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Disclaimer

Neither the BCCA nor Committee will accept any liability for personal injury arising out of participating in any event, rally or race organized by or through the BCCA whether sustained by members, guests, or visitors, or caused by the said members, guests or visitors whether or not such damage or injury could have been attributed to or was occasioned by the neglect, default or negligence of any of the officers, committees or servants of the BCCA.

Boat Owners Third Party Insurance

It is the responsibility of all boat owners to have adequate third party insurance in respect of him/herself, vessel, his/her crew for the time being & his/her visitors.

June / July 2005

To all fellow Bobcat and Catalac sailors

Hi folks, The sec is still away sailing so all reports and pictures from Poole rally will appear on our web page later in the year.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS.

Roy Wallbank,

13 Rockstone Place, Southampton. Mob:+44 (0) 7960 422 193

Roy has spent twenty years of his life sailing round the world and is currently looking for either an eight or nine meter Catalac to continue his travels. He is prepared to update or renovate his purchase to his needs and having sold his last boat he has funds available can you help him?.

Jeff Bell

299 Hagerston Rd. London, E8 4EN. Mail to: jeff@glasscasts.co.uk

Long time owner of **TWEEDLE DEE & TWEEDLE DUM Bob: 8.12** he is also looking for either an eight or nine meter Catalac can you help him?.

Roger & Frances Beasley

5A Chaucer Rd. Ashurst, Middlesex, TW15 2QU. Mailto: roger.Beasley@dsl.pipex.com
New owners of **CL.8.193 CYGNET** & members of Gosport Sailing Club.

Aleck & Chris Tidmarsh

7 Moriconium Quay, Poole Dorset. Mailto: aleck@mq-sales.fsnet.co.uk

Have sold **CL.8.115 MINOU CHAUD (HOT PUSSEY)**

They are now the proud owners of **CL. 12.27 DRAGON SLAYER**

Lesley Ann Denney

The Hawthorns, Seaton Rd, Maryport, Cumbria, CA15 8ST.
New owners of **CL.8.115 MINOU CHAUD**

We wish you all well and happy sailing.

Searead.

You, as we, have I'm sure, visited many marinas and ports during your travels. But have you spotted the most common denominator that links them all, apart that is from the obvious exorbitant mooring fees? I have and I'm sure many of my fellow girlies have as well. Why are the ladies loos so small? It's bad enough during peak holiday time that we have to queue to use them, why make them akin to the Royal Marines Commando Course? It's not a green beret I want; just to be able to reach the loo paper without having to contort my whole body into a one player game of Twist would be sufficient for me.

I don't know who designs them or who they have in mind when they do but I'm convinced that they seem to be under the impression that females who spend some time on the water and not just passing it are size 10 and under. The reality is somewhat different, in my case anyway. Since retiring I have to admit that I have put on a few pounds (!!!!!) but, it is a well known and well documented fact that my girth increases in direct proportion to the current weather conditions. Because on top of my trousers, jumper and life-jacket I may, on occasion, have to comply with the Skippers orders and don wet weather gear. Normally this only occurs when taking the dog for a walk for as you know, being a Catalac 900 owner does not involve sitting outside in a wet and windy cockpit being battered by the elements.

But being battened down and comfy-cosy inside your expensive but chic Helly-Hensen does have its drawbacks, because somewhere, sometime nature calls and must be answered. This is when the fun starts. The first obstacle to be encountered is how to manoeuvre yourself plus the extra bulkiness between the door and the actual loo as space in this area is very limited. It means that you have to bend your legs one direction and the rest of your body in the other direction whilst attempting to hold on to some shred of dignity. No mean feat for one who has never been a fan of Olga Corbett. (Lightweight Russian gymnast) Then once this has been done and the door closed, you struggle with life jacket, Helly-Hensen, trouser zip and crossed legs. What's a girl to do?

With all this gale force, windy weather recently quite a few boats have run for shelter here where we are. One day after a wild ride, one such boat made its way in. The deck looked a shambles; lines, boat hooks and empty coffee cups lay strewn across it in complete disarray, the sails lay where they had fallen, crumpled and heaped; the skipper and his wife wore an expression of complete and utter exhaustion. My heart went out to them as they mustered their weary and depleted muscles to complete the mooring manoeuvre.

I met up with the wife later as I was going in to do battle with the ladies loos, just as she was coming out, clutching a small infant under her arm. As she passed by I heard her mutter to herself "there's nowhere flat enough to change the baby". Flat enough? After what they had just been through, now she needs flat???????

Happy sailing
Floozy.

The girlie loo may be small but, the loos us boys use hardly ever have such niceties as loo roll. ED.

GOODS FORSALE IN THE MARKET PLACE

1. PAIR OF MAGANESE BRONZE, ONE INCH O.D. $\frac{3}{4}$ I.D. ADMIRALTY WATER FILTERS IN LINE, FINE MESH.....PRICE: £15.00 each.
2. ONE HUNDRED FEET OF NEW 5/16 CHAIN COUPLED TO ONE HUNDRED FEET OF 15mm NEW TWIST ROPE (NYLON).PRICE: £100.00

CONTACT JOHN GREEN Tel: 023 9246 2502.

Bernard Warden has these items and a 9mtr. Catalac for sale

ALL THESE ITEMS ARE NEW.

<u>Ref No.</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>RRP</u>
<u>BARTON MARINE ITEMS.</u>			
	1	1 Towable Genoa Car	60
	2	3 Fiddel Swivel Block	9.82
	3	1 Triple Swivel Block	60
	4	1 Double Reverse Shackle	32
	5	1 Single Fixed Eye Block	17
	6	1 Towable Genoa Cars 2:1	60
	7	3 Single Block Swivel Becket size 4	11
	8	2 Single Snatch Block, Snap Shackle. 10mm	36
	9	3 Single Block Swivel Becket size 5	26
	10	3 Double Swivel Blocks 10mm size 3	15
	11	1 Triple Block Swivel Becket size 3.	22
	12	1 Double Rope Clutch 10mm.	70
	13	4 Size 1 Deck organisers, 4 sheaves.	35
	14	1 Size 1 Deck organisers, 5 sheaves.	36
		1 Size 1 Deck organiser, 6 sheaves	
<u>LEWMAR MARINE ITEMS.</u>			
	15	2 Solent Snatch Block Size 1,	80
	16	1 Superlock Rope Clutch 10 - 12 single .	37
<u>OTHER ITEMS.</u>			
		1 Plastimo Olympic 85 Compass	?
		1 Barton Lazy Jack System for boat 30' LOA	?
		1 SKANTI Leisure DSCall Trans/Rec unit.	625

I am open to offers on any or all the items above

Contact Bernard warden on 01296 662505 Mob:07958 353374

or e.mail: bwb@warden.freeserve.co.uk I also have for sale my



Catalac 9m Catamaran "Nemra" No 9.110.

A well established safe catamaran suitable for family use. The vessel has been completely refurbished with the hulls having been "peeled" and replaced using International Gelshield 200 epoxy, professionally carried out, November 2000 – June 2001.

