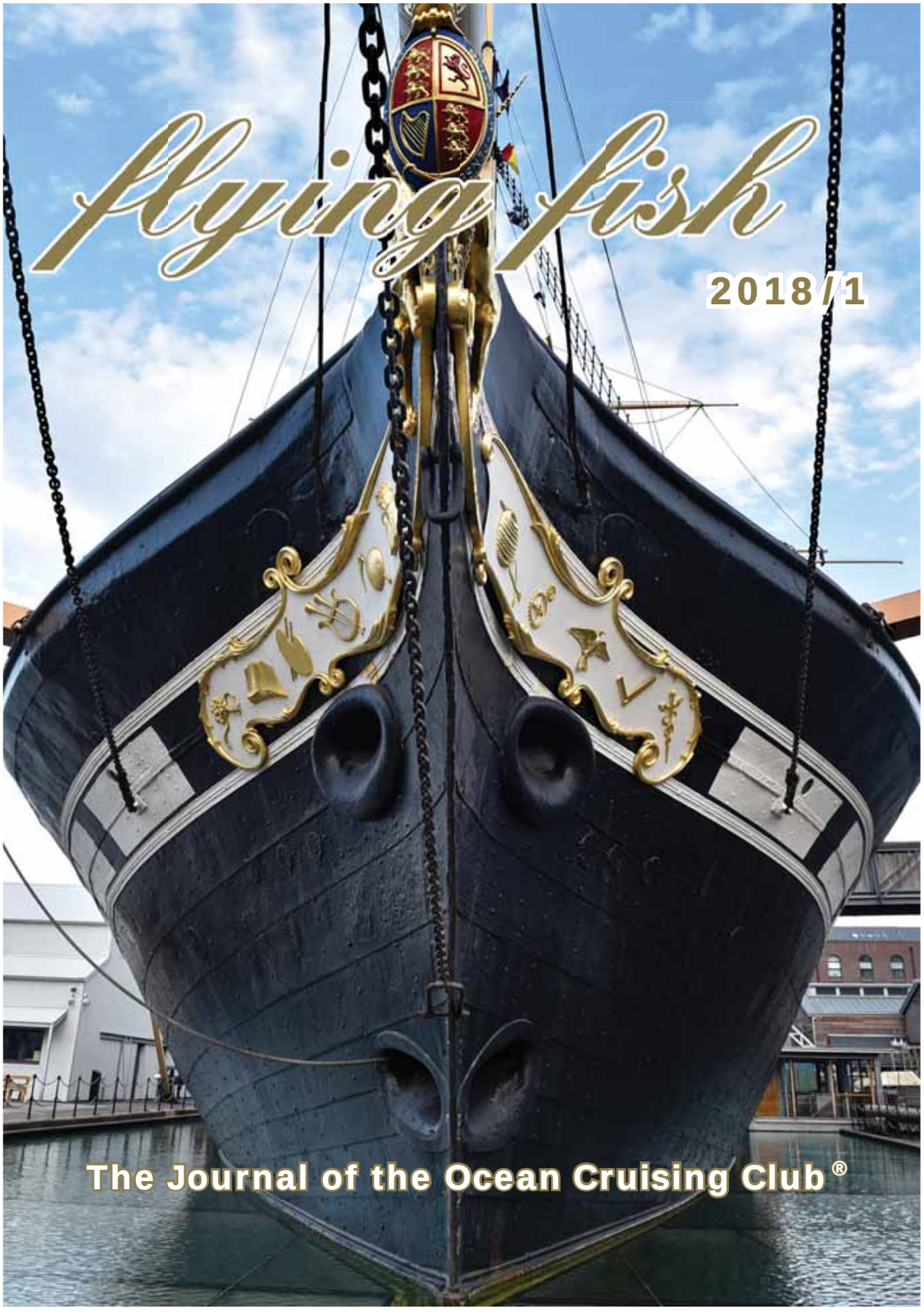
Flying Fish
2018/1
The Journal of the Ocean Cruising Club®

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It's standard for me to start this page thinking 'what on earth am I going to say?' and end up running out of space! To start with, a quick run-down of this issue. As always there are some riveting cruises accounts, inland as well as at sea; plus Jonathan Lloyd's very helpful suggestions for *Passage Planning in the Southwest Indian Ocean*; virtual visits to some fascinating places and, sadly, the loss of a well-loved yacht and the recovery of her skipper by one of the world's best-known cruise ships, documented in dozens of photographs.

Thinking of photographs, two requests. Firstly, had Kathy not taken the stunning picture which graces the cover of this issue I'd have been really stuck. It doesn't quite tick all the boxes, as most cover photos have relatively blank spaces top and bottom so that nothing is obscured by the titling (sky and sea are ideal), but it more than compensates in terms of pzazz – a cover photo *must* have that 'look at me' factor! So if you have a picture you think would make a good *Flying Fish* cover please forward it to me, even if you aren't writing an article to go with it. Secondly – and this applies to all photos, cover or not – please try to get the horizon reasonably level. *Flying Fish* does not favour sloping horizons, and though I can and do level them up, it becomes difficult if they're too far astray. Personally I blame it on the demise of astro – anyone who took sun sights several times each day soon learned to hold their sextant upright!

From future to past, and you'll find the first of a new *From the Archives* series on page 23. This kicks off with an account of an Atlantic passage taken from *Flying Fish* 1964/1, the very first *Fish*. Future issues will carry articles from subsequent years, though not from every single one or we'd be here until doomsday! Meanwhile the *Flying Fish* website archive is heading in the opposite direction, with all copies from 1990 onwards now available to download as PDFs. The earlier part of the archive will follow in due course, but probably not before the end of the northern hemisphere sailing season.

What else? Oh yes, I'd be happy to welcome a few more proof-readers to my regular team. As well as sharp eyes allied to reliable grammar and spelling, technical knowledge is very useful (though not essential) and I'd be particularly glad to reinforce the already high level of legal advice I receive ... retired (or not) solicitors and barristers please note! Drop me a line at flying.fish@oceancruisingclub.org if you'd like to know more.

And the standard last paragraph – the **DEADLINE** for submissions to ***Flying Fish 2018/2*** is **Monday 1 October**. I already have four articles on file, plus two more promised, so if you plan to add to them please follow suit and send in good time – it saves unnecessary stress all round.

Cover Photo: Isambard Kingdom Brunel's iconic SS Great Britain, aboard which the Club held its 2018 Annual Dinner. Photo Kathy Mansfield (www.kathymansfieldphotos.com)

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
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THE 2017 AWARDS

(*The Awards presentation is described by Zdenka Griswold, who together with her husband Jack had flown in from Portland, Maine to be present for the event.*)

This year's AGM, Annual Dinner and Awards presentations were held in the First Class Dining Saloon aboard the SS *Great Britain* in the Great Western Dockyard in Bristol. The Dinner took place on 21st April, and photos and details of the weekend's events will be found in the accompanying *Newsletter*. Both the venue and the weather were spectacular and the event saw record participation, with 83 members present for the AGM and 133 members and guests in attendance for the Annual Dinner. As in previous years, Topsail Insurance provided generous support towards the cost of the event. Topsail's Managing Director Rob Stevens gave an informative talk about insurance in the morning and joined us throughout the day.

OCC PR Officer Daria Blackwell collected much of the information about this year's Award recipients, without which this summary would not have been possible, and Alfred Alecio served as Master of Ceremonies. The photographs taken at the Dinner are courtesy of Jeremy Firth, Kathy Mansfield (www.kathymansfieldphotos.com), Zdenka Griswold and John van-Schalkwyk.

THE QUALIFIER'S MUG

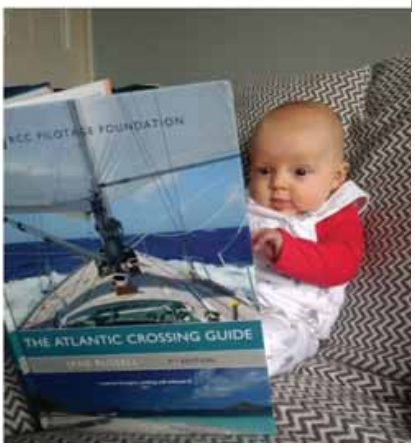
Presented by Admiral (then Commodore) Mary Barton and first awarded in 1993, the Qualifier's Mug recognises the most ambitious or arduous qualifying voyage published by a member in print or online.

The 2017 award went to **Megan Clay** for an ambitious Atlantic Circuit with her (non-member) husband Ed aboard *Flycatcher of Yar*, a Contessa 38 which they co-own with Ed's parents. Charlotte, the latest addition to the family, was entrusted to Megan's parents so her mother could attend the Annual Dinner to accept her award.

Megan receives the Qualifier's Mug from Commodore Anne Hammick

During their 400-day cruise, the majority of which was sailed two-handed, Megan and Ed covered 16,450 miles and visited 240 harbours and

Ed and Megan paddle ashore in western Greenland



Baby Charlotte is clearly enthralled!

anchorages. As well as more frequented destinations, they spent time in the Gambia, penetrating some distance inland, then crossed the Atlantic from the Cape Verde islands to Barbados, a voyage of 2050 miles and Megan's qualifying passage. From the Caribbean they headed north up the US East Coast. After spending some time on the west coast of Greenland, they headed home to the UK via Ireland.

Megan wrote a memorable and highly enjoyable account of their cruise, entitled *Hippos to Humpbacks: A North Atlantic Circuit*, which appeared in *Flying Fish* 2017/1 illustrated by a number of her superb photos.

THE DAVID WALLIS TROPHY

First awarded in 1991 in memory of the Founding Editor of *Flying Fish*, this salver recognises the 'most outstanding, valuable or enjoyable contribution to *Flying Fish*'.

The 2017 award was made to **Fergus and Katherine Quinlan** for their article *The Russian Voyage*, which

Fergus and Katherine show off the David Wallis Trophy later in the evening

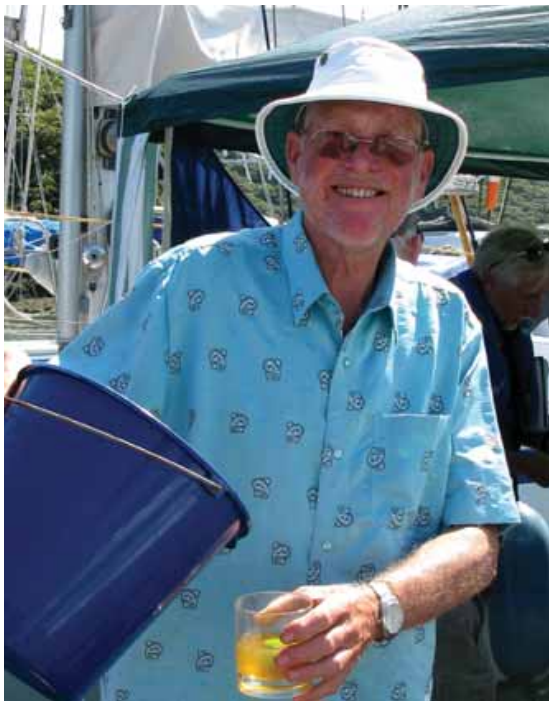
appeared in *Flying Fish* 2017/1. Their 109-day, 3,800 mile journey took them from the west coast of Ireland to St Petersburg, where they were welcomed by our very helpful Port Officer Vladimir Ivankiv. After an overland visit to Moscow they returned to Ireland via Finland and the Gota and Caledonian Canals. Fergus and Katherine received their award from Commodore Anne Hammick at the Annual Dinner.

Newer members may also wish to catch up on *The Origins Cruise – Circumnavigation 2009-2012* in *Flying Fish* 2013/2, which tells how the Quinlans built their 12m van de Stadt-designed steel cutter *Pylades* at their home at Kinvara on the west coast of Ireland.

THE PORT OFFICER RALLY AWARD

Created in 2017, this award recognises an exceptional rally organised by a Port Officer or Port Officer Representative.

Peter Flutter, Port Officer for Falmouth, UK since 2011, with Commodore Anne Hammick



Peter fills his glass during the 2017 Falmouth upriver party

Falmouth Port Officer **Peter Flutter** was on hand to accept his well-deserved award for organising the annual West Country Rally. Perhaps the shortest rally in the OCC calendar, but one to which members return year after year, this event takes place every August. A jovial dinner at the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club is followed next day by a cruise upriver to a midstream pontoon for further parties, both on the pontoon itself and aboard the larger yachts, primarily Peter's own *Tyrian of Truro*.

It is not just the big, long rallies that are important – more people get to know and appreciate the OCC by attending the small ones. Our thanks to Peter for masterminding a great weekend which attracts new OCC members and goodwill towards the Club year after year.

☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆

THE PORT OFFICER SERVICE AWARD

Introduced in 2008 at the suggestion of then Rear Commodore Mark Holbrook, this award is given to Port Officers or Port Officers Representatives who have provided outstanding service to both local and visiting members as well as the wider sailing community by promoting their port, harbour or area.

This year's recipients are **Gary Naigle and Greta Gustavson** of Pilot House, Norfolk, Virginia on the US East Coast. Countless OCC members have secured at the OCC dock managed by Gary and Greta. Whether their visitors are staying for only a night or a couple of weeks, Gary and Greta cannot do enough for them, from organising propane bottles and laundry to helping with provisioning. Their commitment to the OCC is remarkable and their helpfulness, kindness, hospitality are second to none, as confirmed time and again by OCC members since their appointment in 1993.

Gary and Greta were unable to attend the Annual Dinner and the award was accepted on their behalf by John and Inga Chapman. They relayed Gary's and Greta's thanks and appreciation, along with Greta's message that the award is clearly given to the Port Officers having the most fun!

☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆

THE PORT OFFICER EVENTS AWARD

Created in 2017, this award is made for an exceptional single event organised by a Port Officer or Port Officer Representative.

This new award was presented for the first time to **Robert Ravensberg**, Port Officer Representative for Cape Town, South Africa. For the past four years Robert has singlehandedly organised a series of Cape Town get-togethers, including wine tastings and lunch at one of the Cape vineyards, pulling in skippers and crews from multiple marinas and managing different arrival times as the various boats navigate the often tricky passage along the east and south coasts of South Africa.

These Cape Town events are a fitting end to what for many is a difficult Indian Ocean passage, and a prelude to preparation for crossing the South Atlantic. Robert also handles a wide variety of OCC members' needs and queries, and recruits new members as qualified passage-makers arrive. Robert was unable to attend the dinner and newly elected Rear Commodore Jenny Crickmore-Thompson accepted the award on his behalf.

☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆

THE VASEY VASE

Presented by Past Commodore Tony Vasey and his wife Jill and first awarded in 1997, the Vasey Vase is awarded for a voyage of an unusual or exploratory nature made by an OCC member or members.

This year the Vasey Vase went to **Andrew and Janice Fennymore-White**, who spent eight years building their exquisite Van de Stadt Samoa 48, *Destiny*. This was very much a joint project which started with aluminium sheets and ended with a beautifully crafted

Destiny in Svalbard

yacht, every inch of which exudes quality, care and attention to detail. Andy and Janice have prepared their vessel and themselves for a prolonged, multi-year, liveaboard voyage in the polar regions. Their planning and obvious skills make their considerable achievements look effortless. Their article *You're not Sailors, are you?* appeared in *Flying Fish* 2017/2 and their blog can be enjoyed at www.sailblogs.com/member/destinyatsea.

Andrew and Janice Fennymore-White

Andrew and Janice have lived aboard in the Arctic for the past four years. During the winters they have explored the coast north of Tromsø on skis, and in the summers pushed north into the high Arctic, circumnavigating Svalbard in 2016. Late in that season they sailed south to their winter berth in Akureyri on Iceland's north coast. In early 2017 they sailed to Iceland's West Fjords and spent much time seeking out snug anchorages from which to ski in the wonderfully remote Hornstrandir National Park. Once the snow had receded in May they undertook an early-season circumnavigation of Iceland, returning to Isafjordur in July to prepare for a year in Greenland. In a challenging ice season, they crossed the Denmark Strait in early August to Tasiilaq, and then cruised south down Greenland's remote and inhospitable east coast. Without drama or mishap, and despite an abundance of ice, they transited Prins Christian Sund and cruised north for six weeks to Maniitsoq to seek out a suitable place to overwinter. Their plan is to get out their skis when the snow returns and explore Hamborgerland and the Eternal Fjord from their anchorage.

Andy and Janice joined the OCC in 2016. They plan a transit of the Northwest Passage in 2018 and to spend next winter skiing from their boat in Alaska. They sent their apologies for being unable to attend, along with this message:

> "Wow, what an unexpected surprise! We were crewing on another OCC member's motor boat in the Marshall Islands in the Pacific when we received the notification. Our initial response was dumbstruck followed by 'Have they got the right email address?' Finally, once it had sunk in and considering all the OCC members around the world undertaking their own adventures in their vessels, we are humbled to have received the Vasey Vase 2017. So tonight we will be raising a glass to the Ocean Cruising Club and all its lovely members. Keep on adventuring.
>
> Cheers and thank you. Andrew, Janice and Yacht *Destiny*."

THE AUSTRALIAN TROPHY

First awarded 1990, the Australian Trophy was donated by Sid Jaffe, twice Rear Commodore Australia. Carved from a solid piece of teak by Wally Brandis, it is awarded for a voyage made by an Australian member or members which starts or finishes in Australia. The winner is decided by vote of the Australian membership.

Hugh Pilsworth received the Australian Trophy for 2017 from Paul Furniss, Regional Rear Commodore for South East Australia at the OCC Sydney Dinner held on 9th November 2017 at the Sydney Flying Squadron in Kirribilli, the original home of the famous Sydney Harbour sailing skiff class, founded in 1891.

Hugh Pilsworth (right) with the OCC Australian Award, presented to him by Paul Furniss, RRC South East Australia

The award recognised his circumnavigation aboard his 49ft Jeanneau *BlueFlyer*, and his contribution as a teacher of others with an interest in ocean cruising, some of whom joined *BlueFlyer* en route. The first part of his circumnavigation in 2007/8 took Hugh and his wife Val from Dublin to Melbourne, after which they settled in Australia. Sadly, during this time Hugh lost Val. He set sail again in June 2016 to successfully complete his circumnavigation.

THE VERTUE AWARD

The Vertue Award is presented to a member in North America for an outstanding voyage or for service to the Club. Named after *Vertue XXXV*, in which OCC Founder Humphrey Barton sailed across the North Atlantic in 1950, it was created in 2014 to commemorate the Club's 60th anniversary. Awardees are selected by North American Regional Rear Commodores.

Andy and Liza Copeland of Vancouver, British Columbia were the recipients of the 2017 Vertue Award, presented to them in Vancouver earlier this year by then Vice Commodore Tony Gooch, for their enthusiastic and active membership of the OCC over many years. Andy qualified with a 1973 voyage from St Barts to the Azores in *Eileen*, a 65ft Fife-built classic, and joined in 1986. Liza became a member in 2002, her qualifying voyage having been in their own *Bagheera* from Gran Canaria to Barbados in 1985.

The Copelands have sailed extensively, including more than 160,000 miles on their Beneteau First 38 *Bagheera*, and have visited over 110 countries. In 1985 they set off with their young family on what would become a six-year circumnavigation. The voyage would eventually be documented in a series of four best-selling books which have, over the years, been of inestimable help to cruisers looking for realistic and practical advice. They have also written articles for many sailing magazines and given presentations at numerous boat shows as well as other venues. Subsequent voyages saw Andy and Liza sailing to the Middle East, the Mediterranean, West Africa, Brazil and the Caribbean.

Andy and Liza have served as Port Officers in Vancouver since 1998, during which time they have organised multiple parties and rallies, including the OCC Golden Jubilee Rally in 2004 and the Desolation Sound Rally in 2008. Their generous hospitality has benefited many cruisers from around the world.

Lisa and Andy Copeland were presented with the Vertue Award for 2017 in February this year

THE OCC BARTON CUP

The Club's premier award, named after OCC founder Humphrey Barton, was donated by his adult children, twins Peter Barton and Pat Pocock, and first awarded in 1981. This is the first year it has been open to non-members.

The Barton Cup was awarded to **Susanne Huber-Curphey**, the first woman to navigate the Northwest Passage singlehanded. She received extraordinary praise from Victor Wejer, who advised Susanne during her west-to-east transit in *Nehaj*, her 39ft (11·9m) cutter. Victor was himself recognised for his assistance with ice and weather reports by the OCC Award of Merit in 2016. According to Victor, Susanne completed her passage 'with great style, ability and perseverance, beating many experienced crew who were way ahead. She provided all support and immense friendship to others, even when her own resources were at their limits'.

Susanne was born in Ingolstadt, Germany and trained as an architect. She started sailing on the Bavarian lakes, and in 1986 singlehanded a 21ft day sailer down the River Danube from her home town to the Black Sea. Her first circumnavigation was aboard *Glory*, a 30ft Seadog. She met her future husband Tony Curphey – also a singlehander – in New Zealand and they were married in the Solomon Islands.

Susanne's second circumnavigation was in *So Long*, a Rhodes 41 built in 1964. She and Tony sailed on parallel courses, each in their own boat. They were awarded the 2008 Cruising Club of America Rod Stephens Trophy for Outstanding Seamanship when Susanne rescued her husband aboard *Galenaia*, a 27ft cutter built of plywood in 1958, when it started taking on water 29 days out of Bunbury, Western Australia. *So Long* towed *Galenaia*, with Tony still aboard, for 650 miles across the Tasman Sea to Port Nelson, New Zealand under challenging conditions.

Susanne built *Nehaj*, her 39ft Koopmans cutter, herself over a three-year period. The name has a family history, and means 'Feel safe here, Do not be afraid'. Susanne's

Nehaj in Iceland

John van-Schalkwyk, Port Officer for Halifax, Nova Scotia, visited Susanne aboard Nehaj to present her with her plaque

journey with *Nehaj* began in June 2015 with a good shakedown sail from Holland around the top of Iceland to the Azores, followed by a 133-day non-stop voyage to New Zealand. Her only crew was 'Miss Aries', who steered *Nehaj* beautifully. In January 2017, after a loop via Tonga and New Caledonia to Tasmania, Susanne laid course across the Pacific Ocean. When she reached the Aleutian Islands, with 200,000 miles sailing experience under her belt, she decided to attempt a singlehanded transit of the Northwest Passage.

It was an easy start in the Bering Sea and across the Arctic Circle, Victor Wejer keeping Susanne informed about weather and ice. By the end of August, however, solid ice in the Franklin Strait blocked the way ahead and behind, and *Nehaj* was stuck for nearly two weeks. Susanne thought she might be forced to winter in the wilderness of the Boothia Peninsula, but managed to reach the Bellot Strait, the 'eye of the needle' in the Northwest Passage, during a brief weather window. Lancaster Sound brought freezing spray and the first severe autumn gale, and *Nehaj* sought shelter in the 60-mile long fjord of Arctic Bay. Sailing down Baffin Bay in mid-September brought more gales and, by then, dark nights in dangerous iceberg-filled waters, during which Susanne hove-to. She reports that the Northern Lights were spectacular.

After 3683 miles north of the Arctic Circle, often too close to land and in too shallow water, Susanne successfully completed her Northwest Passage transit. Following a 2000 mile latitude race southwards to Nova Scotia, Susanne overwintered aboard *Nehaj* in Lunenburg, NS, a lovely town with a rich maritime history. *Nehaj* by then had 42,800 miles under her keel.

THE OCC JESTER AWARD

The Jester Award, first presented in 2006, recognises a noteworthy singlehanded voyage or series of voyages made in a vessel of 30ft or less overall. It is open to both members and non-members.

Maistral steering herself under poled-out storm jib

The Jester Award for 2017 was presented to **Josh Ghyselincks** for his 24-day, 2900 mile solo passage from Mexico to the Marquesas Islands in *Maistral*, an Arpege 29 designed by Michael Dufour and built in 1967.

Maistral was the first ocean-going yacht owned by former Vice Commodore Tony Gooch and his wife Coryn, who covered some 65,000 miles in her. Josh bought her a few years ago with the dream of offshore sailing. Sadly *Maistral* had been neglected by later owners, and by the time Josh bought her was even more basic than when the Gooches cruised her. She had no inboard engine, just a 9hp outboard, no windvane self-steering, and very little navigational or communications equipment.

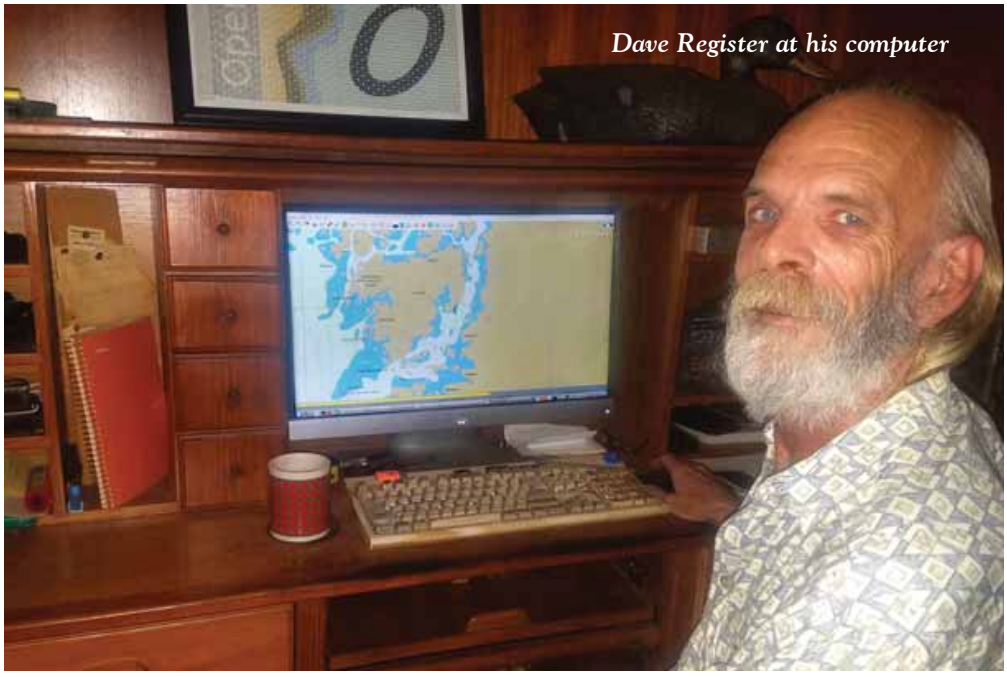
Tony Gooch, himself a singlehanded non-stop circumnavigator, explained that 'Josh uses the poled-out storm jib method for self-steering ... plus bits of string and shock cord. Josh's voyage is taking him from Victoria across the Pacific to New Zealand (sometimes solo, sometimes with crew). What he really wants is to find a singlehanded girl going his way'. Trevor Leek, current owner of the Folkboat *Jester* from which the award takes its name, added: 'Josh has my blessing – I'm particularly impressed by the lack of self-steering'." (*Jester* is steered by a vintage Haslar SP windvane.)

In expressing his appreciation for the award, Josh noted that, 'It is no small feat to take to the open sea, no matter the vessel or crew. Long distance cruising presents challenges and lessons that can't be found anywhere else. Thank you to all those who have dared before me and planted the dreams in my head. Thank you to the Ocean Cruising Club for recognising such feats and more importantly, continuing to foster this exceptional community of offshore cruisers'. Tony Gooch accepted the award on Josh's behalf.

THE OCC AWARD

Dating back to 1960, this award recognises valuable service to the OCC or to the ocean cruising community as a whole, and is open to both members and non-members.

The OCC Award went to **David Register**, lead developer of the OpenCPN chart plotter and navigational planning software. Dave initially created OpenCPN for his own use back in 2009, because he wasn't satisfied with commercial products. When other cruisers learned what he was doing they asked for copies, and it has been developed by a team of active sailors using real world conditions for program testing



Dave Register at his computer

and refinement – their motto: 'We're boaters; we're coders'. There are now tens of thousands of users worldwide.

OpenCPN, which is still free of charge, is now available for Windows, Mac and Linux. An Android app version can be purchased for a small fee in the Android app store, and there is even a version for Raspberry Pi. The system, available in 20 different languages, is constantly being improved and updated to keep up with ever-evolving charting systems and user requirements. It now incorporates AIS, routes, tidal support and weather, and plug-in modules are available for climatology, weather routing, weatherfax, Google Earth, Voyage Data Recorder, AIS-radar, SAR, sQuidd.io, Radar Overlay, Logbook, and many more.

A network of more than forty volunteer software coders now work to improve the product, update it and expand its capabilities. Dave continues to co-ordinate this work from his floating home, the aluminium motor vessel *Dyad*, which he calls the 'Big Dumb Boat' (www.bigdumboat.com).

Open CPN has made a magnificent contribution to the enjoyment and safety of cruising sailors, and Dave deserves great credit for his invention and his ongoing efforts.

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THE OCC SEAMANSHIP AWARD

Donated by Past Commodore John Franklin and first presented in 2013, this award recognises feats of exceptional seamanship or bravery at sea. It is open to both members and non-members.

The OCC Seamanship Award for 2017 was presented to **Lisa Blair** for her solo circumnavigation of Antarctica, which included a dismasting. She had sailed three-quarters of the way around the world singlehanded, non-stop and unassisted, when her mast came down in storm conditions. After a four-hour battle in freezing temperatures she was able to save her Open 50 yacht *Climate Action Now*, and her life. She transmitted a PanPan, then motored toward Cape Town to effect repairs. An attempt to transfer fuel from an 80,000 tonne container ship resulted in a collision and further damage, but again she saved her boat, constructed a jury rig, and continued towards Cape Town. Two months later she returned to her circumnavigation attempt and

Lisa Blair aboard Climate Action Now

Lisa in the Southern Ocean

became the first woman to complete a solo circumnavigation of Antarctica, with one stop. Her time at sea totalled 103 days, 7 hours, 21 minutes and 38 seconds.

Born and educated in Australia, Lisa began sailing professionally in 2006 and has since clocked up more than 50,000 ocean miles. She uses her yacht *Climate Action Now* to promote awareness of how the actions of individuals can help towards a solution to climate change by drawing media and political attention to the problem. Visit her website at https://lisablairsailstheworld.com/.

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THE OCC LIFETIME CRUISING AWARD

The OCC Lifetime Cruising Award was presented for the first time this year. Open to both members and non-members, it recognises a lifetime of noteworthy ocean cruising.

The OCC Lifetime Cruising Award was presented to British sailor **David Scott Cowper** for tackling the world's most difficult sea routes while completing six circumnavigations. Following three circumnavigations under sail he turned his attention to the high latitudes and has made several Arctic crossings, via the Atlantic Arctic Circle and the Pacific Arctic Circles, in 1986 aboard his converted RNLI lifeboat *Mable E Holland*, and in 2001, 2009, 2011 and 2012 aboard his 14·6m aluminium motor vessel *Polar Bound*. His most recent Northwest Passage transit took place via the Hecla and Fury Straits, making David and his son Fred the first to navigate this passage since its discovery in 1822. He has been the recipient of several awards, including The Cruising Club of America's Blue Water Medal, and the Seamanship Medal and the Tilman Medal, awarded by The Royal Cruising Club.

Polar Bound wintering in the Arctic

David with long-term crew Jane Maufe

David Scott Cowper was born in 1942 and educated at Stowe School. He lives in Newcastle upon Tyne and is a Chartered Building Surveyor and a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. He became well known in sailing circles in the 1970s and '80s for competing in the Observer Round Britain and Ireland Race and the Singlehanded Transatlantic Race (OSTAR) in *Airedale*, his 29ft 6in Laurent Giles-designed Wanderer. In 1982 he completed two circumnavigations in his 41ft Huisman-built Sparkman & Stephens sloop *Ocean Bound*, and became the fastest person to sail singlehanded around the world in both directions, breaking Sir Francis Chichester's record by a day and Chay Blyth's by 72 days.

His move from sail to power in 1984 was due to his interest in the Arctic, where exploration often takes place under power. His preparatory cruise around the world via the Panama Canal in the *Mabel E Holland*, a converted 42ft Royal National Lifeboat Institution wooden lifeboat, achieved him the honour of being the first person to circumnavigate solo in a motorboat, and the first to do so under both sail and power.

In 1986, he embarked on a circumnavigation via the Northwest Passage which lasted for four years. He departed from Newcastle in July to make his way across the North Atlantic and up the west coast of Greenland to enter Lancaster Sound, eventually reaching Fort Ross at the east end of Bellot Strait. Due to heavy pack ice and the start

Polar Bound, designed and built for the ice

David Scott Cowper holds his audience spellbound at the OCC Annual Dinner

of an early winter *Mabel E Holland* remained in the ice, and when Cowper returned the following summer he found the boat waterlogged, so spent the short summer beaching and repairing her. In 1988 he managed to reach Alaska, and in August 1989 sailed the *Mabel E Holland* into the Bering Strait, becoming the first person to complete the passage singlehanded as part of a global circumnavigation. In 2012 he made the passage again but via the McClure Strait, the most demanding and northerly of the seven known routes.

Subsequently Cowper commissioned *Polar Bound*, which he took around Cape Horn and up the west coast of the Americas. In 2002 he planned to attempt the Northeast Passage over the top of Russia but was refused permission by the Russian authorities. Instead he turned east and, over two summers, sailed the Northwest Passage again from west to east, becoming the first person to have completed singlehanded transits in both directions.

In August 2009 he began what was to be his sixth circumnavigation. He departed from Maryport on England's northeast coast and by 6th September 2009 was in Cambridge Bay, halfway through the Northwest Passage. Eighteen days later he reached Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians, completing the passage singlehanded for the third time. From Dutch Harbor he sailed to San Francisco, and from there headed south for Chile and Antarctica, continuing via the Falkland Islands, South Georgia Island, Tristan da Cunha and Cape Town. From South Africa he sailed to South Australia and across the Pacific Ocean, returning to Dutch Harbor via Fiji and Hawaii, finally transiting via the Northwest Passage back to England to reach Whitehaven on 5th October 2011.

The Frozen Frontier: Polar Bound through the Northwest Passage, by David's companion and co-adventurer Jane Maufe, was reviewed in *Flying Fish* 2017/1 and has sold over 10,000 copies. We were delighted to welcome David and Jane to our Annual Dinner where, after accepting the OCC Lifetime Cruising Award, David told a spellbound audience about some of his many adventures.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

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

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

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

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

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

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

11th November

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

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

Humphrey Barton's Rose Rambler

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

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

I am back in the tropics once more. It is cooking hot too, 84°F. below decks now at 16.00. The trade wind has not exceeded F.3 and has been between N.E. and S.E. for the last two days, but we are making very fair progress. Log now reads 826 so we have averaged 115 for seven days. This morning we hauled out the Genoa on the pole to starboard and rove the guy through another block half-way along the tiller. At the end of the tiller on the lee side I secured some shock cord. After a little experimenting *Rose* sailed herself straight down wind. What happens is this. When she gets by the lee and the Genoa starts to fall in and the load decreases on the guy, the shock cord then pulls the tiller a little to port and the Genoa again starts drawing and pulls the tiller over to starboard. It seems to work very well and I am delighted with it and wish I had thought of it before. The tension on the shock cord has, of course, to be adjusted to the strength of wind. We were all able to have lunch below together – a splendid omelette with three veg. We are using the gross of eggs that I coated with Oteg months ago. This morning Jillie made some jolly good bread in the frying pan! I am busy teaching Robert navigation.

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

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

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

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

27th November

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

29th November. 23 days out

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

30th November. St. Georges, Grenada

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

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TWO US CITIES AND THE NEW YORK STATE CANAL SYSTEM

Belinda Chesman and Kit McAllister

We bought *Quilcene* in 2006 to replace our beloved Contessa 32 and provide more living space for our 'big trip'. She's a cutter-rigged Bowman 40 built to Lloyds A1, and a good bluewater yacht. Since 2007 she has taken us from Plymouth to the Mediterranean, where we lived aboard for eight years, dropped the hook in 13 countries, and visited 44 Greek islands! We left the Med in 2013 to sail down to the Canary and Cape Verde islands, then across the Atlantic to Suriname, South America in 2014 (our OCC qualifying passage), and north from there up through the Caribbean Islands, Virgin Islands, Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Cuba and to the East Coast of the USA. We decided on a different type of cruising for 2017 – mostly on rivers, canals and lakes. (photo 01)

Leaving Deltaville, Virginia in early April we sailed *Quilcene* north up the Chesapeake Bay and into the Potomac River, following the river inland from its 12-mile wide mouth, and taking two days to reach Washington DC. Mostly we stuck to the buoyed shipping channel, taking advantage of flood tides. Once into the river we tentatively picked our way through the crab pots that seemed to be everywhere into The Glebe, a pretty creek on the south bank, to anchor for the first night. Next day we continued upriver, again following the buoyed channel. The air appeared a bit hazy, but we soon realised that it was due to clouds of pollen dust blowing up from the trees and across the river. I have never suffered from hay fever, but this had me sneezing with my eyes watering.

