

the club, they even went as far as to put a few crude cartoons in the local Yachting journal, but all of this only made me more keen to carry out my ideas on rebuilding it, and whilst everyday I had vaustic comments passed, I tried to turn a blind ear or eye. The time must come when I would HAVE to start on the praject to allay public opinion, but I had lots to do before that happened. Timber was the biggest trouble in my mind, The war had hardly finished and one of our greatest scarcities was just that one thing. There were others, but good seasoned timber was like gold dust and I jsut didn't know where it could be obtained. The know-how was another thing. I could handle machine tools with dexterity but what about woodworking tools? Wood is softer than steel so it must be easier, but I knew there was more in it than that, but without help of the right sort, I would have to make my own way on the job. I had a good friend who was a yacht designer...Derek Haswell, and Derek held down a good job at Camper & Nicholsons our top Yachtbuilders, so decided to get his help on the timber angle. He introduced me to a friend of his who had a big timber yard in Poole, and very soon after that, the timber problem was solved, now for the tough part...the actual rebuilding...how to go about it and what to do first. The mess I had facing me was so big, so fantastic that I just couldn't figure at which end I should begin. I knew once the initial start was made I should be well away, but how???that was the question.

BUILDING THE BOAT

Sometime in January 1951 I got cracking on the biggest project of my life. rebuilding the boat that was to become "Yasme" First jobs on any construction job are always the most unintersting and usually the dirtiest...I found that out very early when I settled down to the lousy job of scrubbing the entire hull out to remove the stench from long submersion. Gallons and gallons of disinfected hot water went into this lark, and now, I never wish to see another scrubbing brush in my life. The smell of that boat stayed with me for months. My home. my clothes, everythng I touched became impregnated with the odour, and reargardless of continuous spraying, it just stayed all the time. It took me just two months working under a massive tarp to clean that wreck out. Not only were the barnacles screwed and glued to the hull, but the entire bilges had been filled with concrete when it had been built originally---I had to chip it all out with a hammer and chisel, and by the time I had get the last piece out, my knuckles were so raw I never thought that the skin would grow on them again. On top of the concrete was layers and layers of tar and oil, all of which had to come out...how I became to hate that boat, and as each day

passed, so the boat became cleaner and I became dirtier. My hands which had originally been smooth, clean and soft at my trade as a watchmaker became like a hardened ditchdiggers. My nails had long ceased to look anything like, and my hands were horny and scarred...they became stiff and awkward, and I found great difficulty in fixing watches...at odd moments I would absentmindedly pick up a hammer and chisel to adjust the balance of a watch, this was never very good for the watch, or for my reputation, but the job had to go on regardless and I tried hard to take things a little easier. Cleaning the hull gave me a new outlook on life and I reckoned that the time had come when I could actually start doing some real construction work. The timber was all piled up in neat heaps, planed to thickness of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " and my tools were all ready to start the business of ripping out the old and putting in the new. I will do my best to keep out all the technical terms I learnt as time went on for the various parts of the boat, but if I slip up now and again, you will have to phone your local boatbuilder to get the dope, however, I will guarantee to keep out famous French adages which most authors love to stick on every page just to let every one know they are capable of reading a little French. Personally I have my own views on French, or I should say The French, but I wont go into them now...how the heck did women come into this story...
...just cant keep ~~my~~ em out. To continue with this epic, I started on the business of removing some large chunks of rotten timber around the area in the bows, and by very carefully taking them away, was able to retain their original shape. Using them as patterns I placed them on a good chunk of timber and drew a line around. With the aid of the boat yard foreman, he soon cut the plank the right shape, then with dexterous use of the plane I quickly messed the whole plank up making it fit for firewood. This sort of thing I expected but not quite as quickly, and I soon learnt that hacking away at wood is ~~far~~ different from filing up a chunk of metal, so decided that I would give myself some practice before I wrecked anymore of this valuable commodity. After only wrecking a dozen planks I got the general idea and was actually able to make one fit. Boring holes and bashing in the galvanised spikes was childs play until I found that even that had to be done the right way if I was to avoid splitting anymore frames. So the business went on, removing a chunk of wood cutting another to fit in its place...first a plank then a timber, sometimes a carline, but every piece that went in gave me a little more enthusiasm. Working in spare time made the job an extremely slow one, and at the end of a year I had scarcely finished half of one side. I knew from the very beginning that this would be a long job, but never thought I should

be still plugging along in twelve months with so little to show, but I was learning fast how to handle the tools and that was half the battle. The foreman and I had become fast friends by now and he spent many hours at his home giving me advice on how and when etc., The boat yard owner was also feeling a lot better when he saw how things were progressing and was lots more amicable and gave me the full use of his shops and machinery. All my "friends" of the criticising days now came along to give me unwanted advice which I listened and then forgot.....It'll never sail, its too shallow astern, not enough freeboard..and so it went on every day, but I still had my own ideas on the subject, and after all the work I had put in, no-one was going to put me off. Very gradually the hull took form, and from a filthy dirty hulk, there came a white smooth surfaced speedy looking boat. Still old fashioned in appearance, but new from stem to stern. Winter time, the big tarp covering the entire boat, a little coal stove burning inside with hurricane lamps going full blast. I managed to build up a real good fug inside and on odd occasions was able to get a few of my pals to help out in the warm interior. By this time I had organised a power line to the boat and was able to use my few portable tools aboard without running into the workshops all the time. This sure pushed up the speed of the job, but still it seemed to take hours and hours more than I ever anticipated. Whilst this has only taken a short time to write, the amount of time has tripped itself up to 3 years now, and still I haven't finished. It seemed to me that I should never complete the job. Building the new rudder trunk, fitting the horn timbers, massive chunks of wood that took two of us to handle. Drilling holes about 4' long to put the long steel bolts through to support the stern framework. So many of the jobs that could never be done by machine had to be laboriously tackled with hand tools...sometimes lying on my back, sometimes twisted up into the most awkward position possible, but gradually the hull of Yasme took form and became a thing of beauty.

Now I want you to know that up til now I had no idea of ever sailing around the world, in fact that thought was the farthest from my mind. All I wanted was a solid sound boat that wouldn't let me down or attempt to drown me, and I felt that this was the solution. My sailing books had been neglected for some time now, and the only time I looked at them was for some reference to construction, but as to the actual sailing, I paid no heed.

By midsummer 1954 Yasme had her decks on, but was still devoid of a cabin top and itime was running short for the summer period...I had to get that top on before the winter set in as I wanted to devote the winter months to interior fitting out.

It must have been sometime near the end of the summer that I decided to have a crack had an extended sailing tour, but still the idea of circumnavigation hadn't entered my head. that was TOO fantastic for words, and was forgotten, but still at that time the deck fittings cabin roof hadn't been fitted, in fact there was easily another years work to do maybe more before she would be ready for sea and I was getting a little impatient for the time to come when I could take to ^{DECK} the water. Had a talk with the foreman about this cabin top and he wanted a design but that's where I was completely stuck, so had to go arunning to my old Pal Derek. This was just up his garden. I sat for hours at his home figuring and working out sizes and details so that the cabin would be just the right size, and yet look nice at the same time. There was also the rigging to design as well as the original boat had been designed for the old fashioned gaff rig with top mast and 14' bow sprit, and to use that type of rig for single handed sailing was out of the question, so Derek got stuck into the design and figured it all out for me. We spent many hours on the boat measuring ..there's nothing in the world tougher than a sail boat when one is trying to fit ten times more into the hull than it was designed for, and to try to please me and yet keep the boat ^{FROM} looking like ~~an office building~~ a skyscraper was quite a ^{problem} proposition, but he did manage to get a design less like out that suited everyone...even the boat yard foreman, and from then on we planned to get the yard to do this part of the work. After the usual dickering, a price was arrived at and with me working inside and the yard boys on top, construction went on a little faster

By Christmas, they had managed to get a lid on the boat and keep me fairly well protected whilst I did the interior, but still I found that it would still be over a year before I could possibly think of seeing the boat in the water. Working in my spare time was a dead loss, and with the idea of the extended voyage fermenting in my mind, the idea of returning to my shop each day became more abhorrent. I found that I was pushing my work onto others, and generally speaking, found that work was interfering with my pleasure. There was only one thing to do...give up WORK. This great decision was made directly after the Christmas rush of 1954, and arranging that I should have a manager take over, on Jan 1st '55, gave up all ideas of continuing as a watchmaker and threw the whole mess into the managers hands with a warning that whatever happened I wan't to be disturbed. Maybe this idea appears to be crazy to many of you who have spent many years building up a lucrative business to throw the whole thing away for a mere whim, but I had realised that this was more than a whim, but something that was to govern my entire future.

From January first 1955 I started full time on my project—to get that boat in the water and ready for sea by August First. There was nothing to stop me except myself and the willpower to carry on, and prompt at 7am each morning until very late each night I plugged on. It was agonising building doors and drawers, There seemed to be thousands of them all over the boat but my plans necessitated lots of storage space, and therefore, cubboards etc had to be made to hold the stores. Every item was constructed of African Mahogany, every door was morticed & tongued...the drawers dovetailed and hardly anything but glue was used to keep everything looking a fine job. Nails were taboo here and screws were seldom used.. it had to look right both to me and everyone that came aboard. Every piece of wood was studiously sanded down to a fine smooth surface until the entire cabin was completed. After this came the job of rubbing linseed oil in for preservation. I shall never forget those hours of rubbing, and most of all the smell from this oil. It stunk the house out...everywhere I went the smell followed me..it reminded me of the early days of cleaning out the boat. This oiling business was very fine, but the darned stuff wouldn't dry, and many times I had to sit around seething and waiting ~~for the darned stuff to dry~~ so I could get on with the varnishing. I tried every method I knew to get that oil dry, tried wiping it off with a rag soaked in gas, but the blinkin stuff kept coming out to the surface. This delayed me considerably and to do any work that necessitated saw dust flying around was out of the question so got to work on the engine.

My finances had begun to get a little low at this stage of the game and as much as I would have preferred a Diesel, it had to be a gas engine which was far too small, for the job being only 10 H.P. Whilst the actual fitting of the engine was no great problem, the system of laying the exhaust presented another headache. Yasmie being so low in the stern meant that it was possible that the exhaust would be under water most of the time and would naturally run back into the engine causing it to stall, but I found a good lad in the engineering shop of the yard who devised a very fine piece of twisted galvanised pipe that when fitted made it impossible for the water to run back—I found later that this never caused me a spot of trouble in the whole trip for which I was very grateful, ~~as~~ The engine was a menace on its own without other troubles coming up to impede my progress.

GAS

Installation of extra large tanks was no problem as I was able to obtain these from the numerous junk yards in the area, and when I had them steam cleaned and regalvanised they did the job fine. I had a capacity of 150 gallons below decks in these tanks, and

later installed two other tanks on the deck to carry a further 150. Water was no bother as tanks are made in numerous sizes and are quite cheap, but I installed two of them with pipes connecting so that at any time I could isolate one and draw from the other or balance the two should the occasion arise. The tanks I ~~was~~ cement washed which gave me sweet water all the time regardless how long it had been in the tanks. Carrying 100 gallons gave me an allowance of $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon a day for 200 days and as the likelihood of my ever being that time at sea was remote, I knew I should always be on the safe side. One other tank was fitted in the stern to carry 25 gallons of kerosene for the pressure stove. I had intended to fit Butane ~~gas~~ or Calor Gas as it is known in England, but was warned by so many "Knowalls" that it would be unobtainable in other parts of the world that I chose kerosene—I found later that they were talking out of the back of their necks and I could get the gas wherever I went. Naturally one has the other wiseacre who says the gas is very dangerous etc., but I have found that any fuel is dangerous if you treat it with contempt, and to date I can honestly say that I have not had one fire aboard from fuel. With this fire hazard comes another very important item—fire extinguishers. I carried three "Pyrene" type and one two gallon foam. The foam is by far the best, but invariably with a small fire, the foam will do far more damage than the fire itself. The extinguishers I fitted one by the stove, one in the saloon, then the forepeak, and the big foam job in the cockpit and reckon that whatever happened I would be in a position to handle anything that came up.

There were numerous things I fitted whilst I waited for that cussed oil to dry, there were clips all over the place to stick odd pieces of gear, a gadget to hold the torch, another for the soap—so many tiny items that to write them all down would take the rest of my life. I studied every book I could lay hands on to give me further ideas on stowage, styles and methods of rigging, safety precautions, but whilst all these books could explain these items, not one could teach me experience, and I knew that would be the toughest part of the whole job when the time came. I had the local glazier fit all the windows with $\frac{3}{8}$ " armor plate glass...there were no opening ports anywhere...they always leak, and the amount of air they permit to enter in the tropics is hardly worth the trouble of keeping everything dry through leakage....they always leak whatever you do...I cannot emphasize this point enough. The cabin top and deck were all canvas covered, the canvas glued down with a special waterproof glue, and hhen given about six coats of deck paint. The cabin sides I varnished... gave them about four coats, but next time, would paint them as I found the varnish would flake

and leave the wood bare after a few weeks in the tropics, then afterwards, the wood started to split, whereas had it been painted, whilst it wouldn't have looked so nice, it would have stood ~~up~~ to the elements much better. I painted all the bilges with red lead, gave them two coats. Some prefer black varnish with a bitumen base, but I liked to see the bilges clean and felt the red lead was better, The internal ballast consisting of $\frac{1}{2}$ ton of iron sash weights was left loose at first to trim the boat, but later was all screwed into position with crosspieces of wood...nothing can be more devastating at sea when a storm arise to find the ballast has shifted...this will sink a boat very quickly. All the floor boards were first screwed into place, to locate and fit them properly, then afterwards removed and cut into short sections that could be easily removed in an emergency...the sections were then screwed down, ^{with} very short screws to permit them to be forced up quickly. One has many things lying around in a cabin, and ~~where~~ the boards long, it would necessitate clearing the whole cabin before removal of the boards...sometimes there isn't time for that.

I had two six foot bunks in the main saloon fitted with sponge mattresses...they are the only type that will remain dry in high humidity areas, I also had them 2'6" wide, anything narrower than that makes life most uncomfortable for a six footer at sea. Lee boards were also made so that they would slide into slots at the side of the bunks to prevent my falling out...when they weren't in use, they acted as seats in the saloon by being attached to the sides of the bunk on angle brackets. Every loose item on the boat I endeavoured to use for a other purpose and every space consisted of a cupboard or drawer. The first cabin, or "Dog House" as it is known served a triple purpose. On the right was the stove and galley, on the bulkhead dividing it from the saloon the transmitter and receiver was fitted, and taking up the majority of the space was a full size chart table capable of holding the largest chart made...there is nothing worse than trying to plot a course using the saloon table which is invariably covered with tea, coffee, jam, and what have you, also one had to fold the chart to put it down anywhere...the fold usually upsets the parallel ruler and the course laid usually is quite a few degrees off...a good chart table I found is the first steps to good navigation and comfort. Fitted also in the doghouse was the navigation gear, sextant, handbearing compass, chronometer, DF loop...which incidentally never worked for me, and under the chart table were two deep drawers to hold my numerous charts flat...how I abhor trying to use a chart that had been rolled up..it will never stay flat whatever you do.

Jumping back to the saloon again, I had two large cuboards fitted there which being quite deep held a large supply of stores and immediate necessities, whilst under each bunk, I stowed all the canned foods, first removing the labels and painting a number on the tin for identification...this is a fine idea, only don't lose the book that gives you the key numbers. ~~Slipping into~~ The forepeak I fitted ~~this~~ up as a bosuns store. All gear to be used in general maintenance was stowed in this section, and a couple of drawers for clothing. I had originally designed a long cuboard to hold coats, but found later that the continual movement of the boat caused great holes to appear in the sleeves etc through chafe, so the space was relegated to other odds and ends and the coats, what there was left of them into a suitcase. There are many sailing types who ridicule a suitcase on a yacht..say it is cumbersome and a nuisance...they prefer a kit bag, but I can assure you that nothing is more annoying than to arrive at a new port and have to go ashore in wrinkled and mildewed clothing. I found that a suitcase kept my coats etc perfectly flat and free from mildew, also made life a lot easier from a stowage viewpoint, which goes to show that these old timers don't know everything, also, if one is invited ashore as a guest, nothing looks worse than plonking a filthy kit bag into the butlers arms....that will really rattle him. Yasme was a very dry boat generally speaking, and I found that by periodically taking all my clothing out and hanging it in the rigging whilst at sea, I was never troubled with that enemy mildew...my shoes I gave a generous application of polish and didn't polish them...that worked fine. Plenty of odd types of gear I picked up at government surplus stores...mosquito nets for next to nothing, machette which came in very useful for chopping anything that needed to be chopped, leather cases to hold tools..one could spend many hours toying through one of these stores picking up innumerable things that are definitely useful in world travel, and the cost is remarkably low when one figures how much the new factory article is...don't buy rubber dinghies...they fall to pieces after three months.

To return to the construction of the boat as the oil has now dried sufficiently to carry on with the varnishing, and I can forget about all the other small items that seem to pile up all the time.

With the help of the boat yard, and my being able to put full time in on the job, work was progressing satisfactorily, but I still had grave doubts as to my time of departure being August 1st. Not only did I have the work to do, but everyday had to make voluminous notes on things that cropped into my mind. The lists grew longer and longer as each day ~~went by~~ ^{passed}, and for every job ~~crossed~~ ^{crossed} off, two were put down, until I really thought

the list would never end. Caulking the hull was beyond my powers ^{then}, and reckoned the yard would do a better job...I have since learnt the art and proved myself, but in those days couldn't take the chance of a bad job beneath the hull. Weeks whizzed by and I noticed that many of my old pals had come along to give a hand out, all of them realising the dead line was near. Weekends there were as many of ten of them, some rubbing down, others painting...everyone complaining about it but still giving all they had. Gradually the hull turned from a smooth yellow wooden surface into a glossy hard polished beauty. The new varnish gleamed on the rose hue of the mahogany, and the ash capping around the bulwarks gleamed white. Everyone was getting more excited as the days passed. The mast had been stepped and all the rigging tuned up to a fine art. She looked wonderful there on the ~~way~~ stocks. With her gleaming topsides, dark green bottom, and ~~the~~ varnished cabin sides, she looked what she was, a thoroughbred and I am afraid I was very guilty of doing too much admiring and insufficient work, but around the end of May she was ready to go into the water. Around this time, my future exploit was public news and seldoma day passed without the usual sightseers and timewasters came along to either talk, give criticism, or just look and wag their heads in a knowledgeable way. I soon accustomed myself to this and grew a thick skin especially for them.

Yasme was ready for launching...this was the day I had waited for. For years I had put up with nasty remarks etc., many had questioned my sanity, but here now was the results of all that work ready on the slipway to be launched. Here I will take time off to tell you how we gave her the name "Yasme". As with a new born child, so I went through the uncertainties of naming my baby. Girls I knew plenty...too many, but somehow not one of them seemed to have a suitable name to christen my boat. Discussions went on late into the night, we pored through books and finally by pure chance an old friend of mine who had been a Jap prisoner of war suggested the word "Yasume"...he told me it meant Freedom but was pronounced Yasme. Whilst I was in no position to prove the authenticity of this, he assured me it was so, and it was then that I decided that Yasme would be my ships name... it sounded right and was certainly unusual, and its meaning was so correct from my viewpoint.

Yasme was christened as she slid down the ~~ways~~ into the River Avon. A tiny river in the County of Hampshire, very narrow and shallow, and it was with a feeling of relief and joy that she took the water to be tied up alongside the quay wall, rubber

fenders hanging along her sides to prevent the hard concret walls from scratching that glossy surface. It took 24 hours for her to plim up, that is to have all the planking of her underwater surface soak in sufficient water and expand to prevent the tiny leaks that always appear when a new ship is launched. This flood of water in the bilges gave me a fine opportunity to test out my king sized bilge pump. This pump had been on a motor torpedo boat...it was a massive thing, and I had connected it by means of a clutch to the main engine. When I threw the clutch, a jet of water $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter swept through the outlet with such force as to force Yasme away from the quay wall...I knew then that I had a real good pump that would handle anything that might come along in the normal course of events...I also had a smaller hand pump, but seldom was it used in my travels...I always preferred to let the engine do the work.

Now the time had come when all my dreaming was coming true and the next set of events were to store the boat and finish the odds and ends. I had arranged with my grocer to fit me up with six months food all in cans, and here my Mother helped out in a really demoralising job. She removed every label, painted every can and then painted a number on it, at the same time making a log book with everything written down. This was a tough job, but she did it without another thought, even though she knew that the faster she worked, so would the day come more quickly when I should leave...I know know that I could never have accomplished all the things I did without her support, both moral and physical.

Stores stowed, then we paid a visit to the Hydrographic office to get the charts. I had previously made notes of all those I required, but when we finally checked up, found there were many I had omitted...I finally finished up with over two hundred and about twelve copies of sailing directions. Piling them into the car, we shot back home and started sorting them out. We spent a whole day just looking at them and talking about the places I would visit..it was wonderful to sit there and travel thousands of miles without moving, but underneath it all I know my Mother felt the strain...she knew that it wouldn't be long before the time would come when I would leave...perhaps never to return again, but she kept smiling and giving me encouragement...it must have been tough for her those early days.

Running through those lists was a nightmare...food, charts, water, pencils, clothing, spare canvas, rope, needles. .and so it went on, checking and double checking until we figured that everything that was needed was aboard. The myriads of items that needed to be done were countless...one never finishes doing things to a boat..I found that out, but

I considered that she was as ready as any boat could be. There were still a few days to go before departure time, so decided to take Yasme out for a trial run and also to get her compass swung at Poole, the nearest port. I made a point on that day to take her alone, and was determined that now and for ever in the future she would always be sailed by me alone.

My feelings taking her down river are hard to define. She was big...the biggest boat in the river...she drew then about 5'....later it was much more, but I carefully steered her through the marker buoys going very slowly all the time worrying whether she would "run in the putty"...a favorite term for those who run aground. The engine ticked over smoothly and I felt quite proud there at the helm, but underneath my smile and friendly waves to other craft, the fear remained...could I navigate her to the open sea? My previous reputation had not died and there were several who were waiting for me to make the big mistake....running in the putty would give them all food for a good laugh at my expense and the way I felt then, I don't think I could have taken the ridicule, but I reckoned with reasonable care I would make it. We wound our way through the tortuous bends of that river gradually nearing the Run. Glancing quickly through the binoculars I could see my old pal the ex Sea Captain standing, hands in his pocket on the wall by the Run, his brown wrinkled face screwed up as he squinted against the sun, then as I rounded the last bend his hand came from his pocket to give me a wave of encouragement...I think he knew my feelings at that time...into the run on a slack tide it was ridiculously easy to steer through..his cheery shout broke the silence of that Sunday morning as he bid me good luck on the maiden voyage. That small gesture of recognition and cheer gave me new hope and it was with a strong feeling of confidence I passed the final marker buoy into open sea. Opening the throttle wide, Yasme lifted her bows and creamed out into the chop of the Channel, but without steadying sail up, she threw herself all over the place and from below came the resounding crash of some odd pieces of china improperly stowed...my lesson was beginning, the first one to ensure all moveable gear be stowed solid. Locking the helm I ran forward and started to hoist up the jib, but I was learning another lesson...the jib sheets were tangled, the jib was caught up with loose deck gear and as I pulled and jerked on the halyard there was a horrible ripping sound as the jib tore right across. I felt terrible, and panic stricken ran aft to the tiller to swing Yasme about..she had swung intoward shore again in those few minutes and was heading straight for the sand bar near the run with engine wide open. Falling into the cockpit, ripping my slacks at the same time, unlocked the helm and pushed hard to

get her around in time. My heart flew into my mouth in those few seconds...I sweated, leaning my body as though the movement would help the boat to come around more quickly...little did I realise in those few moments that had I shut down the throttle she would have come about much more quickly, but that knowledge wasn't to come till much later. Gradually she swung, the sandbar showing only a few feet from the bows, there was a bump, the Yasme slowed, another bump, then she swung hard to port...swung in the direction of the open sea...I stopped breathing for what seemed hours, first looking forward then aft, hoping to see the wake that would tell me she was still under way...there was nothing, only a few bubbles denoting the tide was on the move... we were aground on a falling tide...what a way to start a maiden voyage. I ran below and tried to get another rev out of that engine..it was already wide open...there was another solution I had read about...swing out the boom and slide out onto it. This would pull the boat into a steep heel and possibly lift the keel from the mud. Releasing the ties holding the boom, I hoisted on the topping lift to raise it, then, hanging on like grim death, swung both boom and myself out over the water. As it swung out, so the Yasme took on a steep angle of heel and I almost dropped into the water as the boom swung with a pendulum action.....could I hang on long enough to make this work? Throwing my weight more downward, the Yasme rocked more, then, ~~slowly~~ I saw a line of bubbles appear in the stern. We were off...at last, another lesson had been learnt, but I knew unless I got back into the boat mighty fast she would swing in another circle and arrive back in the same place. Climbing hand over hand like a Tarzan, the boom gyrating all over the place, I made the deck. There was no time to lash the boom, it had to remain flacking about until I could reach that helm. Half running almost falling over the side as I slipped around on the deck I dropped into the cockpit and wrestled with the helm to get Yasme on a ~~straight~~ course. This time, everything worked out fine, and with sweat pouring from me, we swung out into deep water. The roll that had been set up through this manoeuvring coupled with the action of the sea nearly threw me overboard, and the boom now completely out of control threatened to brain me at the first opportunity. I was determined to get Yasme well out to sea before attempting any more sail hoisting and keeping my head well down away from that murderous boom I stayed put in the cockpit for the next half hour. To be quite frank, I was utterly disgusted with my first attempts, all the errors I had made could have been easily avoided had I given a little more thought to the position of the sails etc., but my excitement had made me forget my judgement...I found that it sure doesn't pay to make mistakes at sea.

Looking astern the land had become hazed up and I knew then that I should be able to make all the mistakes I wanted without a load of critical clots stooging around. Easing the throttle I tried to muzzle the boom, but that was easier said than done...it swished through the air trying at every swing to throw me overboard. Finally, getting really fed up with the whole idea, I grabbed a rope and tried lassoing it. At the first throw I was lucky, then came the struggle to get it in. The Yasme had by then started to go in wide circles but I wasn't too worried...I had plenty of sea room and no audience. Gradually, the boom was tamed and I had it lashed down solid. Without wasting any time I started to hoist up the mainsail, but first made darn sure that it was quite free to go upI wasn't having any of the same old larkthat sail was going up in one piece whatever happened. Releasing the lashings I pulled in on the main sheet to harness the boom, then running forward pulled on the topping lift. Once the boom was clear I started pulling away at the main halyard and very slowly with plenty of flapping it crept to the top of the mast. Not waiting to give it that last pull I lashed the halyard to the cleat and nipped aft to swing the helm. The sail had turned itself into an uncontrollable piece of canvas. We were head up into wind and I struggled with the helm to get it onto a port tack. We were in irons...Yasme would neither turn to port or starboard and I knew that it wouldn't be very long before the sail flapped itself to pieces in the ever increasing wind. Jumping below, I opened up the throttle of the engine to give her more way...the prop skidded in the water...the smooth wake astern boiled as the prop finally took hold then Yasme gradually swung to starboard. The mainsail gave a last despairing flap then with a noise like a pistol^{shot}, it thwacked over, the mainsheet taut as a bowstring as it took the strain of 500 square feet of canvas and a twenty knot wind. Yasme almost at a standstill took the shock with a shudder. The mast quivered as she took on a terrific heel. Water poured over the bulwarks along the decks, some spilled over the cockpit coaming soaking me as I fought with the main sheet to free it. Still trying hard to make headway, she heeled still further...this was impossible, it just couldn't happen to a boat this size, but it was happening, and I knew if I didn't get that mainsheet clear very soon, Yasme would capsize just the same as my 12' dinghy. Oh God, that knot had become so tight I just couldn't move it and whilst I struggled Yasme heeled further, water now filling the cockpit and splashing into the cabin. I hated to do it, but there was no other way out..my sheath knife came out like greased lightning and with one slash the sheet parted. The mainsail now free, swung out over the side and *started to flap itself into pieces again.*

This was absolute hell..here I was hardly half a mile from home and had almost wrecked the boat twice almost wrecked the boat twice. My sails, which were hardly new owing to lack of finance were showing signs of wear very quickly. The jib had been made utterly useless, and the mainsail was going that way fast. At the peak it had developed a nasty tear and with a rush forward bordering on panic I released the main halyard and let the sail down with a run. With the boom over the side, half the sail fell into the sea the rest draping itself over my head, and with the engine pushing the boat along, the sail was gradually being pulled under the boat. Struggling to free myself from the enveloping folds of wet canvas, I ran back to the cockpit and threw the engine out of gear. Immediately, Yasme set up that infernal roll again and swung the boom all over the show. Waiting for the right moment when the boom swung over the cockpit, I did my lasooing act again and made it fast. Out of the cockpit again to haul the mainsail inboard. Naturally, it had turned itself into an efficient bag and had filled with water, and pulling that cumbersome lump of canvas in developed into a real strong man act. Squaring things away, I crept back to the cockpit to pull myself together and restore my shattered nerves. This couldn't go on...it was utterly stupid to permit all these things to happen, but when I came to figure things out, realised it was entirely my own fault. Sticking the engine in gear, I headed Yasme once again out to sea ...heading directly into the waves in an endeavor to kill this rolling. First thing to do was to fit a new mainsheet. I had cut the other exactly in the centre and it was far too short. Fortunately, the coil of new hemp was on deck, but I knew before I started to unwind a length for the new sheet it would tangle....Phsyicic....thats what I was ...sure enough as I dragged the darnee stuff out it coiled and twisted into the most unholy mess imaginable. Expecting it to happen didn't ease my feelings one little bit and the air turned blue as I expressed my feelings in no uncertain terms as to sailing, ropes and whatever else I could think of. The madder I got, the more the rope tangled until I was almost screaming my head off in anger, wrenching this way and that, stretching the rope from one end of the boat to the other in an endeavor to get sufficient free to do the job, but unravelling 120 feet of rope under those conditions was sure a rough deal. Finally after lots of twisting and unlooping I managed to find an end that would come out right. With no time to do fancy splicing at the ends, I tied a knot to prevent the rope from unravelling and cut off what I thought was about right. No time to lash the coil down which by now resembled

a ball of wool which had been played with by a kitten. Playing the rope out astern to get the kins out, I then rove it through the blocks on the mainboom. Feeling a little worried about the rip in the head of the mainsail, I lugged out the sail-needle and threads, then sliding the leather palm onto my hand made my first attempts at sewing sails. I was learning something then that I should have my fill in later years. Sewing canvas on a rolling boat can hardly be called a pleasant way to spend an evening, but when the darn stuff is wet and feels like a board...the needle slips and digs a hole in my hand, then I sew my pants to the sail....the thread becomes knotted and finally the needle breaks when I put too much pressure on it. Those first attempts at sewing could hardly be called bad...they were awful, but at least served the purpose of stopping the sail from ripping further. Casting a final glance around to see if all was clear, hoisted up the sail again. This time it worked out fine, and with a little trimming on the mainsheet, found that we headed in the right direction with a full sail. Keeping the engine running for insurance I decided to cruise for a while like this until I had got my breath back and dissolved the rage that had mounted in those hectic minutes. We were about a mile offshore now and with the seas slightly abeam, Yasme made good headway in the direction of Poole Bar Buoy about 6 miles to the West. Was going to set up the other jib, but decided I'd better get below and try to straighten up the chaos below. Never did I realise there could be so much mess in that tiny cabin. Every book...there were about two hundred of them had fallen out of the racks, two drawers had slid out and cast their contents with the books, and to top it all off, some very sticky jam had managed very successfully to remove itself from its pot and get mixed with the whole lot. I learnt a few more adjectives whilst I cleaned up the mess, and then adjourned to the galley to brew up some coffee...I sure needed something after that lot. Popping out at various intervals I found Yasme handled herself very well with the tiller lashed, so continued to take life easy for a while and scoff the coffee.