The interior of the cabins have been relined. The rigging has been replaced, cushions and

mattresses recovered and reconditioned 2 Volvo 2001 diesel engines with "S" drives installed. To all intents and purposes a "new boat" at a reasonable price. **GB25,000 = E35,000.**

9 Mtr CATALAC AKU-AKU serial No. 7.

After our purchase of her in 1997, Aku-Aku underwent a very thorough and comprehensive refit with Blue Water cruising under sail in mind. We also decided to make her as self sufficient and independent of shoreside facilities as possible. Starting with the hull, a survey showed no sign of osmosis. Following removal of spent anti-fouling, the hull was treated with G4 from Bondaglass of Croydon. The product is an absolute osmosis barrier and has proved very successful. The hull to deck securing bolts were all removed, fresh Sicaflex was injected into the joint and the bolts replaced. The integrity of this joint is of paramount importance and is often neglected, giving rise to apparent condensation when the problem is in fact water ingress! Six large new cleats and fairleads were fitted. A central steerable and liftable Sillete Sonic outdrive leg was fitted to the stern amidships. This arrangement eliminates all the appalling drag associated with the normal twin screws. It greatly improves sailing qualities, speed, and particularly ability to go to windward often, so lacking in Catamarans. The leg is powered through a Technodrive clutch/gearbox (450hrs) by a truly amazing Rugarini 25 hp diesel (600hrs). There are gauges for water temperature, oil pressure and an audible overheat alarm. Engine cooling is indirect by heat exchanger which incorporates an insulated calorifier for the domestic hot water supply. Water is stored in two stainless steel tanks below decks in hulls. Two large portable pillow tanks are available for supplementary water storage in harbours or at anchor. The original swing up rudders were replaced with skegs and full draught rudders. A "blister" to accommodate a transducer was moulded into the inboard side of the starboard hull. This transducer serves a forward viewing echo sounder; this is incredibly effective and is like underwater radar! Four submersible electric bilge pumps were installed, to supplement the existing manual ones. At least one has failed due to internal rusting and seizure, which does not bode well for American Rule pumps. The topsides cabin and coach roof were re-sprayed white as the original gel coat was locally discoloured. Blue tread master was applied to strategic areas of the deck. A pressurised water system was installed together with a new stainless steel four burner oven, full size sink and drainer. There is an alternative foot pump for water and salt water can be drawn through another pump. Water heating is by instant gas heater or calorifier heated by engine cooling water (earlier mentioned) or electric mains immersion. The doghouse coachroof was extended fore and aft to give plenty of invaluable permanent-standing headroom in the saloon with sun shading for the helmsperson in the cockpit. It is more spacious than the 900 series. New white vinyl suspended deckheads were fitted throughout. New upholstery, with matching curtains and cushions were professionally made for the saloon. Upper windows are tinted Perspex with roller blinds. A new unblockable Lavac heads was installed using special purpose hose. Two new seacocks were installed. A shower tray with water conserving re-circulating shower system was fitted in the same compartment together with stainless hand basin. The entire accommodation including the shower can be heated by the highly efficient Eberspacher warm air system. A gas refrigerator is installed where the pilot berth should be. It proved far better than an electric type despite extensive insulation. The main full size double berth mattress was improved to give better comfort. The binnacle, helm, grid compass and door were moved out onto the main bulkhead to give more standing headroom in the accommodation. The helm is to port, the door to starboard, similar to the 8Mtr.Catalac. In the saloon is a fold up leaf oak dining table with fiddles. For convenience, it can be rigged at two different stations. The somewhat crude, dated and suspect chain and cable steering arrangement was replaced with a new hydraulic system...Operation of a hidden valve disables the system making the vessel unsteerable in an effort to deter potential thieves. An alternative emergency tiller is available. A folding chart table was fitted just inside the doorway visible from the helm. This supports a Yeoman's type chart plotter interfaced with the Garmin G.P.S. with remote antenna. A V.H.F. and Navtex Pro. Weather reporter is close by.

Pushpits and extra guard wires were fitted aft to give greater crew security. Non slip rubber was applied to the locker tops and a fibreglass deck added to the stern to form a transverse aft poop/ sun deck, again similar to 900 series.

The entire wiring harness was replaced and there are no terminals, which are not properly soldered, and all circuits are separately switched and fused. There is a 240 volt ring main with Brit and continental sockets. 12 volt cigar type sockets are also installed. The mast was fitted with new updated spreaders and all S.S. standing rigging wires were renewed. The Rotostay Genoa furling received a new core wire and head and deck rotary bearings were renewed with the latest types having stainless bearings rather than nylon, which did not last long

in service. Mainsail is slab reefed. Folding mast steps were fitted together with new masthead tricolour, steaming and deck light. A J. R.C. Radar was fitted, its L.C.D. screen being clearly visible from the helm. A compression strut was fabricated which enables the mast to be stepped and lowered unaided. The mast-wiring loom was renewed, extra internal conduit was inserted and secured inside the mast. Sails, sheets and associated winches were found to be good and no attention or replacement was required. A Spinnaker was added to the sail suit. Two whisker poles, one adjustable for use with same, are secured thwartships at the bows.

Ground tackle. The foredeck has a hand lever operated winch/gypsy. Anchors are a Bruce, a Danforth, the original plough and two Fishermans. There is plenty of warp and chain and there is also a heavy weather parachute anchor.

The tender is an oldish but serviceable Avon doughnut being the largest we could find being capable of carrying two adults, two mountain bikes and a dog. The outboard is a 3.5hp Mercury. A stainless steel boarding ladder is fitted to the stern where there will be found a M.O.B. rescue system together with Danbouy and horseshoe life float. There are both wind and water powered gennys with regulators.

There are numerous charts and pilots ranging from U.K. to the Med. On board is a large locker and folder for stowage of same. Comprehensive manuals are available for all ships equipment.

She now needs new carpets in the saloon and the white topsides respray has degraded due to the onslaught of U.V. One guardwire stanchion is damaged. All systems are still in good working order with the exception of one electric bilge pump. I describe the Rugarini engine as incredible because it always starts first turn of the crank without the need for pre-heaters or decompressor. Spares are now available at half list price via the Internet. The 3 X 12-volt batteries are still serviceable. These are charged by an intelligent "Sterling" regulator and alternator. Gas bottles are housed in a ventilated stern locker. Feed pipes are all copper with soldered joints as required outside U.K.

The current mooring is free. It would take 1-2 days to navigate out into the Med. Aku - Aku featured in Jim Andrews book "Catamarans for Cruising" and some fellow cruising folk still knock on the hull asking if she is THE Aku-Aku. Her bow still sports her name and Logo. (Name means Guardian Spirit featured in the book of the same name by the late Thor Heyerdahl, (intrepid explorer voyager and archeologist).

We believe that she is a good comfortable boat for serious sustained cruising. In her current mode she is not suitable for weekends with everybody and their dogs cats and parrots aboard. All the original mattresses are available and in good order and it would take little work to restore her to the original multi berth accommodation status.