Quilcene on the dock at Deltaville


76°W
72°W
ONTARIO
CANADA
Kingston
N
44°N
Cobourg
NEW YORK
STATE
Lake Ontario
Oswego
Oneida
Lake
NEW
HAMPSHIRE
Erie
Canal
Oswego Canal
Syracuse
Mohawk
River
Waterford
Albany
MASSACHUSETTS
USA
Hudson
River
Long Island
Sound
Catskill
42°N
BRONX
Port
Washington
CONNECTICUT
Manhassett
Bay
Hudson
River
MANHATTAN
NEWARK
Hell Gate
QUEENS
East River
BROOKLYN
LONG
ISLAND
GOVERNORS
ISLAND
New
York
STATEN
ISLAND
New York
New York
Bay
Atlantic Ocean
NEW
JERSEY
40°N
PENNSYLVANIA
Philadelphia
Delaware
River
Chesapeake and
Delaware Canal
MARYLAND
Annapolis
Washington DC
Port
Henlopen
Cape May
DELAWARE
Delaware
Bay
Potomac
River
38°N
VIRGINIA
Chesapeake
Bay
Deltaville
Atlantic
Ocean
Norfolk

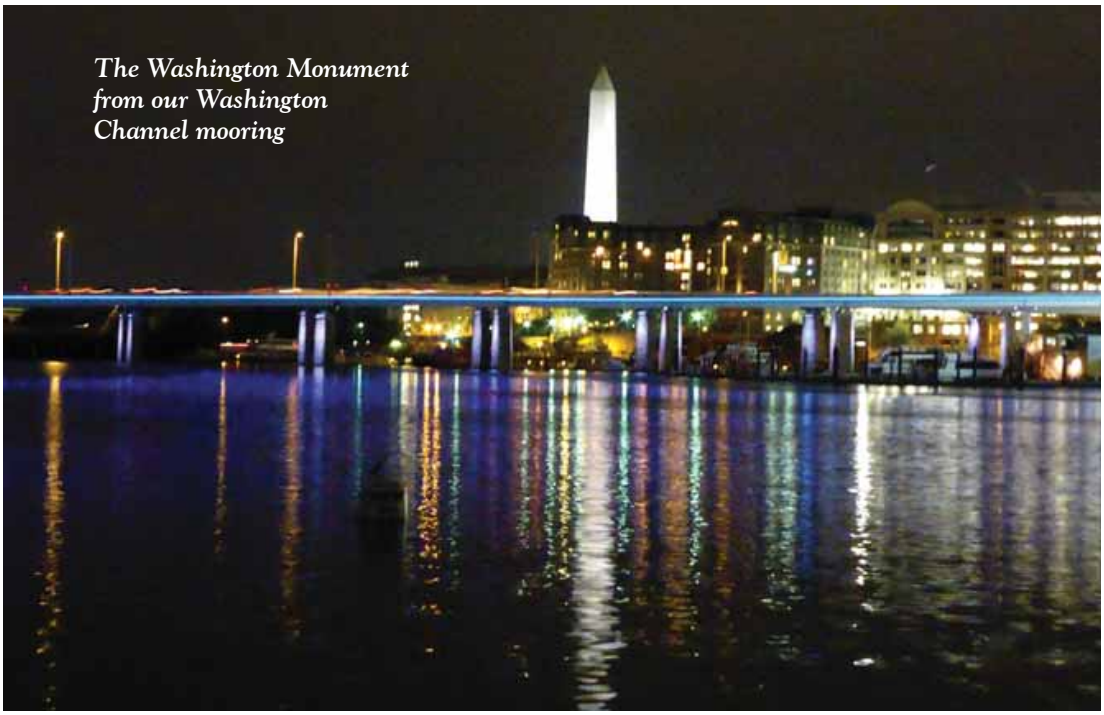
The chart showed that we were approaching the Dahlgren military firing range so Kit called them up on VHF to check it was OK to pass. A very polite young man told us there would be firing and requested that we keep to the north side of the river. Naturally we complied, but were a little sceptical about the firing as all was peaceful. How wrong can you be – sudden deafening booms rang out and we almost jumped out of our skins! Coastguard and military vessels were out in force and no doubt monitored our progress through the zone. We spent the second night anchored at the side of the river. Reports had suggested that we might be disturbed by the wake of other traffic, but we actually saw few other vessels with the exception of the military. We managed to sail a little in the lower reaches, but finally had to resort to the motor.

An osprey nesting on a starboard hand buoy

The Potomac can be quite lumpy at times, especially in narrow stretches where a strong northerly created wind-over-tide effects that saw us bashing into the chop – most uncomfortable! Luckily it didn't last too long and the final stretches were relatively quiet. The scenery is lovely with beautiful wooded banks – just south of DC we passed Mount Vernon, the historic house where George Washington lived with his wife Martha in the 1700s. Lots of tourists wandered in the grounds and we felt privileged to have a great view of the house from the river.

As far away as Alexandria, five miles downriver from DC, we could see the tall Washington Monument and the dome of Capitol Hill. The final approach to DC is also the approach for Ronald Reagan Airport, and planes flew noisily overhead as we made our way into the Washington Channel and picked up a mooring buoy just off the waterfront. The Washington Monument towered above the buildings to one side, balanced by the green swathe of East Potomac Park and golf course on the other. The riverside edges of the park, including some of the paths, disappeared underwater when we experienced a high spring tide a few days later – apparently this has become a regular occurrence over recent years.

We paid US $35 per night for the mooring, but we were close to the centre of DC and in a great place to base ourselves for checking out the museums and galleries on the city's National Mall – most of which have free entry! Shortly after arrival we were invited to the Capital Yacht Club for drinks and supper by Scott Berg, who'd noticed our OCC burgee. Scott used to be a Commodore in the Seven Seas Cruising Association, and since our visit has become OCC Port Officer for Washington. Scott and his wife Freddi were very welcoming and helpful during our stay, and kindly assisted us with a battery problem. Our OCC burgee was often recognised, and through it we met some wonderful people as we travelled up the East Coast of the US.



The Washington Monument from our Washington Channel mooring

We really enjoyed Washington DC, taking our time and visiting a few of the principal attractions each day. The weather was quite changeable with sunny hot days interspersed with wet grey days – a bit like the UK but warmer when the sun shone. We'd arrived just in time for the Cherry Blossom Festival, although there'd been a waterspout through the basin the previous week that had stripped all the blossom from the trees. The festival was a small affair on the waterfront with lots of food stalls and a couple of bands, but the fireworks were spectacular and we had a great view from the boat.

The National Mall stretches two miles from Capitol Hill to the Lincoln Memorial, with the Washington Monument about halfway between. Lining the Mall are huge buildings, many resembling Greek temples, housing museums, art galleries, and monuments. There are sculpture gardens, the National Botanic Gardens and parkland. Much of this is part of the Smithsonian Institute, and most have free admission. The Smithsonian was founded by a British scientist, James Smithson, who never visited America but in 1826 left $500,000 to found an 'establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge'.

Amongst the sites we visited were Capitol Hill, the Lincoln Memorial, Martin Luther King Memorial, Washington Monument (you have to get close to appreciate the size), the American Indian Museum, National Art Galleries (modern and traditional), Smithsonian Castle, Arthur Sackler Gallery, Freer Gallery, Union Station (an amazing building) and of course the White House. We walked miles but also used the buses and metro (underground). The metro is not as extensive as the London underground but covers the central area. The stations, although modern, are huge and very dark and dour. Unlike London there is no advertising so all you can look at is grey concrete – who'd have thought we'd miss advertising!

After a week our cultural appetites were satisfied, so we headed back down the Potomac and up to Annapolis for the Spring Boat Show. Sadly it was only a small affair and not a patch, we're told, on the autumn one. Even so, Annapolis was a great place to visit for a few days, and how could we resist a famous 'painkiller' in the waterside Pussers Caribbean Bar and Grill. From Annapolis we sailed to the top of Chesapeake Bay and through the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal. We'd been warned about potential encounters with large ships passing through the C&D canal, so were almost disappointed to arrive in the Delaware River having seen nothing larger than a rowing boat! Then just as we got the anchor set for an overnight stop near the east end of the Canal, what can only be described as a leviathan popped out of the canal, towering over us as it passed. How it managed to squeeze through the quite narrow waterway is a mystery ... and thank goodness we hadn't been in its path.

We'd just caught up with Phil and Monica on their catamaran *Miss Molly*, so we sailed down the Delaware River in company, planning to anchor overnight at Port Henlopen opposite Cape May before sailing up the Atlantic coast to New York. However a VHF weather forecast announced strong northerly winds in the next few days, so we decided to carry on and sail overnight to get to New York ahead of the blow.

Rounding Cape May was a bit tricky, as we took an inside passage close inshore to save time. We arrived just as the tide was turning and encountered rip tides as we picked our way through the narrow channels. It was a relief to get through the disturbed seas and away from submerged rocks. We spotted a whale off Cape May, and then a pod of dolphins kept us company for a while, diving under our bows and leaping alongside, clearly showing off. It's always such a pleasure to see them! Atlantic City, with its bright lights, was quite a spectacle as we sailed past after dark, and we were treated to a fantastic sunrise next morning – one of the rewards of overnight sailing.

Sailing into NY was thrilling but quite daunting. As we passed the Statue of Liberty the waters of New York Bay were churned by the wake of pleasure boats, tugs, fast ferries and police and coastguard boats. Helicopters were buzzing overhead and the coastguard called us on VHF to redirect *Quilcene* north of Governors Island off the tip of Manhattan to reach the East River instead of the recommended inside channel, as they had an 'ongoing incident'.

Kit, Belinda and the White House

The Manhattan skyline

We never found out what had happened, but the delay put us at Hell Gate on the East River at the wrong time. The East River, which links New York Bay and Long Island Sound is not so much a river, more of a tidal strait. It flows at 5+ knots and switches direction in a matter of minutes when the tide turns. Hell Gate is the infamous dogleg point on the river where strong tidal streams, whirlpools and boils combine to make it a challenge for low powered vessels and those with limited manoeuvrability. *Quilcene* was already making around 9 knots with the current as we approached Hell Gate, and was carried through at 11 knots! Kit managed to keep control as we passed through overfalls and whirlpools, but we vowed to hit slack water on the return journey.

It had been a hectic few hours – thank goodness we'd heard there were quiet moorings available at Port Washington, Manhassett Bay in Long Island Sound. With the first two nights free and only $25 per night thereafter, including a free water taxi service,

you can't go wrong – and how nice to visit NY by train and return to *Quilcene* in a peaceful bay after a hard day's tourism! We did a lot of sightseeing and even treated ourselves to a Broadway show, which was fantastic. Port Washington itself is such a nice town that we lingered a while. Shops, laundry, cafes and restaurants are all within walking distance of the water taxi dock, and there's a weekly jazz night at the Mediterranean Café.

Busy times in Times Square

Eventually we slipped the mooring and headed back through the East River – having studied the tides and currents our timing was perfect, and the waters of Hell Gate were placid. We turned into the Hudson River just as the flood tide began and had fair winds and tide for 49 miles to reach a pretty anchorage at Cornwall-on-Hudson. *En route* we passed West Point, looking more like a walled city than a military academy!

We picked up the following flood tide next morning and spent a beautiful, sunny day admiring the mighty Hudson. To see the beautiful Hudson River Valley from the water is a real treat and we loved the lighthouses, which are actual houses on rocks in the river! The only downside was that we had to keep a careful

A lighthouse on the Hudson River

Unstepping the mast at Catskill

watch to dodge the numerous logs and other debris floating in the river. There had been a lot of rain and water levels were quite high ... as we were to find out later.

At anchor off Catskill we watched a pair of bald eagles fishing in the river – a wonderful sight as they scooped up fish in their talons and flew overhead with the struggling fish held fast! In Catskill marina we removed the sails and carried out preparatory work before the mast was unstepped and, hey presto, *Quilcene* became a motorboat! All it took was two strong men and a big crane. This was a first for us and it felt very felt strange to set off with the mast resting on 'horses' on deck – even stranger when we passed under our first low bridge! We passed through Troy Lock, the limit of tidal inundation on the Hudson, before turning into the Mohawk River where we tied up to the floating dock at Waterford Visitor Center. Waterford marks the eastern end of the Erie Canal and offers free docking for 48 hours with free showers. Very civilised!

We decided to stay for a farmers market held on the dock on Sunday mornings, and stock up with fresh vegetables. The stall-holders had just about packed away when it began raining, hard – and didn't stop for two days. This compounded the effects of a very wet spring and water levels began to rise in the Mohawk River and Erie Canal approach. Soon it was flowing fast. After the first flight of locks at the eastern end of the canal, the route follows the Mohawk River which was now in full flood. A canal closure was announced due to high water and strong currents, and the 48 hour docking rule suspended, not that we could have gone anywhere anyway as the rushing water was pinning *Quilcene* firmly to the dock.

On the floating dock at Waterford, which had been 5ft lower when we arrived!

We spent an anxious night listening to the water surging past the hull and hoping that the dock was secure. By next morning the waterlevel had risen by 4 or 5 feet. Our floating dock, which had been 5 feet below the concrete dock wall when we arrived, was now level with it! With little else to do but wait we took a bus to Albany, the capital of New York State, and spent a lovely day sight-seeing. There were also enough pretty walks around Waterford to keep us occupied.

A week later, and after a few dry days, the water levels had subsided sufficiently for the canals to reopen, but just to be sure we gave it another day or so before heading into the first flight of locks. The first one on the Erie Canal (perversely numbered Lock 2) is a 'biggie' with a 34ft rise. We were quite apprehensive, but managed okay and once through the first five and into the Mohawk River we felt like old hands.

A lock on the Erie Canal – note the turbulence set up by the dam

Quilcene and Espirit on a free dock in the Erie Canal

We left Waterford with another yacht, the US-flagged *Espirit*. The skipper, Pete, was singlehanded apart from his dog Allie – we were very impressed that he could manage alone as the Canal locks, especially the rising ones on the river sections, are quite hard work. Most are next to dams where rushing water sets up turbulence on the approach, and once in the lock there are only pipes, cables or sometimes just ropes to hold on to. It can be difficult to control the boat and stop it swinging when the water rushes in. The deepest lock has a rise of 40 feet and has no opening gates but an overhead gate that drops down – it felt like heading into a dark tomb! We stood on deck at the bottom hanging on to just a rope each and peering up as the lock filled.

The locks are perhaps more difficult for a yacht than a motor vessel because the mast overhangs at both ends – ours by 5 feet! We tried to alleviate the problem with a wooden plank tied across the boat close to the bow to keep the masthead fended off, but it snapped in the second lock. Even so we only had one casualty, when the VHF antennae hit the lock wall and was damaged. Luckily Kit had another and was planning to replace it anyway.

Entering Lock 17, the deepest on the NY canal system

To port for Buffalo, Lake Erie; to starboard for Oswego, Lake Ontario

New York State Canal System was enjoying its centennial year in 2017, and as part of the celebrations waived all transit fees for 12 months. We travelled 184 statute miles on the system from Waterford to Oswego, partly on canals and partly on rivers. There are numerous free docks along the route to secure to overnight so our passage through cost very little. We kept company with *Espirit* for a few days, but Pete was in a hurry and had further to go than us as he was bound for Buffalo on Lake Erie. Our route saw us leaving the Erie and entering the Oswego Canal to get to Lake Ontario.

We rose to 420ft above sea level, but the descent in the locks to Lake Ontario (245ft above sea level) was much easier – like going down in a lift! Overall the canals were very interesting, with several museums and historic canal sites along the way. We enjoyed spotting wildlife such as bald eagles, osprey, beaver, ground hog, deer, snapping turtles and numerous small birds. It was also good to visit some inland places and many pretty canalside towns where people were very helpful and made us feel welcome. Even so, it was a good feeling to pass through the final lock and arrive in Oswego on the shores of Lake Ontario. Oswego is a nice town with many small, individual shops on the high street – something we haven't often found in the US.

In Oswego Marina we looked askance at the 'gin pole' used for stepping the mast. It really didn't look strong enough, but the marina hands assured us that they'd dealt with bigger masts than ours ... and sure enough the guys were very methodical and professional and the job was completed in no time.

Stepping the mast at Oswego

Sailing again. Raising the Canadian flag

We bent the sails back on and checked that everything was shipshape, and we were ready to go. We'd booked a week in Kingston Marina on the Canadian side of Lake Ontario, and were about to set sail when we received an apologetic phone call saying they couldn't accommodate us – their visitors pontoon had broken loose due to strong winds combined with extremely high water levels in the lake. To make matters worse the Canada Day holiday was approaching and most of the nearby marinas were fully booked. After a few frantic calls we managed to secure a berth in Cobourg Marina, further west than Kingston, so *Quilcene* finally headed out onto the lake. It felt wonderful to raise the svails once again and switch off the engine!

Rough weather on the Lakes. Photo Peter Roth

The 78 mile crossing was a little disappointing, as despite a good forecast we soon lost the wind.

However it was fine and bright and we motor-sailed most of the passage in sunshine. Eight miles out from Cobourg the sky darkened and we were caught in a very nasty thunderstorm – lightning all around for a while, and we saw the dark funnel shape of a waterspout in the distance – not a pleasant welcome to Canada. The same storm had passed over Lake Erie *en route* to Lake Ontario, and Peter and *Espirit* had also been caught in it – he later sent us a picture.

We arrived in Cobourg looking like drowned rats. The first priority was to check in with Canadian Customs. This turned out to be an easy process – we rang them up and two officers soon came along to *Quilcene* with the paperwork. They were helpful, welcoming and friendly, telling us that very few British yachts arrive in their port. Once checked in we left the boat in Cobourg Marina for a week and celebrated Canada Day, July 1st, with Kit's brother Peter and his wife Pat at their home in Scarborough, just

Celebrating Canada Day with Kit's brother

west of Cobourg. Previously called Dominion Day, Canada Day is the anniversary of when three separate colonies – Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick – became a single Dominion within the British Empire – Canada. 2017 was a particularly big celebration as it was the 150th anniversary. After reunions and celebrations we had a whole new cruising ground to look forward to!

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THE CHALLENGE OF PASSAGE PLANNING IN THE SOUTHWEST INDIAN OCEAN

Jonathan Lloyd, Roving Rear Commodore

(Jonathan and Anne are in the later stages of a circumnavigation aboard their Malo 42 Sofia. *They left the UK in June 2014, and were appointed Roving Rear Commodores two years later.* Flying Fish *last heard from them when Jonathan wrote about their participation in last year's Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation Cruise – see* Cruising Tasmania *in* Flying Fish 2017/1.)

With the route out of the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean still significantly affected by the threat of Somali piracy, most yachts on a circumnavigation are now faced with the prospect of a passage across the southwest Indian Ocean to South Africa and round her southern capes into the South Atlantic. Yachts starting from Southeast Asia are most likely to take the northern route, involving Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Chagos archipelago, the Seychelles, northwest Madagascar and Mozambique. Those starting in Darwin, Australia usually take the southern route, involving Christmas Island, Cocos Keeling, Rodrigues, Mauritius and Reunion. While yachts can combine elements of the two, the focus of this article is on what happens when a yacht reaches Madagascar on the northern route or Reunion on the southern route. Up until this point passage planning is relatively straightforward, given that the SE trade winds predominate.

From here on two significant weather factors affect passage planning. The first is the Aguihas Current, which starts in the Mozambique Channel and flows southward down the South African coast as far as Cape Agulhas. The continental shelf runs close inshore for much of the coast between Richards Bay and Port Elizabeth and this is where the current flows strongest, often as close as the 200m depth contour. The rate of flow varies along its length, but can reach 4–5 knots between Durban and East London. While this can assist a yacht to make a fast passage down the coast, with many yachts recording their fastest 24 hour run down this stretch, there is a major downside in terms of passage planning – caused by the other significant weather factor in this part of the world. These are the southwesterly depressions which, at regular intervals often as short as two or three days apart, roll from the southern ocean up the east coast of South Africa as far as southern Madagascar. When one of these depressions meets the south-flowing Aguihas Current the resulting seas become very short and steep, creating unpleasant and often dangerous conditions. In severe southwesterly gales waves as high as 20m have been recorded in the Aguihas Current – not a place to be caught out.

There are two further complicating factors when voyaging in these waters. The first is the cyclone season, which affects the waters around Madagascar, Reunion and Mauritius from December to May. This means that yachts need to leave northwest Madagascar or Reunion for South Africa by the end of November at the latest. The second is the lack of safe harbours between Richards Bay and Cape Town. The only

realistic options before the Cape Town area in the event of bad weather are Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth and Mossel Bay. Once round Cape Aguihas there are two safe and accessible harbours either side of the Cape peninsula before reaching Cape Town. The first is Simonstown on the east side in False Bay. The second is Hout Bay on the west side. Both are within easy reach of Cape Town.

Knysna, 45 miles east of Mossel Bay, is only a realistic option in benign conditions. The entrance is tricky and potentially dangerous, a fact highlighted to me by a British yacht that we met on arrival in Cape Town. She had been hit by two monster waves just after crossing the bar on departure, which bent the steering column and spinnaker pole, and did considerable damage to the stainless-steel deck gear as well as drowning all the electronic equipment. The owner told me that had theirs had been a lighter yacht they would almost certainly have broached and rolled over, ending up on the rocks. As it was, her 21 tons was just able to punch through the waves and survive the experience. In my view they had a very lucky escape! It should also be noted that Mossel Bay is only really safe if you can get inside the harbour. If a strong easterly is blowing, the anchorage outside in front of the yacht club becomes a lee shore subject to large swells. While we were there sheltering from just such conditions, a yacht anchored outside broke its anchor chain and ended up on the beach – they were extremely fortunate to be towed off by the lifeboat with apparently minimal damage. Both these incidents highlighted to me the fact that this coast deserves real respect and very careful consideration when it comes to passage planning.

Before tackling the challenge of this stretch of coast, however, one has to get there. In particular the passage between Reunion and Richards Bay or Durban poses its own considerable challenge. The aim here is to avoid getting caught out in a southwesterly depression when rounding the southern tip of Madagascar and especially when crossing the Agulhas Current. The passage is approximately 1400 miles, so will take most yachts 10 to 12 days. These dangers lie at the end of the passage, however, and at the time of departure from Reunion there are no accurate forecasts to predict what the weather will be doing off Richards Bay or Durban. Consequently one has to set off blind in this respect, and be prepared for whatever one might encounter later on in the passage. That said, the first challenge is to round the southern tip of Madagascar. Shallow waters and a wind acceleration zone make this an unpleasant place to be in a southwesterly depression, but by paying careful attention to weather forecasts while in Reunion, one should be able to avoid this situation.

Once safely round Madagascar it is very important to be able to obtain accurate information about the weather in the Mozambique Channel and coastal waters of South Africa, either by e-mail from a weather router or from GRIB files. An Iridium Go system is probably best for this purpose, as Sailmail via HF radio is not particularly reliable until well into the Mozambique Channel. At this juncture one should be in a position to head directly to Richards Bay or Durban if there is a clear weather window before the next southwesterly depression comes through. If, at this stage, a weather window has not opened up, the sensible strategy is to stay further north and head west along latitude 26°S. This keeps one north of the path of most depressions, and one's options open. One is then in a position either to head down to Richards Bay or Durban when a window opens up, or to head north to Inhaca Island off Maputo if one needs to shelter from a southwesterly depression.

The alternative to facing the dilemma posed by a direct passage from Reunion to South Africa is instead to head northwest from Reunion to northwest Madagascar and thence down the Mozambique Channel to Richards Bay or Durban. The advantage of this option is that it breaks the passage into shorter legs, thus providing more accurate weather windows during the latter stages of the passage down the Mozambique Channel as well as several options for seeking shelter in the event of bad weather. It should be noted, however, that this option will take substantially longer, especially if one intends to spend time cruising in the waters of northwest Madagascar, reputed to be a delightful cruising ground. Accordingly, this decision to be made well in advance and factored into one's overall plan for crossing the Indian Ocean – given the vagaries of the cyclone season it is not a realistic last minute option. The passage from Reunion should be undertaken in October, as the subsequent passage down the Mozambique Channel must take place by mid November at the latest in order to avoid risking being caught in a cyclone or severe revolving tropical storm (RTS).

Once safely in Richards Bay or Durban the next challenge is to negotiate the South African coast round to Cape Town. The overall length of the passage is 800 miles from Durban, and a further 85 from Richards Bay. With southwesterly depressions barrelling up the coast every two or three days one would be lucky to make the trip in one go. Therefore the trick is to work out how much progress one can make in the window between depressions before the next one comes through. It should be remembered that the Agulhas Current can provide a significant boost to progress, especially between Durban and East London where it really kicks in 40 miles south of Durban. In favourable conditions it is quite possible to achieve a 240-mile day on this stretch of coast, and this should be taken into account. The other factor to be considered is the weather for rounding Cape Agulhas. In strong conditions, with winds in excess of 20 knots from either direction, the sea state can rapidly become very unstable and unpleasant. A further complication is the likelihood of encountering a cut-off low at some stage on the passage. These are generated off the land and in most cases are of relatively short duration, few lasting more than six hours. Consequently they are harder to forecast accurately. However, their potential impact on a passage plan in terms of imposing delay can be significant. Thus it is important to factor some reserve time into one's plan to allow for the possibility of encountering one.

Unlike the passage from Reunion, where one has to set off blind, there is no need to do so when sailing down the South African coast, as there is a wealth of accurate weather information available from the South African Meteorological Service and other weather sources such as PredictWind, PassageWeather and Windguru. However, it is important to monitor these sources very carefully as the detail changes on a daily basis, particularly with regard to timing. With careful passage planning taking full advantage of weather windows there is no excuse for being caught out in bad weather on this stretch of coast unless one has the misfortune to suffer major gear failure. It is also important to maintain the average speed estimated in the passage plan, and to be prepared to turn the engine on if wind strength drops below what is necessary to maintain the required speed over the ground. Winds in a weather window can often be on the light side, so one should expect to motor for a considerable amount of time – that was certainly our experience down this stretch of coast.

Leaving Reunion behind

So how did *Sofia* cope with these challenges as we crossed the Indian Ocean to South Africa in the autumn of 2017? Mid October found her berthed in Port de Galets marina in Reunion, with her crew looking for a weather window to depart for Richards Bay. Mindful of the challenges and uncertainties involved in the passage ahead, which had been on our minds for some time, we decided that it would be sensible to employ the services of a professional weather router. After reading an online article in *Yachting World* about why ocean cruisers should consider using a weather router we found Simon Rowell, who is meteorologist for the UK Sailing Team and the Clipper Race. He is also an ocean sailor who has made two passages in these waters, so we were confident that we would receive the advice we needed. We wanted input from him in two respects for our passage planning. The first was, when was the appropriate window to depart Reunion and round the southern tip of Madagascar? The second was to provide ongoing weather advice as we approached the Agulhas Current. His charges were very reasonable and his advice proved to be both helpful and accurate.

After signing on with Simon, Jenny Crickmore-Thompson, our PO/POR coordinator, told us about local South African weather expert Des Cason. Des is a retired ocean sailor based in Durban who provides free, tailored weather advice to any yacht crossing from Reunion or Madagascar to South Africa, or sailing down the coast of South Africa, out of the goodness of his heart. His advice was to prove invaluable both on the passage from Reunion and then from Richards Bay to Cape Town. I would strongly advise any yacht sailing in these waters to make use of his services. Thus armed with advice from Des and Simon we set off from Reunion on 16 October 2017 in company with *Dreamcatcher*, another OCC yacht.

Conditions approaching the southern tip of Madagascar were relatively benign, but at this point we noticed a major tear in our mainsail. In order to prevent further damage we took the sail off and replaced it with the storm trysail, which slowed us down somewhat so *Dreamcatcher* pulled steadily away. By now we were aware of the existence of a strong southwesterly low making its way up the South African coast,

Des Cason and his wife Nell (left), with the crews of Sofia (right) and Dreamcatcher (end) at the Zululand Yacht Club

although at this stage it was not entirely clear when it would reach Richards Bay. Consequently, rather than heading directly for Richards Bay, we followed advice from Des to keep our options open by keeping further north and heading west along latitude 26°S. By the time we reached longitude 30°E the situation was much clearer and we knew we had 48 hours in which to cross to the Agulhas Current and reach Richards Bay before the low arrived. The prevailing light winds in the Mozambique Channel would mean motoring hard to cover the distance in the time available, however, and as we had already motored some of the way from Reunion to the southern tip of Madagascar, fuel consumption was now an issue. After some careful calculations we reckoned that we had just enough to make it, with a small reserve for emergencies.

The author at the Zululand Yacht Club marina

Beating to windward south of Durban

After motoring hard for 24 hours we were in a position to take advantage of the favourable winds that Des and Simon had forecast as we approached the South African coast. As the wind backed from northwest to southwest we were able to follow it round and close-reach our way down the coast to Richards Bay. At that point we took a wave over the foredeck, which split the genoa at the foot, so we replaced it with the staysail and were able to make it into Richards Bay on Thursday 26 October after an 11 day passage, with six hours to spare. Thus we were safely tied up in the smallcraft harbour in Tuzi Gazi by the time the southwesterly gale arrived and roared through the rigging!

At the end of November, after five very pleasant weeks at the Zululand Yacht Club in Richards Bay it was time to head for Cape Town. Most yachts opt for this timeframe for a variety of reasons, although the best time of year for the passage is January to March. We felt confident that, provided we allowed sufficient time for stopovers in the event of bad weather, we could make the 900 mile passage in 10 to 14 days and reach Cape Town by mid December. Armed with advice from Des we reckoned that we could reach East London in our first weather window, even though we might encounter a small cut-off low south of Durban for six hours. Based on Des's comment that conditions might be uncomfortable but not dangerous, we decided to press on rather than call in at Durban. After a bouncy 12 hours tacking south of Durban the wind backed to the southeast and we picked up the Agulhas Current.

With the boost from the current we rocketed down the coast, averaging 10 to 12 knots. Such was progress that we decided to bypass East London and head for Port Elizabeth, where we would wait as the next southwesterly depression came through. It

High SOG recorded in the Agulhas Current

should be noted that in spite of a very welcoming yacht club there are two significant problems with Port Elizabeth. The first is surge within the harbour, and the second is coal dust from the coal loading facility right next to the marina, which quickly coats everything. This problem is compounded by the severe water shortage. Restrictions on water usage mean you cannot use fresh water to wash off the coal dust and the harbour water is filthy.

Once the depression had blown through we moved on to Mossel Bay. Unfortunately for us the strong easterlies, which would have been ideal for a quick passage to Cape Town, made rounding Cape Agulhas problematic, so we called into Mossel Bay and ended up on the harbour wall rafted alongside a French yacht that we had met in Port Elizabeth. There we waited for 24 hours for an opportunity to round Cape Agulhas.

Given the go-ahead by Des, we set off at the crack of dawn in order to reach the Cape by midnight, when the wind would be starting to die down. We duly arrived at the appointed hour and had a relatively benign rounding. However, as we were motoring along in calm winds and flat seas towards Cape Point, a cut-off low suddenly materialised with 25 knots on the nose! Consequently we found ourselves beating our way up towards Cape Point, which delayed our arrival in Cape Town.

Reaching along in the Agulhas Current

Table Mountain with its table cloth, seen from the Royal Cape Yacht Club marina

Instead of arriving in daylight in reasonable winds, we found ourselves arriving at midnight in the teeth of the 'Cape Doctor'. Berthing in the Royal Cape Yacht Club's marina in the dark for the first time, with the wind gusting over 30 knots, was a somewhat nerve-wracking experience!

With the benefit of hindsight, the passages between Reunion and Cape Town have certainly been the most challenging of our circumnavigation to date. In light of our experience, the following advice might be useful for those following in our wake:

- Use the services of Des Cason at sygambit@gmail.com. In our experience his advice is timely, customised to your requirements and invariably accurate.
- Consider additional input from a professional weather router. We found this very helpful, and neither Des nor Simon had a problem with it. It is always useful to have confirmation from an additional source.
- If you dislike uncertainty and have time in hand, consider taking the route from Reunion to the Mozambique Channel via northern Madagascar which has the added bonus of beautiful cruising grounds in northwest Madagascar. However, anyone contemplating this option should consult Des Cason, who can provide detailed information on Madagascar and the Mozambique channel.
- Consider waiting in Richards Bay or Durban until January when weather conditions are likely to improve before heading down to Cape Town. There is plenty to see and do in this part of South Africa.
- Allow at least double the normal time for the passage from Richards Bay or Durban to Cape Town. A 900 mile passage would normally take us six or seven days. We allowed 12 to 14 days and it took us 11.
- Make sure your fuel tank and cans are full, as you are likely to do more motoring than you expect.

FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Tim Bridgen, aboard *Marionette*

Tuna preserved in oil

This must not be stored for more than a few days, other than in a 'fridge, but if chilled it will keep happily for two weeks. Do not keep it for longer than that, even if it seems okay. It really is delicious, however, so there's little risk of being tempted to keep it longer – unless it was a very big tuna and you made a huge amount!

I have Kilner and Mason jars aboard, as well as a canning pressure cooker. This is NOT a canning (UK English 'bottling') recipe, however – hence the warning not to keep it beyond two weeks and also only in the 'fridge. On the plus side it means that any airtight container can be used, and it doesn't need to be sterile, just very clean. Particularly rigorous washing in very hot, soapy water is enough.

Cut very fresh tuna into steaks, then cut those into 2–3cm chunks. Don't use the dark meat. Albacore tuna is probably the best for this because its flesh is particularly pale, but yellowfin and bigeye are fine too. I probably wouldn't use the smaller bonito or skipjack, whose flesh is darker and a little more 'fishy'. The good thing for us Brits is that albacore is the tuna most likely to be caught if trolling off the coast of Ushant or South Brittany.

Rinse the fish and pat dry, then pack closely into a frying pan or saucepan. You need to just cover the tuna with vegetable oil, and therefore want as little airspace between the chunks as possible. A frying pan has the advantage of not squashing the chunks on top of each other, which can cause them to fuse together when cooking.

Pour on vegetable oil until completely covered, but only just, then start to heat very gently. Heat until a few bubbles start to come out of the tuna and keep it at that temperature for 10 minutes. By doing this you are poaching the tuna at between 70°C and 100°C – no more. You are not frying it!

Once the tuna is fully opaque all the way through and can be gently flaked, turn off the heat and add any flavourings you choose to the pan. These can include any combination of lemon peel, sliced garlic, pepper corns, bay leaves, chilli flakes, thyme, sage – whatever you like, really. As soon as it's cool enough to handle, pack the tuna into the clean container and pour the flavourings and oil on top to fill all airspaces. Seal and refrigerate immediately.

Editor's note: Tim is too modest to let on that he's one of those rare beasts, a cruising sailor who's also a dedicated – and very successful – fisherman.

I want a boat that drinks six, eats four and sleeps two.

Earnest K Gann

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AROUND ICELAND 2017
Chris Jones, Regional Rear Commodore GB

After 14 years travelling the world on a slow circumnavigation aboard our Gitana 43 *Three Ships*, Fiona and I found that liveaboard cruising is a seductive and somewhat all-consuming lifestyle which is difficult to give up. So when we finally returned to the UK in July 2016 we were at a bit of a loss to decide what to do next. Sell the boat and move on was one option, but that seemed a bit final, so it had to be just one more trip. We had loved the remote anchorages and dramatic landscapes of New Zealand's South Island, and having spent plenty of time in warm climes we looked for the nearest equivalent in the North Atlantic. The answer soon became obvious – Iceland, with the added opportunity of a quick trip to Greenland if conditions permitted. I had visited Heimaey and Reykjavik on the way to the east coast of Greenland back in 1993, and was keen to visit more of the island, particularly northwest fjords, so the trip was on.

As the pilot guide for the Arctic* points out, Iceland is a remote cruising ground where self-sufficiency is the order of the day, so the first job was to prepare the boat. Over the years we had found *Three Ships* to be a tough, quick boat, which would be more than up to the task. However, as many of our cruising friends will testify, boat maintenance and fixing things is a major preoccupation, so preparation was going to be crucial. Basically it all boiled down to a full engine overhaul, fitting a new AIS transponder and installing a blown air heating system. We chose an MV Airo 5 heater, which at 5kw may have been a bit over the top output-wise, but you can't turn up what you haven't got and it proved to be ideal. The Icelandic Coast Guard have embraced the use of AIS by pleasure craft, and those who don't have a unit fitted are required to check in by VHF at regular intervals. In the event we found the ability to see and be seen by other craft was, without question, a huge advantage over just a receiver, especially when sailing in poor conditions. And so, with Pas and Tim Hewett, OCC, and nephews Joe Jollands, OCC, and Flynn Simpson joining us as crew, we set off from the Menai Strait on 4 July 2017 in search of another adventure.

The passage up through Scotland to the Faroes defined the trip in two main ways – weather windows and tidal gates. So we passed through the Swellies, up to Port St Mary on the Isle of Man, and through Calf Sound. Next came the Mull of Kintyre, Fladda Narrows in the Sound of Luing, Kyle Rhea, Ardnamurchan Point and so to Stornoway, where we met David Thompson, OCC, on *Peat Smoke*. After an easy 30 hour crossing we reached the Faroes, where we realised that UK tidal streams are but nothing compared to their tidal races, such as that between Tórshavn and Fuglafjørður which, with a range of only about a metre, runs at up to 9 knots. However, a free download app called Rák provided graphic real-time tidal flow information throughout the island group at any specified date and time – excellent.

Landfall at Vágur on Suðuroy was straightforward, with plenty of room against a tyre

* *ARCTIC AND NORTHERN WATERS, including Faroe, Iceland and Greenland* by Andrew Wilkes. Published by the RCC Pilotage Foundation / Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson Ltd.

wall in the fishing harbour. Next morning we awoke to the sight of 25 pilot whale and six dolphin carcasses lined up neatly on the dock – clearly a successful *grindadráp** had taken place that morning. The village was in celebration and by the afternoon the spoils had been divided between the villagers, and whale meat and blubber was being carted away in wheelbarrows. Next day only a bloodstain remained. Our respect for local cultural practice has become second nature over the years, especially since visiting Vanuatu, but clearly some might have found the sight of so many dead whales a little less acceptable.

The Rák AP

We were keen to keep moving so, after a brief stop in the capital, Tórshavn, where we met up with Jim McIlraith, OCC, on *Saboo*, we battled on with a headwind and rough seas around to Fuglafjørður where one of the brace of nephews had arranged to visit the uncle of one of his school friends – a tenuous but very fruitful connection. Janus, Aneka and Steingrim were incredibly hospitable to six complete strangers, and after a meal at their home they took us on a memorable late-evening car tour of the island culminating in a stunning sunset.

