a very light breeze, so we sailed slowly back towards Saco da Ribeira. In the middle of the night we were getting close, but had to anchor in 13m to stop the tide carrying us backwards.

In the morning we launched the dinghy and, towing alongside with the 2hp outboard going full pelt, we made 1·5 knots. Tio came to meet us and help us onto a mooring. He then cajoled a local diesel fitter to come immediately to remove the pump and clear the salt water from the cylinders. That same afternoon Tio drove us 55km to a diesel injection pump specialist, Dieselmar, who told us next day that the pump was broken and they couldn't get all the parts to fix it. In southern Brazil, importing parts is an expensive nightmare which can take six months, but Dieselmar suggested an alternative – they could use a part intended for a different three-cylinder engine and adjust it internally to suit ours. In a few days, which we used to empty and clean the tank, the rebuilt pump was ready and refitted. Dieselmar insisted we use a can of ultra-low sulphur diesel to start it up ... to everyone's relief it worked. The fine weather and light winds continued, so on our way we gave the motor – with its refurbished injection pump now using regular diesel – a good run.

The bay of Ilha Grande is well known as a cruiser's paradise, despite usually being windless. We'd visited many of the anchorages in 2013, including the remote spots on the ocean side of the island, but there were still plenty for us to try. At the western

end of Ilha Grande, just inside Punta dos Meros, we could see the bottom 8m below and enjoyed some good snorkelling. The only problem was debris in the water – dead fish, bilge waste and plastic containers, presumably from the many fishing boats around. The coastline and headlands on the northwest side of Ilha Grande are fascinating. The tree-clad slopes rise to majestic peaks, and the shore is lined with granite rocks forming their own unique shapes as they are worn away by the swell. The sky is usually filled with frigate birds.



Dinghy tow!

We were invited by the Association of Brazilian Cruising Sailors (ABVC) to Bracuhy Marina, where their two-day annual conference was taking place. There we met a lot of members as well as friends we'd made in 2013. Bracuhy is a great place to visit and meet Brazilian cruisers but unfortunately the short-stay marina charges are very high.

Before continuing east to Rio we needed to visit the authorities in Angra dos Reis, the commercial, fishing and tourist centre of the area, to extend our visas. We motored into the port and anchored near the fishing harbour, convenient for the town. The process was completed in three hours, but we also had to get a gas bottle refilled so stayed for two nights, which was more than enough. The smell of sewage, dead fish floating in the water and disturbance from passing boats was no fun.

We motored out in the late afternoon and anchored in clear water off the little Ilhas Botinas, just three miles away, to await southerly winds which were expected by 2200. After a swim and early supper we took a nap, but by 2000 were shaken out of our bunks by the strengthening wind and were soon speeding between little islands and numerous fishing boats on our way out to sea.. The wind was force 5 gusting 6, so we sailed under genoa alone, and the skies were sometimes lit by lightning. As we passed the eastern end of Ilha Grande the wind dropped for a while but soon returned, accompanied by rain. By mid-morning next day we were inside Guanabara Bay and anchored under the Sugar Loaf mountain, off the Fortaleza São João. We were back in the Cidade Maravilhosa.



BERMUDA TO THE AZORES IN 1986
Chris Burry

We departed St George's, Bermuda on 20 June bound for the Azores in *Plover*, our Dickerson 41 ketch. There were three of us on board, having dropped one crew member from our Norfolk to Bermuda passage. Over 1600 miles lay ahead of us – double what we had done from Norfolk to Bermuda, and that passage had been fraught with rough weather in the wake of tropical storm Andrew, the first named storm of the 1986 hurricane season. We hoped for a better passage to the Azores.



St George's, Bermuda

I was 30 years old at the time, but though I had been sailing my entire life this was my first transatlantic voyage and I knew little about offshore passages. Fortunately, the old adage 'what we lack in wisdom we make up for in youth' held true. We recorded our passage notes on a tape recorder while on watch in the cockpit, and mailed the cassettes home to our families, a stroke of brilliance which made it possible to re-create the voyage today as if it happened just yesterday.

The cassettes tell a slightly different story than our memories. Both my husband Bill and I remember a tranquil passage compared to the 50 knot winds and steep seas we experienced on the leg from Norfolk to Bermuda. We recollect the influence of an Azores High leaving us in unusually calm, mirror-glass seas in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean; taking sun showers on the aft deck; and at night observing some of the most interesting phosphorescence we have ever seen in the open ocean. We remember

the spinnaker halyard parting in the middle of the night (isn't that always when such things happen?) and hoisting Bill up the mast mid-ocean to replace the halyard.

What we didn't remember, as recorded on the tapes, were the constant squalls every night, the incessant howl of the wind, and the ocean swells. The background noise of the ship groaning, the wind blowing and the Monitor windvane moaning was never-ending. Bill's trip up the mast was recorded as a day-time event during which the seas were so rolly that he got seasick at the masthead and felt he couldn't count on his crew to pass the correct end of the halyard back up the mast. There was constant chafe on both the halyards and the windvane steering lines, something we had not anticipated.

Nor did we remember the overwhelming influence of ham radio communications on our daily lives at sea. We reported our position back home every day via a transatlantic ham net and learned about the locations of other vessels crossing either ahead of or behind us. We could track the weather ahead of us thanks to those communications. We were also able to make a few phone calls to our parents, courtesy of phone patches placed by the ham radio operators.

Every night we watched for a green flash on the ocean horizon and on rare occasions got one, although many of the sunsets were spectacular. We were amazed to cross paths one day with a westbound sailing vessel, which we hailed on the VHF without response. After passing us he finally responded, and we learned that he was singlehanding on his way to Bermuda. We were also surprised one day to hear a freighter talking about icebergs on the VHF radio. We got worried that we might be near icebergs until he transmitted his position and we learned that he was 200 miles north of us, above 39°N, and only strange radio ducting permitted us to hear him.

Final preparations for the Atlantic crossing





Landfall in Flores

There was the monotony of the four-hour watches we set each evening after dinner, and the rise of the moon over the horizon that often first appeared to be the light of an approaching ship. We entertained ourselves on watch listening to cassette tapes on headphones rigged to a speaker jack wired into the cockpit so as not to disturb the off-watch crew. There were the chores to complete, like the hourly updating of our dead reckoning position based on the miles recorded by our Walker towing log, which we had to crawl aft to read. The highlight of each day was the calculation of our daily distance run and miles made good on a large-scale planning chart as we inched across the ocean. Meal planning continued as if we were on shore, with the added challenge of rolling seas at every meal. Mid-way across the Atlantic, Bill commented on one of our tapes that although we had been sailing for a week (about 700 miles), we still had close to 1000 miles and another week to go and that seemed incredibly long.

Today a transatlantic sailor would have all this information readily available via GPS. Weather routing services make the navigator's job simpler, and many vessels carry microwaves, generators, wind turbines, solar panels and spare autopilots. Back in 1986 we carried only a sextant and a satnav that gave us a fix whenever the satellites passed overhead, every six to eight hours or sometimes longer. We took sun sights when the weather and rolling seas permitted, but our exact location was not a problem until we closed in on the Azores archipelago. We relied on running our engine once a day to charge our batteries and keep our refrigeration running. When we encountered engine problems such as loss of the refrigeration cooling pump, we had to make a bypass to avoid losing all the food in the freezer. And although we had an autopilot, we did not generate enough power to keep it running day and night.

As we approached the Azores we were advised via the ham radio net to divert slightly north and make landfall on the island of Flores, the 'island of flowers'. Although we

had only a hand-drawn sketch of the harbour entrance, which someone had given us in Bermuda, we decided to give it a go.

We made landfall on 4 of July after 14 days at sea. The appearance on the horizon of a lush green island with rolling hills and hydrangea hedges was a sight for sore eyes after the monotony of the ocean's grey seas and sky. As we rounded the north end of Flores we called on the VHF, and several dinghies came out to greet us and provide assistance entering the tiny harbour at Santa Cruz. As we rapidly learned, however, English was not a language common to all the sailors and confusion reigned as we made our entrance. Our local guides advised that we pass between a set of rocks and turn to starboard once inside. What they failed to mention was that every other sailboat, of which there were four, was facing bow out and that we would have to execute a 180° turn once inside. We had anticipated that the harbour would open up, but once the surge carried us through the rocks and we turned to starboard, it became apparent that there was no room to manoeuvre. Somehow we managed to swing the boat around, but not before scraping the keel on the rocky bottom and the dinghy davits on the concrete quay. We dropped our CQR and backed down into the anchorage Mediterranean-style, but there was no quay astern. Instead we secured two stern lines to massive 6 inch ship's hawsers secured across the harbour. We surged back and forth all night in tune with the other yachts and got our best night's sleep in 14 days. Welcome to the Azores!

As I write this 30 years on, my husband and I are still sailing our beloved *Plover* with a third crew member aboard, our sailing dog Flaco, an American foxhound (you may remember seeing his photo in the 2014/2 issue of *Flying Fish*). We didn't learn of the Ocean Cruising Club until some twenty years later, thanks to fellow Dickerson owners Don and Dierdre Wogaman of *Southern Cross*, who encouraged us to join. Now when we



Santa Cruz harbour, Flores



Leaving our mark on the wall of Horta's new marina

cruise we fly the flying fish burgee and look for others in the anchorage. It has become our way of meeting long-distance sailors, with whom we have a common bond. We also enjoy hosting OCC cruisers at our dock in Mathews, near Deltaville, Virginia on the southern Chesapeake Bay. And that is why I joined the OCC.

MID ATLANTIC YACHT SERVICES

PT-9900-144 HORTA / FAIAL

AZORES

TEL. +351 292 391616
mays@mail.telepac.pt
www.midatlanticyachtservices.com

Providing all vital services to Trans-Atlantic Yachts!

Raymarine-Service Agent/Repairs of all Yacht Systems
(Rigging, Engines, Generators, AC-DC systems etc.)
Chandlery, Charts, Books etc.
Mail Holding
VAT/EC importation assistance & guidance

SHOW YOUR COLOURS

OCC UK Regalia & Merchandise Shop now expanded on the website





New items in stock

Traditional bunting and now nylon burgees and flags
Clothing includes polo shirts for men and women,
fleeces, body warmers and more

These and other products can be viewed online with full descriptions

View and select items on the website at
http://www.oceancruisingclub.org/index.php/regalia
accessible from the Regalia tab at the top of every page
(members must be logged in to see page)

Order through Club Secretary Rachelle Turk
at secretary@oceancruisingclub.org

Pay via secure credit or debit card online
Prices include postage and packing

THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE: TWO DIFFICULT ICE YEARS

Michael J Johnson

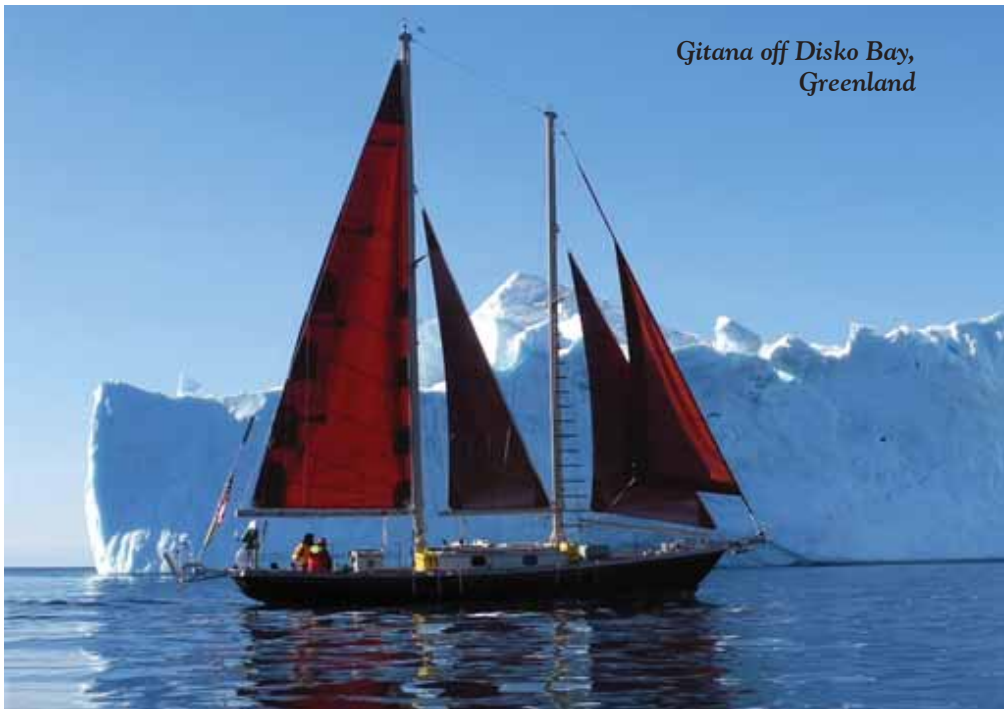
(*Michael is one of the OCC's most experienced members. From crewing on skipjacks in the Chesapeake Bay in the 1970s he progressed to sailing all over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in a variety of roles. He doubled Cape Horn twice in the 1980s, receiving the 1990 Barton Cup in recognition of his east to west passage in an engineless 32ft cutter, and completed a 5½ year circumnavigation in August 1994. Accounts of some parts of his travels will be found in* Flying Fish *1990/1, 1991/2, 1994/1 and 1995/1, all available on the OCC website.*

Since buying Gitana *in 2000 Michael has cruised the Pacific and Atlantic, visited Greenland and Svalbard to explore Viking and other historic sites, and also cruised the Mediterranean – a total, he calculates, of well over 125,000 miles.*

Gitana *is a 44ft staysail schooner, built in Costa Mesa, California in 1979 to a Lapworth hull design. Originally intended for racing, Michael modified her for ocean cruising and strengthened her further for her Northwest Passage attempt.*)

> 'Victory awaits him who has everything in order – luck we call it. Defeat is definitely due for him who has neglected to take the necessary precautions – bad luck we call it.'
>
> Roald Amundsen

(When thinking of the Northwest Passage one cannot help but think of Amundsen, the first man to sail through it, in 1903–1906.)



Gitana off Disko Bay, Greenland



The author

We shot through Bellot Strait, fighting to control our small schooner as swirling eddies twisted us first right and then left of the narrow safety line leading between Magpie Rock and the shoaling shore to the north. For a moment I considered our tenuous position. This route through Bellot was the only remaining possibility for success in September 2013 as the Arctic navigational season closed around us. To both east and west icy doors were slamming shut the labyrinth of waterways that constitute the Northwest Passage. A number of the possible routes had not opened at all that year, and this late in the truncated season none would reopen until July or August of the following year. (We were later to discover 2013 was reported to have had over 60% more Arctic sea ice than 2012.) The dark, looming canyon of Bellot's bare mountainous terrain stretched before us like a narrowing funnel, pulling us to the west and deliverance into Franklin Strait and Larson Sound. Ice was marching south down these waterways to shut off our advance, but for the moment they were still open – if we arrived soon enough. To the south of us along the 20 mile long strait lay the Boothia Peninsula – the northernmost extension of the North American Continent; to the north was Somerset Island.

We were just a few hundred miles north of King William Island*, where Sir John Franklin met his end and where Amundsen later found shelter in Gjoa Haven and over-wintered for two seasons during the first successful transit of the passage from 1903–1906. Since that first passage fewer than a hundred sailing vessels have succeeded in wending their way through these icy channels. The Northwest Passage had been sought for over 400 years as a shortened route to reach the riches of the Orient from Europe, and though by Amundsen's time that motive had been largely discounted the challenge of a sea passage linking the Atlantic to the Pacific via an extreme northerly route remained. The possibility that global warming might finally provide a commercially viable Northwest Passage has opened a Pandora's box of claims, counterclaims and growing concerns over the fragile and vulnerable Arctic environment and ecology.

In getting to Bellot Strait so late in the season we had been both fortunate and unfortunate. Fortunate in that we were able to navigate through Bellot at all – a number of vessels attempting the same route earlier in the season had waited the better part of a month for the ice in the strait to allow them passage, only to finally turn back toward

* A chartlet showing *Gitana*'s route over both seasons will be found on page 6.



Icebergs off Disko Bay …

the east. We had met several such vessels at Pond Inlet on their way back out having decided that there was simply too much ice too late in the season to go on. Unfortunate in that we had experienced a number of weather-related setbacks and gear failures which ate into the already short season. We had departed Virginia's Chesapeake Bay in late June after a number of boatyard delays while preparing *Gitana* for the arduous Arctic voyage. En route north we had encountered our first significant icebergs in the Gulf of St Lawrence, near the Strait of Belle Isle. There were three of us on board, and although I had been in the Arctic numerous times the first sighting of icebergs on a voyage is a portal into another realm. An old Inuit once told me that ice, like fire, is endlessly fascinating but also like fire, dangerous. We continued to encounter ice across



… and more further north



Locked in Ilulissat Harbor

the Labrador Sea and in the Davis Strait to Greenland, and on northward along Greenland's rock-bound coast to Disko Bay.

We entered Disko in order to re-supply at Ilulissat. To reach this small fishing harbour we had to detour some 36 miles around an icy drift that projected into the bay from the Ilulissat icefjord, and after entering this stream of ice was wind-driven in behind us, trapping us in harbour for several days. Eventually a favourable wind opened the ice just enough, and with dark veins of water now interspersed throughout the glittering whiteness we could gingerly wedge our way out. After two days, using a lookout high in the rigging to determine the most favourable path of escape, we were finally free of the ice again.

After crossing Baffin Bay among soaring, cathedral-like bergs, our steering cable snapped as we approached Pond Inlet, leaving us helpless in a windless sea. The repair, which took hours lying upside down in the cramped greasy counter, couldn't help but drive home again our complete isolation and the need for self-reliance in this beautiful but unforgiving environment where help was distant or nonexistent (Nunavut Territory has a total population of about 33,000, mostly Inuit people, spread over an area of some 777,000 square miles). The season to be on the water was rapidly closing, and this became impossible to ignore as temperatures dropped and we crossed paths with the last retreating vessels on their way eastward.

My goal had always been to get halfway through the Passage in one season and have the time to interact with local communities. If we could get to Cambridge Bay, almost directly north of eastern Montana, we would have achieved our goal ... it was becoming a race. There were reports that new sea ice was already forming in the northern passages that had earlier been open, while McClure Strait and Peel Sound (part of Amundsen's route) had never opened at all. We had arrived at tiny Graham Harbour, a secure anchorage surrounded by bare mountainous walls, on the north side of Lancaster Sound. There we waited out a gale for several days. After daily visits from a polar bear, which seemed baffled by our presence, we finally struck out southwards, promptly running into a snow squall as we blindly probed for the eastern coast of Prince Regent Inlet.



The date was 5 September – we were not to learn until the end of the passage that this northern end of Prince Regent had been declared closed for the season on 27 August.

We pushed south along the Brodeur Peninsula, hugging the coast as we were beset by ever-greater ice until we could go no further. We were completely locked in, with ice jammed so densely that there was no dark water between the flows. Here we waited for the better part of two days, unable to so much as point the schooner in the proper direction – westward toward the open water just visible from the masthead.

Ice in Prince Regent Inlet



Finally, fortuitously, the ice turned us in the desired direction and again we were able to slowly snake toward freedom, using the boat as a wedge and orienting her one way or another using our ice poles. Once clear of this latest impediment we continued down the inlet, trying to get round the bottom of a moving ridge of ice in its centre which extended southward some 100 odd miles. On achieving this we found we had to beat back northward in 35–40 knots of wind to reach the eastern entrance to Bellot Strait. Icing on the rigging and sails made sail handling very difficult – my hands became so cold grappling with ice-coated lines and sails

that, although I could will them to seize rigging or ties, they had lost all strength and slid away without gripping as if they no longer were a part of me. I watched this futile groping incredulously as would a puppeteer whose suddenly severed strings no longer activate. Cold is painful to a point, but this was the next stage toward incapacity – extending inward from the extremities. Each tack brought us a little closer, however. The wind-driven ice edged toward the coast, narrowing our northward path. We had nowhere to go but on and quickly. There was no refuge elsewhere. Eventually we cleared the cape and made it safely into the bay near Bellot at dawn.

Now here we were, shooting through into the increasing darkness on the western side of the strait. The compass was worthless as we were so close to the magnetic pole, and the charts were all marked with warnings accordingly. We were steering toward our next waypoint, but at times our only real orientation was by keeping the wind at a constant angle relative to the schooner – a method as old as seafaring. We were moving southward away from the heaviest ice concentrations, but that could all change quickly with the temperatures falling. We made a brief stop in the keyhole harbour of Gjoa Haven at the southeast corner of King William Island. Amundsen had once described this anchorage as the greatest small harbour in the world. Protected from marauding bergs and bits drifting by just outside the entrance one could appreciate his perspective.



Gitana wintering in Cambridge Bay

Simpson Strait was now the major hurdle between us and the final refuge of Cambridge Bay. This 60 mile long gauntlet of twists and turns is a trickster's jumble of strong currents, ice, shallows, shoals and poor visibility. It is described by the *Arctic Pilot* as the single most hazardous stretch of water in the entire Northwest Passage. Negotiating the pass out of Gjoa Haven in daylight, combined with the increasing hours of darkness late in the season, meant that we found it necessary to navigate Simpson Strait in darkness which made it doubly treacherous, but after a harrowing night we managed to emerge unscathed at the far end just as dawn broke. From there we proceeded almost effortlessly across Queen Maud Gulf to Cambridge Bay, with a fair wind and through one-tenth ice coverage, arriving there on 20 September 2013. Once there we began to prepare the schooner for the –60°F (–51°C) temperatures she would have to endure during the Arctic winter, and there we left her to await the next season as the days quickly shortened into the Arctic night. My two crew and I arrived back in Cambridge Bay in mid July 2014. *Gitana* appeared



Michael and his 2014 crew, joined by a member of the Canadian military, at Tuktoyaktuk

exactly as we had left her in October, having braved winds and the –68°F (–56°C) temperatures. The wreck of the *Maud*, one of Amundsen's later vessels abandoned here, still rose slightly above the ice in the east arm of the bay. The *Martin Berman*, one of the ships searching for the lost Franklin expedition vessels, *Erebus* and *Terror*, had also over-wintered here and was ready to resume her search once the ice allowed. Her captain commented on the increase in ice this year and how that might limit their search in the shortened season. He told me, "In the Arctic all you need is horsepower and patience. The more you have of one the less you need of the other". Of those, the latter would have to be our ace for the limited navigational season – the ice in Cambridge Bay and Dease Strait stretched almost unbroken as far as we could see.

We trudged slowly back and forth from town (about 3 miles each way) and stowed all the supplies and equipment that had been stored to protect from being damaged by the severe Arctic temperatures. We had ample time, as the lingering ice plugged the exit from the bay as effectively as a cork in a bottle. It wasn't until 3 August that we finally got *Gitana* back into her element. The fuel available was not diesel as we thought but Jet A (a type of kerosene/paraffin with a very low freezing point). The hamlet had run out of diesel during the winter and there would be none available until the barges arrived. No one knew when that would be, but it would be too late for us. Diesels will run supposedly on any hydrocarbon, but the question is for how long? There were lots of opinions about this. I decided to proceed, hope for the best, and replace the fuel as soon as possible.

Three days after relaunching we departed Cambridge Bay in the same doglegged fashion as we had entered, following a reciprocal course into Dease Strait. The ice had finally let us out and now to the west it was clear, although I knew the short season had

curtailed our options. As if by magic we now encountered only bergy bits. It seemed surreal. We sailed into Coronation Gulf with the water temperature in the 20°s and compass variation changing very quickly due to the proximity of the magnetic pole. We proceeded without incident to Dolphin and Union Strait, experiencing about four hours of twilight from 2300 to 0430. At this point, with the wind becoming unfavourable, I discovered an electrical problem that indicated the batteries weren't being charged. As the starter motor, as well as all the instruments including the GPS, were dependent on these batteries this was a serious concern. There were no anchorages as we entered Amundsen Gulf, with only two small communities about 100 miles upwind, neither with good shelter. The nearest place of any size was the hamlet of Kugluktuk (Coppermine) back across Coronation Gulf, 170 miles in the wrong direction.

In this sparsely-populated and frozen land I again thought of our need for self-sufficiency and by what a tenuous thread our safety hung. I put waypoints in a handheld GPS and, with the wind now favourable, turned and started giving up all the miles we had so recently gained. Once in Kugluktuk we had some good fortune. Australians Roger and Ali Grayson with their small motor vessel *Wave* had got in behind a breakwater, and they came out and indicated a way that we could do the same. This was a great help, as much of the Arctic is uncharted (70% by some estimates). Another factor is iceberg gouging, which can change the sea bottom by as much as 2m from one year to the next – particularly significant in areas that are very shoal. The following day the Canadian Coast Guard vessel *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* was, by chance, making a crew change off Kugluktuk and I was able to speak to the chief engineer. At his suggestion we checked all of *Gitana*'s electrical systems thoroughly, and eventually concluded that the problem was in our instrument circuit board rather then the system itself. All was well, but we had lost about six precious days.

We re-entered Amundsen Gulf on 15 August en route to Tuktoyaktuk on the western side of Cape Bathurst. This area was now mostly ice free, but ice hovered along parts of the Alaskan North Slope and the end of the season was growing nearer – Point Barrow is often frozen over by 15 September. We anchored for one 'night' at Summers Harbour in the Booth Islands, named for the gin company owner who was an early sponsor of Arctic exploration. Henry Larsen, who took the schooner *St Roch* through the passage in 1940, described Summers Harbour as 'the best harbour in the Canadian Arctic'. We left the anchorage and its musk ox after fuel transfers and maintenance, and sailed up the eastern curve of Cape Bathurst – a notorious ice choke-point – viewing the famous Smoking Hills. These range about 30 miles along the barren sea cliffs, the smoke plumes due to spontaneous combustion of coal and bitumen deposits.

Once around Cape Bathurst the seas flattened and the water turned a shallow milky green. This area is known for its pingos. These formations are unique to the Arctic and this area has the highest concentrations known – some 1350. They look much like volcanic cones, and can form on land or on the sea floor where they can be a navigational hazard. They are created by ice incrementally lifting the earth over a period of years, and can reach some 200ft (61m) high. Tuktoyaktuk is a community of about 900 people, situated near the mouth of the Mackenzie River. Here we re-supplied for the 1000 plus mile run across Alaska's north coast and on through the Bering Strait to Nome. We were invited to a traditional dinner of dried white fish, cooked white trout and Beluga whale *muktuk* (a traditional Inuit and Chukchi dish of frozen whale skin

and blubber). All over the Arctic we were shown generous hospitality by the native inhabitants, and in Tuktoyaktuk I was also invited to a meeting of Inuit rangers who were assembling for a patrol with the Canadian military.

From Tuktoyaktuk we departed for the old whaling station on Herschel Island and from there the daunting north coast of Alaska. This portion of the passage reminded me of running a gauntlet. Ice was fast along some of the shore, but in the late summer a channel maybe 40–50 miles wide may open between the shore and the offshore pack. The channel is not stable and can close with onshore winds. There are few anchorages, with scant protection for a vessel drawing 2m as the coast is shallow with minimal tide.

