

A JOURNAL OF THE PASSAGE OF

JULY INDIAN

FROM BERMUDA

TO PLYMOUTH

VIA THE AZORES

SUMMER 1988

KEITH N. CRAIG

JOURNAL

Saturday, June 25 - 0630 (+3) - BERMUDA

Yesterday, after clearing Immigration, we picked up our motley baggage including spinnaker (enclosing the home made wine) and the radar bracket, a hoop of stainless steel tube with an outstanding leg to brace it against the mast, the whole lot having a diameter of about 3½ in.

Jack spoke quietly to a customs officer riding herd on the crowd awaiting customs check. By some magic this resulted in us taking all our gear straight on by the entry desks and the waiting crowd, with no questions asked.

We found a good sized van to take all of it and us to JULY INDIAN, smugged in the best berth of St. Georges Harbour. A short walk west of the White Horse Tavern, but far enough away to be quiet. Paul greeted us with obvious delight at our arrival.

Then we settled in the boat and had a cockpit meeting with coffee. In harbour, the Carloss's are in the foreward V-berth, John and I are port and starboard on the saloon settees, and Frank is in the quarter stateroom which is also something of a gear and luggage warehouse.

All of us will stand individual 2 hour watches except when it is our time to be cooked, every 5 days.

Saturday, June 25 - Cont'd

In addition to watchkeeping, the chores and duties will be distributed as follows:

Paul, of course, is Skipper!

Jack is responsible for monitoring and maintaining the standing and running gear.

Frank is the mechanic.

John the electrician.

And I'm the top navigator.

Others want to work at the navigational skills, except Frank.

John is especially interested and could certainly stand-in, in this capacity, for me. I'll do astro all the way, and the satnav will be a good basic check - provided it keeps in shape, as it has been doing so far.

The stores and supplies are, or will be, in good shape for departure.

There is an impressive stock of rum - and a well planned regimen of its limited use while at sea.

The rest of the day was spent settling in. I tried, without success, to contact the Wilsons by phone and I left a message at the Cablevision for Gavin or Bill to let them know I'm here and where we're docked.

Paul showed off with a pot roast beef dinner aboard. Later, after a stroll along the dock, we had coffee and butter tarts before turning in.

(Paul announced prizes for the best meal served and the greatest distance run on watch.)

Saturday, June 25 - Cont'd.

Today Paul stayed aboard and the rest of us did the tourist thing - bus to the dockyard, a tour of the museum there, ferry ride back to Hamilton and various activities in Hamilton, and return to JULY INDIAN for drinks before going out for dinner. "Steve", a classmate of Jack's, visited aboard with two youngsters, and plans to transport us all to a beach for a swim and freshen-up tomorrow.

We mixed some "dark and stormy" and after a gam went to the White Horse Tavern for dinner followed by a beer at a quieter location on the way back to the boat.

The crew are in good spirits, the boat is provisioned like a grocery store, the rigging is in good order and we will be ready for sea by Monday, with the dinghy brought aboard and the water, diesel and propane topped up.

Paul read us Corrine's stowage list - pages and pages of itemized delicacies with their locations in various lockers. We're going to have to eat like hell all this trip if we are going to do her preparations for us justice.

Sunday, June 26 - BERMUDA

In the morning the crew was on make and mend preparing for tomorrow's departure.

- mounting the radar bracket
- collapsing the dinghy
- securing the port covers
- more groceries

Lunch at the St. Georges Club, a filling and fancy buffet. Then we returned to JULY INDIAN for a siesta for all hands. After a rest, the resumption of tying down and making ready. Paul and Jack cooked a couple of chickens for tomorrow and beyond, but at bedtime we only needed Joan's butter tarts and tea before retiring. Plans are for an early start as soon as we've filled with fuel and water and cleared customs (after 8 a.m.).

Monday, June 27 - AT SEA!

Grey skies, drizzle, wind SE/10.

This is a big day! Up at 0600. Paul went to clear customs and Frank went in a taxi with the propane bottle for a refill. The rest of us set the spinnaker and tied things down. When Paul and Frank came back, we went to Downer's Marine, right next to our berth, to top-up diesel, water and gas. Got under way at 0908, motored out of the gut and set a reefed main and part of the roller furling genoa. In the choppy seas the chickens, which were cooked last night, got free and flew around the cabin. First time I've known chickens to fly after being roasted.