Offers in the region £22,000 will secure this fine vessel AKU-AKU
Contact Dave Thomas mail to davidmichelethomas@wanadoo.fr

SAMEN EEN

- Boat Name & Details:** “Samen een”, Sailing Catamaran
- Registration:** Maltese number **5401** in 1999
- Specifications:** LOA 9.0m (29’ 3”) ~ Beam 4.2m (13’ 9”) ~ Draught 0.75m (2’ 6”) ~ Sail Area approx. 39 sq m (420 sq ft) ~ Weight 9 tons ~ Berths 7 in total: 1 double & 1 single cabin; saloon converts to extra double, 1 pilot berth, 1 quarter berth
- Construction:** Designer Tom Lack
Built in 1977 by Tom Lack Catamarans Ltd. Construction Number 9.116 Material GRP
- Sails:** 1 Main, Lazy Jacks, 2 furling foresails (1 Genoa, 1 Jib), 1 New Seateach Asymmetric chute with snuffer. Standing Rigging S/Steel
- Winches:** 4 – 2 New Antal W16 self tailing winches on coach roof for port and starboard sheets, 2 on mast for main sail
- Engines:** 2 – Volvo Penta type 2001 9hp each originally installed new on 3/7/1986 and professionally reconditioned in 2003, since covered 350 engine hours Details: Starboard Serial no. 12979, Gearbox 12702. Port Serial no. 13384 Gearbox 12219. Radio 2.4:1
- Instruments:** Tachometers - electronic, one for each engine Oil pressure, one for each engine Water temperature, one for each engine Engine hours, one for each engine all instruments new in 2003
- Batteries:** 4 x 85 Ah each - 2 for port and starboard engines and 2 in parallel for services. New three stage, three bank automatic battery charger 50Amp
- Navigation:** Fascia mounted GPS Garmin 128 New Windex wind speed & Direction coupled to Autohelm New Autopilot – Autohelm 3000 New VHF –
- Windlass:** Electric 1000w ‘Vetus’
- Ground tackle:** Anchor: 1 new Bruce 15kg New Danforth 25lb original
Fenders 6 Lines various lengths and types
- Dinghy:** 2.4m Inflatable New. with Outboard Selva 6hp
- Davits:** 2 with reduction blocks New
- Safety:** Emergency manual steering gear. (stainless steel) New
Life raft 4 man Lifeguard (needs servicing)
4 Whale pumps, 1 for each hull and 1 for each engine bay – all serviced
1 Portable electric bilge pump New
2 fire extinguishers (1 dry powder for electrical fires, 1 foam) New and serviced
- Cockpit:** Sprayhood for a fully covered helm position with opening front screen. Bimini, with closures for back and sided for a fully enclosed cockpit. New A cockpit table which raises from the wooden floor seats 8 people. It was built by yours truly. It is my design and quite apart from being useful it is attractive.
- Head:** Baby Blake WC, Pressurized Hot & cold water. Hot water Electric, Water tanks 2 x 25 gallon aprox. Stainless steel 1 in each hull. Shower with an option to switch from running water to circulating to have a long cool shower with out consuming water unnecessarily.
- Galley:** Hot and cold pressurized water and foot pump driven sea water supplement.
Gas oven with 2 burners Compressor driven 60 ltr refrigerator - All above new
Molded sink and drain boards – re sprayed
- Other:** VHF Radio – hy-Seas – registered - Call **Sign 9H5737**

Space heater. Unknown make. Runs on paraffin from its own SS tank never used
Shore power with connections both fore and aft for a choice of berthing
CD player/Radio. New Chart table with map (adjustable intensity) reading light.
Search light 500,000 candle power Numerous charts of the Mediterranean

History: "Samen een" which I was told means "Two in One" in Dutch was purchased new from the its maker Tom Lacks in 1978 by a Dutch man by the name of E.A. Boerema. He kept the boat for several years and seemed to be very meticulous. Apparently he cruised the Med. extensively and spent some time in Greece. "Samen een" was then purchased by an English man whom I met briefly but I lost track of him and his name and address. This gentleman subsequently sold "Samen een" to a Maltese by the name of John Agius. Unfortunately "Samen een" ran into neglect and its owners subsequent to Mr. Boerema not only did not add any improvements but did not repair or replace anything that went wrong. When I picked her up she was in a very sorry state. But although neglected, she had a sound hull her whole construction is strong in fact she is built like a tank. I purchased "Samen een" from John Agius on the 23rd August 2000 and started a very extensive refit and upgrading of this pretty vessel. The internal upholstery was changed, curtains fitted, roller blinds fitted to the cabins for some privacy and a major refit of the head and gully was undertaken. The Baby Blake WC was retained in preference of fitting one of the modern cheaper versions,. Having seen the price of a new Baby Blake I decided that giving this a thorough service was well worth the trouble it is now in perfect working condition and as good as new. Sailing wise I had the rigging checked by a professional rigger and I fitted new sheets and halyards. The sails were changed for good second hand ones and a new asymmetric chute with snuffer sock purchased from Seateach. The stepped mast is fairly easy to lower. It may look tricky the first time round but I lowered and raised the mast with the help of another pair of hands and the powerful windless with no trouble at all.

The engines which were bought new and installed in 1986 by the Dutch owner were given a thorough overhaul in 2003. The job was undertaken by Ron Wood, an accomplished marine engineer and Dave his colleague at the time. The Volvos now work like sewing machines. They are of a modest 9hp each and push "Samen een" at a moderate 5 knots, as was customary at the time of construction of this boat.

The Catalac is an easy cruiser to handle and 5 to 6 knots being the normal sailing speed in a moderate breeze. I did get 10.5 knots on a few occasions in a blow but that may not be everyone's cup of tea. I travel to Sicily with my family and their kids practically every summer and the men often do a spring or autumn trip to Sicily or round the Edadi Islands, Lipari, Pantelleria etc. It is easy to maintain a steady 5 to 6 Knots motor sailing if the wind is not strong enough to or not blowing in the correct direction, and the Volvos are very economical. I have not quite yet finished all the work I intended to do on Samen een, she still needs a coat or two of twin can International paint, because the gel coat has lost its luster but unfortunately she has to go. I will not be able to use her for personal reasons and I would hate to see her go back into neglect. I have put plenty of loving care into "Samen een" and she deserves another careful and loving owner. "Samen een" is by no means a large vessel at 9m, at hair under 30ft but being a catamaran she has accommodation of a much larger vessel. I would say that her accommodation could easily compare to that of a 38ft mono hull. I found her ideal for the family not only for the space she affords, (her cockpit is truly voluminous) but also safety wise for the kids. Being a cat. She does not heel and lends herself well for entertaining, be it family or friends. Being of moderate size, she is easy to maintain and handle. Her twin engines make childs play of maneuvering in harbour. On one occasion I lost steerage due to a broken chain link and had no problem in berthing on engines only. As you may have guessed I am more than sorry to have to part with "Samen een" but it will give me pleasure to know that she has found a new loving owner. She has plenty more years of life in her and is capable of giving her new owner many years of pleasurable service as she has given me.