The wind which had remained steady decided to increase as is its custom in the English Channel, so I got cracking right away getting up the smaller jib before the weather got too bad to work on deck. Still feeling a bit un-nerved, the ever increasing wind making me feel worse I started to reef the mainsail which was none too soon, as within ten minutes, the wind had reached semi gale force. The seas never very kind in the Channel built themselves up to a nasty 6' chop which threw Yasme into a drastic pitch and toss motion. Stopping the

engine; the fumes were making me feel a little rough, I tried hard to settle down in the cockpit and steer. My first trip out to sea and this was whappeninged. No-one could be as unlucky as I on that grim day, and with each jump of the boat, so my face turned greener. Needless to say, I was soon feeding the fishes as I lay prostrate over the cockpit coaming. How I tried to control my feelings, but seasickness has no respect for man nor beast and I heaved for a solid half hour, every minute getting worse. Where I was going or what was happening to the boat I couldn't have cared less..I would have welcomed the thing sinking under me, anything to stop this infernal motion. I gave up any ideas of steering and stretched out my body in that tiny cockpit trying hard to lay down. My back and sides ached, my throat felt like a rasp and I wanted to die. The land seemed millions of miles away. I would have given anything to be anywhere else at that time, but like all things, even seasickness has to end, and as my retching became less, so I began to feel a little better...if one can feel better under those circumstances. Seasickness was no stranger to me. I had experienced it on the tiny dinghy, but never had it been quite as bad as this. To heck with it all. I went below and started up the engine to increase my speed. The sooner I got to Poole the sooner I could get ashore and rest my weary body. Yasme lifted up her skirts and flew over that water. Spray swept high in the air to be whisked away in the rising wind. I had become so wet that the additional water had no effect on me, but periodically the engine exhaust would be flung into the cockpit to choke me with its vile fumes. My stomach soon rebelled against this unfair treatment and I was forced to stop the engine. We pressed on regardless and as time made its slow passage, so we came up to the buoy that marked the entrance to the channel into Poole Harbor. Swinging hard to port, the buoy flashing its warning white light, Yasme headed straight as a die down channel, the marker buoys flashing by as she held a steady seven knots. The tide was rising fast and with aid, we covered the last mile at a speed nearing ten to twelve knots. A ferry boat happened to be crossing the entrance and I must admit that for the first time that day I did the right thing...I didn't hit it. Encouraged by this wonderful piece of seamanship I carried on through the Wytch Channel and on up to Poole Quay. My troubles were far from being over even in these sheltered waters. Dropping the mainsail and jib and securing them I tried to come alongside the quay wall using the engine....BUT, I had forgotten this fast current brought on by the rising tide, and within seconds, Yasme was sailing along sideways, the engine having no effect whatsoever. Opening the throttle wide made no difference, and slowly but surely she was swept up river to finally

jam herself solidly against the Poole bridge. The mast and rigging were pressing hard on the unbending iron girder construction of the swinging bridge and as I gazed skywards saw first the mast head light disintegrate, then part of the brass track which carried the sail was ripped off and still she was forced harder and harder onto that unyielding structure. Putting the engine astern had no effect as she was side on to the bridge, and all the time I had awful premonitions of the mast breaking. That poor old mast. It bent badly the only thing keeping it in one piece being the straining rigging. Flustered, not knowing what to do next I just gazed around me with a look of horror on my face. A crowd had gathered on the bridge all shouting advice but no one actually doing anything. After a short while I realised Yasme had settled, and apart from the nervewracking grating of the wire rigging on the girders, everything seemed to be holding out OK. Common sense told me the only thing to do would be to get a rope ashore from the stern of the boat and try to pull her sideways and backwards with the help of other yachtsmen nearby. Grabbing one end of my heavy anchor rope, I tossed it up to the bridge audience, then ensuring that the other end had been attached securely to Yasme, I shinned up the mast and climbed onto the bridge. Pulling hard on the rope, I walked along the bridge, passing the end around each upright girder until I reached the end, then climbing over the bridge and down the girder work, I dragged the rope with me onto the quay wall where with the help of many of the lads, we all walked backwards away from Yasme pulling hard. The rope had now reached its end and there was insufficient of it there for many of us to pull, but soon, one of the boys brought an extra length out and lashed it to mine. With thirty of us pulling, Yasme unglued herself from that bridge, and reluctantly the tide had to give second best to the man power then available. As we pulled Yasme from the centre of the channel, so the tide eased its pull and she came easier until finally, she lay alongside the quay. No fenders out to protect her paint, she soon had great scores along her topsides. I felt so unhappy that I could have cried. I doubt whether there was one man there who really realised the work I had put in to produce that high gloss, but being yachtsmen, they gave me plenty of sympathy...I sure needed it then.

After tying up and thanking my helpers, I climbed down and started to assess the damage. Whilst there was no great structural hurt, the highly polished mast had some really deep scores in it, and where the brass track had been ripped away, it had torn some nasty holes in the wood as the screws had been ripped out. The damaged track was beyond repair, but the mast head light only had a broken glass. I reckoned after all that I had been mighty lucky

to get away with such slight damage, but whilst I could fix that, I wondered if I should ever be able to repair my very damaged reputation, and I dreaded the ridicule that faced me when I returned to my own little harbor and the news had got back to them all there..... exaggerated of course. I had to hurry to make my appointment with Keith Metcalfe..he was a friend who had offered to swing my compass and also to fit me out with all my odds and ends from his ship chandlers store. Though I was over an hour late, he made no comment after hearing about my misfortune, but only regretted he hadn't known in time to warn me about that vicious current. My original appointment, had I been on time would have given me slack water with no danger, but that hour made all the difference, and he heartened me with the comment that many others with far more experience had been caught in the same trap. There was little I could do about the damage then, and we had to get this compass swung whilst the daylight held, so we both climbed aboard and headed out into the harbor to get on with the job. The Yasme being all wood made the job comparatively easy for Keith and within an hour we back at the quay side and tied up. I suppose we must have spent a couple of hours chewing the fat, but I sure learnt a lot of things in that short time. I shall always remember him telling me to depend on my compass;.his words came true many times in the future when I doubted that floating card and found he was right.

I spent the night aboard Yasme and woke early to repair the damage with the spare glass for the light and the new track that Keith had fixed me up with. I had quite a problem filling up the torn screw holes, but by using plugs of wood and longer screws, made a fair job of it. It was noon before I managed to get away. The sails I had given to the local sailmaker to fix, and when I finally cleared the harbor, made darn sure that there was nothing fouling them before I hoisted on the halyards. The trip back was uneventful. The wind and tide were in my favor, and with full mainsail and big jib flying, I made the journey 20 minutes earlier than I expected. Nearing the Run, I dropped all sails and tidied up the decks. Was determined not to let anyone see what I had gone through in the last 24 hours, but on arrival at the moorings, found the whole town had heard about my escapade and I knew right then that I should be pestered for days with caustic remarks. Those few days before actual departure were hell for me. The telephone rang constantly at the boatyard ...reporters came along for a story. The BBC sent a bloke along with a gadget for me to *Talk* ~~speak~~ into and generally speaking, I found it almost impossible to get on with my work.

Departure date was set at noon August 1st 1954, and with the dawn of that day I found myself still awake, my brain in a turmoil. I tried hard to think of all the things I may have forgotten, jobs that still remained undone and possibly would never get done anyway. I ran through my mind the things which would clear me from England... Customs had been attended to, my sea stores had all been put in the bonded store.... four dozen bottles of Scotch and 10,00 cigarettes, a few fresh provisions to carry me through I checked and crosschecked. My lists had now become a series of scribbles where I had written something down and then crossed it off again later... in the end, in desperation, I tore up the list and tried to forget the thing ever existed.... the jobs would have to be done later, to heck with the whole thing. I was just about getting browned off with the whole affair. Never did I realise that a little trip could cause all this bother. Goodbyes having been made all around, my mother and I climbed into the car and went to the boat yard to load the final bits aboard and prepare for the getaway which was only half an hour away.

By this time the crowds of wellwishers had completely filled the boat yard and overflowed along the banks of the river. People I never knew came up and shook my hand, wishing me luck others struggled in the crowd to get a snapshot of the me on the boat. It was chaos for the last few minutes. Being in grave doubts regarding my tiny gas engine I chose to have my old friend Bob Bishop tow me out with his fishing boat. I had the feeling that whatever happened he would get me out of trouble. By this I meant that there was a very good chance I should put Yasme up on one of the numerous sandbars. She was well below her water line and the channel was shallow, so I hoped if Yasme touched bottom, Bob would be able to pull her clear. In to Bobs boat piled such a crowd that I thought it would sink, and in the centre of them all, I could see my mothers wan face.... she was bravely trying to look happy, but underneath it all there was stark misery... she was tough, my God she was tough, and the mere fact she got into the boat was enough for me. She just couldn't get into a boat at any time without feeling violently ill, so getting into Bobs at that time made me realise what she was going through. Everything ready.... the mainsail had already been reefed as it was a blustery day, and I didn't fancy the job of reefing in the Channel.

My first order as skipper of Yasme.... "Cast off aft.... cast off forrard.... thanks"... then slowly Bobs boat pulled away slowly from that quay wall and dragged Yasme into mid stream. In my new peaked hat and dark reefer jacket I felt really proud. yasme flew her Blue Ensign

aft, and from the mast head rigid with the strong wind flew the Parkstone Yacht Clubs burgee. So as we left we gradually picked up various other small craft, some under power others sailing, all of them trying to stay with me until the last minute. On each side of the river crowds of people had gathered waving and cheering. A lump came in my throat when I realised what all this meant to me and I regretted the harsh words I had said to many of them in the past. Looking forward I could see the taut tow rope and trying hard to keep upright, the BBC television camera man was shooting the scene. At odd moments I would see my mother give a tiny wave of her hand to encourage me...how I wished I could have been at her side in those last few moments. The familiar outline of the Run came into view and there I noticed were many more thousands of people waiting for us to pass through. The inner bay had now become like a regatta. From every angle were boats sailing...there seemed to be millions of them darting about..overhead were two aircraft taking shots for the papers as Yasme drove through the run into the open sea that was to be her home for many months to come. Now away from the protection of the harbor, Yasme started her cavorting in the choppy seas...the launch ahead was making tough going of it and spray was drenching everyone aboard. The tow rope jerked incessantly with the strain and half a mile off shore, Bob yelled to me to cast off. Locking the tiller, I ran forward and threw his line over the bows, and then turned very smartly to hoist up the mainsail. All else forgotten, I devoted every thought to carrying out that job with perfection. I daren't make any stupid mistakes this time. I could feel the movie cameras boring into me as I made each move with specific exactness. Head up into wind, the mainsail went up without a murmur, then before she had a chance to bear away, up with the jib. It all worked as smooth as clockwork, not one tiny mistake in the whole operation for which I was truly thankful. Walking steadily back to the cockpit, I released the tiller and took over swinging Yasme around to the prearranged course. Bob circled me several times, the tiny dinghies nipping in and out around my bows, and the bigger passenger launches, everyone crouching low to avoid the spray chugged along astern.

This was it...I was on my way. I had cut the last bond with my home, my mother and all my friends. Wether I should succeed was an unknown factor, but it was Do or Die at that time. No turning back but forward to a new life, new countries, new people and ever widening oceans. Peering through my binoculars I kept one person there all the time, my mother....I felt I was doing this just for her, and it was only her encouragement that kept me going when I would have thrown the whole thing up at a later date.

As I slowly got further from the shore, so the procession of boats got smaller and the seas got higher and nastier. Bobs launch had turned and was heading for the shelter of the harbor and as he disappeared to the realisation of what I was attempting to do struck me. I cried like a baby...control of my emotions had vanished and I wept the tears of one who is lost in a strange world...alone...completely and utterly alone without friends or hope, the cruel sea stretching into the middle distance and fading long before the horizon could be reached. Looking astern again, I noticed the land had vanished in the haze, and with nothing but my compass to guide me, Yasme sailed on down Channel to where? I just didn't know, except it was the way to what I thought was freedom from monotony and the same old job each day...freedom from criticism and petty laws...from here on in, I was the law with no man to say yea or nay, and my life and destiny were all here in this tiny cockle shell called Yasme...it was to be this way for two and a half years.

Pulling myself together, I realised I would have to set up some sort of routine, but I cast those thoughts aside very quickly and decided to let things take their course...I would eat when hungry and sleep when I was tired, no more set times for anything except to check my course and position every hour...one thing was, I had to be sure of at times was my position, and in those days, it was strictly dead reckoning. I hadn't yet learnt the arts of celestial navigation, but had plenty of books on the subject and a fair knowledge of mathematics...little did I realise that to work out a problem on a table which remains steady and doing the same thing in a tiny boat was quite a difference, but more of that anon. As expected, the wind rose, the seas got nastier and I got very sick again, but Yasme seemed oblivious of all these things as she pressed on regardless. On the Starboard hand I sighted Poole Bar Buoy...too far away to read its name, but it was very obvious to me that we were in the grip of the fast running current as we passed. Yasme yawed very badly and wavered off course and it took quite a bit of helm to hold her. The weather still got worse and over the radio came the very definite promise of a south westerly gale. Whilst it is the habit in England to ignore all weather forecasts...they are usually wrong, the state of the sea and wind left no doubt in my mind that for once the forecaster was right, and I also reckoned that if I didn't get into some sheltered harbor pretty soon, Yasme wouldn't be feeling very happy...neither would I. The seasickness persisted and I grew weaker all the time. The thought of the gale coming up was greeted with the greatest of pleasure. It was to me, the finest excuse in the world to call into the next harbor and not one person would

criticise my actions...they would all think I did the wise thing, and I for one wasn't going to tell anyone the real reason for pulling in. Looking at the chart, I found that Weymouth was a fine place to call. The harbor entrance was very easy to negotiate with no nasty twisting sand bars to run into and as we neared it, I swung the helm and with engine ticking over, passed into that haven of quietness and smooth water. No one will know how grateful I was to get out of that lousy sea, and very shortly after hitting smooth water, so the sea sickness drifted away. It seemed to me that I would soon get used to this erratic action of the sea...that's what I thought! Weymouth was a very pretty place, and as I tied up alongside another boat, my eyes scanned the quay for a sight of my mother who I had contacted by radio whilst at sea and told her of my intentions. She had been wearing a red dress earlier on and every flash of red in the holiday crowds made me stare harder for a sign of recognition. Scrambling ashore I wandered up the road, the feeling of dry land gave my fast ebbing moral a big lift, and all thoughts about the last hectic trip vanished with the presence of people around. Still casting around for sights of my mother I became involved with a couple of sea going types who knew about the Yasme, and before I knew what was happening we had all adjourned aboard Yasme for a rag chew and to dispose of a bottle of you know what. Engrossed in conversation...NOT dealing with the sea either, we were awoken by a loud hail from the shore. She had arrived. I shot out of the cabin, fell headlong into the cockpit, climbed out and in two seconds flat had scrambled across three other boats and up the steel ladder alongside the Quay wall and landed flat on my face at the feet of my mother. Our feelings at meeting again can hardly be described...we both thought the last time would be the last, but fate has a funny way of arranging things. I thanked God for that gale warning. My two new acquaintances had come ashore and after introductions had been passed around, we all tootled off to eat. Neither my mother nor myself felt like eating, emotions do funny things, but I felt really good at that time as we just all sat and talked about nothing in particular. That evening we spent in a local pub looking at Yasme on TV...I had quite an audience after that when it was discovered I was in Weymouth, and all thought of a little privacy vanished with the entrance of reporters for the local rag. We stayed the night there at the local hotel, and around ten the following morning, I made my last and final goodbye. From here on in there would be no more meetings between us, but I made a promise that the first port I hit I should be on the telephone.

Maybe this mother complex is worrying a few of you jokers, but I can assure you there was nothing stupid about it. When someone gives everything in life and receives nothing in return it makes it tough for the bloke on the receiving end to forget it, and it seemed to me that directly we got together for a short while, something would happen to send me away. My Air Force years had kept me away from home and we were getting used to these partings, but in this case, it was slightly different. No more short week ends home, no more leave periods when we could get together, but something that would part us for an unknown period maybe for ever.

Yasme was ready to move off under her own power, but this time my Mother didn't wait around, and I left with the thought of her in my mind, the waving crowds ignored. Heading out into the Channel, the wind had fallen considerably but the sea was still making things uncomfortable as we pushed along under all canvas. I had been warned about Portland Head and the Portland Race. This is a headland sticking out into the Channel with a stinking reputation, and many small ships had met a sticky end in the Race which was a current building up to fifteen knots. I had the option of hugging the coast around the Head or clearing the Race far out to sea. I chose the seaward route which I considered best for my lack of experience. Soon the sun came out and Yasme bounded along gleefully through the sparkling sea. It seemed to me I was going to get a taste of good sailing weather for the first time, and I thought it would also help allay my inner feelings a bit to have a comfortable trip. To date I hadn't had a trip at night but knew that it would have to come very soon. The thoughts of leaving Yasme to herself in that very busy chunk of sea rather scared me, and as the day passed I tried to take short naps to preserve my strength for the coming night...I certainly didn't intend to sleep if I could help it. It would be tough but that's the way it had to be. I had tried to eat, but just couldn't stomach a thing, just didn't feel hungry, but kept myself going with nibbling chocolate and drinking tea. Had taken on a load of biscuits and fruit, but somehow, the mere thought of food revolted me...later I found that the first two days from any port in the world gave me the same feeble feeling of nausea, and it became an established thing that I wouldn't eat any solid food for at least 48 hours. Many things aboard had shifted from their original stowage spots through the erratic motion, and I learnt daily how and where to stow each individual item so that it would stay put in all weathers. Being a fine day I decided to have a go at

this celestial navigation racket. According to the book, all one had to do was to get the angle of the sun and the exact time, work out a simple formulae with the aid of the Nautical Almanac and a set of mathematical tables..this was too easy. I had heard all these deep sea types shooting off their mouths about how difficult it was but here in black and white in the book of words was the simple solution, and I reckoned that in a few minutes I should be able to plot my position on the chart with no bother at all. Seeing land marks helped a bit, but wouldn't have to come into the working of the solution, but knowing where I was would help to verify my solution. Climbing out onto the cabin roof I swung the sextant up to get the sun in the sights. It was very strange but somehow I couldn't find the darned thing. There it was right bang in front of me, but whatever way I moved that sextant it still wouldn't appear. It took me all of five minutes to realise I had all the shades down on the thing and I was trying to see through almost a black wall of sun shades. Slipping them out the way I took another go and nearly blinded myself. This was great, wish I'd learnt something out of my book before I tried. Next came the business of getting the angle of the sun to the horizon. On dry land this would have been an easy matter but out there with the boat moving around twenty degrees each way all the time it was practically an impossibility and I chased that sun all over the horizon before I got a reasonable shot. Looking down at the scale to take the reading, I then realised I had forgotten to check the time so had to start out again. Looking through the telescope I found the sun was sinking far too fast for me to catch up, but spinning the screw fast, got a sight that I thought was a real good one and also got the time too...I wasn't going to get caught out again like that. Going below I started to study the tables and formulae. It had looked so easy before when I'd glanced through it, but by the time I had written the sight down, corrected it for height of eye, added $12\frac{1}{2}$ degrees for declination and taken away the first number I thought of I landed up with a position that put me precisely twelve miles due south of New York. Reckon I made a small error somewhere cos I knew I was still in the English Channel, but by this time, the motion of the boat coupled with trying to figure mathematics had made the old stomach queasy, so I decided to leave it for another day when I felt better. That night was a rare one for England. In place of the usual rain and high seas, the wind dropped and the Channel became like the proverbial mill pond. With all canvas up, Yasme cruised at a steady five knots, the line of lights ashore

spreading a glow into the haze. Periodically a large ship would pass by, the rumble of its engines reverberating through the water. I often thought about the passengers on those ships that passed in the night. Were they happy...were they doing exactly what they wanted in life? Tonight I felt fine and my previous mood had vanished as I listened to light music coming from the radio below. I took pride in walking up and down the decks, moving around the cabin that was to be my home for years to come, I had the feeling that possession gives one, and that feeling was to grow. I had very little to eat that night, but kept going with tea and crackers...my stomach was settling down and I thought this would be the end of all sickness, and as dawn broke I saw the outlines of the high cliffs and hills of Devonshire, and through the entrance of a breakwater, Torquay became visible. I was feeling much surer of myself as I sailed Yasme into the tiny harbor with all sail up. I had been to Torquay many times before and knew exactly how much space there was available. Passing through the two entrance lights, down came the jib then the mainsail and with the little way on the boat, I steered into the anchorage and dropped the anchor in one of the most beautiful spots in England. For the first time I had made a sea passage with success and made it without a mistake. Lowering the dinghy over the side, I paddled ashore to be greeted by the Commodore of the Corinthian Yacht Club. He made me very welcome and knew all about my intended voyage, so we soon got down to a long talk about the future. I hadn't been in the club more than an hour before I was truly shaken by seeing an old friend of mine come through the doorway. Old Paddy..he was a typical Irishman of the Old Country and a keen yachtsman. He had travelled many miles and to many countries in his old motor sailer and in my home town, we had become fast friends, and to see him appear there was a great surprise. Apparently he had heard that I was calling into Torquay, and having nothing better to do had motored down the day before to greet me. We left the club later and really painted the town red. I think we visited every night club and other joint in the place, and it was well after 2am that we finally ran out of places to go. What a night that was for both of us and its memory was to stay with me for many a day. Around noon after an attempt at sleeping he came over to see me off on the next and I hoped final trip to the toe of England, Falmouth but that wasn't to be...the old man of the sea had something else in store for me. Clearing the harbor and out to sea came easy to me then and I layed a course to clear all the headlands to make Falmouth. Within an hour the weather had turned bad on me, and the weather report

did nothing to encourage me to carry on so started looking for a bolt hole in the immediate locality. Plymouth wasn't too far away, so changing course, stuck the engine on to help us along and crowded all the sail on she would carry to get there before the storm broke. I had been in the harbor for ten minutes when the gale hit. Yasme leaned far over at anchor with its force, and I struggled to get my other anchor out to prevent her dragging. The water was sure deep in that channel and I let every foot of chain out...the whole 60 fathoms and with the kedg went 100 fathoms of rope. The remainder of that day was lousy, and I never slept a wink that night. Yasme snatched at her anchor all the time, the wind shrieked through the rigging as though it would tear the mast out, and the incessant roll and pitch made me feel like nothing on earth. How I prayed for the morning to come, but as per usual it took its time and I had to sit there in that freezing cold cabin, wrapped in every coat I could find in a vain hope of getting warm. I kept the primus stove going continuously, but the stench from the kerosene made me feel terrible and finally had to put it out. The tea and coffee I drank to keep me awake tasted like nothing on earth after the first dozen cups, and chain smoking filled the cabin up solid and put me into such a fit of coughing that I thought I should pass out. This was supposed to be a sheltered anchorage, but I should think that was for full size ships only. I dreaded to think what it was like in the open Channel that night and was grateful for being at anchor. Morning came with a bitter wind from the south west and I was half inclined to stay there until the sun came out, but the thought of another night at that anchorage made me haul out and get the anchors in. Somehow in the night, Yasme had turned a few circles and the chain and rope from the two anchors had twisted themselves up into a glorious mess. All attempts at separating them were futile so I had to try to get both the chain and the rope around the deck winch and haul them in together. Now that winch of mine wasn't very big, but it had a heck of a pull. One had to move the long lever about a yard to bring in three inches of chain so you have some idea of the load it would take. Well, I pulled with every iota of strength I possessed, but apart from pulling the bows of Yasme deeper into the water, exactly nothing happened. The one dread thing that all seamen hope against had happened. I had hooked an underground wire or an old naval anchorage cable, both of which require a ship of several thousand tons to lift, and here was I with a tiny winch attempting the impossible. Looked then as though I was going to be forced to stay there whether I wanted to or not. Looking around for some help discovered that the complete area as far as the eye could see was empty. I'd had it.

This was a fine kettle of fish. My only two anchors were down there...all my chain and a large percentage of my rope supply. I just couldn't afford to cut them adrift and yet I couldn't see any way of getting them free...how unlucky could a bloke get?

The only way left was to try to get each anchor up separately and try to untwine the rope from the chain as it came up...maybe it would be easier to get one up at a time, but I had to try something. Started with the lightest of the two which had the rope on and pulled like stink. If the rope broke, well, that would be unfortunate, but it was the only way. Heaving on the winch, an extra length of tubing stuck on the end of the lever to gain that little bit more power and away I went. That rope had a breaking strain of 5 tons and after ten minutes of winching, the bows had been pulled down over a foot and the rope was stretching so much that it had become a lot less in diameter. I knew it would have to break pretty soon, but that's the way it had to be. Noticed that I was still able to winch and was hauling in plenty of rope. The bows still kept down as before but I was actually pulling the anchor in. Whatever was down there was mighty heavy, but we were making headway and something was happening. I reckon it took me about an hour to haul in the major part of that rope and the sweat had soaked my clothing even though a bitterly cold wind had been blowing all the time. Looking down into the murky water I could see a black line going directly across the bows of Yasme...this apparently was the cable I had picked up. Had to pull in a little more on the winch to get it closer to the surface, then came the question of getting the anchor free of it. Obviously with the terrific strain on the rope I couldn't handle it with my own puny strength, and I only had one winch...well, I got a large chunk of heavy rope, lashed one end to a cleat on deck then passed the other end under the cable which was now about 6" below the surface. Passing that end up again to the deck, I put it around another cleat with a round turn that could be easily released making sure the rope was as tight as possible, then, passing over to the winch, I started to let the anchor go very slowly, so as the anchor returned to the depths, so the chunk of rope looped under that cable took the strain until it was holding the entire weight and the anchor was free. Climbing over the bows and standing on the cable, I grabbed the anchor and unhooked it and pulled it aboard. Well, that was one of them freed, now for the next one, the one with the chain on it, and also the heaviest, as not only did I have the actual weight of the anchor to handle, but also 60 fathoms of chain which weighed around a ton. Putting the chain on the winch, back I went to the grind of hauling in. This chore was a lot easier than I thought, and I could only

assume at the time that my second anchor had got caught in the same cable. Whilst it took me far longer to get the chain in owing to the fact I was almost half dead, it finally reached the surface and I found that it also had been caught around another cable..NOT the same one unfortunately, so releasing the other cable and using the same rope, I did precisely the same as before and got my other anchor aboard. The hellish job was finished but what a mess the decks were in, Thick black mud covered everything...me too, and I reckon it took me some time to clear everything up, but I had a certain satisfaction at actually accomplishing another feat of seamanship...I was still learning...learning the hard way, but it was sure penetrating. Yasme had no use for her own anchors now as we were quite well fixed in that position with that underground cable, but I had strong doubts how long the rope would hold with the terrific strain on it, so made immediate preparations to get to heck out of the place as soon as possible. The weather...my favorite topic, was lousy and I expected a real beating up when I cleared the harbour...little did I know then what sort of beating, otherwise I should have stayed out. Hoisting the canvas, we sailed out into the Channel and staying on course made toward Falmouth with the vague hope of reaching there in 24 hours or so. It had been pretty late in the day when I got away mainly through the delay with those darned anchors and I knew it would mean two nights at sea to make my next port..I should have stayed put, but as I said before I was learning. The strong winds had built the sea up considerably and the lousy chop set up caused Yasme to bounce around like a cork. The only encouragement I could give myself was the thought that very soon I should be in tropic waters where the sun always shone and the seas were always smooth...at least, that was what it said in all the books...there were other things to look forward to, but more of that some other time when I'm in the mood....my mood then was of the very blackest, and it was only the occasional radio contact with the shore station that kept me reasonably sane.