Iceland beckoned, and so on 22 July we headed northwest on the 250 mile passage to Seydisfjoerdur. The weather was fair, so some of the crew took the opportunity to navigate using astro as well as GPS. On the previous occasion I had made landfall

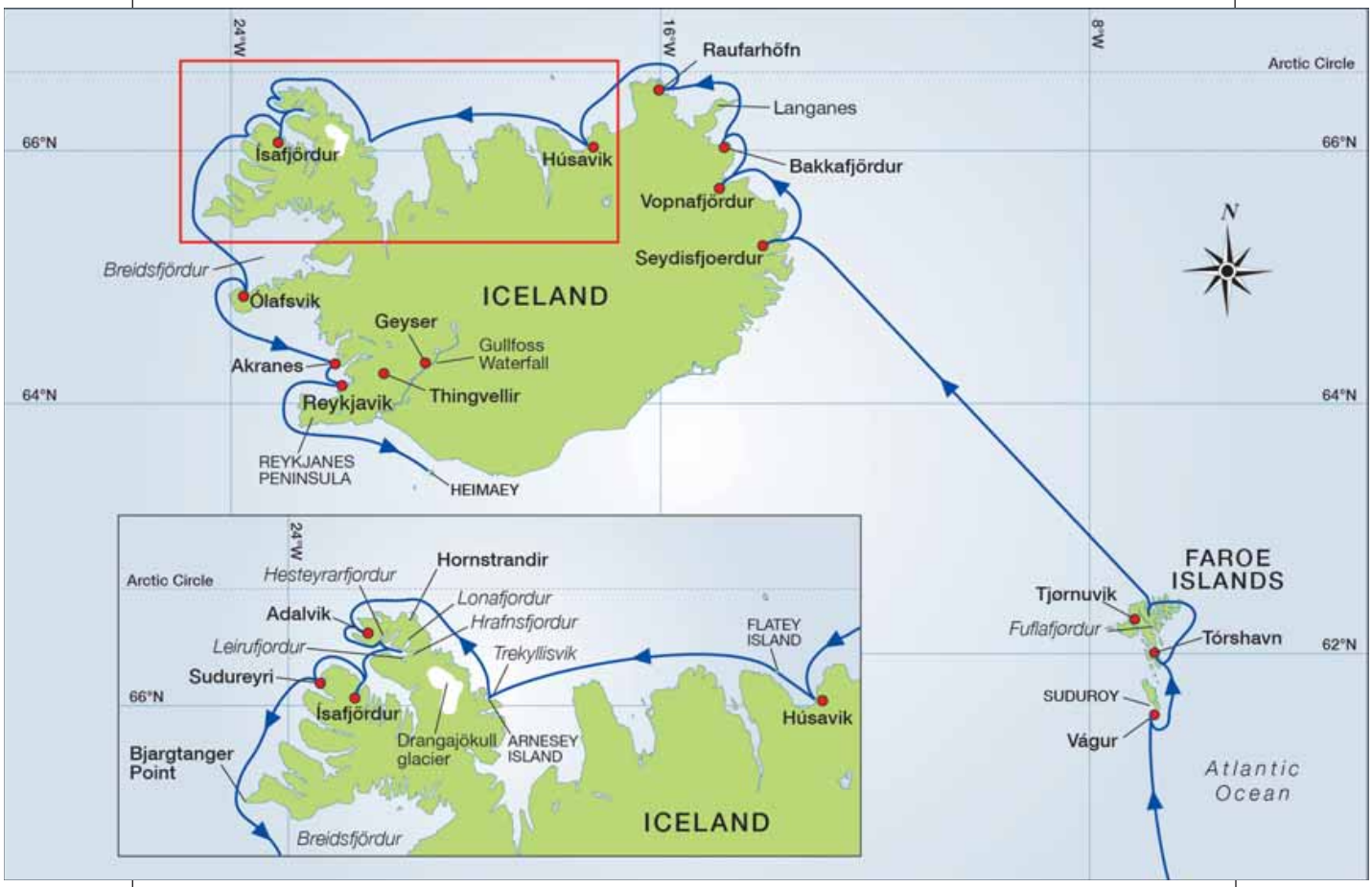
* Community-led, non-commercial hunts for pilot whales, which are surrounded by boats and driven towards a bay or beach for slaughter. Many Faroese consider whale meat an important part of their food culture and history.

A successful gryndadrap

on Heimaey, off the southwest coast of Iceland, as we were heading to Greenland. This time, however, we wanted to explore the north coast so we chose landfall at Seydisfjoerdur from where we would head northeast on an anti-clockwise circumnavigation. The only problem was that we would be against the prevailing currents, but more of that later. We had e-mailed our details to the Icelandic Coast Guard, so when we arrived two days later a customs officer was waiting on the dock and formalities were completed in record time.

The next day, with a deteriorating forecast, we moved 60 miles north to Vopnafjörður, arriving just as the wind increased to 30 knots. The best berth for a yacht was port side to on the inside of the lifeboat pontoon, a downwind, leeside approach with a beach close to starboard. Interesting, but fortunately the lifeboat had just finished tying up and there were five strong guys to take our lines. The wind blew, it rained for three days, and all the fishing fleet were in. We hired a car and had a trip inland.

Vopnafjörður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Húsavik
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Vopnafjördur
Seydisfjoerdur
Breidsfjördur
Ólafsvik
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ICELAND

Flatey Island…

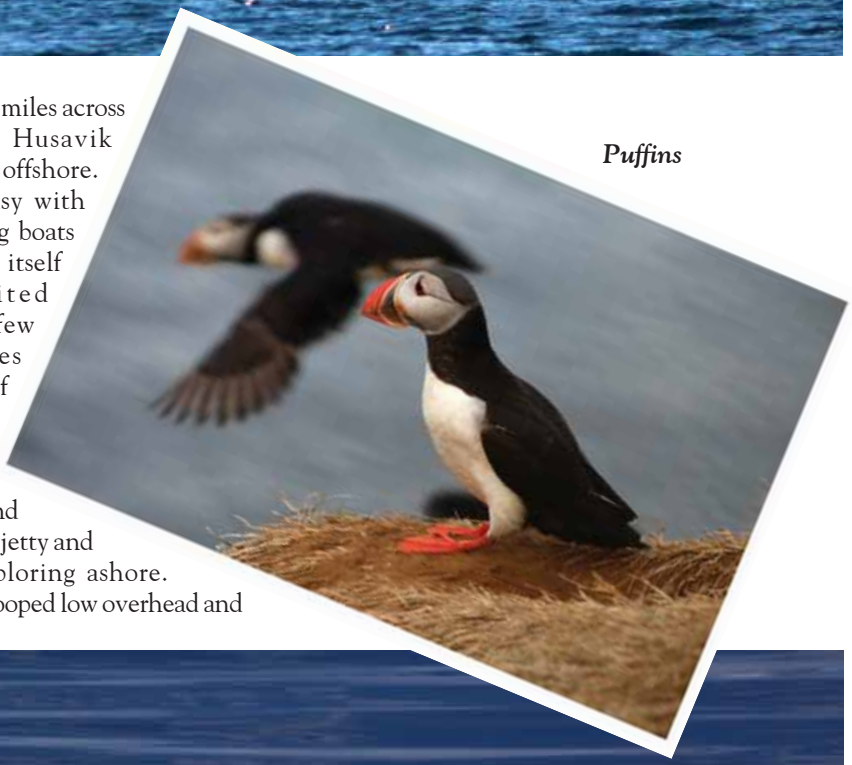
Once the weather cleared we moved on to Bakkafjörður fishing harbour, which was much more sheltered than the pilot suggested although we only had 20cm under the keel as we entered. The very friendly harbour master made no charge. Langanes is the turning point on the northeast coast, and has a fearsome reputation for strong currents and rough seas well offshore. The pilot suggests a close rounding at slack water, but determining when that might be is a bit of a challenge. In the end we settled for 30 minutes after local low water and rounded about 500m offshore with 1 knot of current under us, some lumpy sea and a speed of 6·5 knots. The stream soon turned against us, but Raufarhöfn was only 30 miles downwind across the bay. We were soon alongside the tyre wall, where we were also able to top up with diesel courtesy of a local fisherman who had an account at the pump.

The north coast of Iceland is spectacular, with a proliferation of wildlife, dramatic cliffs and distant, snow-covered peaks. On 2 August we crossed the Arctic circle and then headed southwest towards Húsavík and Flatey island, reputed to be the whale watching centre of Iceland. We were not disappointed.

… and the view from Flatey

Whale watching near Flatey Island

Flatey lies 14 miles across the bay from Husavik and 1·5 miles offshore. The bay is busy with whale watching boats but the island itself is uninhabited except for a few holiday homes and millions of seabirds. We found just enough depth on the outer end of the concrete jetty and were soon exploring ashore. Arctic terns swooped low overhead and

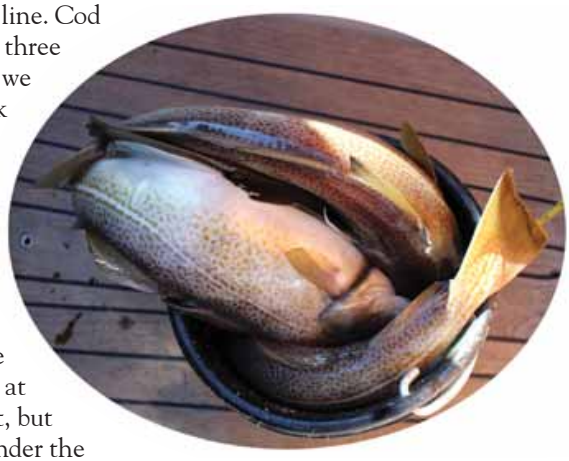


Puffins

Fulmar

rafts of fulmars, puffins and eider ducks fed on shoals of sand eels in the bay. It was late in the evening but the low sun still shone, casting long shadows in crystal clear air over an almost surreal landscape.

Flatey was an extremly special place with a unique atmosphere which impressed us all. We were sad to leave next morning, but the northwest fjords beckoned. An overnight passage took us 90 miles west into Trekyllisvik where we anchored off Arnesey island. We had heard about the excellent fishing to be found in the fjords, so once depths shoaled to 30m we hove-to and cast a line. Cod are easy to catch. Three hooks equals three cod at a time, and with 15 minutes we had a bucket full – but the chips took a little longer.



The 55 miles of coastline from Trekyllisvik to Hornstrandir is normally a lee shore, and the chart shows a complex mess of shallows, reefs and islets, so we circumvented the lot and made our way around to Aðalvík and the entrance to the northwest sounds. The anchorage at Aðalvík looks a bit open on the chart, but it proved to be fine as we tucked in under the headland with 3m under the keel. There was a hostel ashore inhabited by a few sea kayakers and some trekkers, and the walking was excellent around an abandoned airfield which gave us a welcome chance to stretch our legs.

The northwest peninsula is a high plateau roughly 60 miles across, with deeply indented fjords several of which give access to the Drangajökull glacier. Interestingly,

Leirufjordur

Glacial outfall

several of these glaciated fjords have submerged terminal moraines at the entrance with rocks and shallow gravel banks down to 5m or less in depth. Once again our forward-scanning Echopilot came into its own. We visited Lonafjordur, Hrafnsfjordur and Leirufjordur, where we walked up the wide outwash valley through extensive moraine fields and along the milky torrent which gushed from the mouth of the glacier. The anchorages were all secure and we had mainly good weather for three weeks – a truly great cruising ground. We could easily have spent a whole season in the area but it was already mid August and time to keep moving.

The Drangajökull glacier

On passage to Ísafjörður, the largest town in the immediate area, we spotted another yacht going in the opposite direction. We called them up and it turned out to be Gary and Leslie, OCC, in *Spellbound*. We chatted again on VHF when we were passing Stornoway on our return trip, but sadly never got to meet face to face – one day, guys. The visitors' pontoon at Ísafjörður was largely taken up by resident boats and unfortunately Halldór, our OCC Port Officer, had to travel down to Reykjavik the day after we arrived. But we did manage to get a berth opposite his boat, which was useful. Ísafjörður has an airstrip close to the harbour and one of the nephews took the opportunity to abandon ship in order to fly home in time to get his A-level results. I thought that his priorities were questionable but his results were good – so well done Flynn.

Hesteyrarfjordur

The coastline heading south is deeply indented, and most of the anchorages involve travelling up to 10 miles inland and then out again next day. So, rather than waste time, we decided to call in at Suðureyri, 15 miles around the corner and then do an overnight for the 85 miles around Bjargtangar point and across Breiðafjörður to Ólafsvík. Incidentally, one of the reasons for visiting as many small harbours as possible is the fact that they all have excellent swimming pools with outside hot tubs, free coffee and reduced prices for the over 65s. There is nothing quite like relaxing in a hot tub with warm sunshine and a cool breeze, gazing at the surrounding mountains.

The passage across the bay was a mixture of light wind sailing with occasional engine support to counteract the adverse current. But it didn't rain. We called in briefly at Akranes before arriving in Reykjavik, where we found a berth on the Brokey Yacht Club pontoon. The clubhouse turned out to be nothing more than a portacabin with showers and toilet, directly across the harbour from the staggering architectural

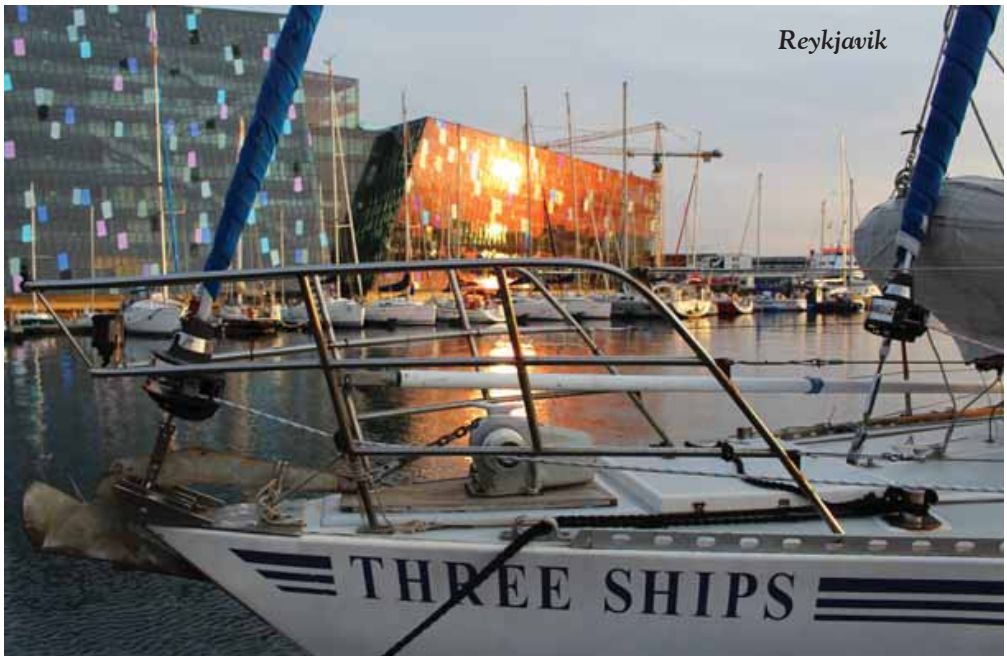
creation that is the Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre – quite a contrast in priority, we thought. But the Commodore was very hospitable and the cost was minimal considering we were berthed in the centre of a capital city.

Before leaving Reykjavik we hired a car and travelled the famous Golden Circle route past Geyser, the Gulfoss waterfall and Thingvellir on the Mid-Atlantic Rift where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates are moving apart at 2·5cm annually. This was the site of the historic Icelandic parliament, and probably explains why the annual meetings took place in temporary buildings.

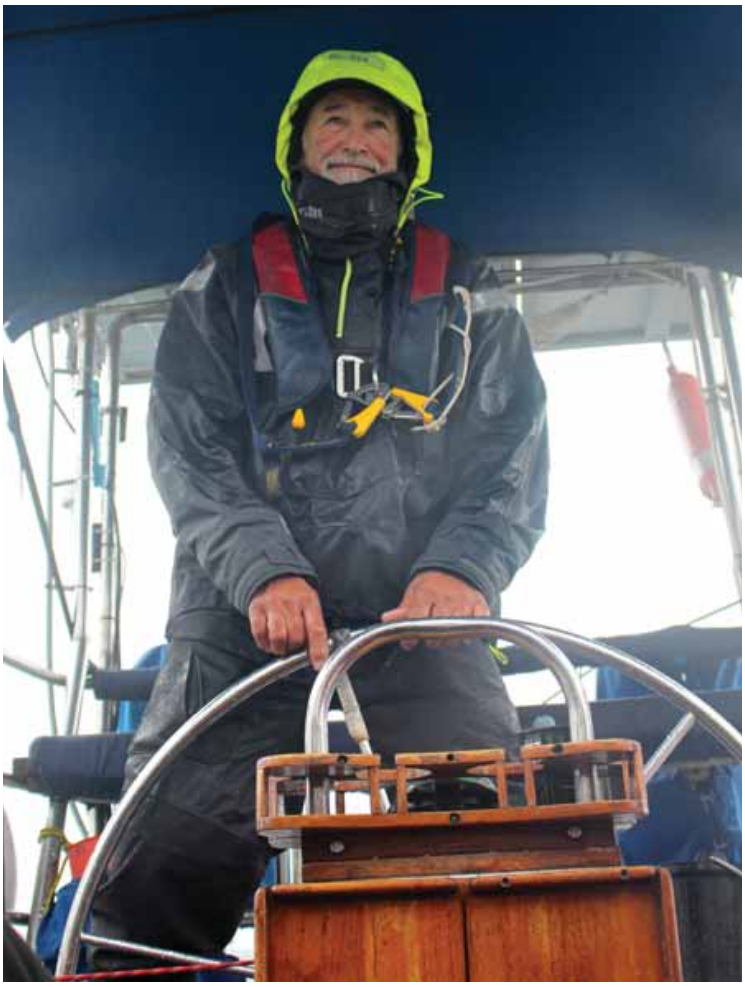
On 24 August we left Reykjavik for the 120 mile passage to Heimaey, departing at 0430 in order to catch the tide around the Reykjanes Peninsula some 40 miles to the southwest. Once more light airs prevailed. At midday we rounded at 7·5 knots and no wind, but a breeze soon filled in and we had a good downwind run to Heimaey. Arriving at just after midnight we found the harbour entrance interesting as we headed in the darkest of nights towards a port hand mark beneath an even blacker cliff. But the buoyage is good and we were soon alongside the fuel dock in the inner harbour. The harbour master was relaxed and very helpful, and once the diesel tank was full we moved to an adjacent pontoon.

In January 1973 Eldfell, a 200m volcanic peak next to the town, erupted and within hours had destroyed half the town and dramatically improved the harbour entrance, making it one of the most secure harbours in the country – until it erupts again, perhaps. Happily the fishing fleet were all in harbour after a storm and the entire population was evacuated overnight. I last climbed the volcano in July 1993 and it hadn't changed much – still hot spots underfoot, but lots more tourists.

The weather was still unusually unstable and so on 28 August we took the opportunity to jump onto the back of a northeasterly-moving low pressure system and use the fresh northeast winds to give us a flying start on the 560 mile passage back to Scotland. The decision was good, although a brief ridge saw us motoring for 12 hours before we met



Reykjavik



the southwest winds on the other side, and on the evening of 1 September we picked up a mooring at Loch Gairloch on the east side of the Minch.

Then we were back to a week of tidal gates and head winds until, on 9 September, we picked up a mooring in Craighouse on Jura where we met up with Richard and Alison Brunstrom, OCC, on *Vulcan Spirit* for a meal in the local pub. The next day the weather relented as a ridge of high pressure crossed the country, providing a brief period of northwest winds. We dropped the mooring at 0500 and caught the flood down the North Channel. By evening we were off Chicken Rock, and when the next front arrived early the next morning with 25 knots from the south, heavy rain and very poor visibility, we were only 4 miles from Puffin Sound. Navigating buoy to buoy on compass bearings up to Beaumaris reminded us of our sea school days, but by 1330 we were through the Swellies and into the dock at Port Dinorwic. Home again after a memorable, highly recommended ten week trip and another 2600 miles on the clock.

Some reflections

- This was a very 'doable' trip with short crossings and, given the time, plenty of good sheltered harbours to wait out poor weather.
- If circumstances had allowed, setting off a month earlier would have enabled us to include East Greenland on the trip.
- Stocking up in the UK with 12 weeks' food saved a fortune and meant we were not continually searching for produce. There were plenty of other ways to contribute to the local economy.

- Mobile phone coverage was excellent and tethering allowed us to have good internet access all the way around.
- The Icelandic met office – en.vedur.is – provided excellent, accurate forecasts.
- The *Arctic and Northern Waters* pilot suggested that some harbours were free – some were, but we always made enquiries to avoid being branded cheapskate yachties.
- All berthing was alongside tyre walls, so some big fenders and a plank made life easier.
- We met very few yachts, but it was encouraging to encounter four other OCC boats.
- An anti-clockwise circumnavigation is not the best in terms of passage planning, as it's against the prevailing currents and any northeast wind tends to be light at that latitude. It got us to where we wanted to be quicker than going south about, however, so no regret**s.**

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.

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LYDIA ACROSS THE TASMAN
Donald Begg

(Donald and his Bowman 48 Lydia *left Lymington, on England's south coast, in 2014, crossing to the Caribbean via the Cape Verde islands and continuing into the Pacific. They reached New Zealand in November 2016. A year later Donald was ready to move on...)*

Whangarei, 13–17 October

Lydia is in the water again. She has been refitted and serviced, her bottom has been pampered, caressed, and de-barnacled, and she has been lowered gently back into the Pacific. The Norsand Yard in Whangarei appear to have met every positive expectation. My thanks to Mark, the service manager from Falmouth, and to David, the hoist manager from Germany who carries off heavy-lift operations with a delicate touch.

Once in the water I motored her the couple of miles to the marina in the Town Basin in Whangarei, mildly surprised to stop all traffic at the bascule bridge with a word on the VHF, and secured her for a couple of days of storing and marine Mrs Mopping. The dirt ran off, and is still running off, in rivers. The town of Whangarei is light-industrial, but the paucity of its charm is compensated for by the friendliness and helpfulness of its people, as always in New Zealand. It's quiet and out-of-season still, but of course it's springtime, and the birds' dawn chorus is cacophonous. No *tuis** at the marina, but some very tuneful sort-of-blackbirds.

Lydia

I needed a new USB cable for my sat phone, having cleverly left the old one at home. The young lady at the phone shop near the marina, who knew her stuff, told me that my cable was

* A member of the avian honeyeater family, with handsome black and iridescent plumage and a noisy call which combines normal notes with cackles, clicks, wheezing and timber-like creaks and groans.

not a phone part and that I would need a specialist computer shop – "Try Beryl's in Tarewa Road". Well, I got instructions as to my route, and thought I wouldn't forget Beryl's even if it sounded more like a patisserie than a computer shop. Got there, looked around, no sign of Beryl's, now what do I do? By coincidence, the shop that I'm standing outside looks pretty techy. Look up ... see the name ... double-take: F. W. Barrel Technology. Friends divided by a common language! But I got my part and, as the young lady might have said, no worries.

I had lunch with Annie Hill, the redoubtable and charming 'Voyaging Annie', who is building herself a boat at Norsand Yard, and who had kindly agreed to keep an eye on *Lydia* during my absence over the European summer. Annie left Liverpool as a young girl to sail across the Atlantic, never came back, and has now covered over 170,000 miles. She has a fund of anecdotes and good advice, and used to write the column Blue *Water Letter* in *Yachting Monthly*. Her boat is 26ft, junk-rigged and will take her another couple of years to complete, after which she is quite capable of sailing it anywhere. Thanks for your help, Annie, and good luck with the project.

The weather is cool in Whangarei, 10°C at night, time to head north. I plan to sail for Opua tomorrow, taking a gentlemanly couple of days over it and anchoring somewhere at night.

Up to Opua, 17–18 October

After a long weekend in Whangarei the boat was cleanish and the fridge was not looking as idle as **it** had been, so ready to go. My appreciation to Mary Schempp-Berg, OCC Port Officer for Whangarei, who saw that I was there and made a point of saying hello.

On Tuesday morning I rather lazily motored the 15 miles down the river – there was wind, but **it** was fluky and drizzly. Once past Marsden Point I got sail up, made a tangle of the mainsail as I always do first time out, got it sorted, and finally had the bows pointing towards the Pacific. The sun came out, there was 20–25 knots of breeze on the quarter and, to plagiarise David Mitchell, *Lydia* came out of the river like a rat out of a drainpipe. What a difference a clean bottom makes! I had planned to stop at Tutukaka or, if the going was good, at Whangaruru, but the boat was revelling in the conditions, logging 7, 8, and even touching 9 knots, so we kept going for the 50 miles up from Marsden to Whangamumu, close to Cape Brett. I had anchored there on my way down six months earlier and thought it charming. It is a very sheltered, woody bay, five miles by forest track from the nearest road, and wonderfully isolated. The only signs of humanity are the ruins of an old whaling station. The calm and the birdsong are terrific, the water deep green. There was only one other boat there, a motor-cruiser wearing no colours, maybe a professional crew awaiting owner's instructions.

Wednesday morning, and disaster. I weighed anchor, put the engine into gear, and the propeller fell off (or so I thought). One moment I'm rejoicing in the remoteness of the location, and the next I'm coming to terms with a serious breakdown a long way from help. Well, the decision process wasn't difficult – there was nothing to gain by hanging around, so I got sail up and ghosted out of the bay towards Cape Brett, enough wind in the lee of the land for 3 or 4 knots of boatspeed. I telephoned Opua Marina which kindly agreed to have a boat ready to tow me in, provided it was before their closing time of 1700. Five or six miles to the Mammoth at Cape Brett, round his tail, and then a very long 25 mile beat up to Opua with 20–25 knots of wind on the nose,

The Mammoth at Cape Brett

my mood unsympathetic to the beauty of the Bay of Islands. I eventually got there at 1900, too late for the marina, but edged up the last bit of the river in very flukey wind conditions and managed to find a space not far from the marina in which to drop the pick. Just to improve my good humour it was race night for the local sailing club, and the race boats were buzzing around me wondering what page this bloke in his heavy cruiser could be on.

Chris Tibbs, in his safety briefing for ARC crews, has a saying that disasters are seldom as bad as they appear to be at first. He may or may not be right, but now that I had the leisure to look I found that it was the Aquadrive coupling between the gearbox and the propeller shaft that had broken, in the engine room, and that shaft and hopefully propeller were still in place – so probably no need for the expensive haul out that I had been dreading. On Thursday morning I was towed in, and the excellent engineer from Seapower was soon aboard and dismantling the coupling. The finger points at an engineer in French Polynesia who replaced the prop-shaft bearing but appears not to have fully tightened the bolts on the coupling. They had fallen out one by one, until the last one had to take all the strain, and sheared. The verdict from Seapower is that it should be repairable, but a new flange is needed and must first be located. Murphy's Law – it's a long weekend in NZ. It seems the flange will have to come from the US, hopefully by the end of the week. Bob McDavitt, weather router, tells me that I should have a weather window for Australia on Tuesday. But ... I'm unlikely at that stage to have a propeller that turns. Patience.

Whangamumu

Opua, 19 October – 5 November

Opua is a serious yachting centre but not much else. Paihia, down the road, is a pretty resort, not quite yet in season and limited in scope. The people are charming, the Bay of Islands is picture-postcard, but I've spent a lot of time here over the last year and I'm ready for something new. What proportion of a cruiser's existence is spent wrestling with cabin fever induced by breakdown or contrary weather?

But ... I have a small rented car and can get about. I've pottered up to the old whaling port of Mangonui, across North Island to Kaitai and Ahipara on the Tasman Sea, and back to Opua along the remote and rustic inter-coastal road. The land is green and beautiful after the spring rains – if one wished to be a farmer I can think of no better place. I've also walked the overland route to Whangamumu Bay, a steep hour and a half's hike each way over the hills from the nearest road (itself a clinker track), well worth it for the exercise, the views and the birdsong. There are lots of boats arriving from the Pacific islands at this time of year, and the marina is buzzy.

Tuesday the following week. The part has arrived, been fitted, tested, and the boat appears to be whole again. My thanks to Chris, the engineer at Seapower in Opua. He is the size and shape of a grizzly bear, with a ginger rasta hairstyle, a Ho Chi Min beard, and a lot of the old ink on the skin. He has done various bits on this boat and impresses me as a natural engineer. I could use him as crew. There is a depression coming over North Island, with a stiff wind from the northeast, backing to northwest – not good for Australia. This is likely to last until Saturday or Sunday, at which time I hope to be on my way.

Engineer Chris

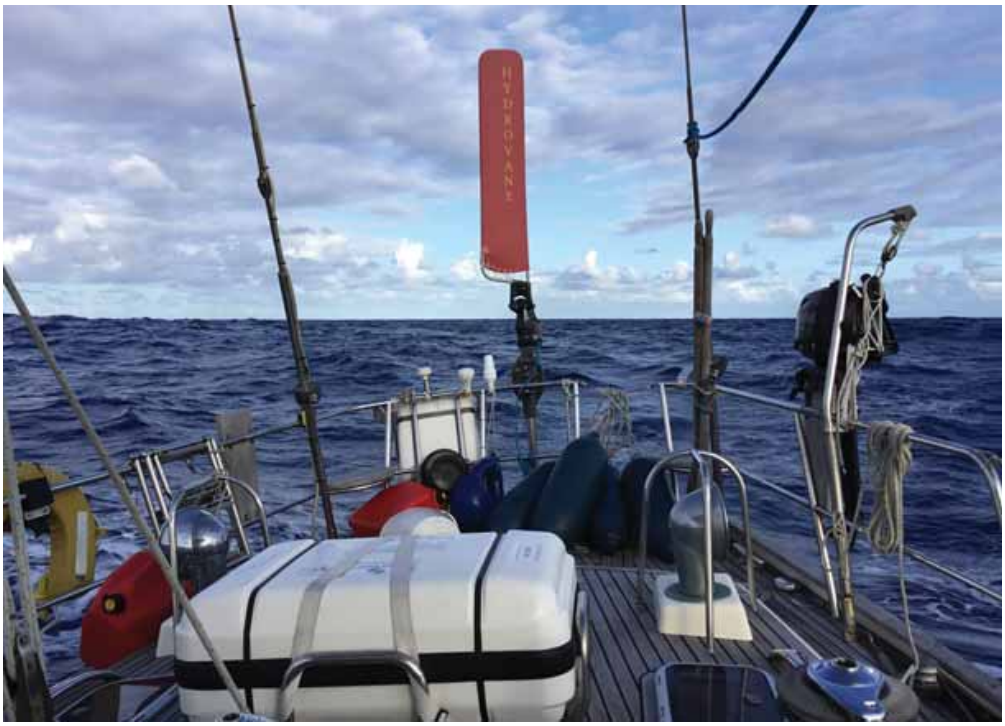
Passage to Bundaberg, –17 November

I have the green light from Bob McDavitt, weather router. The high pressure that has given us north winds for the last week is away to the east, the north wind will back to the southwest in the afternoon. There is then a deep depression well down over South Island which will give me strong northerlies the day after tomorrow for a 60 mile corridor which I can cross at right angles, then a nice high taking over and giving me southeast trades all the way to Bundaberg. Farewell NZ, and all the familiar sights like the Mammoth and Ninepin Rock. Three white sails up, and 7 knots on a grey afternoon.

Cathy, who looked after the boat during lay-up in Raiatea, had something of the witch about her. She said to me *"ne commence jamais un voyage le vendredi"*, it's certain bad luck. I believe her, I wouldn't have started on a Friday, this was a Sunday. But, three weeks ago I had launched the boat back into the water in Whangarei on Friday 13th. That can't be a problem, I had thought, I'm only taking her a couple of miles up the river to Whangarei Town Basin today, it's not the start of the voyage proper. Then I lost the Aquadrive coupling on the way up to Opua. Have I served my penance?

The depression hit me as forecast, not a big problem, north wind between 25 and 30 knots, but on the beam. But then an unexpected depression formed around Norfolk

Ninepin Rock



A touch of roughers in the Tasman

Island, giving me similar strength winds from the south for an additional couple of days. The first consequence was that I abandoned my thoughts of calling at Norfolk Island, which I had hoped to visit, as now I needed to get west and into the high. The wind itself was not a problem, but the seas were very steep, and on the quarter, so the boat was slewing and I had to slow her down to avoid a gybe or broach. For a while I was in what I think of as my storm rig, staysail only. The staysail does not set well with the wind abaft the beam, but it's steady, and the boat was comfortable at a modest (for the conditions) 5–6 knots.

At this stage, and after sterling performance all the way from Lymington, my autopilot failed. Luckily, and for this very circumstance, I have a Hydrovane as backup. But I had never really made friends with the Hydrovane, suspecting it of being too light for a heavy boat like a 48ft Bowman, and had lazily preferred the electronic immediacy of the autopilot. Here then came the most positive element of the voyage – the Hydrovane behaved impeccably from then on in varied conditions, suspicion waned and friendship blossomed. So off George, and on Hydro. I wanted to call him Hydra, but if you look at him from the cockpit he is definitely not a girl. His disadvantage, of course, is that he can't be used with an engine, so later on in light winds it was either sail slowly or hand-steer. Levity aside, I have to say that the sudden realisation that I was alone without an autopilot, 300 miles downwind from NZ and 1000 miles from Australia, was probably the most sobering moment of my sailing career. I am surprised in retrospect that I had not lost more sleep over the prospect in the past, and promise to keep it high on the priority list in the future.

Just as the wind was beginning to ease and the sky to clear, the port intermediate

shroud parted. I've no idea why – it wasn't under particular strain. The rigging was renewed by Berthon only three years ago, and it was surveyed and approved by the rigger in Whangarei. If that wasn't enough of a surprise, two days later the starboard intermediate also parted. Luckily, a Bowman has several strong stays backing each other up, and the running backstays have a similar run to the intermediates. I was careful not to put up too much sail, and the mast never showed any sign of distress.

Then, a more serious malfunction. The forward end of the boom is retained in the gooseneck by a nut which has in the past shown a tendency to work loose. I therefore make a point of checking it morning and evening and carry the appropriate tool in a cockpit locker, and recently it has remained nice and tight. Now, suddenly, the nut was rolling on the deck, and the boom was out of the gooseneck. There was no way that I was going to get it back in on my own at sea, so from now on the mainsail was out of action. The consequence was that we sailed most of the way from NZ to Aus under one foresail alone. It won't happen again. I shall have serious talks with a rigger and make sure that that nut is permanently secured in the future, with Araldite if necessary.

Singlehanded sailing is well and good, but it's nice to arrive!

The weather became sub-tropical, the sky was blue, the wind was in the right direction. There was the occasional dolphin, and the shearwaters had kept me company all the way. But the wind fell to 10 knots, and boat speed to 5, 4, occasionally 3 knots. Not a safety problem, but hard on the patience. This is why the voyage took 12 days when it should have taken 10 or less. Eventually, agonisingly, we crossed the shipping lanes, rounded Sandy Cape on Fraser Island, the wind freshened to 15 knots, and we clipped along the 50 miles of Hervey Bay at 6 or 7 knots under the yankee with morale on the up and land in sight.

We came up the Burnett River just before midnight. Port Control instructed me to anchor below the marina and await Customs in the morning, which suited me – I could feel a night's sleep coming up. I selected a spot to anchor, made my approach, put the engine into astern to take the way off her, and ... the engine lever jammed solid. Was this Neptune making a skewed offer of peace? He had kept his last laugh

until the last manoeuvre of the voyage, further out it would have caused me serious difficulty. I slept, and the marina boatman kindly towed me in in the morning. For the record, *Lydia* is not a boat that is thrashed. She is regularly and professionally serviced and maintained, and I do not skimp on cost. Oh, by the way, the joker valves on both loos failed during the voyage.

Friday morning in Bundaberg. The sun is shining, long trousers give way to shorts. The infamous Australian Customs are actually quite charming – I was even allowed to keep enough of the contents of the 'fridge to make lunch. Jason has removed the autopilot and taken it to his workshop, Gary has had an initial look at the engine lever and will be back on Monday, Colin will be along to look at the stays on Monday. A new chapter in the adventure begins. *Pace*, Neptune?

Bundaberg

I could have used some local advice when approaching Bundaberg, especially (inevitably) in the middle of the night. Unfortunately my e-mails to the OCC representative remained unanswered, as did the ones to the marina (the young lady who would normally have helped had a couple of days off).

One is constantly reminded before arriving in Australia that the immigration rules are stringent and the officials unforgiving. Both the *Pacific Crossing Guide* and the *Coral Sea Pilot* tell you not even to think about anchoring, but to proceed straight to the quarantine berth at Bundaberg marina and there to await Customs in hermetic isolation. Well, they're out of date – there is no quarantine berth. As mentioned above, I talked to Port Control on my way up the river and asked for guidance in identifying the berth. They told me not to worry but to anchor until morning, off the fairway and just downstream of the marina. This was easy, and most agreeable to me in the circumstances. In the morning I went into a normal berth in the marina, had lots of willing hands to take my lines, and was told to just stay on the boat until cleared. Not a problem. For the record, I should have checked Noonsite, they got it right.

Bundaberg claims to be the busiest port of entry for yachts on the east coast. The marina suffers a bit from river surge, but otherwise is comfortable, friendly and well-equipped. There is an abundance of technical expertise on hand, with the exception of a rigger – Colin Quinn lives and works 250 miles away and charges for his travelling time and cost unless he can combine several clients. Haul-out and lay-up facilities are excellent. There is a restaurant in the marina, another in nearby Burnett Heads, together with a good supermarket. There is a cheerful coterie of long-distance yachtsmen. Bundaberg is a pleasant, provincial town 9 miles away. Otherwise there is very little within 50 or more miles. I was disappointed to find that there is no local sailing area, unlike, say, the Bay of Islands. Lady Musgrave Island at the start of the Great Barrier Reef is a 50 mile sail and has no real anchorage. But hey, Brisbane is 5 hours away on the train and I'm going home for Christmas!

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FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Mark and Lynn Hoenke aboard *Roxy*

Pineapple Chow

Roxy spent the 2017 hurricane season at Power Boats in Trinidad, where Mark and Lynn learned this recipe from Jesse James, OCC Port Officer Representative for Chagaramus.

Ingredients

- 1 ripe (or almost ripe) pineapple
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ¼ cup finely chopped cilantro (coriander to most Brits)
- juice of one lime
- ¼ of a scotch bonnet pepper*, finely chopped (adjust according to personal heat tolerance)
- salt and black pepper

Peel the pineapple and cut out the eyes. Slice the fruit into rings and then cut each ring into chunks about 1½ inches wide. Combine the chunks with the garlic, cilantro, half the lime juice, half the chopped hot pepper, and a liberal sprinkling of salt and black pepper. Stir to mix thoroughly, or put in a plastic container with a secure lid and shake well.

Preparing pineapple chow

Taste and add more lime juice, hot pepper and/or salt to taste. The chow should have a nice balance of hot, sweet, salty and sour, with noticeable punch from the garlic and cilantro. Set aside for 20 minutes or so to allow the flavours to develop fully.

* Also known as Caribbean red peppers, these are members of the chilli family. Be warned!

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(taken from The Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy)

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A SAIL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR SAFER DOWNWIND CRUISING

Iain Simpson

(*Iain contributed to* Flying Fish *on several occasions between 2003 and 2014, first from his and Jan's Najad 460* Song of the Sea*, and latterly from their Najad 570,* Song of the Ocean. *Neither is this the first time he's written about the Simbo Rig, but it's obviously been refined since he last did so in 2010, not to mention that the OCC has gained nearly a thousand new members since then. For more information visit www.rhbell.com/simbo.*)

The Simbo Rig has been developed as a sail management system centred around the flying of identical 106% twin jibs with their higher cut clew. The system enables the short-handed yachtsman or woman to sail efficiently on all points of the wind with minimal foredeck work, controlled from the security of the cockpit. Simbo Rig – which is an acronym for Simple Bow Rig – may be of interest to cruisers who are not only sailing larger and more powerful yachts these days, but also undertaking longer passages, often involving many weeks at sea. The merit of the rig is that it enables the crew to sail dead downwind efficiently and safely without resorting to coloured sails, whilst retaining control of the working rig which is always on hand to make immediate course corrections to avoid collision or return upwind to retrieve a man overboard.