All day in a S/SE wind of 12 to 20 knots, we've been ripping along averaging about 7 knots. Choppy seas on our beam make for a rough trip but we're making good time - very good time on the course we want, NE to get into the westerlies and the Atlantic current. We've been rolling and unrolling the genoa on a beam reach - great fun.

Paul is setting a fine example as sea cook on our first day out.

Tuesday, June 28 - 0815

The wind and sea increased from the same direction and lasted all night and prevailed today. It is giving us an average speed of about 7 knots on the NE route we want, but makes things difficult below. Seas are now about 6 feet with breaking caps. Weather is clear.

My first sun sight yesterday worked out well. I'll shortly have another go at it.

The crew changed down to a small staysail from the genoa, and left the reefed main up.

AZORES, HERE WE COME !!

Wednesday, June 29

lots of excitement today. The daily run of 176 miles (8 a.m. to 8 a.m.) set a new record for JULY INDIAN; we saw dolphins (the kind that keep company sometimes (although, apparently we were going too fast)); we caught a dolphin (the kind that you eat), and John landed him. We saw a whale and we saw the first ship since we had Bermuda in sight. The excitement was substantial. The freighter MINERVA, registered in Monrovia, exchanged locations with us which substantiate our DR track. He is bound to Baltimore. The fair weather and wind and lively sea continue, giving a broad reach, and no worries at 7 knots, sometimes surfing at up to 10 knots on the larger waves. The Aries vane self steering is a joy.

Tomorrow I'm cook.

I hope the chaps can stand it.

Saturday, July 2 - Day 6

We (that is John) caught another dolphin. A very fine eating fish - on Thursday, so last night we had a fine soup. Jack is excelling as a sea cook.

The wind persists and we make good speed still. The day before yesterday there was substantial make and mend to the running rigging, and the steering gear which was about to let go - which would have had dramatic influence on the conduct of the voyage if it had not been caught.

Yesterday, I occasioned a serious redesign, demolition, and refitting of the marine head and plumbing. It was a major job that the skilled skipper and crew turned to with good spirit and excellent results. Conditions found would have needed correction soon anyway, which made me feel better about my part in the affair.

It amazes me that we have had 15 to 50+ winds on a beam reach all the way so far. (I wonder how this boat performs on the port tack!) We have had seas of 10+ feet at times which knock us about a bit since they are abeam. However, the speed of our progress more than compensates for the awkward movement, tiring lurches, and generally moist conditions as some seas splash aboard.

We've seen a couple of more ships but did not speak with them as there was no hazard of collision. When there's a collision course, we become much more sociable to other mariners.

Saturday, July 2 - Cont'd

We will soon stop our northern progress and head up to a great circle to the Azores. Before the day is out, we should be half-way there. May this wind persist.

One day soon I shall shave.

Tuesday, July 5

Since Sunday the wind and seas have eased, slowing our progress but making life below easier. It is noticeably less hot. Yesterday we stopped for a swim. Quite an experience, about half-way between Newfoundland and the Azores with no waves or wind and a long, low swell, diving into the BLUE water, probably about a mile or so deep.

The wind yesterday turned light and contrary, and except for a burst this morning, it persists.

We saw whales again this morning, at a greater distance, and went by a large pod of dolphins, some of which came to have a look and jump for us. Delightful!

Twice a day we run on engine, as we need to keep our batteries topped up and the meat frozen. Today I am relieved of watches - to be cookee. Yesterday afternoon I succeeded with a couple of loaves of bread, and made the crust for a meat pie, otherwise by John Fischer. A disaster yesterday. Joan's butter tarts were finished. There is some criticism that some were not shipped to Horta for us to pick up there.

Fortunately, stores of fuel (propane, diesel), fresh water and beer are in good supply, and there is enough food aboard to circumnavigate Africa.

Repairs and maintenance continue as needed:

- a heavy leak from the anchor locker into the foreward bunk which soaked bedding and had to be taped up.

Tuesday, July 5 - Cont'd

- frayed lines for the self steering replaced.
- mainsail foot boltrope which was pulling out of the rope groove was eased by changing shackles.