Somewhere out there was the Eddystone lighthouse. It was stuck way out in the middle of the English Channel keeping company with a whole load of rocks and I layed a course that would bring me close enough to recognise it...I had no intention of paying a call on the keeper of the light...I felt sure he could do without my company that night. The wind was giving me a great big pain. It would fall off as though everything was going to be fine, then, soon as I decided the weather was going to get better, it would sweep across the boat with an intensified fury that threatened at any moment to take the mast from her. I had reefed down some time ago with expectations of hard blows. and the way things were turning out it looked

as though I should have to get more sail down onto the boom. The English Channel is not very deep, and the prevailing winds being south west cause large chunks of the Atlantic to build up in the Channel and in consequence the results are very short seas full of venom. I was getting the full brunt of this right now and it took me all my time to hold Yasme on course. Sitting there in the cockpit in the dark with flying scud soaking into my duffle coat was far from pleasant, also it was ~~adarned~~ cold and I was freezing. The sky became blotted out with low clouds, and I could see the flash of the white tops breaking around Yasme as they built higher and higher. This was the time to heave to. I had never done this before, but now was the time to try it out and find out also if the books were right on this score. Heaving to is to drop the mainsail and to back the jib, then one lashes the tiller hard to port or starboard depending on the tack one intends to lie to. This I agree sounds awful complicated, but in reality it merely means that the ship will lie in such a position so as not to sail forward and yet not be at the mercy of the elements, but will remain in one position drifting slightly all the time in the direction of the wind. In this way, the motion of the boat will be cut down considerably and she will be much safer than forging ahead into the seas...many large ships have severe damage done to them by virtue of the fact they try to head into big seas instead of easing up. There is too much of this sort of thing to discuss to cover all types of ships...all boats have a different way of heaving to..some leave the mainsail up, some the jib, and some just use a sea anchor, but let it suffice that my best system was to use the jib only, and I found the book was right...so right in fact that I could easily have imagined we had returned to a sheltered harbor. Yasme swung a little and lay at an angle of 30° to the wind and seas and apart from a gentle rise and fall, she remained as though at anchor, To me, this was one of the finest discoveries since Newton discovered gravity by getting conked on the noggin with a pippin, and with a feeling of bliss, I went below out of the cold and wet to rest on the bunk. Several times I must have dozed off, but never enough to completely lose my senses. The cabin filled with steam from the clothing drying on my body and I knew the following day I was going to pay for this with every sort of stiffness known to man, but then, I couldn't have cared less as I lay there in a semi coma. Periodically a big sea would hit Yasme with such a resounding thud that I would jump up, my whole body trembling with the shock, only to settle back again my heart beating fifty to the dozen as I waited for the next one to strike her. How long this lasted is hard to say. I lost all sense of time and the motion was making me sick again

Drifting into that sleep that comes with over fatigue I was rudely awoken by the biggest crash I'd ever heard on the whole trip, and following this, the surge of water came very plainly to my ears over the decks. Yasme staggered under this blow and I was rolled off the bunk onto the floor as she heeled at a fantastic angle to starboard. Scrambling up the best I could and clinging to every handhold in the cabin, I staggered aft to open the cabin doors. Yasme had become very sluggish and I could sense she had plenty of water in the bilges. Grabbing the handle of the door, I opened it to look out. As the door opened so I was completely blinded by a white seering glare. It felt as though all the suns of the uni universe had clubbed together and shone in one concentrated form into my eyes. Pulling the door closed, I rubbed my eyes in an endeavour to clear the haze over them, and in those few seconds the stark reality of what had happened struck me like a ton of bricks....that light was EDDystone Lighthouse, and somehow I had drifted close enough to it to get the full glare from its umpteenth candle powerlight. Shielding my eyes, I climbed out into the cockpit which was brimming full with water, and with hands acting as a shade I looked astern. There seemingly only 100 yards away were the Eddystone Rocks, and towering above was the light continuously carcling, sending its warning beam out to all mariners....All mariners except me...Me, I was asleep. Frantic with worry and lack of knowledge as to what to do under these circumstances, I went below and tried to start the engine. My navigation lights had been on for hours and the batteries were pretty well shot also the magneto was almost covered with water that had sloshed around in the bilges from that last packet we'd just received, and apart from a faint whine and grating sound from the starter...not a bloomin light came from it...not a blinkin whistle..it was kaput, finished. To swing it was out of the question, I had about as much strength left as cockeyed flea with both hands tied behind its back, and gave that idea up before I thought of it..if you get what I mean. There was one answer to the whole thing...The only answer, and that was to get some sail on her and try to swing away from the rocks, in fact swing anywhere, as long as I could get away from that hateful light. We were now in the shallow water that preceeded the rocks and Yasme was almost standing on her head. I crawled along the decks..it was impossible to walk in the normal way and fumbled with the mainsail. All the tyers had tightened with the wet, and I finally cut them all adrift to free the sail. Then came the problem of getting it up in that crazy sea. From the top of the mast hung numerous halyards or ropes..each one to pull up a different sail. The erratic motion had tangled them all, and it seemed I must have pulled on thousands

of ropes to find the right one. The boom now being free from its lashings had started to fling itself about in a murderous fashion; I had lost control of it completely and it would only become still when that sail went up. Topping lifts, jib halyards, spinnaker halyards, flag halyards...I pulled on every ruddy rope there without finding the right one, but after shuffling them again, I took another pick and discovered it. How that sail flapped as I pulled it up. Several times I thought it would fly into small pieces, but somehow it crept up the mast to lose itself in the murk above, and with the entire sail up, Yasme lay far over as the wind took hold. Leaving the halyard loose on the deck...there was no time to coil it neatly, I rolled down the side deck into the bath of water that was the cockpit. Cutting the lashings adrift, I forced the helm over with all my strength in an attempt to get Yasme to come about. The strain must have been terrific as the tiller bent alarmingly, and I quite expected it to snap at any odd moment. The roar of that surf astern came as a dirge to me in those hectic minutes...I knew there would be no chance at all for Yasme or myself once we hit the rocks, but I could do no more than hold the tiller over and hope. Heeling still more as she tried to get under way, Yasme changed course very slightly. I watched the glare of the light from the corner of my eye, never moving my body a half inch, trying all the time to use that light as a gauge to Yasmes movements. First I would see the entire light, then it would swing behind my head then to the front, then slowly with an almost imperceptible movement, the light gradually disappeared behind my head somewhere...Yasme was swinging at last...could she make it in time? would she clear the rocks on the starboard side of the light? millions of doubts ran through my head as I swayed my body as though to give Yasme extra turning power. She came through fine, and with spray spilling over the decks, she swept past the rocks, their jagged teeth being very obvious as we passed the lighthouse. I was going back over the same ground I had fought so much for in the last few days, but it was safe ground and that's all that mattered then. Clearing the lighthouse and the rocks, I brought Yasme up into wind and dropped the mainsail again. We were safe, and I knew there were no more rocks or lighthouses anywhere in that vicinity, so hove her to agian to rest my weary body. I hadn't finished even then as I had to spend over an hour pumping out the wetness in the bilges back where it came from. I lay on the bunk, my arm kept up a reciprocating action for some time after that..reflex from the pump, and my whole body trembled with fatigue and the aftermath of shock. I would have given anything to return home and forget the whole thing, but to face all those crowds of good people who had given me such a

regal sendoff was more than I could stomach...I just didn't have the guts to go back. Maybe it needed a certain amount of guts to go on, but not as much to return, So...I went on. The night ended as they have a habit of doing, and the dawn brought nothing but high winds and a wicked sea. The south westerly gale was still having a go and I thought about moving to another part of the sea that didn't have any gales. Eddystone lighthouse was still visible about 3 miles away, and using that as a landmark, I scanned the chart for a suitable harbor. The nearest was Looe in Cornwall...a tiny fishing harbor was there, not very deep but still a harbor, so changing course and hoisting up the sails, we made our way towards the haven in the north west. The wind was more favorable on that tack and soon, the little island that stands close to the harbor came into view. Bringing Yasme into the lea of the island, the waters went suddenly calm, and with a big sigh of relief, the anchor slid away into 12 fathoms to bring Yasme up with a snatch. Drifting down with the current, she settled down in perfect peace and I breathed a big sigh of relief as I sat back in the cockpit. Within a few minutes, a launch had come alongside to see who the heck had come in from that gale. Tying it up astern, they all came aboard for a talk, and once again, I found that they had heard about the Yasme...seemed to me that we were both pretty well known along the coast. I was informed that whilst I could get into the harbor, I should have to wait for high tide as it was too shallow for Yasme, but as my engine was kaput, they would give me a tow in. After our talk etc., they buzzed off and I sat around waiting for the tow. I suppose I should have been busy on the engine, but who the heck wants to play around with a filthy engine when one feels half dead and very sick...I for one didn't, so I just sat. As promised a fishing boat pulled out of the entrance and tied a line to Yasme, and with one of his crew, we hauled up the anchor...to be perfectly truthful all I did was to grunt every time the other chap pulled on the chain, but as to doing any work, I was utterly useless. The tide was still a little low as we went in and Yasme gave a little jump as she hit the muddy bottom, but apart from that, the run up the river was OK, and they cast off near the quay wall where with the aid of a few longshoremen, I tied up. Customs came aboard thinking I had come from some foreign port, but I soon put em straight on that point, Next thing was to get to a phone and pass on the glad tidings of my arrival at Looe which was not on the scheduled route. My mother naturally was overjoyed to hear from me, but I tactfully kept my big mouth shut about what had happened...no sense in worrying her any more, and it sure didn't help me. The chap that towed me in invited me to his home and then we all pushed on

out to dinner. By this time, my stomach felt part of me again and I was able to get a lot down to replace all that I had given away to the fishes, and with the advent of a full stomach and nice company, I drifted off to sleep in the restaurant. They didn't disturb me those good friends. They were all seamen and knew what I had been through out there, and there is some sort of unwritten code among all men of the sea that had never been said or explained they know what the sea can do to the strongest of men...their whole lives are devoted to fighting the sea in all weathers, and I had all their sympathy in the few days I spent with them. They helped to repair the sails that had been torn, then gave a hand with the engine, and finally finished up by giving a big hand out with the rigging and most important of all, they gave me advice...advice that had hundreds of years experience behind it, Generation upon generation of Cornishmen had been seamen and in the old days, they were famous as wreckers. They would display false lights ashore, sometimes putting a light on a donkey and let it walk along the cliff side to give a ship at sea the impression that there was another ship on his beam. All these things tended to cause ships to be wrecked on the rocky shores and with the wrecks, so the wreckers would pillage and loot, never caring about the crews of the unfortunate vessels. Yes they were all fine men of the sea, and their advice was remembered in many awkward places in future places. I spent three days there, recuperating and preparing myself for the final leg of the voyage to Falmouth. This had to be the last attempt, and nothing would prevent me from making it, so, three days later with favourable winds and a sunny day, I motored out of Looe into the Channel and on towards Falmouth. The wind held fine all that day and the trip was perfect, but with the advent of night, so that fickle wind dropped and I had the opposite to everything in the past... a flat calm. Now Yasme doesn't like calms one little bit and that makes me feel the same way. Not only do we not get anyplace, but she sets up a roll that increases each time so that I feel she will capsize completely, This puts the bar up to any cooking, and as one cannot sit there and starve, I have to stick on the engine. Now this engine will always run fine in harbor or even when I am at anchor, but just once stick it on when I really need it and then the trouble starts, She will spit and cough like an asthmatic old man, give a few gurgles, then there will be a resounding explosion as she backfires then silence. Should I be lucky enough to keep it going, then it will run on three cylinders or less of its maximum of four, but never really pluck up enough courage to fire on all four at once. I had deduced the trouble as water in the tank, bad magneto, and dirt in the carburettor...all of these

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troubles...and others, I was able to correct except the magneto. I cannot tell you the number of times I stripped the ~~damned~~ thing down and dried it out, but always the same result after I got the engine going. I had come to the point when I could strip any part of that engine under any circumstances with my eyes closed, but always I had trouble until one day in the far off future I fitted a new magneto. Some will say that I should have fitted a new one before leaving England, but I just couldn't find any real fault with it, and reckoned that if I finally managed to get it to run for a considerable time it would ultimately dry itself out completely, but that never happened...the moral here is...carry a spare one or throw the engine over the side...its much better to have no engine at all than to have one you cannot rely on, but as I said before....I was learning the hard way.

Whilst all this is going on, I have managed to get the engine to actually produce 2 of its 10 Horse power, and we stagger along in a smooth sea at two knots...maybe. Rounding the head before coming into Falmouth Bay gave me some bad moments. The weather remained the same and I found the meagre power of the engine was insufficient to keep Yasme off the land, and slowly but very surely she was closing the shore. There were some mean looking rocks sticking their ugly heads up in that particular chunk of shore and I had no wish to be impaled on them but what to do about it was a problem. I ran forward and let the anchor go, but although the entire 60 fathoms ran out, we still carried on drifting in....obviously the water was too deep and if I had had the intelligence to look at the chart, it would have told me exactly that, and I would have saved myself the trouble of hauling in all that ~~damned~~ chain. As we drifted closer, I sighted a tiny fishing launch in the distance, but too far away to attract his attention....I had a signal pistol below for emergencies such as this, but once again...I just didn't think about it, but just bawled my head off through the megaphone with the hope that the bloke in the launch had microphonic ears. Anyway, he didn't hear me, but as I sighted him, so he had seen me, and having a lot more intelligence than me, he realised immediately what was happening and, opening up his throttle came steaming up to me full out. His backwash caused Yasme to give a few dirty rolls, but I couldn't have thought less about Yasmes feelings as I grinned all over my face at this welcome hand out. No words were necessary as he passed me a line, and within 20 minutes, he had towed me far off shore into safe waters, then to top it all off, he started to tow me into Falmouth harbor. Seemed to me that I was making a real fine job of this trip with other peoples boats and their engines...but that is the way of the sea and the camaraderie that is there.

About three miles from the harbor a fine wind came up. We had rounded the point that was holding the wind and as it struck Yasme, she heeled slightly and got under way, very slowly closing up on the launch. Lashing the helm quickly, I nipped forward and cast his tow line adrift, and he once the strain was off, circled me and with a wave of thanks, he disappeared around the headland again to carry on with his fishing. So as we entered the harbor the wind picked up and Yasme really showed all the other yachts there what she could do. Inadvertently I got tangled up in a race...it was a regatta day, and entering the fun of the thing, I carried on around the course with the rest of the boats. Whilst Yasme put up a fine show for herself, she couldn't hold the pace of the racing boats, and slowly we dropped astern to then change course to the anchorage. Heading toward the Yacht Club, I rounded up on the buoys and dropped anchor....the final part of the trip along the South of England was over and from here on in it would be foreign lands and foreign waters...everything would be new and my adventure around the world would start...but...before all this could happen, I had to be absolutely sure that Yasme was in top form, and more important, that I was in top form. It is worthy to note here that a small boat will in nearly all cases outlast the endurance of any man, and whilst her mast might be gone, and she be almost full of water, she will always stay afloat long after the man had gone off his rocker or jumped over the side....I was determined that Falmouth was going to be the place I got into 100% form. What we needed was a North Easterly wind to make a good passage across the Bay of Biscay, and at that time of the year, when they came, they came to stay, but somehow, I was out of luck, and the only wind that came was a south westerly. Three weeks were spent there, every day to fit a new item, to tune up the rigging, check the sails and the million and one jobs that seem to appear from nowhere, until finally, I considered I was as ready as I should ever be and decided to take off on the following morning. That evening I got on the phone and used up every cent on the long distance call. I had all my English money in small change and settled down in the box for one of the longest calls I have ever made. It was to be the last one I made to my mother, so it had to be good and long. It was sure long..it lasted over an hour, but when the time came I had run out of money, I said a final cheerio and, boarding my dinghy, rowed out to Yasme without a glance astern at the last piece of British soil I would touch for many years. Pulling the dinghy aboard and lashing it securely, I set about in the half light of evening to the business of preparing the sails for an early morning start, then, not feeling a bit tired, I turned in...the last night.

Tossing and turning all night long, the old brain getting twisted up with the millions of thoughts that would recur. Try as I might, sleep wouldn't come and I did so much want to be fresh for the morning, but that's the way it is for anyone I should think, and that night was long...very long. I suppose I must have tumbled off some time cos I remember waking up with the sun pouring in through the open hatch. It was later than I thought, and not waiting to prepare and chow, I stuck my head into the water outside to wash away the cobwebs, and got cracking with the anchor, the engine and the sails trying to do all of it at once. I hadn't told anyone about my departure...I didn't want another crowd to see me off like before..it made me feel lousy afterwards, so with just a few of the locals around, Yasme sailed away down channel out into the open sea, the open sea that would take me to Spain. Whilst I didn't have the north easterly I'd prayed for, the wind was favorable, and before very long, the last of Cornwall disappeared over the horizon astern and I was alone. There were over 600 miles to go...maybe more, but that was the minimum distance before I would touch dry land again. My celestial navigation knowledge was still exactly nil, but I reckoned I could lay a fairly good course and hold it using dead reckoning, and maybe on the way I should be able to learn a little more of this art of getting a position by the sun etc. For two days the weather remained reasonably fine. Never actually good, but then it never turned into a gale, but was the sort of thing that gave me lots of experience in handling the Yasme. I hadn't worked out any set routine aboard, but that would come with time. The first night out I tried to get Yasme to hold course on her own and get some sleep, but always she would come up into wind after an hour and the flapping of the sails would wake me. There was one thing for sure I had to do...learn how to make her sail herself so I could rest. I could heave to, but the thought of sleeping with the Yasme drifting didn't appeal to me one little bit, so for some time to come all I managed to get was cat naps as I kept on correcting the course every hour. I had planned my course to arrive about 15 miles west of Ushant light. This light was situated on a point of south west France and was the last light I should see until I reached Finisterre the other side of the Bay of Biscay. If I sighted this light OK, I would know then that I only had the actual Bay to cross, and also knew I was on course. The idea of keeping well out to sea from Ushant was to avoid being embayed in the Bay. According to the sailing directions it was very dangerous to get caught inside the Bay. There was a very big tidal set into it and a small boat stood very little chance of getting out once inside...one would finally finish up on the rocks, and I had no wish for that...Yet.

Life aboard was hardly dull. I spent many hours working out the current movements and applying them to the chart, but still kept away from the sextant...still afraid that I should make a mess of the calculations, and I was feeling too fed up anyway to play around with cosines and haversines. Cooking, what there was of it was carried out on the primus. All the stuff I had aboard was canned, and the fresh milk I had taken on in Falmouth had gone sour after 12 hours, so went over to evaporated...it was vile in tea and worse in coffee after being accustomed to fresh, but it was another of those things I would have to get used to. The bread had gone hard. I had wrapped it up in a cloth to keep it fresh, but found it went mildewed...here a small point which I later discovered about that all important food

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At each port I would buy a loaf of bread and cut it up into four parts. One I would leave on a shelf in the open air, one would be put into an air tight tin, a other wrapped in a cloth, and the last one wrapped in a cloth and stuck in an air tight tin. At the end of each week whilst in that port, I would examine each piece and see what it was like. If I found the air tight tin system OK, then all the bread I bought for the next part of the trip would be stowed that way. It is useless for me to say that any one system is good as every baker cooks differently and his bread will react accordingly. Most bread will mildew on the outside, but after that has been cut away, the inside is edible, but there was quite a lot that would mildew right through and turn black. Of all the bread, the French will keep the longest although it gets so hard one has to almost use a hacksaw to cut it and a set of hardened steel teeth to chew it, anyway its your funeral whatever bread you eat....in the end I got used to being without it, so what do you know about that? Potatoes are another item that can cause a lot of bother if you don't treat em right. I got good hard ones and put'em in a box on deck and let the air get to them. This way they kept fine as long as they were dry, but just keep them in the cabin in a bag or something like that and before long the cabin will stink like nothing on earth and you will be inundated with the biggest horde of tiny black flies anywhere in the world...the same for onions. Cabbage is a dead loss..two days and it's had it, and as for butter, that will go rancid very quickly...I stuck to margarine, that will keep for a year. For frying I used one of these synthetic cooking fats. Lard if it is the pure stuff will go bad very quickly. Now....Hen fruit, generally known as eggs are OK all the time. At first I dipped a load of them in some synthetic stuff which was supposed to keep them for six months or more...they all went bad in a week, but the few I had wrapped in newspaper were OK for many weeks...they were fresh at first, not the frozen type.

I suppose I could go on here for a long time talking about preservation of foods, but they will come up again as the story progresses and you can please yourself how you do it when you make a voyage around the world without a deep freeze.

I found that I could manage quite well with one good meal a day after the seasickness went, and for some time, that's all I ever had. Used to get up in the morning and brew some tea and have a couple of eggs and bacon...bread too if there was any left and marmalade, then would carry on right through the day until around 6pm and knock together a mess of anything that happened to appeal to me....as we are able to get most things in cans today, there was quite a variety of stuff, but I always made sure that if I couldn't finish the can full I would tip it onto a plate....one can get a real good dose of poisoning from stuff left in a can overnight...I soon found that out. Two days passed and looking astern at my patent log...a gadget that tells you how far you have gone through the water...I reckoned that I should soon sight the lighthouse, but all the peering through the binoculars gave me nothing except a big pain in the neck..I just couldn't see it..maybe it had sunk or something, or perhaps the chart was wrong. I always blame the chart if I can't find a place it's the best way to avoid confusion. No ships to see only lots of green cold wetness around me. How I prayed for the sight of just one ship, but one never hove into view. Continuously looking at the log, checking my course and then spreading the dividers on the chart...I just couldn't figure why Ushant lighthouse was missing. According to all my calculations, it should have turned up at the very latest at noon, but here we were, 5pm and still no signs of it. I was worried. Thoughts of being lost at sea ran through my head only to be dismissed with the logical answer that I only had to go due east and I HAD to hit land, but the other thought came up...if I did turn east into the Bay...the bay was over two hundred miles deep and finished up with a nasty lee shore nicely strewn with rocks, but then.....always but this or but that. I held my course and relied on the compass, even if I wanted to use celestial navigation, the sun couldn't be seen, it was too cloudy, so what the heck!

As darkness fell, so the wind started to rise. That was just what I wanted. A nice big gale to come up whilst I was trying to find this elusive lighthouse. I cursed all lighthouses I cursed the wind, I cursed the sea, in fact I cursed everything I could think of, including myself. I dunno, all the beauty of cursing loses its savor if you don't have anyone to answer back, and I finally finished up by just grunting and grumbling unintelligibly to myself. Wanting something to do, I decided to reef the mainsail...just in case, but after that there

wasn't another thing I could think of that needed doing, so just sat there in the cockpit peering over the port side for this light. Now and again a dollop of sea would jump over the side and soak my head and shoulders, then it would make all the seat wet....how can I say I was having a happy and comfortable voyage. It got cold, very cold, and I tried hard to get warm by putting on more coats, but as they kept getting soaked, so I got wetter and colder all the time. I wanted so hard to get into the warm cabin and lie down but dare not. How I wished that light would appear. Must have been around midnight I got up and took a walk along the deck to get some of the stiffness out. Climbed on the cabin top and from there I got higher by standing on the boom....what was that? a glow in the sky? now its gone..... here it comes again. My heart took an extra couple of jumps and a lump came in my throat.. this was it. It was the only lighthouse for miles and with every nerve tense, I started to shin up the mast. Climbing that mast was not easy..it was very slippery and waving around like a reed in the wind, but I did manage to make the first set of crosstrees where I wedged myself with arms wrapped around the mast and legs would around the trees. Now I could see the light. Just that extra 20feet had made the difference, and as I counted the seconds between each flash in my mind, I knew for sure I had made it right on the nose. I suppose it is not easy for the average landsman to appreciate the feeling one gets on sighting a place after being at sea for even a day, but I can assure you, I was so happy I even forgot to be seasick...and to forget that is really something, you can bet on it. Slithering down the mast and tearing my pants in the process, I went back aft completely ignoring the cold breeze around the stern and checked the papent log, then..into the cabin to make a dot on the chart telling me that I was where I ought to have been hours ago..if you get what I mean. I hadn't any idea how far I was from the light until I suddenly remembered that there is a table In my book that will give you the distance off a light if you know its height. Its height was in the official lists of lights, and poring through that, getting the height, applying it to the table gave me the answer...I was around ten miles off. Five miles out on a two hundred mile trip working on dead reckoning was something to be proud of then...later I found that even being five yards out on a 2,000 mile trip was only fair...I was learning, so what the heck to you expect from me? I wanted to get onmy ship-shore radio and tell the whole world of my success, but found that the distance from England now was too great to make any contact, and whilst I could hear plenty of other ships talking to each other and the shore station giving out info, no-one heard my weak signal. Looked asxthough I should

have to depend on passing ships and the use of either signal flags or Aldis lamp to pass on any message....my knowledge of morse code was so small as to be negligible, so wasn't looking forward to using the signal lamp. Well, I had reached my first objective, and not to waste anymore time, I plotted the next course across the Bay of Biscay to Finisterre lighthouse, about 400 miles. Now the Official Sailing Directions for this Bay are on the vague side. They tell you there is an inset coming from the Atlantic, but sort of evade the issue slightly when it comes around to telling you how much. There is a lot of guff about how it varies in different times of the year and about a captain on a sailing ship around 200 years ago found himself embayed and all hands were lost with scurvy because they ran out of salt horse...BUT, whilst all this is very interesting if you have anything else to do it still didn't help me very much in laying that course, so trying to use a little judgement, I drew a pretty curved line on the chart...having no idea how I was going to keep on it, but thinking at the time it looked very impressive. I added a few other lines as well just to fill in some blank spaces on the chart and then stood back to admire my work. It looked very very nice, then, completely ignoring the chart, I steered a course what I thought was right and hoped that I would see the land before I hit it. With the wind as it was I reckoned on making it in four days or less, but to make plans in the Bay is very foolish as I learnt later. Whilst I do not quote this from the Official Sailing Directions, I learnt from seamen older and wiser than myself that the Bay of Biscay is one of the worst stretches of water in the world. One might be lucky and have a perfect trip across, then on the other hand.....It was unpredictable, and many ships had been sunk in that Bay, more than I should care to write about, but here was I having a go at it with the weather deteriorating every hour, but still not blowing a gale. I had removed the big No.1 Jib and had reefed the main - sail down to the size of a pocket handkerchief. The tiny storm jib was pulling like a train and I knew that it would take more than the average gale to blow it out..it was almost $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick canvas and one could almost stand it against the wall without support it was so stiff. Switching on the radio to listen to a little light music from the BBC, I settled down in the cabin for a short nap. Yasmie with reefed sails was holding her course pretty well, and I had a tiny compass rigged over my bunk so that I could see wether she changed course. This saved me running out all the time into the cockpit to check the main compass. Suppose I must have dozed off. The regular motion of the boat was very soothing and it was the sudden quietness that woke me up. It was midnight and the BBC had gone off the air. Its funny about noises on

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a boat. One gets very used to them, and if they stop, its just as though a big alarm sounds and awakes you from the deepest sleep. I had lost sight of Ushant Lighthouse and without a moon, there was little to be seen except the occassional phosphorescence ^{made by} the waves and the long streak astern ~~was~~ by the log line. Now and again cross sea would break over the beam and below, I would hear the trickling of the water as it flooded the decks and ran away through the openings in the bulwarks. Once or twice there would be a frantic flapping noise on the decks, magnified a hundred fold in the silence and I would go out to find a fish that had taken time out from swimming and come aboard...I hated fish, so threw them back instead of into a pan...they were happy on that score anyway.