Twin jibs and mainsail work in harmony to produce maximum downwind drive

The system permits you to complete a passage, or season, with just the one suit of sails that remain rigged to meet your needs, no matter whether sailing to weather, bearing off to a reach or running dead downwind. Apart from the raising and stowing of the whisker poles, no further foredeck work is required and

The mainsail directs its wind around the mast into the weather jib, which redirects its total accumulation into its leeward twin

with in-mast mainsail and jib furling, one person can control the rig day and night, in fair or foul weather without needing to call upon off-watch crew – assuming of course, that the yacht is under the control of a reliable autopilot.

The identical jibs are hoisted up the twin grooves of a furling forestay on a single halyard. On the wind, the sails fly together with no appreciable additional wear over a solo jib. The jibs and in-mast furling mainsail in the photographs were constructed in Dimension-Polyant's Hydra Net® woven cloth, which is a hybrid of woven polyester with a spectra ripstop. On the wind, the twin jibs enable you to rest the upwind sail on its downwind partner to re-lead the sheet from outside to inside the cap shroud for

The twin jibs flying in tandem, with their own colour-coded sheets, fairleads and winches

The twin jibs present a powerful wall of sail downwind, which can instantly revert to upwind headsail trim on releasing the backed weather jib to leeward

a tighter sheeting angle. In the same way, you can also run an otherwise loaded jib car up the track without, in either case, incurring flogging sails or loss of boat speed. On tacking, the upwind leeward jib sheet is eased to rest on its downwind twin, to leave just the downwind sheet to release on coming about. Once through the wind the new downwind jib sheet captures its upwind partner and, trimmed to the new course, the upwind sheet takes over final tweaking. On reefing or striking the jibs, both sails furl together around the forestay in the same way as a solo jib. In strong winds, however, it may be preferable for a larger yacht with greater sail area which requires powered furling to furl the jibs from around the leeward bow, to enable the skipper to luff the sails and reduce the pressure on the furling mechanism, rather than furl them from across the foredeck directly into the wind. As both sails have their own pairs of sheets there is double the quantity in the cockpit, but this can be simplified by their being colour-coded.

No need for a leeward whisker pole unless wanting to gybe, when it can be rigged whilst the leeward sail is temporally secured by its weather sheet

The system excels when the yacht bears away onto a run. The twin jibs separate to their respective sides to create a powerful cloud of sail in tandem with the mainsail to power the yacht downwind. With the mainsail eased to 45° off the centre-line the following wind is directed around the mast into the windward jib from which, together with its own accumulated wind, it is redirected into the leeward jib, which would otherwise be blanketed by the mainsail. To gybe, simply haul and trim the mainsail onto the new course – the whisker poles and jib sheets remain unaffected.

Prior to bearing away onto a run one can raise the weather whisker pole on its boom-lift with attached fore and aft guys, and run the weather lazy sheets of the two jibs under the pole's retractable bolt. This enables the twin jibs to be separated immediately on coming onto a run. If remaining on that tack there is no need to hoist the leeward pole as it is the redirected wind from the windward jib that sets the sail. On subsequently requiring to gybe, the leeward pole can be set without loss of drive, by restraining the sail by its weather sheet whilst rigging the leeward pole on its boom lift with fore and aft guys, following which the sail's retention can be transferred back to the poled-out leeward sheet. A more relaxed approach to rigging the whisker poles is to furl away the jibs on bearing off onto a run, hoist the whisker poles, and then unfurl the sails to their respective side. However if running dead downwind – ie. with the true wind no more than 25° off the stern – the twin jibs will set without the poles by running the jib sheet cars forward on their tracks to tighten the sails' leeches down to cup the sails.

If hit by a squall one can immediately dump half the sail area by coming onto the wind to back the weather jib to join its leeward twin. The jibs can then be reefed under the lee of the mainsail before separating them again on returning to the run. If running in severe weather, when the mainsail has been struck in favour of the twin jibs, it is consoling to know that the remaining sail area can be reduced by half merely by backing the weather jib and continuing to run with both jibs poled out in tandem to leeward. Following on from this, the twin sails can either be reefed in unison or struck without incurring any foredeck work. The whisker poles can be retained on a reach until the apparent wind is approximately 60° off the bow, when the leeward sheets are released by withdrawing the restraining bolt at the pole's

Reefed twin jibs. Note the five tell-tails streaming off the leeward jib leech

Speed 12 knots, speed over ground 10·6 knots, true wind speed 34·8 knots, apparent wind speed 25 knots

claw via a line run to the inboard end of the pole. The poles can then be stowed up the mast or left in situ for later.

The Simbo Rig can be retained, albeit reefed, without undue anxiety up to gale force. I experienced this sailing a Najad 460 between the Azores and England some 15 years ago, when we were caught out by a 50 knot squall under full Simbo Rig. It lifted the yacht onto a plane, but she continued sailing dead downwind at 15·5 knots without any inclination to broach or deviate off course. Since then I have sailed all three of the yachts I have owned – the Najad 460, a Najad 511 and my current Najad 570 – through several gales with confidence from the safety of the cockpit.

As there is no significant pressure on the mast from the leeward pole, and the main boom opposes the weather pole at only 45°, downwind rolling is reduced to a minimum. The main attributes of the Simbo Rig, however, are that it permits the skipper to sail on all points of the wind with the one suit of sails with minimal foredeck work and most importantly, power downwind without compromising the working rig which is always at hand to deal with unforeseen circumstances.

On yachts with forward lowers the whisker poles are jointly stowed up a forward-mounted mast track and lowered like wings to pre-marked settings on their boom lifts,

The twin jibs become dominant sails, lifting the bow and creating course stability

The Simbo Rig without whisker poles or need of foredeck work. Note the apparent wind angle on the ensign compared with that on the courtesy flag, which indicates the additional flow of wind accelerating off the mainsail

with fore and aft guys which ensure the poles are at right angles to both the yacht and mast. For yachts like the Najad 570 the poles are manually stowed up the mast, and subsequently rigged between the fore and aft lowers by attaching the inboard end to the hinged male mast fitting. In either case, carbon poles are to be preferred, and should be 50% of the length of the jib's foot measured from tack to clew.

For further information, including articles on the Simbo Rig in the international yachting press, visit www.rhbell.com/simbo. You will also find a video of the twin jibs being unfurled to their respective whisker poles in 10 knots of true wind speed, from which you can see the immediate acceleration in the yacht's speed once the jib is set.

The leeward whisker pole secured by a boom lift plus fore and aft guys, the jib sheeted by a red running sheet. Its lazy blue partner crosses via the weather pole in preparation for sailing on the wind

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CÉRÈS THROUGH THE RUSSIAN INLAND WATERWAYS, Part 1

Thierry J-L Courvoisier

(*Thierry is a Swiss astrophysicist whose main area of research is in the physics of active galactic nuclei. He is currently president of the European Academies Science Advisory Council.*

Following an Atlantic cruise taking in the Cape Verde islands, French Guyana, Cuba, Bermuda and the Azores, in 2014 Thierry and Barbara sailed Cérès*, their Centurion 40S, to the Baltic where she has been ever since – see* Cérès in the Southern Baltic, Flying Fish 2014/2, *and* More Land than Sea – A Cruise in Finnish Waters, Flying Fish 2016/1.)

Cérès, our 40ft Centurion 40S, had spent some years in the Baltic Sea. We had sailed along its south coast (Poland and the Baltic States) and in the Finnish archipelago, enjoying the history of the region and nature in the latter (see *Flying Fish* 2014/2 and 2016/1). *Cérès* wintered in Helsinki in 2015/16, after which Barbara and I wondered whether we could exit the almost closed water system of the Baltic while discovering new territories.

Some years earlier we had enjoyed a few winter days in Tromsø, a large Norwegian city at 70°N with an important university, and found the light of the Arctic winter fascinating. It would be an interesting place to spend some more time, and I might be able to obtain a visiting position in an institute of the university. I therefore developed contacts in the Arctic University in Tromsø, and arranged an academic stay as invited professor for the winter semester 2016/17.

Looking at a European chart one sees that the most natural route between the eastern part of the Baltic and the Norwegian Sea leads along the east of the Scandinavian peninsula via Saint Petersburg, the great Russian lakes, the Belomorsk Canal, the White Sea, and up the Barents Sea to the northern tip of the European continent, from where one moves south again to Tromsø. Some elements of family history, related to Peter the Great and the origin of the Russian Northern Fleet, added to the attraction of this path. The route, without being exactly among the most popular cruising itineraries, has been sailed a few times in the last years, including by *Chamade* in 2012 and by Jarlath Cunnane aboard *Northabout* (*Flying Fish* 2013/1).

The OCC maintains a presence in Saint Petersburg through Port Officer Representative Vladimir Ivankiv, who is making considerable efforts to open Russian waters to cruising yachts. He already covers the Russian part of the Baltic sea, but also aims to make the route to the Barents Sea accessible to foreign vessels. Contacts with Vladimir in the months preceding our passage paved the way to obtaining the necessary visas and authorisations, and he also provided the required invitation and informed us of the conditions the Russian authorities imposed on those undertaking the voyage. These include, in principle, that a pilot is aboard for the whole passage, but it is interpreted lightly for sailing boats and translated into the requirement that we have one Russian crew member. We thus looked for and found Masha, a young student from Arkhangelsk, who took this opportunity to discover more of her country and culture. Masha is a French and English translator, a perfect combination for our


22°E
28°E
34°E
N
FINLAND
Valaam
Lake Onega
62°N
Konevets
Voznesenye
Lake Ladoga
Svir River
Turku
Kotka
Helsinki
Haapasaari
Kronstadt
St Petersburg
Oreshek
60°N
Gulf of Finland
Fort Konstantin
Shlisselburg
Neva River
Tallinn
Baltic Sea
HIIUMAA
ESTONIA
RUSSIA
SAAREMAA
22°E
28°E
34°E
58°N

French-speaking crew. Her presence proved indispensable, as contacts with all sorts of authorities along the route were to be numerous, be it only to operate bridges and locks, and none of them spoke English.

Professional duties made it impossible to leave Helsinki before 10 July, well after the Summer Solstice, on a day that started in as heavy a fog as one can imagine. We left harbour as soon as visibility was sufficient for safe crossing of the heavy ferry traffic between Tallin and Helsinki, after which settled winds from the west gave a few pleasant sailing days to Kotka, the last Finnish city before the Russian border.

Before entering Russian waters one must clear out of the European Union. This is done at Haapasaari, a small island 15 miles from Kotka where Finnish officials do the paperwork efficiently. The Russian authorities had to be informed of our approach 24 hours in advance, which Vladimir did. The Finnish officers clearing us out also informed their Russian colleagues of our impending arrival in their waters. We had been instructed to cross the Finnish-Russian border at mark Number 16, and to call the Russian coast guard on Channel 16 shortly before reaching the mark. Our call remained unanswered but we proceeded nonetheless.

We still had some 80 miles to sail eastwards in the Gulf of Finland to reach Kronstadt, a small city on an island 20 miles northwest of Saint Petersburg. We left Haapasaari in the late afternoon with the last of the westerlies, and sailed through a night of absolute calm lit by the beautiful colours of a sunset that ends in a sunrise. The strong and rainy easterlies that had been predicted reached us just few miles short of Kronstadt, ensuring a cold, wet arrival in Russia. Dykes extend from the coast on either side out to the island, leaving only a narrow opening in front of Fort Konstantin, just outside the city. Heavy doors can be seen on either side of the opening, which can be closed if weather conditions cause a surge in the water level of the eastern Baltic that could threaten Saint Petersburg.

The basin used by the authorities in Fort Konstantin is small, poorly protected from east winds, ill-equipped to moor a yacht, and generally most unpleasant. It was the first of many uncomfortable berths along our route. The entry procedure was somewhat

On the eastern (Russian) waters of the Gulf of Finland, en route to Kronstadt

The port authorities' basin at Fort Konstantin near Kronstadt

lengthy, but the officers friendly and helpful. Vladimir had given them all necessary details about our trip, and customs and the coast guard had the corresponding forms ready for us to fill. No payment was required. Paperwork done we tied nearby in Fort Konstantin, where we met Masha, our young Russian crew and interpreter.

We visited Kronstadt in pouring rain before sailing 20 miles the following day to Saint Petersburg Central River Yacht Club. We sailed east and northeast through thick brown waters, in southwest winds of force 4–7 and rain, following well-marked channels used by a heavy traffic of cargo ships and tourist hydrofoils flashing by in heavy black smoke. Vladimir had indicated that we should look for the wall of the harbour when approaching, but rather than seeing the harbour, a bridge under construction was conspicuous on our path. The construction work not being mentioned on any of our charts, we were happy when Vladimir indicated by phone that we had enough clearance to sail under it. It was the first time Masha had set foot on a sailing boat, and though moderately enjoyable it did not contribute much to making Masha love sailing. Our crew was completed in Saint Petersburg when Nicolas, a friend from Switzerland, met us. Nicolas is an excellent sailor and was to be on board for the entire passage to Norway.

Saint Petersburg is a wonderful city enjoyed by a tremendous number of tourists. We did visit the sights for a couple of days, but concentrated on meeting old friends and preparing for the coming trip. Vladimir provided us with a VHF radio (frequencies differ from those of international maritime traffic), and verified both that we had the required documentation and that, with Masha's help, we were able to understand it. He also gave us a number of contacts along the route. Surprisingly Vladimir did not hand us any documents stating that we had paid the dues for the locks, bridges and canals, nor any official passage authorisation papers. He simply stated, and was proven right during the following weeks, that all necessary paperwork had been done, authorisations obtained and required sums paid, and that our passage was expected along the route we had provided in advance.

Cérès' crew. From left to right, Nicolas, Barbara, Thierry and Mashav

The first leg of our journey started at midnight on 20 July. The mandatory Saint Petersburg pilot, organised by Vladimir as part of the arrangement, arrived at the boat, as expected. Before leaving he described the route and the procedures to motor through the city bridges, and we slipped our lines at 0100 to be ready when the bridges open at 0200. What a sight! Sliding in front of the lit palaces of the city, during the night with a hint of light left in the north and the moon in the south. By 0600 we were motoring up the Neva River through the city suburbs, less glamorous but still in a reasonable shape. We left our pilot on the bank and continued towards the next bridge on our own.

A bridge opens on the Saint Petersburg palaces

The Hermitage Palace illuminated as we motor past

The last bridge on the Neva River before reaching Shlisselburg and Lake Ladoga is a railway bridge that opens only between 1600 and 1800. We had to motor as fast as possible to be there in time, sailing against a strong current and a strengthening headwind. We arrived just in time. Masha established communication and the bridge opened to the required height, which obviously had been communicated in advance. Arriving in Shlisselburg in cold, wet and windy conditions that evening was no fun – what had looked on the chart as a possible shelter was in fact a derelict dike, no pontoon or quay was to be seen, and the port authorities were unhappy to see a yacht arrive without a proper pilot. We were finally directed to a floating crane where we understood we could tie up. Lots of rusting steel, but good fenders and lines allowed

Cérès moored alongside a floating crane in Shlisselburg

for safe berthing in the prevailing conditions. The city was drab. Some of the wooden buildings were partly derelict, others in decaying concrete of the 1960s, a few of them abandoned. Trees often grew close to the walls and windows, adding a gloomy touch to the sight. The whole city had a sad and hopeless feel.

The fortress of Oreshek lies on an island two or three miles from Shlisselburg towards Lake Ladoga. There was no way to visit with *Cérès* in the absence of a place to tie up, but there is a ferry service. The island has been used as a fortress for many centuries, and was a strongpoint of the Soviet resistance to the Nazi invasion during the Second World War – one of those places which were key to the Nazi's defeat in Russia. Reading *Kaputt* by Curzio Malaparte gives some idea of war conditions in and around Leningrad, and of the suffering and efforts endured by Soviet people during the war. This is remembered in the fortress by a monument in Soviet flamboyant style in the middle of the ruins of the church that once stood at the centre of the fortress. The ensemble of the black monument within the bare red brick ruins is deeply moving. It reminded us that the victory against Nazism owed much to Soviet efforts. The Russian Orthodox establishment is seemingly battling now to get its hands back on the church. They want to move the monument out of the ruins and rebuild a church or monastery, to which the local people object. Indeed, the present arrangement is a vivid illustration of a time of acute fighting in which the whole local population paid a heavy toll.

The fortress was also a prison in which the tsars incarcerated dissidents, as happened in the 1820s when Tsar Nicholas I imprisoned the Decembrists there. That part of the detention facilities can be visited. The Soviets kept the tradition of using the island as a prison, and developed the detention facility for what must have been ugly practices. Indeed, part of it was called 'the menagerie' because there were no walls inside, just wired fences, giving inmates no privacy whatsoever. Those days are past, and now the island is visited by Russian tourists and a few from abroad, who arrive from Saint Petersburg on fast hydrofoils for a couple of hours on site.

The monument to the memory of the Soviet war effort at Oreshek

The day of our visit to Oreshek the weather was brilliant. The forecast for the next day was not so nice, but it did promise some pleasant sailing while moving north on Lake Ladoga. Things were to turn out differently, however. The sun shone between 0600 and 0700 while we prepared the boat, but fog appeared just as we were ready to sail. Radio contacts had warned us that conditions on the lake could be dramatic, with an operator questioning us on the maximum wave height that *Cérès* can tolerate – a somewhat disconcerting question when approaching a lake that is large (more than 100 square miles) but no ocean, and in winds expected not to exceed force 5–6.

The current around the fortress was strong, around 4 knots, making for slow progress in the channel that led to the open waters of the lake. The fog lifted, but rain set in as the wind kept blowing from the north, the direction we were heading to reach Konevets, an island some 70 miles away. We motor-sailed for the first nine hours in cold, wet weather, but conditions eased towards the end of the day giving us four hours of sailing close to the wind. As we approached the island from the south it became quiet, with some wind left under a grey sky on flat waters. The island is home to a monastery, the light blue domes of which shone above the grey of the sea and green of the forest as we approached. We dropped anchor in 4·5m and enjoyed the endless cool calm of the evening.

Next morning military ships brought a host of people, whom we later identified as pilgrims, to a shabby wooden quay. We disembarked on the beach using our dinghy and started to make our way to the monastery. On the beach we were greeted by officials requiring that Barbara and Masha wore skirts and covered their heads, while men had to wear long trousers. So equipped we walked to the monastery, an ensemble of buildings around the white church under its blue domes. There are two churches in the central building, one on the ground floor, richly decorated and one above in lighter tones. The lower of these spaces can be heated and is used during the winter, while the top one is used during the warmer months. All the people who had been brought by the military boats were there, mainly women. A liturgy that seemed to have begun long before our arrival, and that was to continue long after our departure, was proceeding. Priests and monks were singing in deep, strong voices while parading in rich robes of gold, white and dark colours, wafting generous quantities of incense smoke towards the standing crowd. We did not understand the meaning of the ceremony, but found the voices and the show beautiful and impressive. It was to be the only time we were to see the singing priests and monks, who usually remain hidden behind the iconostasis*.

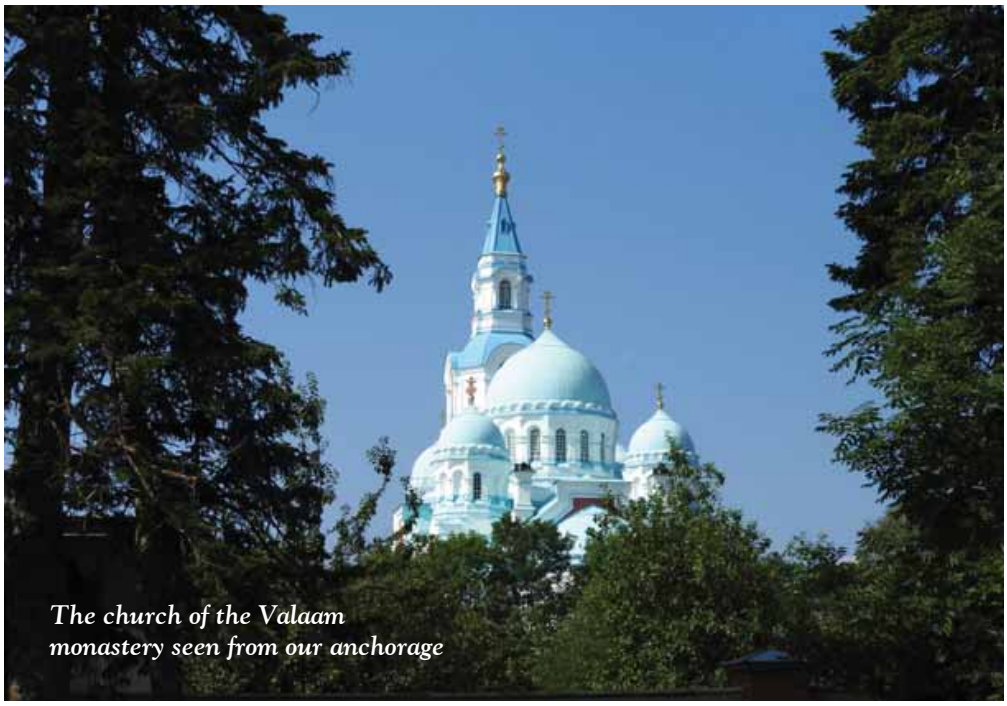
Towers and domes from our anchorage at Konevets

Approaching the Konevets monastery

Our friend Nicolas spends many of his holidays in Russia, most often climbing in exotic mountain ranges, and he thus developed a friendship with some young people from Saint Petersburg who were spending the summer camping on the north shore of the lake. Since the weather was calm we decided to visit their camp. This caused some stir within the authorities that were following our progress as it involved an unannounced stop some 30 miles from our declared route, but this seemed manageable for 24 hours. There were some 30 people camping there, the youngest a few months old and the oldest more than 80. They were many miles from the nearest village, road or shop. All had travelled by dinghy or kayak from the nearest point – some miles away – where cars could approach the lake, bringing all the equipment needed to keep them alive, dry, and for some of them working, for several weeks. They had built all the infrastructure on the spot, and would dismantle it when leaving. This included an 'office' – an open space with a wooden floor and protected by a tarp, which housed a large number of laptops on improvised tables. An internet connection provided them with access to the world. Life seemed pleasant on the sunny day we spent there, children playing, men building and women tending the cooking fires.

The following day we sailed to Valaam, a monastery on an island which forms part of an extended archipelago in the northern third of the lake. We carefully entered the narrow, shallow fjord that leads to the monastery, far too slowly, according to the captain of the hydrofoil which entered behind us to discharge a load of pilgrims at the pier. We dropped anchor some way past the pier, a spot not quite to the liking of an official who had little idea of swinging space around an anchor. The sky was bright blue. Seen from our deck the monastery rose above the trees of a thick forest, its walls

* In Eastern Christianity an iconostasis is a wall of icons and religious paintings which separates the nave of a church from the sanctuary.



The church of the Valaam monastery seen from our anchorage

dark red crowned by light blue onions. We joined a crowd of monks and pilgrims on the shore and walked up the hill to the main building. The monastery has the same structure as in Konevets – two churches stand one above the other, the summer one on the top. Monks hidden by the iconostasis were singing as we visited, beautiful, luminous, low voices again following endless liturgies. The pilgrims departed in the late afternoon, leaving monks of all ages moving around the island, some by boat speeding by *Cérès*. The presence of a white yacht hoisting a Swiss flag seemed to be purposely ignored by all, a trait that we were to note more and more as we moved out of the routes sometimes followed by tourists.

The light on the evening of our second day was so gorgeous that after an extensive walk on the island we decided to reschedule our departure for the Svir River. Rather than waiting until next morning we left as the sun slowly sank into the trees. The narrow fjord was like a mirror in golden light as we left. We sailed east along the archipelago in the descending darkness, seeing no signs of life on the small islands draped in forest other than a bonfire here and there. We turned south after some hours, passing through a strait between islands lit by two lighthouses, aiming south for the mouth of the Svir River some 70 miles away. Arriving there the following afternoon we first found an isolated red and white clear water mark, the low shore barely visible in the distance, and entered a marked channel as little by little a marsh appeared on either side. It was only several miles further on that trees could be seen, indicating the sides of what had become recognisable as a river. But for a small working ship that had approached the channel as we did, and stopped there in the middle of nowhere, we were completely alone in an infinitely calm landscape.

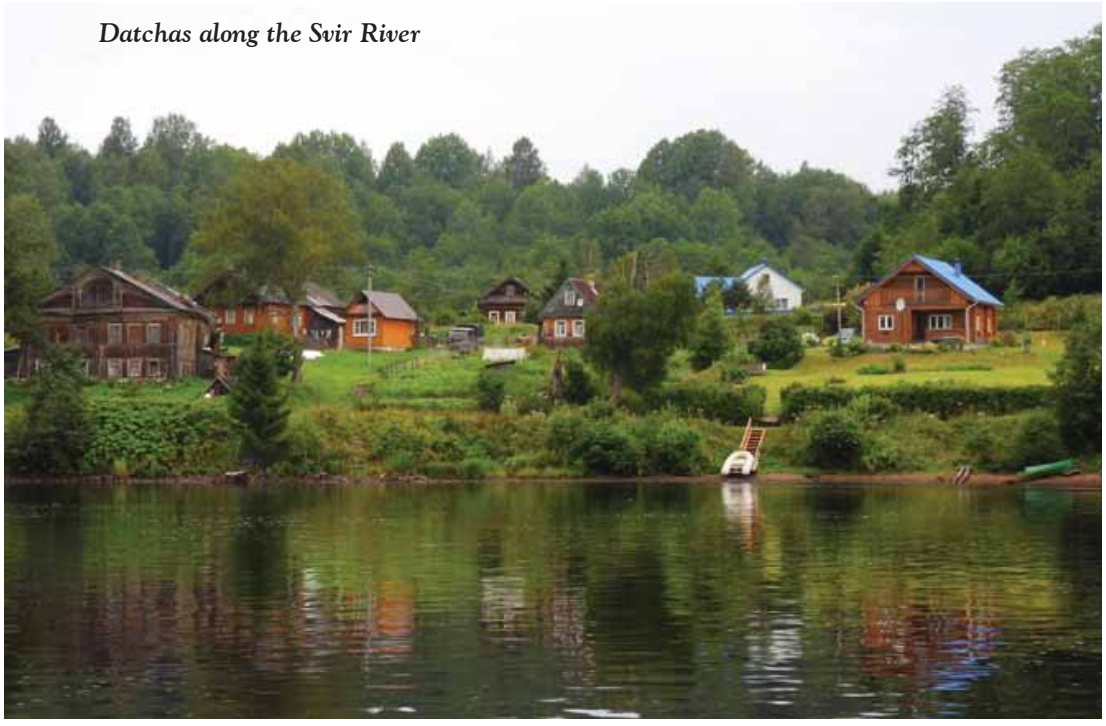
Our charts indicated what I imagined would be a town or at least a village some miles up the river. I had planned to stop there for the night, but only a few scattered

houses could be seen – no pier, no quay, no place to tie a boat even for a few minutes. The shores were shallow, unsuitable for a sailing boat. We therefore pushed on, alone on the broad river now surrounded by thick forest, to reach a place marked on the chart as a possible anchoring spot. Nothing there but marshes and forests – no sign of human presence. The current was strong, with a fresh breeze blowing upstream. It was difficult to know whether wind or current would win to stabilise *Cérès* at anchor, and where we would rest once the anchor was laid. We had to try several times before being reasonably satisfied that *Cérès* would spend the night in sufficient depth.

It was to be a perfect evening with drinks, food, light, warmth, quietness, a passing cargo ship every few hours, the sound of the wind on the nearby reeds. In the middle of the short night I realised that we were slowly drifting away from where we had stopped in the late afternoon, so stood watch until morning. When we lifted the anchor we understood – it had caught a heavy sunken tree trunk, which was bulky enough to hold us but not quite massive enough to prevent any drift. Once freed from the trunk we continued motoring upriver through endless thick forest for the whole day, only seeing the occasional *datcha*. Few people were seen on the shore or around the houses, and to our surprise they made every effort to avoid noticing the white boat passing by. Only children would make happy signs as we passed.

We stopped for another short night at a deserted resort on the riverside. After some hesitation, apparently because tourist ships might arrive, we were shown a barge alongside which we could tie for the night. Deserted log houses were organised around a large, completely empty, restaurant where we had a meal. Stretching our legs after 2½ days on board was a pleasure, even if the surroundings felt like a sterile, empty resort for wealthy but non-existent Russian tourists.

Datchas along the Svir River



Motoring up the Svir River
through the endless Russian forest

A further day of motoring upstream led to another isolated anchorage, in an elbow of the river out of the current. A chapel could be seen on the shore and some houses in the distance, to and from which a fast, light motorboat moved at times. But here, as elsewhere, nobody approached us, and we spent another night in the quiet of the endless Russian forest. It was to be yet another day of motoring before we reached an area where some human activity took place, old timber industries flanking the river before we reached a lock and a bridge. We waited at anchor in front of the bridge for it to be opened and the lock made ready. Masha was again hard at work on the radio conversing with the various officials.

With these obstacles behind us another hour or so led us to Voznesenye, where the Svir River exits Lake Onega, the second largest lake in Europe. Finding a spot to tie *Cérès* needed another round of communication with various officials. We were told to tie alongside two motor boats which had already seen many years of use, inhabited by elderly men. The boat owners, however, warned us that they would leave in late afternoon as strong thunderstorms were expected and the place was not sheltered. We were then to tie to a half-stranded steel barge, despite having barely enough water under our keel. While waiting for the storm we went to the supermarket, the first since Shlisselburg, a necessary stop after many days living off the boat's resources. The two men helped us carry our groceries back, a welcome gesture as the supermarket was quite some way down the river.

When leaving the two men warned us that, whereas our boat would probably be safe during the storm, we should watch for groups of young people who used the spot to drink significant amounts of alcohol and could become aggressive. And indeed, as clouds approached, so did some ten or fifteen mostly young people carrying large plastic bottles of a colourless liquid that was most probably not water. Thinking that the best way to deal with the situation was to engage with them, I went on deck and attempted to start a conversation. But either they did not speak English or they did not want to talk with me, or a combination of both, and the dialogue never got off the ground. I went on insisting, however, to the point that after a while they left. The storm did not materialise beyond some wind and rain, and we enjoyed a quiet evening and night.

To be continued...

FROM THE GALLEY OF … Helen Norris aboard *Island Drifter*

Tuna Fagioli (serves two)

Quick and easy to prepare, this is a real store-cupboard standby. It is low in calories (under 300 per serving) yet is filling and full of flavour. Like many dishes, it tastes even better the following day – should any survive that long!

Ingredients

- 100g tin of tuna in olive oil, undrained (though see below)
- 400g tinned cannelloni beans, drained
- half a red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
- juice of half a lemon
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- flat-leaf parsley, torn (if available)
- rock salt and freshly-ground pepper
- 2 large ripe tomatoes, sliced

Put everythting except the parsley and tomatoes in a bowl. If you can't get tuna in olive oil but only in brine, drain it but add a glug of good olive oil to the bean mixture.

Mix and leave to settle for at least 30 minutes. Garnish with fresh parsley and serve with sliced tomatoes sprinkled with rock salt and freshly ground pepper.

How good one feels when one is full – how satisfied with ourselves and with the world! People who have tried it, tell me that a clear conscience makes you very happy and contented; but a full stomach does the business quite as well, and is cheaper, and more easily obtained.

Jerome K Jerome, *Three Men in a Boat*

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IN SEARCH OF NEW CHALLENGES
Linda Crew-Gee

(*Linda attained Full Member status in 2017 after six years as an Associate, by sailing thousands of miles in the Pacific with Pete Hill aboard his 33ft junk-rigged catamaran* Oryx. *It was not her first taste of the ocean, however. In late 2013 she left New Zealand to sail round Cape Horn to the Falkland Islands aboard STS* Tecla – *see* Flying Fish 2016/2 – *but at 25m that vessel exceeded OCC limits. This is the tale of a lifestyle change and an altogether smaller boat...*)

With Pete Hill aboard Oryx

At the end of November 2016 I packed my bags and cast off from my London houseboat where I had lived for the previous thirty years. At the beginning of that year I had returned from Croatia to London with the firm intention of finding a job by April. Soon I received an offer that could not be refused, but rejected it on realising that deep inside I did not want to work. I wondered what I really did want. Soon the answer came in the form of an e-mail from Annie Hill in New Zealand asking me if I wanted to sail around the world with Alan. Although I did not know much about Alan and his boat, and nor did I plan to circumnavigate the globe, I knew I wanted to go. My life suddenly took a different turn.

By chance I came across some verses that resonated within me. The first one was part of *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* by the Irish poet WB Yeats, which includes the lines:

> I will arise and go now, for always night and day
> I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
> While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
> I hear it in the deep heart's core.

There were also the lyrics of one of the Arctic Monkeys' songs:

> This is how you are
> Or have to be
> In a decadent city
> At the time of greed.

I realised that my love for London was gone. Constant destruction of its soul had become painful to watch and I wanted to leave. At the same time, the pressure of needing more money intensified. A trivial episode with a bag of garden compost started me thinking 'Why do I need more money, why should I work to buy things that I do not need and without which I can live – like compost?'. I made a profound and lasting decision not to work any more. It turns out that my life change was brought about by a purchase (or not) of a bag of compost.

Closing a chapter

I met up several times with Alan to firm up the plan – we would sail around New Zealand for three to four months and if everything was okay on board, we would go around the world starting from Borneo. I hardly could wait for this to happen and immediately started getting rid of most of my worldly possessions. The most difficult was to part with around 100 pairs of shoes! Many of them held precious memories and I knew that if I could give them to charity, I would be free to leave. In some ways it was symbolic – my life on a hard ground was over, and for a new life at sea I did not need high-heeled shoes!

Disposing of things was cathartic. It represented the closing of a chapter in my life, but also the beginning of a new chapter where there was no room for many possessions. I moved on mentally and emotionally, even feeling physically much lighter. I was very happy to be left with only 130 kilograms of personal luggage (including a bicycle) to be transported to my parents' home in Croatia.

Ready to go and elated, I sent Alan a message and received an unexpected and brief answer: 'Sorry, but I have to cancel everything'. What a shock! I was without money, work or suitable shoes and clothes. I had a one-way ticket to New Zealand and no entry visa. I sank deep, wondering what to do. My dream was over.

A friend, seeing me so upset, suggested that I go back to work for a year, but I rejected this. The decision to change my life had not been easy to make and had required huge amounts of energy at all levels, and if I returned to work I did not think it would be possible for me to generate so much energy and determination again. I decided that I would not change or question my decision, and that I would go to New Zealand anyway.

Whangari Heads from Mount Aubrey

Roller-coaster

After this episode I devised my own 'manifesto' – to create new friendships, buy my own boat, convert it to junk rig, learn to sail it, write about it, and then sail it wherever the sea took me. I emailed Annie and Alan asking for help. They both responded, and within hours five people got back to me, willing to help with accommodation and/or sailing. I could not believe it. I had suddenly found myself in an even better position than before – life had suddenly turned for better!

Excited about this development, I wanted to spend more time in New Zealand with these generous and hospitable people. I applied for an extended-stay visa which I received very quickly. I was now over the moon and realised I would have plenty of time to meet the goals in my manifesto. I asked Annie to continue searching for a boat for me, and soon there was another e-mail with a link for the boat. It said: "You did ask!"

In disbelief I looked at the pictures of a tiny, sweet and gorgeous sailboat, an irresistible beauty. I called the owner in NZ who had built her some 40 years ago and had owned and cared for her ever since. I told him that I was buying her and asked him to look after her for me until I arrived. A new adventure had started!

Freshly painted and launched

Soon I left London, my heart filled with happiness from the beautiful life I had lived there, appreciating the wonderful friends I was leaving behind but at the same time excited about the new life waiting for me in the southern hemisphere and enchanting New Zealand. On arrival in New Zealand I had no fixed plans – everything was open. This suited me perfectly because I could catch every opportunity when it appeared. I lived in the small, quiet village of Stillwater in the suburbs of Auckland, with my wonderful host and new friend Roger. Without him life would certainly have been different and much more and difficult.

New friends

Roger's always-present help was incredible and of great importance, and I soon realised that he was one of the nicest people I had ever met. He drove me to many beautiful places. To celebrate my arrival Roger had organised a welcome party, and to my surprise more than 20 junk rig members and friends turned up. I struggled to find anything suitable to wear in my mainly sailing gear wardrobe, but managed to buy a colourful outfit and a new pair of shoes – old habits die hard! I was very happy to have the opportunity to talk and laugh with so many new friends. I even drank a glass of rum in the early hours of the morning.

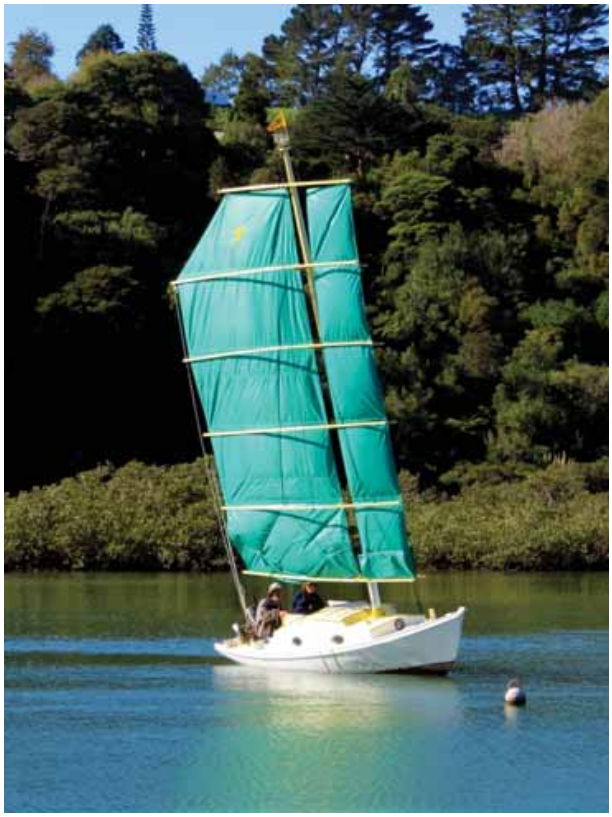
That evening set the tone of my new sailing life in New Zealand, and was important to everything that followed. During the first month I went aboard numerous boats, met many extremely friendly and dear people, participated in several regattas and sailed over 1000 miles, not always in the best weather!

A masterpiece

As for the small wooden sailing boat I bought while I was still in London, she turned out to be a Buzzard Bay 14 (actually 17ft LOA), a masterpiece by one of the greatest and most famous designers, the legendary L Francis Herreshoff. She is called *Francis H*. When I first saw her, hidden in the yard under an olive tree in Kerikeri, I was even more convinced that our union was meant to happen, despite the distance. Mr Murray, who built *Francis H* in 1974, had invested a lot of effort in restoring his pet boat. I spent a few wonderful days with him and his family sanding her hull and painting her. Then she was transported to Stillwater, where I soon launched her.