Yesterday the sunny weather and easy conditions enabled quite a drying operation - bedding, tea towels and clothes.

I even shaved!

The satnav performs well and the sextant is getting little use by me, as I'm always either occupied or drowsy. (The fresh sea air and constant motion can lead to the need for sleep).

Spirit and relations among the crew couldn't be better.

John Fischer has been doing some sextant work and helping Jack get established with it.

Must put the soup on for lunch - with sandwiches, of course!

Friday, July 8 - 1530 hr.

Flying spinnaker and full main at a run of 8 knots plus.

Joan would love this situation. Here are two sailboats and we have a boat race in mid-Atlantic! We sighted him about two hours ago dead ahead and also bound toward Horta. Since then we've gained considerably and at this rate are bound to overtake before sunset. We spoke to a Canadian sea going tug that we met yesterday who told us there was another sailboat ahead. We've seen about five commercial vessels but this is the first sailboat since our departure from Bermuda.

Nearly every day we have a visit or more from a school of dolphins or porpoises (which, I don't know). They are friendly, frolicing things that like to come alongside and jump for us.

1715 hrs.

Nearly abeam of the Kolnor also on its way to Horta from Bermuda, after the skippers exchange lies about how long it took us to get here. It is a larger boat but not the racehorse that the JULY INDIAN is.

Thursday, July 14 - 0920

At sea again since mid-day yesterday when we departed Horta in a light SW wind. In the light fluky air the spinnaker didn't work well, and eventually the wind died so we motored ever since departing the docks at Horta, going on toward a full day. The weather forecast indicates that it may be some time before we will have as much wind as we'd like, although they were having force 8 gales at Ireland yesterday.

We all came away with favourable impressions of Horta and the Azores. The people are friendly and hospitable, and the island shows little sign of poverty or social unrest. We tried two restaurants and were well treated at very low prices both places. Food and other services are very cheap. It is not a tourist trap, and there is limited shopping.

The day before yesterday we took a two hour taxi ride to sight-see the island. It is a fascinating place with extensive agriculture in cattle and vegetables. Instead of fences, cane and other bushes are used to separate the field. Some of this in blue hydrangea was very pretty and fragrant. We saw two sites of volcanic activity. One at the top of the island (over 3,000 feet up) is a high crater, long inactive, which is quite deep and about 2 km in diameter. A very impressive sight. The other spot, more recent, is on the coast at the SW point of the island. It blew about 1957 and is a desert of volcanic ash. It must have been scary for the islanders when that happened.

In the evening the waterfront was alive with the townspeople. Kids all over the parkland playing soccer, and generally running around and having good clean fun under the watchful eye of parents.

Thursday, July 14 - Cont'd

The kids were happy. Scraps were not taking place, and there were no tears. There was a blissful absence of bugs of any kind.

In the marina there were about 150 yachts, mostly from Europe and the Americas, which usually stay longer than we did. The other islands are worth a visit and you could enjoy a lengthy stay at Horta, at little expense.

The marina facilities are new (a couple of years) and are excellent, giving secure shelter in a harbour that before surged badly in some weather. Everything was of the best, and arranged for the comfort and convenience of visitors, from clearing in to clearing out. Dockage runs about \$4.50/day which provides dockside water and power. Showers, washrooms, laundry, etc. are available on site. It makes the charges now in the Great Lakes seem more than a little excessive.

Our quick passage to Horta excited compliments from other sailors. 13 days was quite respectable. The last two days were especially fine, charging along with full sail in a reasonably flat sea in the sunlight. The satnav put us on track with precision, but the astro we did clearly indicated that we could have found the islands that way with no problems.

With clear visibility on our departure, we could still see the islands 40 - 50 miles away, and the loom of a beacon stayed with us much of the night, reminding us that the islands are still there behind us. Since leaving, we have seen more boats and ships than at any other time in the trip.

Thursday, July 14 - Cont'd

Ships east and west between North America and Gibraltar were a recurring sight, and there were a number of fishing boats -- working out of the Azores.

The diet aboard is ample and the service is superb most days. These guys eat more fish and less desert than I'm used to but I'm enjoying most of the fare and it may be good for me.