It is about 400 miles from Herschel to Point Barrow. Barrow itself has no protection and is an open roadstead, but Elson Lagoon lies some 8–9 miles to the southeast. It is very shallow, and has a difficult approach through shoals that shift and change depth, and once inside the pass the lagoon shoals up rapidly. Protection is said to be only fair even in 'good weather'. After Barrow there is not much in the way of protection for 300 more miles until Point Hope, where one can at times anchor in the lee, depending upon wind direction. At Point Barrow the ice moves on and off the shore until July – northerly winds bring the ice on shore – but can remain closed until August, or even all summer. In most years freeze-up begins at Barrow in mid September and at the Bering Strait in October, but this is not something one can be sure of.

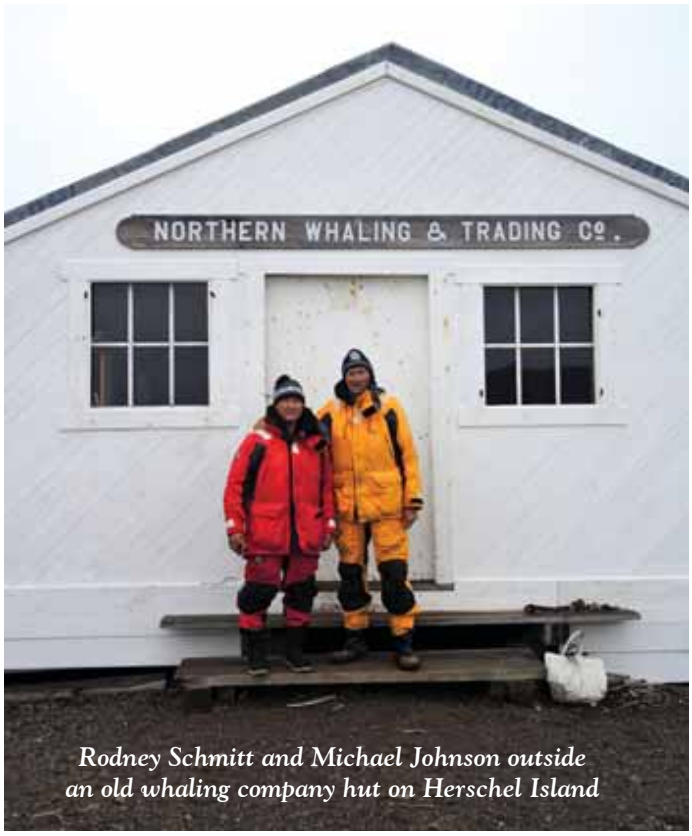
We approached Cape Halkett, en route to Barrow, in an attempt to shelter in its lee against an adverse west-northwestly wind. The charts were marked with the caution that 'depths may vary as much as 6ft due to iceberg groundings', which is significant when one has 3ft of water under the keel and no real tide to rescue you from a grounding – the soundings were much shallower than the charts indicated. We tacked out and headed on for Barrow, with the northern lights dancing in the increasing darkness. Finally we brought *Gitana* to Eluitkak Pass and the twisting entrance to Elson Lagoon. The ever-changing entrance was unmarked, and we passed around a shoal with four quick changes of course and a channel so close to a sand spit you could touch it with a boat hook. What worried me was the ice gouging. We had less water than the chart showed, but about 2ft under the keel. We held our breath, the water deepened and we were inside, though we could only go in



Crew member Rodney Schmitt among driftwood at Herschel Island, with Gitana at anchor in the distance

for half a mile before we had to anchor. We were some four miles across open water to a road that ran to Barrow, eight or nine miles away.

It was the end of August and freeze-up here could be as soon as two weeks away. We were about 300 miles from Point Hope and about 600 from Nome, on the south side of the Arctic Circle and the Bering Strait. The wind was relentlessly out of the south-southwest, heading the course we needed to make. (The predominant wind should have been from the east, but that wasn't our lot.) We transferred fuel, cleaned up and prepared the vessel for the next leg.



Rodney Schmitt and Michael Johnson outside an old whaling company hut on Herschel Island

After several days I went ashore to check in with customs (this was not a port of entry, but I had been instructed to contact Fairbanks if we stopped at Point Barrow). The sun peeped out, but before I got ashore there was a snow squall which obliterated visibility. There was no sign of *Gitana* now and none when I reached shore – fortunately I had brought a handheld GPS with the boat's position marked. I waded through boggy tundra with my bear gun over my shoulder until I reached the sand road and eventually the town. I was able to contact customs next morning, and they cleared me in as the post in Nome (which is a port of entry) was temporarily unmanned.

The wind meanwhile had increased to 30 knots with rain, snow and fog, and I felt I had to get back to *Gitana* although the return trip was risky. The schooner was not visible until I got within a half mile of her. The dinghy had to be bailed, and the quartering seas became dangerous as I slowly progressed across the four miles of shallow lagoon, the fetch increasing. I realised I would have to close with the schooner on approach as I would not be able to bring the dinghy around in these breaking seas without capsizing. The bowsprit pitched high and plunged into the green shallow seas. I saw one of my crew checking the anchor rode, and he grabbed the painter as I banged into the hull. My crew were glad to see me and I was happy to be back aboard. Next morning it was still blowing southwesterly, visibility was only a few feet, and the deck was covered with several inches of snow. This was the situation when my older crew member collapsed as he entered the cabin. We stretched him out, checked his vitals and slowly he revived ... confused at first, but then seemingly okay. We could not have got him ashore in



Michael Johnson, glad to have traversed the Northwest Passage despite 'two difficult ice years'

the dinghy against the wind, and though I could have called for assistance he did not wish me to. I monitored him closely and he seemed to recover fully. We never got a complete explanation of what caused his collapse, but he did receive a heart stent on return to California.

After a week in Elson Lagoon, a place I would not recommend and was delighted to see the last of, we got a slight window. We ploughed out through breaking seas around the shallow bars and into the pass. The waves were considerable, and at times the depth indicator showed 0ft under the keel in the troughs, but we didn't touch and finally we were into deeper water and running along the spit that terminates at Point Barrow. We were now in the Chukchi Sea, rounding the northernmost point of the United States and heading southwest toward Point Hope, the Bering Strait and the last leg of the Northwest Passage. Fog rolled in and obliterated the shore and snow blew horizontally, but we had a fair wind and we were free of the lagoon. At just past midnight on 7 September we anchored to the east of Point Hope, which gave a bit of protection from the southerly winds. From there we would sail almost due south to the Bering Strait.

Two lows were converging on us and looked to bring some extended bad weather. In an attempt to avoid this we departed in the dark early morning and raced south into Kotzebue Sound. We no longer had the long daylight, but we were now out of the ice and the air and water temperatures began to rise. We crossed the Arctic Circle on 9 September, having crossed it northbound off Greenland on 13 August 2013, and passed uneventfully through the Bering Strait into the Pacific Ocean. The Arctic was now astern of our little schooner. The following morning we anchored in Port Clarence in the rain, the first real harbour we had seen since Herschel Island. We were less than 100 miles from Nome where I hoped to overwinter *Gitana*.

Adverse weather was our lot for a few days and we went ashore to the small native village of Brevig Mission, population about 500, where we were very hospitably received. I reflected on the Northwest Passage, having read that there are more books on the subject than vessels which have transited it. We weathered a gale at Port Clarence and then sailed on to Nome, where I was able to get *Gitana* up one of the barge ramps and out of the water. In the weeks that followed I prepared her for –40°F (–40°C) temperatures. It was with interest that I read the following quote, attributed to the Canadian Press, in the local paper: 'The ice is very heavy this year (2014). There is a myth that there is no ice in the Arctic and that is exactly that, a myth.' A notice sent to me later quoted the Scott Polar Institute as listing *Gitana* as the 87th sailing vessel to traverse the Passage.



PURE BY NATURE.

AWARD WINNING SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY FROM THE ISLE OF ARRAN.



San Francisco World Spirits Awards – Double Gold Medal, Islands

San Francisco World Spirits Awards – Gold Medal, Islands

ISLE OF Arran ESTD 1995 DISTILLERS

Distillery & Visitor Centre
Lochranza, Isle of Arran KA27 8HJ
Tel: +44 (0) 1770 830264
www.arranwhisky.com

YACHT CLUBS IN GALICIA: SNOOTY, OR BALM TO THE SALTY BROW?

Steve Pickard

(*Steve edits the RCC Pilotage Foundations's* South Biscay *guide*.)

Galicia! Its granite fingers grip the North Atlantic and have the aptly named Finis Terre as their beacon. Between these claws lie its five famous *rías*, and in their sheltered waters lies probably the richest cruising ground in the western Atlantic. A wonderful series of almost endless possibilities, yet too many cruising folk use Galicia as a stepping-stone either returning from the Med or, more often, when outward bound on an Atlantic circuit.

As we all know, *ría* is Spanish for river, but this does not in any way describe the extensive bodies of water encompassed by the term. Nor does it give any indication of the richness of culture made evident by the cities, towns and villages that abound on their shores. So if one has struggled to get the boat into ocean cruising order and then taken the most difficult step, that of actually starting, and finally made the most perilous passage of the trip, the crossing of the Bay of Biscay, why rush past Galicia? The winds are fair from this point on, with the Portuguese tradewinds leading into the tradewinds proper. There are places to visit en route to the Canaries such as Lisbon and Madeira, but if you are early in the season a long wait in Las Palmas could prove tedious in hot and sultry conditions ...

Meanwhile back in Galicia, in ambient temperatures of 24°C or so, the cruising folk who managed to overcome their outward bound momentum are sailing hither and yon, mostly in sheltered waters with a different anchorage every night or, for access to towns and other delights such as supermarkets, a marina.

Anchorages speak for themselves – they are either a delight or a nightmare, depending on the weather prevailing at the time or, worse, that which crops up in the middle of

The view from Real Club Náutico Sanxenxo





A Coruña from the Real Club Náutico

the night, but marinas I think need a little elucidation, especially in Galicia. They are generally of two flavours, the commercial marina and the ones owned and run by yacht clubs (*club náutic*). We are all familiar with the large commercial marinas – like hotels they vary little from one continent to the next – but here in Galicia the clubs and their marinas differ wildly, each the product of individual history and membership.

But what is it, this 'yacht club'? Fundamentally it's the Yacht Club we know so well, a group of enthusiasts who get together and form a club, elect a president/commodore and a committee, rent or build a clubhouse, and then organise social events and drink a lot. The Spanish version varies in that sometimes it causes a marina to be built. This introduces another layer of management; the manager and his staff, the harbour master and his *marineros*. Some of these clubs evidently have financial geniuses at their helm from time to time. The brand new club building at Sanxenxo has to be seen to be believed and yet the members pay only €40 a month, though this does not include marina berths. Another feature is that they are not-for-profit entities. That may explain why, in some clubs, participants in every race held pay no berthing fees!

In my view it is better to use the club marinas for two principal reasons: first is the intriguing variety already mentioned, and second is cost, as in most cases their daily rates are less than those of the commercial marinas – up to 25%, it is claimed, but I have no direct evidence of this. Where there are both commercial and club marinas in the same port the prices tend to be similar but the facilities very different. Take, for example, A Coruña (the Galician name – La Coruña is the Spanish equivalent, in case you wondered). The daily rate for a 12m boat is around €32 in both marinas, and mundane facilities such as showers, laundry etc much the same, but in the RCNC basin you have not just the town at your feet but the use of the magnificent and elaborate Club building complete with liveried attendants. I was intrigued and astounded by the elaborately framed *Menu del día* – two courses and wine for €9 or the full monty for €13! I asked *El Presidente* of the RCNC whether I would pass muster in my shirt and jeans ... he eyed me from top to toe and, no doubt wishing that my shirt was more recently pressed, confirmed that I would be welcome.



The Club Náutico de Ortigueira¸ northeast of A Coruña

There are other benefits – for example, clubs do not charge for short stays, such as refuelling and lunching in the clubhouse. (If any club marina disputes this, refer them to Javier Ruiz de Cortazar Diaz, President of the clubs association ASNAUGA). In most if not all clubs, marina staff do not mind if departure is delayed until 1900 or so, a useful feature if a night passage is on the cards. Another characteristic of the clubs are the strange stainless steel boxes one sees, usually near the office. These are 24 hour info points (*puntas de informations*) and one day they may actually work...

There tend to be several preconceptions about *club nàutics* which I will try to address. The first is that they are more expensive, and this I have already covered. The second is that they have no space for visitors or that they do not welcome them. All club marinas in Galicia have 10% of their berths kept free for visitors, and



The restaurant at Real Club Náutico Portosin (where your editor enjoyed the best calamares a la romana she has ever tasted)

if any *marinero* should be less than effusive in his welcome I should report him to his manager. It is perfectly possible for the marina to be full in the high season or when running events in line with their sporting charter, but I think the reason for this is becoming clear... One way around this problem is that, because the 29 *club náutics* in Galicia are united into a group called ASNAUGA, it is possible to book your next port of call from the one you are in, no matter how many days hence. In fact there is an app one can download to make this process even easier.

Another preconception is that the Spanish *club náutics*, especially those with the appellation '*real*' (royal) and thus blessed by the King or his antecedents, are snooty. There is no doubt that certain members of these clubs were hoping to hobnob with folk higher up the food chain than your average cruiser, but this is certainly not the view or attitude of the management.

As mentioned, one of the principle attractions of the *club náutics* as opposed to commercial marinas is their variety, and to illustrate this let us dip into a few of my favourites:

RCN Coruña has a wonderful city setting and is one of the true crossroads of the yachting world. There are two long basins linked by a wide passage. Most cruisers tie up in the eastern portion, but this makes access to the RCN Coruña clubhouse less accessible. I prefer the northwestern part of the marina.

RCN Portosin is a charming, friendly and well-run club with stunning views westwards from the bar/dining room. A feature of this club is the *camarotes*, cabins apparently used for crews sick to death of the sea after a long passage. How green behind the gills you have to be to qualify I do not know...



Musicians at Club Náutico Boiro, Cabo Cruz

CN Boiro at **Cabo de Cruz** has a great setting and one day they will erect a new club building, but now is the time to visit because the wooden chalets that serve every need are charming and airy.

I would only tie up at **RCN Sanxenxo** if I could lie alongside the single club pontoon. This in order to experience the unbelievable opulence of the newly-built clubhouse. I will not begin to describe the facilities therein, but if there is anything imaginable missing I should love to hear of it.

Just round the corner from Sanxenxo lies **CN Portonovo** and its new clubhouse, a good spot for an overnight stop on moorings off the mole or in the marina. It might also be a good place to overwinter the boat, either on a pontoon where continuous surveillance keeps you informed of any unfortunate developments, or ashore where a Club-designed 12 tonne crane will lift you out and an ingenious transfer vehicle will do the rest.



Lounging on the balcony at Club Náutico Portonovo

I would not actually use the **RCN Vigo**, despite its Titanic style, Art Deco architecture and near Olympic-size swimming pool – not because of its slightly faded splendour, but because the **CN de Rodeira** across the water at Cangas costs at least one-third less in mooring fees and, at €2 a pop, the immediately at hand ferry is worth every penny for the views of Vigo and the *ría*.

Of course every paradise has its drawbacks, and in Spain it is the uncivilised hour of the evening meal. 2200 is normal, even considered early in some places. Fortunately there is a solution – *tapas*!



allspars



- Global supply of Mast & Rigging services and parts
- World class rigging, engineering & hydraulic workshop facilites
- Experience and advice second to none

Allspars Head Office:
Tamar Building,
Queen Anne's Battery Marina,
Plymouth PL4 0LP
T: 01752 266766
sales@allspars.co.uk

Allspars Solent:
Unit 9, Premier Marina,
Swanwick,
Southampton SO31 1ZL
T: 01489 876876
www.allspars.co.uk

The World's Best Anchor

STRONGER. FASTER. LIGHTER.



FORTRESS
MARINE ANCHORS

(954) 978-9988 | WWW.FORTRESSANCHORS.COM

www.hydrovane.com

FEEL THE FREEDOM

With a completely independent self-steering windvane AND Emergency rudder... in place and ready to go

- Your best crew member - doesn't eat, sleep, or talk back!
- No power consumed - less reliance on charging at sea
- No problem to install off center - keep your davits or platform
- Have confidence in case of main steering or rudder failure




Hallberg Rassy 352


Jeanneau SO 54


Wauquiez PS 40

Bristol 51.1


Ovni 385


Najad 373


Columbia 43


Westerley 49


Freedom 35

HYDROVANE
SINCE 1968

ECH2O Tec Watermakers
watt&sea Hydrogenerator
HYDROMAX Marine Fuel Cell

STEERING THE DREAM

SAILING ADVENTURE ~ CAPE TOWN TO CABADELO

Jolien van Cranenburgh

(*Let me introduce myself. I am 26 years old and graduated last year with a BA in Sports and Movement Education. In 2011 I started my own business, Sailing Veerse Meer, which has expanded with Jolie Outdoor and other activities – for more information see www.sailingveersemeer.nl and www.jolie-outdoor.nl. Since these activities are outdoors and I am based in the Netherlands, they are limited to the summer months.*)

I always dreamed about crossing an ocean. When, in October 2014, I started looking for a job in which I could sail in wintertime in Australia or New Zealand, I discovered that every country has a separate set of papers that you need in order to give sailing lessons or take people on tours. I searched for a certificate that would be valid all over the world, and found that the RYA Yachtmaster would do the trick. One of the requirements is that you have to sail a minimum of 2500 miles aboard a yacht, with a minimum of two overnight passages. If I crossed an ocean I would meet all these requirements. So I started looking for a yacht that could use a crew member, and came in contact with Dick van der Waaij and Anita Idskes with *Kind of Blue*, their Stephen Jones-designed Starlight 39. They were so nice – and crazy – to invite me on their yacht, which they have sailed and lived aboard for the last ten years. I had a lot of respect for this – it is a big thing to have a stranger in your house for around two months. I was so happy to hear I had a boat that would take me, I was dancing in the living room all morning!

In mid December, when on Lanzarote enjoying a well-earned holiday after graduation,

The first week in Cape Town



I received an email from Dick and Anita. They wanted to speak to me urgently. Oh no, I thought, someone is ill or something. But luckily that was not the case. They told me I could apply for an OCC Youth Bursary, but had to do it quickly. This was fantastic! Within a week or so the decision had been made that I would get a bursary and I had some extra finance for the trip. I am so very grateful for that!

On 23 January I was on the plane to Cape Town. I was rather nervous – it is not a small thing, crossing an ocean. I was reassured by the fact that Dick and Anita had already been sailing the oceans for ten years and for them it is the most normal thing in the world, so there is no stress. I was mainly anxious about meeting whales underway and the piracy in Brazil. The next morning I arrived at Cape Town International Airport and there they were to welcome me. We had had Skype contact regularly, but the first impression was good and also there was a 'click'. They freed the boat's aft cabin for my use, so I had my own place, which was great. The first week there was too much wind and waves to leave Cape Town, and instead we went out to dinner a lot and I went on a mini-safari. We also made preparations for the trip, provisioning, reading pilots, sailing the route on paper, etc.

We finally left Cape Town on 29 January for Saldanha Bay, a day sail of around 65 miles. I was confronted with my biggest fear on this trip – we saw two whales! The first one was relatively small and close by the boat, the other was enormous, but luckily far away. I enjoyed it a lot and my fear was gone! The anchorage in Saldanha is full of yachts, most of them badly maintained. We stayed two nights and then continued to Walvis Bay, Namibia.

This was my first passage with multiple overnights. We drew up a watch schedule: 2000–2300 for me, 2300–0200 for Dick, 0200–0500 for Anita, and then



Ready for departure



Cold between Saldanha and Walvis Bay

0500–0800 for me again before Dick took over for the day watch. While underway we wrote up the log every six hours. The passage took 5½ days for the 703 miles, and during this time we saw sharks and had three nights of dense fog with very little moon, which made it quite exciting. The AIS and radar were working fine, which made me feel safe. Just before we entered Walvis Bay we were greeted by a gigantic pod of dolphins which came to play with the boat – it was fantastic! Walvis Bay is a great place with a good vibe and happy and helpful people, and the wildlife was stunning. Seals try to jump into your dinghy, and pelicans are flying everywhere. We stayed for a week. After Walvis Bay it was time for 'the real work' – sailing to Brazil with a stop in Saint Helena, a British island in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean.

Ocean sailing gives you a very special feeling, especially at night when you are thinking about what you are doing. On a 39ft boat with 5000m of water under you, there is no assistance and also



Hoisting the Namibian courtesy flag



Walvis Bay – a big harbour with beautiful nature



– hopefully not needed – no rescue services. On the other hand it is the safest thing to do. There is nothing you can hit and you can't run aground, as long as you keep a lookout and an eye on the AIS. This is totally different from sailing in the Netherlands. Even if you are off the rhumb line course, it does not matter a lot on these long distances. I regularly had a laugh when Dick and Anita were discussing that we had to gybe, "Oh, we'll do that tomorrow sometime". I could not believe my

Torn spinnaker



Time to read Flying Fish!

ears! In the Netherlands I am always sailing on confined, busy waters where we have to gybe or tack every ten minutes or so. And now we have a whole day to gybe! Ocean sailing is easy sailing, very safe, and above all very relaxing!

During the crossing to Saint Helena, which took 9½ days for the 1283 miles, we had some bad luck with the spinnaker. On a quiet morning the top and the leech tore off, and the whole thing landed in the water. Then just before reaching Saint Helena there was a rip in the main, but it was repaired quickly. Once in Saint Helena we repaired a couple more seams in the main, where the stitches were coming loose. We were greeted



Land ahead … almost overlooked St Helena



Jacob's Ladder – 700 steps in 18 minutes!

by dolphins – so nice! – and there were supposed to be whale sharks too, but we did not see them. In Saint Helena a ferry service runs from the yachts to the shore and vice versa. Using your own dinghy is very difficult because of the high waves that usually run there. The island is very old-fashioned. There is no mobile phone network and wifi in only three places, where it is very expensive, but there are some fantastic hikes and the residents are very friendly and helpful. It was good to see some of the boats we had met in Cape Town or Walvis Bay, which gave a nice atmosphere.

After a great week we departed for Cabadelo, Brazil.

The St Helena ferry service





Ocean wildlife



Flying fish every morning

The wind was pleasant, around 12 knots, and the sea relatively quiet. The temperature was getting higher everyday, around 34°C in daytime and 27°C at night. During one of my night watches a flying fish flew through the hatch into the cabin. We had no success at fishing – we had a fish hooked twice, and one we almost got on board, but both escaped. We sometimes had birds visit. The first time they came around, they generally had a fight with the wind generator and ended up in the water, but after a few tries they learned how to land on the bimini and radar pole without being hit by the blades.

A refreshing shower just before reaching Brazil





We made it – what a long way!

At dawn on 13 March we could finally call 'Land in Sight!'. Arriving in a sailing boat on a continent where you have never been before is very special. As the morning wore on we could see more of the land, and soon we were going up the river to Jacaré Marina Village. After 14 days and 1913 miles we could moor alongside a pontoon. This arrival was another party! We walked around, found an ATM, had lunch, and back on the boat opened a bottle of champagne to celebrate our crossing of the South Atlantic Ocean. We rinsed the boat with fresh water, had some *caipirinhas* (Brazil's national drink, made with sugar cane liquor and lime) and met other ocean sailors. Four days later I flew home to prepare my company for another sailing season in the Netherlands.

I am very grateful and happy that I was able to make this voyage with two experienced sailors. I learned a lot: about the use of the preventer, for instance, which I normally do not use for the short distances; cleaning the paddlewheel of the log without sinking the boat; sealing the propeller shaft; repairing sails; preparing for the passage; keeping a log book; sailing with a gennaker (which I do not have); how to interpret radar images; anchoring; night watches; fishing; running the watermaker; baking bread and making yoghurt; electricity management, etc. During the day there was not a lot to do and so I was forced to read – including the experiences of other sailors and general information about our destinations – sleep, and get a sun tan. I was forced to relax, which is something I am normally not very good at.

My goal for the future is to take my Yachtmaster exam, expand my companies in the Netherlands, start making yacht deliveries, and sail overseas in wintertime so I can see a lot of the world and do what I love to do all year round.

I would like to thank Dick and Anita for giving me the opportunity to sail with them and for teaching me so much. It was a very generous and unexpected gesture, which I will never forget. You will find their website at www.kindofblue.info.



We offer worldwide cruising solutions. Don't hesitate to ask us for a quote.

Yacht Insurance International

P.O. Box 1148
9701 BC Groningen
The Netherlands

t +31(0)50 - 313 08 60
info@yacht-insurance.nl
www.yacht-insurance.nl

FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Murray Longmore, aboard *Irish Eyes*

Tiffin (based on a recipe from netmums.com)

Ingredients

- 100g butter
- 25g soft brown sugar
- 3 tbsp cocoa
- 4 tbsp golden syrup
- 225g digestive biscuits, somewhat crushed
- 150g dried cherries or any dried fruit
- 225g milk chocolate

Heat the butter, sugar, cocoa and golden syrup in a bowl over a pan of hot water for a couple of minutes until melted. Add the crushed biscuits and cherries and mix well (some bigger chunks of digestive biscuits give a really good texture). Press into a 20cm square greased tin. Melt 225g chocolate (milk, plain or a combination), pour on top and smooth over. Mark into squares and chill in the fridge for at lean an hour before cutting.

See page 27 onwards for Murray's Tiffin-related yearning...



FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Kath McNulty, aboard *Caramor*

Tiramisu

Ingredients

- 150g mascarpone cheese
- 50g sugar
- lemon juice to taste
- 3 eggs (very fresh, as used raw)
- 200ml of strong, sweetened expresso coffee
- Marsala wine

Separate the eggs, and mix the yolks with the first three ingredients above. Whisk the egg whites and add to the mixture.

Place a layer of sponge fingers in a container, spoon the sweet coffee over them, sprinkle a couple of spoonfuls of Marsala wine, and pour half the yellow mixture over the top. Repeat the sponge fingers / coffee + Marsala wine / yellow mixture sequence. Refrigerate over night, and sprinkle cocoa powder over the top just before serving.

If we can't get Marsala wine I use rum and call it nautical tiramisu. Alternatively you could use Tia Maria, but make sure you never serve that to your half-Italian boyfriend – it was nearly the end of our beautiful relationship!



What Cruisers Do



What society thinks I do



What my mom thinks I do



What my friends think I do



What my colleagues think I do



What I think I do



What I really Do

www.coastalboating.net

A VISIT TO THE NORTH COAST OF CUBA
Ron Heyselaar

(*After leaving Malta on Valentine's Day 2014, Dutch members Ron and Ineke Heyselaar – and Boris the cat – sailed* Lily*, their 2010 Amel 54, around the Mediterranean and in November crossed the Atlantic with the ARC+. Then they turned north, with the ultimate destination of Halifax, before returning to the Caribbean for the winter. Plans are to return to Europe in 2016 via Greenland and Iceland. Follow their travels at www.facebook.com/sailingyachtlily/.*)

April 2015, slowly mountains started to emerge from the sea haze. Cuba!

We shared this view with a more famous person than us, Christopher Columbus. More than 500 years ago Columbus landed at Playa Blanca, just two miles from our landing point, Puerto de Vita. Rumour has it that he was very impressed with the view, and certainly the scenery is nice, with impressive mountain ranges, but everything is burned by the very intense sunshine, and it is very hot and humid.