On e day out from Ushant and things still going fine...120 miles covered in the last noon to noon run and the weather still undecided...still not good, but not bad, just lousy enough to make things uncomfortable, and as for taking any sights, the sun had remained hidden since leaving Falmouth, so I couldn't even practice with the sextant even had I felt in the mood...so it was just as well, but the lack of sun made me feel terrible, and it was still very cold. That night I had a strange feeling that all wasn't well with the wind. It would gust up and then fall away to a flat calm. The sails would fill, then flap all over the place causing me to stay at the helm all the time to keep Yasme on course. I was still reefed down, not caring to take the chance of having all canvas up in an unexpected gale so there was little to do regarding sail handling, but there were many times that I would love to have it all flying, but earlier experiences had taught me a lot. Listening to the music from the BBC..it was now fading quite a lot owing to the great distance from the station there was sudden silence as the announcer came on....."We regret having to interrupt the programme but here is a gale warning....etc etc." To cut it short he told me that I was in for a packet...a real southwesterly gale was on its way to the Bay and I was plumb in the middle of it. As expected, my mind made up all sorts of horrible stories about the intensity and danger of the gales in this part, and I really made myself ill with all my imagination, but it still didn't alter the fact that the gale was going to come whether I liked it or not, and if I wanted to be safe, I had better start doing something mighty quick. First thing get that mainsail down and lashed good and strong so that it couldn't break away. Next back the storm jib and lash the helm hard over and make sure all the gear on the decks was fixed securely. Satisfied on top, I went below to clear the cabin of all loose articles and to brew up some coffee to stick in the vacuum flasks for later...I

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didn't think there would be much chance to use that stove if things got really bad, and I wanted to be sure I had something hot to drink later. Personally, I felt rough. In actual fact, I hadn't had any sleep since leaving England three and a half days ago except those odd naps which had only made me feel worse anyway, and the thought of a gale now where I knew full well I wouldn't sleep wasn't very comforting. For three hours Yasme lay hove to. The movement aboard was negligible and I think an egg would have stayed still on the table it was so quiet...but...the lull before the storm was very obvious and my nerves were almost at breaking point waiting for the blow to come. Just around midnight it started with a wailing in the rigging. A high pitched sound that sent shivers down my back and caused my heart to step up the cadence to double time. Oh God, when will it come? these preliminaries were driving me mad and I wanted that storm to begin...the sooner it started the sooner it would finish. The flat calm faded away as the wind took over and gradually Yasme took on a slight angle of heel as she took the load. The sea started to boil a little and the surface ruffled up, little waves breaking over into the cockpit....nothing very serious, but a portent of things to come. So it went on like this for a full ten minutes, then from that black sky it hit me with a bang. The rigging screamed in anguish as the wind tore at it the seas built up suddenly to a height of ten feet, the tops being broken off and thrown at Yasme with a force unknown to me. I felt utterly helpless. Sitting in the cockpit, my safety belt clipped to the rigging, my hand clutching the tiller in a death like grip, I must have stopped breathing...the intensity of the wind and seas were beyond anything I had ever dreamed of, and I sat there scared out of my life waiting for the end to come. How could my tiny little craft survive this war of the elements? Just a thin layer of wood held together with nails and a frail cabin top were the only things between me and death..... thoughts of being drowned out there passed through my mind...I should never be found and there would be a small column in the newspaper about a small yacht missing at sea. Thoughts of home and security, going out to a dance or to a movie...all these things flashed through my twisted mind as the seas did their damndest to force Yasme down. I had a sea anchor aboard and thought I would try to get it out to ease the motion...thoughts of pouring oil on the sea came into my mind...that was supposed to stop the seas from breaking over the boat..then I thought of the few stupid little quarts I had below...as though they could help, it all sounded so silly. Lifting the cockpit seat I dragged out the sea anchor and lashing it to my spare anchor rope threw it over the side and let it pull from the stern.

First the rope moved over slowly, then, as though a giant hand had grasped it, it shot over the stern at a crazy pace....one hundred fathoms slid out in five seconds as the mountainous seas took hold of that anchor and dragged it to windward. Yasme never changed her motion or seemed to move...still she bounced around and still the seas continued to break over her, each one bigger than the last. It was funny, that anchor should have made some difference yet nothing had happened. The rope which according to the pull should have been drum tight but it wasn't....my brain couldn't grasp this fact and taking hold of the rope I started to pull. Within five minutes I had pulled in maybe fifty feet of rope then I saw why....the rope had snapped and all that remained was a frayed end. The rest of the rope and the sea anchor had gone....a five ton breaking strain rope had snapped like cotton..it was new rope and thats what had happened. Completely baffled with the coursse of events I coiled up the remains of that rope and continued to sit there getting wetter and wetter every minute. All semblance of time had long since vanished..it was a question of day and night, storm or calm, nothing else interested me. After sitting there for several hours I noticed that although the storm had apparently reached its peak, Yasme was still holding her position, and the little water coming over was mainly spray and not solid water. It took some time for this to penetrate my thick skull, but when it did breakthrough, I felt a little happier.. if one can be happier in those conditions. Also realising I wasn't doing any good in the cockpit, I opened up the cabin doors and climbed into the cabin. This was very strange. g I seemed to have entered a complete new world, The cabin was comfortably warm, and it seemed that without the sight of those seas and the feel of the wind that themotion had decreased considerably, and it seemed so peaceful in that tiny saloon with all the familiar things around me. Glawing off my clothes so ~~that~~ I was stark naked, I grabbed a rough towel and rubbed myself until the skin nearly came off in strips, but it felt good, and diving into the locker produced a complete set of dry clothes. That change of clothing made all the difference to my low moral, and once I got some hot coffee into me I was a new man...almost. Even the mightiest gale in the world cannot compete with fatigue, and as I lay there on the bunk oblivious to the scream of thewind, fell into a dead sleep.

I still don't know how long I slept...maybe five minutes..maybe five hours or even fifty.. I just didn't know what day it was. I had omitted to enter the log every hour as I had planned, but I did know the gale was still raging with all the fury it could muster. Faintly I could hear the swish of water in the bilges and realised that she must have taken quite

a bit of water in the open cockpit...that was the only place it could reach. I had secured both the hatches and all the ventilators had been screwed down hard, but even though the cockpit was small, it could hold a lot of water, so pulling myself from the bunk I slipped on my still soaking storm coat and climbed into the cockpit. I should say I started to climb into the cockpit because as I opened the door, so a wave hit it with such force that water was forced right into the cabin. Closing the door fast, I went back into the cabin and took off all my dry clothes and with just that clammy wet storm coat around me, I waited my chance to open the door. A quiet lull and then swinging the door wide I jumped through just in time to close it again before the next sea swamped the boat and me too. How many of those seas had come aboard was hard to say, but it took me over two hours of slow pumping to clear the bilges and the gurgle of the pump as I neared the last drop was one of the most welcome sounds I'd heard for a long time. I sat there for some time after that listening to the storm knocking hell out of Yasme, but she stayed put without a murmur, taking everything that came, nothing seeming to upset her stolid fashion. I knew then that I had the finest boat in the world and I think it was only then that I really had faith in that structure of wood and nails ...I was going to call her an inanimate object, but a sailor cannot possibly call his ship that...she is alive, a thing with feelings, with moods and those moods are reflected into my own so that very often I am swayed against my own judgement.

Giving the pump a few more shakes to clear the bilges of that last little drop I went below again and had another good rub down and some more coffee, then tried to read. All thoughts of sleep had gone, and as the sea continued to smash against the sides and the water ran over the decks, I dropped my book and just listened. For three whole days that gale blew, but on the last day whilst I was trying hard to rest, a noise foreign to all others I was experiencing broke through the gale. I was shocked and shaken with the deep roar of a siren near by, and it was only then that I realised that I was in a main shipping channel, and all this time I had been below not looking out or paying any attention to other ships that might be in the area. This was unforgivable, but it had happened, and not stopping to don my storm coat, I rushed out on deck to see towering above me a massive ship. She seemed to be almost on top of me, and leaning over the sides were two men, one bawling through a megaphone. Scraps of his shouting reached me, but the rest were swept away in the wind as I waved him away. How to tell him I was perfectly OK was impossible. My voice wouldn't carry any better than his, but reaching inside the cabin, I grabbed the signal lamp and kept on sending OK OK OK

to him in the vague hope he would understand. Still they kept there, still that perilous distance away from me. Though it was dark, I could see the water glistening on their faces and running down their rubber coats. It was a French fishing boat around two hundred feet long....what a day for fishing I thought.... I could see the nets hanging over the high bulwarks....why didn't they go away and get on with their confounded fishing? couldn't they see they were endangering me, and I certainly didn't want to be saved or salvaged, but to convince them of that was another question. I suppose as far as they could see I was a small sail boat miles from anywhere in a big storm and it was their duty to rescue me. They obviously didn't understand my morse code, so I threw the lamp down in disgust and waited for them to make the next move...what could I do. Had the weather been better I would have sailed away from them, but I certainly wasn't going to risk hoisting my mainsail in an attempt to do that. I tried to adopt an attitude that would convince them I was perfectly OK but how does one do that in a howling gale with the rain pouring down thick and fast and seas breaking over them. I just gave up, and with a final wave, crawled back into the cockpit and made a lot of show when I opened the door to go into the cabin...it was the only thing I could do under the circumstances...the trouble was that whilst I was making all the show of opening the cabin doors, so a big sea made a big show of pouring itself straight into the cabin.....I cursed the fishing boat, the crew and the sea...I stood on deck and called them everything that came into my head.....they obviously didn't understand English because I distinctly saw the two chaps smile and wave, then the boat drew away from me...what characters they were. Going below I started swabbing up the mess. My chart table was covered and all the charts were soaked. The log book, sailing directions packs of cigarettes were all sodden, and it was over three hours before I got some semblance of order in that cabin and my temper had quietened, but by then I didn't feel, like sleep or anything else but just sat there in the stuffiness which you could almost cut with a knife and tried again to read. Several times I had tried to start the engine to get the batteries charged, but always the same response. That magneto had been well and truly soaked with bilge water and the last deluge into the cabin had really made sure..it had soaked the entire engine and there was little chance to ever see it running until the weather improved and I could dry it out. I did have a small charging plant fitted especially for batteries, but I had grave doubts as to its operation. The exhaust for it was under the water most of the time and I didn't think it would have the power to force the water away to even start, but as the lights

were very dim now, and the radio wouldn't even work, I thought I would at least try to get it going. Pulling the panel aside where it was housed, I fitted the starter cord around the pulley and after flooding the carburettor, gave it a hearty pull. A miracle had happened. It started first pull, and as it roared into life, so the cut out came in and the batteries started to charge. The lights which hadn't seemed too bad before now shone with a brilliance that made me think that they would blow out any moment, but all was OK, and very soon I had every light on and the radio pouring out some good Spanish music...I assumed it was Spanish because I heard some castanets in the background and the beat of a Tango...Oh to be in the local hop now...but that was for the future as wonderful visions came to my eyes of dancing with beautiful Spanish señoritas....that's what I thought...Oh boy was I going to be shaken. The rumble of that little charging plant turned my apparently dead ship into something alive again. I had been hove to for almost three days, and that in my book meant I had only been drifting, but which way was uncertain and I would have to wait and see what happened later. The third night I noticed a definite change in the sound of the wind. It still screamed through the rigging but without the same sound. Its hard to define it, but I knew then that things were going to get better...at least they couldn't be worse. The barometer hadn't changed..it was still on the low side, but I never trusted that darn thing..it always said fine when it rained and vice versa, so what the heck...just like our weather forecasters at home....the liars. I still didn't sleep, somehow sleep didn't seem to matter anymore and although my eyes were stinging and aching, the thought of closing them for any period seemed stupid as there was always a reason to open them again after a short time, and providing I kept on drinking coffee it was easy to keep awake...in any case, after that little episode with the fishing boat, I had no more ideas about sleeping and having some other darned idiot try to save me. Sitting there, my mind miles away as I tried to concentrate on a book, listening to the wind and feeling in my mind that it was decreasing in violence. The night used itself up and dawn tried to break through the low black clouds and sleeted rain. It was a lousy morning. Freezing cold and grey, The sea was grey and murky looking, but there was a noticeable change all around, and even though things were rough, I felt that very soon I should be free to hoist some sail again. Trying hard to penetrate the rain to sight land or another boat were fruitless, there was nothing to see. Slowly the wind dropped and the seas whilst getting lower were still acting in a hectic way as the force of the wind now no longer controlled them. I realised that it would take some time to make that patch of

water calm down, but I couldn't wait that long and wanted to get a move on, so went out on deck and started to get the mainsail up. Apart from spending an hour in sorting out the tangled halyards there was no bother hoisting, and as I still wasn't sure of the weather, kept the storm jib up. Releasing the helm from its now almost permanent lashing I let Yasme take up her best sailing position and refixed the helm. Directly we got under way, so the motion changed to something that wasn't nice at all and I knew right then that I was going to be seasick again. I had the usual pills aboard to stop this business, but they either made me feel worse or made me drowsy so packed up taking them. Yasme was certainly doing fine on her new course, but when I went to check the chart found that we were heading in the wrong direction, so, although it broke my heart to do it, I hauled her around on the not so favorable course, but at least it was in the right direction. Still not knowing where I was I carried on as though the gale hadn't interrupted me for three days. Maybe I should sight a boat or something who could give me a position...there were no traffic cops around to direct me...even I knew that, and the sun was still hiding behind a layer of cloud ten miles thick, so taking sights was out. Oh well, keep pushing on and hope for the best, Tried several times to get someone on the radio but nothing better than a lot of squawks came back and I didn't understand that language anyway. The direction finding loop looked very nice in the cabin but that's about all it was fit for...I couldn't even raise anything with that. Looking through my charts came across a "Consul" chart. Now this is a system of navigation aid dished out in these waters. One is supposed to listen for a signal in Spain, another in France, one in Ireland and another in Norway. Each signal has a series of dashes and dots and by counting each one over a period of a minute, one can by transferring the number counted onto this special chart get some idea where you are. I tried it and it worked out fine, but as I had no means of verification it wasn't 100% perfect, anyway, it did at least tell me that I was somewhere near the position I thought, and that was better than a kick in the pants. I suppose I was biased with this position but still feel I should have carried on the same course regardless, anyway, that's the way it was. The fourth day was drawing to a close and I hadn't yet been sick even though the inclination was there. I was determined to keep a close watch that night as I felt in the old bones that something was going to happen. Midnight turned up much the same as usual and the next day started to get under way. I had been on deck most of the time with the binoculars glued to my eyes. They were getting very heavy, and I was cold...my arms ached and so did my body, but I had to stick

it out for a while longer..at least till daylight came. Seldom looking ahead, my binocs invariably pointing to port or starboard I looked around and hoped another boat would appear. This low cloud completely hid the sky and no stars were visible, but somewhere ahead I thought I saw a glare of light in the sky. Running forawrd...as though the difference of twenty feet was going to make any difference, I looked again but it was only imagination. One imagines all sorts of things at sea...even to the extent of hearing dogs bark and people shouting. Once I heard a motorcar start up and change gear....all in my imagination...about 200 miles from land. Walking about the decks, half climbing the mast, searching the vague horizon with still nothing in sight yet I knew that land was near...I could smell it. Expect you coves don't think that is possible, but let me tell you that I have smelt land when it has been over three hundred miles away...now pick the bones out of that statement.

"Four hours to dawn!..then what? No answer came the stern reply..... I knew that I should still keep on going until something turned up, so it was a stupid thing to say, but I felt entitled to say something then even if it didn't mean anything.

Two am...the worst hour for anyone..when one is at his lowest ebb...thats what they say in the books. Let me tell you they don't know what the heck they are talking about because at that time exactly a good meaty solid chunk of light jumped up over the horizon and smacked me straight between the eyes. It was impossible...I knew that, but unless someone had stuck himself in the middle of the drink with an oversize flashlight then it must be Finisterre Lighthouse dead ahead. Trembling like ten leaves, I checked the flashes with my stop watch not trusting my memory, but there it was...the light I had been looking for. I hadn't steered for it...at least not for three days, and the remaining time I wasn't too sure what course I was on being too bleary eyed to read the compass anyway, but there it was in front of me, God had smiled on me again and taken care of me, when by all the laws, a man with my ignorance should have been at the bottom or up on a rocky coast. You know, I am not a church going bloke by any means and have often considered going to church a waste of time, but this little incident which proved to be only one of many, made me think a lot more about someone we all worship but are unable to see. Maybe this story of adventure lardd& the place for discussing the Bible, but I want to say that its a pity more of us don't put our faith in God! I do.....

) Seeing that light had shaken me up more than I can say, and it was apparently luck that had caused the storm to blow me in the right direction and keep me on course, but there it was and from a very rough check, I considered that I should actually sight land before nightfall.

Three oclock that afternoon the faint outline of a foreign shore stood above the horizon. This was Spain. Still too far off to recognise the silhouette of the mountains....there was a photograph in the Sailing Directions showing me what the coast line should appear like, but they aren't too good at the best of times, so had to rely on my judgement that it was Spain. Looking at the chart there was a tiny fishing village called Corruna very close to the Finisterre Lighthouse and as much as I should liked to have put my foot on dry land Vigo was to be my port of entry into Spain, and having come so far, didn't want to deviate to any other place, also I was in doubt as to whether they danced the Tango there...Hi!!!!!! As things turned out, Finisterre light shone for me all that afternoon and evening and far into the following day as I swept around the point and down the coast of Spain to Vigo. It was a wonderful landmark and I was able to judge my position all the time without reference to the chart or compass. Keeping close check on the log rotating astern, I noted the reading when the light came dead on the port beam, then looking at the chart, paced off with the dividers the distance to the entrance to Vigo Bay. I also had to take into consideration the tidal set or current that swept along the coast, and I hoped that the wind would hold long enough to get me there. Daybreak brought me alongside some of the highest islands I had ever seen, and it was between two of these I had to pass to enter the Bay. The early morning mist was very thick and I found it extremely difficult to define one island from another, and I dare not get too close to them in the event of the wind failing. Watching the log closely until the right amount of miles came up I took a chance and swung Yasme to Port and hoped that I had chosen the right two Islands to swing into. Far off shore they looked big, but as I closed them so they grew bigger and bigger until they towered far over me and I had to look almost straight up to see the mist shrouded tops. The wind still held and Yasme passed between these two mountains in the sea and into the Bay of Vigo. How does one go about explaining heaven? Well, that is what Vigo Bay appeared like to me after what I had been through in the last six days. The water had become dead calm with hardly a ripple, the wind was a gentle zephyr, the hills and mountains were green and rich as they swept down to the waters edge. Brilliant colors of plants and flowers speckled the hillsides, and nestled here and there were brightly coloured houses, painted red blue and yellow. The water was deep blue and occasionally a bright silvery fish would leap from the water. Was this what I had been looking for all these years...was this the solution? Far in the distance I could see an old grizzled man and his son rowing a heavy boat towards me. Their curiosity was as big as

mine as we both steered towards each other. Running on deck I dropped the mainsail to slow Yasme down, and with the jib, she very slowly closed with the boat until it was alongside. Bringing Yasme up into the light wind, she almost came to a standstill, and with a knarled hand the old boy grabbed the rail and hauled his boat close to the side. The young lad quickly handed up a rope which I lashed around a cleat on deck, and as the rope took the strain, so I invited them both aboard using gestures alone to make myself understood. It took me quite a while to get the old man to get my meaning, but the lad grasped the idea immediately and sprang aboard holding fast to the safety rail as though his very life depended on it. The old man still silent then followed suit and ignoring my hand to assist him, pulled his chunky body aboard. Yasme had now lost all way and was drifting in a small circle down toward the harbor...quite a few miles away. I personally was overjoyed at meeting these two Spanish people, and whilst neither of us could understand the other, by using gestures and making pictures on a piece of paper I was able to let them know I had travelled from England alone. Their eyes glistened as they walked around the decks, first to finger the sails, then the ropes...they pulled on the levers that controlled the back stays, and the lad enjoyed himself pulling the lever on the chain winch and getting great delight in watching the thing rotate and click as the pawl fell into each tooth. Still not saying anything they continued to walk up and down, looking up to the top of the high mast all the time with beatific smiles on their faces. Not knowing what more to say, in fact I couldn't say anything even though I wanted to, I then turned my ideas to a little more hospitality in the form of a glass of scotch for the old man and some lemonade for the boy. From the expression on the old mans face I could see he hadn't tasted scotch before. First he sipped it..his eyes closed as his face screwed itself up, then he took another sip and looking up into the sky rolled it around his mouth and I could almost follow its passage down his throat as his Adams Apple slid up and down. These two sips had made his mind up for him as when his head had come down to sea level again, he grasped the glass with both hands and with a very smart move, the glass was become only empty. As the liquor hit his stomach so his whole body shuddered and he gave such a melodious burp that I thought it was a fog horn in the vicinity. His face now wreathed in smiles he held out the glass to me for a refill and before I had a chance to fill the thing to the brim he had emptied it again with the fastest elbow action I had ever seen...I gathered from this that he liked scotch, but I didn't intend to spend therest of the morning filling up his bottomless stomach. The lad

had long since finished his lemonade and was standing by for a refill, so acting the fine host I gave him another dose and just to keep the cold out, gave the old man one more and ran below with the bottle before he went completely haywire. Returning to the deck I tried hard to get him to tell me in which direction Vigo Yacht Club lay, but do what I could it never seemed to penetrate. Finally I went below and grabbed the chart and showed him the place...also Vigo bay. Screwing up his eyes, he took the chart from my hands and held it about three feet from them to get a better view. Turning it sideways and upside down I realised that charts were beyond him and tried to take it away, but he wasn't having any. Jabbering to the boy who also joined in the conference they placed the chart on the cabin roof and went into a huddle. I could almost see their brains clicking as they both tried to figure out that mass of lines and figures that represented my means of getting places, but in the end the old chap handed me the chart and spread his hands out in disgust. Yaame still, continued to drift and I wanted to get on, but looking ahead saw a series of different channels any of which might or might not lead to Vigo Yacht Club...I just had to try to get some sense out of them. Don't think for one moment I hadn't tried my English Spanish book on them, but I reckon I had the wrong accent or something, but whatever it was they didn't understand. Going below aggin I tried hard to think of something aboard that would help matters, but there was nothing. As a final shot I spoke backwards and said"Club Nautico Vigo" and by golly he understood....this was absolutely priceless. I knew the Chinese read their books backwards but didn't know the Spanish spoke backwards which just goes to show what three scotches will do to a Spanish fisherman. Those three words caused him to come out with such a stream of Spanish that I nearly fell over the side. His face lit up as he swung and pointed to a channel to the far right, then he pointed to his boy, then the boat and then to himself finally giving one last wave towards the channel. From all this I gathered that he was going that way too, so beckoning them into the cockpit, I went forward and hoisted the mainsail. Directly Yasme felt the wind on her wings, she lost very little time in moving on at a fast clip. The rowbeat slipped astern as the rope stretched to its fullest extent and we were on our way. I had quite a job getting them out onto the deck again after we were under way. They had both cast their eyes into the cabin and made gestures that they wanted to go inside, but although I wanted to show them around, was loathe to leave them alone in that cabin with all my gear littered around, so making some sort of an apology under my breath, I closed the doors and got them on deck again.

Yasme made fine time in that magnificent bay, the water was dead smooth and clear as crystal and as we moved, so a tiny line of bubbles swept in her wake. This was heaven here in the Bay, and the more I continued to sail on, the better I felt. I wanted to sing and shout with the exhilaration of the moment...the world was sure worth living in then, and as the mist dispersed, so the sun broke through in all its early morning glory turning the water into blue diamonds and the ripples into faint silver shreads...this was true Arcadia. In my travels I have seen many lands but never once have I found any to match this beauty and splendor. With the mountains acting as a frame to the bay, I should have loved to have made a color shot with Yasme as the picture in the centre, but not having a helicopter aboard, that was a little awkward. I gave the helm to the old man and never have I seen the such pleasure in a mans face before. He was like a child with a new toy as he swung the helm back and forth, looking astern at the winding wake. Pushing a little to hard, Yasme showed her annoyance by a terrific flutter of the mainsail...she wasn't accustomed to strangers on her tiller and made sure I knew about it. Taking the helm again, I put Yasme on course and she settled back contentedly again how her master had taken over once more. She was funny that ship of mine, always good tempered until I did the wrong thing, then anything might happen. Sweeping around the bends of that wide bay, so I sighted the fine white building ahead which turned out to be the Yacht Club. Running forward, Yasmes mainsail slid down the mast and heaped itself on the cabin roof. With a few quick lifts and a pull, I had it looped over the boom and lashed, then coming up very slowly to the moorings near the quay wall, I brought Yasme about and let the anchor go. With jib flapping she came to a stop, then down with the jib, lash it down and lock the anchor chain around the cleat.. we were here at last...this was Spain, my first foreign port on the round the world trip. Admitted it wasn't very far when one considers the world is 30,000 miles in diameter, but I had proved to myself that I could actually reach another country 600 miles from home. Trying hard to appear nonchalant, I helped the alod man and his boy into their boat and went about the job of clearing up the decks and getting the sails properly furled and covered. Next came the job of tidying up all the loose ropes around the deck and then into the cabin to give that a straighten up...it was in a chaotic state, but just then I didn't care. Suddenly, realising I was in foreign territory, I dashed on deck and pulled up the yellow quarantine flag also the Spanish flag as a matter of courtesy...I waited then for Customs men to come and clear me into the port...the British flag was flying from the stern and I

knew Yasme looked a picture. Having completed my chores aboard, I spent my time looking ashore at the quay wall. Never have I seen so many sightseers since the day I left on my trip. They were packed four deep the whole length of the wall. Old men and young, women and children..it seemed to me that the whole town had turned out to see me arrive. Everyone was pushing and jostling the other to get a better view and I quite expected to see a few of them fall into the water, but somehow they never did. I felt such a fool sitting there doing nothing with all that big audience so I thought I would give them a show, Climbing from the cockpit, I walked along the deck, cigarette in my mouth at the correct angle to make me look tough, and feeling I was giving the right impression, started to climb the mast. Absolute silence reigned as I climbed, and the moment I reached the first set of cross trees 25' above the deck, such a roar went up of cheering and clapping that I looked around in case something had happened ashore to take their minds from my actions, but this ovation was strictly for me. My ego had started to grow to such wild proportions that I climbed still higher and reached the next set of cross trees about 35' up...another great cheer. What an audience I had...how I wished I had someone ashore to pass around the hat...I was sure making a hit with the gang. Climbing that distance had really tired me. As you are well aware I hadn't had any real sleep, for six days and very little food, and that exertion had taken more from me than I cared to admit, but the old ego kept pricking and pushing me on. I was hot then, and the sun had really started to show me what it could do in that part of the world. Sweat poured down my body and into my eyes...I felt lousy, but dare not let the crowd see it...I had had enough of being laughed at in England and had to keep face somehow. The idea of just sliding down the mast seemed too tame for my inflated ego and I did the most stupid thing I have ever done in my life...just for a cheer from the crowd. Walking out to the very tip of the cross tree, I poised myself over the water about 40' below. It was a long way down, but now my actions alone had committed me to a deed I knew was mad and dangerous...I had never dived this distance in my whole life. I could swim yes, but I had always been a lousy diver..usually landing flat on my stomach from a height of 6', and here was I attempting the impossible feeling half dead too. I had to do it, there was no way out and the crowd had now become so dense that there seemed to be thousand's of people there all staring up into the sky at the craziest Englishman that ever lived. If only a policeman would come along...maybe the customs launch would turn up and that would give me a chance to climb down gracefully and escape the deed I had to do, but nothing of

that sort happened...the police, the customs and the local soldiery were all in the crowd looking up and I knew they wouldn't do a thing to stop me...they were as keen as the rest to see me make this crazy jump. Seeing then there was no way out, I was fully determined to make the biggest show of it I could. Peeling off my heavy jersey and letting it fall to the deck, kicking off my rubber shoes, I stood there poised in a pair of khaki shorts. Moving my body backwards and forwards I set Yasme into a roll, gradually increasing the angle of the mast over the water with each sway of my body. I had to do this as I knew I could never jump sufficiently clear enough to dodge the deck below, and I needed that extra momentum to get me well out and away from the boat. This had to be timed just right...more and more I swung, and further and further Yasme heeled at each swing...this time...no not right....maybe next...now I was getting the motion synchronised, gently does it...don't panic..it has to be right...exactly right...once over and then...pushing hard with my feet against that narrow piece of wood, my legs straightened out as I took off into that void. Miles below I could see the water glistening up at me. I tried hard to remember what had been told to me in my very early days of being taught to dive...keep my body straight...don't let it buckle in the middle..keep my hands together over my head..feet pointed in line with my body. The air swept past my body as momentum took over...the water rushed up to meet me and I struck. Suddenly everything blacked out as my body was enveloped by the water. Deeper and deeper I went not feeling anything except the bursting of my lungs as they screamed in agony for air....turn your finger tips up you idiot. My senses returned as I gradually came to the surface. There was no feeling in my body...nothing except that grating in my throat. Feeling quickly along my chest I felt nothing at all, no pain..Had I made the dive OK. Now I knew I had not hurt myself, the old ego took over again and with its aid, I swam to the surface and then to Yasme 20' away. Lungs going at full tilt I grasped the rail and with one superhuman heave, pulled myself clear of the water and climbed into the cockpit. For a few seconds there was a funereal silence and I thought my audience had gone...then, with a sound resembling all the guns in the world, there came such a roar from the crowd that it almost burst my ear drums. they went literally crazy there on that quay side. Hats were flung into the air, people laughed and screamed with joy at my effort...little did they know how I felt underneath it all. I realised that I had made one of the biggest mistakes the master of a vessel can make...I had shown off, I had permitted my ego to take over when good judgement would have said differently, I had risked my

life and my ship as well for nothing except the cheers of a crowd. Yes I was foolish, very foolish and I found that learning to do the right things at the right time wasn't as easy as I thought. I had escaped from a nasty accident by the grace of God, but I knew that one cannot keep taking advantage...one day it would catch up with me and then it would be too late. Drying myself off and getting a few decent clothes on I went back and sat in the cockpit waiting for the confounded Customs to arrive. I was getting thoroughly brownd off with thas hanging around and wanted to get ashore. The crowd had become restless and was waiting for me to do another crazy act. There were shouts here and there then suddenly silence fell. Looking toward the quay again, I saw a tiny boat being paddled out by a small boy toward Yasme. Very slowly hee came alongside and climbed aboard tying his boat up very carefully and carrying the paddle under his arm as though it would get stolen if he left it behind. Whilst very clean he was also very ragged, and stood there on the deck, his brown eyes shining out of a dark brown face. Licking his lips he gazed around him never saying a word,,he seemed to be enthralled with Yasme, but suddenly, his eyes swept back to me and from his pocket he produced a very grubby piece of paper. I took it from him but saw it was perfectly plain...I had half exoected a message from someone in authority, but apparently this wasn't so. He spoke as much English as I Spanish so you can imagine our conversation was hardly enlightening. Taking the paper from me he very laboriously tried to explain his purpose aboard. I went go into the hours of messing around but it finally penetrated my thick skull that he wanted me to put my name, last port and name of ship etc etc on the paper. Writing in block wapitalis I wrote down all the date I thought necessary...he took it back and after glancing at it gave a beautiful smile and slid it into his pocket and started to climb back into his boat. Looking down at him, I noticed the paper had gone into his pocket and straight through a hole in it into the sea, but although I called to him, He just smiled some more and started rowing back. Not knowing what to do, I just sat there, but half an hour later he hadn't returned so, throwing all my ideas to the winds, I got aboard my own dinghy and rowed ashore armed with the ships papers and my passport intending to show them to the nearest authority. R_aching the stone steps I tied up the dinghy and climbed to the top. The dense crowd made passage for me, never touching me all the time. Not a word was spoken as I passed through them and as I walked toward the imposing building which was the Yacht Club, they all tailed behind me leaving the quay wall deserted. Reaching the entrance to the club I entered looking astern to see if the crowd was following, but they

stayed put leaving me without support as I tried to find someone who could speak English. Try as I may, not ONE person there spoke my language, but I did managed to get into contact with the Commodore of the club who took my passport and gave me a receipt. This I found later was the customary thing although I didn't go very much on the idea at the time. Whilst both of us wanted to talk about the trip we were stymied, but he seemed to get an idea, and gesturing me to sit down he grabbed the phone and started pouring a stream of gibberish into the spout. I gather someone must have answered him, but I still cannot figure out how they managed it as I know for a fact that he didn't stop talking all the time. Dropping the receiver back into its slot he reached into his cupboard and produced a bottle of wallop. Still no word to me he poured out about a half pint of this liquid into a glass and did the same for himself. It was ruby red but I hadn't a clue what it was. I am strictly on the waggon always, but courtesy demanded that I drink with him...we drank and he sat back smacking his lips with enjoyment...I fell back nearly collapsing on the floor. I tried hard to get my breath...my throat felt as though I had poured liquid fire down it as I gagged and choked. Tears streamed down my face and my whole body shook with the shock of having his brew try to destroy my innards. Trying hard to look him in the face and yet also trying to avoid his startled look I made a half hearted effort to laugh over the whole display. A few grunts emanated from my burnt throat and for a few seconds there was silence in his office, then...he burst into such a peal of laughter that I almost forgot my embarrassment and very soon, he was up and patting me on the back with a hand like a New Yorks steak joint assist my continual coughing. Whilst this was going on there came a knock at the door and in comes a policeman. Removing his hat he shook hands with the Commodore and me then sat down to receive a glass of that liquid nitro glycerine. Quaffing it in one stroke...by golly his stomach must have been made of asbestos, and as he lit up a long thin cheroot I half expected an explosion in the office. Settling himself comfortably he started to talk in excellent English. He was the police interpreter and had served many years in England both before and in the last war, and with questions both from myself and the Commodore he was kept very busy interpreting for around two hours. The liquor continued to flow into their bottomless stomachs and I took coffee...it was safer to my health, but they seemed to be able to hold it all the while....until they finally stood up then the fun started; Each supported the other and shaking each others hand they brought me into their little circle and it finished up with me trying to hold them both up...it was funny whilst it lasted.