Sitting in her cockpit when she floated I was overwhelmed with joy. Little trickles of water came through

her planking but nothing like as much as I had been warned might happen. She was solidly and tightly built and within twelve hours there was no water coming through at all. Her charming lines and the grace with which she floated delighted me, as well as my first glass of wine on her deck at sunset.



Many passers-by stopped to admire her beautiful lines, which made me very proud. Soon I had ordered all the materials for the construction of the mast, and Pete had pulled out of his secret repository green sail material that soon became *Francis*'s sail. But that's another story...!

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sifting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the Western stars...'

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Ulysses*

FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Tim Bridgen, aboard *Marionette*

Pollock chip shop style

Pollock is beginning to be viewed as a viable alternative to cod, which it indeed is, though it suffers from the fact that its flesh is not as bright white as cod and is not as firm and flakey. It is also slightly more 'fishy' than many British palates are entirely comfortable with. Light salting is miraculous in remedying all of these – particularly the tendency to be slightly mushy.

Ingredients

- pollock fillet
- plain flour
- salt and pepper
- one egg
- oil for shallow frying

Rinse the pollock fillet and pat dry. Place skin side down and sprinkle very course salt over the flesh – you are aiming to cover it completely but quite thinly. Leave somewhere cool for no more than 10 minutes and then rinse it very thoroughly with running water to get every last crystal off. After patting dry you can treat it exactly as you would cod, but this recipe is for a boat-friendly batter substitute.

Season some plain flour with salt and pepper and put on a plate. Beat an egg and pour it onto another plate (this assumes that boat plates have a decent lip). Season the pollock with pepper only, then lay it down on each side in the flour, then the egg, then the flour again. Put it in the 'fridge for half an hour on a clean plate. Fry in a very little oil until golden brown on both sides.

Potato and pak choi rissoles (makes four)

I'm not sure these are actually rissoles, but the pak choi makes them taste completely different from bubble and squeak. We started making these because cabbage is rare in the tropics but pak choi or something similar seems to be available everywhere. The taste was a revelation!

Ingredients

- 4 potatoes
- 1 onion, sliced
- olive oil (if available)
- 1 clove of garlic, chopped
- 1 head of pack choi, finely shredded
- salt and pepper
- vegetable oil for frying

Continued on page 164

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THE ADLARD COLES BOOK OF MEDITERRANEAN CRUISING – Rod Heikell, 4th edition. Published in soft covers by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £20. 186 248mm x 171mm pages in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-4729-5123-6

The first edition of this book was published in 2004 under the title *THE RYA BOOK OF MEDITERRANEAN CRUISING*, the subsequent three editions being published by Adlard Coles, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing plc. All four have provided excellent introductions to the Mediterranean as a whole, and as such have proved invaluable guides for those considering or planning a cruise in the Med.

Concise, clear and entertainingly written, they convey the magic of Mediterranean cruising with first-hand practical advice on sailing in these unique and diverse waters. OCC member Rod Heikell is an acknowledged expert on sailing in the Mediterranean, and for 40 years has cruised its coasts and islands in his own yachts while also skippering charter and delivery boats. He is the author of 14 pilot books for different parts of the Med which have become essential navigational aids for many cruisers.

This relatively slim book provides sound advice on Mediterranean cruising options, equipment, practical issues, navigation, weather, berthing and anchoring. The last quarter of the book gives a country-by-country overview of routing, local weather, formalities and facilities ashore. The three appendices comprise an equipment checklist, related reading and websites, plus quick and easy-to-follow distance tables. It is well illustrated throughout with coloured charts, diagrams and photos.

An introductory book to the Mediterranean of this calibre obviously needs to be kept up-to-date, since facts change, as do readers' requirements and expectations. To claim that this edition has been 'extensively updated' is, however, something of an exaggeration. With the exception of a brief reference to Brexit and the sub-section on electronics, most of the narrative and photos appear, quite understandably, to have been brought forward from the third edition. The excellent cover is, however, refreshingly modern and clearly designed to 'sell' the new edition, and we have found this book is usually the first one our visitors pick up and read, possibly because it is not a weighty tome and is not bogged down with detail.

Anyone who is considering a visit to the Med and is not already familiar with the area should make this their first purchase. Owners of the previous edition, or those with reasonable practical experience of Mediterranean waters, may wish to think at least twice before purchasing this update – unless of course they have deep pockets or simply like to have the latest edition of a quality book in their ship's library.

MN

CORNELL'S OCEAN ATLAS – Jimmy and Ivan Cornell, 2nd edition. Published in spiral-bound format between hard covers by Cornell Sailing Ltd [www.cornellsailing.com] at £69. 136 A3-size pages, in 4 colours throughout. ISBN 978-1-9997229-0-6

To be honest, I had assumed on first seeing the cover and flicking through a couple of the pages, that this book was a nicely illustrated reprint of the NOAA Pilot Charts which are available for free download online. However, on reading the explanation of the pilot data's sources in the foreword, and looking more closely at the charts' content and arrangement, my view quickly changed.

The book's content is more detailed, more relevant, more accurate and more up-to-date than that of either NOAA or the Admiralty, whose data spans way back into the 19th century and was collected from manual observations by commercial shipping. That means that it is unavoidably subject to inaccuracy and patchiness in its coverage, while its historic nature means it cannot significantly reflect any impact on weather and currents which may have been caused by climate change since the latter part of the last century. Instead, the weather and current data used by the Cornells reflects detailed and comprehensive satellite observations covering specifically the last 25 years.

So far as detailed content is concerned, this 'ocean atlas' is subtitled 'pilot charts for all the oceans of the world', but neither nomenclature really does the book justice. Firstly, as an 'atlas' it includes descriptions and explanations of global oceanic weather systems and phenomena, as well as global current circulations and 'local' winds and weather patterns covering all oceans and all latitudes. Secondly, as a volume of 'pilot charts' it is in no way reproducing either the Admiralty Routeing Charts or the NOAA Pilot Charts. Instead, although it presents the data in the familiar wind rose format in 5° squares, the data itself has been independently computed by the Cornells using publicly available weather and current data obtained from satellite observations over the 25 years from 1991 to 2016. The charts also include average tropical revolving storm paths derived from the same data, as well as – new for this second edition – what it calls 'windgrams', single average wind roses for specific commonly sailed routes, printed down the right hand side of pilot chart pages and covering the area and month in which they are usually undertaken.

As for coverage, it is indeed global and fully includes the high latitudes. However, it saves space and increases relevancy by increasing the number of pages and their content in respect of the more frequented areas of the world's oceans – it has 32 pages covering the North Atlantic, Caribbean, Mediterranean and the Baltic; 24 for the North Pacific; 24 for the South Pacific; 25 in total for the North and South Indian and just 13 for the South Atlantic.

Are the changes since the first edition significant? Yes, I think they are. Firstly, it expands the underlying data set by 25% in adding the last five years (and, given climate change, the impact of those last five on the averages may be more relevant than the last fifty!), and secondly, it now includes the 'windgrams' noted above, which represent a very useful addition. The list price has, however, remained the same.

So would I spend £69 on it, when I can download NOAA's entire catalogue for nothing or buy just the Admiralty Routeing charts I think I will need for £15 apiece – particularly when it contains more than just a couple of full pages of advertising? Yes, I would. And why? Because it shows comprehensive, detailed, accurate, relevant and,

above all, recent, averages of what are the 'new normal' conditions to be expected anywhere in the world's seas. It is not a coffee table book, in spite of its colours and its glossiness – it's too big and its content makes it too much of a text book. However, for both armchair planning and keeping on board when deciding exactly where and when to sail next, it's something I would certainly appreciate. For the work which has gone into deriving its data and making it accessible in this way, it represents very good value and its data cannot be found in this form elsewhere.

TJB

NB: OCC members ordering Cornell's Ocean Atlas are offered a reduced price of £60 plus postage, and can have a signed personal dedication if they wish.

YOUR OFFSHORE DOCTOR – A Manual of Medical Self-Sufficiency at Sea – Michael H Beilan, 2nd edition. Published in soft covers on the CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform and available from Amazon at $14.95 / £11.37. 204 229mm x 152mm pages. ISBN 978-1-9795-8087-8

The skipper is responsible for the vessel and the crew. Just as the boat must be well found and seaworthy, so the crew must be kept safe, victualled and healthy. Preparation is the secret to a safe and sound vessel and to a fit and healthy crew. In *Your Offshore Doctor,* Michael Beilan starts with a chapter on 'Preparation'. He recommends various websites regarding vaccinations and he emphasises that skippers should be aware of any chronic illness affecting crew members. Crew must take adequate medication with them for such afflictions as diabetes, asthma, epilepsy and hypertension. Remember, there is always the option to stay ashore.

Beilan recommends that sailors should take courses in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid. Although there are online courses, there is no substitute for proper hands-on experience with a mannikin. He is keen on record keeping. A note of when an event occurred and the treatment can prove invaluable. In medical practice, it has been said 'If it wasn't written down, it never happened'.

The next chapter deals appropriately with lifesaving under the headings CPR, choking, bleeding and shock, and anaphylactic shock. Good advice is given on CPR and the Heimlich manoeuvre, but I could not find an account of how to place a patient in the recovery position, not even in the chapter entitled 'Unconsciousness'. I agree with Beilan's advice regarding haemorrhage. He suggests that blood loss is best staunched by direct pressure on the bleeding point for at least ten minutes, perhaps longer. He advises 'Do not peek', because more blood will be lost while having a look too early. He dismisses the use of tourniquets, and certainly they can be counter-productive.

Further chapters cover infections (including sexually transmitted diseases), heart attack, unconsciousness, burns, swimming emergencies (drowning, the bends, jellyfish stings), trauma and, importantly, dentistry. In other sections, less common afflictions such as rattlesnake bite and poisoning are described. The emphasis, however, is somewhat

uneven. Sometimes more medical detail is included than perhaps is required by a non-medical sailor – for instance three pages explaining why antibiotics are not effective in viral illnesses such as cold or flu. On the other hand an increasing number of yachtsmen are taking a cardiac defibrillator offshore, a practice of debatable value, and yet I could find no reference or discussion of it, even in the section on heart attack.

This is a book to read before setting sail – it is not a handbook to dip into briefly. *Your Offshore Doctor* is written by an American doctor for American sailors. Virtually all the web sites given, mostly good and comprehensive, are American, and temperatures are given in Fahrenheit, as is the custom in the USA. The drugs all carry American names such as Acetaminophen (paracetamol), Demerol (merperidine in the USA but pethidine elsewhere). Bonine is the antihistamine Meclizine, often known as Dramamine. This is not a problem, but skippers must be careful that they carry the correct drugs in the correct doses especially if not bought at home.

The section on procedures is helpful. Different types of injection are described well. Setting up an intravenous infusion (a drip) is covered in detail but at sea is extremely difficult. The casualty is likely to be shocked, 'shut down' and cold. This makes access to a vein more than challenging, especially when being buffeted around on the cabin sole in the dark. In my view this should only be attempted by an experienced doctor or paramedic trained in the procedure. Those who sail with men of a 'certain age' should carry a urinary catheter. Acute retention of urine is agony, so learn how to pass a catheter – this book will help. For those with hypertension concerns, which does not include anyone with whom I have sailed, the suggestion to take an automatic blood pressure monitor is useful. Non-medics should leave the stethoscope at home.

Anyone, any skipper, but particularly a doctor, dreads having to treat someone at sea without proper equipment or drugs. Hence the temptation to turn the boat into a floating pharmacy with enough emergency medical kit to perform a transplant. This book recommends nearly sixty medications for an offshore voyage, some of them potentially hazardous (opioids, adrenaline) which in my opinion is too many unless there is a medic, like Dr Beilan, aboard.

Every boat should carry a medical text – for American sailors, this may be the one.

MHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paddy Macklin is a memorable character, down-to-earth with his observations on life, kind at heart and, I think, would admit to being a bit of an eccentric. Despite his shoestring circumnavigation, done at times using school atlases rather than Admiralty charts, he survived to tell the tale of views of mountainous waves, knock-downs and roll-overs, and returned to Falmouth none the worse for wear, albeit rather later than intended. *Captain Bungle's Odyssey* is a book to adorn the shelves of any bluewater yacht and should be read by anyone aspiring to sail the Southern Ocean in winter. If it seems like a challenge you would relish and this book doesn't put you off then the chances are that you will get what you deserve. But it can be done – Paddy Macklin did it.

PJM

TALES OF THREE SHIPS – text by Fiona Jones, illustrated by Hannah Edge. Published in soft covers and available from the author [www.talesofthreeships.co.uk] at £6.50 plus postage. 36 296mm x 208mm pages in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-9999-0310-7

This picture book by OCC member Fiona Jones, aimed at children aged about three to seven, describes the first part of her 14-year circumnavigation with her husband Chris in their Gitana 43 *Three Ships* and was written to explain their way of life to their grandchildren.

Each large-format page carries a colourful illustration by Hannah Edge. These are well-observed and full of detail, providing lots of opportunity for a young reader to spot things, or for an adult to point things out. The large-print text is written in rhyming couplets, which can be very effective if done well and can assist a child who is learning to read. Unfortunately, however, some of the lines don't scan properly, which could make reading this book aloud to a child quite frustrating – you get into a rhythm with poetry, and when extra words upset the scan, the flow is spoilt.

This is an entertaining story which is successful in describing many aspects of the cruising lifestyle – preparations, saying goodbye, bad weather, the joys of arrival, and even exploring a new and different country. The (simplified) sailing details are accurate, but there's a curious error near the end where the page describing Cape St Vincent – which has links to Prince Henry the Navigator – depicts Lisbon's famous Rose Compass accompanied by the words 'They saw a monument to Captain Cook in a giant compass shape'. But then it was never intended to be a geography text book!

Tales of Three Ships is quite long, and might be best read a few pages at a time to a younger child, but those captivated by the adventure can look forward to enjoying further books in this series as Fiona and Chris continue their circumnavigation.

NL

THE ATLANTIC CROSSING GUIDE – revised by Jane Russell for the RCC Pilotage Foundation (seventh edition). Published in hardback by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £50 / $75 (£45 through Amazon and £35.40 for the Kindle edition). 292 A4-size pages in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-1-4729-4766-6

I reviewed the third edition of this modern classic in *Flying Fish* 1992/2 and my goodness, what a lot has changed! The interweb thingy was invented, GPS and electronic charts came along, marinas have been built inside marinas, and now we are all passengers on our yachts while wi-fi takes care of all the boring stuff (including navigation – see more on that below). It also seems that I may have become a grumpy old man.

That third edition's cover had a single photograph of *Wrestler of Leigh*, the redoubtable Rustler 31, burying her nose into the back of a stormy-looking wave under a threatening, leaden sky – and clearly thriving in her element of the wild, untamed ocean. This seventh edition's cover tells an entirely different story. It shows the bow of a teak-decked

40-something footer cresting a tradewind wave in glorious sunshine with an enticing blue horizon ahead. The message has changed from: 'So you want to cross the Atlantic? Here's what you need to know' to 'Yes, it's every bit as good as you hope, here are lots of photos to prove it, here are plenty of things to think about while planning and preparing, and here are some descriptions of lovely places to leave from and arrive at'.

I exaggerate to get the shift of point of view across, but I don't denigrate the book because of that shift. I believe that its layout, structure and its text (with the exception of its pilotage notes and chartlets) are pitched perfectly at the modern first-time Atlantic crosser. Ocean sailing has become both widely aspirational and achievable in a way it used not to be. Boats have grown and their systems have become comprehensive, integrated and reliable. The balance has shifted from achievement through managing, to achievement through enjoyment.

So what about the detail? The first part, Preparations, is well-written, comprehensive and very well-illustrated. I set it some 'what about?' challenges (eg. total electrical failure, steering failure, anchoring choices etc) and it passed them all. It's surprising how much very sensible advice is packed in. We all have our pet do's and don'ts, and we'd all disagree with some of the things it says. However, it lays out all the choices, options and 'things to think about' really very well. The sections on 'creating a home from home' and 'a happy ship' are good examples of a more modern cruising approach.

The second part, Passage Planning, is much more of a curate's egg – good in parts. Its descriptions of routes and weather systems are very good, but are let down by the fact that its routing chart extracts have rather odd wind arrows and, hard as I looked, I couldn't find a key for them. So you're left wondering exactly which way they're pointing and whether each feather is 5 knots or the equivalent force in the Beaufort scale.

Its coverage extends up into the higher latitudes, recognising the increasing popularity of sailing in the ice. It also stretches across to the Panama Canal and down to Senegal and The Gambia. Again, we could all find fault with some of its harbour inclusions and exclusions – I regret that it misses the Algarve and, on the way to Panama, perhaps Cartagena would have been useful.

We then come to the real problem area, which is the harbours themselves. The pictures and text are captivating and informative, and I appreciated all of those for the harbours with which I'm familiar. Details like those of banks, post offices and gas supplies are gone, but its coverage of marinas, moorings and anchorages is fine and Google Earth can provide the rest. The chartlets, however, are very largely useless in this edition, being screenshots of Navionics electronic charts. They are far too cluttered to actually be used for pilotage, and they lack details such as light characteristics, which are only accessible in the 'live' chart version by drilling down.

Then, I am forced to say, my confidence in the pilotage notes took a knock. That is a dreadful thing to write, so let me explain. I looked hard at the chartlet and the notes for Falmouth, my home port. The chartlet correctly shows a red can marking the west side of the deep water channel into Carrick Roads (it shows the fact that it is lit, too, but not its light characteristics). It also shows that Black Rock, close to the west of that can, is now also lit as the isolated danger it has always been. The pilotage notes, however, remain unchanged from the sixth edition. At that time, the pilotage text and the chartlet were at least consistent with each other, but in fact neither reflected

the fact that the lighting and buoyage had by that time already changed (Black Rock was lit for the first time in 169 years in 2006 – wrecking traditions die hard!).

My concern is that this may not be a single oversight, but may possibly be a result of 'outsourcing' the chartlet production to Navionics, which has metaphorically 'distanced' them from the writing of the pilotage notes. It also demonstrates the fact that the chartlets are so hard to use that at no stage in the checking process did anyone notice the disconnect between words and picture. I only managed to because I am familiar with the history of the marking of Black Rock. It probably also says something more fundamental about electronic aids to navigation which can encourage you to look without seeing – but that would just be me being old and grumpy.

The publisher's price is high, but Amazon's feels much better, starting as it does with a '4'. For the amount of really good information it contains and the truly beautiful photography, it's perfectly good value. However, because of the chartlet problem in this 7th edition, and my doubts over whether the pilotage notes have been fully updated, I really could not recommend buying it unless you were prepared to heed entirely the warning on the fly page from Navionics that their charts are 'not to be used for navigation'.

TJB

SHAKEDOWN CRUISE – Nigel Calder. Published in hard covers by Adlard Coles Nautical [www.adlardcoles.com] at £20 / $25. 224 246mm x 162mm pages, plus 16 pages of colour photos in the centre. ISBN 978-1-4729-4671-3

We've all heard of Nigel Calder – and most boats have his books on board, complete with oily thumb prints when *Marine Diesel Engines* or the *Boatowner's Mechanical and Electrical Manual* have helped sort out a problem. But I was surprised to discover that the *Shakedown Cruise* in this title took place in 1987, the same year we were enjoying our second Atlantic circuit. We probably shared anchorages, although we never met. So the experiences of *Nada's* crew ring very true; it was the era of simple cruising, often in smaller boats, with no GPS or other technical gadgets. The fact that Nigel and Terrie's 39ft home-completed GRP ketch had a fridge, freezer and microwave made her better equipped than most cruising boats 30 years ago – certainly ours. But there's no point in having all that unless you have enough power, and their microwave was soon relegated to being a bread bin...

Shakedown Cruise is subtitled *Lessons and Adventures from a Cruising Veteran as he learns the ropes*, and from the day of the launch in Louisiana to Venezuela, via Key West, the Bahamas and the Leeward and Windward Islands, *Nada* was beset with problems and hairy incidents – to say the skipper was on a learning curve would be an understatement. Within days they are aground – 6ft of draft in 4½ft of water – but eventually a fisherman helps get them floated again. Throughout this book, the pages with a dark grey background contain Nigel Calder's current thoughts on dealing with a variety of tricky situations, so along with being an entertaining read, this cruise account contains lots of useful advice.

As the author admits, *Nada* isn't the most suitable boat for this voyage. She doesn't sail well to windward, she's top-heavy due to her extra-strong deck so her gunwales are awash in even a moderate breeze, and she has too much stuff on board, including a diesel stove with a cast iron top. As well as being heavy, it creates far too much heat in the tropics. Calder bought it because of his aversion to gas as a cooking fuel – this reviewer sailed with a similar skipper and stove back in the '70s – it also turned out to be an expensive mistake! Over the following years the Calders have owned *Nadas II*, *III*, and *IV*, all of them more seaworthy, more comfortable, and eventually using gas for cooking, which admittedly is much safer and better regulated than it used to be.

To add to an already challenging situation on *Nada*, there were two very young children aboard. Pippin was just a year old at the start of the cruise, and she was joined by her brother Paul less than a year later. Having crossed oceans with one (very easy) two-year-old 25 years ago, I have great admiration for a young couple coping with two children, especially as Pippin was frequently seasick, something small kids aren't usually bothered by. Their son was born during a three month trip back to US, and within days of their return to Venezuela, Nigel and Terrie were taking the children on intrepid trips inland, up steep mountain roads and sometimes having to sleep in very rustic accommodation – the sort of thing you look back on years later and can't quite believe you got away with! At this point Nigel realises that going into the Pacific isn't on, due both to the children and the need to be close to home to research his books, destined to become best-sellers and to support the family financially.

Shakedown Cruise is illustrated with 16 pages of evocative colour photos and numerous black and white chartlets showing *Nada*'s track southwards. Unfortunately the islands are almost obliterated in the dark grey of the shallow soundings, and only the deeper sea is pale. Presumably taken directly from the colourful, easy-to-read Imray-Iolaire charts which the author was using, the conversion to black and white simply doesn't work. On the plus side, a considerable amount of well-researched history gives an interesting background to this lively narrative, and for anyone who has cruised the Caribbean, especially 30 years ago rather than more recently, it will bring great memories along with gasps of horror at some of the alarming incidents that this inexperienced crew had to cope with. That they came through relatively unscathed is a great relief. I thoroughly enjoyed this book – highly recommended!

EHMH

THE MERCY (film). A British biographical drama, directed by James Marsh, written by Scott Z Burns and starring Colin Firth, Rachel Weisz, David Thewlis and Ken Stott.

With the resurrection of the Golden Globe Race comes the release of a film called *The Mercy*, which tells the extraordinary tale of Donald Crowhurst's bid for fame and fortune in the first Golden Globe singlehanded non-stop race around the world. Starring Colin Firth and Rachel Weisz, it's a disturbing journey through the deteriorating state of mind of a man who set out to win everything and realises he is about to lose everything instead.

The reviews have been mixed, but for sailors, especially those old enough to have followed the original story or read the subsequent excellent account in *Voyage for Madmen*, it's a must-see. Soon after setting off in *Teignmouth Electron*, Crowhurst realises that the 41ft trimaran is not up to the task. Yet having wagered everything, including his house and his business, he cannot quit. He must keep going.

The boat leaks and he uses a bucket to empty the outriggers. He survives a storm under bare poles. When he comes to accept that his boat will not survive the pounding of the high latitudes, and desperate to win the £5000 prize money that will save him from bankruptcy, he concocts a means of reporting his position by plotting a course he imagines would put him in the lead. With this, the media create a sensation around his story. His mental state cracks in the horse latitudes when he makes no progress. He knows he won't stand up to the scrutiny if he does come in first, so he slows himself down to come in last – except that Moitessier decides he doesn't want the fame and keeps going, and Nigel Tetley drives his boat so hard that she breaks up and sinks. Only young Robin Knox-Johnston in the much smaller and slower *Suhaili* remains in the race, the only sailor to cross the line. Unable to deal with the fallout, Crowhurst breaks and decides to seek 'the Mercy'. His boat is found adrift with no-one on board, leaving behind a great mystery and infamy.

I thought *The Mercy* was very well acted and would not be surprised if there were several Oscar nominations. Despite being a story of more than seven months spent drifting around the Atlantic, it was fast-paced and the end came sooner than expected. I'd forgotten that Honorary OCC Member Knox-Johnston donated his winnings to Crowhurst's widow and children – the scenes of him crossing the finishing line at Falmouth is actual footage from the real race.

For sailors in general it won't be a joyful experience. For racers, it may reveal some of the inner struggles that propel them to the start line and across the finish.

DOB

200,000 MILES: A LIFE OF ADVENTURE – Jimmy Cornell. Published in semi-hard covers by Cornell Sailing Ltd [www.cornellsailing.com] at £29.95. 414 214mm x 149mm pages carrying over 500 colour photos. ISBN 978-0-9572-6268-3

200,000 Miles is both a continuation and expansion of Jimmy's autobiography *A Passion for the Sea*, published some ten years ago, and a distillation of many years' practical experience in world cruising under sail. Largely based on anecdotes from Jimmy's wide-ranging experience, though not in chronological order, it is fun to read and possible to dip into as a guide to practically any aspect of long distance sailing. Thus advice ranges from pets to pests, monohulls versus multihulls, etc etc. He is, however, even-handed, and gives alternative views of each issue, explaining his opinions based on his enormous range of experience in his own boats over the 200,000 miles of the title. The book is substantial and thus not an easy bedtime read, but is very well produced. Almost every page carries a photograph or two, although many are not captioned, and

there are a few chartlets in addition to those on the end-papers.

His advice begins with choice of boat design and material, and desirable fit-out parameters for reliability as well as crew safety and protection. For instance, he advises readers not to follow racing specifications, that spade rudders are best avoided, that gear should be oversize and reliable, to divide up sail area with a cutter rig etc. It is interesting that Jimmy originally put forward the ideal size of an ocean cruising boat as 40ft, in order to be easily handled by a couple, but went up to 43ft for *Aventura III* and then 45ft for *Aventura IV*, though she carried more crew for the Northwest Passage. He has also fallen in love with aluminium construction and centreboards, although these can involve higher costs.

In addition to his own circumnavigations, Jimmy's regular surveys from his own rallies – the 1986 ARC onwards – are illuminating and well-quoted, including comments on failures and damage situations. His primary philosophy for enjoyable sailing is to follow the trade winds as far as possible, and safety and reliability in offshore waters are stressed in good measure. He has caveats, however, such as – do not ignore a weather system in order to pinpoint an arrival date, as 'this can cause a headache'.

Jimmy provides a great breadth of advice besides passage-making, such as his admirably detailed coverage of laying-up. Although time on this is always well spent, after many lay-ups Jimmy seems to have got it down to a fine art and is able to leave his boat tucked up for an extended period after just two days of work! Certainly the reviewer can identify with his tips to avoid finding, on return, a boom packed tight with bird-nest material and a masthead wand bent and damaged by perching sea birds! Although not specifically stated, the maintenance and repair matters mentioned throughout the book do require a skipper to be able, practical and knowledgeable, so hopefully more independent of outside assistance.

To sum up, *200,000 Miles* is both an entertaining read and a good onboard reference, with a wealth of all-round advice and practical experience. Every page speaks of knowledge gained from his adventurous life on both land and sea. Recommended.

JLC

Just the other day I was in my neighbourhood Starbucks, waiting for the post office to open. I was enjoying a chocolatey café mocha when it occurred to me that to drink a mocha is to gulp down the entire history of the New World. From the Spanish exportation of Aztec cacao, and the Dutch invention of the chemical process for making cocoa, on down to the capitalist empire of Hershey, PA, and the lifestyle marketing of Seattle's Starbucks, the modern mocha is a bittersweet concoction of imperialism, genocide, invention, and consumerism served with whipped cream on top.

Sarah Vowell

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THE LOSS OF TAMARIND
Mervyn Wheatley

(*The introduction is condensed from a piece written by OCC member Colin Drummond to introduce a talk by Mervyn to members of the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club*:

I first met Mervyn Wheatley 43 years ago when we were both competitors in the very first Azores and Back Race in 1975. Mervyn has now completed seven solo AZABs, and I'm sure that he would have completed all eleven except that, as an officer in the Royal Marines for 33 years, Her Majesty sometimes required him to do some work and sent him off to defend the realm.

On the morning of 10 June last year, when the news got back that a 73-year-old singlehanded sailor had been rescued by the Queen Mary 2*, there must have been plenty of journalists whose first thought was, "What on earth is a 73-year-old doing sailing the Atlantic singlehanded?" No doubt they started sharpening their pencils to write a critical review. Then they would have done their research and found that Mervyn is one of the most experienced sailors in the UK, if not in the world. He has sailed well over a quarter of a million miles, more than half of them in* Tamarind*, including five Singlehanded Transatlantic Races and five Round Britain and Ireland Races. He skippered one of the eight boats in the first Clipper Round the World Race in 1996 and also skippered various yachts on several legs of the 2005–2006 Clipper Race.*)

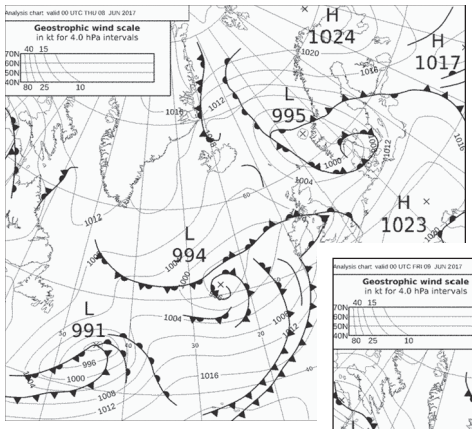
We had a good start in a southwesterly force 4–5 and fine weather. *Tamarind* was a Formosa 42, designed by Perry and built in Taiwan in 1985. I had sailed some 135,000 miles in her and this was our fifth OSTAR* and, for those who enjoy their superstitions, our 13th Atlantic together. I hoped it was going to be my 19th and 20th Atlantics.

***Tamarind* at the start of the 2017 OSTAR**

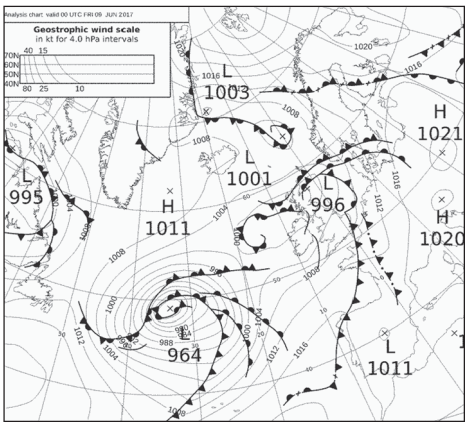
The first week was fairly benign for an OSTAR –

* For many years the Observer Singlehanded Transatlantic Race, now the Original Singlehanded Transatlantic Race, which takes place every four years over a course from Plymouth, UK to Newport, Rhode Island, USA under the auspices of the Royal Western Yacht Club of England.

hard on the wind but with a satisfactory VMG (velocity made good) and nothing over a force 6. On day 9 (Tuesday 6 June) it began to freshen, and I received a text from a Master Mariner in my village with a detailed synopsis of Atlantic weather. I had a Toughbook laptop on the chart table which I did not want to move, and as the alternative was the saloon table which had no fiddles, and as by then it was blowing a force 7, I did not bother to plot it. These charts shows what my friend was trying to tell me. As a basis for comparison, the Fastnet gale of 1979 was 980mb.

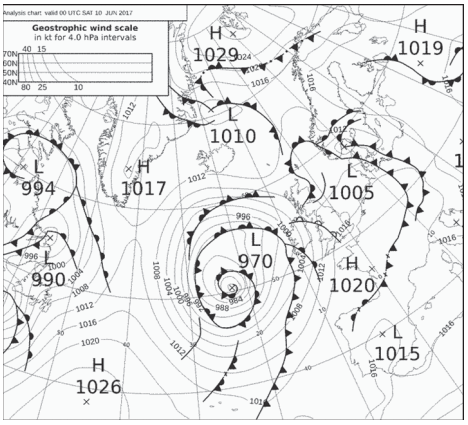


00 UTC Thursday 8 June …



… and Friday 9 June

By the evening it had freshened to force 8 gusting 9, and I handed the sails, started the engine to charge the batteries, and went to bed in a saloon bunk. At about 0200 I was woken by a violent lurch of the boat and a deluge of water over me. We had been rolled to, I think, about 150°, and the window above my bunk had been smashed by something very solid from inside the boat. I had put in one of the two washboards and closed the hatch, but that had also let in a considerable amount of water.



00 UTC Saturday 10 June

I stepped out of my bunk onto what I hoped were going to be floorboards but found instead a water tank. All the boards had moved, in spite of being jammed in hard. All the electrics had failed but I found a torch and surveyed a scene of chaos. *Tamarind* had a deep bilge, but the water was above the cabin sole and was awash with food, clothing and detritus. I had a quick thought about priorities but fell back on the maxim that, in any vessel, the fundamental plan is to keep the salt water on the outside. I was worried about what would happen if we were struck by another large wave, and started pumping.

It took 3½ hours to clear the bilge, by which time it was dawn. I went up top and found the sprayhood at the back of the cockpit and, caught in it, the EPIRB – transmitting. It had been torn from its bracket and immersed, and that had activated it. It had not occurred to me to activate it and I tried to turn it off. I failed and, eventually put it back in its bracket and it switched off! However, after some thought I realised that this would give the impression we had sunk. I also thought that, after four hours, the rescue would be well underway and it would be better to keep it running while I assessed my position.

I examined the vane steering which was at a strange angle, and thought I could repair it until I found some cracks in the main transverse stainless bar, so I left that for the moment and went below to start sorting out the shambles. I then heard an aircraft, a C130 of the Royal Canadian Air Force, and called him on my handheld VHF which, fortunately, I had charged before the start. I told the pilot that I was worried about the endurance of the VHF and he said he would try to drop one on a long line. He missed on both that and the next try, so he then tried two liferafts with a line between which also failed. I asked him what the wind strength was and he said between 60 and 70 knots. Hurricane force 12 starts at 64 knots. It is hardly surprising he missed!

He was relieved in succession by two other aircraft, and the third one told me a ship was on the way. I asked for its ETA and he said 15 hours. At about midnight the bulk carrier MV *Labrador* arrived, and asked how I proposed to get aboard his ship! He manoeuvred to within about 30m and it was

still blowing hard. There was no apparent means of boarding – no ladder, no net, no rope. I realised that any attempt to board would result in the destruction of both *Tamarind* and me, and told the C130 pilot so. He agreed, and said not to move until morning by which time the weather should have moderated.

I gave some thought to my position. I could repair the window easily and I could probably repair the vane gear. The steering cables had parted, but I had spares and had repaired them before on a previous OSTAR. I considered the best plan would be to sail downwind for the UK, but this left three problems. First, what would happen when the next gale hit and the boat and I would be in a fairly parlous condition? Everything was not just wet but soaked, and the only usable food I had was freeze-dried. Second, when we arrived in the Western Approaches, we would have no communications, no power, no AIS, no lights and, in the likely event of calm, would be a sitting duck. Finally, and the clincher, it would take me at least three weeks to repair the boat and return, during which my family would have no idea of what was going on. That seemed unreasonable when I did not have to subject them to it. I decide to continue with the rescue.

The Queeen Mary 2, with Tamarind alongside

In the morning there was no aircraft or ship, but soon a C130 arrived and told me that the *Labrador* was still there but, not far behind, was the *Queen Mary 2*. I said, "If I have any choice in this, I would prefer the *QM2*". This was not because of her luxurious appointments, but because I knew that a transfer onto her would be a much safer option than with the bulk carrier. The *QM2* arrived and the Captain made a lee to launch their pump jet rescue boat. The *QM2* was blowing down on *Tamarind* and eventually we T-boned the ship, then went broadside-on and the spreaders started to knock divots out of her paintwork!

The rescue boat arrived and I threw my backpack into it and then went below to scuttle *Tamarind*. I had already decided that there was no alternative to this. I would have been extremely annoyed if I had hit a derelict boat but, more importantly, I realised that if a merchantman saw her, the Master would feel obliged to investigate and this would cost him time and money at best, and at worst endanger his crew.

The rescue boat comes alongside to take Mervyn off …

… and Tamarind starts to drift astern

We were hoisted on a single cable up seven decks and I disembarked, after thanking the coxswain, and was met, inevitably, by the Security Officer, an ex-Royal Navy Petty Officer. After an examination

by a very pleasant female doctor and nurse I was taken by the hotel team to my stateroom. It was a surreal contrast with what I had just left! Captain Wells and his crew could not have been more considerate and generous. The Captain offered to block out the considerable media interest, but I pointed out that I had little else to do and, if I could achieve

Last sight of Tamarind as she is left astern in the wake

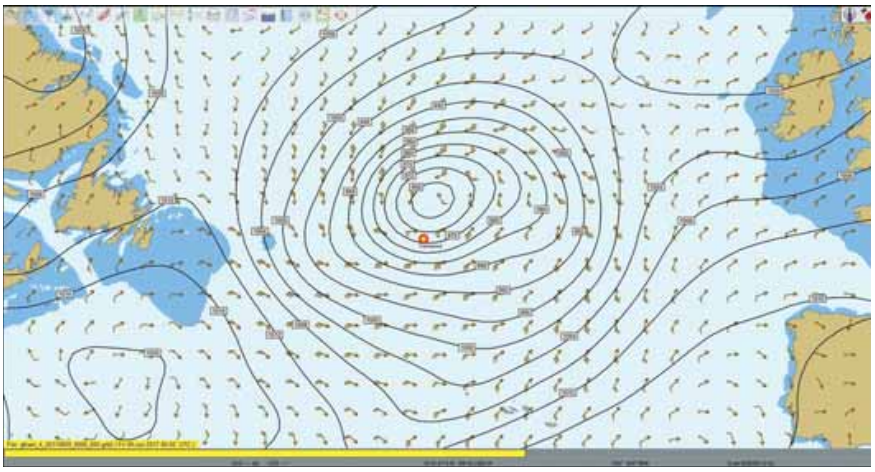
publicity for the ship and Cunard, I was happy to do it.

I was issued with a dinner jacket, dined at the Captain's table, attended cocktail parties, and Captain Wells and I did a Q&A session for 1200 guests. After three days, we arrived in Halifax and after a press conference ashore I flew home that evening.