Our first sight of Cuba

After leaving Fajardo in east Puerto Rico just four days previously (650 miles, including a 'small' detour to the Silver Banks off the Dominican Republic to see the whales, but no joy), we were keen but also a bit nervous about landing in Cuba. Stories abound about inaccurate charts, massive bureaucracy and derelict marinas, so with some anxiety we called the *Guarda Frontera* to start the process of inward clearance. Nothing could have been more contrary! The marina in Vita is in a very good state with all facilities available, albeit a bit isolated. The charting was, indeed, a bit more complicated. All three of our electronic charts (Jeppessen, Navionics and Garmin) were inaccurate to some degree, the German NV* paper charts were extremely accurate. It was strange to navigate the 'old-fashioned' way on paper. We actually had to work out where we were (can you imagine that?). Highly satisfactory and so much fun! Our RYA instructor would be proud that after all these years his rather intense methods of teaching navigation are not forgotten.

* Nautische Veröffentlichungen Verlagsgesellschaft mbH – http://eu.nvcharts.com



The monument to mark the landing of Christopher Columbus at Playa Blanca

As soon as we entered the 15 mile territorial waters of Cuba we established contact with the *Guarda Frontera*, who asked us to call again when we were closer. We were then instructed to proceed to the marina. Within minutes of the coast guard call, the marina hailed us on Channel 16 to welcome us to Cuba and ask whether we needed any assistance. To speed up the clearing process, the marina also asked the basic clearance questions so they could inform the various officials. The channel is very well marked, though unlit, and is dredged to a consistent depth of over 5m. At our request the marina dispatched a speedboat to guide us through the channel to the marina.

Lily moored in Marina de Vita



Cuban officials take their tasks very seriously, and we were asked to anchor first to allow the health official to clear us. The friendly doctor arrived within ten minutes of us anchoring, took our temperatures, asked the usual health-related questions, filled in reams of paper and subsequently declared us healthy (always good to know ...). We could now lower the Q-flag. As it was already late afternoon we were told that we should wait for morning before proceeding to the marina. This worked perfectly for us – the holding is very good in mud and the whole port, including the anchorage is extremely well protected, the 20-knot wind causing a mere ripple. After four days at sea we slept well, so next morning we were ready for whatever Cuban officialdom might throw at us.

At 0800 the marina informed us that they were ready to receive us. The same support again, with plenty of people taking our lines (mooring was Mediterranean-style) and the officials to conclude the clearance process. The pleasant and efficient *Guarda Frontera* official informed us that, at Puerto de Vita, it had been decided to combine the various functions (immigration, customs, agriculture, harbour master) into one person – him. Indeed, some more reams of paper but all very straightforward. The expected inspection of the vessel was quick and painless – no request for gifts, just something to drink as it was already quite hot outside. They left taking the 'foreign' waste with them to avoid contamination of Cuba. The vet was already waiting to come onboard to check our cat, and left 15 minutes later having also given the all clear. An hour after we had handed our lines to the crowd on the jetty and CUC 55 (about US $60) poorer, we were officially in Cuba and allowed to stay for 30 days. The payment included the cruising permit and all charges for clearing in and out. Not bad!

There were a few other yachts in the marina but no great number, which is very much the scene in Cuba. We sailed along the whole of the north coast but never saw another yacht. Bliss after the BVI!

The marina staff were very helpful with sorting out the more mundane issues (which are not so mundane in Cuba) like changing money. The various sailing forums state that it is nearly impossible to get cash from an ATM or via your credit card, so we had brought a big stash of US dollars. How expensive this wrong information turned out to be! Maybe ATMs are not as widespread as in other countries, but they are around and are very safe, as most have a security guard stationed nearby to keep an eye on things. Cash can be obtained from a credit card at all state-owned money exchange locations (*cadecas*) so long as the card is not US-issued or MasterCard (nothing to do with the Cubans, but due to the American government's embargo of Cuba, hopefully soon to change). Changing US dollars attracts a 10% fee (not 20% as many forums state) when changing into CUC. Credit cards are not widely accepted in shops and, if accepted, will cost an additional 3% fee.

After almost six months of white Caribbean beaches, painkillers and coconuts we decided that it was time to explore inland, instead of the many anchorages so pretty they are surreal. Cuba has plenty of these, which you have to share with nobody but your shadow. Renting a car and driving in Cuba is very straightforward. In east Cuba traffic is basically non-existant and the roads, with a few exceptions, are good. Most of the time we just shared the road with an occasional horse-drawn carriage or bicycle.

The scenery is spectacular, with endless sugarcane fields and mountains vying for the best scenery award of the hour. Road signs and road maps (the old fashioned way



A typical road scene in Holquin province

again – no satnav system showing roads in Cuba) are clear and, if confused, just look lost at any major crossing. Within five minutes somebody will come and give you directions. No tip is expected but a few pesos are always welcome. The Cubans must be some of the friendliest people in the Caribbean.

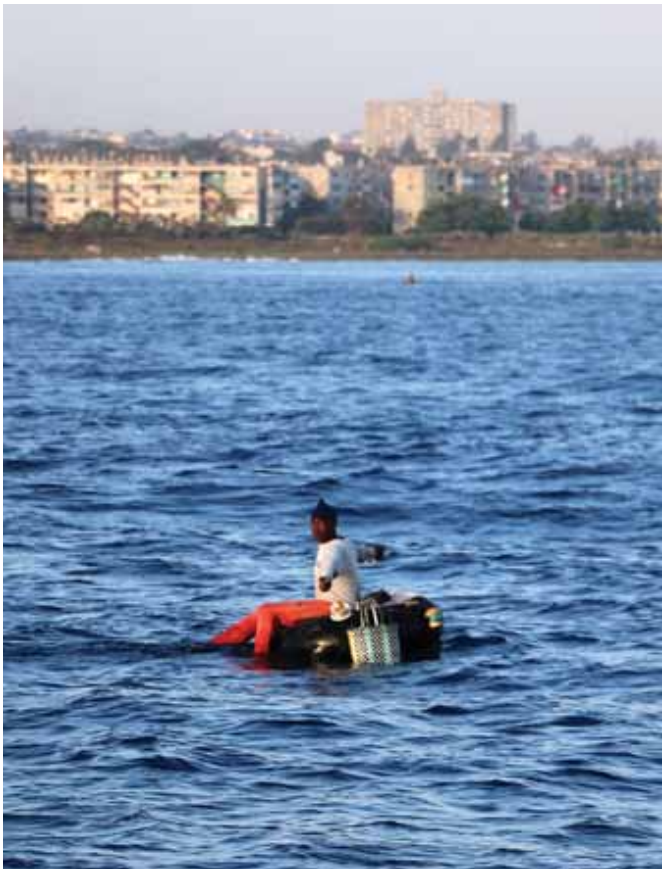
In just over a week we explored the eastern part of Cuba, drove almost 500km, stayed at Cuban b&bs (*casas particulares*) and made Cuban friends. It is a wonderful place. However, soon it was time to leave Vita and move to Marina Hemingway in Havana. We decided to sail it in one go, forfeiting all those wonderful beaches and bays waiting for us to share with nobody! Clearing out was as fast as clearing in. The cruising permit was issued – "*Please Sir, anchor anywhere you want as long as nobody lives there, and visit any official port as you please. Just give the Guarda Frontera official this cruising permit*" – a quick inspection, and off we went.

Santiago de Cuba



With the trade winds blowing at 25+ knots, and the Old Bahama Channel current pushing us at 2 knots, it took us just over 2½ days to cover the 430 miles along the Cuban north coast. In the Old Bahama Channel one gets squeezed between the barrier reef (the second longest in the world), the traffic separation zone (plenty of vessels using this en route to Florida) and the infamous hurricane flats (a mere 3m deep at best). It was good that we were doing almost 10 knots so the ordeal did not last too long.

As Marina Hemingway is closed during darkness (as in Puerto de Vita there are no functioning lights) and our progress was fast, we decided to anchor at Cayo Buba, a small island east of the Hicacos peninsula (Varadero), for a couple of hours and sail the last 60 miles during the night. As Cayo Buba is far into the huge bay, we had to sail about three miles through a very well-marked channel. Once again, the electronic charts were all inaccurate in one way or another so again we relied on our NV paper charts. As we got closer, the marina contacted us asking whether we needed any assistance. After we explained that we had merely come to anchor for a few hours they wished us a good rest and left us alone. Marina Gaviota is a brand new marina, of huge proportions and mostly empty. All moorings are French style (ie. stern-to moorings with a holding buoy) and full service. A bit remote at the very end of the Varadero 'strip' but beautifully built. At Cayo Buba holding again was very good. The marina called again when they saw us leaving to be sure we were okay, and wished us a good trip to Havana.



All went well until we hit the Gulf Stream just 10 miles east of Havana. A 2 knot current on the nose and the wind dropping fast made us realise that we had been spoilt after so many months of consistent tradewind sailing since leaving Gibraltar the previous September. Motoring closer inshore to avoid the current worked, but we hadn't expected the many fishermen floating by. All were using some floating device or other – some huge inner tubes, others giant blocks of foam – and all were floating with the tide while trying to catch fish on lines. We were not sure how they actually moved around. An interesting sight!

A fisherman floats by as we approach Havana



Havana by the sea

Slowly Havana came into view. Not having seen a big city for some months, it took some getting used to again, especially the smell of civilization! Marina Hemingway followed the same procedures as Marina Vita – all very professional, friendly and less paperwork as we had the cruising permit. The moorings are good, with reliable power and safe drinking water available, and it is close to Havana. What a city! It is best explored using the 'local' system – there's nothing like riding to town in a 1952 Pontiac owned by the same family since new, and sharing it with five other Cubans. A 20 minute entertainment costing just 20 pesos (about US 80c!).



Lily at Marina Hemingway, Havana



Havana Old Town (Havana Vieja)

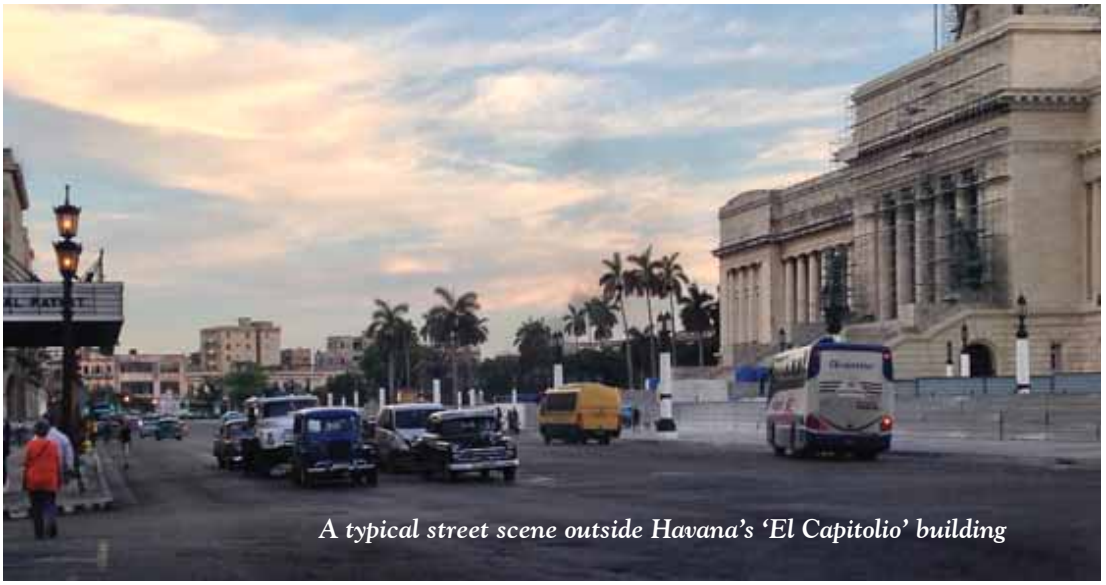
After our daughters joined us from Canada and the Netherlands, we left the boat in the marina and rented a car to explore the Pinar del Rio region of western Cuba, known for growing the best tobacco in Cuba. We were keen to explore the tobacco plantations and get educated on growing, smoking and enjoying (very) good cigars. The Viñales area, a little further north, is beautiful albeit a bit touristy. As everywhere in Cuba, there is plenty of music and people are friendly. It was easy to find a good *casa particular* and cheap restaurants.



La Bodigita del Medio, Havana. Later some enthusiastic Chileans embarked on a massive jam session

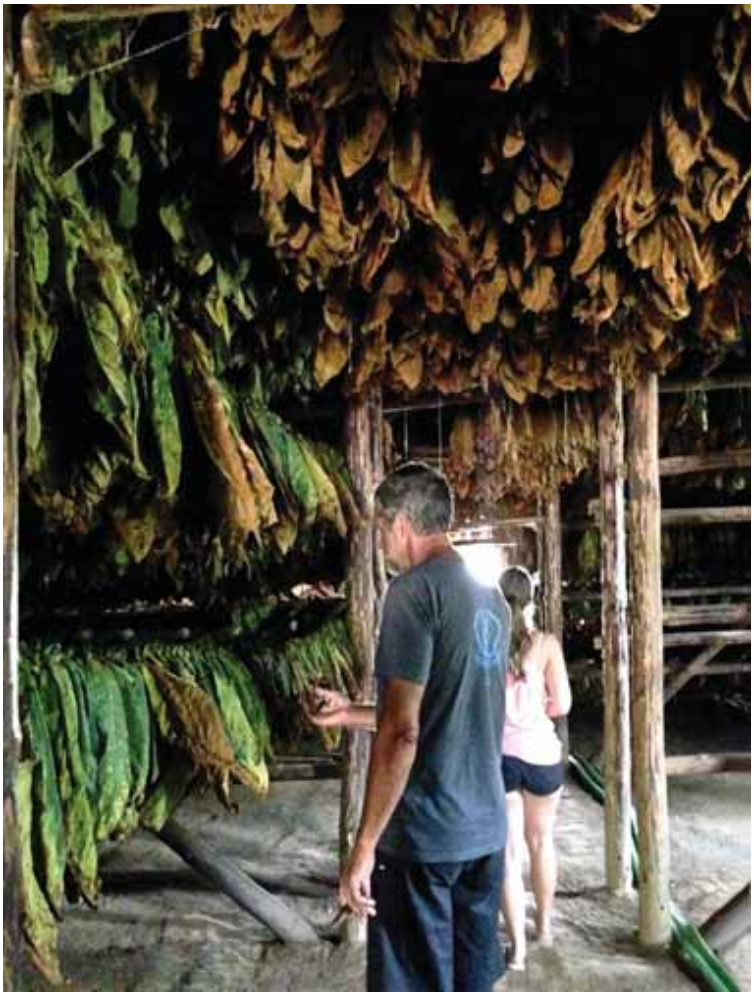
Old American cars ready for tourists





A typical street scene outside Havana's 'El Capitolio' building

Renting a car in Cuba includes the usual Cuban experience of the government being hell-bent on scamming you out of some money. With rental cars it is fuel. The definition of full and half tanks bought and returned is much in favour of the rental car company. As always in Cuba, it is best to take it in one's stride and try to minimise the effect of the scam. There's nothing like being scammed whilst acknowledging it and smiling.



Cohiba tobacco plants drying on a tobacco plantation at San Juan y Martinez



The Heyselaar family with the plantation owner. It is important to be seen with a cigar!

After five weeks in Cuba it was time to move on. As we planned to sail along the US East Coast as far as Halifax we thought it best to make Key West the next stop. A combination of poor research and plain stupidity made this first stop in the US a very painful one. Losing our US cruising licence (as issued in Puerto Rico) brought us close to the yacht being impounded – "*You know, Sir, that we are entitled under the law to impound your vessel*" – an (almost) hefty fine – "*Sir, we are in a good mood today so we will let you off with a warning only*" – and being made to understand that we were probably the worst criminals ever to visit the US – not exactly the warm welcome we had become used to. This is obviously a different story, to be told later.

Our overall experience of Cuba?

- The Cubans are very friendly, and the country is very safe. We strolled through poor, derelict areas of Havana in darkness but never felt uneasy. People come out to talk to you and are interested to hear where you're from.

- Yes, they all try to take money from you but the country is very poor and tourists are a good source of funds. The amount of money involved in the scamming is quite low and the locals are equal victims. The government does it on a larger scale and is thus a bit more annoying, but it is still within limits. We have paid higher amounts officially in other Caribbean destinations.

- The economy forces many Cubans to be very industrious and entrepreneurial, allowing them to make some necessary additional money. It's easy to find somebody willing to help for some CUC. With the right attitude it is possible not only to make a friend for life but also get genuine help. Some Spanish is useful, but among the younger generation English is spoken.



Viñales in the Pinar del Rio region of western Cuba

- It is not as cheap as you think, but it is still cheaper than the other Caribbean islands. Working the system like a local is a little complex but, with an open mind, doable. Provisioning is a bit of a hassle, as most supermarkets seem to have nothing worth buying. Watch for queues at shops, as this normally indicates they are selling something of interest. Join the queue and see what they have to offer ... and always very entertaining! We queued for an hour to buy fresh eggs – at 1 peso (US 04c) each – and two hours to get some ice cream (1 peso per generous scoop of delicious ice cream). The Cubans have fine-tuned queuing, making it quite interesting and hassle free.

Yeah! Eggs! Finally! Ron and Ineke



- The officials are getting more yacht-friendly and, based on our experience, are very easy to deal with. Investments in marinas have been made, to await the influx of yachts.

We will definitely be back to see more of this beautiful country, with its unspoiled scenery, beautiful anchorages, brilliant diving, 1950s cars and friendly people.

GREENHAM REGIS

Means a GReat Deal in

marine electronics

www.greenham-regis.com

ADVICE | SALES | INSTALLATION | SERVICE

The company that provides a complete marine electronics solution, from your first consultation, through sales & installation to maintenance.

AGENTS FOR:

ICOM B&G SIMRAD GARMIN

FURUNO Raymarine

MAIN SALES OFFICES

Lymington | 01590 671144 | lymington@greenham-regis.com
Southampton | 023 8063 6555 | sales@greenham-regis.com

ALSO AT

Poole | 01202 676363 | poole@greenham-regis.com
Chichester | 01243 511070 | sales@greenham-regis.com

INDIAN OCEAN CROSSING
Chris and Fiona Jones

(*Chris and Fiona have owned their Gitana 43,* Three Ships*, since 1999, and for several years used her to teach sailing from their home at Y Felinheli in North Wales. In 2002 they left the UK for an extended cruise around the Atlantic and Mediterranean, continuing through Panama in 2006. After several seasons in the Pacific, in 2009 Chris and Fiona headed west, spending the next few years in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.*

Read more about their travels at http://www.threeships.co.uk/ and blog.mailasail.com/threeships.)

On 7 April 2014 *Three Ships* left Langkawi, Malaysia for the 5500 mile passage to Richards Bay, South Africa. Sailing with us was Toby Morsley, who hails from our home village in Wales and was offered Youth Sponsorship by the OCC to join us for the passage. For him this was an introduction to ocean sailing, while we had the bonus of a world-class dinghy sailor aboard.

Our first stop was Straits Key marina in Penang, where we found the staff not only helpful but genuinely friendly. We had our liferaft serviced and did some provisioning, as well as savouring the delights of George Town, before setting off down the Straits of Malacca for Puteri marina in Johor Baru. We ran the usual gauntlet of thunderstorms, and didn't see any pirates. We stopped at Port Klang, the Water Islands and Pilau Pisang before berthing in Puteri on 19 April. Five days later we checked out of Malaysia for the last time and headed across the Singapore Strait towards Nongsa Point marina. We anchored for the night next to Pulau Nongsa, just short of the marina, only to be awakened at first light by a violent squall and the sound of the keel grinding on coral. In heavy rain and strong winds we motored off the offending shelf and re-anchored in 10m a short distance away. Inspection a little later showed only a



Three Ships at anchor in Belitung, Indonesia


LANGKAWI
Straits Key Marina, Penang
Straits of Malacca
MALAYSIA
Klang
Kuala Lumpur
Puteri Marina, Johor Baru
Singapore Strait
Pilau Pisang
RIAU ISLANDS
Selat Riau
Equator
Singapore
Nongsa Point Marina, Batam
INDONESIA
SUMATRA
Pilau Belitung
Indian Ocean
Sunda Strait
Karakatoa
Jakarta
JAVA
To Cocos Keeling
Pilau Peucang
100°E
South China Sea
N
INDIA
ANDAMAN ISLANDS
SRI LANKA
MALDIVES
Equator
Indian Ocean
LANGKAWI
MALAYSIA
Singapore
SUMATRA
Jakarta
JAVA
COCOS KEELING
Direction Island and Home Island
MADAGASCAR
Port de Galets
Port Louis
REUNION
RODRIGUES
MAURITIUS
MASCARENE ISLANDS
Tropic of Capricorn
SOUTH AFRICA
Richards Bay
Durban
30°S
40°E
60°E
80°E
100°E

little lost antifouling off our lead keel. Once the squall had cleared we headed into the marina and checked into Indonesia – very straightforward if a little pricey.

The decision whether or not to bother getting a cruising permit for Indonesia, bearing in mind the short time we would be spending in the country, was a difficult one. In the end we decided to do it by the book, which proved wise when our alternator failed and we had to spend some time in Belitung getting it fixed. On 27 April we left Nongsa Point and, with the tide under us, made good time south down Selat Riau towards Belitung, stopping only at Pulau Mesenak on the way. We crossed the Equator for the third time on 1 May, and within two days were anchored in the sheltered lagoon on the northwest corner of Pulau Belitung a short dinghy ride from Rusey's bar and restaurant. Rusey is a great guy and helped us enormously with getting the alternator fixed, topping up the tank with diesel, and shopping for fresh provisions. He also introduced us to Jonny, a local teacher, who did all the check-out procedures for us at a very nominal cost.

On 7 May we set off south again for the Sunda Strait and Krakatoa island. We passed the Strait at 0430 on 9 May with a thunderstorm raging, torrential rain, nil visibility and four ferries manoeuvring across our course all within a four mile radius. Thankfully AIS works regardless of the weather, and we were able to heave-to and contact them on VHF to ensure they were aware of our position. An hour later the rain cleared and we were on our way, and by mid-morning we were anchored below the steaming crater of Krakatoa. When the volcano erupted in 1883 it unleashed huge tsunamis which killed 36,000 people, the explosion was heard 3000 miles away in Perth, and the shock waves went around the earth seven times – but it looked fairly benign as we explored its lower slopes the next morning, marvelling at the huge gouges left by lava bombs the size of small cars and collecting multi-coloured souvenir rocks. Next day we sailed



Approaching Krakatoa Volcano



Approaching Cocos Keeling

south to Pilau Peucang, a sheltered anchorage on the southern tip of Java, and spent the day with the headsail down and the sewing machine on deck while we mended a 1·5m rip in the leech of the sail – a sign of things to come, maybe.

We left the anchorage the next day, 12 May, the winds a little variable and the seas confused, but we made good progress out into the Indian Ocean towards Cocos Keeling. Just after midday a dorado took our towed lure with such enthusiasm that it broke the rod holder, and rod, reel and fish all disappeared beneath the waves – another omen perhaps. The squally winds kept us on our toes for the next three days, but at least the thunderstorms were gone, for the moment at least, and the main impact was heavy rain and lighter shifty conditions. Even so we covered the 600 miles in four

Ashore in Cocos Keeling



days exactly, and the morning of 9 May saw us winding our way through the shallow, reef-infested waters into the quarantine anchorage off Direction Island, Cocos Keeling. Frank from *Tahina* and Chris from *Griffon 2* came out in their dinghies to guide us in, and with 0·3m of crystal-clear water under the keel we made it into the anchorage and dropped the hook.

The trade winds blew strongly overhead, but the holding was good and so was the company. The following day the French yachts *Huahine*, *Alibi* and *Yovo* arrived. The Australian police arrived shortly afterwards and checking in proved to be unusually easy – considering we were in Australia – assisted no doubt by the fact that we had taken the trouble to obtain Australian visas in advance. Cocos was a delightful place with excellent snorkelling in the rip at the north end of the island. Provisions were expensive, since all fresh produce arrives twice weekly by air, and the Malays on Home Island should be treated with some circumspection. One lady agreed to do our laundry – this is us trying to contribute to the local economy – and when it came back her husband tried to charge us $200 for the 8kg load. Needless to say a long discussion, which nearly resulted in us calling the police, ensued before the matter was settled – but the lesson was learned.



Underwater in Cocos Keeling – clear water and some curious locals

On 22 May we set off from Cocos, in company with *Alibi* and *Yovo*, on the 2000 mile passage across the Indian Ocean to Rodrigues in the Mascarene Island group. The first week was characterised by fresh 18–25 knot winds and occasional heavy rain squalls, plus a 3–4m southeasterly swell with a 1m wind wave on top, all making for lively living conditions. But we caught fish, made bread and Fi's galley never failed to produce the most excellent food – Toby was hooked on the beef *rendang** and Thai green curry. On 29 May we sighted a large fin whale and the next day the wind dropped to a light east-southeast and we took the opportunity to send Toby up the forestay sitting astride the spinnaker pole to put a patch on another gradually increasing tear in the headsail.

Two days later, after a fairly wild night with good boat speed, we made our best 24 hour run of 178 miles ... and then the Monitor windvane self-steering's rudder sheared off – probably due to stainless steel fatigue over the previous ten years – leaving us with a choice between hand-steering and the Raymarine autopilot. The latter performed well, though the rough seas meant that it had to work hard to keep us on course and the rudder movement consequently increased considerably. Next day the headsail ripped for the third and last time so we took advantage of the easier sea conditions to drop

* Slow-cooked beef in a spicy lemon-grass, ginger and coconut sauce



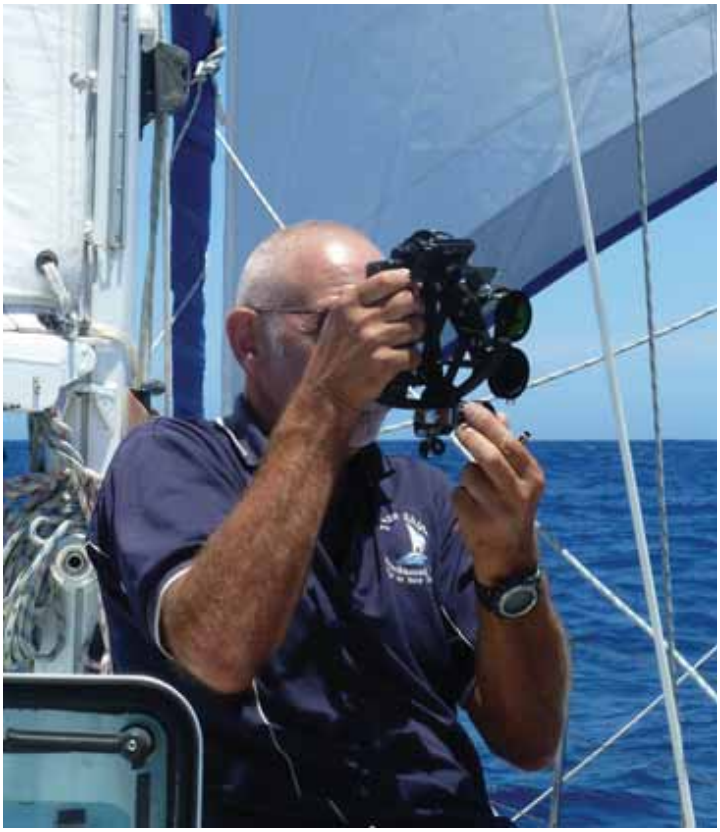
Toby fixing a sail patch while seated on the spinnaker pole

it and hoist our spare, which is about half the size but, with pennants to adjust its position on the foil, worked well in the freshening winds.