Registration: Annual ships registration fee is is Lm85 p.a. and the VHF Radio license is Lm25 p.a.

Price: GBP 28950 - VAT paid
This includes pontoon berth at Pieta Marina Malta should one wish to use Malta as their base. Berthing fees are Lm220 payable every 6 months and this includes water and electricity which is available on the pontoon and is free of any further charge.

For more details and pictures contact Joseph mail to jpm@onvol.net

Having seen the pictures I can confirm the "SAMEN EEN" looks well worth the money. ED.

The circumnavigation of Alleda.....continued

Alleda's sideband (i.e., long distance) radio is starting to convince me that the transatlantic trade winds are getting established and I am beginning to suffer from whatever is the nautical equivalent of itchy feet. I am also getting fed up with roly anchorages so this chapter will be a quick one. The last ended with Alleda and me waiting for Sue at Porto Santo, Madeira....

My biggest problem by far is sleep. The whole project is based on the assumption that I can develop the habit of cat-napping. Francis Chichester used to look out every 20 minutes and Naomi James did the same when close to land. I have singularly failed in this respect and get so tired that I sleep for as much as 2 hours at a time which could be fatal in view of the approach speeds of other shipping. I should not rely on others to keep good watch when not doing so myself. Since others can presumably see Alleda better by day, it would be preferable to sleep then but I have so far failed to sleep at all during daylight, despite much trying. If my sleeping patterns have not improved by the Canaries I will have to make a decision about continuing to take a big chance or giving up. This is a depressing but honest thought with which to finish the first chapter.

Boat maintenance continues. In Porto Santo I had made a sketch of the new rudder pintles Alleda badly needed. They were made by Madeira Engineering, a real pre-war Midlands sweatshop where men working 1930 Colchester lathes and the such have to clock out even for their tea breaks! They did a good job though and Alleda feels much better on the helm now. Based on an enormous sample, I am of the opinion that over 70% of Madeiran adult males wear vertically striped shirts. Not many people know that.

I left Funchal at about midday, raising sail in the outer harbour in what was to be a fair wind all the way to Tenerife. 2 miles off and looking back, Madeira was just so beautiful that even I remembered the camera and took 3 shots (3 is absolute top rating). Unfortunately I had been talked into a schedule of hourly contacts with Rocheas via the radio telephone and found this a real burden. I should take comfort from the fact that there is another yacht nearby in case of disaster and I suppose I do, in a way, but it intrudes heavily on the closed world I enjoy - my regular routines, my thoughts, looking after my ship, plotting progress. I must be the classic singlehander. "It's a NE 5 here, swell is big, we are making 5 to 6 knots under main 2 slabs down and 70% poled genoa" is an interesting bit of information to another sailor once or twice, but hourly? Radiotelephone range is 20 to 25 miles inter-ship and I was truly grateful when Alleda's speed converted our 12 miles behind Rocheas at the start to 25 miles ahead by the second day when contact was lost.

I should have enjoyed the 47 hour (240 mile) trade wind sail but, in addition to the hourly schedule, I had just started a cold (full of viruses is land!) and on the first night out got caught off balance by a big roller, falling backwards from the cockpit into the cabin, cutting my head and straining my back. Nothing too serious, both cold and back twinges went away after a few days in Tenerife. From 30 miles off the Canaries I headed into an apparent valley with the loom of lights on Las Palmas, Gomera and Tenerife all around my forward horizon. Dawn arrived close to land. The Atlantic Islands Handbook warns of wind acceleration zones in the Canaries and, boy is it right - Alleda zipped up to over 10 knots in calm water in the lee of Tenerife's high cliffs. I saw my first flying fish off Punta Teno, the NW tip of Tenerife and Alleda was tied up in the marina at Los Gigantes by 1130.

Neighbours, everybody needs good...

An Austrian vessel arrived, typifying everything I dislike about many yachts on the circuit. This is how it's done - after tying the boat up, next you connect to the mains electricity, then the mains water to wash off the poor boat all that nasty sea that you had to encounter (since the last marina) to show your style somewhere else, then out with the designer gangplank, in polished aluminium with black ropes, down which you carry 2 bags each containing a folding motorcycle to be started as soon as possible to blast up and down the pontoon. Later the motorcycles will be most useful as the shower block is 50 metres away. Is sailing just another excuse for conspicuous consumption? Am I so out of my time? If this were a Philip Larkin poem it would certainly end with 'I don't know'

The Austrians did all this for a one night stay and were replaced as next hatch neighbours by sanity in the forms of Paul & Sheryl Shard, young Canadians sailing the Atlantic and Med for 3 years before settling down. Now in their final year and getting ready for a crossing to Brazil via the Cape Verde Islands. Most days they sailed a

few miles offshore filming, with Cousteau quality underwater gear, dolphin and pilot whales. They took some very moving footage of a mother pilot whale trying to motivate her dead calf, refusing to leave it even with 2 humans nearby – whales normally avoid human contact. Neither would the rest of the whales leave the mother. I suppose one could say that this is mainly instinctive but, having also talked to the cameraman, I prefer to think of it as caring social behaviour of an advanced order.

Paul's dream voyage almost ended here in electrocution when, with one foot on the metal of his boat, he touched the pontoon with the other (i.e., he got off normally) only to find the aluminium edged pontoon alive with 220 volts. Young and fit, he survived it but was thoroughly weak kneed for half an hour. The locals just leave their boats hooked up to the mains and one rather ordinary bit of household flex had worn through with the constant movement. We thought it time they learned about fuses. The marina management style may be described as idiosyncratic. They would only allow me 2 weeks when I wanted 3 (loads of room) but I could pay *manaña*. The skipper of a big German yacht was granted the 20 days he wanted but had to pay the mooring fee of 35,000 pesetas (close on £200) within the hour! Luckily for him there is a Telebank in Los Gigantes but he was rightly furious.

Where are you BBC?

Before they left, Paul & Sheryl introduced me to the Transatlantic Maritime Mobile Net, a bunch of yachting amateur radio enthusiasts who 'meet' in English on the upper sideband of 21,400 kHz at 1300 GMT. Yachts dotted around on various stages of Atlantic crossings report their current position and weather which is very useful and the source of the first paragraph of this chapter. At 1330 a fellow called George based in Canada reads out a synopsis of all the relevant weather forecasts collected within the previous few hours. Net controller is Trudi who is based in Barbados, both she and George seem to organise this free service for something to do. A valued role in life. I have neither a transmitter of the required standard nor the licence to use it so just benefit by listening in, along with a few hundred others I should think.

As far as I know, the Net is the only English language forecast available for the area in which I wish to sail. Radio France International also broadcast one live at 1140 GMT which during the week is read slowly and logically enough for me to grasp the main points but at the weekend they let trainees of often outstanding incompetence loose on it. Last Sunday the reader started giggling only a minute into the broadcast then played music while she got over it. The continuation was at such gabbled speed that even my French neighbour could not understand and in any case the bit we both wanted was just left out. Thank heavens for the unpaid Trudi and George.