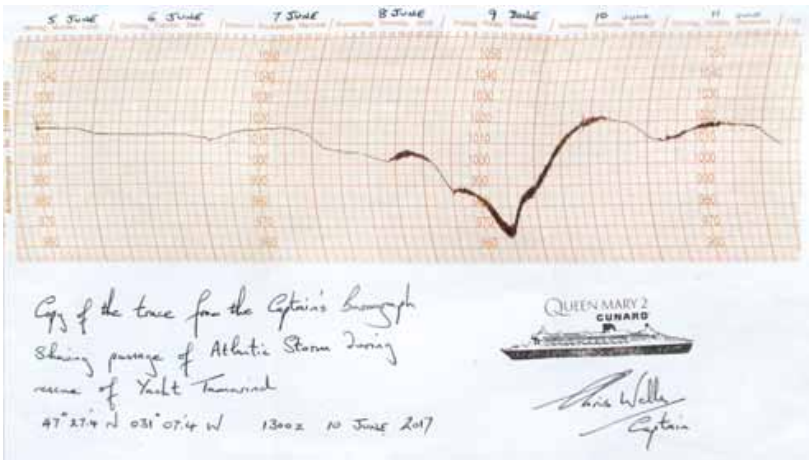
Coming in to land, seven decks up

Mervyn with Security Officer Laurence Pilbeam

My stateroom aboard the Queen Mary 2



The trace from Captain Wells' baragraph. He later wrote: 'The barograph trace is very interesting, particularly as we were skirting round the edge of the hurricane. Mervyn was in the middle, where the pressure was even less than our recorded 967mb – maybe as low as 950mb'.



Mervyn with the Queen Mary 2's Hotel Manager and Captain

The many photos which illustrate this article are courtesy of Mervyn's friends and family at the start of OSTAR 2017, the pilot and aircrew of the Royal Canadian Air Force C130, and the passengers and crew of the Queen Mary 2. The photograph below is by Kathy Mansfield (www.kathymansfieldphotos.com).

Captain and Mrs Wells were guests of the Club at our 2018 Annual Dinner aboard the SS *Great Britain*, where Captain Wells was presented with an engraved plaque thanking him and his crew for their seamanship in carrying out the rescue.

TAM O'SHANTER'S 2017 CRUISE – TRAVEMUNDE TO GALICIA

Anne Kenny and Neil Hegarty

(*Anne and Neil need little introduction, having featured in the pages of* Flying Fish *2016/1 and 2017/2 – but on both occasions sailing Neil's Dufour 34,* Shelduck.

Tam O'Shanter *is a Chance 37 which has been in Anne's family since 1987. She was built by Henri Wauquiez in France in 1972, to the design of Britton Chance, and was a member of the 1973 Irish Admiral's Cup team as well as competing in the notorious 1979 Fastnet Race. She was re-rigged as a cutter in 2010, and laid up at Vilanova last autumn in order to be well placed to depart for this year's Azores Pursuit Rally.*)

We were sorry to be taking *Tam O'Shanter* out of the Baltic and away from Scandinavia. We sailed her from Kerry to Norway in 2010, and since then had very much enjoyed our summers, cruising to St Petersburg and back to Travemünde while exploring ten countries. After last year's excitement bringing *Shelduck* back from America, however, Neil and I wanted this year to be a little quieter so we arranged to have *Tam O'Shanter* professionally delivered from Travemünde to Cherbourg. This would also make it easier to put aboard Atlantic cruising gear for the coming years. Together with our friends Peter Cassidy and Peter Clarke and some family, we intended to join her for day-sailing the French and Spanish coasts, arriving at Portosín for the start of the Irish Cruising Club's Rías Baixas Rally. A good plan, we thought. The two Peters were to come with us on the Irish Ferries Rosslare to Cherbourg sailing at 1530 on Monday 29 May. None of this came to pass.

Tam O'Shanter being lifted ashore in Travemünde

On Friday 26 May Neil received an email from the delivery company saying that *Tam O'Shanter* was returning to Travemünde – the crew had only sailed 38 miles before turning back.

They had managed to break the gooseneck and vang, and had also put the boat aground, thankfully, as it turned out, only doing cosmetic damage to the keel. So on Wednesday 31 May Neil and I boarded the 1400 bus from Cork to Dublin airport. Arriving at 1700, we were immediately able to check in our bags for the flight to Hamburg the following morning, a great relief. We had three 20kg bags of gear.

Our insurance company, Pantaenius, arranged for a surveyor to inspect the keel and *Tam O'Shanter* was lifted at 1000, before we had arrived. The surveyor phoned Neil later that day to say that the damage to the keel was such that if we wanted to we could sail immediately, and that repairs could be done at the end of the season. However, as we had to wait for new parts for the boom and vang to arrive we decided to do all the repairs at Bobs Werft Boatyard in Travemünde, where *Tam O'Shanter* had been stored over the previous two winters.

Neil ordered the damaged boom and vang parts from Ireland and started to deal with the boatyard and insurance company. Anne was shattered by events, but tried to keep our spirits up by arranging car and train trips to the surrounding area of Germany which we would not normally have had the opportunity to visit. Monday 5 June was a holiday in Germany so the boatyard was closed. Anne drove us the 45 km to Wismar, a UNESCO world heritage site and part of the German Democratic Republic from 1949 to 1990. The centre of the old town is a huge market place surrounded by elegant buildings in styles ranging from 14th century North German Gothic, to 19th century Romanesque revival, to Art Nouveau. On Wednesday we went to nearby Lübeck to have a SIM card installed in the iPad, returned the hired car, and then went back to Travemünde by train.

Neil started searching for crew, locally, to help us on what could be a difficult 1500 miles to Galicia – across the North Sea, down the English Channel and then across the Bay of Biscay to the Rías Baixas. He visited a local sail loft who immediately sent out a notice to nearby sailing clubs, and also asked his daughter, Patricia, who lives in Paris, to check for crew in Holland as a central location between Travemünde and Cherbourg.

On Friday 9 June *Tam O'Shanter* was lifted out and the keel repaired – as the surveyor had already confirmed, there was no structural damage to the boat. On the same day Patricia called to say that an experienced sailor from Holland, André Smith, would sail with us from Travemünde to Cherbourg where she was to join us.

During that weekend we did some sightseeing by train. On Saturday we went to Hamburg and enjoyed lunch on the waterfront and also visited the new Elbphilharmonie concert hall. On Sunday we went to Lüneburg. The River Elbe flows through the town and it is part of the Hamburg Metropolitan Region. Since the early 1970s the town has been systematically restored, so that today it is a tourist attraction and important sectors of the town's economy depend on tourism. We were shown around by a very patient taxi driver from Romania, from the station and back to it. We were interested in visiting because we had sailed into Lunenburg, Nova Scotia on *Shelduck* – a town named in honour of the King of Great Britain and Ireland, George August of Hanover, who was also Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg. We hopped back on the train, this time to Schwerin, a town surrounded by lakes which lay behind the Iron Curtain after World War Two. We got off the train one stop too early, so took a trolley bus ride which we really enjoyed. On arrival at the main station we decided to repeat the Lüneburg

experience and took a taxi tour, which was excellent. The landmark of the city is the Schwerin Palace, located on an island in the lake of the same name.

On our return to the boat that evening Neil received a text from a 24 year old German boy called Moritz, who had just completed his final accountancy exams and was offering to sail with us to Spain. On Tuesday he visited *Tam O'Shanter*, and on Wednesday confirmed that he would join us. We had been watching the weather forecasts daily and decided that the following Saturday, 17 June, would be the best day to set off for Galicia. André arrived on Thursday evening and we did the shopping on Friday. Moritz's father also came to meet us, and later he brought his own yacht – which is similar in size to *Tam O'Shanter* – alongside so that the family could wish Moritz a *bon voyage*.

Anne on a tram in Schwerin

On Saturday we were out of our bunks at 0430 and left at 0500, arriving at the east end of the Kiel Canal at 1800 after a passage in a fresh northwesterly. We were quickly into the lock and motored on to the marina at Rendsburg, which we reached at 2105. It was a long day of sailing and motoring, 91·9 miles at an average speed of 5·74 knots. The following morning we took on fuel, just to check consumption, showered, breakfasted and left the marina at 1100. We were never bored in the Canal, with the amount of shipping going each way keeping us alert. At the locks in Brunsbüttel we were instructed to go into

A busy Kiel Canal

André, Anne, Moritz and Neil in Cherbourg

the smaller lock – we were the only boat in it so we exited easily at 1800. We then motored against a very strong tide on to Cuxhaven, arriving there at 2100 and immediately taking on fuel for our planned 300 mile passage to Dunkirk. Happily the wind was forecast to be a moderate northeasterly.

Next morning we departed the marina at 0900 to catch the tide down the Elbe. With a northeasterly it was a very pleasant passage past Holland, and we had little excitement until at 1630 on Tuesday we passed the Europort at Rotterdam, where navigation became tricky as there were so many ships coming and going in differently angled traffic separation zones. *Tam O'Shanter* arrived at Dunkirk at 0750 on Wednesday 21st, a passage of 329 miles and 536 miles from Travemünde. We felt lucky to get so far so quickly.

We took on fuel and water, showered, breakfasted and left for Cherbourg at 1000. The crew thought Neil was pushing on a little too quickly, but knew he was worried about westerly gales in the Channel – which thankfully did not materialise. The wind was still from the east and north. We reached Cherbourg at 1330 on 22nd and were joined by Patricia, who had travelled by train from Paris to be with us for three weeks. André left after dinner to spend the night ashore, before returning to Holland the following day to celebrate his 59th birthday with his family. He had been a great help to us and a support for Neil in what, in more normal strong westerly conditions, might have been a very difficult passage indeed.

Our next short passage was to St Helier, Jersey where Anne's son Ian and his family had lived for many years. Anne had been to Jersey before with *Tam O'Shanter* and was surprised at the navigation as our route took us closer to the shore than she was used to. We spent two days on Jersey, taking the opportunity to catch up with family and some of Ian's friends and also indulged in Jersey's home produce.

We departed St Helier on Monday 26th as soon as the marina gates were opened at 0600. *Tam O'Shanter* motor-sailed in a light northerly along the French north coast to the Chenal du Four, which we exited at 0200 on a windless night. In complicated areas our system is for Neil to watch AIS on the screen below, while Anne is stationed in the cockpit watching for small boats and buoys – on this occasion she found the many flashing lights surrounding *Tam O'Shanter* very confusing in the black of night. We don't have a chart plotter in the cockpit, but Neil uses an iPad and phones there during the day.

We motored on to the Raz de Sein, where *Tam O'Shanter* was tossed around by a very strong foul tide. Anne was glad she had fitted a Flexofold propeller in Finland, to go with the Yanmar 39hp engine fitted in Norway, for conditions like these. *Tam O'Shanter* reached Concarneau marina at midday on 27th June, ahead of a storm which was approaching across the Atlantic. At this stage we really could relax as we had broken the back of our passage to Galicia. Next day was Neil's 79th birthday. It has been our tradition to eat lobster on this day every year, wherever we are in the world, and Anne treated the crew to a memorable dinner – possibly the best we have had over the years of eating lobster.

Celebrating Neil's birthday in Concarneau

Very strong winds continued to blow on Thursday and Friday, with heavy rain, an Atlantic storm which brought all the Glénan boats in from their island. But even if not weather bound, as we were, Concarneau is a beautiful town to visit. The walled old town is splendid, and there's a typical French covered market open every day, as well as good supermarkets. Neil particularly enjoyed discovering some great 1970s architecture in the centre of the town, including the local church which replaced the original church which was blown down in a storm.

We left at 1500 on Saturday 1 July, having been watching forecasts of an easterly gale developing on the north coast of Spain on Tuesday, but we expected to be able to sail the 350 mile passage to Sada ahead of it. Neil and Anne continued to take one watch and

An Gobadán entering Concarneau

Patricia and Moritz the other – they liked to carry more sail than we did. As we sailed out of Concarneau Neil saw a familiar yacht, *An Gobadán*, built many years ago by Dermot Kennedy of the Baltimore Sailing School. Aboard was his son Irial and friend Ciara Whooley who were early into an Atlantic circuit via the Cape Verde islands and the Caribbean. (Having crossed the Atlantic, Irial and Ciara recently joined the OCC as full members).

The sea was very lumpy until we cleared the land. Moritz was particularly pleased to be carrying full sail in a northwesterly force 4, but we had to take in two reefs during the night. During Patricia and Moritz's first afternoon watch a bird hit the mainsail and landed on the starboard lifeline. It was so tired that it came down onto the deck and finally into the cockpit – a homing pigeon a little off course. Patricia provided this beautifully-kept bird with food and a bird bath, and he stayed with us through that night and into the following day until he saw the Spanish coast. We all enjoyed our new pet, whom we named 'Percy', except maybe for Neil who wasn't too keen on the mess he made on the cockpit floor.

The wind lightened during Sunday so we motor-sailed for the day. It continued to lighten to nothing, and then started to come up from the east – a day earlier than we had expected from the forecast in Concarneau. The wind continued to strengthen on Monday until it was blowing gale force from the port quarter, and Neil decided to carry on with little sail. We were making good, safe speed in the breaking waves. As we approached the Islas Gabeiras *Tam O'Shanter* and her crew began to feel more comfortable in the shelter, and reached the marina in Sada, east of La Coruña, at 1500. The seventeen day cruise from Travemünde had been much easier than expected. We were so lucky with the weather and wind direction.

Percy the (passenger) pigeon

The main reason we had chosen Sada as our Spanish landfall was to meet Anton Pellejero, the ICC Port Officer there and OCC Port Officer Representative for La Coruña and the surrounding area, who had been who was recommended by Peter Hayden, OCC. There was a problem with the outlet from the hand washing basin and Anton immediately visited the boat and arranged to have it attended to the following day by the boatyard/ chandlery Cadenote. We received great service from both parties. In Sada the heat hit us, so our first purchase was a fan to try to push the air around inside the cabin and cool it all down a little.

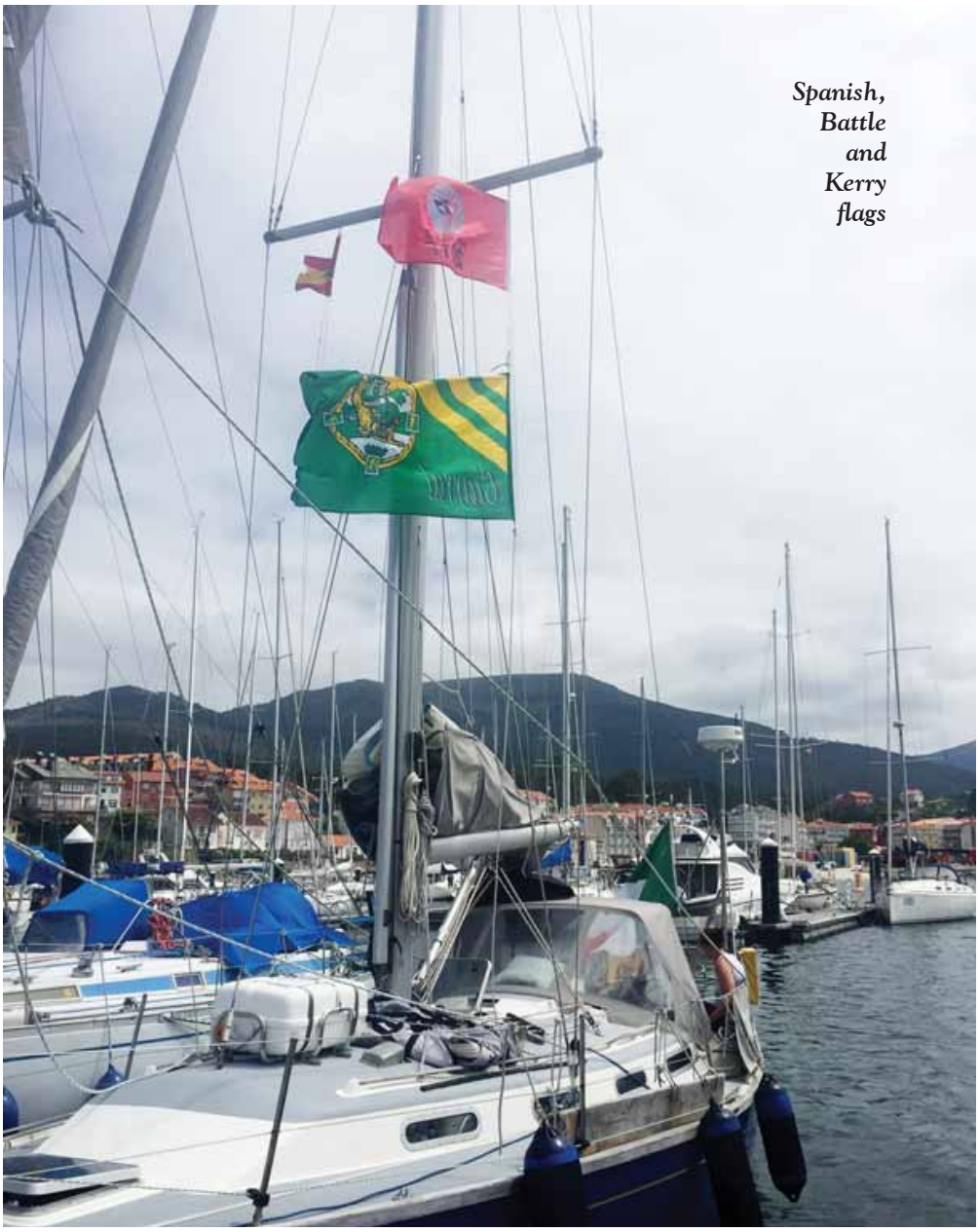
Cutter rigged in Biscay

Neil and Cormac toast the new fender step aboard Island Life

Of great help to all was that the ICC had set up a Rías Baixas WhatsApp group so rally members could exchange information. Cormac McHenry, OCC, had his fender step burst in Portosín, and he had bought the previous one at Cadenote in Sada. We think he must have seen on the Rías Baixas WhatsApp that we were in Sada, as he emailed Neil who was happy to purchase a new one for him and deliver it to his berth in Portosín. Moritz left by bus for Porto at 0800, and we left the marina at the same time for Camariñas, where we enjoyed pre-dinner drinks aboard John Daly's *Wave Dancer*. This was another great port, where the marina manager even helps with your laundry as well as with fuelling. We lost a few socks in the laundry, however, and this had Patricia meeting many other sailors on the marina while tracking them down. Our neighbour on the starboard side was preparing for a passage to the Azores, and on Monday 10th we both left port amongst the fishing boats for our last passage before the Rally start.

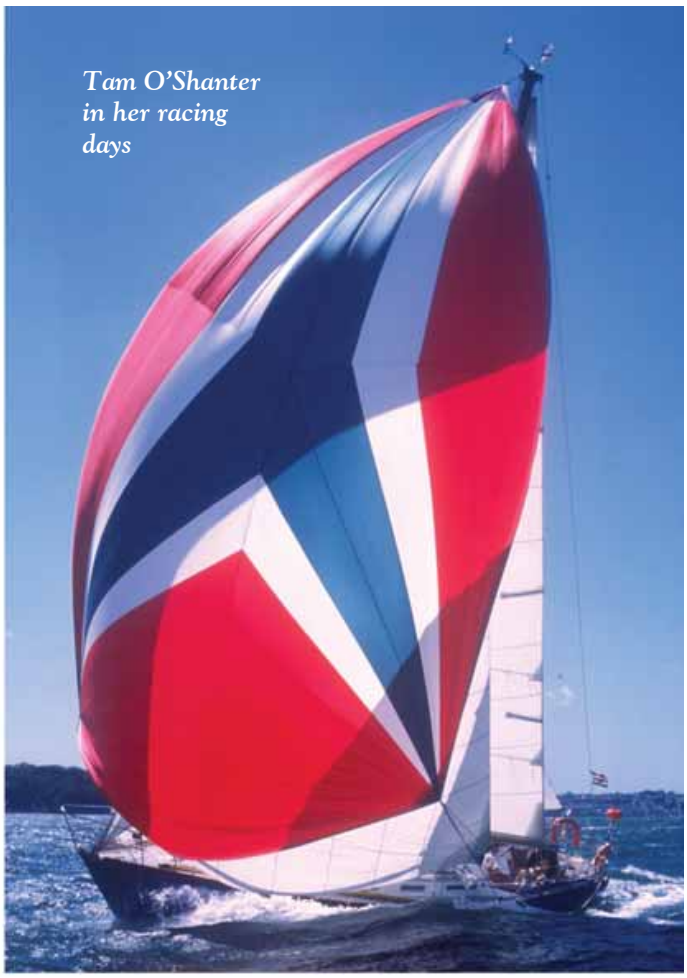
We arrived in Portosín marina to a wonderful welcome and were presented with our battle flag, which was raised to port with the Kerry flag below. Bikes were put on the pontoon and we were ready to begin the festivities. Having arrived early we had the opportunity to get to know the town, stock up and check the local restaurants. Neil gave Anne a fright

Goodbye to Patricia



Spanish, Battle and Kerry flags

one evening after dark, when he fell off his bike on the pontoon and went for a little swim. He was fished out by club workers, and will not be doing that again. Apart from a few scratches and a modicum of embarrassment, plus removing Anne's heart from her mouth, he was okay. On Wednesday 12th the three of us dined in the Real Club Náutico Portosín, and next day Patricia flew home to Paris from Santiago de Compostela. On Sunday Neil's only brother Frank and his wife Ann joined us for the Rally. They had last been with us in St Petersburg, and as usual we enjoyed their company.



Tam O'Shanter in her racing days

There were many highlights during the Rally but for us three stood out. First was Peter Hayden's faultless organisation. Second was the beauty of the Canal de Sagres and the Paso de Carreiro as Neil took *Tam O'Shanter* through with the assistance of the chart plotter and the pilotage notes compiled by Norman Kean and Geraldine Hennigan. Third were our pre-dinner drinks aboard in Combarro, where we entertained *Tam O'Shanter*'s former owners Mungo Park and Jimmy Butler and some of her former crew, including John Bourke, OCC, who had sailed with Mungo when *Tam O'Shanter* was a member of the 1973 Irish Admiral's Cup team. Also aboard were former Jimmy Butler crew Dan and Jill Cross, Colin Hayes, Pauline McKechnie and Nick Musgrave, who was part of the crew during the 1979 Fastnet.

Ready to be lifted out at Vilanova

On her cruise from Travemünde to Galicia, *Tam O'Shanter* logged 1504 miles.

Bill Marden The Care and Feeding of the Lead Acid Battery

Many of you doubtless know more than I of the care and maintenance of batteries. If so, read no further! For the rest of us, who rely on our batteries to power almost everything, I hope you may get something out of my ramblings.

In 1895 Joshua Slocum sailed out of Gloucester with only whale oil, some wood, and a few candles to show his presence at night or in fog, but nowadays every yacht has an engine starting battery designed to give a burst of high amperage (200-400 amps). This battery is usually 12 or 24 volt, providing a DC power source, and lead acid – a sensitive thing in which to store your power. Just sitting idle at the dock doing nothing it will lose in the order of 1% of its charge daily. Starting batteries do not take well to full or nearly full discharge – my estimate is that in the vicinity of 20% of the battery's future capacity can be lost if it is allowed to become completely discharged.

When charging any lead acid battery take great care not to bring near it any spark or fire or it will blow up in your face, covering you with acid. Hydrogen is a byproduct of the charging and one of our most explosive gases. During charging, dissociation takes place, producing hydrogen and sulphate ions, so don't let a spark explode your battery. If you do it will bite you. We now have sealed batteries which largely alleviate the problem, but it's better to know what can happen and sometimes does.

We also have to thank the golf industry, which needed something more than bigger drivers and funny putters to attract people to the golf course. The more urgent requirement was to get rid of the infernal combustion engine with its smell and fumes. Electricity was the only way to go, and golf had to invent a new battery which could work all day and be charged all night. The golf cart was thus born. No big problems with designing the cart, but a new type of battery had to be invented which could be used all day until completely discharged and charged up again at night. So we have golf cart engineers to thank for their wonderful invention, the deep cycle battery.

Our deep water sailor now had a battery which he could not easily destroy. It could be completely discharged over and over – all that was required was a source of electrons to feed it. My experience has been that you can get years of service out of these deep cycle cells. Further improvements have now come from the golf cart people – larger, heavier deep cycle batteries which will also serve as a starting battery if and when required. I for one have two of the latest deep cycle units for ship's power, and one sealed top quality starting battery.

The boat's battery box has now become infinitely more useful than it was at the turn of the century, but with any battery be careful not to lay a wrench across the terminals by accident. Impressive fireworks will occur if you do.

(*Bill is believed to be our most senior member, turning 96 on 1 June this year. He last wrote for* Flying Fish *2013/1, about purchasing a Hans Christian 38 in California and transporting her back to his home in Texas.*)

Houses are but badly built boats, so firmly aground that you cannot think of moving them. They are definitely inferior things, belonging to the vegetable, not the animal, world, rooted and stationary, incapable of transition. The desire to build a house is the tired wish of a man content thenceforward with a single anchorage. The desire to build a boat is the desire of youth, unwilling yet to accept the idea of a final resting place.

Arthur Ransome, *Racundra's First Cruise*

THE SOUTH COAST OF CUBA, VIA HAITI'S ÎLE-À-VACHE

Carla Gregory and Alex Helbig

(*Carla and Alex left Portsmouth in July 2014 in their 1986-built Trintella* 45 Ari B, *cruising Spain, Portugal, Madeira and the Canary Islands before crossing the Atlantic to Antigua in 2015. They have spent the past two years exploring the Caribbean, and future plans include Colombia, Panama and then 'west'. Visit their blog at www.sy-arib.com.*)

Our adventure started in Bonaire in early December 2017, when a plan was hatched to sail in company with fellow OCC members Tim and Gayle Evans – and their Patterdale terriers Gem and Pip – in *Wild Bird*, their Trintella 44, and explore the south coast of Cuba. We set off in a blustery 20 knot easterly for the 470 mile sail to Île-à-Vache on the southwest coast of Haiti. It had already been blowing 20+ knots for several days, so we expected a lumpy sea and were pleasantly surprised by the relatively small waves on day one, enabling us to cover 185 miles in 24 hours. The following day our earlier expectations were realised, with 30 knot gusts and moderate waves off of the starboard quarter making things a bit more lumpy. We still made really good progress, however, and on the third day had to reef down further to ensure we arrived in daylight, having read reports of unlit fishing boats and countless plastic bottles marking fish traps.

As we approached land the winds eased and we motor-sailed the last 12 miles. Yes, there were a few plastic bottles, but they were easily spotted with a lookout on the bow and nowhere near as many as we'd expected. The two boats had kept within a few miles of each other for the whole passage, and *Wild Bird* led the way into Port Morgan anchorage where there was one solitary boat. As *Ari B* approached it looked as if *Wild*

Dressed in her Sunday best for the market


Cienfuegos
22°N
Trinidad
Cayo Largo
Cayo Machos de Fuera
Golfo de Ana Maria
CUBA
Cayo Cinco Balas
Cayo Alcatracito
Atlantic Ocean
N
Caribbean Sea
80°W
LOS JARDINES DE LA REINA
Golfo de Guacanayabo
Marea del Portillo
Santiago de Cuba
CAYMAN ISLANDS
Cabo Cruz
Chivirico
Cayo Cuervo
Cayo Algodón Grande
CUBA
Canal Algodones
HAITI
Port Morgan
Madame Bernard
Cayos Leguas
Canal del Pingue
Cayos Pingues
JAMAICA
LOS JARDINES DE LA REINA
16°N
Cayo Grenada
ISLE DE VACHE
Caribbean Sea
Cabeza del Est
76°W

A mud fest at the market in Madame Bernard

Bird had several fenders out each side, but it soon became apparent that they were in fact local boys in dugout canoes hanging onto the sides as *Wild Bird* manoeuvred around and anchored. The entry to the anchorage is straightforward and it was very calm with good holding in mud. Arriving on a Sunday was perhaps not the wisest decision we have ever made though, as the kids were out in force!

The boys were extremely polite, eager to work or sell produce to make money to pay their school fees. We also had requests for gifts such as fishing gear, rope, old sails and mobile phones, and scoured the boat to find a few items for them. There were so many boys, however, that the constant company did get a little tiring after a few days. Ashore in the village of Caille Coq it was like stepping back in time. There was a generator and solar-powered street lights, but most people had no electricity or running water. Gayle and Carla took a guide, Pepe, to the market in Madame Bernard, four miles each way, past pigs, goats and sheep tethered along the path and through small villages, mules laden with produce passing us along the way. It had rained heavily the night before so the market itself was a mud fest

Pepe, our market guide, in his dugout canoe

OCC meet in Haiti: left to right, Nicol, Alex, Ronald, Tim and Gayle

(as was the path), but that didn't stop the local people from getting on with buying and selling everything from livestock to flip flops. Friends and fellow OCC members Nicol and Ronald in *Fairy Queen* arrived the next day *en route* to Jamaica, so we had an OCC get-together on *Ari B*.

Haiti was quite an experience, and enjoyable. Overall though, we felt that having given so many gifts, it would have been nice to be on the receiving end of a little thank you of some kind, even if it was just one of the many coconuts on the beach.

After four days we set off in the early morning for the 180 mile passage to Santiago de Cuba, at the southeast end of the island, arriving at 1400 the following day. While motoring in the wind shadow off the southwest coast of Haiti we encountered numerous plastic bottles marking fish traps, but managed to avoid them and entered the deepwater windward passage before dark, picking up a steady 15–20 knots of wind on the beam until 10 miles from Santiago.

Clearance was straightforward with medical check, customs formalities, a boat search and a US $235 fee (surprisingly, the exchange rate was better for dollars than

Fishing, Cuban style

Grand buildings…

…and not so grand buildings

euros). There are two docks, which can take about eight to ten boats in total, and an anchorage towards the plateau to the north that is well protected with good holding. The reported broken marina pontoons were in good repair, the facilities refurbished (although without toilet seats or paper). The ferry wash not really an issue, and as there were only eight boats in total including us, spread between the dock and anchorage, there was lots of space. The often-reported discharge from a cement factory also did not materialise during our stay.

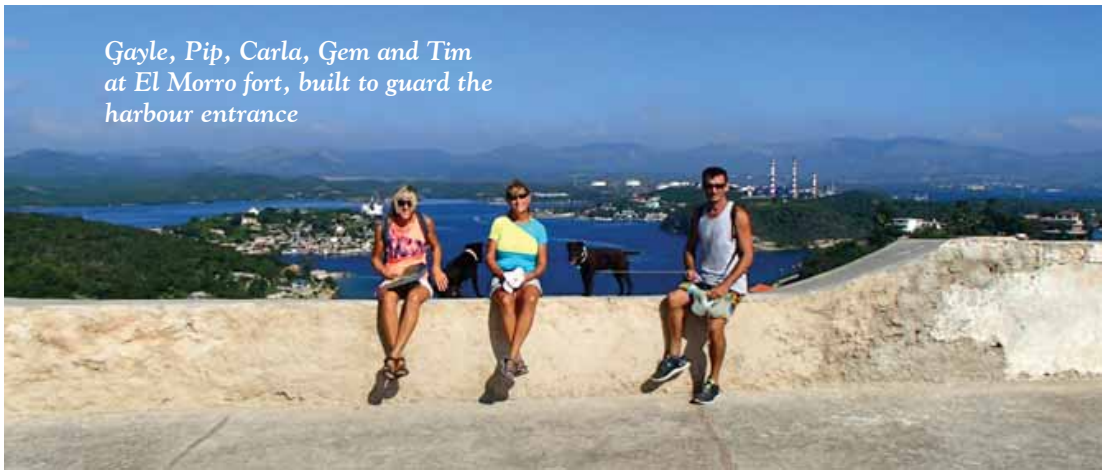
Next morning we ventured to Santiago de Cuba on the local bus, for the grand sum of 1 peso (about 4 US cents) for all four of us, engine cooling water top-up stop at a local restaurant included. Santiago is a bustling town full of 1950s American cars and Russian equivalents (Ladas and the like), and the associated fumes. Many local town buses are converted trucks, which in the UK would have livestock poking their heads out of the long narrow slit windows instead of people. Grand buildings and rundown, ramshackle ruins stand comfortably alongside each other, music pours out of bars and squares, people dance in the street, and men are engrossed in chess games under the shade of the trees.

Local transport options

We exchanged money at the *cadeca*, where you can purchase CUC (convertible pesos, primarily for foreigners) and then CUP (national pesos, used by locals). Then we stocked up on fresh fruit and vegetables at the local market where everything is priced in CUPs per pound and the vendors extremely helpful and friendly. 'Supermarkets' in Santiago are very limited, one selling only stock cubes, so we were glad we had arrived fully provisioned. Rum, however, is plentiful, very good and cheap!

On entry to Cuba we were issued with 30-day visas, so after five days it was time to move on towards Cienfuegos where we could renew them. We opted for a 75 mile daysail to Marea del Portillo, as although Chivirico is a shorter 35 miles we thought the 2·4m charted depth in the anchorage might be a bit tight for our 2·2m draught. We had little wind in the lee of Cuba, and had to motor-sail out to five miles offshore to avoid the counter-current, and arrived in Portillo at 2215. The anchorage has easy access and is buoyed, although the buoys are not lit at night. We anchored in 5m with great holding in very sticky mud, and *Wild Bird* and *Ari B* were the only two boats in this glorious, well-protected bay. Between us we carried three different varieties of electronic charts, plus GeoCuba paper charts, and found the Navionics charts to be very accurate on entry and for the rest of our passage.

Santiago's agro-pecuario (fruit and vegetable market)

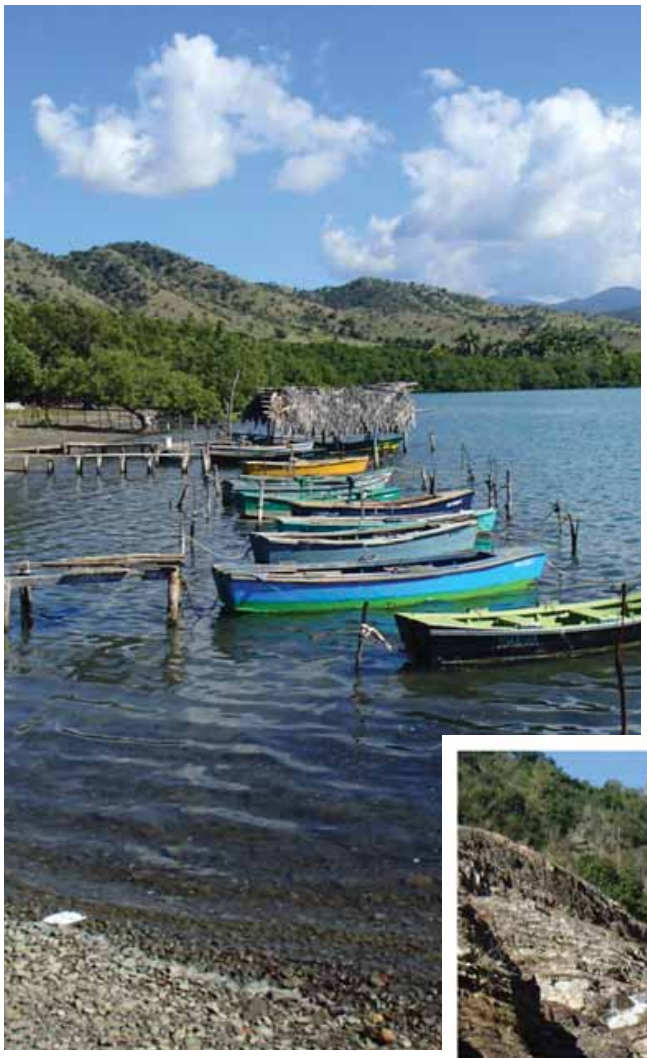


Gayle, Pip, Carla, Gem and Tim at El Morro fort, built to guard the harbour entrance

The Cuban officials were waiting for us the next day, and after completing the formalities we were free to explore. We were immediately approached by a lady asking if we wanted any fresh fruit or vegetables, and she invited us into her home. She also had fresh pork and lobsters and told us they were slaughtering a young goat on Christmas Day and we were welcome to some meat. She didn't want any money for the goods but wanted to trade for, amongst other things, clothes, fishing hooks/line, rope and old sails. On further exploration of the village – with pigs, goats and chickens roaming freely – we discovered a bakery, a school, a tiny shop and found wifi could be picked up with our ETECSA* cards. Apart from the occasional bus and car, horse and carts are the main mode of transport here, and the houses and gardens are immaculately kept. Every evening we watched the fishing boats row out to sea, using a third oar as a rudder, returning the next morning. When there was wind they would hoist a homemade sail for additional propulsion.

* ETECSA stands for Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Cuba SA, owned by the Cuban government and the country's only provider of telephone and internet services.

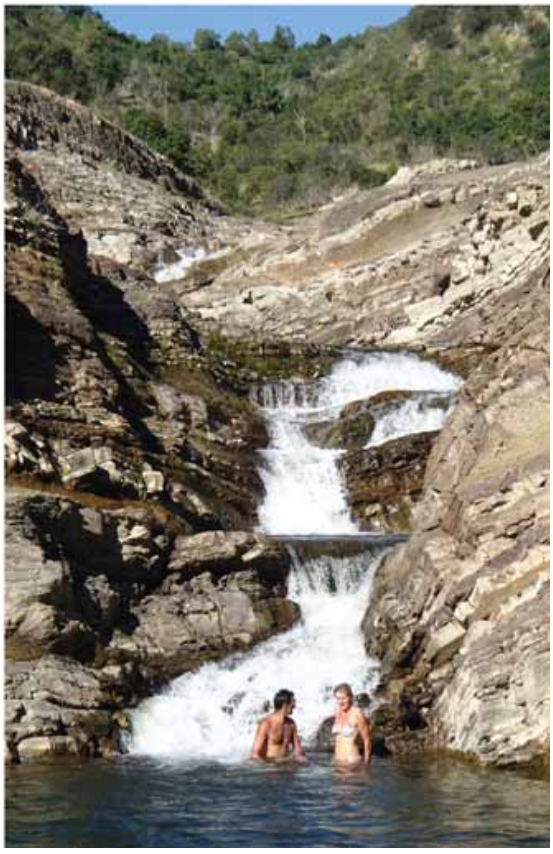
One BHP transport lorry



Portillo harbour

On Christmas Day we went swimming at a waterfall an easy 3km walk from the village. Some local people had a fire going, cooking up pork scratchings, pumpkin and plantains whilst the kids jumped off the rocks into the pools. We joined in the fun and were made very welcome.

On the way back we stopped at a smallholding and traded some goods and CUPs for lots of fresh fruit and coconut water. We were continually astounded by the generosity and friendliness of the Cuban people, who would happily invite you into their homes and share what little they have. It was very much trade not aid, and a sharp contrast to the attitude in Haiti's Île-à-Vache. We felt very ashamed of our limited Spanish and so wished we could converse more with these wonderful people.