This morning I was delighted to get a 3 line fix at dawn with no cocked hat that checked within a mile with satnav. Paul has a very good sextant.

Friday, July 15 - 12:30 a.m.

After a day of motoring (20+ hrs) the spinnaker was hoisted and carried through the night as the wind freshened. Having run north to get into favourable wind and current, we altered course about an hour ago from 020 to 055⁰ Gybing the spinnaker and main. This heads us for Ireland rather than Greenland, as we need more northing yet before paying off to Portland. From now on when winds permit, we will be closing the gap faster between us and the UK. There seem to be no whales and fewer dolphins in this part of the world, but freighters are still a common occurrence between the Mad and North America. We are making 6 - 7 knots in a quiet sea. It is cooler, and the sky is 10/10 cloud.

Saturday, July 16 - 10:00 a.m.

The wind dropped in the night to the point that all sail was taken down and we started motoring. Early this morning sail was raised and we've been motor sailing since. An hour or so ago we came into heavy mist and fog. The sea has settled down, so the boat ride is smooth - but we'd all sooner have some more wind.

We are far enough north that we've headed east of north, but not direct to Bishop's Rock yet. Breakfast, morning coffee, lunch (preceded by a beer), afternoon tea, a drink before dinner, and dinner, are the social highlights of the trip, the sustenance provided for by the chef for the day.

Tomorrow the chef is me! And I've exhausted my repertoire. I'll need to bake bread again, as stocks are getting low. Frank made some yesterday that didn't rise too well. The Horta bread is coming to an end, so Frank's will certainly not be wasted. I hope I have more luck in getting it to rise than Frank did.

This is a slower passage than Bermuda - Azores was for us. At this rate it could be up to 10 more days before our arrival at Plymouth.

Monday, July 18 - 10:20 a.m.

My bread yesterday (4 loaves) was a big success, the best I've made anywhere yet.

At the moment, we are reaching in fog with the spinnaker at about 6½ knots, greatly enjoying the burst of speed after a full day of motoring and motor sailing.

We had a good close look two days ago at a very large whale basking on the surface, blowing a great spume of spray about once a minute. We were close enough to hear him and had a good look before, at 1/4 mile stern, he put his big tail in the air and dove.

Last night porpoises did their traditional act at the bow of our boat for half-hour or so, obviously enjoying the sport, and apparently aware of us as spectators on the foredeck. They are beautiful animals, quick, graceful and apparently intelligent and fun-loving.

So far this has been a slower trip than the Bermuda-Azores passage, where our average speeds were remarkable. We're hoping for better as we get further north and east and closer to Britain.

I have the greatest admiration for the seamanship, fellowship and resourcefulness of this crew. There is the fullest confidence in the yacht, the skipper and the crew. The watch system Paul set up works extremely well. Except for my bread, I have to take a back seat to the skills of all the others in food preparation and 4 days out of five we are eating very well.

Tuesday, July 19 - 10:30 a.m.

It is generally agreed that things have become too cool, both water and air, to persist in the daily practice of sea water showering on the fore-deck. This has been accomplished by going forward, stripping, and using detergent, and sea water scooped up with rope and pail for a shower. Followed by a sprinkle of fresh water to rinse the scalp. Very effective bracing in warm weather. But now the air is cooler, and we have had a noticeable drop in water temperature as we go eastward.

Yesterday was a good run (140 miles) mostly under spinnaker in a west wind of up to about 15 - 20 knots. Bright and breezy and close to our desired course of about 080° E.

While I was on watch in the afternoon, busy trying to maintain a reasonable course with a quartering sea, I smelled the magnificent aroma of a baking cake, that could only have emanated from our galley where Frank was doing his day as cook. The son-of-a-gun baked a cake in honour of my birthday, which was yesterday the 18th. Doing this was no small feat of planning, searching for ingredients, and finding the time and energy with his other duties. The results were magnificent and the cake was a part of the birthday dinner celebration, which was followed by a generous tot of the skipper's best brandy.

Apart from this special occasion, alcoholic consumption has been limited to two beers at lunch time, and two drinks before dinner, while under way. There seems to be no limit when in port, and those are jolly times.