I left the club accompanied by the police wallah, and with him leaning on my shoulder we both staggered down the pseudo marble staircase into the lobby. The doorman gave a knowing smile, and we managed to make the police car without both falling in the gutter. I was a little frightened that my friend was going to drive but I need not have worried. Drunk or sober, these Spanish lads drive the same. Foot solid on the floor flat out with horn blowing all the time and heaven help anyone in the way. That crowd outside the club scattered like leaves in a gale as the driver screamed away, tires burning as they spun in the gravel. I hadn't a clue where we going. I sat there not saying a word wondering if I was being taken to the police station for some infraction of the local laws. We did go to the station, but only to be introduced to the Big Cheese in charge. With the aid of my semi drunken interpreter...I found later that whatever he drank he never got helpless, we had another talk for about two hours with more hard liquor. I had to admire them for their capacity to take it AND hold it too. The day ended with my friend telling me he would meet me at the market place the following morning at 6.30 am....what an hour to turn out, but he told me that I wouldn't be able to get a thing if I arrived later. He took me back to the club and feeling very tired with the events of the day I went back aboard to have a good long sleep. By gosh I was tired...I felt as though I could sleep on a clothes line, but once getting between the sheets found it impossible to even slumber. Being tense and without sleep for such a long time had taken its toll on my mind and to rest was impossible. I tossed and turned all night long...it was a lousy night. My eyes ached and every so often there would be repercussions in my stomach from that hell brew I had drunk earlier. I am not quite sure whether I slept or not, but I was shaken from my reverie with a thud against the side of the boat. Still thinking I was at sea, I jumped up and ran into the cockpit stark naked only to be greeted with a petite Spanish senorita selling vegetables,.....I think. Stunned momentarily I stayed put and froze, then realising I was hardly dressed for company almost threw myself backwards into the cabin to envelope my nakedness. I felt awful for a minute and wondered what she had seen that she shouldn't have, and trying hard to cover my embarrassment, I slipped on a pair of shorts, combed my hair quickly and then went to the cabin door again. She still stood there in her little boat.. not one little bit put out by my previous strip-tease effort and with a charming smile offered her wares,,,the vegetables I mean. Not having any Spanish currency I was nonplussed but after thinking for a second, went below and brought out a tin of cigarettes and some

English money. I held the money in one hand and the cigarettes in the other...thought it just as well to have both hands occupied at the time. Still not saying a word, she placed something on the deck...I was too busy looking at her to notice what she put there, and in any case, who the heck wants to look at vegetables at that hour of the morning? Still smiling that Mona Lisa smile, she stretched out a tiny brown hand and took the cigarettes turned slowly and sat in the boat. Carefully smoothing her red skirt, she picked up the heavy cumbersome oars and skillfully rowed toward the shore....I just stood there and gazed after her not moving until she had tied up, mounted the steps and reached the top of the quay wall. She gave one shy little wave and disappeared from sight. SO THIS WAS SPAIN.... Wow!!!!!! Not even looking at the clock...actually it was 5.30 am...I had a fast wash and shave, donned my best whites and rowed ashore as fast as possible. Quite frankly I hadn't the faintest idea why I was going so fast, or why I was going ashore in the middle of the night....it was broad daylight, but 5.30 am is midnight to me at anytime. Tying the dinghy up, I skidded up the steps and looked around for my dream girl, but the streets were crowded and she had vanished...actually, I never saw her again and I never figured out why, but maybe it was just as well for me. Feeling really down in the mouth I wandered aimlessly around the Quay hands in my pockets and then wandered over to the market place. The whole area was a hive of industry. The majority of the women were clothed in black...long cloak like dresses enveloping them completely. They must have been awfully hot in that rig-out but it was the customary dress for them there. The men were attired in the normal European clothes, but all seemed quite ragged and poor, yet they were all happy. Low single decker trams clattered along the streets and the local soldiers or civil guards were typically attired in their three cornered hats, blue uniform with flashing buttons, and a very imposing revolver strapped to their belts, and a carbine slung across their shoulders. They made no pretense to smartness, even to standing with their hands in their pockets and smoking whilst on duty, but they were quite content and happy as they strolled around the crowds and lounged around the guard room. Trams stopped at the market place and the crowds alighted with their wares. Baskets piled high with all sorts of things, bread, milk in large churns, boxes full of chickens all piled off the tram, and from the doors poured about three tram loads of bodies,, how they all managed to get aboard I shall never know Once emptied the trams clattered away up the street and another took its place still more people and produce pouring out into the already crowded street. This had been going on for

several hours before my arrival...they sure start early in that part of the world. Pushing my way through the throng I entered the market, but stopped a few minutes to scan the large black boards exhibited outside displaying the set market prices. Everything was a controlled price and policemen were there to see that no-one was overcharged. The prices really shook me....average price of meat was around 6¢ a pound, a sack of potatoes could be purchased for around 50¢....should think there was about 100 lbs in a sack...the sack was worth more than the spuds. I got about a gallon of fresh milk...and it was fresh too, for around 4¢. They work in kilos and litres there and it took me quite a while to get used to the system but whatever I bought was far cheaper than any other place I have visited in my travels. Actually on my first entrance into the market I was unable to buy anything owing to lack of the local currency, but just around the corner was a money exchange who fixed me up with all the pesetas I needed. On returning to the market I met up with my hollow leg drinking friend the Police Interpreter and with his arm in mine, he took me around the market and introduced me to all his personal friends there. He chose the best for me and made sure that I only paid the exact amount. Everyone in the market was helpful and I found that from that day on, they would always serve me first however many other customers there might be waiting. No-one grumbled at this favorite treatment and I felt a bit of a stinker doing it, but they wouldn't have it any different in my entire stay. I shall always remember one day I purchased some tomatoes. I had taken a kilo away and paid for them and had carried on with my shopping. I suppose it might have been an hour later that a small girl came panting up to me and gave me 1 peseta, worth almost nothing. My friend who had been talking to me explained that I had been inadvertently overcharged and they had given me the excess money back....I just couldn't figure this wonderful action of honesty, and although I tried to give the kiddie the peseta back, she wouldn't take it...it was really fantastic....for people who have so little in life financially this was really something for me to think about. One morning I noticed a woman trying to get some help to lift a basket of bread onto her head...the custom is to carry all loads on their heads. Well, being all chivalrous I went up and offered to give a hand. Bending down I grasped one side of the basket and heaved.... nothing happened. Exerting all my strength I had another go...still no results. Laughing, another woman came up, bent quickly, and with one heave lifted the basket bodily into the air and placed it on the other woman's head who then took off down the street balancing it perfectly all the way. Oh BOY are they tough out that way, I should hate to get in an argument

with any of them. Once again in the market area which was completely covered, I was amazed at the exceptional cleanliness there. The market was divided up into various sections for fruit, vegetables, meat and fish. All the meat was displayed on big white marble slabs also the fish, and when everyone had gone home, the men would come in and start hosing the place out until it was spotless....maybe they were poor, but they were honest and clean and wonderful people. Each day my friend the interpreter would take me to the local bar for his aperitif and I would join him with a soft drink. Some times we would eat some of the Spanish food, and it was with him that I tasted my first octopus, a great delicacy there. He told me that the fishermen would spend several days sometimes to catch these long armed chunks of sea food and when they returned, would sell them to a restaurant proprietor for a measly few cents. I just couldn't understand this, but he told me that most of the natives here were quite happy with what they had and all lived very frugally. Here I have to tell you of an episode which I sincerely hope has been forgotten by the local types....at the time of the event, my friend lost a lot of prestige, but lets tell it from the beginning it will be better that way. After our usual sojourn in the local bar I invited my friend aboard Yasme for a further aperitif in the form of some good old English Scotch Whisky. Without having to even twist his arm he accepted and off we went down to the quay. Now I had warned him that my dinghy was very tiny being only 6' overall and whilst it would support us both very easily, he must get in very carefully to avoid it capsizing. He assured me that he was quite capable of getting into any boat having spent most of his life at sea, but still I was a little dubious of his ability to do it, so without climbing in first, I stood at the bottom of the stone steps and held the dinghy in tight to the side of the wall in an attempt to steady it whilst he climbed in. Still telling him to take it easy, he took one jump and landed square in the centre. The dinghy not being accustomed to this treatment immediately retaliated by turning turtle and depositing my agile friend head first into the local fish slimed water. He was dressed in a white tunic, white pantsm white peaked cap and sun glasses BEFORE he fell in, but when his bald head appeared above the surface covered in fish scales etc...the refuse from the fish market that had been dumped in a few hours before....he hardly looked the same man. Whilst wearing his sun specs that were a little awry, his beautiful white uniform looked like nothing on earth, and gently floating away down current was his immaculate hat filled with fish heads. Although there were several men there, not one attempted to help him, and it was left to me to grasp

his coat and pull him out. Now he was hardly a slim man, in fact he was damned fat and also weighed a ton. He couldn't swim either, and the more I tried to pull him out, the more he struggled and slipped back into the water each time sinking and bringing to the surface a new variety of scum and slime on his head and shoulders. I was handicapped by the very slippery surface of the stone floor, and with rubber shoes on I was sliding all over the place. Whilst I wanted to get him out, I still had no great ambition to keep him company. I cannot remember how often I made the rescue attempt, but finally he got his hands into a crevice in the stone steps and hauled himself out. For quite ten minutes he lay there puffing like a grampus and stinking to high heaven. He was covered from head to foot in the fish offal, and that wonderful uniform which only a short time ago had looked so spick and span, was now all the ghastly colors that could be imagined. I was stuck as to what to do. The audience above had laughed themselves sick at his predicament and the fact that he was a policeman made it all the more funny from their point of view. Appreciating how he felt, decided that the only thing to do would be to get him back to Yasme and once again tried to get him into the dinghy. No-one will know how much I tried to help and advise him in the second attempt to board the now righted dinghy, but with his own viewpoint he took another header into the dinghy and landed straight back in the drink again. This was too much for me. As much as I tried I just couldn't hold myself any longer. Holding my sides I roared with laughter. I rocked from side to side as I saw the humorous side of the whole episode, and whilst I realised all the time he couldn't swim, I just couldn't do a darn thing to help him. The crowd had taken over with me in this hilarious laughter and the screams of joy that filled the harbour had to be heard to be believed. Tears running down my face, trying hard to wipe the grin away, I leant down again to help him in, and this time we were a little more successful as one of the other men gave a hand. Poor Lugi,,, it was tough on him, and knowing he could never climb into my dinghy in his present state, I called to one of the boatmen to bring over a larger boat. He crawled in and lay on the floor. His hat we had rescued, but his specs had vanished. Leaving my dinghy behind I rowed him out to Yasme feeling sorrier and sorrier as we neared her. Words just wouldn't come. I helped him aboard and pulling out one of the sails made a tent over the cockpit so he could strip off. I dare not let him enter the cabin in that state..I should never have got the stink out for years. Pulling in a bucket of water from over the side I gave him a good dousing from head to foot, then grabbing a big towel, helped him

to dry off. Whilst it was awarm day, he stood and shivered there and had to light up the stove in the cabin and give him a full quart of whisky before he settled down. Making him lie on the bunk, I covered him with blankets and then went outside to try to get some of the slime etc from his uniform. It was a tough job with sea water as the slime was mixed with diesel oil and his coat and slacks were streaked all over. Doing the best I could, hung the stuff in the rigging to dry and then adjourned to the cabin to comfort him. He was almost in tears. The loss of prestige was far more important to him than anything else. He couldn't forget the roars of laughter that had greeted him and was scared what his superior officer would do when he found out. Slowly the effects of the scotch took hold and he settled down quietly. I decided to keep him there until dark and reckoned that by then his uniform would be dry and he could go ashore unseen, but that wasn't to happen. There was a thump on the boat and upon looking out saw three gents come aboard...they were reporters for a story about myself...they didn't know about Lugi, but he didn't know that and when they entered the cabin he nearly blew his top thinking they were going to make a story about of his last misfortune. The four of them jabbered together for some time Lugi doing most of the talking until they finally convinced him they wouldn't print the story. Well, one of the reporters spoke English and after the long talk and another bottle of Scotch, they got Lugi to slip his wet uniform on and sit out on the boat whilst they took shots of us with a very dilapidated camera. Later, one of the reporters took off and got another change of clothing for Lugi, and late that afternoon when everyone was at siesta, he went ashore and crept quietly away. It was a day that Vigo will not forget in a hurry, but I do hope that by the time this comes into print that he will have regained his prestige, else heaven help me when I return to Vigo again. The Yacht club was really something there. It was a massive building built on the designs of a ship complete with sun decks etc. There were several floors used for numerous pastimes that yachtsmen have!!! and one place I really thought I'd have a good time was the magnificent ball room wher I was ultimately very disillusioned. I turned up there one evening to dance with some of the many charming girls but thats about as far as I got. Everyone of them was guarded by their inlaws brothers sisters, in fact I couldn't get near 'em. I learnt later that I should have to know a family for twenty years before I would get a look in...that was tough and I never got that dance after all. Noticed a British ship pull in one day, and keen to speak to a few of my own countrymen went down to the dockside and went aboard. Got the OK to see the skipper and

after talking for a while we both came to the conclusion that we had somewhere before. It finally worked out that we had been to the same school together...it was an Engineering and Navigation college...I had taken the engineering and he the navigation...we had met on rare occasions when we took the same subjects such as mathematics etc. It was sure a small world and I was to see many more of these occurrences in the future. I had been stuck for getting a Portuguese flag and he sent for his bosun to see if he had a spare in the store. This was later produced in the form of a small bundle that I tucked under my arm...I mention this item as it has a funny side to it later. My stay in Vigo had to end sometime. I had seen most of the place and had taken my photographs and now it was time to move on to another country. Luigi was sorry to see me go and helped me get all the stores together for the next part of the trip, and on a bright sunny morning, clad only now in a pair of shorts owing to the heat, I upped anchor and motored out into the centre of the bay where I hoisted the sails. Dipping my ensign to the club, they replied very smartly and slowly Vigo harbour, its happy people and beautiful surroundings vanished around the bend of the river. The feeling of solitude returned immediately I was alone and I wondered when I should be able to conquer it. Really it was spoiling things for me, but one can never get used to that sort of thing easily. A steady breeze soon took us out into the open sea ~~th~~ through those two massive mountains standing like sentinels to the harbour entrance, and swinging Yasmine south again and trimming her sails, I laid a course to Lisbon in Portugal. As far as I could reckon it would be a three hundred mile trip, maybe a little more depending on the weather. I half hoped I would pick up the Portuguese trade winds which would have made it easy sailing all the way, but the it was too late in the year for that, and I would have to hope for the best. I wondered if I could keep close enough to the shore all the way to avoid that unmentionable subject Celestial navigation, and although I tried very hard, found it was impossible as the entire land would be completely hidden late in the afternoon until mid morning in a heavy mist. This mist stretched far out to sea and I had no wish to get into it near shore, so of course, had to stay well out all the time and rely on dead reckoning. I found that the sailing directions were very helpful along this part of the coast, and with a favorable tide I was making over 120 miles a day. The weather was exceptionally good except that each evening the wind would drop completely and leave me in a flat calm forcing me to start the cursed engine. On many occasions I passed Spanish fishing boats with their very patched triangular sails, and once or twice saw quite a lot

racing in some sort of Regatta. Whilst I was able to hold my own with them with sail and engine, once the engine stopped they left me standing. I just couldn't figure this as they were hardly a fast looking craft, and I had a lot of fun in my travels down the coast. I was undecided whether to call into Porto about 100 miles down and collect a few bottles of the famous wine made there, but I didn't have a chart of the harbor, and also it was dark at the time I passed the place and covered in mist, so thought it better to keep out to sea...I didn't drink wine anyway. Many times I wanted to close the shore to try to find some land mark, but caution kept me well out to sea...was beginning to learn now and didn't take so many chances. Often at night whilst I slumbered in the cockpit, never daring to sleep in the cabin in this busy shipping lane, I heard shouts from fishermen and sometimes the throb of a big liner passing close by. .so close in fact that the wash would toss Yasme all over the place and invariably throw me from my seat. My navigation lights burned brightly all the time, also my mast head light...I made a point of walking around the decks at intervals checking these lights..they couldn't be seen from the cockpit. With the radio playing continuously it made life quite pleasant, so pleasant in fact that I was able to forget all the lousy weather I had been in before. Two night passed without anything unusual happening and the third day was well on its way to closing down for the night when I considered it was high time I get closer to the shore to sight a light. The mist had eased a bit with a slight offshore breeze as Yasme nose^d her way in. I had worked it out that according to the fast current flowing down the coast coupled with the favorable wind in the day I had covered the mileage to reach the River Tagus leading to Lisbon. The coast was well lit with lighthouses and there should be no reason why I shouldn't sight one before very long. Closer and closer we went, the mist whilst not being very thick was swirling around Yasme and from the mast head light shone a beautiful hallow in the sky. With the engine still running I couldn't hear a thing and after travelling like this for three hours began to get worried. The sea was very calm and that would mean I wouldn't hear the light surf on the beach. Going below, I stopped the engine and decided I would hang around until daylight, then carry on from there, but even after stopping the engine, I had a strange feeling that I was too close. Visibilty was good for maybe a hundred yards, then all else was lost in the swirling mist. No sound came from anywhere. The fishermen were silent and I didn't hear a ship for some time just the popple of the water around Yasme as an unseen current pressed against her. This current was unpredictable close into shore, and the longer

I waited the more frightened I got. There was one answer as I saw it. Heave over a sounding line. That would tell me the depth of the water mighty quick. I had a 60 fathom line ready and as I tossed it over, even the splash seemed to be deadened by the mist. Gradually I let the cord slide through my fingers. One fathom, two, three, four.....then nothing happened. It had stopped at four fathoms. I had exactly 24' of water under me and all the time it was shallowing faster. Leaving the sounding line hanging, I ran into the cabin and pressed the starter button. Thank God! it started immediately. I swung the helm hard over and headed Yasme out to sea sails flapping as we headed into the slight breeze. My heart set up a tattoo with the shock of realisation. Where I was I hadn't a clue, but as far as I was ~~con~~ concerned, I sure wasn't staying around there for long. Checking the log closely, I motored out for maybe half a mile then swung back onto course. According to the chart I had to be close to the entrance to the Tagus, and my soundings had verified that fact, but still I didn't know how far away the lights were. If I went out to sea there was a good chance that I should pass the River and then I should have the lousy job of beating all the way back against that current with a bad engine and very little wind. Keeping the engine revs down I dropped the sails and kept on that course that would lead me along the coast line. The damned mist cut down the visibility so much that I just couldn't see a thing even with my night binoculars. Lashing the helm, I went out on deck and started swinging the sounding line continuously. I was now in 8 fathoms of water and it stayed at that all the time so I knew my course was fairly true. The chart also told me the depth of water in the area and it seemed as long as there were eight fathoms I was OK. It was murderous work swinging that lead but it was the only way to be safe and sure. Out of the mist I heard the clang of a buoy, and then up popped a light....a bright green light winking through the mist. I counted the seconds it flashed and the seconds it was in darkness and quickly checked the chart. This was wonderful, I had come up on the port hand light at the entrance to the Tagus. Slowing the engine to almost nothing, I put Yasme into a tight circle to maintain her position. I didn't want to lose that light after all that trouble, and I had to plot a course that would lead me to the next marker buoy. Ensuring Yasme was holding her position, I went below and quickly marked off a line on the chart and checked its bearing. Another second to apply the variation and then up again to change course to enter the River. I was only just in time as Yasme had started to drift along with the current and the light was being left far to port...another minute and I would have lost it altogether. Coming up to the buoy again, the tiller now in my

hand, I gazed at the compass as she swung around to starboard and headed inwards to the river, Never once daring to take my eyes from that card bobbing around in the compass bowl. I headed dead slow towards the other buoy, allowing just enough in my mind to account for the southerly set, maybe it was around 5 degrees, can't remember now. I thought of Keith at that time and what he had said about always relying on the compass, but I never heard him tell me anything about it accounting for the drift...I was supposed to do that. Straining my eyes for that darned light...it was supposed to be a red one flashing, and it seemed hours instead of 15 minutes before it finally came into view...what wouldn't I have done to have a radar screen on Yasme then. Carrying out the same procedure, I went below and laid another course to the next buoy. There was never time to plot more than one at a time, and I would hate to lose those buoys in the middle of the entrance as everywhere there were sand bars ~~about~~ and a few very hard rocks too. So this business went on through the night. Never in all my time at sea have I had to contend with so many lights in one place. I finally reached a place where the chart said I could anchor in safety, so pulling Yasme from the fairway and out of the main channel, I ran forward and dropped the anchor in 12 fathoms. As the anchor bit into the sand, so Yasme came up and stopped, the light on the buoy throwing a greenish hue over her as it flashed in the mist. Leaving my navigation lights burning, I went below to get a cup of tea, then to rest until morning...I was completely flaked out and could have slept on the mast head. Setting my ancient alarm clock, I dropped off into a slumber only to be awakened two hours later with the damned alarm blowing my head off. It hardly seemed to me that I had slept at all. Whilst the sun hadn't risen, there was a grey hue over the water, and here and there were deep patches of mist impenetrable at the time. It was still too early to move on so I returned to the cabin and sat there drinking tea until the weather should get a little better for me. Around 7am, whilst the mist still hung around, I could see the other buoy in the distance so decided to get under way. The wind had come up a bit, so using the engine to get back into the channel, I hoisted up all the sails and pushed onward keeping the engine ticking over...just in case. From buoy to buoy I passed until I had used them all up and was in the River Tagus proper. The mist had gone and the sun was shining as we swept along heading onward to Lisbon. This was the life for me until suddenly, Yasme heeled over so that she almost lay flat in the water. A squall had hit her. I had once again neglected to look at the sailing direction properly. It says there quite plainly that the wind will funnel down from the mountains and will strike small craft with hurricane force...BEWARE. Naturally I

didn't, and that wind hit me with all it had. To say I was scared is putting it mildly. I made no move to shift from the cockpit and lower sail but swung the helm in an endeavor to bring her head up into wind. This was disastrous even though it did the job. The more she came up the lower she was forced into the water, and with water pouring into the cockpit over the coamings, sails dragging in the water, she gradually came up into a more reasonable position. That wind blew for five minutes then all was calm again. I'd had enough, and leaving the helm to look after itself, I dropped all canvas and decided there and then that I would motor the rest of the way up to Belhem, the yacht harbor. Getting over the shock, I straightened up the decks and made her all ship shape the remembered that Portugese flag that my old school pal had given me. I got it out, also the yellow quarantine flag. First the yellow flag. With that fluttering, I then hoisted up the other one keeping it in its bundle so that I could break it out when it reached the cross tree block. Pulling on the halyard, the flag broke out. My gosh! it was almost as big as the mainsail of the Yasme. It fluttered out from its halyard sweeping back almost to the stern of Yasme, and I was so shaken with its size that I had to burst out laughing. It was then I realised that whilst this was big for me, at the mast head of a full size ship it would appear very small...if my friend ever reads this I hope he remembers me. Well, it was up, and whilst it was certainly out of proportion I wasn't going to take it down, and I felt that the Portugese authorities would appreciate this big show of courtesy. Motoring up the tagus with its charming scenery either side, I was struck by the pretty colors of the houses strewn along the edge of the water, and winding in and out through them was a railway. It reminded me of my child-hood days when I had a model railway set. It looked so tiny from my position out there, I quite expected to see a Gulliver come along and lift up the tiny engine to wind it up. Many odd types of boats passed me. There were the queer shaped fishing boats used mainly to carry cargos more than fish. Their terrific blunt bows pointing high in the air and the masts leaning far back as though they were almost ready to fall on the crew consisting of one man and a boy. They carried a queer sail almost Bermudian type and no jib at all, but they could sure move along fast and beat well up into the wind. Ahead of me was a magnificent sight. Lying to anchor was a full rigged sailing ship complete with yards and square sails all neatly bent on the spars. She glistened white in the early morning sun, and as I get closer, I could see men up her masts scraping and painting. They looked like flies on that massive ship. She must have been all of 350' long and she was

every inch a real honest to goodness ship. Looking through my binoculars I could see she was spotless. Everyman aboard was smartly dressed in uniform and doing some job. I could see her officers in their gold braid standing along her high bulwarks talking and I made a vow that I would take time out to examine her more closely at a later date, but for the present, I had to get into Belhem and settle the Yasme down in her new home. Passing this fine old timer which the Portugese use to train their men first, I passed on in the centre of the channel preparing to come about to enter the harbor. Just as we swung, the darned engine spluttered and stopped. The fast current soon took hold of her and she started to head bows first straight down onto that fine sailing ship. Dropping the helm I ran into the cabin to push the starter button, but although I pushed until my thumb wore out and the battery was flat, she just wouldn't have it. There wasn't time to get the sails up. They were all rolled and lashed down with the covers on and would take at least ten minutes to even have them ready to hoist and the way that current was flowing, I reckoned that it would take exactly three minutes before she struck. Still below trying to get the thing going I heard an voice in English call out.... "I say Old Boy, can I give you any assistance?" Astounded to hear an Englishmans voice out there in the middle of Portugal and in the middle of the Tagus, I just couldn't say a word, but finally collecting my scattered senses, I ran out to see a yacht about the size of Yasme pull alongside. The Skipper jumped aboard with a rope, and not giving me a chance to say anything, he ran forward passing the rope around the rigging and then lashed it to the winch up forward. Running back, he climbed aboard his own boat, there was a roar from his engine and both Yasme and his boat slid past the big white training boat with inches to spare. Still going flat out he pulled me into the centre of the channel, and handing the helm to his wife, he came back aboard onto Yasme. Hardly saying a word, he helped me to hoist the sails, and once I was under way again, he then cast off the rope and started to introduce himself. Whilst I sailed Yasme he told me his name was Reynolds and he lived in Barreiro a town on the opposite side to Lisbon on the Tagus. He gave me the location of his home on my chart and told me to head there and wait for him as he had an appointment down river, but would be back later. With that, he climbed aboard his own yacht and disappeared. This whole thing had taken about 5 minutes, and it was quite a time before I finally came to my senses and swung Yasme about to follow his instructions. The wind held all the way, and when I reached the spot, I dropped anchor and waited. Nothing more to do I stripped the magneto and found the trouble, but was loathe to attempt

the winding channel to his little harbor, so stayed put. At precisely 7pm, he turned up and finding that my engine was OK, he piloted me into his harbor. Traversing that channel I was very glad I hadn't tried it on my own, because even following him, I felt Yasmé touch bottom several times. He slowed down and put his own boat into a little walled off place, and then called over to me to position mine alongside his own. Both he and his wife helped me to moor up then I went ashore to his home for chow. Its a long story to tell, but I will try here to make it very brief. His family had been there for generations and owned cork forests and also a cork factory,...I always thought cork came from the sea, or out of bottles..he certainly enlightened me on many things. In my stay there he took me in his car to see the forests of cork trees for which Portugal is famous. I saw the men cut the bark which is the cork from the tress with very skilful slashes of a peculiarly curved knife. From there it was taken by mule to be piled into a heap where it was left to mature. Later it was taken by truck to the cork factory where it was put into crushing mills. The granulated cork was then graded, put into a large cauldron and mixed with it a synthetic glue. After a good mixing it was then poured into a mould and put under terrific pressure and the mould capped and screwed down to hold the mixture in place. This was then put into an oven and heated for some time and when removed had converted itself when taken from the mould to a solid chunk of cork. These chunks were taken into another part of the factory where they were cut into thin slices like I have seen on the floor of a bathroom, or in some cases, the mould produced a circular sausage like form of cork which when sliced then became the insert for the metal caps of beer bottles. I was suprised to see that all these discs were checked with a micrometer and had to be exact. so next time you have a bottle of beer, just think for a minute where that little circle of cork came from in the lid of the bottle.