And so it went on. At 2330 the following night, while we were running at 8 knots on starboard tack with three reefs in the main and the boom on a preventer, the starboard forward lower fractured at the T-ball fitting and fell to the deck with a resounding crash. This was a bit of a shock for Toby, who was on watch at the time, and somewhat surprising for us since all the rigging had been replaced some 18 months earlier while in Phuket. We quickly dropped the main and carried on, somewhat cautiously, under staysail, still doing 6 knots and with 370 miles to go to Rodrigues. Two days later at 0230 in the morning, while Fi was on watch and with Rodrigues in sight, the port aft lower decided to go the same way. We furled the headsail and motored through the offshore reefs to tie up alongside. The following morning I climbed the mast to discover that the port forward lower fitting was also



Jury-rigged lowers before leaving Rodrigues



Chris still takes sights every day that there's a clear horizon

halfway broken – but we were in, safe, and all was well, though we were extremely unimpressed by the quality of the fittings and wondered how many other yachts had been supplied with the same fittings when they re-rigged prior to their next ocean crossing. But fourteen days to cover the 2000 miles was fine, even if the manner of its execution left something to be desired ... but that's ocean sailing for you.

The next day we fixed up some jury-rigged lowers, with spare 8mm wire threaded through the mast secured by numerous clamps generously supplied by *Yovo* and *Alibi*, and a few days later were able to continue the 350 miles to Mauritius without any problems. In the meantime we hired a car and had a look around the island, which was not quite as high and rugged as we had been led to believe but nonetheless provided an excellent coastal walk and some nice touring scenery.

Our berth alongside the ship dock was always going to be of limited duration, and sure enough a day later the harbour master told us that a long-overdue supply ship was imminent, so we decided to leave for Mauritius the following morning. This meant checking out with immigration, customs, quarantine and the local police – who had taken possession of our spear gun to ensure we didn't kill any fish or rob a bank. Late that afternoon, and with the spear gun safely back on board, we cleared the outer reef as darkness fell and were on our way once more. With fresh winds the passage only took two days, and just before midnight on 15 June we motored through the ships berthed off the entrance to Port Louis and anchored in 12m, ready to enter port and check in the next morning. This time anchor drop took a little longer and then it was 0300 before the whiskey ran out, and so it was a slightly bleary-eyed crew who tied up alongside the harbour wall next morning, and attached lines to the fence while watching the local business community take morning coffee in the dockside cafes.

Checking in was mostly by guesswork, as various officials turned up at their leisure and gave us more forms to complete – customs won with 16 – but a couple of hours later we were cleared, and motored over to Caudan marina basin and tied up alongside an



Approaching Mauritius

oily concrete wall next to a car park which served the adjacent plush marina shopping complex. It was with some reluctance, but with buckets full of rich and unforgettable memories of the open ocean, that we stepped ashore back into that other world popularly known as reality.

The next week was spent getting the rig surveyed and deciding on the safest berth for *Three Ships* while we returned to the UK. The choices were: against a rough concrete wall with oily water in Caudan marina basin, with wash from passing ships and uncertain security; hauling out in La Réunion, with no certainty of a haul-out date and reputed very poor security; or 15 miles further north at Grande Bay, on a mooring and supervised by a qualified Mauritian skipper (whatever that meant). In the end we chose the latter, largely based on guarded recommendations from *Serranity* and *Moonfleet*, who had spent time there the previous year. Sunil, our 'skipper', agreed to check the boat on a weekly basis, loaned us a car, entertained us at his favourite restaurants and took us to the airport on time – so a good choice, which was confirmed when we got back on 28 September and found everything in good order. Toby did not return with us, having sailed 4090 miles aboard *Three Ships* and proved to be very competent and excellent company.



The famous Mauritius water lily, which can reach 3m in diameter

On the flight back our luggage was crammed with replacement rigging, but with the help of Vendée Globe veteran Hervé Laurent we soon had the new lowers in place and the other T-balls replaced with Norseman swageless fittings. Finally, Herve

came out with us for a tune-up sail prior to our departure for La Réunion. We had also commissioned a new headsail, to be built by MU Sails in Mauritius, as well as asking them to put a fourth reef in our new Tasker mainsail. These were delivered on time, although the main had to be returned for the stitching to be improved. We decided that the problems with the headsail were mainly cosmetic, however, and since the materials used were good quality deemed it acceptable and set off for La Réunion.

Exactly 24 hours later we were again alongside *Griffon 2* in Port de Galets. Marina manager and OCC Port Officer Jérôme Belhuerne proved to be both a fount of local information and an enthusiastic mountain runner. His assistance was equal to that of any OCC port officer and we did some memorable treks together through the magic mountains of La Réunion, climbing Roche Ecrite and Grande Benarre as well as exploring the incredible Cirque de Mafatte and the huge lava desert area of the Volcano Fournaise. One road in the south cuts through lava flows from only three years ago, and has already been buried in lava, cleared and re-built four times.

On 21 October, feeling much fitter, we departed La Réunion in radio company with OCC yachts *Kite*, *Sula* and *Hokule'a*, bound for Richards Bay, South Africa. Our passage plan took us to a waypoint about 120 miles south of Madagascar before hitting the rhumb line for our destination – a recommendation which proved somewhat unfortunate since it put us into a 2 knot adverse current for a time, whereas vessels further north had positive current as indicated on the charts. Such phenomena are, of course, a moveable feast, and together with the varying weather conditions provide us with the uncertainties that make ocean passages such compelling experiences. Three days out, and just south of Madagascar, a slow-moving trough had us huddled in the cockpit as thunder, lightning, torrential rain, 40 knot gusts and disorganised seas filled the blackest of nights – and of course there was the confounding variable of a ship on collision course to add to the excitement. Next day we ran under headsail for a while, before the wind dropped and once again we found ourselves in an adverse current, motoring in order

The marina office at Port de Galette, La Réunion





Jessy and Jérôme (now Port Officer for La Réunion) aboard Three Ships

to reach Richards Bay before the next southerly blow arrived up the coast. About 120 miles out and 20 miles north of the rhumb line we felt the first pull of the Agulhas Current, and 12 hours later were making 10 knots over the ground. Needless to say, as we headed for the fairway into Richards Bay at 2000 on 30 October a black bar of cloud appeared to the southwest, and within 30 minutes we were motoring into a 20 knot southwesterly – the front had arrived three hours early – but with just three miles to go we had beaten it in.

We tied up in a vacant berth in Tuzi Gazi marina, where checking-in was easy and OCC Port Officer Anne de Robillard, together with husband Lawrence and daughter Lorkan, provided unparalleled support. We visited game parks together and arranged a haul-out at the Zululand Yacht Club where we became temporary members. We stayed in South Africa for three months before heading on to Trinidad – but that's another story.

Lessons learned

- Sharing the passage with a young sailor sponsored by the OCC was a delight, although we'd have reservations about accepting such crew without prior knowledge of both their personality and sailing experience. Happily we had known Toby for many years and had the full support of his parents in accepting him for the passage. We would recommend a careful interview and a shakedown cruise of at least three days before considering a young person of unknown quantity.
- The Indian Ocean has a reputation for difficult sea conditions and strong winds – this is well deserved, and after discussion with others we were glad that we had made the crossing in early May rather than later in the year.
- Standing rigging, steering systems and sails all come under considerable pressure during this passage and need to be in top condition. Many boats well into their circumnavigations have spent the previous season(s) in the relatively benign waters of Southeast Asia where such testing conditions are rare. Be warned.
- If deciding to re-rig in Southeast Asia, as we did, use parts from respected makers sourced in Europe rather than those available locally which may have structural



Fellow OCC yacht Kite on passage between La Réunion and Richards Bay

and possibly design weaknesses. (See *What every skipper ought to know about stainless steel* by Vyv Cox, in *Yachting Monthly* February 2014.)

- We should have spent longer – at least two weeks – in Cocos Keeling, where the diving and snorkelling is superb.
- We would recommend Rodrigues and La Réunion, but have some reservations about Mauritius unless the crew are staying on board. Checking in to Rodrigues was very easy and informal, and berths alongside the harbour wall were free of charge and only limited by the arrival of a supply vessel, when yachts were required to anchor outside the harbour during berthing.



- The requirement for a 'qualified' local captain to look after vessels left in Mauritius in the absence of the owner/skipper is totally disorganised and a lottery, though we were lucky with Sunil. If the system is to work properly the authorities need to compile an official list of qualified persons whom they supply and monitor, and also provide details of the extensive entry and exit requirements. Caudan basin is dirty, suffers from wash and is, in our view, unsuitable for a long-term stay. Grande Bay is well-sheltered and has a good anchorage.

Three Ships under storm jib and well-reefed main



Three Ships safely settled at the Royal Cape Yacht Club

- La Réunion has limited berthing and prior booking is essential, especially for yachts wishing to stay in St Pierre. We found Port de Galets to be an excellent harbour in terms of safety and proximity to popular mountain venues. *Maître du Port* Jérôme Belhuerne is incredibly obliging and helpful, and we would have been happy to leave *Three Ships* in his marina while we visited the UK.
- We opted to spend our time trekking in La Réunion rather than making the passage around the north coast of Madagascar. Those who did choose this option had a good experience and enjoyed their time in Madagascar. Having crossed the Mozambique Channel, the onward passage to Richards Bay proved easier from the anchorages along the African coast, as the three or four day passage south allows for a viable arrival weather window to be identified, whereas the nine or ten day passage from La Réunion does not.
- It's important to check the itinerary of the World ARC Rally, which causes huge disruption for independent cruisers and is correspondingly unpopular. Vessels moored in Caudan marina and in Port de Galets were all required to leave to make space for the World ARC vessels. We had previously coincided with the event in both Panama and the Galápagos, and were determined not to find ourselves once again in its company. Fortunately Tuzi Gazi marina at Richards Bay had refused to accommodate the fleet, so at least we had somewhere to berth on arrival. Maintenance is an ongoing issue at Tuzi Gazi – several pontoons came apart during periods of strong winds – but this is somewhat ameliorated by the proximity of good value restaurants.
- Finally, the haul-out facilities at Zululand Yacht Club are extremely expensive (about UK £700 haul and launch our 43ft) and need to be closely monitored, although storage once ashore is good value. It is also important to get a clear quotation for any work prior to commencement.



SCANMAR
INTERNATIONAL

Home of the Monitor Windvane

Your Source for Self-Steering and Emergency Rudder Solutions

- **Monitor** Windvane and optional Emergency Rudder
- **Auto-helm** Auxiliary Rudder/ Trim-Tab Windvane
- **Saye's Rig** Windvane
- The **SOS** Emergency Rudder



Contact us to determine the best solution for your boat – multihulls too!

Introducing the ANCHOR RESCUE

Don't set sail without it!

www.selfsteer.com

Richmond, CA

510.215.2010 • 888.946.3826

scanmar@selfsteer.com

LAS PALMAS TO BARBADOS, 1965
Gerry Wright, Honorary Member

(*When they crossed the Atlantic with their four daughters in 1965, to Jim and Ann Griffin it was more than a dream come true. It felt like a miracle – nearly twenty years previously medical experts had given Jim just six months to live...*)

Sailing across oceans had been my father's dream from the age of eight, when he watched the schooner ***Result*** visit Ilfracombe harbour in north Devon. When he joined the Navy in 1938 he planned to live on a boat and sail it in his Naval ship's home port. The Second World War put a stop to that yet, undeterred, when he fell in love with my mother Ann, a Wren* in Scapa Flow four years later, he proposed by saying, "If I ask you to marry me, will you live on a boat?". She abandoned ideas of marrying a farmer who could dance and took my father and his two left feet, along with the plans he made for her of a luxurious, sleek, gaff ketch. Reality was a Thames barge, Atlas, straight out of the carrying coal trade. Future bulkheads were marked by chalk lines, but then doctors diagnosed a hole in the heart – Jim was invalided out of the Navy with a prognosis of just six months to live.

For three months they followed the doctors' advice – no exertion of any kind, no lifting the newborn baby (me) and certainly no sailing. Then one day a decision was made to enjoy one really good day regardless of the consequences. They took *Atlas* out for a sail. It was a turning point – contrary to expectation my father grew stronger every day and soon my mother became pregnant again.

My parents sold *Atlas* and bought *Bendilow* – half the size and fully converted – and kept her on the Hamble, and when my sister June was born my father used

* The Women's Royal Naval Service, generally referred to as the WRNS (Wrens)

Gerry aged two





his engineering degree to go back to work. Several jobs, another two daughters, and a dozen gaff ketches later his health was fully back to normal. Modern medical equipment showed that, although his heart was abnormally large, there was no hole in it. Consequently he set his sights further afield and bought the Colin Archer-designed *Northern Light*, which had spent her first two years lifesaving amongst the ice off Norway. Solid teak on large oak frames and a sea-kindly hull, this was a boat he could sail across oceans.

In the meantime June, Heather, Linda and I grew up, attending several schools with a variety of different homes but one constant – the experience gained from growing up afloat. We understood tides, wind, weather and sails; learned to row, steer, recognise navigation lights, and identify a potential collision course and what to do about it; learned to scale the rigging, hoist the huge sails, lower and haul in the hefty anchor – all this alongside traditional subjects ashore. Although we knew various seaweeds we did not know the difference between hay and straw, and our identification of birds was limited to those near the shore. Our map reading was always good, however, and transferred easily to charts.

When I was 12 we were made 'registered British seamen', under a loophole in British law that allowed children to be employed provided all the crew of a vessel were of the same family. Registration would allow us to be protected as 'distressed British seamen' should anything happen while sailing abroad. We were each allotted tasks and given a 'salary' equivalent to pocket money. Mine was the princely sum of 7/6d (37·5p) per month, with responsibilities as bo'sun and navigator.

We took our tasks seriously. I learned all I could about the rigging and how to patch sails properly using beeswax, needle and palm. Over the years I've patched many sails for *Northern Light* and other boats. The most recent was in Watchet Boat Museum – I couldn't bear the thought of an ancient, handmade sail being patched using a sewing machine, so took the matter in hand! My father taught me both coastal and celestial navigation, although Mary Blewitt's books on celestial navigation were a great discovery



Mending sails

and wonderfully helpful. June was the Second Mate – my mother naturally being First Mate – and Heather the Engineer. At 13 she had a knack with the petrol-started two-cylinder Kelvin diesel, and only she and father could get it going. The flywheel was almost 3ft across and sat within the heads, so that if the engine was running and the loo paper was not properly stowed, it would draw in a length of paper – once it spun it `1all around the flywheel. Every gear change had to be made down below, where it was impossible to hear an order, so my father used a 4 inch cannonball on the cockpit seat above the engineer's head. One thump for ahead, two for out of gear, and three for astern.

By 1965, when I was 19, my parents decided that my father should seek a job at the end of a good sailing route through the advertisements in the *Times Educational Supplement*. He accepted a lectureship in the Bahamas starting in September. If the family remained in the Canaries until mid-October, Jim would be able to fly ahead to fulfil his tasks for six weeks before returning to sail across the Atlantic after the hurricane season.

Once all *Northern Light*'s spare rigging and sails as well as the new charts were stowed the rest of the stores had to be carefully calculated to fit into the spaces beneath the bunks and in the bilge. Tinned food, dried food, fresh food, UHT milk, loo rolls and plenty of cat litter – everything had its own space. We had one cupboard each for our personal items which included a formal dress, a couple of summer dresses, a warm coat and foul weather gear plus a handful of trousers, shorts, T-shirts, one or two sweaters, underwear and three or four bikinis. Finally there were several plastic jerry cans to be filled with water to supplement the 100 gallon tank.

Inevitably there was a raft of publicity as we left. Sailing across the Atlantic was not very common at the time, but sailing as a family – and girls at that – created quite a stir and we found ourselves exhibited as far afield as the South China News Agency and on the of an album cover called *All the Nice Girls*. We never did hear the music captured within.

Crossing the Channel and the Bay of Biscay was already familiar to us, but it was a good time to shake down into an arrangement of watches that suited each of us. We settled on two hours on and six hours off, with Linda, aged 11, taking an occasional spell during the daytime and father – who was on call all the time – during the night. I loved the night watch from 0200–0400 so took that one, which

also meant watches from 1000–1200 and 1800–2000. Heather took the hours before mine, June the hours after, and mother the final set. Interspersed with this were meal preparation duties, washing up (in a bucket of salt water while at sea) and tidying up below, though mostly we were responsible for our own areas (two of us were sleeping in the saloon at the time).

Sailing down the coast of Portugal was a joy. We stopped at Oporto and met up with a friend of father's who worked for Sandeman's Port. We were taken around the huge vats, tasting each variety. Oporto and the River Douro were quite beautiful. Then another glorious stop at Cascais for a few days to enjoy time ashore before setting sail for Las Palmas. Along that coast a fishing vessel came up beside us and cheerfully chucked us a bucket of fish as a gift. It was a species we hadn't seen before, long with green bones and delicious. We trailed a fishing line ourselves but caught little – our average was one every 2000 miles, though to our delight we did catch a tuna before reaching the Canaries. We also saw a whale less than 100 yards away, which rose to the surface, blew and disappeared. The story got back to the press in England and was grossly exaggerated with tales that 'amorous whale lifts *Northern Light* 30 feet out of the water'! My father had to telephone all our close relatives when we reached the Canaries to reassure them that we had had no such encounter.

There is something exhilarating about being a foreigner in a distant land – the smells, sights, sounds and wonderful sun and light all delight the senses. Two months in the Canaries allowed time to learn a little of the language and culture, and to meet local people, while preparing the boat for the next stage of the trip. June, Heather and I met some charming young men who took us to see the local dancing, to dinner, and to

Time to leave





Cleaning the hull

enjoy normal life ashore. One was a drummer in a band, another an Iberian Airlines pilot, while some came from the international selection of boats who, like us, were passing through.

In Las Palmas we met up with old friends Eric and Susan Hiscock, who were crossing in *Wanderer III*, heading for New Zealand. Through them we met Hum on what turned out to be his last crossing before he met Mary. Describing himself as someone who sailed round and round the Atlantic, Hum became great friends with the family. He introduced us to the Ocean Cruising Club, which was an imaginative idea and wonderful organisation. The OCC achieves a great deal more now than it did then, but the idea of creating a network of ocean sailors who could meet, support and encourage each other, people to drop in on when in port simply because they were flying the same burgee, was a brilliant concept. It was to give us years of fascinating contacts thereafter.

My tasks in Las Palmas included repairing any worn ratlines so that we would be safe scurrying up and down the mast, as well as tightening the lanyards fastening the shrouds, once they had been coated down with tar. Heather maintained the engine so that it was in tip-top condition. June and mother organised the re-victualling, which included a hand of bananas hanging from the main boom and another in the dark of the engine room, with oranges also in the light and the dark. The idea was that they should all ripen at different times, but it didn't happen – a glut of fruit had to be eaten within days of ripening. Water would be rationed, allowing us two cups of



Coating the lanyards with tar

tea a day and one small bowl of water for us all to wash in turn (each day a different person would be allowed the privilege of going first). Salt water soap would be used to wash clothes, our hair and occasionally ourselves. Finally the first chart was laid on the chart table and it was time to set sail.

Mother traditionally took the helm for the first four hours out of harbour – a way of staving off possible sea-sickness which, fortunately, did not affect the rest of us. And so we departed, father standing on the bow signalling silently what he expected of his crew, Heather waiting down below to change the gears on the Kelvin, and June and me hoisting the sails. At last the engine was off, the sails set and on a glorious day we headed west.



Taking a sun sight

We set off, as my father used to say, on Columbus' route with Cook's instruments. Trailing astern was a Walker log, torpedo-shaped with a propeller turning a dial to show distance travelled. At the end of each watch the crew would haul it in, read it and enter the distance in the log. Our speed averaged 4¼ knots throughout the crossing. At lunchtime my father would take a sun sight, and each evening as the stars came out I would take sights before the horizon became too dark – I remember Arcturus, Sirius, Aldebaran, Antares, Vega and Betelgeuse all playing their part, having learned them all while sleeping in a hammock on deck at anchor in Las Palmas. The results would give a 'cocked hat' on the chart, within which was *Northern Light*.

At the first dawn we had the delight of seeing Tenerife's El Teide spiking above the clouds. Nothing else, just this majestic peak about 90 miles away. Sunsets were glorious and always different. The hot breezes of the day cooled to perfection and we would add a layer of clothing to the bikini which was otherwise the rig of the day. For the night watch I would wear a bikini with a sheepskin coat – an ideal combination.

To exercise we might play records on our portable player and dance, though you couldn't be certain where your feet would come down. Sometimes we walked a mile – 176 times up and down the bare deck. Other times we might read, play a board game, paint or draw, while the cats enjoyed skitting up and down the mainsail or jumping in and out of the small awning above the helmsman.

When the wind died we would slacken the sheets, trail a lifebuoy on a line astern, and leap overboard with the salt water soap. Those who have done this will know just what a humbling experience it is. From waterlevel one is aware of the curve of the



Swimming in mid-ocean

earth, but it is the smallness of the boat – our entire world – the vastness of infinity above, the miles of deep blue water below, as well as the hundreds of miles to land that brings home just how small one is in the middle of an ocean. Mother stayed on board for shark watch and to assist if the breeze should pick up.

We celebrated changing the chart halfway across the Atlantic with a formal dinner. A good breeze meant the boat was gently heeling as we cooked on the paraffin two-burner, which was started up with methylated spirits (denatured alcohol). The oven was little more than a tin box, which sat above one of the burners and gave an unpredictable heat. Gateau for the dessert came out with a heavy slant, thanks to the heeling, and was cut and pasted back together with icing to look level. Next, a roast – potatoes around the (tinned) meat with vegetables in another pan, put in separately according





to cooking time needed. We dressed for dinner, us in our finest dresses and my father in black tie, and ate down below while shock cords held the wheel in place for a steady course. We hadn't seen sight of a ship since leaving harbour ... my father checked the horizon every few minutes (I think he did this simply to keep cool!) Our feet, however, were bare.



As we neared Barbados the wind increased. No need to gybe, but we reduced sail to staysail, main and mizzen. The waves deepened, and around 200 miles from the island we wondered if we were being accompanied by killer whales ... but no, these were pilot whales swimming alongside, at much the same speed and in groups of two and threes. They accompanied us for most of the day.

During the night electrical storms developed as the wind intensified, so we dropped the main and continued under staysail and mizzen. Shortly before the end of my watch at 0400 I was enraptured by the sight of slightly fuzzy 'stars' developing ahead, stars that rolled with the boat. They began near the top of the forestay and developed evenly downwards. By the time my father came on deck ten minutes later the last star had faded. Apparently this was St Elmo's fire, rarely seen but a good omen for sailors. I was sorry I had not called the whole family to come and see it.

Two mornings later, just after dawn and absolutely on the nose, Barbados appeared ahead of us. We sailed in later that afternoon and dropped the anchor off the yacht club. We had taken 28 days for the crossing, used less than three-quarters of the water from our 100 gallon tank, eaten all the fresh fruit and vegetables (even the onions), but still had some tins in the bilge and packets of food in the cupboard.

Anchored nearby were some of our friends from Las Palmas, so we had a spontaneous party to celebrate the crossing. Diving overboard to swim amongst the phosphorescence, we discovered that we were swimming with a turtle and several leaping fish. What a celebration. My parents' dream had come true. Now we were fit to join Hum and friends as fully fledged members of the OCC.

So why is Gerry an Honorary Member, when she's obviously fully qualified? She explains: "By 1971 Hum had married Mary, and both came to my wedding in Gibraltar to Cdr Nick Wright RN, whom I'd met during his time as captain of HMS *Chichester*. By then we had crossed back from the Bahamas to Poole via the Azores through stormy weather, and sailed round the Mediterranean. Hum's wedding present was life membership of the OCC – on account, he said, of my extraordinary and then unique upbringing and traditional skills".

FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Niki Phillips, aboard *Spirit of Penmar*

Anything goes egg frittata – or 'eggy thing' as we call it (serves two)

Ingredients

- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 or 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 green, red or any colour pepper, diced
- anything else you want to use up (diced bacon, smoked sausage, tuna, olives etc, or none of these if stores are desperately low)
- plenty of grated cheese
- oil for frying

Fry the onion, garlic, pepper and any other ingredients that need cooking first in a frying pan. Add the egg and sprinkle the grated cheese all over the top. Cook over a medium heat until the egg has cooked around the edges and starts to bubble through in the middle. To finish off, place the pan under the grill to cook from the top and toast the cheese. Serve with a salad or green vegetable.



FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Suzanne Hills and Chris Cromey, aboard *Whanake*

Spicy Fruit Pudding

Ingredients

- 4 slices of bread
- 1 cup of milk
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 tbsp golden syrup or molasses
- 40g (1½oz) melted butter
- ½ cup of sugar
- 3 tbsp plain flour
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 cup sultanas or raisins
- Drops of a few essences (brandy, almond etc)

Soak the bread in the milk and then beat with a fork. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix together until even – but take care not to overmix. Put the mixture into a lightly greased cake tin/pot and cover securely with foil. Pressure cook over water on a trivet or bake in a moderately hot oven for about 40 minutes. Best eaten hot, but also good the next day as a cake.




10% Discount for OCC Members
ShiptoShore
Established in 1994
Mail forwarding, holding, and scanning service
for long or short term travellers on water or land
Tel: (01962) 868642 or visit: www.shiptoshore.co.uk


Ocean Crew Link
Specialising purely in ocean sailing opportunities, OceanCrewLink.com is an online directory of sailors and sailing opportunities, which aims to connect boat owners with offshore sailing crew.
Now with over 4500 sailors signed up and more than 150 opportunities to sail, oceancrewlink.com offers a unique meeting place for those who love ocean sailing.
Find Boats
Meet Crew
Create your sailing profile now at...
OceanCrewLink.com

MAEVA!
Lynne Gane and Alan Franklin
Roving Rear Commodores

(*Alan and Lynne set sail in July 2014 aboard their Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 45* Jenny*, taking part in the Bayona and Eastern Atlantic rallies before crossing the Atlantic towards the Caribbean, Panama, Galapagos and the Marquesas. At the time of writing (early July) they were sailing the Society Islands, Samoa and Tonga, with New Zealand, Australia and Southeast Asia next on the horizon.*

Alan and Lynne are happy to answer questions about any of these destinations. Contact them on svjenny@mailasail.com. And for those who wondered about the title, Maeva *means 'welcome' in Polynesian*!)

A wonderful Polynesian welcome awaits anyone whose sailing plans include a Pacific crossing and French Polynesia. This is why we love sailing, why we cross the 'ponds and puddles', why we have grumbled through the inevitable repairs, maintenance and setbacks; this is the reward for all our planning in the cold, damp English winters and, for that matter, some of the summers too.