In the wake of Columbus

In Porto Santo I sat at the seafront next to the statue of Cristovao Colombo, looking SSW with him, hoping that some of the great man's talent would rub off. He married one of Governor Pestrello's daughters in Porto Santo and lived near the seafront. Sue and I also stood on the steps of his house there, hoping for more good omens. His name was Colombo in Madeira but Colon here as he later developed a liaison with another woman and had a house in San Sebastian. Yesterday the visiting yacht crews had a lovely surprise as the replica of his ship, the Santa Maria, sailed into harbour along with replicas of two of her supporting fleet of caravelas. How flimsy they appear but I imagine Columbus would have looked at Alleda and thought worse.

Columbus pioneered the curving transatlantic route that almost all sailing vessels take these days. You may recall that I was worried about sleeping. I actually managed a half hour daytime doze on passage from Madeira to Tenerife so I shall carry on. It is the big one starting tomorrow - 2,700ish miles to Barbados or St. Vincent or Bequia, whichever appears on the horizon. I may be some time, so

C'est Eliane ici

During the last few days in Gomera I made friends with a couple on the French catamaran Milna, the next boat on the anchorage. Milna is new, racy and larger than Alleda. Emile and Eliane are a lively pair of retired doctors who have been sailing since childhood. In what I regard as true French style however, neither had quite brought themselves to learn how to use some of Milna's equipment. We came to a deal, I taught them how to use their sextant, navigational computer and radiotelephone (r/t), and they fed me. A better deal for me than for them, I fancy. Now correct r/t procedure requires, say if you want to talk to a passing large ship, an opening call of something like "Large red cargo vessel on my port side heading south, this is the yacht Milna, yacht Milna". Too boring by half for Eliane who I was later to find got more success on the Atlantic crossing using the opening call which is the heading above. Ship radio officers from all over clogging the airways in an attempt to answer?

Emile had made friends with the crew of the Santa Maria, the replica of Columbus' ship mentioned in Chapter 2. We found that she and her two accompanying caravelas were due to start the historic voyage rerun on November 15th. We had to start on the same day of course. Spending the last ounce of money before leaving a country is a talent I am developing and among other things a Gomeran working man's straw hat appears on my head. Not everyone laughs, I think

The crossing

With two crew Milna got away early on the 15th November but I struggled until 0930 before both anchors were up, they really had been buried. The Santa Maria plus caravelas milked a few more rounds of applause and got away later still. What was really irritating was the wind, faithfully howling down the mountains all the time I had been in Gomera but dying a death 3 miles away. It was as if San Sebastian harbour had collected and hoarded all the available breeze. The whole day and most of that night was spent in close proximity to Gomera, Milna and another yacht which foolishly left at the same time. All four seeming to float listlessly as if time had stopped. The one saving grace was the spectacular view of El Teide towering above the clouds over Tenerife. A wind of sorts did arrive on the 16th but I could see Teide for some 30 hours after leaving harbour.

In Chapter 2 I mentioned that most sailing vessels take the curving Columbus route which heads SW until about 150 miles north of the Cape Verde islands before heading due west on the approximate latitude of the Caribbean island you wish to visit. Ever different, I had decided on a great circle course. How's your 3D geometry? A great circle is the shortest distance between 2 points, the equator and all meridians are great circles. The saving in distance over the Columbus route is about 300 miles but you take more of a risk on favourable winds. This was probably the only chance I will ever get of sailing a great circle to anything like an advantage, so I took it. I had also been listening on the Transatlantic Maritime Mobile Net to others who were having good winds on the route. I discovered later that we may have been a day or two quicker with the Columbus track. Ah well, the sea is always bluer on the other route?

By 1030 on the 16th we are making 4+ knots under full mainsail and genoa in the expected ENE wind, Albert 4 on the helm, me feeling good despite still being able to see 3 Canarian islands (Tenerife, Gomera and Hierro). I cannot possibly use the electronic helmsmen for 20 odd full days so put Rabbit on duty in the late afternoon and he does well.

On the 17th I make the full transition into trade wind mode by taking down the mainsail and poling out 2 foresails, one each side. This is about as safe, stable and chafe free a rig as I can manage on a catamaran. Not as fast as the normal rig but it feels OK and there is no boom to remove my head at the wrong moment (is there a right one?) In late evening a pigeon comes to admire my work, or he may have been tired.

An auspicious day the 18th. Dawn is a lovely blend of orange, yellow, grey and green and we log the 2000th mile since leaving the yacht club. The pigeon has departed, its droppings indicating a stay of 11 hours and 23 minutes (they are frequent visitors). A significant amount of rain today which I am learning to use for washing both myself and what few clothes I wear.

Cirrus clouds on the morning of the 21st, please don't let them mean what they do at home. Unfortunately they do, and frontal systems both N and S of us stayed around for 4 days during which we made very little progress as the lightest of winds strayed about in all directions. You get so fed up with trying to find a sail setting and course which will make any progress that in the end you give up and try to occupy yourself with something, anything that takes thoughts away from your vessel wearing itself out heaving in the leftover swell. Some yachts have massive fuel tanks and in this situation motor for 4 or 5 days but this is not possible with Alleda. I weathered this patch fairly well but got very angry on the 25th, shouting at the sea and punching a sail. What an idiot! That same evening a small wind started to pull Alleda along at 2 knots, perhaps I should get angry more often. Around 2100 I convince myself that there is at least one large animal in the pitch dark beside us and am very scared indeed. After a while, I pluck up enough courage to shine a torch around but can see nothing but a lumpy sea. The feeling does not go away and I keep thinking that something is nudging Alleda. Listening for the 'animal' I suddenly notice that the starboard rudder has become noisy again. On cue the moon obliges with enough light for an inspection. Alleda has rudders which hinge in dinghy fashion and I try to tighten the bolts but this has no noticeable effect.

The 1002nd use for a spatula

The 26th provides a terrible test for the rudders. The wind is soon up to the 25 knots (Force 6) predicted by Radio France. This in itself is no great problem but the seas are ridiculous, worse than the Biscay. I find it difficult to comprehend how the sea can 'remember' the winds of 5 and 6 days ago - there are cross swells from the NE, SE and S, all winds we have sailed so far. Newton's laws work here too and swells/waves from different directions produce resulting peaks/troughs/waves going in yet more directions. The trickiest, most evil seas occur when the wind suddenly drops a little and chaos reigns. I am worried about capsizing end over end (pitchpoling) in this situation.

In an attempt to reduce the thumping between rudder and its stock, I try shoving in some rubber wedges but cannot get them to stay there. Later in a bout of sheer inspiration, I manage to stick a kitchen spatula (one of those metal ones with hardwood handles you see hanging in sets) down between stock and rudder. A small relief and later still, contrive to work in 2 seat belt mounting brackets (my reputation as the yacht club hoarder is deserved) which halves the noise. All this while hanging over the stern at 6 knots in a 25 knot wind. We might make it to Barbados! Albert produces less rudder movement than Rabbit so I put him on for the night and crash out. Poor Alleda pounds on through the ocean without my help.