As you can well realise, there were other processes and systems used all far too complicated for my dim brain, but all in all, I learnt quite a lot. Also he was a very fine wine connoisseur and his cellar was something to make a man think a bit. Unfortunately I was unable to pass any comment on the quality of his cellar, but still enjoyed going on a tasting tour. He had one of his men look after Yasmé all the time I was there, and I tried to help him out by fixing a few watches and in doing a few jobs in his workshop. In welding, I was able to be more help. Whilst he had the equipment, there was no-one to use it, so I spent some happy hours teaching one of his men how. I must admit that whilst I couldn't speak the lingo, the chap was very intelligent, and in three days was able to make a passable weld.

As we were on the other side of the Tagus to Lisbon, it was necessary to travel via ferry. From Reynolds place we covered the few miles on dirt roads with his American car...how the heck the thing got there is quite a story, but dumping it at the landing, we boarded the ferry. It was quite a chunk of boat diesel driven and had two classes of travel aboard. If it rained you got wet in the lower class, and if it was fine you sweltered in the heat in the first class. His wife and son came along on this trip and chugging along through the minor tributary we entered the Tagus. Seeing the river from a higher vantage point gave me plenty of opportunity to get all the snaps I required of the strange craft. We saw several other steel built square riggers which were used in the fishing fleet. They gave them the name of "Handliners" Apparently they took off about twice a year and headed North to the fishing grounds somewhere around Iceland and other outlandish spots. On arrival they would unload over the side a series of small sail boats about 16' long which would have a crew of one. The "Handler" would then circle the spot continuously whilst these tiny sail boats would spread out for a distance of several miles. The solitary crew member would use a hand line to fish for cod and when he had filled his tiny boat, he would return to the Mother ship and unload his catch, then off he would go again. With many of these small boats going and coming they would ultimately fill up the bigger ship and it would then return to Lisbon. The time they were out from port would depend on the weather and the catch, and it was nothing for them to be out 6 months on end. This cod was dried and sold. I was invited to a meal of it, but the smell was so revolting that I had to excuse myself from the dining room...how the heck they ate the stuff I shall never know. Crossing the Tagus we landed up at a big wooden floating platform. The ferry came up to it with such a bang I thought it would sink. Following the long queue of people was climbed up some rickety steps to the quay side and passed through a series of gates all heavily guarded by police, civil guard and many other officials far too numerous to mention...they all were attired in different uniforms with lots of gold braid...except they were all captains. Coming from the very primitive side of the Tagus I was immediately struck with the town of Lisbon. It was ultra modern being like a miniature New York. Wide streets, modern shops and very modern prices...everything was far too high for me to even contemplate purchasing, Lisbon is on a hill which is surmounted by an old Palace of the Kings. We took a taxi and passed through New Lisbon and finally swept through Old Lisbon. There was a definite line where

the two areas joined, and whilst Old Lisbon was far more picturesque, it was also very dirty. The streets narrowed considerably and the sidewalks were covered in pedlars with barrows holding their wares. We climbed out of the taxi as we entered the old quarter and trudged up the steeply sloping streets. This was the biggest mistake we made as we could not travel a yard without being pestered by the numerous pedlars. The hung to our sleeves sticking whatever they had to sell right into our faces, and also surrounding us were hordes of children holding out their hands. It was then I really made a mistake. Feeling sorry for all these tiny ragged infants, I dug my hand in my pocket to find some loose change. As you are possibly aware, the escudo is not worth very much and a fist full wouldn't amount to a dollar. Pulling out a load of these I scattered them among the kids. In the rush, all three of us were nearly swept off our feet. From about a dozen kids they turned into a million lion eating tigers as they scrabbled in the dirt for this money. Realising my error, we tried hard to beat a hasty retreat, but it was impossible...the rich Englishmen were there and they weren't going to see us leave until we were bled dry. From every house, alley and niche in the place hordes of kids and grown ups too came running, and finally losing our heads, we turned about and ran down the hill to reach the more civilised area. Seeing an empty taxi ahead, we all made a dive for it, scrambled in closed all the windows and locked the doors. The driver hardly waiting for us to sit had already engaged his gears and letting the clutch out with a bang that through us all back in the seats. With his foot hard down, he swung the wheel hard over and screamed away down the hill...I was beginning to wonder if we had jumped out of the frying pan into the fire as that taxi twisted and turned in and out of the traffic with horn going full blast all the time. Collecting our senses, we all screamed together at the taxi to ease up. He turned around and gave a big grin and started rattling away in Portuguese. Holding the steering wheel with one hand and the other over the back of the seat he slewed himself right around and completely ignoring what was going on ahead carried on talking fifteen to the dozen. Other cars and taxis in the immediate vicinity tore past us all blowing their horns and miraculously we didn't hit anyone...how, I shall never know. We finally got him to stop and swing his taxi around to take us up the hill to the Old Palace. Without any signal, down went his foot on the gas and he turned a complete circle right in the middle of the main street and headed up the hill. Nearing the old part I did think he would slow down but apparently the sight of the streets ahead milling with people had the opposite effect.

This was the time for him to really show off, His foot went down harder and the horn seemed to blare louder and the crowds scattered. Bumping over the cobbled streets, often his fenders would brush against one of the rickety stalls sending oranges and vegetables boucing all over the road. Looking behind we could see the pedlars screaming and whaking their fists as he disappeared in a cloud of dust. I suppose there must have been some traffic laws in the place and I reckon he broke all of them in the mad drive up to the Palace. Passing through stone ornamental arches we finally reached the top and he turned his taxi into the old stone courtyard and stopped. We were all, so shaken up that it took us some time to climb out onto soild ground. What a relief to be on our own feet again and still in one piece. Armed with cameras, we toured about this relic of bygone days. The roof had long since gone, but the major walls were still standing. Looking out over the Tagus was really one of the finest views I had seen. It loked a thin ribbon of blue from that height, and around us were the thousands of brightly colored houses, the narrow streets hardly discernable in the glbrious mix up of disorganised planning. The miniature railway threaded itself along the banks of the river and dotted over the surface tiny boats moved along at a snails pace, faint spirals of smoke hanging in the listless iar. Looking in another direction I could see the high modern building of the New Lisbon as they reflected the sun from their whire concreted sides. There was no beauty in that modern preciseness, it looked like a lot of wooden boxes row upon row, the streets solid with cars. No, I prefer the old places for beauty, but to heck with them for actually living. Well we can't have it both ways as the vicar said to the actress.

Owing to our little mishap with the kids and the money, time was running out and we had to catch that ferry. Accidentally we told the driver of the taxi we were late...that was another mistake. Before we had closed the doors of the car it was half way through the old quarter of the town. This time he only knocked over two stalls and crashed into one iron post, but he did get us to that ferry with 5 minutes to spare.

It h appened a few days later. Reynoldsson had been given two tickets for the bull fights in a nearby town and the second ticket was going spare. Naturally he asked me to go along. We motored through to the town and directly we hit it, I saw what the Portugese did with their towns on festive ocassions such as this. The entire place was decked with garlands made of paper and flowers. Street vendors were selling cockades made of flowers, the colours of the fighters, and as we walked along the many beautiful senoritas were pinning these cockades onto our coats...the only trouble was, we were expected to pay a fantastic price for

each one. They could see we were British and really piled on the price, so it became the habit to keep on removing these badges all the time. Everyone was dressed in the National costume...the girls were in particular the prettiest, but maybe I was a little biased. We both knew that whatever we did with these girls we should never get to first base...they were the untouchables...all we could do was to look, and not too much of that either in case we wanted a thick ear from the blokes hanging around. Wandering along the brightly colored street we finally came to the Bull Ring Arena. It was a massive place being completely surrounded with a high concrete wall sloping inwards and perfectly round. We passed through big iron gates in the base of this wall and handed out tickets to a resplendently dressed policeman, and then by making many detours through underground corridors we finally came out into the open arena. We had come in about half way up the sloping interior, and looking down the rows of seats I could see the bull ring. It appeared very small from my vantage point, but later we walked down the aisles to take up our proper seats. For a few escudos we were able to rent a cushion each. These cushions are very essential as the seats are stone. Our tickets were the better ones as we had a seat that was in the shade, whilst the cheaper ones were in the sun....after a while I wished I had been in the sun as it got very cold and I shivered in my thin slacks and shirt. The arena quickly filled up, and I reckon there must have been many thousands in those seats. Everyone was talking and shouting and the noise was deafening. Silence fell as a bugle pealed out...this was to be the beginning of the show. First about a dozen horses paraded around the ring with the beautifully dressed toreadors aboard. Those horses were magnificent beasts and were very well trained. They weaved and backed and did all sorts of wonderful things, and the colors seemed to blend one with the other to form a perfectly harmonious picture. I was really impressed with this show of horsemanship. After that, they all tramped out of the ring and then the fun started. From one side of the ring a big wooden gate was opened and in came a really big chunk of horned bull. He wandered around the ring in a half interested way, sometimes looking at the crowd, but most of the time examining the floor of the ring as though he expected to find some food there. The crowd became restless and started to shout and scream. Through another door came a few horsemen, then one would ride out to the bull and goad him along with a lance. You could see the bull didn't like it by giving a kind of a roar and that's when the crowd really started to warm up. With the noise and this confounded lance digging in his back the bull started to get a little rattled...so would you, and then he started to charge

the horsman that had done the damage. This is exactly what was wanted and he did a bit more taunting. As time passed so the bull got madder and madder, I could almost imagine fire coming from its nostrils as it continually charged the horseman. There was no question about it, those horses were the cats whiskers as they dodged the rushes of the bull. The horses were covered about the flanks with heavy leather shields, but I know darn well that had the bull been given a fair chance, it would have knocked that horse from here to breakfast time and back. The crowds shouts had built up into a crescendo and apparently this was the time to get on with the rest of the show. The picadors went after the bull trying to keep astern of it all the time and at just the right moment he would stick that lance hard into the back of the neck of the bull. If it was done correctly, the tip would break off and it would stay put in the bull. Atop of the lance tip sticking out flew a colored streamer, and as the bull now real mad chased these horsemen, so the streamer would flutter out. Several of the horsemen went up and did the same thing and by the time they had all had a bash, the poor old bull looked like grandmas pincushion. Blood streamed down its sides and it really made me very sick to see the way the bull was teased and ill treated. The picadors now having got the bull in the right mood, it was now time for the big boss to come in...the Toreador. He strolled into the ring and bowed to the crowds. Very stiff and formal, his cloak and sword at the ready, he turned in four different directions as he made his obeisance to the screaming hordes. The bull was still rampaging around the ring and ~~wasn't~~ wasn't paying too much attention to this little bloke standing there alone...maybe he thought as he didn't have a horse and a lance that he was a pal of his....thats what he thought...OH boy was he to be disillusioned in a cuppler minutes. The little bloke...he looked little from where I sat, turned around and strolled over to the bull and waved his cloak at it. The bull thought he was fooling and made a playful swipe at the toreador, but he was a bit nippy on his feet and the bull missed. This business of dodging and ducking went on for some time, the Toreador trying all the time to outwit the bull and vice versa. Of course I suppose many would say the bull was getting a fair break, but I know how I should feel going into a boxing ring with about a dozen sharp darts sticking out of my hide...sort of makes you feel uncomfortable, and not only that, there were about fifty other blokes all stooging around in the background all ready to give the bull a tough time if he did manage to outwit the bloke with the pig sticker. So it went on. I was getting really fed up with the whole deal and waited for the end. Finally, looking at the crowd for a word of assent...how the

heck he was supposed to hear anything with all that racket going on I just don't know, but he must have had someone give him the OK 'cos he gave a little bow to the mob and then made a feint of sliding his sword into the bull..then it was all over. he didn't kill the bull, as it aint allowed in Portugal...only Soain,, they just bleed it to death. Well, the crowd had apparently appreciated this fine show of valor more than I and they all went mad. The cushions, hats, flowers and a few odd boots sailed into the ring, and he smiled at them all and kept on bowing. The poor old bull was then shepherded out by using another couple of old bulls that had bells hanging around their necks, and that was the end of the first fight. I personally was so disgusted with the whole affair that I walked out and my friend who was a little more bloodthirsty than I decided to stay behind...I'd had enough of bull fights. I stood around the place for a while waiting for him, then when he arrived I was sure ready to return to the boat. You can have all the bull fights ...I have other ideas of amusement. It was quite late when we got back and I soon turned in...the time was soon to be time to leave this place, and as much as I had enjoyed seeing the place and the people I wanted to move on. Yasme had been kept in trim all the time and was ready to shove off at a moments notice, so with my adieus, I took off through that winding channel out into the River Tagus and then out into the Atlantic Ocean...next port...Gibraltar.

I was a little more fortunate in getting through all the buoys going out. The sun was shining and visibility was 100% and as we steamed out I passed several big ships and many smaller fishing boats all who gave me an encouraging wave....I had around 400 miles to go and whilst 250 of it would be easy sailing, I had a vague idea that going through the Straits of Gibraltar wasn't going to be any picnic. The weather was still pretty variable, I found the wind would come up about 9am and then disappear around 6pm, and the rest of the night would be almost flat calm. The fact that I was in a busy shipping channel all the time gave me no opportunity to have a good rest, and I certainly didn't want to keep calling into all the small ports all the way along the coast. As usual the mist came up as dusk fell and completely covered the coast line, also the lights ashore which I was depending on to guide me through....I still didn't know how to use the sextant and was making my way on dead reckoning still, but the time I knew would have to come when I should be forced to get down to using the sun only for my position, but I thought there would be time enough for that in the future, My sails hadn't been new when I left England owing to a slight shortage of the necessary, and all the time now I was having to get them down to make a repair. Fortunately

I had been able to get my mothers sewing machine from her before I left and that made sewing a lot easier on the lighter canvas, but when it came to fixing the mainsail which was rather heavy canvas, this I had to repair by hand. At first using a palm and needle was quite a chore and I spent many pleasant hours sewing either my truosers to the sail or sewing my leg. At odd ocassions I would poke the needle through my hand just for fun, and also for quite a while my sewing was pretty abominable, but like all things I gradually learnt how to do the correct stitches and to do them neatly...I had ample opportunity to practice on those rotten sails. Why it was I was never able to fathom, but whenever a sail split, it always happened at night, invariably about 2am when I was half dead and the sails were wet with dew or rain. This of course was only one of the little items I had to contend with, but the hardest of all was the solitude. As much as I tried, I still felt awful whenever I left a place and looked forward eagerly to the next...maybe that was the reason I made a lot of mistakes..I just don't know. Daily I passed fishing boats and they helped quite a lot to allay the loneliness...I often wished they could speak English those quaint pleasant fishermen, but all I got was a smile and a pleasant salutation in Spanish. Reading the sailing directions on the second day out, I noticed that somewhere near my position was a Lloyds Signal Station. It also told me they would accept messages wither by signal flags or International morse code on a signal lamp. Now my ship was British registered also I had a radio call sign "GMTY" and as I hadn't been in contact with my mother for a few days, thought it would be a bright idea if I managed to raise the shore station with my signal lamp and get them to telegraph a message home. It was now getting late and the sun had fallen.... perfect conditions for sending by light. Checking the log rotating astern and then the chart I figured I was somewhere near the station. There was nothing in the book to signify the exact location, and there wasn't a light ashore to help me, but I thought if I kept calling up with the lamp in the general area, I must get a reply sometime, so, bringing out the lamp and settling myself comfortably on the cabin roof I started to call up gradually moving the lamp round in a half circle to cover a large area of the coast. I suppose I sent like this for ten minutes, and in between looking for a reply, I was also trying to steer the Yasme which would continuously wander off course. Getting tired of jumping down from the cabin top I finally stayed standing on the cockpit seat and steered the boat with my foot whilst sending. After a while, I saw a series of flashes in the sky, andwhilst I couldn't read them, was very pleased to know that I had actually raised them there and starting again, I sent my own

call sign a few times. Right back came another series of flashes, but they were so fast that I made nothing of them. Back again I went and asked them to send slower and back again came a reply that was so garbled that even when I wrote it down it was impossible to understand. For sure it wasn't Spanish nor Portugese, and even though I checked it in the code book still came up with nothing. Back I went again and hoped they would send plain language and back they returned with another load of tripe. Now all this was taking a darned long time. I was working under difficulties in trying to steer the boat, watch the compass, read their code and try to write it down with the aid of a flash light held in my mouth, also I was getting a little annoyed. This had to be IT. For the last time I was going to send my message and then to heck with them all. Laboriously I plugged away, sending everything twice and sending very slowly...they had to have that, even the greatest Moron in the world would have been able to copy me. For a few seconds the sky remained black...the mist had started to come up and I waited, then...up came a big shower of lights, then lots of sparks and a big explosion high in the air. I realised then that I had spent the last half hour trying to get a message through to a Spanish firework display...was my face red?

Realising I was no hand as a signaller, I settled down for another dreary night. Very soon I knew I would have to turn to port and swing around into the Straits leading to Gibraltar. There was supposed to be a light flashing at Cape St. Vincent right on the south west tip of Portugal and I was rather hoping that I should sight it to give me a fair chance of turning at the right time. It was a bad time to do it, but once again I closed the shore to try to sight it, Using the sounding lead all the time I got as far as 8 fathoms and then changed course to keep level with the coast line. Every five minutes I would swing that lead and check, then the water started to get very shallow. Jumping into the cockpit I quickly swung the helm and headed her out to sea and then swung the lead again. It was still getting shallow. I looked over at the compass and it told me that I was now heading due west. This was impossible. How could the water get shallower if I was heading out to sea? I swung the lead again and found that a mere 3 fathoms was below us. My brain started to whirl. I just didn't understand what was happening so did the obvious thing and swung Yasmie back to where we had come from. Checking the depth again I found it slightly deeper and so it went on like this. I was getting frightened. Nothing made sense here, so I went below and started up the engine. This business of swinging Yasmie all the time was making it very tough for me to handle the sails, and if I got caught in a bad corner, it would be impossible to handle her

in a hurry. Going on deck, I dropped all the sails. The wind was now so light that they weren't a lot of use anyway. The sea was quite calm, but I could feel she was drifting sideways all the time but couldn't understand why. Checking and checking the depth I now found we had a mere 4 fathoms and getting shallower. This was too much for me and hoping that I would be able to get the anchor down before it was too late, I ran along the deck and let go. The anchor dropped and the chain roared out breaking the silence of that misty night. I locked the chain in the winch and waited, There was nothing more I could do. I gazed at the chain as it hung limply over the bows and gradually it tightened and snapped hard into the socket on the winch as it took the strain. It was holding, but I knew right away that a terrific current had hold of Yasme and was doing its very best to pull her away. The chain was now pointing out of the water at a steep angle and shivering with the strain. I released the winch and let more chain out to be absolutely sure. Yasme slid back, there was a sudden jerk as the chain took over again. So great was the force of the current that it boiled around the stem and caused a noise like seas breaking on the shore...that's what I thought, actually, it was seas breaking on the shore, too darned close for comfort, but as all was now shrouded in mist I was to be left in ignorance of that fact until daybreak. Knowing that the anchor was holding but not too sure it would hold indefinitely, I went below and checked the chart again. As far as I could judge according to my soundings of the last half hour, I seemed to be in the centre of a pool as every time I turned, whether it be north, south east or west, the water always got shallower. Staring at the chart gave me no other information to help my overburdened brain, so feeling very unhappy, I sat there in the cockpit all night and waited. For a while Yasme remained fairly steady, then around 3am she started to roll. Whilst the wind hadn't come, the seas were building up, and very soon I was in the middle of a big surf and seas were rolling in and breaking over her side. Checking the depth again I found it was now deeper and came to the conclusion that the tide was rising and I was close enough in shore to reap the benefit of the surf. Regardless of the rising tide, that current was still pulling the chain taut and I wasn't too sure what would happen if I tried to head against it with the engine alone. Leaving the anchor down, I started the engine and stuck it in gear. Going forward I watched the chain to see if it slackened at all, but still it remained taut. Watching that chain as if in a dream I stared at it hard as though my will power alone would make Yasme move forward. I noticed though that Yasme had veered to starboard and the chain had slackened very slightly. This was all very fine, but I was so

unsure of the engine that was frightened to take a chance with it to get me out of trouble. Just for a tryout, I started to pull in a little of the chain and found it was quite easy. Well, at least the engine was just about holding its own, but how much would it actually push me against that current was another question I couldn't answer. My decision was made for me by an outsize wave breaking right over the boat and soaking me completely. This was the end. I wasn't going to hang around this joint any longer than I could help and lose the boat in the surf, so I immediately started to reel in the chain. Yasme veered quite a lot and I had to go back astern to steer her straight again to ease the strain on the chain. Even though the strain was off, it was pretty hard going as the weight of the chain alone was quite a lot and I wasn't feeling in a strong mood. I could have used the winch to ease the strain on my arms but it would have taken hours to get it in that way and I was in a big hurry. So as I pulled the seas grew bigger and kept swamping the boat...on two occasions I was thrown off my feet as the seas hit Yasme and made her roll at a fantastic angle. All the time I could hear the engine roaring away in the stern as I pulled. My ears were tuned to a fine catch to catch any irregularity in the beat of the engine...I was all ready to let the chain all out again if it stopped. Looking over the bows I noticed that the chain was now hanging vertically down and then I knew the anchor was free. Now waiting to get it all in, I went back to the cockpit to steer her. The anchor coming up had let her swing hard to starboard and I wanted to head her due north west out of trouble and into waters that I knew were safe. It was no easy job to get her to hold a course. The engine was only just holding its own and it only needed a backfire or a slight drop in revs to make me lose all the way we had made. 4pm came, then 5 and still we were in the clear but engine getting hotter and hotter. On one or two occasions she had spluttered but picked up again instantly...those were the times when my heart fell through the bottom of my feet. Soon it would be light and I would know for sure what was happening, but I held that course all the time without releasing the helm even to light a cigarette. Just before daylight...that time when there is a greyness over the whole sky and one cannot see anything clearly, I thought I saw a light on the port bow, but being so intent on the compass couldn't be absolutely sure. Glancing up quickly again I used up valuable seconds in looking for that light. Yes! it was a light! It was now very clear and also very close...too close, but what was it? Quickly I counted the flashes of it and they seemed to strike a chord in my memory of past reading. Then it hit me. This was the light on St. Vincent, but how the heck it had got into that position I couldn't figure. it

seemed utterly stupid, but there it was for all to see, and somehow I had made an error in my reckoning because instead of the thing being dead ahead, there it was at the side of me. Knowing my position now didn't help me in the slightest as the current was doing its very best to wash me straight onto the isthmus sticking out into the sea. Pulling the tiller over harder still to veer Yasme to starboard more we plugged on in a valiant attempt to clear that patch of land. Daylight came with us about 100 yards from the end. A wind had come up but I dare not leave the helm to raise the sails. If only I had another pair of hands then I could have got these sails up and it would have been no effort at all to sail Yasme clear of that position, but that is one of the troubles one has to contend with being single handed. Well, it was around 10.30 am before I finally cleared the point and was able to swing Yasme back on course and get the sails on her again. It had been a very awkward time but we were out of it now and free to carry on. It was with a great big sigh of relief that I shut the engine down and got cracking on some chow....Boy! was I hungry, thirsty and dying for a cigarette. As far as I could see, I had taken two days to cover little over a 100 miles. This was a lousy effort on my part and I was determined to carry every stitch of canvas on Yasme to try to make up for that big loss of time. Swinging into the Straits I made a bee-line for Gibraltar. That was also stupid as it put me in the main shipping channel again, but I was in a hurry to make up time and was taking short cuts. Any sailor will tell you that the Straits of Gibraltar are never kind to any ship be it large or small. The Atlantic boils into them and really makes a fuss...I was in the fuss and it took care of me but good. For the first 30 miles I had the tide in my favor and everything was OK, but after that it turned and then I was against the current with the wind astern and did it churn that water up as the two elements had an argument as to who would be the winner...I was the prize Yasme did everything except capsize and as night came again as it had a habit of doing daily I was surrounded with ships of all types and sizes. Now according to the rules of the road at sea, it says "Steam will give way to sail".....that's what the book says, but I wish some of the captains of those other ships had read the book as thoroughly as I. I was kept very busy all that night and the following one dodging the darned things. No sooner would I veer out of the way of one, out of the mist would come another bearing straight down on me. To see about 400 feet of steel sharp end of a boat steaming down on you at fifteen knots will scare the living daylights out of the toughest bloke and I was no exception then. My pip-squeak horn on the boat made hardly enough sound to drown the noise of the sea, and as for my navigation

lights, well I may as well not have had them on for all the notice that was taken of them. What with the weather which also included many of these nasty hurricane force winds which I had experienced in the Tagus, I had the other ships to contend with....Need I say I did not sleep those two nights following. I was half inclined to call into Cadiz, but it would have meant going off course about thirty miles and a great loss of time so I carried on feeling worse all the time. It will be interesting to know now that whilst I hadn't given up the art of being sea sick, it didn't happen quite so often....I was sick in the Straits,,,very sick. Five days out and the morning came with all the splendour of the tropics. Ahead towered the highest mountains I had ever seen in my whole life. That was Africa. Dark mysterious wild Africa. There was no port there other than Tangier around thirty miles to the south and due east was my goal...Gibraltar. Sweeping with the current around the point of Tarifa Gib came into sight. Its peak was covered in mist, but I could see the base very clearly with lots of tiny ships steaming in to anchor at this mighty rock. Now many people think that Gibraltar is an island, but in actual fact it is an isthmus and is joined to Spain by a very thin strip of land. Gib is British and before Spain and England had a difference of opinion it was quite easy to cross from one to the other without any bother, but in 1954 it was a different story. Gib is strictly a military port and very little goes on there except soldiering and the like. On arrival I was escorted by the customs boat to a mooring outside the actual Naval area, and there I landed to complete the formalities which were many, in fact the most I have ever had since leaving England at any time. Rowing ashore and handing my ~~oars~~ over to the police for safe keeping I started on my travels to actually get permission to put Yasme into one of the Naval harbors. I went go into all the miles I tramped in the blazing sun, but let it be said that I walked all day long until night fall before I got that slip of paper to permit me to up anchor and steer into a decent harbor. I got the usual runaround wherever I went. First place I went..."sorry old man but you will have to get the OK from Joe"....go to Joe...."sorry old chap and all that sort of thing, but you will have to see Bill"....I had just left Bill and that's the way it went. Everyone pushing me onto the other bloke and no*one really interested wether I got the boat anchored or not. Even when I fianlly got the darned piece of paper and started to motor into the harbour, a confounded police launch came alongside and boarded me and told me the paper was not the necessary authority. By this time I had nearly pulled all my hair out, and the fact

that I almost blew my top didn't make the slightest impression on these water cops. Finally I actually got into the harbor and tied up only to have another cop come up and tell me I would have to move as someone else was coming there. It took me an hour to convince him that I was the bloke that was coming there...he made at least fifty phone calls before he believed me. When I wanted to go ashore in the naval area I had to get another form filled in, and when I returned, yet another form to go aboard my own boat. The final touch was when I invited some naval types who were actually working in the same basin aboard, I had to get another lot of forms filled out in triplicate before they could come, and when they came back ashore I had to give each one a note to give to the gate cop. They were form crazy there, and as there is one cop to every three civilians, they have to do something to pass the time away and I was IT. My entry into Gibraltar was hardly a pleasant one and I knew I should be out very soon...that would be when I had about three weeks to spare to fill in all the forms to get clear of the place. Gib is not a pretty place, ~~really~~. Being an army town everything is made of ugly stone, and even the birds on the island present arms when an officer screams, it is so militarised. Being ex RAF I wandered down to the base there in the hope I should be able to see some of the boys from home, but there again I met up with the old form racket, and it was two days before they finally let me in. I saw the secret weapon hidden under a pile of junk...it was a 1928 model Ford with the latest type pneumatic tyres I was quite surprised they didn't have it guarded with a battalion of soldiers, but they were apparently very busy guarding the local pub. Getting into the RAF base I was fortunate in meeting one of my old pals of prewar days. The big clot had signed on for his full dose and had another five years to do...I felt really sorry for him, but he was happy and content having been in the RAF unit for around 16 years....he was still a sergeant poor devil. Meeting the RAF boys were my only means of getting around the place. They treated me pretty well in my stay and one day, I went up to the top of the rock to see the apes of Gibraltar. Now don't ask me how they got there 'cos I just don't know. These apes are the African type and are only on the Rock. They are protected by the British Government and even have a ration allowance granted them. They are not permitted to be fed or hurt in any way, but apparently these apes can't read the regulations because when I got to the top of the rock, they pounced on me and started to rob me. Their hands were in every pocket of my clothes and what they didn't actually steal they either smashed or ate. I dashed to the car for safety, but I was assured that they meant no harm....I wasn't too sure about that and kept all the windows

closed. Climbing over the car and under it they made themselves a darned nuisance and it was only by revving the engine and blowing the horn that I was able to make my getaway without hurting them...that's the last time I shall visit my brothers. I'd made a few friends in the R.A.F. Camp there and as it was coming up to the week end, managed to get a few of them to come over to Tangier for a trip. Actually there was 12 of us altogether and Yasme was well loaded down as we cruised out into the Straits. As days go, it wasn't too bad, but having had some experience of the Straits before, had a strange feeling that it wouldn't be very long before 11 of us would be very sick. For the first four miles everything went OK then it began. First one, then two of the lads started to lean over the side, and by the time we had covered 5 miles, the whole gang...including myself were all wishing we had stayed behind. It didn't rain, but the seas started to build up and with a head wind to knock us back, it was a tough journey. No-one would admit the fact that he would rather not be there and as Tangier was only another 24 miles, well, we went on. Crossing the Straits and dodging all the sea going ships kept us all busy, and having so many aboard made it really difficult to run the ship easily. Whenever a rope had to be pulled I could bet someone would be standing on it. If the boom swung over, someone would get a konk on the noggin and go flying across the cabin roof, and I could be absolutely sure that when a sea hit us, they would all duck at the wrong time and get soaked....it was great fun!!!! Finally we hit the African coast and cruised along to the breakwater surrounding Tangier. The wind became fitful and we decided to drop all sail and motor the last mile through the entrance and to the moorings. Once inside the seas calmed and everyone started to clean up ready to go ashore in that fantastic, exotic place..Tangier.