French Polynesia is best appreciated from the sea – indeed its 120 islands are spread over 4·5 million square kilometres (nearly 1·75 million square miles) of Pacific Ocean. Blue water sailing, near-constant temperatures of upper 20°C, stunning scenery and genuinely friendly and helpful people await all visiting yachtsmen. Language is not a problem – many locals speak English and this is infinitely preferable to my poor French.

If you are both tempted and daunted by the prospect of sailing so many thousands of miles, then being part of a cruising rally can be a comforting umbrella, but we are

Cook's Bay, Moorea





Mt Rotui, overlooking Cook's Bay

glad we sailed the Atlantic and the Pacific our own way and in our own time. There are supportive SSB cruiser nets – the OCC Caribbean net, the Pacific Magellan net and many more listed on the Noonsite website. Crossing the Atlantic in 2014 we had our own net thanks to Gavin and Georgie McLaren, OCC, of *Margaret Wroughton* and others. You meet many of the same extended cruising 'family' on the 'Coconut Milk Run' from Panama to Australia and New Zealand. Friendships are struck up, and help is there should you need it. Currently we are enjoying cruising in company with Anne and Jonathan Lloyd, OCC, aboard *Sofia*, whom we first met on the OCC Eastern Atlantic Rally in 2014. There are mini-rallies too, such as the Pacific Puddle Jump (PPJ) in which we have recently participated, and the Tahiti and Moorea sailing rendezvous.

We first heard of the PPJ rally and Tahiti–Moorea sailing rendezvous whilst in Shelter Bay Marina at Colón, Panama around the first week in March, when the hosts, Andy Turpin of *Latitude 38* magazine, Archipelagos* and Tahiti tourism gave an enticing presentation and party. Having registered our interest, we headed across the Pacific Ocean to the Marquesas and on to Tahiti. The rendezvous, now its tenth year, took place over 19/21 June, commencing with a welcome pack and cocktail party in Papeete, Tahiti, a sailing briefing, speeches from local dignitaries and a wonderful display of Polynesian dancing and music. The following day we crossed the start line in a fresh wind for the friendly rally-in-company from Papeete to Cook's Bay, Moorea, a course of 15 miles. Did I say rally – read race! Without too many regulations and in a spirit of friendly rivalry, the winners crossed the line between the outer buoys marking the pass through the reef.

* Archipelagos [www.archipelagoes.net] produces the respected Yellow Flag Guides to French Polynesia [www.yellowflagguides.com]



Weaving palm garlands – Alan preparing his head gear and Anne Lloyd modelling hers

After anchoring in the picturesque bay we enjoyed a Polynesian dinner at the Bali High Resort where the *poisson cru* – raw tuna marinated in onion, salt and fresh coconut milk – was so absolutely delicious that even sceptical skipper Alan came back for more, and the music and dancing breathtaking. Our table was chosen to be surrounded for a warlike dance, and believe me it is intimidating to have a warrior face, eyes bulging and locked to yours, tongue stuck out, just inches from your face, sharing in the flying sweat! The girls danced beautifully, their hips gyrating in ways I didn't think possible. Alan acquitted himself well when 'encouraged' to the floor for a spot of knee wobbling!

The next day was filled with activities. No visit to these islands would be complete without a canoe race, as much part of the Polynesian culture as football and cricket, and lessons in weaving garlands with palm leaves equipped our teams with the Polynesian look! A quick demonstration of paddle technique with our compère (a man-mountain topped by a pink and cream floppy hat, possessed of a terrific sense of humour) and the teams were off, in heats of four canoes. Two experienced locals provided the timing at the front and the steerage at the back as the canoes charged off down the bay. Our team 'Kick em Jenny' – both our boat name and an island off Grenada – with Anne and Jonathan from *Sofia*, Derek Hillen, OCC, and Alan from *Asmara Sky* (we like to keep things in the OCC family!) did well, coming second in our heat to the eventual Kiwi winners of the competition. We felt we had acquitted ourselves honourably, giving them the closest race of all the heats despite their 'previous form' in canoe racing.

Then we enjoyed live music, an introduction to local myths and culture, more demonstrations of coconut husking and grating, flower garland making, tying a *pareu* (a kind of *sarong* made of a single straight piece of printed cotton cloth) which was very funny, races with bananas (I'll leave that one to the imagination), coconut husking



Go! Team 'Kick em Jenny' second canoe from the top

Generation Game style, and traditional stone lifting. Speeches, champagne and beautiful models of traditional outrigger sailing boats for the rally/canoe race winners were followed by a buffet of Polynesian proportions and a finale of more traditional dance. Wonderful – we had so much fun. Do make a date to attend if you're in the area over the weekend of 24/26 June 2016.

Polynesian Dancing



Contacts and dates

Registration for the rally was at www.pacificpuddlejump.com, with loads of information for your Pacific crossing including the Stopover Handbook in French Polynesia. For another great resource, go to www.yahoo.com, search for groups, then type in pacificpuddlejump (no spaces). Or visit www.latitude38.com.

For information on the Tahiti Moorea sailing rendezvous go to http://tahiti-moorea-sailing-rdv.com. Entry was 3,000 Pacific francs or about $30 per person, which included several drinks, a T–shirt, floral garlands, and all the entertainment – very good value, we felt. The Saturday dinner and Sunday lunch, were extras – a further $30 per head for each meal. There were plenty of children who were kept well amused and rewarded for their participation.

Other rallies to look out for whilst cruising the Pacific include:

Tonga's Vava'u Blue Water Festival – a sailing week followed by a fun week, over the end of September / beginning of October. Info and registration and www.islandcruising.org. The rally includes useful advice for cruisers heading for New Zealand – the main ports of entry, Opua and Whangarei (which our Kiwi colleagues pronounced 'fangarei'), passage planning, south Pacific weather, NZ bio-security rules and NZ as a destination.

The **All Points Rally** to New Zealand, which leaves Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia in late October / early November and is free to join. For full information and entry form click 'All Points Rally' on the RH menu bar on the ICA site at www.islandcruising.co.nz. And when you reach NZ there's the **New Zealand Rally at Opua** in mid November, with free seminars and festivities, also run by Island Cruising. A quick trip to their website offers the chance to register interest in future rallies:

- The **South Pacific Circuit** from New Zealand's Bay of Islands to Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia, scheduled for May to September 2016
- The **Multihull Rally to Indonesia** also planned for 2016 and with more info available from early that year
- The bi-annual **Pacific Circuit** to Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu and French Caledonia, starting on 1 May 2017 and with the option to sail to Australia or return to New Zealand.



> Nothing seems really to matter, that's the charm of it. Whether you get away or whether you don't, whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get anywhere at all, you're always busy, and you never do anything in particular; and when you're done there's always something else to do, and you can do it if you like, but you'd much better not.
>
> Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*

SAILORS IN THE ATLAS
Kath McNulty
Roving Rear Commodore

(*Franco and Kath joined the OCC following their 2010 qualifying trip to the Azores in Franco's Trintella 29* Firebird. *The following year he sold* Firebird *and bought* Caramor*, a Rustler 36 built in 1988. In May 2014 they set off from Holyhead, North Wales for five years or more, to sail around the world via South Georgia. Follow their travels at* www.caramor.co.uk. *Photos by Cordelia Molloy and Kath McNulty.*)

Caramor will be our home and office for the next five years. She is also our playpen, with toys including full-length fibreglass sea kayaks (split into three parts) which fit in the pilot berth, folding bicycles under the forepeak berth, snorkelling gear, a lightweight mountaineering rack including crampons and ice axes, and a tent and other expedition equipment. We spent the four winters leading up to our departure in May 2014 giving *Caramor* a full face lift – new tinned electrical wiring, new cabin lining, new water and gas plumbing, new rigging, new sails and finally, just before setting off, a new BETA 30 engine. We headed for southern Ireland to put the engine through its paces before going further afield.

As all was working well, we set off from Castlehaven straight across the Bay of Biscay towards Gijon in Asturia, northern Spain. But ten hours into our crossing the wind backed and was heading us, and our first tack took us to Camaret in Brittany where the smell of good coffee and croissants lured us into temptation. A week later the wind changed direction so we set sail and enjoyed an idyllic 36 hours under spinnaker most of the way to Gijon, where we



Kath and Franco with Caramor in Rabat



Rabat medina

arrived in time for *tapas* and wine. For the first time in my life I was hot sailing in a T-shirt, a thoroughly new experience and something I thought I could get used to.

We spent the summer cruising down the coasts of Spain and Portugal in mostly very light winds. By early September we had reached Rabat, Morocco, and as we motored up the Bouregreg river our senses filled with the colours, sounds and smells of Africa. Bouregreg Marina in Salé on the opposite bank of the river to Rabat is a pleasant and safe place to spend time or leave the boat for a week, as we did, or for longer. The King of Morocco keeps his boat there on a private pontoon. Although there aren't any pontoon security gates the guards on the quay keep a very keen look-out. There is of course the usual bureaucracy, with forms to complete in triplicate, but this is reserved for the male crew members only (sometimes I do enjoy male chauvinism!). All the staff were helpful and nobody asked for tips or *backsheesh*, and we considered the €16 per night berthing fee reasonable for a 36ft boat.



The entrance to the Bouregreg river

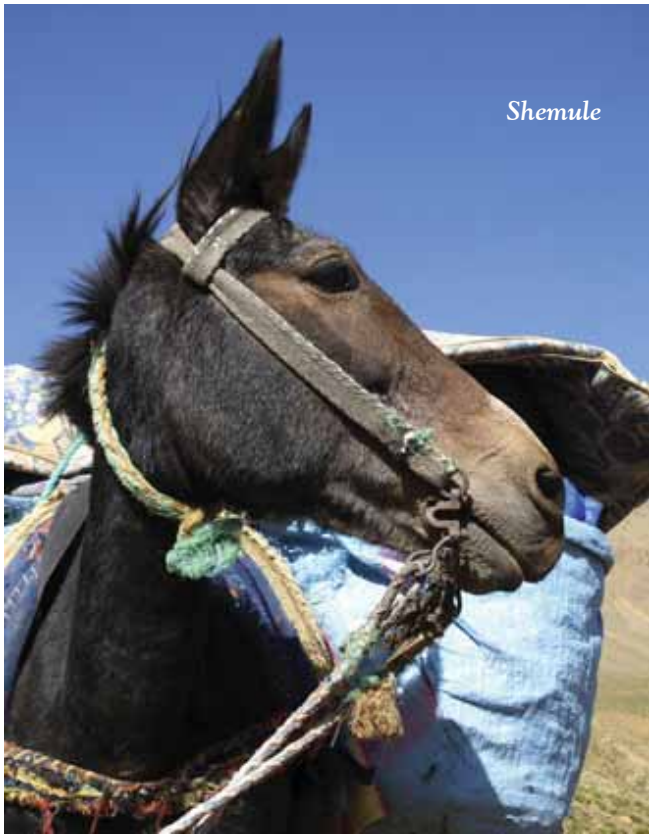
The river is dredged continuously, but at times it can be very shallow over the bar making arrival and departure tricky, and the harbour is closed if the swell is big – sometimes for days at a time. As we approached, Franco told me to keep 3m under the keel. We had been spotted on AIS some miles out and interrogated by VHF as to our intentions, the marina was duly informed of our imminent arrival and it kindly sent out a launch to escort us up the river. The pilot asked us what our draught was and invited us to follow closely in his wake. We crossed the bar with 0·4m under the keel – rather unnerving. The short stretch of river up to the marina was full of young men swimming in all directions, including across our bow.



Imelghas village

Departure involved more forms and a visit by an eager sniffer dog dragging his handler behind him. He walked around the deck but did not come down into the cabin. We preferred Salé to Rabat, it is more traditional and, as fewer tourists visit, there isn't any of the hassle usually associated with Morocco. I was able to wander round the *medina* both on my own and with Franco without any trouble.

We were joined by our friend Cordelia and set off for the M'Goun area in the High Atlas Mountains. I had read about the Wandras gorge on the Tessaout river and the Arous gorge, both of which sounded very beautiful and off the beaten track. Very little information was available, but we thought we might just have the skills to 'walk' through them. We arrived in Imelghas, the village which serves the M'Goun region and met Hussein, a local mountain guide who helped us find accommodation. He was keen to guide us until he heard of our plans, "I'm not a climber," he said. We hired Ali



and his mule, Shemule (female mules are called 'Shemule' and males 'Hemule') and set off the following morning. The first two days took us up to the Tarkeddit plateau at 2920m. This part of the trek is well trodden as it leads to Ighil M'Goun, the second highest mountain in Morocco at 4068m, a favoured destination for many trekkers.

During the summer months, from April to the end of September, the Tarkeddit plateau is home to a thriving community of herdspeople. Whole families from the Tessaout villages move, lock stock and barrel, into simple dwellings in the uplands, a system very similar to the *hafod a hendre* which used to take place in Wales or the *alpage* in Switzerland. At the fountain we would meet women and little children in colourful, often velvet, gowns and headscarves. As we walked through the landscape we chanced upon blankets

Trekking up to Tarkeddit: Shemule, Ali, Cordelia and Kath





Tarkeddit plateau herder

airing or laundry drying in the sun in the most unexpected places. At night the men wore their woolen *jelab*, a calf-length tunic with a hood, and often a turban as well.

The next morning we set off promptly for what looked, on the map, like an easy day. We crossed the Tarkeddit plateau to the source of the river Tessaout, and could see the upper reaches of the gorge from which we would emerge the next day. We met quite a few people, one lady with her small boy asked Franco for money, a young woman, laughing, 'threatened' Cordelia and me with her stone sling-shot, we laughed back.

After an easy ascent to the ridge we moved Shemule's load further back for the descent. We rapidly dropped down into the Upper Tessaout gorge – steep, exposed and stunning. The map shows a steep but fairly even slope rather than the indented, craggy, vertical nature of the landscape – very misleading! We were concerned for Shemule but



Shemule descending the Upper Tessaout gorge



Cypress forest with Amezri fields in the background

she was fine, and in places the track has been built up so that the mules don't fall into the abyss below. Ancient, gnarly cypress trees dot the slopes, reflecting the lower grazing pressure on such steep terrain. We continued downhill to the Idromamem bivouac in a cypress 'forest' where we did some laundry and prepared our climbing gear for the Wandras gorge the following day.

On our fourth day we bade farewell to Ali and Shemule, who were heading back up the way we had come the previous day and would meet us back at the Tarkeddit plateau, and set off down the steep slope to the bottom of the Tessaout valley, where the river exits the Wandras gorge on its way to the villages of Tasgaïwalt and Amezri. As we headed upstream we enjoyed the lush riverside vegetation which included mint and other herbs – a refreshing change from the dry, thorny bushes to which we had become accustomed. Cordelia filled her pockets with mint to add to our *até* (very sweet green tea drunk on all occasions by the Berbers) while Franco reccied the route and I watched dippers skimming the water.



Idromamem bivouac

We arrived at a rickety bridge made out of branches laid across stepping stones, and the river sides steepened as we entered the Wandras gorge. According to the sparse information we had, we would encounter the first 'bad step' of climbing grade 'moderate' after four hours, then thirty minutes later the second 'bad step' of grade 'very difficult' with pitons in the rock to which to attach safety lines. All three of us are capable of leading 'very difficult', though both Cordelia and Franco can handle much harder climbing.

As we advanced we were awed by the towering golden cliffs on either side of the river, and had to cross and recross the watercourse repeatedly to avoid getting our feet wet. There were many signs that the valley is in frequent use – the occasional discarded sardine tin (the staple food among muleteers) as well as man-placed stepping stones. Increasingly we were having to scramble up and down the banks and over boulders, and eventually we reached a small waterfall. Here we climbed up on the right-hand side and wondered whether this was the first 'bad step', but it seemed a little too early as we had only been going for two and a half hours.



Wandras gorge, the Tessaout river before the first bad step

Half an hour later we arrived at a second, more impressive, waterfall and found a bolt (rather than a piton) halfway up an obvious climb. It looked more difficult than 'very difficult' and very much more difficult than 'moderate' – the cliff was overhanging and to fall would be bad news. Franco led. The rocks above the overhang were rounded with no obvious hand-holes, and he was struggling to find a way to haul himself up. Above him a Lammergeier vulture soared and would occasionally land on a ledge on the cliff side. I wanted to watch this amazing bird but had to keep my eyes on Franco as I was belaying



Wandras gorge, Franco on the first bad step …

him. He succeeded in attaching a sling to the bolt while muttering to himself "when in doubt – cheat", stuck his foot in the sling and up he went. Cordelia and I followed rapidly behind.

We rated this climb 'very severe' – much more serious than a moderate. It is plausible that a ledge has fallen off since the information we had was written, or that it had simply been mis-graded. We were still unsure whether we had just climbed the first or second 'bad step', but had reached it in three hours so neither times corresponded to the notes. How difficult would the next bad step be? Would we be able to climb it? It would be a very long way to retrace our steps out of the gorge and back over the mountain to where Ali would be waiting for us. As always when in doubt, we stopped for lunch.



… and Kath climbing the second

The gorge was fabulous, golden rock formations, Berber summer cave dwellings, goats skipping around on the high cliffs above and higher still a Bonelli's eagle swooping for its prey. We walked for another 50 minutes and just round the corner was another waterfall, much taller this time and, a long way above it, the way out. A loud bang – thunder – followed by lightning and more thunder. We found the climbing route over on the right, and as we reached the top of the scree slope just below the climb the heavens opened and we were pounded by hail stones! *Inch'Allah*. If you are a climber you will know all about wet limestone.

Franco set to task and made short shrift of the 'very difficult' route, despite the wet rock. I swear I heard him muttering "good thing I'm more of a sailor really". Cordelia went next and I brought up the rear. Our 60m rope was only just long enough. We gingerly worked our way along the exposed ledge around to the waterfall, it looked worse than it was. Cordelia asked, "Is that the last of the climbing?". I wouldn't have liked to say. A few steps further on we came to a small man-made wall built to stop livestock from the top end of the gorge straying as far as the waterfall. Another short climb up the right bank and several more scree scrambles, and gradually the gorge widened to become a valley and we walked out of the head of the gorge into the familiar landscape of the Tarkeddit plateau.

We passed blankets drying in the sun after the heavy showers, donkeys peacefully grazing along the stream and ladies doing the laundry. We arrived back at the Tarkeddit camp at 1730, tired but elated. Ali saw us from a distance and fetched water from the fountain to make us well-deserved cups of *até*, to which Cordelia contributed the mint she had gathered along the way.

Our final day would be a long one for Ali and Shemule – they would be retracing the steps of our first and second days, while we dropped down below the Tarkeddit plateau to meet the Arous river and follow it downstream, avoiding the steep climb back up the pass. The trekking guidebook says of the Arous gorge '8 hours, moderate – an interesting gorge variation, involving an abseil'. About the abseil it says 'the waterfall is circumvented by an 18m abseil (piton belays)'. Ali said "don't bother taking lunch, I'll meet you at Café Atlas and we'll have lunch there". I stuffed my rucksack with muesli bars, regardless.

Where the path crosses the Arous river we turned off and followed its bed, but the helpful stepping stones soon ran out and we were faced by a big drop behind a large boulder ... we would have to get wet, there was nowhere else to go. We hesitated, this was hardly a 'moderate trekking route'. We looked at the alternatives – climb all the way back up to the plateau and follow the route taken by Ali, or follow the track to the foot of Ighil M'goun and cut back to the Arous valley over a col. Both would take hours and we had to get back down to the Aït Bougamez valley that night in order for Cordelia to catch her flight the following evening. We went for the gorge.

We were constantly wading knee-deep and sometimes higher in the river, we scrambled down boulders, down-climbed cracks in the rock, slithered through mud and bird faeces. The gorge was very narrow, a genuine canyon, and Cordelia remembered that she is claustrophobic! At last, the waterfall – we hoped for some bolts to which we could attach the rope, or at least the pitons mentioned in the book. We searched and searched, and eventually found the screwholes where the bolts used to be. We sacrificed one of our slings to set up a belay using a hole in a rock, and abseiled safely to the bottom.



Arous gorge, Kath on the first abseil

The guidebook says that the gorge widens out after the waterfall ... only it didn't. On and on we went. It was raining now, not much, but here was not the place to be during a thunderstorm. We hurried on. Another waterfall, and two bolts right above it – we were going to have to abseil right down the middle of the waterfall, we would be absolutely soaking! Franco went first, a loud shout, then he appeared safe at the bottom, a big grin on his face. I helped



A mule caravan heading towards the Arous gorge on their way up M'Goun

Cordelia clip into the rope and she quickly disappeared into the waterfall. My turn next, a couple of seconds in the water and then you break through and descend behind a curtain of water. Fantastic! We all had big grins on our faces, what a fabulous place!

Then another big step, 3m at most. We considered down-climbing it, but it was high enough to hurt if you fell and no helicopter at the end of the phone to come and collect you, so we set up an abseil. Each time we abseiled we had to leave a couple of bits of gear behind – we hoped there wouldn't be too many more difficult sections or we'd soon have no equipment left! At last the gorge widened and we were walking on shingle beds. We stopped for some food and to dry out our clothes before regaining civilisation. We were delighted – it had been difficult at times but we had made it safely. On the way out of the gorge we admired thin, airy waterfalls dropping into the river, met a shepherd, and passed a leat built by the Arous farmers to irrigate their fields.

It wasn't long before we were back at Café Atlas, a small shack with a sunbrella, plastic table and chairs, run by the Arous shepherd kids who serve soft drinks cooled in the stream. Ali and Shemule were waiting patiently. We gulped down the compulsory soft drink and a quick lunch, and set off down the valley as the storm broke, rain poured down, the path turned to mud, and villagers ran for shelter. We plodded on, glad we were no longer in the gorge. *Inch'Allah*.



TMS TECHNICAL MARINE SUPPLIES

Hydrogenerators FuelCells Wind Solar

Exclusive UK distributor for:

watt&sea

Eliminate the use of fossil fuels, while easily meeting your on-board energy requirements with Watt&Sea cruising hydrogenerators.

DYNAC HYDROMAX 150

The Hydromax 150 fuel cell is the solution to ensure your power supply on board at the touch of a button, running on powdered fuel that is safe and easy to transport globally.

SILENTWIND

The SILENTWIND is ultra-light at just 6.8kg, aerodynamic and can provide up to 500W of power, using unique carbon fibre blades to reduce noise to just 60db it is a class apart from its competitors.

TMS SOLAR

TMS offer a range of monocrystalline back contact rigid & flexible solar panels to suit any application.

www.technicalmarinesupplies.co.uk For your nearest stockist please call 01752 600454

AUTOPROP

Lets you sail faster.. and motor further

Less noise & vibration - SigmaDrive

YACHTING MONTHLY

"Our tests show the Autoprop achieved 6 knots at 2100 rpm compared to 2500 rpm for our standard prop and most of the others on test."
Yachting Monthly



VARIFOLD

The ultimate propeller for cruiser racer yachts

"Your prop is fab, the Leonora Crew love it. We won our cruising class in Bequia 2013, and also the Barbados Mount Gay regatta 2013, knocked the socks off of everyone, the fast cruiser with no water resistance. Bruntons Varifold is the best!!!"
Owner of S/Y Leonora
Beneteau 473



BRUNTONS

Bruntons Propellers Ltd T: +44(0)1255 420005
E: sales@bruntons-propellers.com
www.Autoprop.info | www.Varifold.info
Oakwood Business Park, Stephenson Road West, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 4TL, UK

BRAZIL
Laurent Debart

First of all, please excuse my writing – I am French, so not a native English speaker. Next, a little about myself. I started sailing, mostly dinghies, when I was 23 years old, during my two-year stint in the French navy as a student officer. About three years ago, at age 39, I was operated on for kidney cancer and six months later resigned from my job as a yacht broker to fulfil a dream of sailing around ... the world ... the Med ... the Atlantic ... it wasn't important.

Two years later, in March 2014, we – my girlfriend (who had never sailed before in her life) and I – set sail from Palavas in the south of France in *Akelia*, our Pogo 10·50 (34ft), and finally, after a few months and many stops (the Balearics, Gibraltar, Lisbon, Morocco, the Canaries, the Cape Verdes) reached Fortaleza, Brazil, in November 2014.

From what I understand there is only one marina in Fortaleza, at the Marina Park Hotel. When we arrived in the 'marina' there were four boats moored there, stern-to, one with its bow secured to a buoy, the other three with lines attached all the way across to the breakwater. The single pontoon is extremely old and rusty. The hotel is a typical conference type venue, but the swimming pool and pool bar were nice. The marina manager was friendly enough, but we did not have much to do with him. Entry formalities were straightforward, except for Customs which took three hours because the right guy was not around. Fortaleza has a nice beachfront with restaurants and bars, and a small historic centre, but other than that is not a particularly attractive city.




48°W
40°W
Fortaleza
5°S
N
Natal
Akelia's route
Baia de Todos
os Santos
ILHA DE
BOM JESUS
ILHA DO
MONTE
CRISTO
ILHA DOS
FRADES
Cabedelo
João Pessoa
Recife
Paraguaçu
Itaparica
ILHA ITAPARICA
Salvador
de Bahia
Atlantic
Ocean
Salvador
BRAZIL
Camamu Bay
Ilhéus
15°S
Fortaleza
B R A Z I L
Salvador
Rio de
Janeiro
Florianópolis
Rio Grande
URUGUAY
Atlantic Ocean
Porto Seguro
Arraial d'Ajuda
Trancoso
Vitória
Atlantic
Ocean
Angra dos Reis
Búzios
Paraty
Cabo
Frio
São Paulo
Rio de Janeiro
Tropic of
Capricorn
ILHA
GRANDE
Akelia's route
Ilha Grande
Ilha
Itanhenga
Angra dos Reis
25°S
Ilha de
Gipóia
Praia de
Pedade
Saco
de Céu
ILHA
GRANDE
Bay of Paraty
Paraty
To Rio Grande
Florianopolis
48°W
40°W

After two days' rest we sailed to Jacaré, near Cabedelo and João Pessoa. That small stretch is hell and I don't recommend anyone to do it. It is shallow, has oil platforms and fishermen, and is against the southeast trade winds and a strong current. After two days' struggling we decided to go offshore, which made the trip longer but safer and nicer. Jacaré is a small village upriver, about three miles inland. We went up the river at dawn which was amazingly beautiful and quiet. The 'Jacare yacht village' has two floating wooden pontoons – a bit shabby, but cute. It was opened by a French guy a few years ago, joined last year by a Belgian and another French guy, and is mostly used by French, Belgian and German crews (though we also met a few Dutch and South Africans) who arrive after crossing the Atlantic. On arrival you berth alongside the end of the pontoons or anchor in the river, and are then directed to a berth. It is quiet, and would be perfect if it were not for the other marinas which cater for motor yachts and the infamous Brazilian love of loud music, especially at the weekend. There is great food (by one of the French partners) at the marina, and nice drinks, plus wifi and good bathrooms. A great place! And then we discovered that it is also one of the cheapest marinas in Brazil.