I awake late on the 28th to find we have sailed a considerable distance. The spatula handle protruding from the starboard rudder looks like that of a knife stuck there by an angry sea god - indicating that we are next? We passed the halfway point during the night. 1,257 miles travelled but only 1,057 on the log so 200 miles down to the favourable current + any log error.

Routine

After some days at sea I got into a quite workable routine where I went to bed for around 12 hours, getting up on the hour (kitchen timer and alarm had to be set) to read and note distance travelled, wind strength, barometric pressure, and of course look carefully about for other traffic. We could have been run down during the 40 to 50 minutes or so I was out but in mid-ocean the probability is not greater than that of being run over in the High Street, I think.

I cooked supper so that I could see the frequently beautiful sunset, breakfast cereal was associated with sunrise and lunch was taken listening to the Transatlantic Maritime Mobile Net. It was nice to hear Paul and Sheryl's (Chapter 2) progress towards their filming ground in Brazil and of course very useful to hear of the progress or otherwise of other yachts unseen but nearby. When you are having a tough time it's good to know others are experiencing the same rotten deal, whether this is too much or too little wind. Interestingly, many other yacht crews were complaining about lumpy seas. I was not alone in wanting to throttle the person who wrote of gently rolling down the trades! The Santa Maria also reported in to the Net daily. She was using her engine a lot, what would Columbus have made of this?

Listening to the Net and having time to think confirmed my previously unspoken feelings about redundancy in North American speech. I listened to one American lady say "I have 20 knots of wind out of the North". A very few miles away the Australian John said "Wind North 20 knots". 10 words instead of 4, no wonder the Net was getting longer to get through to the weather forecast! The "out of the" in front of North is irrelevant since wind is always defined by where from and the "I have" redundant since this would obviously be assumed in a position report. The more I think of "I have" the more interested I get in this 'possession' in North American speech, I bet there are dozens of published PhDs touching on it. The frustrating bit is that by the time we were in Barbados almost everyone used this overkill style and forecasts were up to 45 minutes late.

It is a big day on the 30th November - lift out day at the yacht club back in Norwich and I have a breakfast beer to wish them well. Sadness too, thinking of those who would not be at lift out. Now 3,000 miles since leaving the club in August. Distance to Barbados is down to 3 figures so 2 beers and 2 glasses of wine - normally 1 of each with lunch and supper respectively. A breakfast beer may sound sordid but breakfast is now after 1000. By this time I am so far west that I have to manage my clocks - each 15 degrees west of Greenwich is nominally an hour on the clock. For example, New York is about 75 degrees west and 5 hours behind. Barbados at about 60 west is 4 hours behind. Many seamen keep 1 clock constantly on GMT and alter another clock 1 hour back for each 15 degrees sailed west. I allocated 7.5 to 22.5 degrees west to 1 hour behind, 22.5 to 37.5 to 2 hours

behind and so on. Arrival in Barbados was not such a wrench and clock-change day another welcome mark of progress!

Food and Water

Sue had done Alleda's provisioning excellently in England so, even though I had been far, far too timid with laying in fresh food at Gomera, I had a good choice from tins and packages all voyage. I allowed myself no treats whatever in the way of biscuits and chocolate and must be an inch less around the waist as a result. It has just dawned as I write that I have not had a biscuit since Tenerife in October! I had fresh fruit and veg for only 5 days. Everyone I talked to later did better so I must learn to be less pessimistic about their shelf life next time. The few Gomeran oranges I took were the best I have ever eaten, what an opportunity missed.

I used far too much fresh water at the start but gradually came to use sea water for most things except drinking. For example, I found that pasta cooked in raw sea water tasted OK but needed a 50/50 sea/fresh mix with rice. Washing up in sea water is acceptable as long as drinking vessels are rinsed in a minute quantity of fresh. Without feeling deprived, I was down to 3 litres of fresh water per day for the last 2 weeks. I got to welcome rain, not just because it was so hot but because I could collect it in the dinghy and use it as fresh instead of that from my tanks. In fact no water was drawn from the tanks for the last 9 days of the voyage as the weather was rather squally. Washing myself was easy, stand in cockpit facing squall, soap in hand! One day I nearly fell overboard laughing at what a sight I must be, head lathered with shampoo, facing the squall wearing nothing but a sock (cut foot, healed now). No clothes worn normally so no washing of them for much of the time.

Livestock

A short section unfortunately. Everyone else claimed to see whales and sharks except me. Some compensation from the flying fish which heartened me daily with their glides of up to 60 or 70 metres using the wind which sweeps down the face of waves. It was quite clear that they could 'fly' properly only when the wind was in the 15 to 25 knot range (the norm for trade winds). A few birds were also using, more gracefully, the same wave winds. Knowing how inept I am at recognition, my sister Christina and husband Bill had given me a sea bird book but I must have left it behind. What about big brown ones and smaller, lighter ones with long tails? No? Well that's my standard!

On 2 mornings there lay on deck a minute flying fish, far too small to cook but I probably wouldn't anyway. I felt so sorry for them, stiff and out of place, my dark side reversing the roles. I decided at the start of the voyage not to catch fish, preferring to pass in peace. I suppose this would have to be reviewed in a state of starvation in the liferaft, but not before. 800 miles from Barbados I suddenly saw fins and then leaping dolphin coming towards Alleda. 30 or 40 of them, larger than the Biscay ones, did a full circuit around us before going joyfully on their way, some leaping 2 metres out of the water. Who cares about anthropomorphism, they make me so happy.

The crossing, last few days

Winds are heavier in the last week, force 6 most of the time and Alleda occasionally indulges herself with scary, skidding runs on top of a wave before overtaking it and plunging into the one in front. I reef the sails more and more, and worries about the rudders are never far away. For the next long sail I will have absolutely nothing stowed within 2 metres of the bows, forward buoyancy must be maximised. We are putting in 140 to 160 mile days despite my caution and the goose barnacles growing daily on Alleda's rear end - I tried to knock some off using a dinghy oar but soon hit myself on the forehead with the other end. Score when I retired hurt:

Philip 12 Goose Barnacles 1

Most commercial shipping sticks to fairly direct and well defined routes to save fuel. My pilot chart shows shipping lanes close to Barbados so I tried to sleep less and used full legal lighting when near the lanes or crossing them. I saw only 4 ships (3 of them in the last 2 days) and 2 yachts during the voyage. In common with many other yachts, Alleda burned paraffin lamps at night when away from shipping lanes.

On the 6th December at 1822 I get a satnav fix giving 125 miles to go. Tomorrow's the day! I am too excited to sleep of course and at 0200 on Saturday the 7th I think I can see the loom of Barbados. Before dawn I can see the airport lights. This really is it, please rudders only a little further. The current is pulling well to the N now

and as I do not want to put up the main, I have to work hard to make the necessary course with the twin headsail rig.