Mooring Yasme in the tiny harbor presented no problem and of customs...they didn't exist. A chap came up in some sort of uniform...I still don't know what he represented and by the way he spoke, I feel very sure he didn't know either, but he told us to lock the boat up thoroughly also to chain the mast in the boat too...there was a chance that it might be stolen. Other than his warning we had no further bother in going ashore. The harbor was filled with a mixture of nondescript boats of all sizes...many were used solely for the purpose of Import-export business known to most as Smuggling, but as smuggling is quite legal, no-one pays any attention to it anyway. I was struck by the typical old world Arabic atmosphere around the harbor, and lounging around were many Arabs in their turbans and burnoses...how they are able to wear those thick heavy clothes which cover them from head to foot in that climate I shall never know, but they appear to like it. Walking toward the town I saw a very

old man around 105 I should think. He was creeping along with a long stick to support him and heading toward us. He was such a character that I had to get a shot of him and bringing up the camera I drew a bead and prepared to shoot. In a fraction of a second, he spun around and was belting down the road in the opposite direction burnose flying in the breeze and his stick had been discarded to give him more freedom to run. I was so suprised that the shot was never taken, and the next thing I knew, a policeman about 12' high looked down on me and told me in very good English that it was strictly forbidden for Moslems to have their photographs taken and there was a good chance that if I attempted it again I might get my throat slit.... pleasant sort of bloke that. As far as I could gather, the Moslems reckon that the camera removes their soul or some other rubbish, and if one takes a shot of the women, why that automatically undresses them in the little black box....thats their ideas and nothing in this world is going to change them....my shots after that were all the candid type...if I'm going to have my throat cut, I much prefer to have it done under more sanitary conditions, also I'm not sure weyther my insurance policy covers me for throat slitting in Tangier.

Climbing up the slope into the busier and more modern part of town, we passed numerous tiny shops with their wares displayed outside, but upon reaching the centre, found it was ultra modern in every respect. Roads, shops, gardens...everything was beautifully laid out and all very expensive...a cup of coffee cost me almost a dollar....WOW!.... The party decided to break up here and we all planned to rendezvous at the café later. Two of the lads and I pushed on. We wanted to see the Kasbah and to see if we could find Charles Boyer floating around with one of his Harem fillies...one of the Arabs told me he was engaged at the time and would I call back in three weeks..the stinker. Climbing up the through the narrow streets pushing our way through the crowds we saa the most fantastic sights. Tangier has not been called the melting pot of the world for nothing. Intrigue is around every corner, anything can be bought IF you have the right money...nothing there is impossible from murder right the way down the line and whilst we both tried to avoid looking like tourists, the glisten in our eyes gave the show away, not counting the way we were neck stretching all the time and waving cameras around. A small boy came up, he was around 12 I suppose and asked us in perfect English if he could be our guide. He was dressed like an Arab complete with the turban, and it seemed odd to hear him talk in our language. We learnt he could speak six languages fluently and had acted as a guide since around six years old. Slowly we walked, sweat pouring from us as we explored the market place, the narrow streets with beggars at every step of the way all

mumbling in their scraggy beards for alms, claw like hands reaching out grasping our clothes as we forced our way through the mob. Camels stood everywhere silently meditating their mouths working continuously as they chewed away on nothing in particular. Dogs, filthy and skinny ran between our feet yelping as some filthy Arab would belt the creature with a stick. Piles of boxes stuffed full of chickens, goats tied to posts, pigs lying on their backs feet tethered, and everywhere in the air that awful smell of humanity, dirty sweaty humanity and rotting vegetables. The sun poured down pitilessly and every spot of shade was taken by the vendors with their goods displayed on the cobbled pavement. It hadn't occurred to me that cars could navigate that street until I heard the blare of a horn from the distance. Rocketing down the hill at a breakneck speed came an old Essex doing around 35mph scattering natives everywhere yet not killing a soul, but disposing of at least three dogs and a chicken which weren't quite fast enough to dodge the flying wheels. My pal and I had taken refuge in one of the side alleys but even there we were a little doubtful whether we should be safe. A gang of the most ugly looking cut-throats had gathered around us as we backed into the alley and they looked quite capable of doing far more damage to us than the car, so we got out quick. As the car disappeared, so the crowd melted back into their normal positions just the way the sea will close as a boat had passed through and apart from few of them cursing in their own particular way and righting their upset stalls, things were normal ..if one can call things normal in that place. Most of the buildings were made of what appeared to be white stone, but I think it was mainly mud and whitewash. No glass was used in the windows but most were barred and very high from the street level, and verandas seemed to be the fashion there. Although we looked often, no exotic Arabian beauty ever appeared on these balconies which goes to prove that all you see on the movies ain't so,,, suppose Boyer had 'em all in his little back room. After climbing for what seemed a week, the Sultans Palace came into view....the Sultan wasn't at home and I don't wonder at it, the darned place had no roof. We passed through the high stone doors and entered the courtyard of this ancient relic and saw some of the finest gardens I'd ever seen in my whole life. Every type of flower imaginable was there and the scent of them was heaven after the markets and streets. We wandered around the different parts of the Palace our small guide explaining each part... the walls were still standing dividing the place up and we were able to visualise the magnificence of this place when it was actually in use. In the far corner of the Palace in which was originally a place for meditation for the Sultan we discovered a group of fakirs.

We had heard about these characters as many have throughout the world and wondered what they would do to mystify us....Huh! after their display I reckon I have seen a better show put up by a six year old with his first set of conjuring tricks. All dressed in Arab style, there were five of them, one stood whilst the others sat on their haunches and played a mixture of queer instruments....a reed pipe; something like a guitar with half the strings missing, and a trumpet that had seen better days...the other bloke sat there and chanted in a voice that made me think that he was going to be sick any moment. With the whole orchestra going the bloke standing started his stuff. First he blew into a handfull of straw and smoke came from it, next out of a basket came a small snake looking like a half dead worm. This he waved around in the air and let the thing have a bite at his nose. The snake had no option but to bite it as the Arab stuck his big conk right in the face of the poor defenceless reptile. Never have I seen such a conk.....Schnozzle Durante could take lessons from that bloke..... Well....maybe you are waiting for the rest of the show.... so were we, but that was the end and they had the darned audacity to ask us 50¢ apiece....Fakirs...they should be called "FakErs" what a swindle. We then took some shots and to add ~~insult~~ injury, they even wanted something from us for the privilege of getting those snaps...we almost gave them something which might have improvee the size of their noses, but the size of the knives they carried put the ideas from our heads and we satisfied ourselves with gentle cursing.

Having been completely disillusioned, and not in the way we wanted to be, the downward trek began, down through those filthy smelly streets back to the boat. Having seen everything going up, our only ambition then was to get through the crowds as quickly as possible and into the more civilised part of town. Somehow, whilst we hardly thought it possible the crowds had increased and it became a question of who could push the hardest getting back. We were pretty well handicapped with our cameras which we tried hard to hang onto, also our wallets, but whatever we did, it was impossible to avoid rubbing against everyone. Neither of us are particularly fussy, but to get that close to cause of the stink was repugnant to us and several times I was almost sick. Making our rendezvous an hour late, the rest of the lads had gone on back to Yasme, so with our junior guide cum interpreter, we carried on down the steep slope back to Yasme where he said goodbye and accepted his payment giving us lots of praise from Allah etc etc in the true Arabian style. Both of us had lost something in that mellee of humanity...I a lighter...the thing never worked and I hope the rat that got it has the same trouble, that'll teach him a lesson...my pal lost a key, so we didn't do too badly

I must not forget to tell you we both got something for free too....about 20 fleas apiece, real genuine dyed in the wool Arabian fleas complete with turbans. Fortunately we discovered the stowaways before boarding Yasme, and stripping off in the darkness, we both plunged into the harbor to make the blighters swim for it. Climbing aboard, one of the other lads grabbed our clothes and sprayed them whilst they were on the deck....we both scratched all the way back to Gibraltar. Well, it was night time, and from what we had heard about the place none of us had the guts to venture far from the boat in that dense smelly blackness around the harbor. Sleeping presented quite a problem as Yasme has only one berth available, the rest are filled up with gear, but somehow we all found somewhere to lie down and rest. The evening was pleasantly warm, and with the radio plugging out some light music, we all drifted off except the chap on watch....I think he must have slept sometime in the night as we found a coil of rope missing in the morning...those thieves are past masters in Tangier..they must be to take something off a boat with all us blokes sleeping around the decks. Well, we had seen Tangier and the Kasbah. We had seen the places of vice, the fakirs, the imitation Yogis and the people and I don't think any of us were very impressed with the whole place, but at least we could all boast of our adventures and could always exaggerate if need be...I can't do that cos there are quite a few of you who have possibly been there, and I just couldn't tell a lie!

Returning to Gibraltar the following morning was not too good. A nasty blow had come up, but all the lads had to be back on duty, and it was one of the things agreed on that a pass would be issued them providing they returned on time. Under other circumstances I would have waited another day, but....we had to go. We were all sick needless to say, and with engine going all the way, it took us 14 hours to cover the 30 odd miles back. Whilst I was more accustomed to bad weather, many of my pals had never sailed before and the color of their faces made me think that many of them would pass out completely before we hit dry land again...none of them did, but I know at least 11 men that will never go to Tangier in a small sail boat again.

Well, the time had come for me to bid Gibraltar and my few friends adieu. Yasme had been beached there whilst I had touched up the antifouling on the bottom, many of the lads had given me a hand with my lousy engine and had done all they could to make Yasme a little better than she was, and now it was to be goodbye. Noon saw me leaving the Naval harbor and out into the Straits...next place to be Casablanca on the north west coast of Africa. It was dark long before I was out of the Straits and I was dreading another night as I'd had before with all that shipping, but there was nothing I could do about it but stay

awake and do my best to avoid all the ships milling around me. With reefed mainsail and small jib and engine to help I carried on. Whilst there was very little wind, I couldn't take the chance of getting caught in one of those disastrous squalls, so it had to be 4 knots in safety and not $6\frac{1}{2}$ with a chance of losing all the sails. That night turned into day and slowly Yasme crawled out of the Straits and into the Atlantic to beat her way down the coast of that great continent, Africa.....next port to be Casablanca.

It was a real pleasure to pass Cape Spartel and clear the Straits completely. The Channel had been literally solid with shipping and every moment of the way had been a source of anxiety wondering whether I should be lucky to dodge all the big ships. Getting into the Atlantic again gave me advantageous winds, and Yasme bowled along with hardly a murmur. The weather was very warm and the breeze gentle..this was my first real experience of tropical sailing and if it kept this way I wasn't going to worry. Porpoise played around the bows, jumping into the air as though showing their feelings at the joy of living. They were very playful creatures and it amazed me to see them always just dive at the right time and dodge the sharp bows of Yasme...they were to keep me company for the rest of the voyage. The dolphins were there too..I seldom saw them together, but their beautiful colors as they swept effortlessly through the water made me want to keep taking coloured snaps. I never quite figured why, but in the entire trip, I never once saw either dolphin or porpoise around when the sharks came... I think the sharks were afraid..not the others. Of other fish there were thousands of varieties, so many as to be nameless to me, but I rarely strung a line over the stern to catch them...I hate fish and saw no point in catching them to kill alone, but with the sharks, I had great sport in shooting them with my rifle and see the others tare them to pieces...how I detest and hate those scavengers of the deep. On many occasions these sharks would come up astern of Yasme and endeavour to rub their hides against the rudder to rid themselves of the sucker fish that would attach themselves to the sharks for a free ride. They obviously annoyed the sharks and the sharks would show their anger by coming at full speed alongside and belting the Yasme with all the force they could muster. As the helm was constantly lashed or held in position by my primitive self steering gear, there was always a good chance that either the rudder would be damaged with the force or the tiller broken, neither of which would have made me very happy, so I kept them away with a few well aimed shots. Even to see one of them thrashing in the water after it had been shot did not deter the others from continuing to do the same thing...they were persistent blighters.

I suppose Casablanca was around 150 miles from Gib and apart from the rough passage through the Straits, the rest of the way was perfect, and when the harbor entrance came into view, Yasme sailed straight in without any bother. It was a magnificent harbor with ample room to sail about and swing in a wide circle before dropping the anchor...I was very pleased with my show of seamanship with a fairly large audience on the quay wall...I was learning fast now and had more confidence both in myself and Yasme. As the anchor bit, so I ran forward and dropped all the sails...it had been a perfect trip without one sail ripping the whole way. There was one other British Yacht in the harbor and they hailed me as I looked around. It was a fine feeling to have some of my own countrymen there to talk to, and I think they must have felt the same way to have another friend arrive flying the British ensign. Here customs were quite smart and gave me no bother at all. One of them spoke English well, and the crew of the launch and the officers all came below to sample some of the famous Scotch I had. There is one thing I have found in the world that will help more than anything else....SCOTCH..... and...if you have them, American cigarettes.. I had a few and found that the customs were always very helpful every where I went. My newly made friends from the other Yacht came over in their dinghy and we arranged that I should pull in my anchor and tie up alongside their boat which was almost twice the size of Yasme. This was very fine as the water was very deep and I had no wish to pull that anchor up at the end of my stay without any help at all. They invited me aboard for dinner, and we all swapped yarns about our individual travels and tried to tell the tallest stories. They had been in the gale in the Bay of Biscay but had caught it when they had almost reached the other side of the Bay and had been able to run for Corunna and shelter. Even with that short time in the blow, they had managed to lose three sails which had been blown to shreds....we all had plenty to say about that gale. They also told me that three ships, apparently French fishing boats had failed to return to port...that wasn't so good and rather dampened things down a bit. Later that evening we all went ashore to see the place. Casablanca is French and the biggest port in Morocco, also the most widely used. It served a very good purpose during the last war for every type of ship, but there was nothing there at the time to show that any war had taken place in the area. The main street was very clean and modern, and all the shops were shining with chromium and plate glass...it reminded me a little of Paris...particularly the girls there...Hi! Outside the town were the usual Arab types etc and also the start of a desert, but most of all, it was extremely hot and dusty, hardly any breeze seeming to reach the place from the Atlantic. I spent very little

time there as it hardly had anything of great interest, and I was very anxious to get on and see something a little different and more primitive. Leaving after only a week, I aimed Yasme at the Canary Islands, my goal being Las Palmas on the Gran Canaria Island the largest and most popular of the group. The weather, that very important thing to all sailing types whether they sail in 5 ton or 50,000 ton ships was still perfect, but the wind had dropped appreciably and Yasme cruise at 3 to 4 knots. Africa remained in sight for quite a while and around 9 each morning before the sun had really started to heat the place up, I could see the mountains very clearly, but as the day went by, so a haze would come up and cover the entire coast. The sunrise and sunset in that trip were something I shall remember the rest of my life. At daybreak, the sun would slowly creep through the mist and climb up over the mountains. No wind would move the slaty blue clouds that seemed to be eternally over those mountains and the sun would break into slices as it rose behind them and cast rainbow hues through the sky. Being alone then made me wish I could call to someone and ask them to share this glory of the heavens...I have forgotten the number of times I took photographs of those mornings..I never seemed to tire of it. Slowly the sun would rise and lose its beauty. From a golden glow it was turn into a hot brassy ball of fire in the sky as it reached its zenith. I was forced to cover the cockpit with an awning to prevent getting burnt. Even though the topsides were sprayed with water continuously, the paint would bubble and crack from the intense heat as we cruised along. After that climax, it would fall very quickly in the west just as though it felt it might be late for the following morning. Away in the distance of that massive Atlantic Ocean I could see the tiny trade wind clouds...tiny balls of white floating gently through the sky, and as the sun fell, so it would turn them into black smears against the azure blue sky. As I watched the sun...it became a ritual almost every day to gaze upon its glory, it would settle on the horizon seemingly to balance there for a few minutes to cast its golden glow upon the world, then in seconds, it would drop suddenly as though pulled by an unseen string and disappear from sight leaving nothing except its beams lacing those fleeting white clouds. This was the twilight of the tropics...something I had read about, dreamed about but never realised I should ever be in a position to actually see it with my own eyes. This half light would remain for maybe five or ten minutes, then as though one had turned a switch darkness would fall, a soft velvety darkness that blanketed the ocean quietly, without fuss and leave Yasme there alone with just the sound of the waves as they broke at the bows. This was the life for me, but there was things to come later that would shake me up a little.

Perhaps it was three days out or four, I cannot be sure now, but the glory of the sun was blotted out completely by a ^{blotted} great dark cloud that extended for miles. Thinking it was a squall I hastened out to haul in the sails, but the slight whisper in the air became a rumble and crackling as the cloud became denser and lower. I started to shake a bit as this unusual occurrence took place. I just couldn't make out what it was as it gradually descended on the boat. Suddenly the entire length of Yasme was covered several inches deep in the most loathsome creatures I have ever seen. They looked like great pink grasshoppers varying from $\frac{1}{2}$ " long downward. As they fell so they crawled over the decks and into the ropes piled up, through the cabin doors and the hatch, crawling through the ventilators and worst of all I could feel them in my hair and on my nude body. Shivering with their touch I swept them off only to have more and still more fall. Closing the hatches and every other opening I went into the cabin and killed everyone I could see. Wherever I looked inside the boat they were crawling and I almost gave up hope of ever destroying them. Spraying everywhere I couldn't reach, I then went out on deck to try to clear them from the boat. Outside was chaos. They had covered the sail and were actually eating holes in it. The sea for miles around was covered with them as they had fallen in flight....they were locusts and had flown from Africa en route to any place where they could eat growing plants. My sails being cotton were just their meat, and I flailed around with a broom sweeping them from the decks and off the sails. By this time the cloud had passed and they were fading away into the west, but the job of clearing them carried on until I had moved everything on the decks just to make sure no more lived. Fortunately the holes in the sails were very small...even the locusts didn't think much of my rotten canvas, but it had to carry me across the Atlantic and I couldn't have the things eaten yet. Not knowing where they were going I contacted Las Palmas by radio and gave them the dope. They asked me the usual questions of wind direction and how big the mass etc., thanked me and that was that, but when I finally reached the island I found that even with precautions, the damage done to their crops was fantastic. All this happening had rather upset my happy sailing, and I was quite annoyed at these horrors from Africa wrecking a perfectly good trip. Well, like many other things that happen at sea, they are soon forgotten if the weather is favorable and I can eat well without getting sick. Falling back into my original lethargic state Yasme and I stoozed along and I sat back happily in the cockpit reading and drinking coffee. When my eyes began to ache I would love to relax with the faint glow from the compass lighting the cockpit and think

how lucky I was. How does one explain perfect peace and comfort of mind, this was the perfect life away from the bustle of civilisation and all it stood for, and whilst I knew I should have to return to it again, it was pleasant to sit there and think that I could always be in this heavenly bliss. As we went further south, so the water became more phosphorescent, and looking astern, there would be a long trail of silver where Yasme had disturbed the tranquillity of the ocean. Here and there I would hear a fish leap from the water, maybe swimming from an enemy, or perhaps leaping for the love of it. I would never see the fish, but the flash of light in the distance as the ocean glowed with the ripples of phosphor caused me to stare for hours in the hope it would continue eternally. Many times the wind would fall away completely and although it was sacrilege to break that heavenly silence, I was forced to switch on the engine and ruin everything. The sails would fall limp, the ropes drop and the massive boom on the mainsail would start to cavort about as Yasme rolled in the slight swell. We had to have the wind...even a zephyr was better than nothing at all...at least that would keep Yasme contented and on course, but once let the wind disappear and trouble would start and I would be very unhappy. Days went by, some with a fine breeze and others not so good, but gradually our goal came nearer. Attempts at taking sights were still a little unsuccessful and I was getting a little worried about my inability to master the art. This business of dead reckoning was OK for the time being, but what of the future when I should be out of sight of land for weeks on end? Three days and I now lost the land altogether. The Canary Islands were a big group and I didn't think it was possible to miss them...that's what I thought...Four days and according to that rotating log astern I should soon be sighting the light on the island of Lanzarote (the most northern of the group). The day passed and evening came but still no light. Thought passed through my head as to what would happen if I passed the group altogether...I should continue south and would never hit land at all. There was nothing ahead of me except those islands and the next solid chunk would be in the Antarctic. Maybe it was stupid to think of these things, but according to all my calculations I just HAD to sight land or a light and it just didn't make sense. Well, I would carry on for another 24 hours and if nothing came up, then I would turn due east and then I should have to hit Africa,,,even with my lousy navigation, even I couldn't miss a great big place like that. Slowly the evening wore on and I paced the decks with the binoculars glued to my eyes, staring ahead in the vague hope that light would appear magically as it did after the crossing of the Bay of Biscay. 8pm, 9pm then midnight passed with no sign of light, land or other craft. Feeling terrible

and not a little worried I finally decided it was time I adjourned to the highest point on the boat and see what I could see. Using one of the halyards to hoist the big genoa I fitted the bosuns chair to the shackle and with the binocs around my neck started to haul myself up the mast. On deck it was almost stationary, but as I gradually pulled myself higher and higher, so the slight motion was magnified, every foot higher magnifying the sway to three feet. Gripping the mast with my knees and thighs, trying hard all the time to stop myself being thrown outward over the water and away from the mast, I struggled up. Both hands had to be used to haul my weight, and the binoculars had set themselves swinging and I was afraid they would be damaged against the mast. From a dead quiet deck I had placed myself in the worst possible position imaginable. Every movement of the boat below caused me to lose another piece of skin from inside my thighs and I could feel the blood dripping down my legs and sticking to the mast as it congealed. Still I climbed higher, the chafed parts now stinging and making tears come to my eyes as I pulled on that slender rope. I wanted so much to rest, but in the pitch darkness the cross trees were invisible and they were the only things that would give me the break I needed so badly. I had passed the first set long ago but as much as I pulled, the next lot seemed to be miles away. My original idea had been to reach the top of the mast, but the way things were going it should be lucky to get half way. Ah!...hanging onto the rope with one hand, my other fumbled aloft and I could feel the solid chunk of wood sticking out from the mast which meant rest for my weary body. Only three feet to go, but it took me half an hour to make it. Releasing the rope altogether and grasping the mast with both hands, I eased the load on my legs and twisted them over that welcome cross tree. It was only 5" wide, but it did remain still in conjunction with the mast...not like that chair that rolled about and cut me to pieces. Admitted I hadn't made the top of the mast, but I was at least about 35' higher than the deck now and hanging on like grim death I rested. The motion up there was truly fantastic and it took every atom of my fast waning strength to hang on. Still gripping with my legs and one hand, I managed to get the halyard and tie it around my body lashing myself to the mast. It wasn't a very good job but did help a little. Feeling a little better after the rest, I stood up on the crosstree and started to look around. To port....nothing and the same ahead, only the dense blackness of the night and the glisten of the waves way below me. Looking to starboard I noticed a faint glow in the sky but it was so faint I assumed it to be a cloud bank, and yet how could the clouds glow? The more I thought about it the sillier it seemed, and yet that glow was there. Could it be

a mirage? I knew I was feeling a little dopy, that was understandable under the circumstances and I might be expected to imagine anything, but why should the glow be there and not anywhere else? Even looking through the binocs made no difference, so with my eyes stinging and aching with the strain I decided I may as well get down and see what was cooking. I tried to find that chair up there. Holding to the mast with one hand I swept the blackness ahead with the other but it couldn't be seen or felt. I knew what I had done then. By pulling on the halyard to tie around my body I had also taken the chair to the top of the mast and the way I felt just then, it could darn well stay there...I couldn't have shinned up the rest of that mast to get it for all the tea in China, but I knew darn well that I could slide down the mast. Untying myself I got my legs untangled with the crosstree and threw my body over and started to slide down that very slippery varnished mast. Wow! I had always thought that mast was so smooth until my chafed legs came into contact with it. Extruciating agony wracked my body as more skin peeled off and the open flesh grated on the mast. How I managed to reach the deck is one of those things that just happens but one never knows how. I remember falling onto the cabin roof and lying there for some time before dragging myself up to enter the saloon. Once in the cabin I had the chance to view the damage. Both legs were raw all the way down and my entire body was covered in blood, even the binocs were bloody too. Dragging out the medical kit I started to operate on myself, but to even touch the open wounds made me almost pass out. Realising to treat them would be impossible at that time I thought a little more about that glow I had seen. Switching all the lights out in the cabin, also the compass light I stood on the cockpit seat and tried to see the glow from there but there was nothing at all. Not knowing why, the idea came into my head that the only way I was going to find out if there was a light would be to go and have a look, so turning my thoughts into actions, I switched on the engine, swung the helm and steered Yasme due west and waited. Trying not to be impatient I sat in the cockpit and stared at the compass. Wherever that light was if light it be was a long way off and keeping on staring into the darkness wasn't going to make it come any closer so I sat there in my agony and waited for my body to stiffen up...it did.. with a vengeance. Looking at the log I found that we had travelled 7 miles and reckoned it was time to look. There on the horizon I saw a faint row of lights. Sometimes clear and other times invisible as Yasme would sink into the trough of a wave, but so as time passed they came into full sight all the time and ther amidst the white lights I saw a green and red flashing light. Referring to the light book, it told me that there were two lights, a red and a green