We then sailed on to Salvador de Bahía and berthed at Terminal Náutico. We arrived about two weeks prior to Carnival, but already it seemed nobody worked ... actually it seems nobody ever works in Salvador. I must admit I left the city unimpressed and feeling rather negative. This may be unfair, because the historical centre is beautiful and most people were very friendly. But the place is poor, feels violent and unsafe (though we had no problems), and none of the five technicians I was in contact with showed up when they said they would. The manager, Marcello, was just as useless as I had been warned – it seems his best point is that he speaks good English. Terminal Náutico is basic but very popular and safe, and right downtown. The wifi did not work and the bathrooms were not too clean. There are three more marinas further inside the bay so we went to have a look, but they were even worse, just quieter. Otherwise there is snazzy Bahía Marina. It is beautiful and has everything (and everything works), but you must take a taxi in and out – except to go to the Museum of Modern Art, which is really



Salvador de Bahía

worth visiting, and has sunset jazz-samba concerts on Sundays – a great show! But Bahía Marina is triple the price of Terminal Náutico.

Next we sailed to an anchorage in the bay, between Ilha dos Frades and Ilha de Bom Jesus, a beautiful, quiet place. The only other boat there was sailed by the parents of Vendée Globe sailor Sebastien Josse, who invited us for dinner. Then we moved upriver to Paraguaçu, right behind Ilha do Monte Cristo. The place was magical – the only person we saw or heard was a fisherman in his canoe. The following day we went further upriver, sailing with the local *saveiros* (fishing sloops) in a gorgeous, dwindling river. You can anchor near a church, or a village further upriver, but we just had lunch and then turned downriver for Itaparica. There is a small marina there, but like the other 30-odd boats we chose to anchor. It is said to be a nice place, but we had realised we had to get moving because of our visas. After Salvador de Bahía we met fewer and fewer foreign yachts. Even in Rio there were only two other French boats and one British; in Vitória, there were none.

From there it was fairly quick hopping down the coast of Brazil, but we hope to do it properly on the way back up ... if that's what we end up doing. Our first stop was Camamu Bay, a bit reminiscent of the Paraguaçu River in the bay of Salvador. A beautiful place – no marinas, just anchorages, and definitely worth a few more days.

For some reason we had decided to stop in Ilhéus. At about 2000, when we were five miles or so offshore, we got hit by 30 knots of northeast wind which we were able to ride downwind for about ten minutes before it calmed down. Our first anchorage off the Ilhéus Yate Clube was a nightmare. By then the wind had veered to southeast and was blowing 30–40 knots, we had zero protection, and the anchor was not holding. We moved on to another anchorage which was bit more protected (though not great), where there were already two yachts, and finally got to sleep.



Sunset jazz concert at the Museum of Modern Art, Salvador de Bahía



Ilha dos Frades anchorage

We then sailed on to Porto Seguro, or rather Arraial d'Ajuda, because a friend of a friend of a friend lives there. The entrance to the river and the river itself were very, very dodgy, mostly because it's extremely shallow. We have a lifting keel, but at low tide there was just 1m so we finally followed a fisherman who showed us the way. Just half a mile upriver is the Hotel Quinta do Porto, which has two pontoons. The place seemed fine until the flooding tide kicked in and it became a complete nightmare for the boats. Our boat got scratches from a nearby motorboat – not sure which was at fault as we'd decided to stay in the hotel, which was very cute – and anyway, just scratches. The friend of the friend turned out to be the French Honorary Consul, a businessman/entrepreneur who'd lived in Brazil for 20 years and was building his own 8·5m mini race boat – obviously a keen sailor, and an extremely funny and entertaining guy. Arraial d'Ajuda, Porto Seguro and Trancoso are slightly upmarket beach neighbourhoods – well Trancoso, a little further south, is extremely high end – relaxed, friendly, with nothing much to see or visit but a good, relaxing stopover. We were told that a quiet river, just couple of miles north, was the best place to anchor. We offered Monsieur the Consul a ride on our boat to Trancoso, where he lives, which he accepted with pleasure. Little did we know Trancoso has no port or marina and is fully exposed to the ocean, so when we got into 3m depths, about 100m from the beach, Monsieur the Consul waved us goodbye, jumped off the boat, and swam back home.

Our next stop was at Vitória, which has a population of 300,000 but feels much bigger. It is rich and clean, despite the Tubarão iron ore terminal at the entrance to the bay, so lots of ships anchored outside waiting to load. The yacht club is great – efficient and clean with a good pool. This was mostly a technical pit-stop and we were glad to find lots of really efficient technicians – within two hours of arriving we had an electrician and a mechanic on board, both excellent. The only downsides are the visitors' berth, which is at the entrance of the marina so exposed to flooding tide, and the fixed pontoons, with no ladders at the visitors' berth. We found it easier to take our dinghy to a small, floating, dinghy pontoon just under the restaurant, where it was totally safe.



On the way to Vitória

Then on to Búzios, a great destination except for having to sail past a Manhattan hell of oil platforms! Hundreds of them ... and of course hundreds of support vessels. It made for an impressive traffic jam on AIS.

Búzios is famous because of Brigitte Bardot, because it is close to Rio, because it is cute, has good restaurants, bars, buggies for rent and is a fun place to hang out. There is no marina and just one yacht club, the Iate Clube Armação de Búzios (ICAB), where you can anchor or use the club's buoys, as we did. The club has beautiful grounds and very friendly people, but the bar/restaurant only opens for lunch. Later we discovered the Búzios Vela Clube at Enseada de Manguinhos, which seemed much more active, mostly with dinghies and with a couple of yachts anchored.

We had been told of a great floating oyster restaurant inside Cabo Frio. The stretch between Búzios and Cabo Frio was beautiful but not pleasant to sail, with heavy swell and waves – very messy. By the time we got to the anchorage where the restaurant is located it was blowing 30 knots, from the wrong direction, of course. The restaurant did not look open so we decided to anchor right inside/behind Cabo Frio. At night it did not look like much, but in the morning it felt like being in a volcano, right behind the ocean which could come in through this tiny passage ... not to be tried in southerly winds or swell.



Búzios

Finally Rio! Well, it is something to sail into Rio, by night especially, with all the *favelas* lit up, and of course Sugar Loaf and the statue of Christ the Redeemer. We decided to berth in the Clube Naval Charitas, which is run by the Brazilian navy but open to the public, including foreigners. It has excellent installations and berths, a large swimming pool, good technicians etc, but is located across the bay from Rio itself. Five minutes' walk out of the marina and then 20 minutes' on the fast ferry and you land in Rio city centre – we liked that solution. Rio is amazing. It has a diversity of people, architecture and cultures that we had not previously seen in Brazil. I suspect only São Paulo may be similar.

After Rio we visited THE sailing grounds of Brazil – Ilha Grande and the Bay of Paraty. Our first anchorage was at Saco de Ceu on Ilha Grande itself (the Ilha Grande area is composed of one big island, Ilha Grande, and hundreds of smaller islands. It is green and very beautiful.) We had to stop in Angra dos Reis on the mainland for some shopping and paperwork. Marina Piratas seemed the place to go, except they charge 13 reals (about €3) per foot for 24 hours – more than €100 for A*keliai* – in an average marina in a scruffy town, so we thought, 'hey, let's move on'. So we did, ending up at the picturesque anchorage at Praia da Piedade, off Ilha da Gipóia, where there is a beautiful little church and a beach which uncovers only at low tide. Actually it is not really an anchorage, and the owner of a house with a private berth and two buoys let us use one overnight for free. Our next anchorage was just as stunning – the isthmus at Ilha Itanhanga. Strangely, the three bars/restaurants we tried on these islands all closed at 6pm. The Brazilians only seem to venture out on the water in daylight!

Ilha Grande



Our last stop in that beautiful region was Paraty, where we berthed at the Marina do Engenho. Its two pontoons are very well-managed by Luis, who is pleasant and helpful, and though there is no bar or restaurant it does have water, electricity, showers and wifi ... all for €70 a night. Apparently the other marinas closer to the city centre are even more expensive, and some don't even take visiting yachts. Luis was kind enough to offer us a few free rides into town – and what a town. Paraty is the most beautiful and well-preserved colonial town in Brazil. We could have stayed another week, but just waited for a cold front coming from the south to dissipate and off we went to Rio Grande, a six-day sail.

Rio Grande is a fairly big port with a 13 mile channel leading to the town. It does not matter what the tide is doing, the flow always goes out! Entering we motored at 3 knots over the ground, leaving in 15 knots of wind we sailed at 10–11 knots! Rio Grande has



The grounds of Rio Grande Yacht Club

two options for berthing – the Rio Grande Yacht Club and the pontoon of the Oceanography Museum. The yacht club is beautiful, clean and friendly, with lush gardens and a great swimming pool, tennis courts, wifi, etc. We paid €25 per night which, together with Jacaré, was the cheapest in Brazil. And 95% of the boats there are sailing yachts! You need shallow draught to get in, however, with 1·3m depths.

The pontoon of the Oceanography Museum is located about 100m away and is slightly more open to the elements, but is said to be free. When we visited there were two boats, one British and one Brazilian, but no one around. There did not seem to be any showers. The small museum is very interesting and informative. Rio Grande as a town did not have much of interest, but we had to stop here for exit formalities. First stop *Polícia*, which was our main worry as officially we were a week late leaving the country (you get 90 days in Brazil from when you arrive), but when our names were entered in the system it showed our last entrance as Recife airport (we had flown back to Europe for Christmas), giving us 90 days from THAT date. According to the *Polícia* official the airport staff had made a mistake, and we were still legal in Brazil. When we asked when we could re-enter Brazil, he answered, "Tomorrow, if you want", which was different from what other police had told us, so who knows! Customs and *Capitanía* (the Brazilian navy) were pure formalities. (Despite other skippers' comments, and some of the *Capitanías'* suggestions, we only ever visited the *Capitanía*s of places which we had written down on our official programme. Some said that we should visit the *Polícia Federal* every time we changed state, but we never did.)

All in all Rio Grande was a pleasant stop. A charming, slow, provincial town with not much of interest except its location and wildlife – flat surroundings and a huge lake (more like a sea) behind, which we plan to explore next time. Goodbye Brazil, and a very fast sail – 35 hours, averaging about 9 knots – took us to Punta del Este in Uruguay. From there we plan to visit Montevideo (the port of Piriapolis being closed for works), then most probably the Buenos Aires area, where we will decide on our next move. Cape Horn? Cape Town? The Caribbean?

A quick note on weather forecasts. I normally use four sources – Windguru when coastal sailing, GRIB files, PassageWeather and PredictWind (the paying version, probably the best weather forecast I have ever seen). From Rio Grande to Uruguay I was worried about the southwesterly *pampero* winds, and so we decided to get routing from a pro. We used Bill, who runs PassageWeather [http://passageweather.com/] and provided an efficient and very useful service, though obviously it is not free. I will probably use it again when sailing coastwise in areas with potentially rough conditions.

Germany > Estonia > Russia > Finland > Sweden > Denmark

1 2 3 4 5 6



ARC Baltic

Sailing rally through the Baltic in summer 2017. Includes St. Petersburg & Swedish Archipelagos.

Make new friends and discover new places with World Cruising Club's ARC Baltic Rally. Planned for summer 2017, the rally takes you on a 1,500nm voyage of discovery through Europe's "east sea", combining days of social cruising with exploring the Baltic's fascinating culture and history ashore.

- Led by experienced Baltic sailors
- Guidance and assistance on route
- To Saint Petersburg and back
- Six capitals in six weeks
- Join for all or part of the route
- Crew finder service

July & August 2017

More at **www.worldcruising.com/arcbaltic** or contact **mail@worldcruising.com** or call **+44 (0)1983 296060**

NORTHERN ADVENTURE, LOFOTEN 2014
Peter Owens

(*In 2004/5 Peter sailed a 15,000 mile Atlantic circuit aboard* Plyades*, a 12m Van de Stadt Caribbean, with his partner Vera Quinlan skippering, before they bought* Danú *in southern Portugal in 2011. Plans for 2016 include a visit to the Azores, with a family transatlantic pencilled in for 2018 or so.*)

During the delivery of ***Danú***, our newly-acquired Bruce Roberts 13m Mauritius ketch direct from Portugal to our home at Kinvara on the west coast of Ireland in 2011, the conversation would often turn to future plans and sailing destinations. The islands of Lofoten were raised as a possible destination. In the dark of those early watches one could imagine towers of granite rising up from Arctic seas, orcas feeding on spawning salmon, a wild archipelago waiting to be explored, routes waiting to be climbed. The idea remained in my mind throughout the 18 months of refit in Galway docks. With a new engine, upgraded electronics and total overhaul of the boat's interior I felt Danú was ready for a test in northern waters. In late November 2013 the original delivery crew got together to discuss objectives and route choices. Supercharged by wine on that blustery winter evening, it was easy to make lots of bold statements and that night a date was set for departure the following July.

For the outward leg I was joined by Paul Murphy, Paddy Griffin and Barry Owens. Paul had been on ***Danú*** for our delivery trip from Portugal, Paddy had just got his Yachtmaster and was keen to get some serious miles, and my brother Barry decided he had better learn to sail in the weeks coming up to our departure. We departed Parkmore on 28 June, with a rough plan of sailing directly to Lofoten in one push with as few stops as possible. An overnight brought us to south of Barra in the Hebrides and onwards through the sea of the Minch, which we found in flat calm conditions, leaving the crew ample time to sunbathe on the deck. We arrived in Stornoway at 0100, just ahead of a series of strong depressions due the following morning. After two days waiting for gales to pass through we sailed out past Tiumpanhead and set course to the north of Shetland thence Lofoten. Day by day we settled into the rhythm of life a sea. Watches were set to two hours on, two hours off, each took a turn in the galley, and everyone got used to sail changes and the electronic systems. On one tack we sailed 450 miles, making fine progress towards our goal. We averaged 120 mile daily runs and morale was high. On 7 July we crossed the Greenwich meridian, a new first for ***Danú***.





Paul Murphy captures the reflection of Danú, Sea of the Minch, Hebrides

As we closed in on the coast of Norway the wind veered and the fog descended. Straightaway we were reduced to 50m visibility and the radar and AIS were indispensable. Within reach of the coast and mobile coverage, we received weather reports from home and decided to push on northwards to Rorvik, a port of entry and good place to refuel. As we did so the weather improved, and we made good progress northwards in light northeasterly winds. We arrived at Rorvik in the evening, coming in to berth at the small marina. The visitors' area being full, we made a difficult swing into a tight space as indicated by someone official-looking on shore. Safely tied up,



As dark as it gets – slipping through the channels north of Rorvik. Barry Owens keeps watch at 0200



Good progress up Vestfjorden towards the Lofoten isles

though with half of *Danú* sticking out from the mini pontoon, we celebrated with a beer only to hear, moments later, a shout of 'you're in my place, you have to move' from a motor boat coming in. So beers away, we reversed out and negotiated our quite unmanoeuvrable ship into an even tighter space further into the marina.

From Rorvik we motored through the channels and out into open water, passing the iconic Traena archipelago. With the north-going current we were now making good progress towards Henningsvaer, our Lofoten landfall. The fog descended again on the final night, then cleared to give a fantastic vista of the Lofoten chain, inverted clouds spilling over the tops from the western shores. We tied up in Henningsvaer alongside the Brygge Hotel and were to stay there for the week. The harbour had been chosen

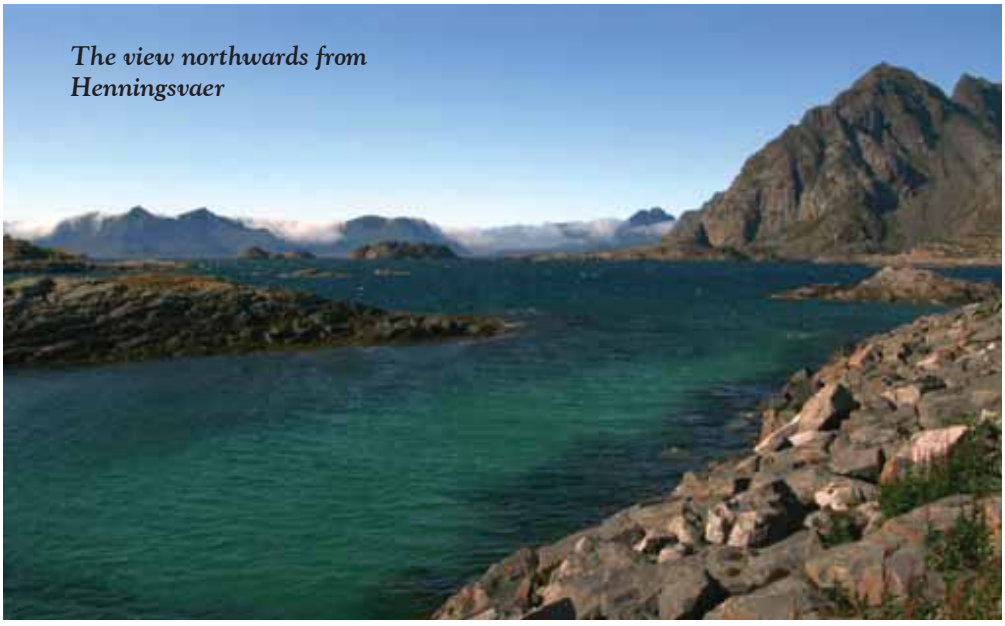
Approaching Henningsvaer after the two week passage from Kinwara





Danú berthed beside the Brygge Hotel at Henningsvaer

as the closest we could get to some quality Lofoten climbing areas, while also being a safe location when *Danú* was unattended. That night we all slept with incredible soundness, to be awoken by knocking on the hull at 0700. Bags of gear were fired onto the boat – the climbers had arrived from Ireland!



The view northwards from Henningsvaer

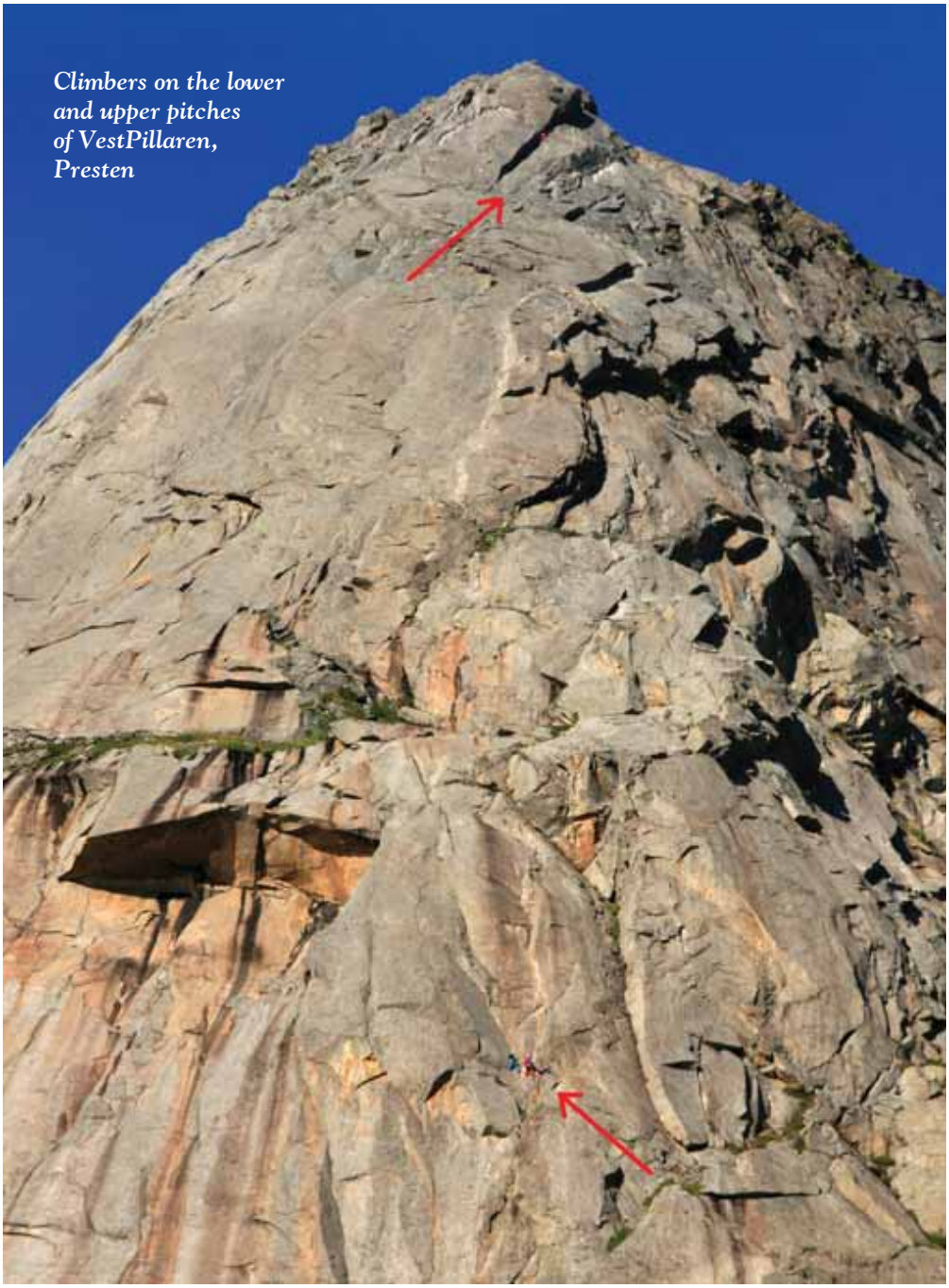


Vagakallen, 943m

Kev Power and Sean Murnane had agreed to travel by plane and meet us at Henningsvaer, and despite the uncertainties associated with rendezvousing with a boat they took a chance and booked flights early. Paul, Barry and Paddy made a plan to climb Vagakallen, an impressive peak dominating the skyline above Henningsvaer. Although just 943m high, the mountain rises straight from sea level making a spectacular view from our berth. Kev, Sean and I spent the day climbing in perfect weather at the nearby 'Gandalf' crag. At 2200 we were still going, the midnight sun egging us on and on. Heading back to the boat we were met by a dusty, parched trio extolling tales of grand vistas from Vagakallen, maidens in distress and airy moves.

The northbound crew departed over the following days. During that time we climbed the classic VestPillaren on Presten (the Priest). At 467m this majestic sweep of rock rises up from sea level, our route taking a devious line up cracks and corners on the right side of the cliff. At 8pm we were at the end of the difficulties, twelve pitches of climbing done. On another day we were back at Presten, this time to climb Korstoget (the Crusade). With a light wind blowing from the north and the sun breaking through the cloud, conditions were perfect.

Kev and Sean returned to Ireland after a week, and the third phase of the trip began with the arrival of the southbound crew. John Sweeney had been on the 2011 Portugal to Kinvara passage. Mantas Seskaukis had no sailing experience but was a competitive rower of traditional boats and also a mechanic by trade. I had climbed many times with James O'Reilly over the years, and this was also to be his first voyage under sail. With James I planned to have a go at the south pillar of Stetind, perhaps to some Norway's most famous mountain. At just under 1400m it is not high, but it rises directly over Stefjord and the south pillar gives 15 pitches of climbing up to E2 grade. In near calm conditions, we slipped our lines and motored back out to Vestfjord and eastwards to the spectacular anchorage in Stefjord. We approached the anchorage in the evening,



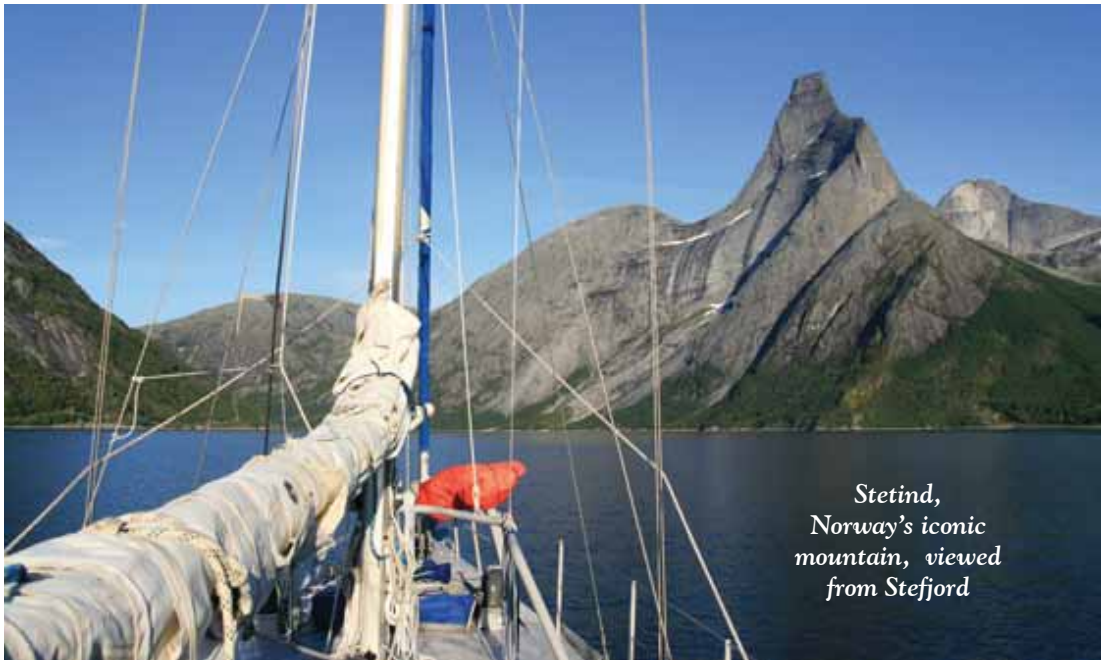
Climbers on the lower and upper pitches of VestPillaren, Presten

sailing towards the tiny hamlet at the head of the fjord, waiting for the depth sounder to register. All of a sudden the depth shoaled to 10m, almost on shore. We dropped the anchor and killed the engine. This is arguably one of the most idyllic anchorages I have ever seen, with Stetind's brooding north face rising directly from the fjord.



Orcas feeding in Ojksfjord, Lofoten

At 0600 next morning John dropped me and James off to the Stetind trailhead. Laden with climbing gear we snaked our way through the forested lower slopes, eventually opening out onto scree. Two hours of slogging upwards led us towards the giant amphitheatre that forms the east side of the mountain. The route traversed a small snow slope and followed a ramp to the 'king's seat', an exposed ledge at the start of the south pillar. James led out up a groove and made a difficult traverse to the base of the next corner system above. The corner became increasingly steep until the crack petered out. With the way above barred, the only possibility was a traverse line out left. I placed some gear and started on the traverse, blindly groping around the arête and swinging around to a steep slab, leading to the central part of the pillar. Fine cracks led up around an overhanging section and after 15 pitches we were on the summit. Unlike sharp alpine pinnacles, Stetind's summit is surprisingly broad and flat, you could almost have a game of football up there. We gazed down to the fjord and to the small speck that was *Danú* 1400m below. We packed up and traversed along the north ridge, the ordinary route up the mountain. This was airy with huge drops on both sides, requiring some rope work to negotiate the difficulties.