So jolly that in the dark of night last night, while the skipper slept, the crew had a "union meeting" and decided to put about and return to HORTA (now that we are more than half-way, and down wind to Britain). In the morning the skipper refused to comply and we persist in going on to Britain. This will probably lead to a reorganization of the union - or worse.

Today the wind has veered into NNW which suits our course but it seems to be diminishing. Cloud cover makes opportunities for sun sights infrequent.

July 30, 1988 - Aboard RAI at anchor in Long Point Cove, Lake Huron

The following recollections complete this journal:

On July 17 to July 20, while weather conditions at twilight prevented astro sights, sun sights were usually available and I carried the DR plot from solar sight running fixes. During this time, water temperature became cooler, which discouraged shower time on the foredeck for all of us but Jack, who persisted. We started to run into conditions of mist and fog, and eventually overcast with strong SW wind.

On July 21 because of fog and the anticipation of heavy ship traffic in the channel, the watch schedule was changed to have two people on watch. This reduced sleep time but increased safety.

On July 22 fog and boatspeed increased, and although close to shore at the major headland near the Needles, we did not see the lighthouse. At this point when we needed precision most, we started getting some Satnav fixes that were not credible. This introduced more than a little tension to the final approach to Plymouth which was achieved by selecting the credible fixes by their fit with the DR plot.

Early on the morning of July 23 in fog, we found the entrance to Plymouth at our first sight of land. Our first land seen, about a half mile off, was the headland at the west side of the entrance.

As we entered, a race of sailing yachts headed out. We motored to the marina and docked for clearance.

After two days in Plymouth, readying the boat and tidying up, touring the town and celebrating, Frank and I departed for London where he went to Holland, and I did some quick touring and flew home on Wednesday, July 27.

WHAT A GREAT EXPERIENCE !

B R E A D R E C I P E

(2 Big Loaves)

1 Tbsp. Yeast

1/2 Cup Warm Water

1 Tsp. HONEY or Sugar

2½ Cups Warm Milk or Water

2 Tbsp. Oil or Melted Butter

2 Tbsp. HONEY or Sugar

1 Tbsp. Salt

7 or 8 Cups Flour

1/2 cup of warm water plus 1 tsp. honey;
Stir - then sprinkle on yeast.
Leave 10 minutes.

Then, 2½ cups water plus butter plus honey plus salt;
stir together in large bowl.

Add yeast to the other ingredients in the large bowl;
then add 3 cups flour.
Mix well to smooth.
Then, add 3 to 4 cups of flour a bit at a time, stirring.

Spread flour on table and turn dough onto it.
Knead, adding flour for 10 minutes.
Grease bowl and let greased dough rise in the bowl, covered, for about 30 minutes.

Punch down - knead.
Ready for baking.

When risen, bake at 375° F. about 35 minutes.

ENJOY!

Elliot Lake crew sails the Atlantic, 3,200 miles covered

By GAIL EMMERSON
Star Correspondent

"You've got to love sailing to take half of last year's holidays and all of this year's holidays to sail the Atlantic," said Jack Carlross, one of five adventurers from Elliot Lake who has just returned from a 3,200-mile odyssey in the "July Indian," a 42-foot sailboat belonging to Paul Carlross, ship captain and Jack's father.

The trans-Atlantic crossing

took the mariners of the North Channel Yacht Club in Spragge from Bermuda to Fata, Azores, in 13 days, which John Fischer, one of the sailors, said was "fairly fast."

After a three-day stopover, the crew made for Plymouth, Eng. This leg of the trip took "nine days, 20 hours," and it was on this part of the trip the group encountered their only problem — fog.

Keith Craig, the astro navigator on board, said, "at any time of the year, you can run into worse weather than we had." Craig said, "we were prepared for icebergs, but saw none." The highest

waves were 10-to-12 feet. Fischer said "we had two days of total calm; we even went swimming."

Craig, who learned astro navigation in the airforce, and taught the crew how to calculate their location using the sextant, the sun and the stars, said fog meant the crew had to turn to their satellite navigation system off the shores of England.