Barbados gradually becomes green and inviting. Off Ragged Point we are joined by 20 or so dolphin that play about, leaping out of the water all around Alleda. Welcome to Barbados! Vigilance needed around the S coast where the inevitable fishing buoys sit with their propeller catching ropes. Around lunchtime I had just washed, washed hair, shaved and tidied up Alleda (Customs board you here), feeling really smart when overtaken by the original tropical rain storm which, although only a 5 minute one, totally soaked me in 5 seconds. I should have waited; it would have been the best shower of the voyage.

In Bridgetown you have to go through the same Customs, Immigration and Health routines as passengers arriving on cruise ships so you tie up to black oily walls amid towering giants in the choppy Deep Water Harbour for clearance before removing your now filthy yacht to the anchorage in Carlisle Bay. The officials were civilised and friendly (took my flare gun and ammunition into custody) even if their harbour was not. I did not want to remove Alleda's rudders for work while at anchor - we would be helpless if a big wind blew up and the anchor dragged. I had been studying maps of Bridgetown while on passage (the excellent Caribbean Handbook) and thought we might cheekily try tying up in the Careenage in the town centre. So we did and got away with it, giving up any rights to privacy! A newly opened air-conditioned supermarket was nearby and I recall buying and consuming a vast quantity of fruit and veg before the remaining 6 or 7 hours of Saturday joined 10 of Sunday in being totally unknown to me, this in what must be one of the world's noisiest towns.

Crossing retrospective

Did I enjoy it?

What a question - no, yes, maybe, sometimes ... figures are easier:

Duration 22.2 days (best of Columbus' four similar voyages was 21 days)

Albert 5 days, Rabbit the rest

Mainsail and genoa 3 days, genoa and working jib goosewing the rest

Actual distance travelled 2,556 miles (via Satnav)

Logged distance 2,051 miles, so favourable current + Log error = 505 miles

Best days' run 162 miles (5th Dec)

Chatting to others later confirmed that the seas were much worse than most people expected. A straw poll of other single-handers showed that I was the only one who got up regularly to check for the presence of shipping. The others just went to bed, some without lights running. Should I feel virtuous or stupid? Nobody saw more than 5 ships. A number of the single-handers mentioned (unprompted) loneliness. Perhaps they expected me to ask about the topic but I have far too much support from home to feel lonely on passage and probably would not have thought to ask.

To be continued.....in September..

FIRST CRUISE IN A CAT

Friday 4 August

Having loaded the car last night, we were able to leave home at a reasonable hour without too much concern about what we had or had not forgotten. We arrived at 'Morffa' to find that the radar reflector had slid down its halyard and had an argument with the wind generator which had come off the worst. Several blades were broken, leaving bits of plastic strewn around. After taking 'Morffa' alongside at the Hardway SC we unloaded the car, which was quite an undertaking, as we were off for four weeks. Left Portsmouth harbour at 12.45 with the no 1 jib set and the main reefed to the first batten, despite a S/F of 5/6 westerly. Having been confined at

Pompey for three days at the beginning of our holiday last year, we were determined to get to Studland Bay the first day.

Having totally forgotten that it was Cowes week, we were rather surprised to find the Solent very crowded in that area. We had to motor through the Hurst Channel and it took us from 16.30 to reach Studland, during which time I had to take two Sea Legs as I was feeling rather green. Kim (our elder 6 ½ year old daughter) was very sick but immediately ate an enormous tea. What recuperative powers children seem to have. It was dark by the time we crept into Studland Bay and I was feeling absolutely shattered. The Scilly Isles, for which we are heading, seemed a thousand miles away.

Saturday 5 August

After Pat had washed up the breakfast things, I shoed him and the girls onto the beach while I did some very necessary cleaning. We have only had 'Morffa' for a few weeks but already I have realized there is a lot more to clean in a multi than a monohull. Unfortunately, yesterday a milk bottle (opened, of course) threw itself onto the carpet at my feet and emptied half of its contents out so now I know how quickly milk can go off. Having scrubbed the offending, and offensive, carpet and swept the floors and shaken the remaining carpets and cushions, I collapsed in a heap with a cup of coffee to write the log in peace. The hungry hunters will soon return from the beach, demanding lunch.

I went on the beach with the girls after lunch to enable Pat to do some running repairs on the wind generator. The weather is rather cool but Kim and Lee, aged 4 ½ never seem to notice. Never has the Daily Mail been so thoroughly read. We all walked up to the local pub in the evening and sat shivering in the garden with our beer while the girls demolished crisps and 'tickly' orange. They were rather late to bed but not us – we are always so tired on holiday. Its all this doing nothing that's so exhausting.

Sunday 6 August

As the S/F gave us a W6 we stayed put at Studland. After lunch we walked along the cliff to Old Harry rocks. It was lovely, sunny and warm and almost completely out of the wind. Luckily the forecast heavy showers did not materialize. Scurried around after the girls' tea to get them washed early so our visit to the local hostelry would not mean another late night for them. Trust us – we forgot about the Sunday licencing laws so we walked around the churchyard until 1900.

Monday 7 August

Kim and Lee went rowing in the dinghy after breakfast, attached to the cat. by a long line – great fun for them and a bit of peace for us to plan in. Later we went on the beach despite dreary weather. I have been instructed by Kim to note in the log that both she and Lee swam, although Lee is more splash than swim. After an exciting lunch of steak and kidney pies and baked beans, we set off for Portland Harbour despite force 5/6W. Set sail with full main and no.1 jib but soon the main was reefed to the first batten and we thrashed our way out to sea to avoid St Albans Race. Pat showed me how to take bearings so at 1400 we found that my fix was only 1/10 mile from Pat's DR. Fantastic. Bet that doesn't occur again. I think Pat almost suspects me of cheating somehow. I've found that plotting a course is not the easiest thing while feeling queasy so took two Sea Legs to quell my mutinous stomach.

The weather was sunny but cloudy at times with a choppy sea, that 'Morffa' was prone to slam into. We've had a funny experience, about 1745 as we were not far off Weymouth, we had a very brief but violent squall which left us becalmed and hobby-horsing on a confused sea. The wind had swung through 180 before it died on us. I suggested to Pat that we might remove the reef from the main, but this suggestion was scorned. Pat reckoned with his superior met. knowledge that the wind would soon return. He was right, of course and eventually at about 1815 we were off again, with black clouds looking ominous overhead. The wind rapidly increased until we were rushing along on a broad reach towards Portland. Poor Albert has had a busy day, our autopilot. After a short, heavy shower the black clouds went their way and we were warmed by the evening sun. Pat eventually did shake out that reef. Arrived in Portland Harbour about 1930, put the girls to bed still exclaiming about the lovely rainbow that had dipped into the sea. Surprisingly, Portland was totally devoid of naval shipping, so much for the might of the RN. Adlard Coles book gives the impression that you can hardly

move for frigates, destroyers etc. We anchored off Castle Cove and while Pat went and rang his mother, I washed up the lunch things and cooked our freshly caught mackerel for supper – lovely.

Tuesday 8 August

What a gray day. Cold too, so ventured onto the beach as late as we were allowed to by the girls. Walked into Weymouth for a lovely crab salad lunch and then did some shopping. Kim and Lee both had a donkey ride and a ride on the roundabout on the beach and then we tramped our way back. The sun had managed to struggle out from behind the clouds for a while to warm us.