Stetind, Norway's iconic mountain, viewed from Stefjord



The view from the summit of Stetind – Danú is the tiny speck in the fjord below

We departed two days later, motoring gently out from the fjord. High level cirrus streaking across the sky heralded a change – we had seen the best of the weather. We sailed and motored along the coast back into Vestfjord, south through the islands of Osholmem and on to Bodo. This is a major administrative hub with high rises and a ferry terminal but for us it meant diesel and fresh food. Not having sampled Norwegian nightlife so far, we decided that perhaps this might be the place we should have a beer in a bar. At €44 for four pints this was our first and last round. With the boat provisioned we were ready to go, but thick fog had descended on Bodo. I didn't want to start our passage south micro-navigating through skerries in the mist, so delayed departure for a day. The light northerly winds prevailed and kept with us as we motored south, gradually working our way further from the coast, taking a diagonal line from Bodo direct towards Stornoway.

North of the Shetlands the weather started to deteriorate and our light northerlies turned to swing against us. Mantas, who until then had been enjoying the motor-sailing, was somewhat bemused by the motion and took a while to get used to the dips and pulls of moving under sail. As night fell the conditions deteriorated and we struggled to keep our course west of Shetland, eventually heaving-to in wild conditions. The winds gradually abated from force 7 on the nose, however, and reduced further as the morning drew on until we were again motor-sailing. We were north of the Shetlands, still pushing into the southwesterly air flow in a sloppy sea, and continued south along the west coast of Shetland 'mainland' towards Scalloway where James was due to leave the boat. Approaching the entrance at 2300 I lamented losing the midnight sun, but after a narrow channel and a number of doglegs had been negotiated in complete darkness, the inner harbour opened up and we tied up to the fishing quay to ask where we should go. Finally, at 0200, we were secured alongside the visitors' pontoon, tired yet on a high.



The author plays a few tunes below the mighty north face of Stetind

Scalloway was an unexpected gem. We were impressed by the friendliness of the place, and that we could get everything we wanted – good food, fuel, and a pint that wouldn't break the bank. So far north they don't get that many visiting yachts, most visitors being associated with the oil industry in some form or another. There was one other boat on the pontoon, belonging to yacht designer Dick Koopman who sails up to Shetland every summer. We stocked up on more fuel, more food, and had a few cheap pints after John managed to procure a dodgy foreign exchange from euros to sterling. We stayed three nights in the end, waiting for a gale to pass. On seeing northerly force 6 forecast for the following three days, the decision was made to go at first light and sail direct to Stornoway.

As soon as we cleared the island we had clean wind, from the northeast as forecast, giving us a perfect course for the north of Minch. We flew along on a broad reach, the wind increasing bit by bit until we starting reefing down. It was in the shallow waters of the Papa Bank that the wind strength reached force 9. During the night, while attempting to put in a third reef in the main, a full broach occurred, pushing our 16 tonnes of boat further over than ever before – we had been hit by a large wave coinciding with a huge gust. I gripped the wheel not far off the vertical, John and Mantas trying desperately to hang on. The wind speed was reading 50 knots plus and the seas had become chaotic. John clipped on and went forward to the mast and stowed the main, while I held the boat into the wind with the engine. In this wind I wondered how we could hold any sail while hove-to, so decided to see how our long-keeled boat would lie a-hull.

We lay off the wind yet not beam-on to the seas, and though the odd big wave would come our way *Danú* seemed to be able to ride out the seas comfortably. We now found ourselves transfixed and in awe of our surroundings. As in a mountain environment once you are committed to a route, or in a boat when you are caught in a storm, there first comes an acceptance and then clarified thinking. We breathed again and then decided it was time to get out of the wind and rain and go below, keeping watch via AIS and VHF. We sat fully geared up ready for action, and remained so until a grey dawn eventually emerged. As time passed the wind eased slightly and I relaxed somewhat. Hours later the wind decreased quite suddenly, leaving an incredibly confused sea. We motored and

surfed, sometimes at 11 knots, until at last the wind returned and we let out the headsail. With commands from astern as to the next big wave to hit we hand steered for hours until we could trust the self-steering to take over – the following sea was the biggest I have seen and gave a gripping ride. Despite not having slept for 36 hours, I was caught up in the rush of excitement from feeling the boat surf down these enormous waves.

As the day wore on the wind died and the seas flattened, and by nightfall we were motoring into a southwest wind towards Cape Wrath. By the following morning we had rounded the cape and approached Kinlochbervie under murky skies. Just south of the cape, Kinlochbervie is a natural harbour and we needed a good place to recover. It is small, with the sense of an outpost – it feels more like being on an island than on the mainland. The pontoons were full with visiting boats so we tied alongside the highest quay wall we had ever seen. Climbing up the rungs of the ladder we scuttled about in the early morning making *Danú* secure. After a few hours' sleep the day was spent making repairs to a mainsail reefing point that had ripped in the heavy conditions. We ate well, recharged the batteries and got ready for an early departure next morning.

The following days saw a mixture of sail and motor power, constantly keeping the speed up to make it back to Ireland despite fickle winds. At last we saw the lights of Tory Island, but we were forced to motor tack against the southwest wind, closing the gap to Rathlin O'Bierne. The passage east along the cliffs of Slieve League was spectacular – at last we could point off the wind and ease the sheets, giving a fine sail eastwards to Teelin, arriving at 2030 on 7 August. We tied up alongside the harbour wall and immediately made our way to the Rusty Mackerel bar for some well-earned pints.

The following morning we put out to sea again, and were back into a fresh southwesterly again as we made our way to Sligo. For six hours we beat southwards, before turning past the Sligo metal man into the calm and tying up at 1630 on the inner pontoon close to the town centre. We looked around – we could relax – we didn't have to go anywhere – we had made it home, 3000 miles sailed. John and Mantas realised they had ten minutes to catch a bus and were gone a few minutes later. I stood in the boat, taking stock of our journey. A few moments later I could hear shouts outside. Vera and the kids had arrived, it was the quickest crew change ever.

John and Mantas preparing to come alongside



SENDING SUBMISSIONS TO FLYING FISH

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 with me before to submitting the latter two, and also tell me if you're sending the same piece elsewhere, inside or outside the OCC. Finally, please double check that all place, personal and boat names are spelt correctly.

LENGTH: no more than 3500 words and preferably fewer than 3000, except in *very* special cases – and normally only one article per member per issue.

FORMAT: MS Word (any version) or PDF, with or without embedded photos (though see below), sent electronically or by mail on CD or flash drive (USB stick).

ILLUSTRATIONS: up to 20 captioned photos, professional-standard drawings or cartoons. **PLEASE** don't send more than this – while you have a single piece to illustrate, I receive at least 20 articles for each issue, so have 400+ images to juggle! Any digital format is fine, but please contact me before sending prints.

Photos should 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 downloadevd from the camera – merely opening and saving under another name degrades the quality. If 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 many image programs, which compresses the file data), rounding off with a final message telling me what you've sent. Alternatively use WeTransfer [www.wetransfer.com] a great little free (!) internet program.

Finally, please include a list of captions in the order they relate to the text. Something along the lines of: '**01** (DCM 3285) Preparing the boat for sea; **02** (DCM 3321) Leaving Horta, John at the helm; **03** (DSP 00045) The whale! Photo Sue Black'; is ideal.

CHARTLETS & POSITIONS: a rough chartlet if relevant, for professional re-drawing. If your article includes cruising information useful to others, include latitudes and longitudes where appropriate, preferably as a separate list.

COVER PHOTOS: eye-catching, upright photos of high resolution and quality, with fairly plain areas top and bottom – sky and sea? – to take the standard wording.

COPYRIGHT: please ensure you either own the copyright of photos or have the photographer's permission for them to be reproduced on the OCC website as well as in *Flying Fish*. A credit can be included, but *Flying Fish* does not pay reproduction fees.

DEADLINES: 1 FEBRUARY for June publication and **1 OCTOBER for December** publication, though an issue may be closed earlier if it becomes full.

For more information, either e-mail me or refer to the three-page **GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS** to be found on the website. Thank you.

Anne Hammick, Editor
flying.fish@oceancruisingclub.org

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL ..."
Niki and Geoff Phillips

(*Niki wrote about her and Geoff's two east-to-west Atlantic passages – in 2006 aboard* Penmar*, a 29ft Westerly Konsort, and seven years later in* Spirit of Penmar*, a 39ft Westerly Sealord – for* Flying Fish 2014/2 *under the title* A Tale of Two Crossings. *Read on for their return passage aboard* Spirit of Penmar*...*)

This is an unusual story and not an easy one to tell – after all, it concerns the loss of a yacht. For those of us who go to sea, our immediate concern is our own survival and how to deal with the unexpected. Rig failure, collision, sickness or simply bad weather – will our carefully planned coping strategies work? Let me pose another question – what do you do when you come across a disabled yacht in the middle of the North Atlantic?

This was the question we asked ourselves as we approached a yacht under jury rig last summer, while on passage to the Azores and a thousand miles from the nearest land. Our course from Bermuda had not been conventional. To avoid the worst of the weather systems transiting west to east, we shaped a southerly route to take advantage of more moderate winds, skirting the bottom of the lows before heading northeast towards our planned landfall of Horta, Faial. We anticipated seeing little traffic on this route, let alone another yacht, but at around 1400 on our ninth day at sea, around the half way point, an orange sail was spotted three miles or so off our starboard bow. Surprised at how fast we were overhauling the vessel, and after a quick scan with the

Spirit of Penmar anchored in St George's Harbour, Bermuda





Mirabel II under jury jig

binoculars, we altered course to intercept, suspecting that all was not quite right. Conditions were moderate, with good visibility – in less favourable conditions we probably would have sailed by her completely unaware.

The orange sail soon revealed itself as a jury-rigged storm jib and, as the profile of the yacht showed itself intermittently above the undulating ocean swell, we recognised her as *Mirabel II*, a 36ft Westerly Corsair with a singlehander aboard which we had seen back in St George's, Bermuda. Under reduced sail we approached the stricken *Mirabel II*, and could make out the skipper on the aft deck. His storm jib, set on a spinnaker pole stayed with various lines on the foredeck, was pulling the boat along at about 1 knot, but the motion was horrible as she rolled in the swell. Obviously she had suffered damage from the dismasting but, whilst looking in a bad way, she was still afloat and the skipper appeared in control.

Although we exchanged few words on the approach, which seemed to take an age, we were wondering just what we should do. We checked how much fuel we had on board and considered what assistance we might be able, or be asked, to provide. We agreed that we would simply have to assess the situation and respect the wishes of the skipper, who was eagerly awaiting our arrival. Meanwhile, all sail was dropped on *Spirit of Penmar* as we drew within hailing distance. The skipper appeared to be tired and rather knocked about, and was hanging onto the guardrails as his mastless ship rolled uncontrollably in the swell. In good English fashion I shouted "Good afternoon, are you okay?" to receive the reply, "Can I come with you to the Azores?"

Of course he could, but we were unsure whether he really wanted to abandon ship. We could see that he had sustained some head injuries and suspected he might be suffering from mild concussion, in addition to the inevitable fatigue following the shock of the dismasting, then the effort of cutting the rig free and getting the jury rig set up in those conditions ... and all singlehanded too!

Several alternatives were discussed (not easy shouting over the wind and swell) but the skipper was adamant – he'd had enough! He knew, as we did, that the jury rig would not stand up to a blow, and also told us that his engine was out of commission. We were primarily concerned for his safety and, whatever his decision, would not have left him out there without at the very least standing by ... in effect shadowing his progress towards the Azores. I must admit to not being entirely selfless in not favouring this option, given the changeable nature of the weather and the inability of *Mirabel II* to make to weather under jury rig, but the prospect of abandoning ship was a rather strange experience for us all, given that she was not actually sinking and there was no imminent threat to life.

The skipper had done his sums – his ship was tired, having completed many ocean miles over a good number of years, and was already in need of an extensive refit, never mind an entire new rig. He'd no doubt concluded that the full cost of a replacement rig and the necessary repairs/refit would cost significantly more that the boat's value. At the time, his decision was undoubtedly the right one – "the boat is finished" were his words, as he calmly contemplated making preparations to abandon his floating home.

In more dramatic circumstances the priorities and decisions might well have been far clearer than they were, as we sat on our respective side decks discussing the options. If we had any doubts, however, the skipper's offer to jump overboard and swim towards *Spirit of Penmar* confirmed his firm intention to abandon his ship and also rather confirmed that those bangs on the head may have, after all, influenced his thinking!

"No!" we both shouted. There was no reason to rush but we sensed that, having resolved to leave his ship, the skipper wanted to transfer across as soon as possible. It was agreed that this would best be achieved via his liferaft, which was lashed to the deck and appeared to be unharmed. It was duly launched, but unfortunately the canopy didn't inflate and it remained inverted until he managed to get it alongside and right

Rolling horribly … getting ready to abandon ship



it on the rise of the swell. We were impressed – it was half full of water and we were surprised that he managed to heave it over on his own. The alternative would have been to inflate and launch our dinghy ... not easy in the conditions.

Standing by, we looked on as he made a number of trips below to retrieve his personal belongings and the hurriedly assembled remnants of his 'home'. Eventually, as the raft slowly drifted downwind towards *Spirit of Penmar*, we felt desperately for the skipper who, before abandoning ship, had cut the hoses to scuttle his cruising home of many years. Once alongside, everything was brought onboard and the liferaft slashed to send it to the bottom. Introductions made, our new crew member, Richard, seemed okay but pretty exhausted, mainly just relieved to be aboard and 'alive'. Under way, none of us looked back. Niki went below and contacted Falmouth Coastguard via satellite phone to report the incident, and she also put out a DSC safety alert to any other vessels that might be in the area regarding the stricken *Mirabel II*, as we assumed she would probably take some time to sink.

I'll never forget the positivity of Richard, sitting on the aft deck surrounded by his sodden possessions but already planning the next stage of his life. Over a brew, he recounted the rig failure and the trauma of the night before and how he couldn't believe his luck when, just 12 hours after the incident, he sighted a sail on the horizon which then altered course towards him.

It took Richard a couple of days to recover from his experience before taking a watch. This was a relative luxury for us, as we normally adhere to a rigid three hours on, three

Journey's end – Spirit of Penmar alongside the wall in Horta





The extended crew of Spirit – Geoff, Niki and Richard – in Horta

hours off routine, and Richard's help made an incredible difference ... more sleep! Inevitably, we shared a great deal over the next nine days and learned much about him. An experienced voyager, Richard had lived an extraordinary life full of ups and downs and we were never short of conversation over those long ocean miles. From time to time Richard would, understandably, agonise over his decision to abandon *Mirabel II*, but any doubts he may have had were dispelled after five days, when *Spirit of Penmar* was assaulted from three sides with large waves during a fair old blow. The Monitor self-steering gear was decidedly unhappy, so Richard and I hand steered down the waves as best we could all day. Niki kept us going with hot food and drinks, but was rather put out by having to mop up down below after being pooped by two rogue waves. Richard reflected that *Mirabel II* and he "might not have made it in this".

It's always good to share experiences, and we'll always remember the sight of a number of fin whales steadily keeping us company, and humpback whales breaching rather close, as being shared with Richard. It's also surprising to note what a 'shipwrecked sailor' considers essential when abandoning ship. We'd just run out of marmalade, of all things, when we discovered that Richard had brought a jar with him, along with digestive biscuits, peanut butter and potatoes! Of course, he had plenty of time to reflect on what he'd left behind, particularly family photographs and other personal memorabilia. In conversation he'd often say "I've got [such and such] on board," only to immediately check himself and say "I used to have [such and such] on board". Again, we felt for him.

As Faial hove into sight one misty morning, and the tip of Pico appeared as if suspended mid-air above the clouds, we knew our journey would soon be over. I couldn't help but reflect on the ups and downs of this sailing life. Around five months before we picked up Richard we had nearly lost our own rig when rolling downwind towards Guadeloupe in strong trade winds. A toggle failed catastrophically on the starboard after lower, despite the rig only being a couple of years old and the part in question supplied by a leading manufacturer. Bruised and battered, we thanked our lucky stars as we limped into Pointe-a-Pitre, the mast lashed with every available rope and halyard. How ironic that we should come across Richard who, unfortunately, had suffered a worse fate.

Following an emotional arrival in wonderful Horta, and with *Spirit of Penmar* safely tied up alongside the famous harbour wall, Richard went ashore to call friends and family. Within hours he had arranged a flight to the UK, and it was agreed that he would stay with a friend until such time as he could find another boat! Two days later we said our goodbyes – and not without a tear or two. *Spirit of Penmar* seemed rather quiet as we reverted to normality.

As usual in early summer, Horta was crowded with boats on passage back to northern Europe. It was great to meet up with old friends and make new acquaintances, many with interesting tales to tell. However, the yachty grapevine is like no other, and word had got out about 'the rescue'. Though the lack of 'drama' may have been a little disappointing for some, I believe we all empathised with Richard's experience and reflected on just how we'd react out there alone on the ocean in the same circumstances.

For us, arrival in Falmouth a month or so later saw the completion of our Atlantic circuit – so wonderful to be back in home waters. We took our time visiting favourite haunts along the south coast in the wonderful summer weather of 2014, until one calm, misty morning found *Spirit of Penmar* anchored in a peaceful spot, up the Lynher River in the Plymouth 'backwaters'. A pretty little Halcyon 27 came to anchor nearby with a singlehander on board, who rowed across to see us – we had arranged to meet Richard to say hello and to hand over some of his gear, left with us for safekeeping. I'm pleased to report that all is well and Richard is busily getting his new love ready for further adventures. You just can't keep a good man down!



PAST COMMODORE MICHAEL POCOCK

Michael Pocock, who served as Commodore from 1998 until 2002, died on 21 November just as this issue was going to press.

Mike worked at many different careers in the yachting industry, but was best known as a designer of long distance cruising yachts, including his own *Blackjack* in which he and his wife Pat circumnavigated some 25 years ago.

A full obituary, to which those who knew Mike are invited to contribute, will appear in *Flying Fish* 2016/1.

OBITUARIES & APPRECIATIONS

Reese Palley

Reese was 93 years old when he died on 5 June 2015. "He used every speck of his life," said his wife Marilyn, "he used up his life to the very last minute. Relaxation was not a word in his vocabulary. He hated weekends and holidays because no one was around. Reese believed that every moment of life is an event. He was always the adventurer and iconoclast". The voice of a sailing legend may now be quiet, but it has been immortalised in his literature of the sea. Although perhaps too late, many have come to recognise that Reese Palley may have been one of the true treasures of the Argonauts.



Reese Palley aboard Unlikely

Reese Palley was many things – sailor, environmentalist, author, economist and pedlar – but being a sailor always came first. Sailing was his inner soul. Being such an important part of his life, his membership in the Ocean Cruising Club (which he joined in 1977, following a passage from Bermuda to the Azores aboard the 32ft *Unlikely V* the previous year) was listed first on his own long list of accomplishments.

On his 72nd birthday Reese wrote, 'Circumnavigation completed! Begun in Miami, Florida in 1979 – next stop Cuba'. Later he mused, 'For me the sail to the West Indies from the coast of Africa was more than just a passage. It was a Rite of Passage as it represented the final leg in a circumnavigation which has involved me for the last 18 years. True, we did many other things during that time, but the distant goal was always to be able to know that I had sailed around the world' ... 'So now please excuse me and join me in my conceit in completing this universal dream of all sailors. The circumnavigation survived and I survived the circumnavigation'. (See *Flying Fish* 1994/1 for Reese and Marilyn's article on *Completing the Circle*, and 1994/2 for their experience of *Cuba and the Marina Hemingway*, both available on the OCC website).

When he looked back on the things in his life of which he was proud, he would say that they were few and most of them were at best dull and irrelevant and some downright shameful. However, he was proud of finding and saving a priceless Raphael portrait of Lorenzo and of running an enormously successful antique business in Atlantic City, New Jersey and other locations. Reese was also known for his generosity, including funding dental work as gifts for friends and lovers, and renting two 747s



Reese in his famous leopard-print pants, as portrayed by his friend Tony Auth

to fly 500 friends to a birthday party in Paris. And he was particularly proud of one of his books, *Unlikely Passages*.

His adventures at sea, recounted in *Unlikely Passages*, allegedly included starting a mushroom farm, becoming the first private vessel to enter China (in 1982), smuggling a sought-after Torah out of Odessa on behalf of an impoverished rabbi, and escaping five Ethiopian gunboats on the Red Sea. At one point he and Tristan Jones (yes, that Tristan Jones) became involved in an idea to run an island government. "It's not that I'm so exciting," Reese said upon his return, "it's just that everybody else is so dull". His ideas were big, and his accomplishments even bigger.

After a highly successful career as an art dealer, Reese Palley embraced retirement and nautical life with a vengeance, making an 18 year circumnavigation aboard his 46ft Ted Brewer-designed *Unlikely VII*. Most sailors dream of journeying to foreign ports, but many are held back by fears both real and imagined. His book *There Be No Dragons* was intended to encourage those timid of the deep oceans and to inspire the confidence necessary to set sail across 'the wine dark seas of the world'. Its title came from Portuguese charts of the earliest voyages of discovery, on which *terra incognita* bore the legend 'beyond here there be dragons'. His accomplishments on the sea were in many ways epic. He was among the first to take a private sailing yacht into the Black Sea port of Odessa, Ukraine in 1988, and apparently the first to visit Romania, in 1989, both coinciding with the beginning of the end of strict authoritarianism in these communist countries.

Sailing was, by definition, not his only passion. He was a man of fanciful ideas and enormous accomplishments. There's the story of the airline he created, Atoll Air, with the support of the Minister of State of the Republic of the Maldives. It was the first useful airline in the archipelago, and he bought the planes for them. Then as he sailed through the Gulf of Suez flying the US flag his boat was frequently shot at

... until he replaced it with a Confederate flag, which confused everybody. They were never shot at again.

Reese is survived by his third wife, Marilyn Arnold Palley, an artist and sailor, as well as a son, two daughters, a brother, three grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.



'Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming: 'Wow - what a ride!'

Anonymous quote from *The Call of The Ancient Mariner* by Reese Palley, 2004

Contributed by Art Ross and Doug Bruce

We first heard of Reese Palley in the fall of 1988. We had been cruising the Aegean that summer, with the idea of going to the Black Sea the following year. We discovered Reese's *Unlikely* on the hard at the marina in Kusadasi, Turkey, where we learned that Reese had just returned from Odessa, USSR. It was very exciting news because we had tried many avenues to obtain a visa for the USSR; all were unsuccessful and we were very curious as to how Reese had done it. Later that winter we got in touch with him and he told us how he had booked hotels, internal travel, show tickets etc through the Soviet travel agency InTourist, but neglected to tell them that he was sailing to Odessa, rather than flying. Only Reese could have talked his way through that one. He did, and stayed for several weeks, using his tickets and meeting dozens of people. He convinced them all he could lead them into the capitalist world, and 'founded' numerous enterprises with eager Soviets, one called something like the Odessa American Friendship Society. He assured us that he could help us obtain visas – by printing a letter on OAFS stationery, which he generated on board *Unlikely*, inviting us to visit Odessa. We later took that letter to the Soviet consulate in Istanbul and were promptly issued visas ... all highly unlikely.

In fact, during that summer of 1989 he facilitated visits by several western yachts to the yacht harbour of the Black Sea Shipping Company, south of Odessa. While there he set up office in his cockpit and planned wishful commercial ventures with the Soviet, soon to be Ukrainian, sailors in the harbour – everything from steel to furs to plastic bags to charter yachts was in play – but unfortunately, starting businesses proved more unlikely than Reese believed. However, he had truly brought about this unlikely trip for us and many others.

Jim and Margy Robfogel, Yacht *Ping*

Stanley Livingstone

Stanley Livingston of Bristol, Rhode Island died on 1 January 2015 at the age of 96. He was believed to be the Club's oldest member.

He was born in Hawaii, the last of five children, and graduated from the Punahou School in Honolulu in 1935 and Yale University in 1940. He then enlisted in the US Navy, where he served in the Pacific and Atlantic theatres during World War Two and received a Silver Star. After the war he worked at Nicholson File Company for many years, and served as Vice President of Operations.

Stanley's main passion was sailing. As a lifelong sailor, he and his wife Martha cruised extensively on both the western and eastern coasts of the Atlantic. He sailed and raced across the Atlantic five times, four of them were in his own boats, his 1966 passage from Gran Canaria to Barbados in the 50ft *Manukai* being cited as his OCC qualifying voyage. He was a past Commodore of the Cruising Club of America, and in addition to the Ocean Cruising Club was a member of the New York Yacht Club and the Royal Cruising Club.



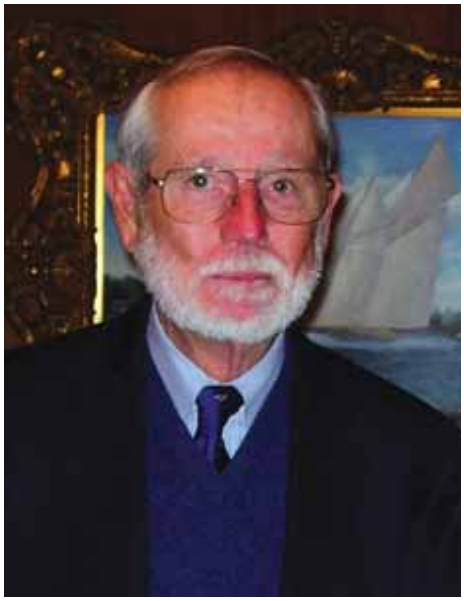
He was a dedicated contributor to his community, serving as President of the Board of Women and Infants Hospital and a trustee of Citizens Savings Bank. He was an active supporter of many organisations, including Connecticut's Mystic Seaport Foundation, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and the Herreshoff Marine Museum.

He is survived by Martha Nicholson Livingston, his wife of 71 years, as well as six children, 17 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

Cyrus Sweet

Cyrus Bardeen Sweet III died on Wednesday 30 September at Portsmouth Hospital, New Hampshire, from complications following throat cancer. He was born and grew up in Longview, Washington, and enlisted in the US Air Force, serving as a pilot in the Strategic Air Command and overseas in Turkey and Vietnam. He arrived in Portsmouth during the Cuban Missile Crisis and moved to New Castle in 1964.

After retirement he served as a Trustee of Strawbery Banke, where he was also on the National Board of Advisors, as well as being a Trustee of the National Tropical Botanical Garden for 22 years, of the New Hampshire Chapter of The Nature Conservancy for 19 years, and on the New Hampshire Board of the Conservation Law Foundation.



He was also on the National Boards of Advisors of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Science.

Cy was a committed philanthropist. He and his wife were benefactors of many non-profit organisation, but Cy went further and lent his interest, insights and passion to each round-table discussion. His dry humour and keen observations charmed and motivated many.

Throughout his time on the coast he was an avid sailor, cruising his boat from the Bahamas to Nova Scotia. He was a member of the Ocean Cruising Club – which he joined in 1984, following a 1160 mile passage from Fort Lauderdale to Portsmouth aboard the 50ft *Sayonara* made two years earlier – as well as of the Portsmouth Yacht Club and the Cruising Club of America. At the time of his death he owned *Little Bear*, a Herreshoff 45.

Cy and his wife Barbara – also an OCC member – enjoyed over 51 years together. In addition he is survived by six nieces and nephews and 14 grand-nieces and nephews.