Fischer, an electronics specialist and the satellite navigator, said "right now it takes three-to-four hours to get a reading of your location" from the five communications satellites. He said the system is "super" but when 12 satellites are in orbit it will be possible to get an instantaneous reading on your location. Fischer said the "1985 Challenger disaster set back satellite navigation from three to five years. With no Challenger, there have been no more satellites launched."

This crew was well organized. Daily charts established two-hour watches, and responsibilities for breakfasts, lunches, dinners and cleanups. These responsibilities were rotated daily and the individual responsible was the "housemouse," Craig said, "we were five pretty big cats. We

had enough food to go around Africa."

Jack Carlross said, "the housemouse had to provide a good meal. It was something we really looked forward to." Photos showed Jack with his homemade meat pie. Craig said he made bread. "I learned this winter. It was the best bread for miles around." Fischer said the crew ate dolphin fish which they had caught; smoked meat, which they had taken on board, as well as chicken, beef and pork chops. The daily "happy hour" was an important occasion "no matter the weather."

The crew celebrated several special events at sea, including Fischer's wedding anniversary, Craig's birthday, the one-year anniversary of Paul Carlross' retirement from Rio Algom, and the 30th anniversary of Fischer's arrival in Canada as an immigrant. "No earthly occasion was missed, but I'm glad we weren't at sea Aug. 2 recontacting the 40th anniversary of the defeat of the Spanish Armada," said Craig.

Nobody suffered from seasickness but they had taken precautions — gravel patch behind the car.

While the group saw one shark and one whale "30 feet long, only 100 feet from the boat," the dolphins provided daily entertainment. "There's no question they were responding to us. We got the definite impression they were friendly, having fun and showing off. They would joll around the boat with one eye underwater and one eye looking at us like they were talking," said Craig.

"We were five adults who got together and practically lived in one room for 25 days on water. We were totally dependent on each other. It's amazing that we got on so well," said Fischer.

And the group chosen by the captain, Paul Carlross, was very different in terms of age and background. While the crew members were from 35 years to 60 years, they were all born in different countries: Jack Carlross in Rhodesia; Frank de Vries, the Netherlands; Fischer, Austria; Craig in Canada; and Paul Carlross in Plymouth, Eng., where the voyage ended.

And while the crew acknowledged the trip was "stressful," they'd all do it again. "It wasn't a vacation; it was an adventure," said Fischer.

"Your Community Newspaper"

the

TABLOYD

Serving Elliot Lake, Blind River, Espanola and the North Shore

Volume 6 — Number 33

MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 1988

Elliot Lake to England in a 42 foot sailboat

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The trans-Atlantic crossing took the members of the North Channel Yacht Club from Bermuda to Faal in the Azores in 13 days, which John Fischer, one of the crew, said was fairly fast. After a three day stopover, the Elliot Lake sailors made for Plymouth, England. This lap of the trip took 9 days

20 hours, and it was on this part of trip the group encountered their only difficulty: fog. Keith Craig, the navigator on the boat, said "at any time of the year, you can run into worse weather than we had". Craig said "we were prepared for icebergs, but saw none". The highest waves they encountered were ten to twelve feet. Fischer said, "we had two days of total calm. We even went swimming".

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You should see the one that got away!

John Fischer pictured above is holding a fish caught during his sail. Across the Atlantic. The crew quickly turned their catch into supper and lunch and...



Crossing the "Big Pond" in style

The 4 crusty sailors pictured above are enjoying a meal during their 23 day crossing of the Atlantic. Pictured above left to right Jack Carluss, Keith Craig, Frank de Vries, and Captain Paul Carluss. (missing from photo is John Fischer)

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Spanish Armada", said Craig.

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While all crew members were "experienced sailors", before the voyage they were all acquaintances. However, a great camaraderie developed. "We were five adults who got together and practically lived

in one room for 23 days on water. We were totally dependent on each other. It's amazing that we got on so well" said Fischer.

And the group chosen by the captain Paul Carluss were very different in terms of age and background. While the crew members went from 35 years to 63 years, they were all born in different countries: Jack Carluss in Rhodesia; Frank de Vries, the Netherlands; Fischer, Austria; Craig in Canada and Paul Carluss in Plymouth, England where the voyage ended.

And while the crew acknowledged the trip was "strenuous", they'd all do it again. "It wasn't a vacation; it was an adventure", said Fischer.