Had a visit from another 9 metre owner in the evening, M'Bulu – so entertained him with Pat's home brew which is powerful stuff. He said he was on his way to Spain to avoid the dreaded VAT. Wish we were going there, it would be a lot warmer than here. The 1755 S/F did not sound very promising, yet again, W5. Oh for a nice E3 to run by.

Wednesday 9 August

We are still in Portland and the weather is even grayer if that's possible. A heavy shower put pay to a morning on the beach. Kim had swum (I cannot imagine what possessed her on a day like this) and was standing under an awning, teeth chattering, looking quite blue, saying couldn't we please go back to the boat. So I rowed like a mad thing back to Morffa just in time before the heavy shower became a torrential downpour. Those poor people trying to shelter on the beach. I could feel their dejection from here. Luckily the weather cleared enough to walk into Weymouth for lunch. Poor Pat had to carry an empty gas cylinder and it's quite a walk. Worse still, he had to carry a full one back. At last I've found some boots, have been trying for ages but no-one seems to have my size left. The price to pay for having average size 5 feet. Just as we arrived back we had another deluge, very glad to be in the dry and warm. In the evening we went to Castle Cove SC for a shower. It took ages to sort out how the showers worked. It was rather tricky trying to shower the girls with a high velocity jet without getting soaked myself. Feel much fresher and cleaner and I'm sure we look it too. Pat hopes we may sail for Salcombe tomorrow.

Thursday 10 August

0030 the alarm rings for S/F. It appears that we are going. 0300 the alarm rings again. Pat arises, resets alarm and returns to his pit. It's too dark to leave as we are surrounded by mooring buoys. 0400 Pat must have been awake as no alarm but lots of getting up and getting going noises. Eventually it's light enough to go and by 0600 we have passed Portland Bill on the inside. Later on having peered in to see if I am awake, Pat presents me with 2 Sea Legs as it's quite choppy. Getting dressed when your feet periodically almost leave the floor takes some concentration. Inserting contact lenses is definitely out in those conditions so go around in glasses, attracting unflattering comments from my husband and children. Later when the wind died on us, lenses went in, clothes came off. It was hot, lovely, and about time. This is the first occasion we have felt inclined to remove even a sweater. Pat turned in for a nap before lunch. Just as we are about to get down to the serious business of bangers and mash, the wind dies so Pat decides to down the genoa and motor for a while.

As we approached Berry Head, we decided to press on to the Helford River to make up time. After supper of freshly caught mackerel, Pat retired, leaving instructions to be called at midnight and a course alteration when we pass the Eddystone. As it's only my second night sail I had to suppress the urge to get up and look round every couple of minutes. We passed the Eddystone at about 2230, having made a course correction to leave it to starboard. I was very relieved when we had passed it and I'd made the alteration as instructed by the skipper. I felt that I could relax a little more. The moon had risen early but had set by 2300 and I was left disconcertingly traveling into blackness, leaving a lovely phosphorescent wake. I'd heard of it but never seen it before, it's rather weird. Pat appeared at midnight, making me jump. I'd intended to leave him until at least 0100 but it seems he had not even been to sleep, although he had been up since 0400.

After making us both hot chocolate, I turned in, lulled by the engines as there was not a breath of wind.

Friday 11 August

Having sailed and motored alternately during the night, Pat picked up a mooring in the Helford River and turned in for 1 ½ hours. We had a late breakfast and then went to explore Helford's facilities. It was a lovely sunny morning to appreciate what a beautiful spot we had come to. The village itself is so picturesque, with thatched cottages and narrow twisty lanes. As no visitors' cars are allowed in the village it was also very peaceful and totally unspoiled. I almost felt obliged to talk in a whisper for fear of disturbing the tranquility. We crossed the river and I left Pat dozing on the beach with the girls playing nearby while I went to the laundrette. We had a pub lunch of cold meat and salad but it was not the salad that the girls expected, so that was not very satisfactory. Had a short walk in the afternoon before returning to the boat. Pat, needless to say, had an early night and I was left with the problem of getting onto the inside of the double bunk without waking him.

Saturday 12 August

Happily Pat has seen a notice saying that meals and snacks can be obtained from the Helford River Club House so I was saved from cooking at the 11th hour. We had intended to have an early lunch but somehow did not finish until after 1400. Took the girls and showered them and washed their hair, then shooed them out to Daddy while I performed my ablutions. Washing 3 lots of long hair seems to take ages and I'm usually greeted with 'you've been a long time'. We took the dinghy and explored Navas Creek, what lovely scenery and a delightful place to have a house. The 1755 S/F sounds promising so we may be off to the Isles of Scilly tomorrow.

Sunday 13 August

We had the familiar caper of the 0033 S/F. Pat got up at 0445 and sailed us out of the Helford River. He says it was a lovely morning but I'm sorry to say I slept rather late, so by the time I was dressed the skipper was complaining about lack of breakfast. Not that I can blame him. The sun was shining and out of the wind, very warm, so clothes off again. My mean husband took a photo of me topless while I was totally oblivious! We alternated between sailing and motoring in an effort to reach the Scillies by a reasonable hour, as there was a W4 against us as usual. Our sailing so far has been so frustrating we have had to beat every time. We went past Wolf Rock in the late afternoon and obtained our first glimpse of the Islands. We had hoped to reach Hugh Town, St Mary's in daylight. What a hope, in our usual fashion we crept in in the dark. We really should have stood off until dawn but I couldn't face the thought of turn and turn about on watch so in we went. Pat was navigating like a ding-bat and I was helming to his instructions. It was such a confused sea, I daren't take my eyes off the compass for a second and it was quite hard to keep to the given courses. Eventually we arrived and anchored in St Mary's Pool in an almost completely black night about 2200. The shore lights were all we could see. After a very late supper, we turned in. We have been very lucky and, thanks to Pat's superb navigating, arrived safely.

Monday 14 August

We had quite a disturbed night, a good swell going. Pat was up a couple of times in the night as we knew there were rocks astern of us and the holding suspect. Moved further inshore during the morning and escaped from the swell. Rather dull and grey at first but brightened after breakfast and the sun even shone for a while. We were able to see how pretty it is among these islands with their sparkling white sands.

Went a walk into Hugh Town to explore and found a pleasant café for lunch. After eating Pat took the girls back to the beach while I did the shopping. After visiting the lifeboat station and inspecting the lifeboat, we spent the rest of the afternoon on the beach. On returning to Morffa, in the dinghy, the two girls in the bow, me in the stern, weighted down by all my purchases and pat rowing, Lee fell in, full clothed. The first I know was when a startled face appeared beneath Pat's oar. We hauled her out completely soaked, poor girl, and nearly choked ourselves trying not to laugh. Fortunately, she saw the funny side of it so we all had a good laugh. A very dreary evening, rained hard, with the wind howling mournfully in our rigging and everyone else's within earshot.

There are a great number of French boats here, we English are definitely outnumbered.

To be continued next Month ED.