Wolfgang Reuter

Wolfgang Reuter, Port Officer for Annapolis and generous friend to many cruisers, died on 31 May. Many of us share the same experience of our first meeting with him, his handing us a card with the co-ordinates of his docks in Crab Creek, along with his sincere invitation to sail in. Flags of many countries have flown in the shelter of Crab Creek.

Wolfgang's life was remarkable up to his last days when, with death imminent, he wrote his own obituary. It can be found at https://wolfgangreuter.wordpress.com/, following eloquent tributes by his son Nils and OCC friends. After World War Two, Wolfgang immersed himself in love of the sea, kayaking, sailing, becoming a naval architect, serving apprenticeships aboard fishing vessels and in a freighter. A time at MIT led to Litton Industries, designing ships for the US Navy. The Navy recognised his extraordinary talent, expedited his US citizenship, and he became the Navy's head naval architect and bought his home overlooking Crab Creek. In those years, working at night after his day in Washington, he built a steel schooner which he later sold. Then in the early 1980s he bought a ship design unit from Todd Shipyards and built it into a major naval architectural firm. His success sometimes led to stressful times, including fighting a hostile takeover. He bought the Bristol 45 he named *Ru'ah* (Hebrew for breath of life) and, retiring after the Berlin wall fell, sailed to the Baltic and Germany, wintering aboard



and reuniting with his early years. In 2000 he met Gemma, and they were happy partners until the end.

Born in 1937, his early years were not of the sea but of the fear and personal tragedy of World War Two and its aftermath in Germany. Wolfgang's father refused to join the Nazi party, ending his plans to be a judge. Moving to work in the National Archives he was offered a furnished flat for his family, with clothes, furniture and food on the table, but knowing that meant a family had been taken away, he refused. The place where they did live was bombed, with them inside, after which his family was given shelter in a farmhouse. The Nazis found his father late in the war. When he refused to fight he was forced to work at a prison for Soviet prisoners of war, where he died of disease. To escape the Eastern Front, his mother took her children westward. Their refugee train was strafed and destroyed but she got her children off and into a ditch. They had little food or money. A vegetarian, his mother taught Wolfgang to collect edible wild plants and to obtain from a miller the outer part of milled grains (otherwise fed only to pigs), which she knew contained the nutrients they needed. These years shaped the rest of his life. From his parents Wolfgang learned to live by his principles, to be resourceful, never to waste anything, and how to live frugally, though he never forgot the many ways the family was helped by the generosity of others. Nor did he ever forget the horrors of the War. Once we watched *Master and Commander* together, and at the end his comment was that it romanticised war. War was an evil reality to him, and for that reality he designed modern warships.

Wolfgang and Gemma's hospitality has been enjoyed by many cruisers, and many of our boats carry projects made by us using power tools in his workshop, though often with his help. We all received a warm welcome in Crab Creek. We enjoyed Wolfgang's many stories, always interesting and with detailed recollection. He would also focus on our stories, and years later remember them in detail. His conversations were often on weighty issues – life, history, politics, books, sailing and more. He taught us all a lot about sailing and boats, but was also open to new ideas. Wolfgang loved the OCC, introducing us and many others to the Club. Many of us were treated to *Ru'ah* porridge, a mixture of grains concocted by Gemma and Wolfgang that Wolfgang described as similar to the 'pig food' his mother had him buy in the years after the war. *Ru'ah* porridge has been standard breakfast fare aboard our *Wings* for ten years. (The recipe for Ru'ah porridge appears on page 98 of this issue.)

In 2004, during the OCC Newfoundland rally, early heart problems appeared, but cardiologists restored his health. The following year he and Gemma sailed *Ru'ah*

to the Azores and Iberia, returning in 2006 with a long passage from the Canaries to Bermuda. Over the next few years Wolfgang made winter cruises to the Bahamas, but each became more difficult. In 2010 Wolfgang, son Nils and another crew member sailed ***Ru'ah*** home, but Wolfgang was becoming weaker. A fall down the stairs in late 2010 was a major setback, and after getting home for a few days he returned to hospital, but only after an afternoon discussing what boat he could still sail. On dialysis, undeterred, he and Gemma learned home dialysis, bought a smaller boat, and put his dialysis machine aboard. He named her *Loki*, after the mischievous Norwegian god, perhaps inspired by his cheating death for a few more years. In late 2014, knowing little time was left and confined to bed, he chose to spend his last days overlooking his beloved Crab Creek.



Wolfgang aboard Ru'ah

Many friends and Nils spent time with him. His mind never faltered. Gemma cared for him and kept him alive, to see winter become spring once more at Crab Creek. Gemma's words beautifully describe her life with Wolfgang: "I met Wolfgang in early 2000, in the club 'Singles on Sailboats'. We started sailing together on ***Ru'Ah***, first on the Bay, then longer and longer distances. That was the first year of what I call 'adventures with Wolfgang'! I even used that term when he was at home with hospice care. Being his partner was an adventure".

Wherever Wolfgang now sails on the seas of time, we wish him '*Immer eine handbreit unterm Kiel*' (always a handsbreadth under the keel).

Gus Wilson and Gemma Nachbahr

(Gemma is continuing as port officer for Crab Creek, as Wolfgang would have wanted.)

Colonel Jonathan Dutton

Jon Dutton was born on 1st April 1950 in Benghazi in what was then Cyrenaica, now part of Libya. His parents both served with the Army, and were later posted to Freetown, Sierra Leone for six years. It was in Freetown that Jon had his first taste of sailing, in a red-hulled Enterprise dinghy named *Lobster*, under the tutelage of his furiously competitive father – a trait that continued unabated in his son. On returning to England, Jon went first to Kent College in Canterbury and then to Welbeck, the Army School in Northamptonshire. There he restored his own dinghy, which engendered a lifelong interest in woodwork and craftsmanship, a skill that was to prove extremely valuable as an ocean sailor.

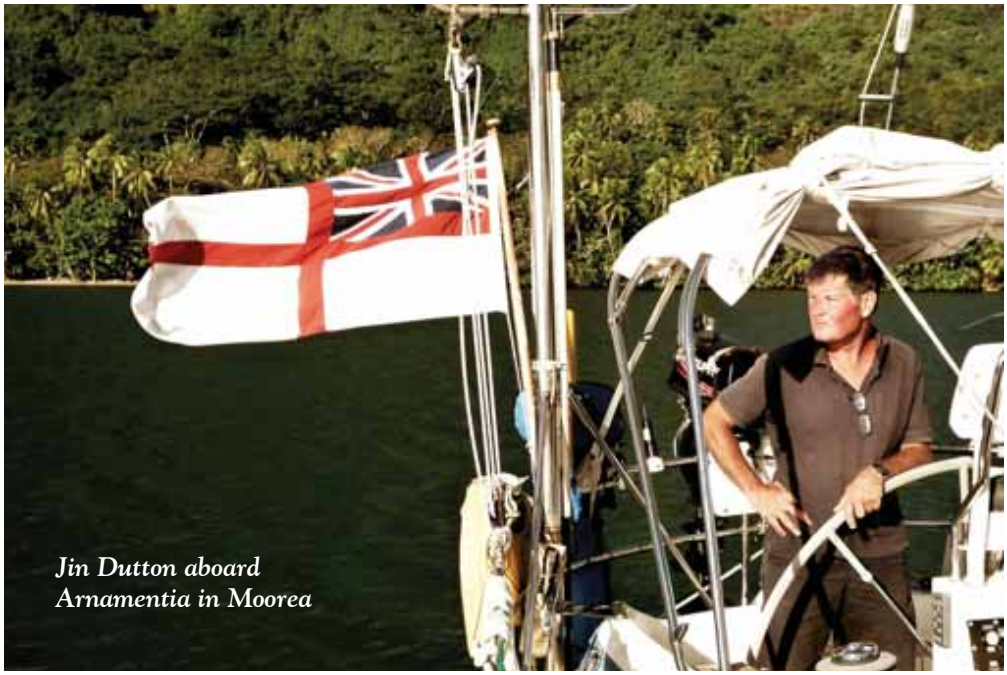
Commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1969, there followed several postings to Northern Ireland and Germany. Whilst in Germany he briefly took up the sport of parachuting, but found it too tame (!) and so turned to sailing at the British Kiel Yacht Club. In order to gain an Army skipper's qualification, candidates were not allowed to use engines at all. The yachts were moored stern-to with dolphins* either side, and one had to acquire a good appreciation of wind and tide very quickly, as well as making sure that the lassoing skills of the crew were up to scratch. Years later Jon qualified as an RYA examiner, and would thoroughly test his armed services Yachtmaster candidates – overnight passages to the Channel Islands under spinnaker were not unheard of – something that is unlikely to happen in the civilian world.

Promotion saw Jon return to the UK, which gave him the opportunity to take part in 'round the cans' races in the Solent for several years in a friend's Sigma 33, as well as many RORC races across the channel. He also successfully completed two Fastnet races on Army yachts. One of his favourite postings was to command 47 Regiment Royal Artillery on Thorney Island in Chichester Harbour. There he was instrumental in establishing the Thorney Island Water Sports Centre, which meant that hundreds of soldiers had the opportunity to learn to sail and race in a glorious setting. As commodore of the Royal Artillery Yacht Club he undertook meticulous research and planning for the selection, purchase, building and equipping of the current RAYC flagship, *St Barbara*. Jon left the Army in 2002 and went to work for management consultants Accenture, as procurement director in their human resource services division. Whilst there, he continued to introduce people to sailing by organising several team-building exercises on a variety of yachts. He also started mulling over what was to be his last great adventure – a circumnavigation.

After our marriage in 2003 we had been persuaded to buy an RS K6, a 6m sports boat. It was a steep learning curve for both of us but we enjoyed a few years of thrills and spills competing in several regattas in the south of England. My first love is equestrianism, and I told Jon that if I was going to sail around the world then I wanted to do it in a boat that was more likely than most to cope with whatever might get thrown at it. We were lucky to find a Swan 46 in the Netherlands in 2006, and named her *Arnamentia*, after the Celtic goddess of spring water. We then spent the next five years preparing her, as well as cruising the Netherlands, Brittany and southwest Ireland.

Jon was one of the first members to express an interest in the new mentoring

* A 'dolphin' is a British term for a mooring post or posts embedded in the sea bed, often with three legs linked by horizontal timbers.



Jin Dutton aboard Arnamentia in Moorea

scheme the OCC was introducing. We were very fortunate to be paired with John and Lyn Whyte, who had completed a circumnavigation in their yacht, *Arch Rival*, a few years earlier. John's advice was extremely valuable and undoubtedly meant that a myriad of potential problems were avoided. It was in September 2011 that Jon issued the instruction to 'cast off' from the pontoon in Lymington. Over the next few years we sailed *Arnamentia* across the Atlantic with the ARC, pottered in the Caribbean, meandered through the Dutch ABCs, Columbia and the San Blas Islands to the point of no return in Colon at the entrance to Panama Canal. A classic coconut milk run passage across the South Pacific followed – Galápagos, Marquesas, Tuamotus, the Society Islands, the Cook Islands, Niue, Tonga, Fiji and finally to New Zealand.

After spending a couple of years sailing between New Zealand and Fiji, the decision was made to start heading back to the UK. Sadly, Jon was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer two days before sailing for Fiji for the last time, which meant the end of the circumnavigation in *Arnamentia*. He approached the diagnosis with his usual sheer determination and a tremendous robustness, but died unexpectedly from a heart attack at home in Lymington on 7 September. He had been spared what would have been a gruelling time in the terminal stages of his illness.

Carol Dutton

David Lyne

We are sad to announce the death on 9 July 2015 of David Lyne, following a very short illness.

David was born in Birmingham on 30 October 1946 and attended Kings Norton Grammar School where he learned to sail and fly, two interests which influenced the

rest of his life. He studied aeronautical engineering at Birmingham University and, after graduating, went to work for Hawker Siddeley in Hatfield, initially on the Blue Streak ballistic missile and then on robotics and aerodynamics.

For a number of years David worked for the Rank Organisation, before moving to the Post Office as Assistant Director of IT, and then becoming President of United International Pictures. A short stint at the BBC was followed by a move to Legal & General investment and insurance group, until he decided to utilise his technical and organisation skills and set up his own IT consultancy. During his leisure time he became involved in rock climbing and hang gliding, setting up a hang gliding school flying off Dartmoor and Whitsand Bay. He joined the Hang Gliding Association, and flew all over the UK and into Europe. He also sailed a National 12 dinghy, and crewed in cross Channel races most weekends.

After David transferred into the computing side of Rank they moved him from his Plymouth base to London. The family relocated to East Grinstead, which is where his family grew up. While there David bought a Heavenly Twins catamaran and fitted her out, after which the family alternated annual holidays between their own boat and chartering in the Mediterranean. Later David decided they needed a bigger boat and bought a Solaris 42 catamaran, which he and Heather named *Milliways*. He had a local boatbuilder fit her out in preparation for their retirement and planned circumnavigation.

David and Heather set off on their great adventure in the summer of 2003, sailing across the Atlantic to Antigua. They sailed down the islands to Grenada, and flew home in the summer of 2004 only for David to return at speed when Hurricane *Ivan* hit Grenada and *Milliways* was damaged. After repairs, they sailed her through the Panama Canal and across the Pacific to Australia, visiting French Polynesia, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu and New Zealand before finally reaching Malaysia where they spent several years.

Whilst cruising off the Tioman Islands in the South China Sea, *Milliways* was hit by lightning wiping out all the electronics on the boat. They limped back to Singapore where all electronics were replaced, and David subsequently wrote a paper on the effects of a lightning strike on a catamaran. This paper formed part of an article published in *Yachting Monthly* in May 2013, and gave cruising yachtsmen much useful information



David aboard Milliways, as he and Heather left the Solent at the start of their planned circum-navigation



Acting as Rum Bosun at the Royal Naval Tot Club of Antigua & Barbuda, in English Harbour, Antigua

about how to protect their yachts against lightning strikes. David was a leader with a clear and able mind, and during his retirement adventures he used those qualities to help others whenever and wherever the opportunity arose. As a result of his very thorough research he became a leading expert throughout the cruising community, to the benefit of all.

In 2011 David recognised the worsening situation with the Somali pirates and in 2012 made the decision to ship *Milliways* to Turkey, where he was encouraged to join the OCC. It was from here that he had hoped to complete his circumnavigation by crossing his outward journey off Portugal.

David is survived by his wife Heather, daughters Claire and Andrea, and grandchildren Alice, Noah and Ela.

Brian Palmer and Jackie Oakey
ex Yacht *Songster*

Ralph Villiger

Swiss sailor and mountaineer Ralph Villiger tragically fell to his death on 29 August this year during a solo climb of the Gspaltenhorn in Switzerland's Bernese Alps. He was 39 years old.

Based in Basel, Switzerland, Ralph was a globally-renowned thought-leader, mathematician, entrepreneur, wine aficionado and gin producer, in addition to being a fearless adventurer. He held a Masters in Finance from the University of Oxford and graduated in Mathematical Engineering from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne. As the co-founder and managing partner of a corporate advisory specialising in life sciences he consulted across the globe, while also managing a fund dedicated to the development of cancer therapies in the UK.

But most of all Ralph was an adventurer, who managed to combine his passions for sailing and mountaineering to explore new heights. He started sailing at the age



Ralph and Ntombifuti at the start of OSTAR 2013

of 18, and joined the OCC in 2014 following his singlehanded passage from Brest to Newport, RI in the 2013 OSTAR. He had bought the 40ft Ed Dubois-designed *Ntombifuti* (Zulu for 'the Second Born Daughter', having been the previous owner's second boat) in 2003. She already had quite a pedigree on the British racing circuit but, more importantly, Ralph saw her as the ideal yacht in which to journey to remote and unexplored locations, to places where only a few had ventured before.

Ralph took part in his first singlehanded race, the Azores and Back (AZAB) in 2011, then *Ntombifuti* underwent extensive redesign and refurbishment in 2012 in preparation for more adventures. After making landfall in Newport in the 2013 OSTAR he continued his journey to Nanortalik, Greenland, again singlehanded. Here he embarked on new adventures with fellow adventurer and mountain guide, Harald Fichtinger (recounted as *A Cruise in the North Atlantic* in *Flying Fish* 2014/1), for which he received the Vasey Vase, awarded for a 'voyage of an unusual or exploratory nature'. A year later Ralph and Harald sailed from Isafjördur, Iceland to Liverpool Land in eastern Greenland. Ralph recorded his epic North Atlantic adventure beautifully, together with his ground-breaking first Greenland co-ascents, in *Flying Fish* 2014/2 under the title *In the Wake of Two Sirs*. More recently Ralph singlehanded through the Caledonian Canal to Shetland and finally Bodo in Norway.



Ralph on Uschba in Georgia's Caucasus mountains, judged by many to be the most difficult ascent in the region



Arrival at Newport after 27 days at sea. Photo Meagan Beauchemin, Billy Black

In 2016 Ralph had intended to venture further north into the ice, planning to sail without the help of the modern technology such as GPS and chart plotter, but rather to navigate using the stars. Now *Ntombifuti* is left waiting in Norway for her skipper.

Often going for days or weeks without the luxury of a daily shower and shave during his adventures aboard *Ntombifuti*, Ralph epitomized the rugged explorer. Underneath the stubble, however, he was the embodiment of a gentleman, refined, well-spoken, and with an elegant, courteous manner. Proficient in five languages – German, French, English, Spanish and Russian – he was both cultured and widely travelled. His interests, to name a few, included astro-navigation, wine, collecting antique watches, literature, art and music. His legacy lives on through his works, many of which may still remain unfinished or unpublished, and the lives of the many people that he touched.

Masako Amemiya

All we can say is simply that Ralph was an extraordinary son; always helpful, always with a smile on his face and always with a big interest in different things on this world – climbing and sailing, good wine, mathematics, chess and many other things. God bless him!

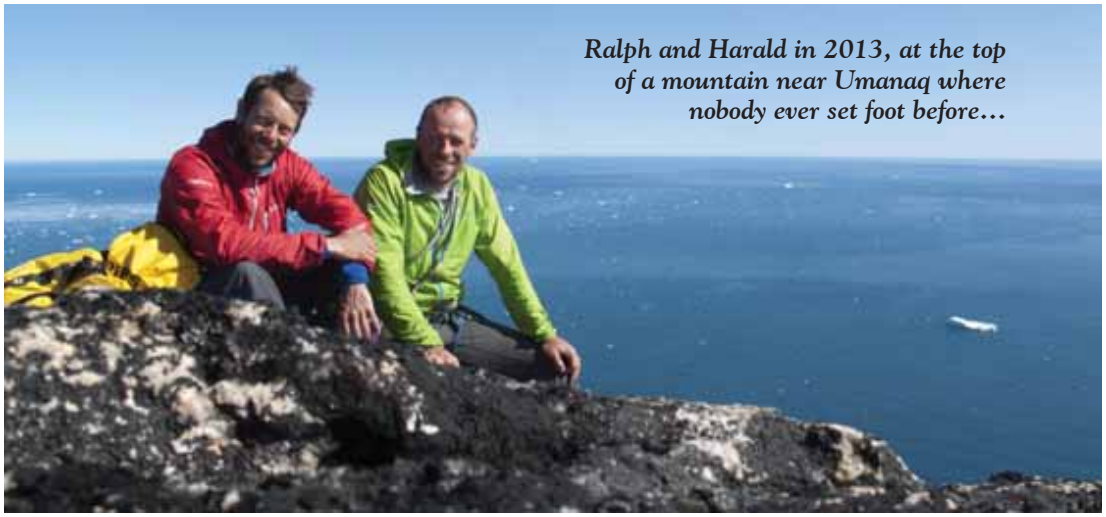
Susanne & Raoul Villiger

Our best friend, our partner, 'Götti' was a genius and a fearless adventurer. Somebody who could live off chips and chocolate. Somebody who would never complain or say a bad word about others. Somebody who would never forget the birthday of a friend and would always offer a helping hand when needed.

Boris Bogdan

Sailing? That shouldn't be too difficult, I thought, the English Channel is not the open sea. But it was now October 2012, somewhere in this same Channel, it was dark and I was lying inside Ralph's sailing boat, unable to move because of sea sickness.

It had been Ralph's idea for the two of us to sail to Greenland to mountain climb. To get us started, and as training for me, a rather hydrophobic person, he planned a short sailing trip on the south of England. I had never been on a sailing boat before, everything was new – I certainly never thought to fear large waves and strong winds



Ralph and Harald in 2013, at the top of a mountain near Umanaq where nobody ever set foot before…

in the English Channel. However, as I was concerned about my sailing capabilities, Ralph simply left all the details of seafaring unspoken. He never mentioned the maintenance and little repairs that appear constantly on a sailing boat, an unforgettable experience whilst fighting sea sickness. A six-week sailing trip to Greenland seemed impossible, but in fact this experience resulted in two trips to Greenland, and to my great surprise, without major sea sickness.

Looking back I assume this was Ralph's revenge for our first tour together. We had met many years previously when, as a mountain guide, I was to assist him in reaching his goal of ascending the north face of the Eiger. To ascertain his mountain climbing skills I scheduled a training weekend in Chamonix. As a full blooded mountain guide, in my mind there was no weather too bad or conditions too difficult to ascend the north face of the Eiger, one just had to fight through. It seemed that Ralph was granting me the same concessions for our sailing turn. Our training weekend in Chamonix ended with some demotivation for Ralph, but he didn't give up and eventually he fulfilled his dream of ascending the Eiger north face.

Harald Fichtinger

I first met Ralph in Cowes when we were both preparing our boats for the 2013 OSTAR, and bonded over many things. I never met him in person again after I waved him off from Plymouth, but he was an exceptionally loyal and attentive distant friend, writing lovely e-mails to celebrate my every sailing success and to share with me some of his own adventures. I will miss him very, very much.

Kass Schmidt

Ralph's life was marked by intellectual achievements and adventurous passions in many fields, including sailing and mountaineering. He was also a wine aficionado, involved with a wine bar in Zürich called 4 Tiere, and produced and marketed a gin called N-Gin. He was known as a man with an amazing spirit, one who didn't spend a lot of time talking about what he was going to do, but rather quietly went off on the kind of adventures most will only dream of.

Jonathan Green

ADVERTISERS IN FLYING FISH

Adlard Coles Nautical (nautical almanacs, books and guides) 99
Allspars (marine and architectural rigging) 135
Astilleros Lagos (full service boatyard in NW Spain) 60
Berthon International (international yacht brokers) 79
Bruntons Propellers (feathering propellers for sailing yachts) 198
Canada Metals (Pacific) Ltd (manufacturer/supplier, Rocna & Vulcan anchors) 4
Epifanes Yacht Coatings (manufacturer of yacht paints & varnishes) ... inside front cover
Fortress Anchors (lightweight yacht anchors) 135
Fox's Marina (chandlery, boatyard and marina; Suffolk, UK) 87
Fuel Cell Systems (suppliers of fuel cell technology for yachts) 53
Furneaux Riddall (Spectra Watermakers – desalinators for cruising yachts) 18
GN Espace (performance galley innovations) 69
Greenham Regis (marine electronics – sales, installation and service) 158
Hydrovane Self Steering (wind vane self-steering systems) 136
Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson (charts and cruising guides) 26
Isle of Arran Distillers (malt whisky distillers – The Arran Malt) 129
Istec AG (innovative downwind sails – Parasailor)..... 32
Mactra Marine Equipment (watermakers, Aries self-steering, wind generators) 100
MailASail (e-mail and satellite communications) 42
Marine Insurance International (yacht insurance brokerage) 145
Mid Atlantic Yacht Services (services & chandlery for yachts in the Azores) 116
Multihull World (specialist multihull broker) 54
Nestaway Boats (nesting, sectional and folding boats) 70
Noonsite (World Cruising Club – blue water cruisers' information site) 100
OCC Regalia (UK) 117
Ocean Crew Link (connecting owners with offshore sailing crew) 181
Sanders Sails (sailmakers) 41
Scanmar International (wind vane self-steering systems & anchor trip device) 171
Sevenstar Yacht Transport (yacht transport by sea) ..... inside back cover
Ship to Shore (mail forwarding, scanning and holding service for cruisers) 181
Sillette Sonic (marine propulsion specialists, custom engineering) 59
Technical Marine Supplies (technical marine equipment supply specialists) 197
Topsail Insurance (yacht and travel insurance specialist) ..... outside back cover
Voyager Self-steering Systems (self-steering systems for ocean going yachts) 17
World Cruising Club (sailing rally specialist – ARC, Malts Cruise, etc) 207

Please support advertisers by giving consideration to their products or services, and mention the OCC and *Flying Fish* when replying to advertisements. Details of advertising rates and deadlines will be found overleaf.

ADVERTISEMENTS

RATES

Advertising is sold on a two consecutive issues basis

Inside pages

Full page colour .....£280 (for two issues)
Half page colour.....£170 (for two issues)

Cover pages

Inside front cover colour..... £525 (for two issues)
Inside back cover colour ..... £525 (for two issues)
Outside back cover colour..... £840 (for two issues)

A 10% discount is available to OCC members

COPY

Copy should be supplied as a high res PDF, JPEG or EPS file,
at a resolution of 300 dpi (118 dpcm) at finished size

Full page : 188 x 120mm (type area); 214 x 145mm (including 2mm bleed area)
Half page : 94 x 120mm (type area); 107 x 145mm (including 2mm bleed area)

Alternatively, copy can be typeset by our printers,
but additional costs may be incurred

DEADLINES

Advertisements are accepted for inclusion on a 'first come, first served' basis.
Space may not permit all advertisements to be accepted, but please try!
Latest dates by which orders **must** be received are:

14 February 2016 for *Flying Fish* 2016/1
14 October 2016 for *Flying Fish* 2016/2

ENQUIRIES AND ORDERS

Mike Downing, Advertising Manager
e-mail: advertising@oceancruisingclub.org
mobile: 0790 199 8373

Printed by Bungay Printers, 4b Market Place, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 1AW
Tel: (01986) 892913, *Fax*: (01986) 896600, *e-mail* tony@bungayprinters.com



Ship your yacht from Asia, Australia, New-Zealand or Caribs back home!

For many years Sevenstar Yacht Transport is the cruising world's shipping partner to ship your yacht back home after cruising. We offer regular sailings utilizing our 125-carrier fleet, including 2 semi-submersibles, to more than 50 destinations throughout the world. Just about where you are.

Sevenstar Yacht Transport,
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone +31 20 448 8590
info@sevenstar-yacht-transport.com
sevenstar-yacht-transport.com

DISCOVER OUR ROUTES BOOK NOW!

SEVENSTAR YACHT TRANSPORT

DY YACHT TRANSPORT

MEMBERS OF SPLIETHOFF GROUP

Specialists in Yacht,
Motor Boat & Travel Insurance

Topsail
INSURANCE

"Having been a customer of Topsail since their inception I have always been ready to extol their virtues. The Topsail team are friendly and ready to listen and discuss policies best suited to my sailing interests. Thank you Topsail for such remarkable service."

Tony and Christine - S/Y Pelagia of Poole – OCC members



Highly competitive premiums plus up to a further 20% Ocean Cruising Club members discount on travel and vessel policies

The preferred insurer of the OCC

Topsail Insurance Ltd. is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

Visit us online or call now for more information.

topsailinsurance.com/occ | +44 (0) 1273 57 37 27 | enquiries@topsailinsurance.com