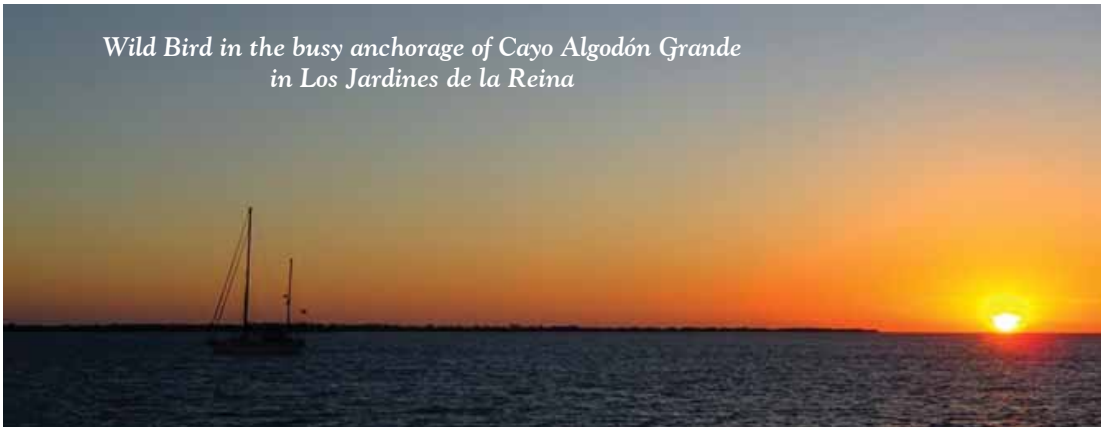


Tim and Gayle enjoying a dip at the waterfall

Tim, Carla and Alex sporting their Christmas presents, hats made by Gayle

After the normal over-indulgence on Christmas Day it was time to move on again. The Cuban official was waiting for us at 0700 to clear us to our next port, after which – laden with lovely fresh produce including a couple of legs of goat (it was the last opportunity until we reached Cienfuegos) – we set sail for Cabo Cruz.

A pleasant light-wind sail with spinnaker flying quickly carried us over the 35 miles, and we arrived in Cabo Cruz in early afternoon. We had read that the coast between Santiago de Cuba and Cabo Cruz was a fantastic fishing area and we normally do quite well. On this occasion, however, all we managed to land was one small *mahi mahi* and Carla caught a cold! We had no plans to go ashore, but even so the Cuban officials came out to both boats to check our paperwork, this time bringing a sniffer dog. Pip, one of the Patterdale terriers aboard *Wild Bird*, promptly went and sat on the dog handler's lap, causing everyone to chuckle and lightening the atmosphere. As the sun was starting to set a local fishing boat passed by and shouted over asking if we wanted any lobsters. He then headed off in the opposite direction and a couple of hundred metres away one of them jumped into the water and swam back to the boats. Presumably they didn't want the officials to



Wild Bird in the busy anchorage of Cayo Algodón Grande in Los Jardines de la Reina

see them, as approaching and selling to boats is illegal. It was certainly the most unusual takeaway delivery service we've ever encountered.

The next morning we left Cabo Cruz at 0400 for the 65 mile passage to Cayo Grenada. With a 20–25 knot northeasterly we rocketed past Golfo de Guacanayabo heading for the Los Jardines de la Reina, named by Christopher Columbus and meaning The Queen's Gardens. Lying some 50 miles south of the Cuban mainland, they are a 150 mile-long chain of more than 600 mangrove-and-coral cays. We would be all alone there, with no settlements or supplies until we reached Cienfuegos some 200 miles away. We passed through the Cabeza del Este channel into shallower water and reached the large, deserted, well-protected anchorage of Cayo Grenada (also known as Cayo Grande) just after noon with the sun high for good visibility. This area is renowned for being rich in seafood, and the next day we snorkelled for lobsters on the isolated coral blocks around the bay and sped across the calm, flat water to explore around the island. There is not much in the way of a beach, but the dogs were grateful for the partially-submerged sandbar all the same. In the afternoons, with not a waft of breeze, there was a total silence that is difficult to comprehend in a world where noise is normally a constant companion.

Another deserted beach in Cayo Cuervo

After a couple of relaxing days we excitedly set sail for our next destination, Cayo Algodón Grande. Our route would take us through the heart of Los Jardines de la Reina via well marked channels. We experienced amazing flat water sailing with northeast force 4 winds through Canal Rancha Vieja, Canal del Pingue and finally Canal Algodones to our anchorage 42 miles later. Comfortingly, the Navionics charts were spot on the whole way and all the buoys were exactly where they should be.

Cayo Algodón Grande is a large and lovely anchorage, again completely devoid of any other boats or signs of civilisation and with several sandy beaches. We anchored in 6m, with our anchors stuck solidly in the muddy bottom and protection from east through northwest. We immediately noticed that the temperature was a bit cooler, especially when we ventured into the water – a chilly 26°C! Lobsters seemingly like

Beware of the sandflies in Cinco Balas!

the cooler water, and we celebrated New Year on *Wild Bird* with 'surf and turf' – lobster scampi and mini beef burgers in fresh, homemade rolls – all washed down with the compulsory bottle of champagne. This year was no exception to the norm and again we couldn't make it to midnight – tucked up in bed by 10pm!

With slightly sore heads we set off on the short hop to Cayo Cuervo, 18 miles away. This anchorage has great all-round protection, probably the best for our 2·2m draught. There was a lovely sandy spit for the dogs and for Alex to kite-surf from, and plenty of reefs to snorkel on. It was time to start honing our lobster-hunting skills and we set off with two Hawaiian slings, a 'tickler' stick, a stick with a hook whipped to the end, a net and a bucket! One hour later, including some manic chasing of lobsters across the reef, we had six lobsters in the bucket, one damaged Hawaiian sling, freezing cold bodies and large smiles on our faces. With a cold front approaching the sea temperature had dropped to an alarming 23°C!

After a few days we wanted to move on again, but with a forecast of stronger winds approaching we needed another well-protected anchorage. As the forecast was for northeasterlies the anchorage of Cayo Alcatracito in Cayos Cinco Balas fitted the bill nicely, and was only 25 miles away. With just over 20 knots of wind from the north-northeast we soon had our anchors down in 2·8m and even managed to catch a few tuna along the way. There was a lot less water than the guides and charts had led us to believe, however, and we were unable to make it into the eastern anchorage, but we still had reasonable protection. The forecast was now for 30–35 knots from the northeast

Our catch

overnight and through Sunday, so with 40m of chain and a 40kg Rocna on the end of it, we put up our cockpit enclosures and hunkered down. The cold front was very cold, and it rained virtually the whole day on Saturday and into the night. Out came the jogging bottoms, fleeces and socks! *Wild Bird* even put their heating on after taking the woofs ashore. On many occasions we've wished we had a dog, but that was not one of them. By Sunday afternoon the wind was still blowing a hooley and the sea temperature had dropped to 20°C. No snorkelling or kite-surfing here!

Thankfully the weather settled down and brightened up after a day or so and it was time to do some exploring. During a walk along one of the many long beaches we spotted large tracks from the sea up to the undergrowth ... crocodiles? Dogs definitely on leads from now on! The local insects made the most of a rare human visit and feasted on every inch of exposed skin. Despite Gayle having spotted a shark in the shallows we braved the water, and snorkelling visibility on the reef was superb with a wealth of fish and corals, including several large lobsters. By now Tim had become an expert shot with the Hawaiian sling, and Carla used her tickler stick to lure them out and then grab them by hand.

With time on our visas running low and another cold front approaching, it was time to head towards Cienfuegos, civilisation and wifi. We had a great sail to Cayo Machos de Fuera (Iguana Island) with 15 knots of wind from the northeast, where we saw the first boats and signs of civilisation. It was another early start the next day for the 50 miles to Cienfuegos, sailed mostly under spinnaker, to be told via VHF on arrival that the anchorage was closed and the marina couldn't accommodate us. Apparently the concrete docks had been damaged by hurricane *Irma*, but why the anchorage itself was closed remained a mystery. We could almost hear the salsa and taste the *mojitos* as we sadly turned around with only two eggs, one tomato and one hairy potato left. The marina at Trinidad was too shallow for our 2·2m draught, so we set off on an overnight sail to Cayo Largo, some 70 miles to the southwest. Cayo

Iguana Hotel, Cayo Largo

Largo is purely a tourist destination and not a bustling Cuban city, and although it has beautiful white sandy beaches and clear turquoise water provisioning is very limited and expensive (four bendy carrots for 2 CUC, lots of olive oil and olives, but no UHT milk or eggs). Rum, however, was very cheap and beer only 1 CUC in the marina bar, so all was not lost.

Our craving for music and salsa had to be satisfied though, so we decided to leave *Ari B* in the very safe marina and fly to Havana to continue our exploration on land. The flights are on a standby basis and only confirmed the day before, so not great if you have a connection to make, but the price is reasonable at 159 CUC return, including transfers to and from Havana.

Cruising the south coast of Cuba may not be everyone's cup of tea. In fifteen days we only saw one fishing boat, and that from a distance, but if you want to be on a less-travelled path and enjoy remote anchorages visited by only a handful of boats every year, Cuba may be right up your street. Essential items to bring with you are insect repellent, a Hawaiian sling or spear if you want a lobster or two, and plenty of provisions.

INSURANCE IS ESSENTIAL – AND INTERESTING
Rob Stevens, MD Topsail Insurance Ltd

How do you write about insurance and make it exciting? No matter how you dress it up, it's never going to have the same impact as the thrill of a new chart plotter, the anticipation of a new boat or the exhilaration of a new set of sails. However, it is your insurance that is looking after all these fun things, including you, so it is exciting in its own quiet way, always there in the background ready to come to the rescue when you need it.

So, what are the key ingredients you need to look out for when buying insurance? Each person's needs will be different, and you have to make sure that what you are paying for actually covers what you need. Be savvy and go shopping! Gone are the days of just accepting your insurance renewal year on year. There are alternatives out there that may give equal or better cover for less, so don't just say "I can't change, I've been with them for years". Instead, do some consumer comparison and see what savings you can achieve.

This is where I contradict myself and say, "when comparing alternative quotes, don't just go on price alone". There are a number of factors that you have to decide are right for you and that may mean the cheapest isn't always best. Some things to consider are:

Yachts can sink for many reasons, sometimes without leaving their berth

Your insurance company: Do you like them? Have you had a good experience with them? Do they have a good reputation? When you contact them, are they providing the right service for you?

A lot of companies actually act as a broker and may not be the ultimate 'insurer', so do your homework and ask who the insurer is. For example, Topsail underwrite on behalf of Lloyd's insurers. So make sure that your underlying insurer is going to pay a claim and is not going to disappear if the going gets tough. Around the world there are General

Insurance regulators and Codes of Practice that insurers sign up to, which ensure a minimum level of service and commitment. Check that your insurer is part of a regulated body.

Fire is rare, but devastating when it takes hold

What excess? The excess is the amount that you have to pay before a claim can be recovered, and often the premium may be reduced at the detriment of a high excess. This may be absolutely fine for you, but when comparing policies be sure you are comparing apples with apples. If you wish to bear a higher excess, tell your insurer and they will quote accordingly.

Market Value vs Agreed Value: This is a hot topic at the moment, with new providers selling on the merits of their agreed value policies. But do you understand the difference?

- **Market Value:** This method was a traditional method used by insurers. If you bought your boat two years ago for £100,000 and it unfortunately goes glug glug, your insurer may say, "well, the boat has depreciated in two years and today is only worth £80,000, so we are only going to pay you that". If you don't agree, it is up to you to prove that it is worth more and negotiate a settlement price with the insurer.

- **Agreed Value:** Traditionally used in the international marine sectors, it offers an agreed value at the start of the policy. You bought your boat two years ago for £100,000 and you insured it for £100,000. If it unfortunately goes glug glug, your insurer will say, "we will happily pay you £100,000 as this is what we agreed".

The thing about agreed value is that it is not 'new for old'. You need to agree the boat's reasonable market value with insurers. Once you have done that, there should be no quibbling over a total loss settlement.

Hurricanes and other severe weather events can leave trails of wrecked yachts in their wake

"How do I know its reasonable market value?" Most people have an idea of what their boat is worth. We all trawl the classifieds and brokerages comparing our boat's value, and that is what you should do. Add any additional equipment which increases the value (eg. new engine, watermaker, refurbishment, etc). Your insurer will be able to assist with what should be included in the calculation. If you are in doubt, consult a local boat brokerage or get a formal valuation as part of a survey.

So which is better? That is a choice for you. In Topsail's opinion, the agreed value policy is better as it provides a guaranteed recovery in the event of a total loss. At a time when you are traumatised by such a loss, you don't need the added stress of arguing with your insurer about how much they are going to pay you. It is really important that you review your boat's value annually, however, as the premium you pay is calculated on the total value of the vessel. By over-insuring your vessel, you are simply paying more premium than you need to each year, only ever recoverable if the vessel is a total loss!

Legal Expenses Insurance: if you pay for Legal Expenses cover as an add-on to your policy but haven't got a clue what it is, you are not alone. Many people don't realise that it covers you for the costs associated with taking legal proceedings against a third party. This can be valuable in a number of areas, but predominately for uninsured loss recovery and contractual cover.

- **Uninsured loss recovery** comes into play when a loss caused by a third party falls below your insurance excess. For example, someone collides with your boat, but the £450 it costs to repair the gelcoat is less than your £500 excess. There is therefore no claim and your insurer will not recover the cost for you. The legal expenses policy will utilise a panel of expert marine solicitors who will facilitate recovery of the cost from those responsible.

- **Contractual dispute losses** are also covered. Say that work on an engine was carried out, and a few weeks later a related failure occurs resulting in a dispute. The legal expenses policy will pursue and support you in the recovery of costs for legal proceedings against the contractor.

In our opinion Legal Expenses insurance is a worthwhile addition to any policy and definitely justifies the small additional premium, usually no more than £10 or £20.

There are many other benefits that individual insurers provide to enhance their policies. Don't get blinded by the bells, whistles, flashing lights and razzmatazz – it is all there to entice you to buy. Look for good solid cover. Make sure it meets your own individual needs and that you have a good level of service and rapport.

Travel Insurance

'What about it?' I hear you ask. Well, have you ever thought of whether your travel insurance actually covers you while sailing?

Whether holidaying at home or going abroad, many people just rely on the free insurance that they get with their bank, or simple 'bucket and spade' insurance. Think before you rely on such policies, however – consider getting specialist yacht travel

insurance. Many standard insurance policies exclude waterborne activities, or impose severe restrictions. Do a bit of homework and check that your own travel insurance policy is actually covering you when you are afloat.

If sailing abroad it is absolutely imperative that you have proper travel insurance, whether taking your own boat or chartering. It will cover emergency medical costs, repatriation and cancellation as basic, and have additional benefits such as baggage, personal accident, personal liability and charter excess waiver cover.

So where do you find specialist travel insurance for sailing? There are 'bucket and spade' travel insurers who provide a 'bolt on' sailing policy, but this could be considered pretty inadequate for cruising. There are a few specialists providers in the market, and Topsail launched its Yachtsman's Travel Insurance way back in 1998. It is proud that this is now considered a benchmark yachting travel product by the worldwide yachting community.

Having reached what the word count and reader boredom will allow, it is time to conclude. If you have found this helpful and it has brought various questions to mind about your own circumstances, then make sure you speak with your insurer and ensure that they are meeting your needs. There is additional information available on the Topsail Insurance website for those who would like to find out more. I told you insurance could be interesting!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Topsail Insurance has been providing specialist boat insurance from Brighton in the UK for 22 years, and sailed into the Australian boating industry with a Perth office in 2014. Rob Stevens is a Director and has 32 years' experience in the marine insurance industry. Topsail is an Ocean Cruising Club-endorsed insurance provider which offers both yacht and yacht travel insurance for local and offshore cruisers and is a Lloyd's Coverholder.

Potato and pak choi rissoles (continued)

Boil the potatoes in salted water until cooked. Drain, mash roughly and leave uncovered. Meanwhile, slice the onion and fry gently in a little oil (olive if you have it) until translucent. Add a chopped garlic clove and the finely-shredded head of pak choi. Turn up the heat and continue to fry until the onion begins to brown and the pak choi is thoroughly wilted. Season lightly with salt and pepper.

Scrape the contents of the pan, including the remaining oil and any sticky bits, into the mashed potato and mix well. Divide the mixture into four and shape roughly into burger-sized patties. Shallow fry in vegetable oil over a high heat until brown and crispy.

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HOW TO RETIRE GRACEFULLY?
Rev Bob Shepton

(Flying Fish 1991/1 *carried an article by the Rev Bob entitled* Never Again... *He's plainly not taken his own advice, however, as since then he's written for us no less than 22 times, usually about 'expeditions' in his own 33ft Westerly Discus* Dodo's Delight*, but occasionally about deliveries, or crewing on superyachts.*

Bob's second love – or possibly his first – is climbing, and many first ascents in Greenland and the Arctic have started from the deck of Dodo's Delight*. However in 2017 he stayed a little closer to his Scottish home...*

The photos are courtesy of Chris Prescott and Stuart Macdonald.)

It was my privilege to take Dave Macleod, Britain's top rock-climber, and his team of Nat and Chris to St Kilda, for Dave and Nat to do another superb new route there and Chris to film it. I had met Dave from time to time locally, and somehow in conversation the idea of going across in *Dodo's Delight* came up. "That would be fun", said Dave.

Eventually a date was fixed for June. In May the weather was strangely fine and settled in Scotland, but by June we were back to the usual depressions marching across the Atlantic with attendant rain and wind. But on 10 June Dave and his party arrived at the pontoons by kind permission of Linnhe Marine near Appin, together with Stu Macdonald who had been volunteered by a friend as sailing back-up as although Dave and team were expert climbers they had done no sailing. They brought their gear aboard, chose their respective bunks, stowed their food, and then I walked them round the boat identifying features and functions. They endured a safety briefing from me even though this was a private expedition, and adjusted lifejackets in case they should feel the need of them. We left the solid dinghy on the grass, again by kind permission, and we were off.

The aim was to get as far up the Sound of Mull as we could that afternoon to introduce them to sailing. It served its purpose though conditions were light, and we continued motor sailing with sails up. There was one moment of crisis when the engine started 'hunting' and almost cut out, but after I changed a fuel filter it started again and

Dave – training must go on


8°W
7°W
6°W
N
58°N
OUTER HEBRIDES
LEWIS
The Minch
Stanton Passage
HARRIS
Leverburgh
ST KILDA
Cope Passage
NORTH UIST
Little Minch
SCOTLAND
Lochmaddy
Sound of Harris
Portree
BENBECULA
Neist Point
Atlantic Ocean
SOUTH UIST
SKYE
Loch Scresort
57°N
CANNA
RHUM
Mallaig
BARRA
INNER HEBRIDES
EIGG
MUCK
Ardnamurchan Point
Loch Drumbuie
Loch Linnhe
COLL
Tobermory
Sound of Mull
Appin
TIREE
MULL
Oban
8°36'W
8°30'W
BORERAY
57°52'N
SOAY
Glen Bay
ST KILDA
56°N
JURA
HIRTA
57°48'N
DUN
Village Bay
ISLAY

The crew: Chris, Dave, Stu and Nat

ran smoothly. Relief – I did not fancy anchoring in Village Bay at St Kilda without an engine, due to its reputation of sometimes having to abandon at a moment's notice. We changed watches every two hours and put into Loch Drumbuie opposite Tobermory for a pleasant, settled night at anchor.

The next day was more challenging. Two reefs in the main – somehow three reefs got in there at one stage – and the No.3 jib. It seemed to take a long time to reach Ardnamurchan Point, though the climbers enjoyed spotting possible routes on the Morven coast as we went along, and then the weather deteriorated further, to showery

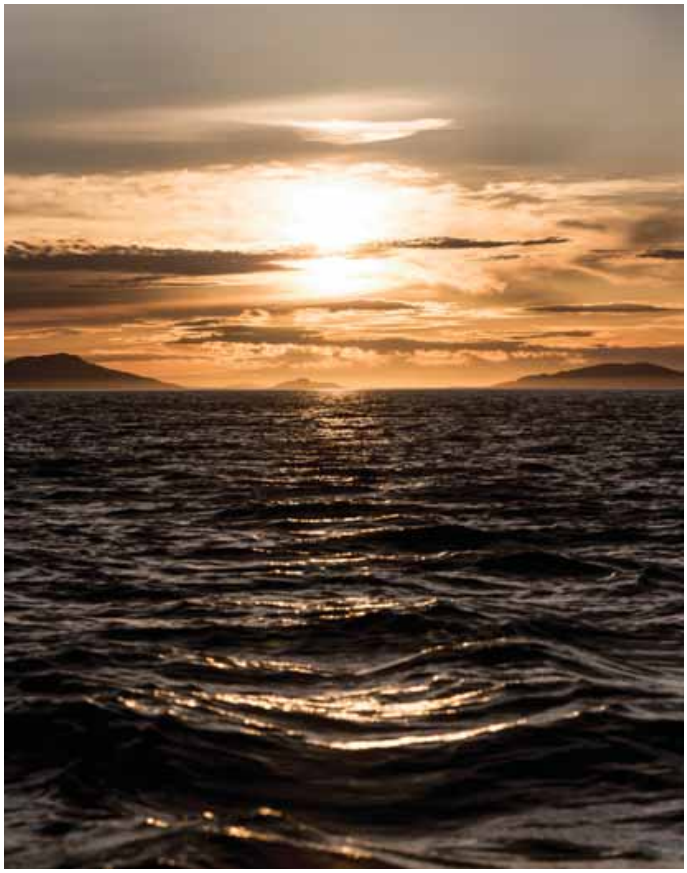
Dave in unusual mode as winchman on a sailing boat

Pleasant sailing across to Lochmaddy

with strong winds. The log reads 'Lively sailing'. We were aiming ultimately for the Sound of Harris, but it was unpleasant and I did not think my team were really ready for night passages yet. I made the decision to go into Canna, which we reached with some drama at the end – the genoa wrapped itself round and round the wrong way as we tried to furl it, and we couldn't get it to unfurl for us to roll it up the right way. At last Stu suggested turning downwind, which worked – we were able to unwrap it and then wrap it round the right way, the unflappable Dave obeying instructions on the helm. These climbers are used to the odd crisis. There was a rumour you had to pay for picking up a mooring in Canna so we put our own anchor down, and paid for it next morning after a stormy night with a huge mass of kelp.

It was lively in the harbour, but better outside with not too strong a wind even when we cleared the shelter of the island. Close-reaching we still could not clear the northwest corner of Skye and had to motor-sail, but there was not the wind and clag of the day before. Neist Point gave much interest as Dave and Nat had done a hard route there with Chris filming sometime back, and then to my surprise the wind backed sufficiently into the south for us to have a pleasant sail across the Minch to Lochmaddy. It strengthened considerably as we approached so we followed the ferry route in on engine. We were just investigating putting our anchor down at the far end when Chris murmured, "So no showers and restaurant?". There were pontoons in the distance by the ferry wharf – was he serious, surely we were meant to be hardened sailors and climbers, eschewing such luxuries?! "I'm prepared to pay" he said – wow, these guys are quick on the uptake. "Well, okay then, though I'll never live this down...". We moored against a pontoon at the second attempt in an awkward wind with people kindly taking our lines, also at the second attempt, then went ashore and had an excellent meal at the Lochmaddy Hotel. Thank you, Chris, and I'm forced to admit that it was a very pleasant evening.

Next morning a man approached the boat, "Is this *the Dodo's Delight*? I'm just reading your book *Addicted to Adventure* which I'm enjoying. Will you sign it for me, please?". All very flattering and I got Dave to sign it too, so he now really has a bumper issue!



The Sound of Harris

Then the gas alarm went off – in trying to light the stove I had let out too much gas before I realised we needed to change bottles. I opened a side portlight and pumped the bilge dry as gas sinks, and it eventually stopped. Then the switch for the VHF gave up, so we changed another little-used switch over and the radio sprang back into life. And then Dave, a prodigious tea drinker, had ordered a huge pot of tea, or was it two, at a neighbouring café.

We started late. The Sound of Harris proved good and bad. We followed the Cope Passage and initially all was fine with obvious buoyage to follow, but then suddenly there were none. My old chart-plotter showed a whole lot more buoys but they were not to be seen, although there were still plenty of rocks and shoals to the north. Was this a cost-cutting exercise, reminiscent of the way that first Oban Coastguard was closed

After the Sound of Harris and before the force 7

down, then Clyde Coastguard, and now we are left with only Stornoway to the north and Belfast to the south for the whole of the west coast of Scotland? I learned later that after the military had largely left St Kilda this buoyage was removed, so in a sense it was indeed a cost-cutting exercise!

Looking around it appeared that the ferry route to Leverburgh was still well buoyed, so I ordered a radical turn to starboard to follow the green buoys and red posts marking this excitingly shallow route. A ferry passed us going the other way and we nudged over precariously to let it past. So on to Leverburgh where we put an anchor down in the open roadstead. It was only 1530 – should we continue on to St Kilda? But I was still not happy with the thought of a night passage with a novice crew, and arriving at midnight to sort out what to do at St Kilda, so we stayed and left early next morning. Decisions, decisions! Ocean sailing is easier – you just get out there and take what comes, and the next waypoint is a thousand miles away with plenty of ocean to play with.

The buoyage north from Leverburgh made the remaining exit from the Sound easy, and so into the Atlantic. I phoned Stornoway to learn the shipping forecast for the Hebrides. "South or Southwest force 5–7". "Thank you, it's going to be a hairy passage then", and it was. Force 5, force 6, gusting into mid to strong force 7s from ahead. The sea gradually built the further out we went and Chris especially, who did a long trick at the wheel to spare his partner Nat, got thoroughly soaked with spray and waves as he sat behind the wheel. At 1100 there was a violent shaking of the whole rig – whatever was the matter? Then I saw the inner foresail sliding down its stay, so rushed forward and fortunately was able to pull the rest of it down easily. The halyard and sail had obviously parted company. There followed a somewhat stormy interlude on the foredeck, tying the sail with one of its sheets along the starboard

Skipper at work, Dave getting his head down between watches

The climbers and all their gear kindly being given a lift ashore by the RIB

guardrail, with the odd wave coming over the top. Finally it was secured, albeit roughly, and I made it back to the cockpit with my soaked hat falling over my eyes with every step. We do this for pleasure?

At least we were able to lay the course, in a rather wavy-navy fashion with an inexperienced crew, and at last St Kilda loomed out of the mist in the distance. There was a gale force 8 forecast for Rockall to the south, so we headed straight for the northern side of the island. A violent gust as we passed close to a headland almost knocked us down, but we put into Glen Bay, to the fury of the resident seals. It is deep, so we put our anchor down close to the shore and set about establishing a line ashore for good measure. These strong climbers were able to paddle the dinghy ashore against the wind and stitch up the lines, which was just as well as we spent the night really lying to this rather than the anchor which dragged along the rocky bottom. We also put an old CQR out astern, just in case the wind went into the north, hauling the climbers back on a line against the wind when they had laid it.

After a windy night with williwaws gusting down from the hills above, it grew a little calmer in the afternoon. We spent some time cobbling together a system of joining and buoying the line ashore to the line from the CQR so that Stu and I could pick them up later if we had to abandon Village Bay. We were then able to fetch our main anchor, and threw out the buoyed lines for later reference, and so made our way in calmer conditions to Village Bay on the south side. There was already a German yacht and, horrors, a cruise ship in the bay, and certainly the conditions were much calmer – though that is a relative term in Village Bay, as there is always some swell and the wind goes round and round without rhyme or reason. We anchored close to the pier, where some RIBs from the cruise ship were circling around waiting to pick up their clients from their foray ashore. I had a sudden inspiration, and beckoned to one of them. "I have

The climbers' tents in a fine spell

Britain's No.1 climber aboard, I suppose you aren't allowed to take them and their gear ashore, are you?" "Oh, who's that?" But she kindly loaded them and their mountains of climbing gear onto her RIB and took them ashore. This turned out to be a great boon, as they were taking a lot of gear with them to camp and climb and it would have taken multiple trips in our small dinghies to get it all ashore.

The cruise ship left, followed by the German yacht, and the next day a smaller, tough-looking ship arrived. She looked vaguely familiar, and on checking she turned out to be a vessel which I had last seen in scenic Prinz Christian Sund in Greenland. It was all happening in St Kilda. This was a maintenance day for us, and Stu proved

Conferring together at the camp site

amazing. He has worked in wood and metal, and in spite of being a thalidomide baby and having no fingers on his left hand he was up and down that mast like a yo-yo. We soon had a messenger down the mast and had reeved a halyard for the inner foresail. But by then the sea had grown rougher so we aborted for the moment.

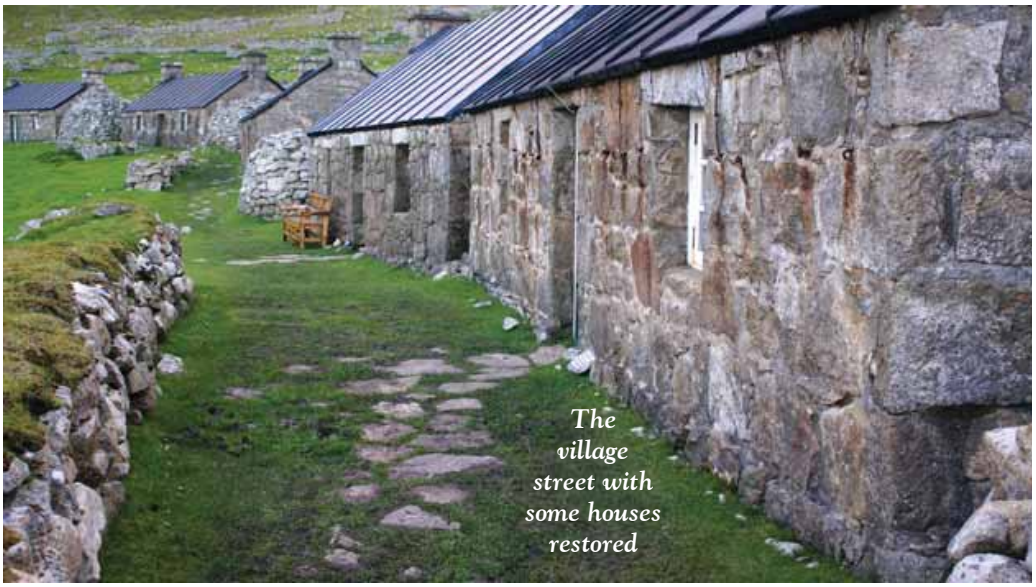
The moment lasted for two days, with quite a lively sea running in the bay. The climbers meantime were stuck in their tents. Memories of Chris Bonington and Robin Knox-Johnston, gale-bound together in *Suhaili* in Akureyri in Iceland after sailing and climbing in Greenland. Robin expressed surprise in his book that Chris was taking it so well. 'Climbers have to get used to waiting for weather as well, you know'. Here we were again.

St Kilda today, old and new

And what of St Kilda itself? As Nat Berry wrote later in an excellent article for UKClimbing:

> St Kilda is situated on the fringes of the British Isles, and at the margins of many an imagination. A volcanic archipelago rising sharply out of the North Atlantic 41 miles off the west coast of the Outer Hebrides, the islands of Hirta, Dùn, Boreray, Soay,

The village street from the hill above



The village street with some houses restored

and their surrounding seastacks standing guard, are often described as being 'at the edge of the world'. The remotest part of the British Isles, St Kilda is believed to have been inhabited as early as the Bronze Age, with settlers arriving on the island 4000 to 5000 years ago.

By the late 1600s a hardy group of around 180 St Kildans rented the land around Village Bay, paying their rent in kind to distant landlords – the MacLeods of Dunvegan on Skye – and receiving imported goods in exchange for their labour and produce. Bird fowling, agriculture and fishing provided the islanders with food and clothing. Cragsmen risked life and limb to snatch eggs and birds from nests by hand and fishing rod on the cliffsides, scrambling barefoot or in socks with plaited horsehair ropes tied around their waists. For the St Kildans, climbing was not a pursuit of leisure – it was crucial to their existence.

One of the puffins for which St Kilda is famous

It is perhaps ironic, although not altogether unsurprising, that the gradual demise and subsequent evacuation of the St Kildans vin 1930 came about through increased interest from tourists and contact with the civilised mainland. Self-sufficiency dwindled, and the harsh living conditions of the blackhouses, unpredictable North Atlantic climate, and lack of able-bodied men, led to a decrease in morale as the inhabitants looked to retreat from the increasingly inhospitable island. In 1957 St Kilda was

A typical cleist where birds and eggs were stored for the winter

bequeathed to The National Trust for Scotland by the 5th Marquess of Bute, and in 1986 was inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in recognition of its natural heritage. In 2006 the cultural landscape of St Kilda was also inscribed, making St Kilda one of only 35 places in the world listed as a dual World Heritage Site.

School children from a different era

Dave Macleod on the first pitch of one of his overhanging new routes

So we waited, in wind, mist, drizzle and spray, rolling at anchor in the bay. The days went by. Dave was fairly relaxed but I think Chris was feeling the pressure to make the film. After three days of waiting Dave was at last able to start work on the

Nat Berry seconding up a pleasant finishing groove

Nat on the famous Mistress Stone, where young St Kildan men were tested to see whether they were man enough

route in the evening, and over the next two days he climbed two new world-class routes on the west cliff of Hirta – intricate, technical, hard, over prodigious overhangs, quietly and skilfully seconded by Nat, though on her own admittance with some strange unheard of climbing moves! Honour and the film were satisfied. Stu and I were not so clever trying to rescue the lines and CQR in Glen Bay in rough conditions. Suffice it to say that we lost the anchor and some warps, but we still had a boat...

Unaccustomed as I am …

Modern technology – Dave preparing to launch the drone

The passage back was one of contrasts. We put out to sea at 1015 on a Wednesday, and had some adventures launching and retrieving a drone for pictures. Chris nearly lost his fingers catching it. We then continued motoring, and motoring, in very light airs all the way across to the Sound of Harris, through the Sound keeping to the Stanton Passage on the Harris side, across to Skye and down to Canna. Next morning we waited for the wind to go round, finally putting out at 1400 and enduring a strong, gusty passage with heavy rain. More waiting in Loch Scresort on the east side of Rhum for a change of wind direction and then back to motoring, past Eigg, past Muck, past Ardnamurchan Point, down the Sound of Mull and up Loch Linnhe, picking up my mooring at 0235 Friday morning.

"Well done, guys, a really successful and enjoyable expedition. But hey, ocean sailing is easier..."

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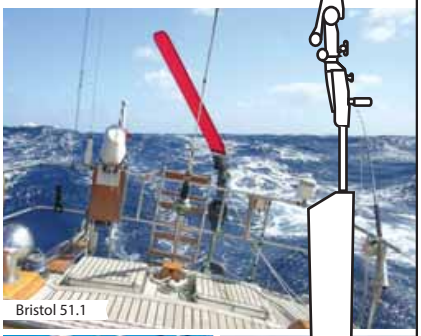
Hallberg Rassy 352


Jeanneau SO 54


Wauquiez PS 40


Bristol 51.1


Roberts 44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Columbia 43


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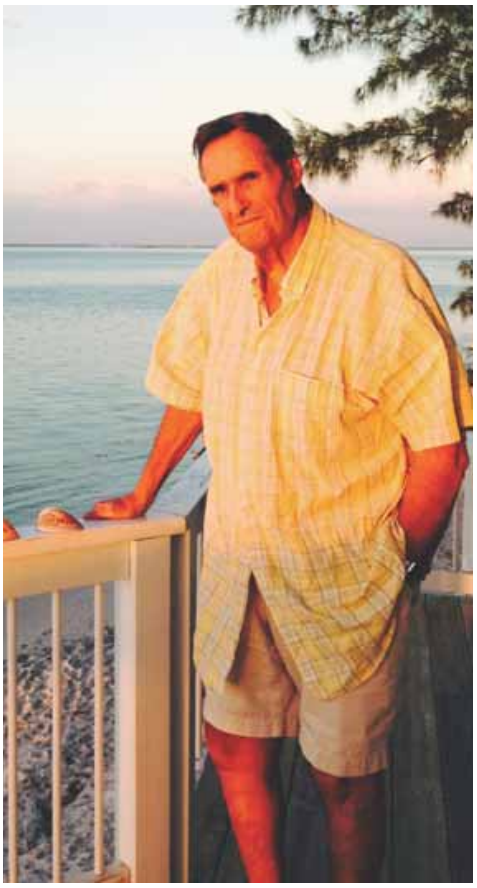
OBITUARIES & APPRECIATIONS

Kenneth Wunderlich

It is with sadness that we inform members of the death of Kenneth Wunderlich, a two-time circumnavigator and OCC member for over 50 years, who passed away on 20 June 2017 in Revere, Massachusetts at the age of 84. He was proud of his membership and flew the flying fish burgee on all three of his boats. Although in his later years and no longer sailing, he still enjoyed reading about the passages made by other members, chronicled in the *Newsletter* and *Flying Fish*.

Kenneth graduated from Columbia University, NY and became an electrical engineer. Working in Research and Development for American Science and Engineering he was involved in many projects, including the Hubble Telescope and airport Cat Scan security systems. Later he would work at GTE in the Boston area. He married Bebe, his wife and sailing partner of 58 years, in 1959. His interest in sailing didn't start until his twenties, when he became friends with some serious sailors and was very influenced by a lecture given by two circumnavigators. While discussing the lecture with his cousin Patience Wales and her husband someone said 'we could do that', and the idea was born for the four of them to sail around the world together.

The first boat that Kenneth and Bebe purchased was a 42ft wooden Atkins ketch which they named *Kismet*. They set off in her in 1963 on their first circumnavigation, via the Panama and Suez Canals, which they completed in 1967. It was during this circumnavigation that Kenneth completed his qualifying passage of 2900 miles from the Galapagos Islands to the Marquesas, and he joined the OCC in 1965.



Since *Kismet* carried only 50 gallons of diesel, they decided to stay with the trade winds rather than sail closer to the equator. Bebe recalls that during the trip they developed a system of responsibilities in which a list of 100 routine duties were divided among the four aboard. This system worked extremely well, leaving no one person as captain, only as members of a team. Kenneth's strong points, which helped make the trip possible, were his incredible ability to analyse problems and develop solutions, along with his developing navigational skills. He practised the celestial navigation needed for the trip at anchor in calm waters until he was satisfied with the results, but his skills were called into question when they were transiting the Windward Passage in rough water and he calculated their position

as being in the middle of Texas! He became much more proficient in rough conditions as they proceeded.

Kenneth's love of the sea and long-distance sailing prompted them to look for a bigger boat with more speed and motoring range. They found that in *Boston Light*, a Skye 51, designed by Robert Ladd. She proved to be a wonderful sea boat, and in 1986 they set off again for a second circumnavigation, again with Patience and her husband. This time they were able to follow a route closer to the equator and visited places they had bypassed the first time, including the Marshall Islands and Guadalcanal. This passage was again sailed east to west through the Panama and Suez Canals and completed in two years, returning to Boston in 1988.

Boston Light was eventually sold and Robert Ladd was commissioned to design their dream boat, a one-off 54ft raised deck saloon cutter that was built in Ontario, Canada. The boat was christened *Boston Light II* and they sailed her on numerous trips down the East Coast of the US and to the Bahamas. They also found time to charter in various places around the world, as well as participating in trips sponsored by National Geographic.

Kenneth leaves behind his wife Bebe (née Kinsman), cousin Patience Wales, many friends, and his beloved cats.

Dick and Moira Bentzel

Meo Vroon

Meo Vroon was a man full of stories and a great person to be with. When I first met him, in January 2006 during the Ocean Cruising Club dinner in Zierikzee, Netherlands, he gave us a copy of his book entitled *100,000 mijl Zeehaas*, an ode to *Zeehaas*, his 37ft Tina designed by Dick Carter. (A 'zeehaas' is the Dutch name for a sea hare, a mollusc of the snail family).

In *100,000 mijl Zeehaas* he describes a period of more than 15 years during which he spent all his free time sailing *Zeehaas* on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean with family and friends. One of his famous sayings during tacking, according to his friend Pieter Blussé, was 'Don't stand on the children!'. This would be unheard of on today's

Meo Vroon in a photo from his book '100,000 mijl Zeehaas' (note the flying fish on his sweater)

roomier yachts. It is a wonderful story of a happy ship and an invaluable manual for anyone who wishes to race and cruise with family and friends in the most pleasant way possible. This he did around the Caribbean, French Guyana, Brazil, Suriname...

Of his eleven Fastnet Races, seven were on board *Zeehaas*, including the notorious Fastnet race of 1979. Meo also raced *Zeehaas* double-handed in the Round Britain and Ireland of 1985. He joined the OCC in 1979 after making a 3600 mile passage from Martinique to St Malo aboard the 65ft French schooner *Grand Louis*.

Meo's motor yacht Zeehaas, in which he cruised European waters for 22 years

After the sailing yacht *Zeehaas* Meo bought a motor yacht which he also called *Zeehaas*, and for 22 years toured around Europe, the UK and Scandinavia. Meo and his *Zeehaas* were also very active and visible in the racing scene, this time as a start, finish and escort vessel. I saw him in Workum when my daughters were racing in the Cadet Class and *Zeehaas* was a start vessel. At the end of the day he invited us all on board for (very extended) drinks. He was fun for adults and inspiring for kids.

Meo was born and bred in Breskens and the sea was in his blood. He was Port Officer there for more than 30 years and a great host. He organised the last Dutch OCC event in Breskens, a tour of the Fishery Museum followed by a wonderful dinner.

Meo – a brilliant raconteur, generous friend and great sailor – will be sorely missed.

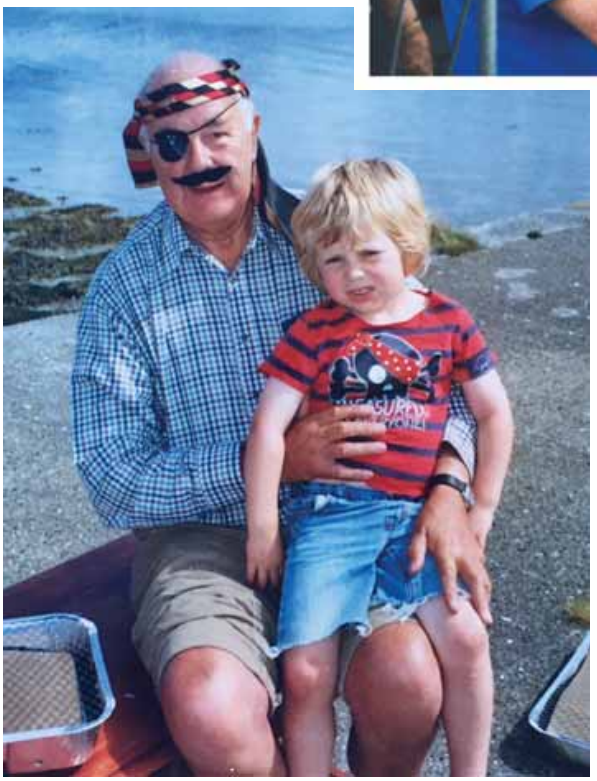
Albert de Heer,
Port Officer Rotterdam

Ronald Sharp

Ronald Linklater Sharp, 'Ronnie' to his many friends, not just on the Clyde but round the world, died quietly at home on 12 January 2018. Ronnie was in a very real sense two people. A quiet, efficient, behind-the-scenes member and often chairman of the many legislative committees which, throughout the '70s and '80s, worked so hard to improve the quality of yacht racing and yacht racing management not just on the Clyde but also on a broader scale. His achievements were recognised by his progression through the ranks to be Commodore of the Clyde Cruising Club and Admiral of the Mudhook Yacht Club.

Ronnie aboard Ultimate, a Moody Carbineer which he shared with George McGruer. Clockwise from left: Ronnie, Dorothy McGruer, Sheila-May Sharp, Hamish Thompson, and George McGruer

Ronnie with his grandson William



Ronnie became a formidable dinghy helmsman soon after joining the Clyde Cruising Club in 1948, moving on to the smaller keel boat classes before finding his real love of the sea in cruising and passage-making. This he enjoyed for over thirty years, many of them aboard *Ultimate*¸ his Moody Carbineer 46. He joined the OCC in 1980 following a 3000 mile passage from Marblehead, Massachusetts to Cork, Ireland the previous year aboard the 55ft *Cuilaun of Kinsale*. He made a second transatlantic passage in 1981, as well as a voyage from Darwin to Bali.

What is the 'vital spark' that transcends acquaintanceship and turns it into a true friendship lasting

over sixty years? I met Ronnie on the lawn of the Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club on a Saturday afternoon after a North Channel Race, and three weeks later had a beer with him on the hill overlooking Crinan harbour at the end of the first leg of the Tobermory Race. Since then we have sailed many thousands of miles together, including three of the Clyde Cruising Club's Blue Water Trophy Races and a Fastnet Race. We often had quite heated discussions but never ever fell out, and probably what I shall miss most are his, some would say old fashioned, ideas of honesty and integrity. I doubt if many are privileged to have enjoyed such a friendship.

Michael McKee

Hugo Duplessis

Hugo Duplessis, keen yachtsman and author of *Fibreglass Boats*, has died at the age of 94. He was highly regarded in the sailing world as an experienced cruising man, and in particular for his expertise in fibreglass.

Hugo was born at Newtown Park near Lymington, UK on 30 June 1923, where he and his sister Hyacinth were initially educated by a governess. He then became a boarder at a nearby prep school, his secondary years being spent at Beaumount in Surrey. He went on to study electronics at Southampton University, punctuated by the war. He was just 16 when the Second World War broke out, and served with his father in the Home Guard. Newtown was also home during this time to four young evacuees from Portsmouth, who stayed for seven years and with whom Hugo kept in touch all his life.

His childhood on Hampshire's New Forest gave him a love of nature and wildlife, and with the proximity to the Beaulieu and Lymington Rivers his love of boats was born, encouraged by his grandfather Col Barklie McCalmont. Many happy hours were spent negotiating the low tide mudflats in various craft, from a Sharpie to a canoe, progressing to adventures on the Solent and the eventual purchase of his first yacht, *Crimson Rambler*, a sistership of Humphrey Barton's *Rose Rambler*.

From 1942 until 1946 he was a radar technician in the Fleet Air Arm, working on the development of microwave radar for night fighter aircraft. His love of electronics continued, as after the war he worked for a few years for Decca Navigator in Weymouth. His interest in fibreglass developed, and with it his writing, mainly of a nautical nature. He also cruised extensively aboard *Crimson Rambler*, visiting the Channel Islands, France, Spain and Ireland, often

Crimson Rambler

accompanied by his great friend Tris Rigg. Later he met Joyce Keevil, a young pharmacist from London, and they married in 1952.

Hugo at a Royal Cruising Club meet in 2014

In 1956 Hugo's uncle died, leaving Newtown Park with some 350 acres to him. He resigned from Decca to take on running the estate, but as the inheritance did not have the liquid assets to match the fixed, he was unable to maintain the house. He reluctantly sold it in 1958, keeping a modest 30 acres on which he built a new home, in which he and Joyce were joined by their daughter Primrose in 1962 and their son Christopher the following year.

In the late 1950s Hugo went into partnership with Mick Hammick to found the Ropewalk Boatyard in Lymington, on the site which now houses Lymington Yacht Haven. He developed his knowledge of fibreglass and became an expert yacht surveyor of some repute, publishing the first edition of *Fibreglass Boats* in 1966. After his mother died in 1971 Hugo moved the family to Ireland, to Bantry Bay in West Cork, a place he had visited in his single sailing days.

As well as continuing with his yacht surveying business once in Ireland, Hugo set up the country's first yacht charter company in 1978, working closely with the *Bord Failte* (Irish Tourist Board). He was a member of the Irish Boat Rental Association (IBRA) and was the Representative for Ireland to the then EEC on all things nautical, travelling to Brussels regularly. He cruised the southwest of Ireland extensively and was Commodore of Bantry Bay Sailing Club for several years.

In 1986 he embarked on his lifelong dream, to sail around the world. He succumbed to the beauty of the Carribbean, however, and remained there for 15 years, living on his 36ft Westerly Conway, *Samharcin an Iar*, and cruising the island chain from Antigua to Venezuela. He returned to the UK in 2001 on the death of his sister Hyacinth, and moved into her house in Lymington, remaining there until 2016 when his health started to fail and he moved to a care home. He published the fifth edition of *Fibreglass Boats* – which by now had become a standard text – in 2010, and continued to write until a few weeks before his death.

Hugo joined the OCC in 1985, following a 1216 mile passage from Bearhaven on the southwest coast of Ireland to Madeira in *Samharcin an Iar*. He was also a member of both the Royal and the Irish Cruising Clubs, and an honorary member of Bantry Bay Sailing Club. He is survived by his children, Prim and Chris, his grandchildren, Nicola, Simon, Sam and Hayley, and by five great grandchildren.

Prim Duplessis

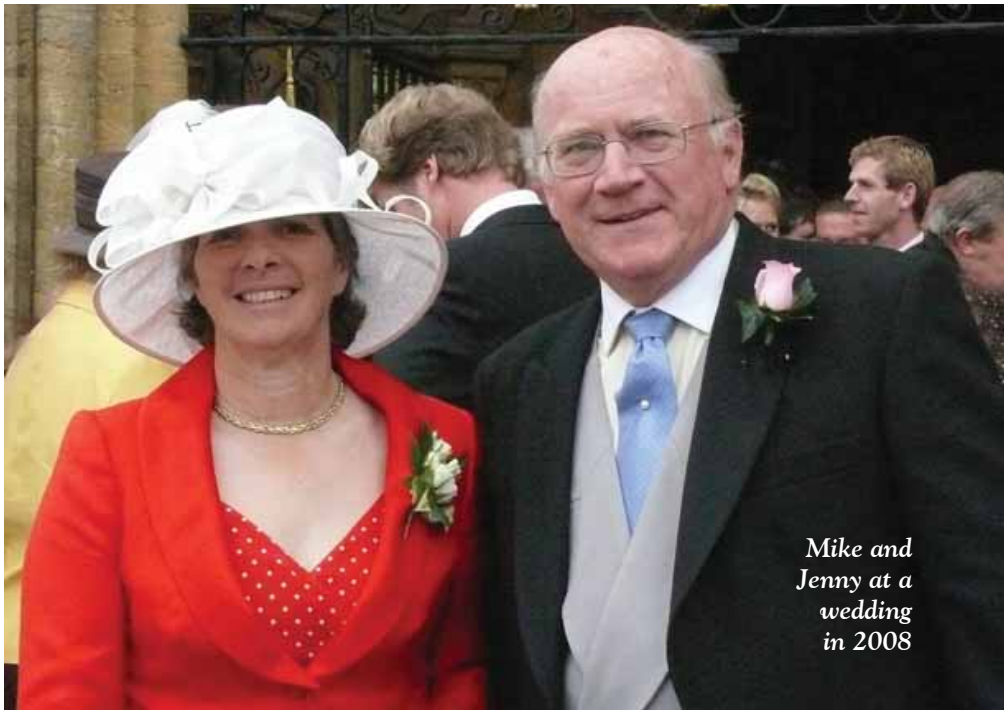
Michael Rearden

It was with great sadness that the death was announced, from pancreatic cancer, of Michael Rearden on 29 January 2018. He had sailed *Édain* back from Ireland in August. He is survived by his wife Jenny, his three children Belinda, Charlie and Georgie (the first two of whom are also OCC Members) and six grandchildren to whom he was known as Grumpy.

Mike was born in 1944 and at the age of six months was taken out to India on a troop convoy to live in a house on the outskirts of Calcutta. He learned Hindustani before he could speak English, and was probably one of the very last Sons of the Raj. At the age of seven he was sent home to prep school in England and thoroughly enjoyed the boarding atmosphere. At 14 he moved to Sherborne School, where he made friends with Johny Russell whose parents lived in Beaminster in the house now owned by OCC member Philip Crawford. It was through Johny that Michael learned to sail, first on the East Coast, then along the South Coast, and eventually in 1966 over to Ireland in the company of Howard Gosling. *Bon Sante* was a converted ship's lifeboat, replaced by *Herga*, a 28ft schooner, allegedly the smallest on Lloyds register. These were rough and ready yachts with traditional hemp cordage and no such thing as winches. It was all done through physical effort.

Following the death of Johny Russell in a car accident at Christmas in 1966, Mike took to horses and had a lot of fun hunting with the Cattistock, where he delighted in being able to hunt on Saturdays and Wednesdays and commute to London on other weekdays. He served his articles and worked as an accountant in what was then Peat Marwick Mitchell and Co, subsequently KPMG. In the 1970s there was offshore racing in the summer and hunting in the winter, following marriage to Jenny whom he had met at the livery stables. Mike became Treasurer of the Cattistock Hunt in 1984 and continued in that role until his death.

At the helm of Édain as she enters Clew Bay on the west coast of Irelandv



Mike and Jenny at a wedding in 2008

He joined the OCC in 1987, citing a passage from Lymington to Gibraltar aboard *Water Music IV* – owned by then Commodore John Foot – as his qualifying voyage.

In 1998 Mike purchased *Édain*, a Westerly Ocean Lord built for offshore cruising, and in the following 20 years they logged over 36,000 miles, visiting the Caribbean, then heading north through the Intracoastal Waterway to the Chesapeake, and on past Manhattan to Boston and Maine. *Édain* was over-wintered in Maine and returned via the Azores for the OCC Millennium Rally. There the family joined him, only to experience a strong gale on the passage back to France which put many of them off further offshore sailing with Mike. Two trips to Norway followed, together with cruises on the west coast of Scotland and Mike's beloved west of Ireland.

All who met Mike were charmed by him. He had a black and white view of life with few grey areas, and did not do political correctness. He was also a modest man who would not admit to working hard. Although semi-retired at 50 he spent many hours crunching numbers for his friends and family, often preferring a bottle of Bushmills to financial recompense. He took tremendous pride in his position as treasurer of the Cattistock Hunt, a duty he performed with diligence and care. Modest, careful, intelligent and thoughtful, he loved his family, friends, hunting and sailing. A force of nature – he will be missed!

Howard Gosling

Mike in Ireland on his 70th birthday

Steven Geczy

Steven Geczy was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1925 and was a skier, sailor, hiker and mountain climber. He passed away in Calgary, Canada on 17 December 2017 at the age of 91. Following a career as an engineer he joined his wife Joan in the teaching profession, spending more than 25 years at Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario.

On retirement in 1990 Steven and Joan set off eastwards aboard *Okkomut*, their Aloha 34, for the 1326 mile passage from Sydney, Nova Scotia to the Azores, the voyage which Steven cited when he joined the OCC two years later. In Joan's words:

"We continued into the Mediterranean and our final destination for the winter in Tel Aviv, Israel. If you remember back to those years, that was the time of the first Gulf War, which we got to experience a little too close for comfort. After being there for quite a while, in April of the next year we left for Cyprus and, via Turkey, Yugoslavia (another war) and Greece, we made our way back to Gibraltar. We decided to go to the Canary Islands for a while and provision there for our trip back across the ocean. We enjoyed our time in the Canaries

Steven at the helm of Okkomut

Okkomut, in which Steven and Joan cruised extensively in the 1990s

very much and met some wonderful people, but on 1 November we decided it was time to head out and began the crossing to Grenada.

We arrived there on November 26th. And slowly began visiting the islands as we made our way north. On 24 April we crossed the Gulf Stream to Florida and made our way to St Petersburg, where my mother spent the winter, arriving on 1 May. We ended up buying a condo there and spent the next two years exploring the Gulf of Mexico. Steven loved his boat, but as he grew older and we were once again living in Canada and spending the winters in Florida, the work and physical tasks proved too much for him and we had to sell her."

He leaves his wife Joan, his daughter Julianna, sons John and George, as well as three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Brian Saffery-Cooper

Brian Saffery-Cooper, successful dinghy sailor, Olympic Finn sailor, Half Ton Cup campaigner, member of a winning UK Admiral's Cup team and finally a worldwide cruiser and OCC member died on 31 December 2017 at the age of 83.

As a young man in the 1950s Brian sailed mainly in 14ft Merlin Rocket dinghies, in one season winning 34 out of 37 consecutive races. This was followed by a successful spell racing International 14s, after which he fancied a crack at the Olympics and was the UK Finn representative at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. That same year he joined the London-based timber company of John Lenanton & Son Ltd, where he remained for 27 years with responsibility for buying and importing timber and also selling to a few companies including some of the UK's top yacht builders.

Brian at the helm of his Merlin Rocket in 1957

At the end of the '60s he met Pam, a National 12 dinghy sailor. They married in 1970 and decided to buy the hull and deck mouldings of a Trapper 28 which they completed in a dilapidated garage in London. Several Half Tonners followed – *Racketeer*, *Zett*, *Buccaneer* and, in 1978, one of their favourite boats, *Green Dragon*. Brian and Pam, together with their crews, were responsible for much of the completion work of all their boats. Also in the 1970s Brian was involved with the sailmaker Bruce Banks in the formation of the British Level Rating Association and, in his capacity as Rear Commodore Sailing of the Royal Ocean Racing Club, of the compilation of the official enquiry report on the 1979 Fastnet Race in which 15 lives were lost.

1981 saw a small Admiral's Cup boat, *Dragon*, designed by Ed Dubois being built by the Elephant Boatyard on the Hamble, again with much of the completion work carried out by Brian, Pam and their crew. *Dragon*, with *Yeoman XXIII* and *Victory of Burnham*, comprised the UK team and won that year's Admiral's Cup from 15 other countries. *Dragon* joined the UK team for the Sardinia Cup in 1982, and in 1983 she again made the UK Team for the Admiral's Cup – but this time Germany won.

By then Brian and Pam fancied a change from racing and in late 1985 took delivery of an Oyster 435. This gave them a taste for cruising, but the boat's performance was too tame for Brian's liking so in 1988 she was sold in favour of another racing boat, an X119, which they only kept for quite a short period.

Aboard Lucky Dragon in the Îles des Saintes

In the spring of 1991 Brian took early retirement and they decided to go cruising seriously. They bought a 42ft yacht designed by Sparkman and Stephens which was renamed *Lucky Dragon*. They left Falmouth in October 1991 for the Canaries to join the ARC, but 400 miles after leaving Las Palmas their electrics failed and they turned back, facing 400 miles on the wind to reach Mogán, Gran Canaria. Repairs were made after which they crossed to St Lucia in 18 days, where they met OCC members Jean and Graham Payne in *Deception* and Nina and Tony Kiff and their family in *Weatherly*. (Nina has been OCC Port Officer in Opua, NZ since 1997). They enjoyed sailing in the Windward and Leeward Islands before heading north to Bermuda and Maine where they were befriended by OCC stalwarts Carole and Bob Cassatt, sadly now deceased. Their few months cruising in Maine were one of the highlights of their cruising years, but come September the cold and fog drove them south again. They cruised the eastern seaboard of the United States, calling at various ports, and left *Lucky Dragon* at Jacksonville, Florida over Christmas.In mid-January 1993 they sailed for the British Virgin Islands and spent the year cruising the Caribbean before ending up in Cartagena, Colombia for Christmas where they met fellow cruisers who were planning to cross the Pacific. They left Panama in April 1994, calling at the Las Perlas islands, Galapagos, Marquesas, Tuamotus, Society Islands, Tonga and Fiji before arriving in Opua, New Zealand in November.

They loved New Zealand and cruised extensively along the east coast of North Island. One year they sailed north, round \North Head and down the inhospitable west coast to Tasman Bay in the north of South Island, where they left *Lucky Dragon* in a marina and bought an old banger to tour South Island by car. For four years they spent the southern summer in New Zealand, returning to the UK for the northern summer. They then shipped *Lucky Dragon* to Savannah, Georgia and returned to the Caribbean where they continued to cruise for several years during the winter months until Brian began to experience health problems and had to return home to Cowes, Isle of Wight.

They joined the OCC in 1993, soon after arriving in the Caribbean, and enjoyed all the friendship that flying the burgee brought. After their return to the Caribbean in 1998 Brian instituted the daily sundowner net, when OCC members and others would exchange information and, most importantly, advice about the problems experienced by long-distance cruising people. This was of great value to many and was continued after Brian was unable to continue. He will be missed.

Pam Saffery-Cooper and Peter Cook

Graham Leech

Graham was born on 7 June 1941 in Manchester, moving a couple of years later to Bournemouth. He was an only child, growing up on the beach at Sandbanks and attending Poole Grammar School for Boys. At 11 he joined the Sea Scouts, igniting his passion for sailing. A junior member of Parkstone Yacht Club, he raced his dinghy keenly and had the opportunity to sail an XOD boat.

Crossing the Equator in 2006 en route to the Galapagos

After training as a chef at the Grosvenor House Hotel Graham completed two years in the Hotel School of Westminster Technical College, where he passed his professional Hotel and Catering Institute exams. He was appointed Junior Assistant Manager at the Sandbanks Hotel, where he met Jane. They married in 1964 and bought a cafe in Totnes, Devon. Seven years later, and now with two children, they sold the cafe and bought and renovated the Seymour Hotel in Totnes. In 1978 the family moved to the St Moritz Hotel in Trebetherick, Cornwall.

Following Jane's death in 1991 Graham renewed his love of sailing. After three months cruising Brittany aboard a Hunter 27 with friends Mike and Felicity Arnott, and deciding a little more space was needed, they went into partnership to buy *Thursday's Child of Lee*, a 36ft Westerly Corsair. Sailing her straight down to the Mediterranean, they cruised from the Balearics to Rhodes, Greece.

Tanya, a keen dinghy racer, and Graham were both members of Rock Sailing Club in Cornwall, though Tanya's experience of cruising was limited to some Army Adventure Training involving changing headsails during cold, lumpy, seasick Channel crossings. Graham whisked her off to Greece for three weeks of gentle island hopping and they were married in 1995. After another season in the Mediterranean they sailed *TC*, as she was affectionately known, home for a re-rig before setting off on their first long passage, completing the 1998 ARC from the Canaries to St Lucia. A chance meeting with Angela Farrant (OCC) in Trinidad led to them joining the OCC Millennium

Graham and Tanya in Western Australia in December 2017

party in Grenada and Mike Pocock proposing them for membership.

For the next eight years *TC* spent hurricane season in Trinidad's Power Boats yard, except for one year when they sailed her up to the Chesapeake via Haiti and Cuba. Winters were spent island hopping from Venezuela and Tobago up to the Virgin Islands, with many OCC gatherings along the way. At home in Cornwall – where they raced a Cornish Shrimper competitively – Tanya, with much support from Graham, worked hard for seven months each year building her own interior design business, generating enough cash to finance the next five months of sailing.

In 2006, having visited most of the anchorages of the Eastern Caribbean, they headed west to Panama. Unfortunately, before they transited the Canal Graham realised he had a problem with one eye, diagnosed as a detached retina. An emergency operation followed but the retina refused to heal properly. In the end, a planned stopover of a week or two turned into a tedious three months of operations and treatment. Eventually given the all clear, they set off for the Galapagos, Marquesas and Kauehi in the Tuamotus. Being very late in the season they enjoyed deserted anchorages, but they met few other cruisers and, not wishing to rush across the Pacific, decided to leave the boat in Tahiti for the cyclone season. Returning in 2008 they completed the passage to New Zealand via Rarotonga, Nuie, Tonga and Minerva Reef. Sadly, this was to be their last passage in *TC*, as a battery explosion while Graham was getting the boat ready in the yard in Whangerei in 2010 caused a devastating fire on board.

The following year they bought *Truant*, a Hallberg Rassy 312, keeping her at Mylor, Cornwall. Deciding that they wanted to live close to the boat, they bought and demolished an old bungalow and built a contemporary house overlooking the creek. Many weekends were spent anchored in St Mawes and the Helford, with longer trips to France and the Scillies.

They cruised frugally, without a watermaker, generator or even an electric anchor windlass. As far as Graham was concerned, one of the most important bits of kit was a mug rack in the cockpit for his coffee! They only ever sailed two-handed, and were never skipper and mate but always an equal partnership. Their roles were the reverse of the norm, with Tanya navigating whilst Graham was always more than happy in the galley – indeed he did all the cooking throughout their 23 year marriage!

Graham was always young at heart. He was funny, laid-back, kind, sociable, hospitable, loyal and extraordinarily patient and they were a tight knit little team of two. He died very suddenly at home on 2 February, without any warning, and is very much missed.

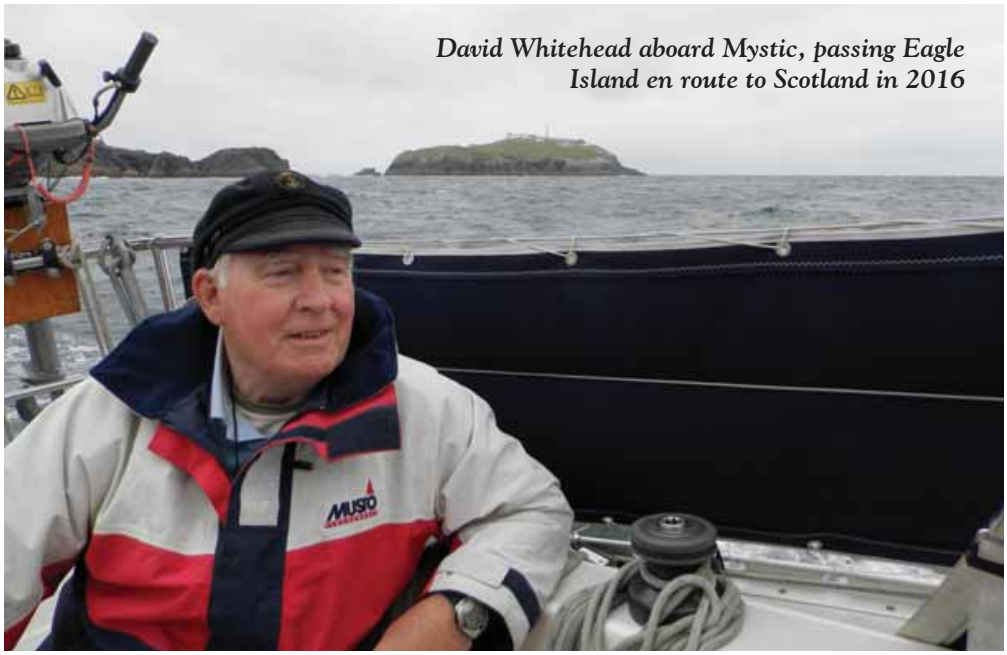
Tanya Leech

David Whitehead

David Whitehead, who died on 27 November 2017 aged 75, was a mine of information and never lost for words. Whether it was boats, maritime history, mountaineering, rugby, climate change or electric cars, you could be certain that David would have a well thought-out position. Where this differed from the accepted or establishment view, he always had the facts lined up to prove his case, backed up by his incomparable memory.

Having moved to Galway in the 1960s, he sailed up and down the west coast of Ireland and further beyond, mainly with his friend David Fitzgerald. His training as a geologist found him working with mining concerns around the world but wherever he was, he found time to sail. He was a founder member of the Galway Bay Sailing Club, and became a member of the Royal Ocean Racing Club, the Irish Cruising Club and the Royal Cruising Club. In 2004 he joined the OCC, having completed a passage from Gran Canaria to St Lucia aboard the 45ft *La Contenta* the previous year.

Over the years David owned boats large and small. His first was a 16ft Paul Gartside-designed gaffer, and his last, *Goblin*, a 16ft Chesapeake Bay microcruiser which he adapted for gunkholing around the creeks of Galway Bay. He also co-owned *Mystic*, a Moody 27, with close friend Peter Fernie.



David Whitehead aboard Mystic, passing Eagle Island en route to Scotland in 2016

In 2009 he was diagnosed with lung cancer, which he attributed to working in an Australian uranium mine. Even so, only three months later and despite major surgery, he sailed his Oyster Mariner 35 ketch *Joyster* to Tory Island and Lough Swilly. David was always out sailing, despite a permanently compromised respiratory system, with cruises to Wales, Brittany, the Isles of Scilly and the Aeolian Islands, as well as the south and west coasts of Ireland. In 2016 he sailed from Galway to the Hebrides and

back around Ireland clockwise to Galway aboard *Mystic*, in company with Peter Fernie.

Our condolences go to David's wife Marie, his son Duncan, his daughters Jennifer and Siobhan, his grandchildren, and his extended family and many friends.

Alex Blackwell,
with input from Peter Fernie

Mike Yendell

Mike Yendell died at home on 10 June 2017 aged 71. He was born near Exeter in Devon, and a lifetime love of sailing was sparked by his father. He was a very practical man with many skills, a lively analytical mind, and a dogged determination which he brought to all areas of his life.

He was a graduate of Cambridge and Southampton Universities and worked in a business/educational capacity, in 1984 taking up a post at Strathclyde University in Glasgow as an interface between these two areas. In his last job there he focused his abilities on setting up and running the Entrepreneurship Centre, offering courses to students of all disciplines, something relatively new in UK universities at the time.

In the early 1970s Mike and a friend bought *Cooya*, a 40ft Linton Hope yawl, built of teak on oak in 1914, and together they used their skills to rebuild her interior and transform her into a comfortable cruising yacht. After a few years Mike bought his friend's share and continued to cruise when time allowed. Moving to the west coast of Scotland opened new cruising areas, and early retirement allowed him

Fishing in Icelandic waters, 2016

Cooya in Croatia, June 2013

to really pursue his passion for sailing and travelling long distance, as well as hill walking, sailing with his wife and sometimes family and friends. It was his ideal way to travel – slowly, meeting and enjoying conversations with interesting people, and experiencing different cultures.

Mike joined the OCC in 2009, having qualified with a 1432 mile voyage from Cabadelo, Brazil to Île du Saint, French Guiana aboard *Cooya* the previous year. He particularly loved sailing to unusual places, little visited by sailors, and his determined 'can do' attitude and persistence found him getting permission to visit Libya, a country he had visited for work, and a thrill to sail to, where he was hosted by local people and had the pleasure of enjoying the local culture.

Never defeated, he could usually work out how to fix anything, but as he said, 'nothing lasts forever' – however his memory will. He is survived by his wife Eilean and children Alan, Suzy and Chris.

Eilean Yendell

Sophie Beeton

Kind, compassionate, loving and 'with a smile like a ray of sunshine that would light up a room' have all been used to describe Sophie Beeton, who sadly passed away in January this year. A classical musician, supply teacher, and member of New Forest

District Council responsible for the environment and coastal protection, Sophie was dedicated to helping others and worked tirelessly to enhance and protect the environment where she lived.

Born in Winchester, England on 16 March 1971, Sophie was a talented musician, performing with the Hampshire Youth Orchestra and London Symphony Chorus. She studied music at King's College London, the violin at the Royal College of Music, and the viola under Keith Lovell. Following teacher training she became a highly respected supply teacher, often being specifically requested by schools as their first choice as a cover teacher.

Sophie learnt to sail in 1997 on a 24ft Wharram catamaran. Two years later she met Alastair Beeton, and they quickly discovered a shared enthusiasm for scuba diving and sailing. They were married in December 2001 and would often sail their Wayfarer dinghy in club events at Lymington Town Sailing Club. That led to an invitation to crew on a Moody 333 in club races and on cruises along the South Coast and to France. Sophie also enjoyed racing a Folkboat with friends she met through the OCC.

Sophie aboard Jo in St Lucia

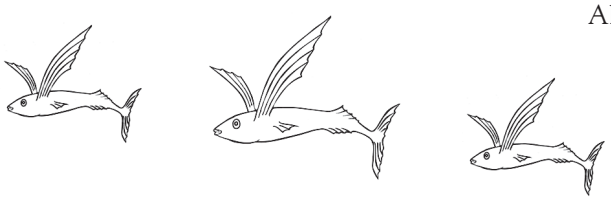
Sophie and Alastair assisting on the OCC stand at Southampton Boat Show in 2016

In 2014 Alastair was asked to crew aboard *Jo*, a Sweden 42, on the ARC, and when he mentioned it to Sophie she said 'Great! When are we going?'. Her disappointment in not being able to do the crossing herself was short-lived when members of the sailing club told her she should only let Alastair go if he flew her out to meet him! Sophie became an associate member of the OCC in 2015, and she and Alastair helped out on the OCC stand at the Southampton Boat Show.

Away from sailing Sophie enjoyed scuba diving, gardening and the environment. Some highlights of her diving included seeing seahorses in the English Channel and diving with dolphins and turtles in the Seychelles. She was a keen walker and loved animals, especially guinea pigs. She and Alastair were planning a circumnavigation before she was diagnosed, in November 2016, with an incurable stage 4 brain tumour. Despite this diagnosis Sophie never gave up hope and stayed positive throughout her illness. often wearing her Team GB T-shirt and saying that she was 'going for gold'. She never complained and would say,'I don't know why I have this brain tumour, but I do and there is nothing that anyone can do about it, so what is the point of worrying about it'.

An amazing person, Sophie's courage in coping with her illness touched the hearts of everyone who met her. She passed away peacefully on 12 January in Alastair's arms, and with her guinea pigs beside her. Nearly 300 people attended a service to celebrate her life at Milford-on-Sea parish church where Sophie was laid to rest.

Alastair Beeton



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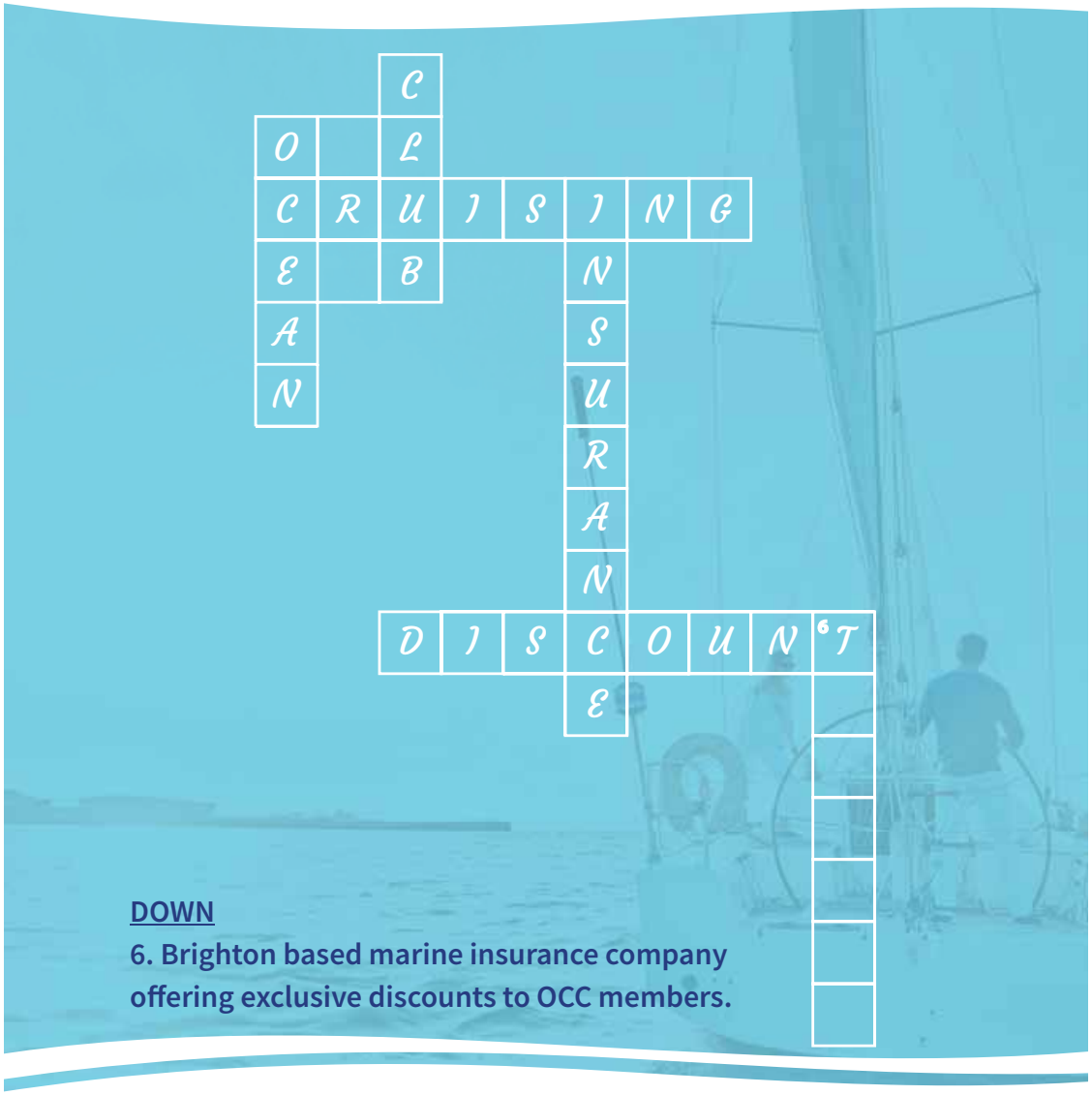

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