which if kept in line with each other would lead me into the harbor of Lanzarote. Looking at the chart I saw that there was a very tiny harbor there quite deep enough to take Yasme and the way I thought then, it would be a good thing to drop the hook and rest up for the night before proceeding to Las Palmas the following day. Swinging Yasme so the lights now appeared dead in line I slowed the engine and dropped all the sails also preparing the ~~hook~~ anchor. The wind which had been almost astern as we approached the island now dropped and swung around so that it blew from the island instead. The first puff did it. Standing on the cockpit seat steering Yasme with my foot as I endeavoured to keep the lights in line I nearly flopped out with the stench that came from that island. It hit me straight between the eyes, and the pure air around me had turned into something that made me violently sick within minutes. It smelt as though there were thousands of bodies putrifying...as though death was throwing everything bad at me in one last effort to destroy me....I cannot find words that would define the revolting nauseating stench that came with that first puff of wind. Gagging and choking I pushed the helm hard over with my foot hoping and praying I should stay conscious long enough to get clear of this place. Yasme swung around faster than she had ever moved before...it was almost as though she could feel that odour and was as anxious as I to get away from it. Lashing the helm and with the engine flat out, I raced onto the deck my aches and pains forgotten in a mad panic to get every stitch of sail up. On this occasion I feel it was the fastest I had ever rigged that boat and with spray showering the decks and a beam wind, we flew over the sea at 7 knots. I held that course until the lights of the island were just visible on the horizon then shut the engine down. Even though I opened every ventilator and switched on the fans that stench remained aboard for two whole days. I sprayed the boat with disinfectant to try to kill it, but it was far too tough to be wiped out with anything I had aboard at the time...what I needed was a couple of hand grenades and a few mortars to break up the atmosphere. Swinging Yasme around on a more suitable course I headed south again with the idea of passing between the southern end of Lanzarote and Fuerteventura island. There was quite a large channel through the two islands and it would be a fairly short cut to Las Palmas. As dawn broke so I neared the channel and swung Yasme through. Hitting that channel was like hitting a brick wall. She stopped dead and remained there not moving forward and inch even though we had a fair breeze blowing. Whilst not visible, there was obviously a strong current against us and even though I stuck the engine on, we only made about $\frac{1}{2}$ knot ahead. I was in a position

which made it impossible to swing out and around Fuerteventura to the east. There were a series of nasty rocks sticking out which I felt we should strike if I tried to turn so had to carry on and hope for the best. Sitting there in the cockpit waiting to pass through the channel I figured out how I had almost missed Lanzarote. In the first place the light which was supposed to be exhibited on the north end of the island wasn't there, and in the second place I hadn't allowed sufficient on my course to take into consideration an easterly set of the current in that area and in consequence had got too far to the west...in short, lousy navigation...need I say more. Well, it took nearly all day before I managed to get through that channel, and in the meantime, the wind had changed a little giving me the benefit of that beautiful scent again, but not quite as strong...maybe I was getting used to it. Clearing the channel and heading Yasmé well to the west to clear a long line of rocks from the northern end of Fuerteventura I swung her around to head for Gran Canaria as it towered high in the sky almost dead ahead. Cruising about ten miles off the coast with the smell to keep me company...the smell incidentally was from (a) rotten fish spread out for fertiliser and (b) the sulphur from the volcanoes that hang around those islands....the two together being a little tough on the old nasal organ....anyway, Las ^{PALMAS} Palmas came into view and entering the main harbor I was greeted by the customs launch which on coming alongside unloaded two officials one speaking excellent English and also having a taste for my Scotch too. They were both very nice and piloted me to a fine anchorage off the Yacht Club there to leave me to myself again. Within seconds of arriving, a small dinghy came alongside with some members of the yacht club aboard. I was invited ashore right away as a guest of the club to dine, and although their English was a little sketchy, no-one could have been more charming and helpful. I learnt to love those people on the island there. Nothing was too much for them to help out and they gave me full use of the club in my stay, also the slipway to bring Yasmé out should I require it. There were three British Yachts in the harbor then, but by the following day only two remained...I heard later that they had gone on to Bermuda and had also caught quite a packet in a hurricane. The other two, well, one was an old Brixham Trawler that had certainly seen better days, on board a man and his wife...he told me he had travelled the world using only a child's school atlas....even I can tell the tale sometimes too...he also tried to sell me a ship's chronometer for about three times its value...when I told him that chronometers were my business he changed the conversation. He was a rogue but nevertheless a likeable rogue...I made sure my boat was always locked up when he was around. It was it

that I didn't trust him, but I just hated to lead him into temptation. The other boat had also seen better days too and was some sort of converted fishing boat about 60 years old. On this were once again a man and his wife and they were emigrating to the West Indies...I never actually found out why even though I met them there about 6 months later...they were still broke and trying to find a rich Uncle or a gold mine...I met many characters like that in my travels, and as time went on became a little more wary of them. Take my tip, Trust all men, even Kings, and Princes, then cut the cards yourself. Scattered around this little world of ours are many who rely entirely on the good nature of others...they are parasites and ruin the chances of genuine yachtsmen..they have a beguiling way about them, can invariably speak the local language and are easy to make friends, but WATCH 'EM....As I think I said once before I was learning...learning the hard way and I got caught quite a few times before I realised what was happening...just learn your lessons from me. It was here in Las Palmas that I renewed an old friendship. In my short stay in Tangier I had met four Frenchmen on a yacht the size of Yasme...the "Moana" they were also travelling around the world on an underwater expedition. All four were expert skin divers and had some super equipment in Acqua lungs underwater cameras, spears etc., and whilst I had only passed a few words with them in Tangier meeting them again in Las Palmas was quite a pleasant surprise and that slight acquaintance grew into a lasting friendship. Pierre the skipper, Rogue the camera man, Serge the French Tahitian who did mostly the diving and finally Bernard the writer who sat daily at sea inscribing in the log their experiences. How I loved to be with them, and as you will see we crossed each others paths in many other parts of the world afterwards...as I write this story they should be almost home in France now...I wonder. One day they invited me out on a cruise around the Islands to carry out part of their expedition....It was a wonderful day and when we reached the spot to dive, they started to give me my first instruction on skin diving. Using the snorkel and the fins was easy after a while, then came the spear fishing and actual deep diving chasing those elusive underwater creatures. It was wonderful sport and I felt good about it as the fish always had the benefit of the fight...they were on home ground and many has been the time I have almost cornered a fish only to find I have run out of breath and had to return to the surface. Those four lads were magnificent swimmers and were like fish themselves...I could never aspire to their speed and agility, but they certainly taught me a lot, and as time passed I grew quite expert in the art. We all got together after that for our little tours over the island and it was a bad day when they pushed on.

and left me alone to fend for myself. Much of the islands wealth of tomatoes and bananas had been destroyed by the locust plague and even then here were still many of them about chewing up any little piece of green. Methods of destroying these pests were flying small aircraft over the area which sprayed the crops with an insecticide, setting fire to barrels of diesel fuel which caused a terrific black smoke and finally the peasants would bang cans to make all the noise possible to drive them away. At the tail end of the plague it was funny to watch one group of peasants making a lot of noise shouting and banging tins to scare off the locusts ...the locusts would then fly up and land on another blokes property and he in turn would try to make a little more noise than the other to cause them to return to the former land..it seemed to be a test of who could make the most noise. Flying over the area it was as though a brown path had been cut across the island with a green fringe. They finally rid themselves of the locusts but only after they had done the damage. In my tour around the island looking at the damage I came across the cave dwellers. Here there were caves cut into the sides of the hills and they lived there as our ancestors did thousands of years ago...the dirt and method of living was almost identical except they did attempt to clothe themselves with an assortment of rags...this was the dirtiest part of the island I saw. Whilst the islands are largely mountainous, practically every part of the land is used for agriculture as the soil is very fertile; grapes, bananas, tomatoes, sugar cane, potatoes, cochineal grow in abundance and Canary Bananas are world renowned for their flavor. Naturally with such fine resources the Islands exports are pretty big, but still the peasants out in the sticks live pretty much in poverty...maybe they like it I dunno. Fishing is really fine, and my friends and I had very good sport there...they liked to use a rod and line too but that in my opinion is the first signs of insanity. Traveling around the town on one of the rickety old buses was quite exciting and one could go for many miles this way for a few cents...that is if one can stand the terrific crush of people who manage to climb aboard. Well, I had seen all of the place, or at least as much as I wished...the town was like many others, the market places also, so apart from those places there was only the night clubs to get around. This was done most efficiently by my joining up with three members of the yacht club and touring the town one evening. We stopped at every place and drank the Islands favorite drink made of honey. It was very sweet and very intoxicating and long before we had completed the tour, the boys had succumbed and were taking a snooze under the table. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and took glass for glass with the boys, but somehow it had no effect on me at all except that I passed out.

completely...at least I managed to stay upright at the table...I think. Perhaps it was around 3am that we found ourselves back aboard Yasme. Not one of us knew how we had got there, but the fact was we had arrived and our pockets were full up with bottles of wallop. The beauty of this liquor is there is no hangover and after we all came around, the session started again. This was my send off party from the boys. Of women we had seen but been unable to touch...the customs of the Spanish are very hard which makes it tough for travelers such as I, but that's the way it goes.

It was a glorious Sunday morning Yasme motored out of Las Palmas leaving behind the beauty, the squallor and dirt, the picturesque people and their fascinating music, out into the Atlantic and south...south to West Africa and the jungle, to the unknown..we were on our way. My friends in the Moana had gone on ahead some two weeks or more and were heading direct across the Atlantic to the West Indies, but I was rather anxious to see a little of Africa before I left that part of the world and as my next port was only just over a 1000 miles, well, I was going to have a bash before I took to the big journey to see some real wild animals. Laying a course that would bring me to Dakar, the great French port on the west coast of Africa, I lashed the helm and went below for a snooze and to get out of the boiling sun. I don't quite know what it was that roused me from my slumber. The motion of Yasme was even, the seas were quiet and the bubbling of the water around the stem remained the same, but something was wrong and although I kept putting it off and trying to sleep again, some unknown force made me get up and go outside. By Gosh! dead ahead were breakers. They looked only a few feet from the stem but were possibly 3 to 400 yards away, nevertheless, I was scared out of my life and tore at the lashings around the helm to free it and swing Yasme back out to sea. Leaning my whole weight on the tiller Yasme slowly came about but not quite fast enough to avoid that surf. Catching herself broadside on to the breaking seas she jumped and tossed around like a cork. Lashing the tiller in position I went below to turn on the gas and get the engine started to help her out. Running between the engine and the tiller, holding her on course and at the same time trying to get that lousy stink box running was quite a job, but it did finally start pop on two cylinders and with the clutch in, Yasme clawed herself off that very dangerous lee shore. With her stern to the breakers her actions smoothed out but for a while it was touch and go and I really thought I was going to be wrecked in the middle of the Sahara Desert without a camel. Getting into the clear I scratched my head and wondered what the heck had happened to put me in that spot. Feeling safe and out of trouble I stopped the engine.

and let Yasme cruise along down the coast. I was forced to look at the coast line as we move out of danger and all sorts of thought passed through my head as to what would have happened had I been wrecked on that remote and unfriendly shore. No water, no trees or grass just high cactus and sand...lots and lots of sand and boiling sun...what a place to pile up. Adjourning to the cabin I started work on the chart and tried to find my error. The compass was OK for sure so I couldn't blame that. There on the chart was a line denoting my course and as much as I tried the direction was the same. Ah! what the blazes was this? I had found my error and what a whopper it was. I had applied the variation of the compass the wrong way and had added about 20° to the compass ^{course} in the wrong direction. Of all the stupid things to do I had done it and I considered my-self dead lucky that I wasn't dead. There was no excuse for this at all, but as there was no-one there to rate and curse me for this mistake, I made a full report of the incident in the log for all to see in the future...Incidentally, it never happened again. Applying the variation correctly now gave me a completely different course and a far better one from the wind point of view. It came from dead astern and it was at this point that the "Danny Weil patent self steering" idea was invented and put into use. Whilst I modified the idea in many little ways in the course of the next two years, the basic scheme remained the same. Two "Yankee" genoas were hooked onto the two topmast forestays each sail being boomed out with 22' spinnaker poles either side of the boat. The poles were fitted into spinnaker cups at the base of the mast and could hinge at that point. From the end of each boom a rope was taken and those in turn were brought back separately to the after end of the boat, threaded through two blocks one either side and the ends of the rope were then tied to the tiller. By altering the lengths of the rope I was able to have one sail boomed out a little more than the other and so cause Yasme to sail herself under any wind conditions...Providing the wind was aft of the beam....once the wind headed us, then I had to change the rig and use the normal fore and aft sails, but as the majority of my sailing was with wind astern, it was a rare occasion in the annals of the trip where I had to change rigs. Naturally with all ideas the rig had its teething troubles and chafe helped a lot to break the ropes, but finally I devised a complete steel wire set up that would last many miles before giving up. With the trade wind rig up, Yasme really picked up her skirts and flew, and without the worry of being at the helm at all hours we made much faster time. Cooking and running the boat was child's play after that and I had ample opportunity to relax and read up on my celestial navigation...actually one of the big snags of taking sights single handed was to keep

the boat on an even course whilst I got the sights and before, Yasme had always tended to wander into circles just at the critical point of the sight, but now, she would hold an exact course for weeks on end and taking sights was nothing. I had the opportunity to sit up there on the cabin roof and leisurely snap the sun and also get the exact time down without any thoughts of steering the boat; I could also sit in the cabin and work then all out too without having to keep running out to correct the course..in no time at all I was mastering the art and my first set of sights gave me an exact position which lined up with the distance run on the log and the approximate part of the coast I had almost hit. That was a "Red letter day for me, and I proudly entered in the log my position with the words at the side.....

"BY SIGHTS". Prior to this the log had always said "D.R."...dead reckoning, but now I knew how to get a position without worrying whether the rotating log attern was right. This pushed up my moral pretty high and more than covered my error of the recent hours.

Sailing under that fig was perfect. I could stroll around the decks like a millionaire with a full crew..whatever I did Yasme held her course much better than I could ever have managed and so we swept further south. The nights remained perfect, and now we were getting a full moon to light the heavens. I have never quite worked it out why the moon should be so much bigger and brighter in the tropics than any other place, but it seems to fill the sky above the horizon as it rises turning the blackness into a bright siver. Every ripple seems to be accentuated with this glow, and Yasmes sails never looked whiter as they reflected the glow down into my face. Although I kept the navigation lights burning constantly, no ships were ever sighted in that expanse of water, but always in the east I could see the faint outlines of the sand dunes of the Sahara as the moon silouetted them against the skyline. I often looked and thought that one day I would see an Arab caravan complete with camels to make the picture perfect, but they never appeared and wrecked my illusions. A bright white light flashed on the port bow as Cape Blanco appeared...this meant we had a out another 4 to 500 miles to travel, but the way things were, I couldn't have cared if it had been 5000 miles. Day followed night with monotonous regularity and so we came to the entrance to the River Gambia which would take me to Bathurst my goal. Taking sights daily and getting accustomed to the method my course had been plotted faithfully on the chart with a series of tiny crosses with circles around them,, each one with the time and the date and the log mieage. With the wind on the beam Yasmes trade wind sails were now useless and regretfully I dropped and furled them on the deck and hoisted the mainsail and the jib to carry on down the Gambia...it wasn't

very far to go to Bathurst so I wasn't too bothered about sitting at the helm after that long rest away from it, but when the time came to make some chow, that was when I really got rattled. I suppose one gets into a habit of taking things easy and when you have to do a little work it becomes annoying...thats the way it was with me then...silly maybe, but thats the sort of thing that happens when you sail alone....I have often thought what the reactions would be to have two of us aboard getting mad over petty things...I reckon we should be slitting each others throats before very long.

Entering the Gambia, that great muddy sluggish river that extends over 200 miles into the interior of Africa was far from pleasant. The wind dropped and the sun increased its intense heat so that it became impossible to stand on the decks in bare feet, and all the metal parts of the boat would burn my hands. I kept up a train of buckets of water over the decks to prevent them from bubbling, but the water would dry almost immediately and almost scald my feet as it ran down the slope of the deck. Mirages those fantastic sights in the sky and just above the horizon were my constant companions. I saw the town of Bathurst upside down in the sky and looking astern saw quite a few ocean going ships floating about a mile above the horizon...the actual ships themselves were no-where to be seen at any time. My chart of the area wasn't very good and didn't show a buoyed channel and my efforts at aiming direct to Bathurst nearly drove me mad. With all sails furled and running about 2 knots under power I kept running into sandbanks. They were invisible from the deck as the water was so muddy and to even try to take any soundings was ridiculous. Somewhere I had come from the main channel and had gone astray, but knowing Bathurst was only a few miles away gave me a little confidence, also the waters were calm with only sand underneath which at the speed we were moving couldn't cause any damage. 24 hours passed...I had anchored overnight and still as the sun came up I could see Bathurst in the distance but only as a mirage, never in actual reality. To say the least this was maddening and I was despairing of ever reaching the place. Two days passed and the third was well on its way to closing down before I finally got myself out of the maze of channels into the buoyed one, and there ahead was the tiny town of Bathurst half hidden in the humid mist of the late afternoon. Opening up the engine, Yasmie spurred ahead at her maximum speed of 4 knots and within 300 yards of the shore I let the anchor go. Directly she came to a standstill so the heat hit me like a hammer. The smooth flow of air has ceased now we had stopped and it was as though a blanket had fallen over us stifling and choking...the thermometer was reading 110°F in the shade and on deck as I fixed

the anchor chain securely, it was all I could do to withstand the heat of the falling sun. From the shore came a launch complete with Customs, police and immigration officials. Whilst very courteous, they were very concerned as to the length of my stay....why anyone would care to stay in that place for any length of time I never could figure, but I learnt that there were many hoboes of the world who would plonk themselves on the community and the Administration would have to foot the bill...they didn't like that and had to be absolutely sure I had the means of taking both my boat and myself away at any given time. This point of view I found was pretty general throughout the world and as time passed I learnt to understand why. With the passing of the officials...all British, I decided it was high time I had a dip in the river to cool off. Climbing into my shorts I made a dive over the side. I just couldn't wait to get into those cooling waters and rid myself of the layers of salt and perspiration. To float there and relax was uppermost in my mind until I actually touched the water. Jumping around as though I had been scalded I made a dive for the rope hanging over the stern of Yasme and dragged myself clear. The confounded water was hot...around 90° and it seemed like boiling water as it covered my head. This was sure a shaker but I learnt how to accustom myself to the high temperatures after a while. There was no need to dry off as the sun would literally burn the dampness of my body, and I found the only way to really cool off was to get wet and let the sun evaporate the water, but after that, I should be back in the same state. Everywhere there were crude native dugout canoes varying in size up to 50' in length. I never saw any sail used there, but most canoes which were used mainly for trading among the tribes were crewed with as many as 20 men to paddle it, one man would be astern with a massive steering oar to keep it on course. Whilst I hated to close up the boat in that intense heat, it was very necessary to prevent the petty pilfering which goes on daily as a matter of routine. Going ashore in the dinghy had to be watched very carefully as whilst there was hardly any rise and fall of tide, there was usually a very strong current flowing..it was the rainy season...but it didn't rain whilst I was there. thank heaven. Tying the dinghy to a rickety landing stage I walked ashore to see the "Town". It consisted of one main street of beaten dirt filled all down one side with frame buildings...the other side being the water front with a few wharves and customs buildings etc. Numerous trading stores were stacked side by side and were all packed with natives buying their meagre stores. Along the edge of the road squatted natives crosslegged, some lying full length asleep. snores reverberating for miles around. They lay there with cotton covers right over

their heads oblivious to the hustle and bustle of the outside world. Finding very little to interest me in the actual stores which were mainly for foodstuffs I cast my eyes to the water front to watch the natives build their canoes. Massive logs weighing several tons had been brought from the jungle, they looked like mahogany trees from the color, and they would sit there for days and days just hacking away with a very primitive tool hollowing out the log. I never was able to find out how long it took to actually construct one of these canoes, but by the way they worked should imagine around a year. Whilst the canoes were very crude, they were seaworthy, and they seemed to devote more of their time in hand carving the paddles. I saw some very old men sit for hours manipulating old bits of razor blade and odd bits of steel on a chunk of wood which when finished would be a work of art in carving. I purchased two of these paddles for a dollar and they looked very nice hanging in the cabin of Yasme. There were a few bars in the place, but as in all British ports of this type, the natives were forbidden liquor....but that didn't stop them from obtaining it, and when they did... Wow! would they go to town. Night time was mysterious there. Lying there in the cabin trying to cool off with both electric fans whirring I would hear the beat of the drums in the distance. They would rise and fall in the form of a chant, and sometimes when the slight wind came in my direction, I would hear the natives singing in that unmelodious rumble. Those natives were very primitive and the veneer of civilisation which some had managed to acquire did nothing to them when they returned to their native village at night. There they would forget all they had been taught at the missionary school and go strictly native. I never dared go alone to the villages even though I was very curious...maybe I had seen too many movies. The drums would beat their monotonous tune until around 2am, then silence would fall only to be broken by the screech of the animals in the jungle. Try as I might sleep wouldn't come. The heat which oppressed me 24 hours a day, every bite of food having to be literally forced down, every glass of water was warm. it was hell, but my curiosity had brought me there and I was going to see all I could before I left the joint. With the tropics comes the heat, that gives the warm water, and from that we get the dreaded TEREDO WORM that thrives in those waters and waters throughout the tropic world. This worm will enter the planking of a boat just below the water line as a microscopic insect. It will then start to bore along the grain of the wood getting larger every day and making a bigger hole. It never comes to the surface of the plank but will carry right on until it reaches the end then it will turn around and come back the channel it has made never once touching the new

bore. In consequence, the actual plank it has started work on will ultimately become riddled from one end to the other and the slightest pressure on the plank will cause it to collapse. One day whilst inspecting the bottom I found slight traces of the worm but was at loss to know what to do about it. The rise and fall of tide was only a few inches and I couldn't beach her, but the Harbor master Captain Townsend came to my rescue. He had Yasme pulled from the water on the government slipway and had many natives help me to scrub and paint her bottom. Exposure to air will always kill the worm, it cannot live without a passage of water passing through the channels it has made for itself and I reckoned that after a week out, any worm would have given up the ghost and died where it bored. Those natives were funny characters. It took about 40 of them to do the job one European could do in half the time, but unless there are a crowd of them, they just won't work... maybe it would be better if I just said they won't work. It took a whole week to get the Yasme scrubbed and painted and I appreciated all the help I got. I found great difficulty in working in that temperature at all, so I suppose the natives' view point had to be respected. The time had come for Yasme to return to her native element and at high tide, two inches higher than the normal water level, she slid slowly down the concrete ways into the water. The natives, their hands smothered in red anti-fouling paint pushed on the white topsides and left beautiful trade marks all over the bows... even though we daubed some white paint over the places, they remained visible for many months afterwards as a memory of Gambia. With Yasme afloat, I had very little else to do and had recently come into contact with a certain colored gentleman there who acted as a solicitor. He invited me into the interior for a three week safari and I readily accepted. Yasme was moored close to the Government dock and an ever watchful policeman kept his eye on her... still I locked everything up and took all the loose deck gear ashore and put it into a store. The thought of the safari was very nice, but when I found that I had to don heavy trousers and leather riding boots complete with heavy shirt I wasn't too happy. Even to get the things on was quite a job. The shirt stuck to my back as I pulled it on, the boots wouldn't fit owing to the expansion of my feet, and generally speaking I was very unhappy and uncomfortable. Buckling on my .38 revolver and swinging my .303 rifle over my shoulder we boarded his jeep, our few stores were piled in the back in a large packing case. We were to pick up the natives who would act as our bearers at the village about 6 miles ahead, but to there, we were on our own. Apart from a box of ammo for the guns, I travelled very light... there was no purpose in taking any more clothing as I

doubted very much if I should ever remove what I already had on...this was the case too. Clearing the town, we finally hit the track through the jungle. It was fairly wide and not too bad having been beaten flat by many thousands of feet traversing it daily, but as we got further afield, so it became narrower and more bumpy. Hordes of monkeys would cross our path screaming and chattering, in the trees we would see brightly colored birds. Parrots, they were there in their thousands and I thought at the time what a packet I could make if I could catch a load of them and take them back to England. Snakes were there, but seldom stayed around long enough to be shot with the camera, and the wild pigs would charge across the road running haphazard as though they were all slightly tipsy.

Those six miles took us the best part of the day, we had to travel slowly owing to the increasingly bad roads, but finally we came out from beneath the interlocking trees overhead into the village. A crowd of natives immediately surrounded the Jeep and Sam Forster the lawyer type gave all the orders. With our stuff on the Jeep and other goods, we had six natives carrying stuff on their heads, then there was the head-man who did nothing except scream and shout at all the others. We both had a man who carried our rifles. Sam had a 30.30 American rifle also a 12 gauge shot gun but no side arms. I emptied my pockets of most of the ammunition and handed it over to my bearer who held the extra magazine for the gun. We were ready to move off. Dumping the Jeep into one of the native huts, Sam took the keys and locked down the hood...maybe he thought one of the natives would steal the engine whilst we were gone...I never asked him. It had been fairly hot traveling in the Jeep, but when the time came for me to actually exert myself and walk I felt like death. My few clothes stuck to my body, saturated with perspiration, and my feet were stinging as they spread in those confining leather boots. After being without shoes since leaving England my feet had grown about three sizes larger, and walking in that jungle was absolute hell for quite a while.

With nothing to carry, even the thumping of the camera on my chest drove me nuts. Every thud seemed to bore a hole into my heaving chest, and the course heavy shirt was chafing my skin unmercifully. What the heck was I doing this stupid thing for? For two pins I would have turned back but first I didn't know the way and second I wouldn't have had the strength to carry my gun. To heck with it, I had to go on although what I expected to see except a lot of trees and undergrowth that was doing its very best to break my legs I hadn't a clue.

With Sam ahead and me staggering along behind we slowly trekked on into the depths of that very uninviting jungle. I cursed both under and over my breath. I cursed everything I could

think of, but apart from a grin from Sam and a few hearty grunts from the bearers, all was silent as we plugged along. I cannot quite remember how many times I asked Sam when we would stop, but in the end he got so fed up that he stopped anyway just to shut me up. What a relief to halt. I collapsed onto the ground and puffed and blew as I tried to get my wind back. It was very hard and lumpy, but it took the weight off those aching feet until I felt something nip me in the nether regions. Yelling like stink that I had been bitten by a snake I jumped up with my hands clapped behind me. Sam ran over and then burst out laughing. The whole of my back was covered in red ants...I had sat right on the start of an ant hill and the local workers had objected to having their entrance blocked off...and showed it too. With Sam and the Headman to brush off these ants I still kept getting bitten where they had crawled down inside my shirt. Wrenching of the jacket and shirt, ripping my sleeve at the same time, I killed the offending blighters and breathed a great big sigh of relief. As evening was closing in I had no longer got rid of the ants than the mosquitoes took over and really went to town on my bared upper half. This was too much ...I was catching it every way and I did want so much to see the jungle and the wild animals...the wildest animal there at that moment was me, and I feel very sure that had a lion or something like that turned up I should have torn it to pieces with my bare hands. I wasn't a fit person to be around that evening and even Sam kept well away from me. Tiny tents were put up and I climbed into my camp bed pulling the nets around me in the vague hope it would keep the mosquitoes away, but those blighters there just circled the target and then dive bombed straight through the net. I lay there that night sweating and ready to scream. Thoughts that this had to last for another two weeks slowly drove me mad, I think every animal born came around my tent and screamed as close in my ear it could manage. Pulling the thin sheet over my head nearly stifled me and as much as I tried to drown the noise of the jungle by filling my ears with fingers, it made not an iota of difference. There I lay, tossing turning and scratching until dawn broke and the birds came to life with their very ^{cheerful chirruping} welcome twittering. Glad to be able to get up I pulled the net aside and crawled out of the tent. Already the natives had the chow on the go and Sam had been around for some time organising the days march. I managed to get some black coffee down, but the thought of food made me heave...I felt lousy and I didn't care who knew it. Breakfast finished....Huh! breakfast, a cuppa coffee and a cigarette, and that had to fix me for the next four hours, but what the heck, I knew I wouldn't last that long so what was the difference. Strange as it may seem I did last out, and although I crumbled all the time I

manage to last out until noon. By then we just had to halt, The sun had reached its topmost point in the heavens and even though we were shaded with the trees, the heat was terrific. Everywhere the humidity showed itself with steam rising from the undergrowth, but we never saw a thing to shoot at the whole time. Settling beneath a big tree, we rested on large waterproof sheets while the natives prepared the fires for food. They seemed to exist quite well on rice and kola nuts....I thought both of them quite revolting, but then my opinion was never called on and as far as they were concerned, the natives couldn't have cared less what I thought. For lunch that day we had a glorious mess of corned beef that fell out of the can with a splash and some baked sweet potatoes. That beef made me sick to look at it and I managed quite well with some coffee and a bar of chocolate with a few cigarettes to build up my morale. Sam tried hard to make me eat, but it was no good, I just couldn't take it. So it went on, day by day, creeping, crawling, beating our way through the impenetrable jungle with nary a sign of wild animals. I do believe Sam was getting a little fed up with this lack of game so he changed course slightly so that we should finally strike the River Gambia...at least we should find some crocodiles there. Nearing the river we surprised a whole load of wild pigs and whilst I ran for the nearest tree, Sam started blasting away with his shotgun and the natives after dropping their loads had a bash at the pigs with their machettes and spears. Total kill between 9 natives and two hunters...one wild pig and a nasty gash in the leg of one of the bearers who had a heated argument with one of the pigs. We carefully dressed the leg with nice clean bandages etc only to find that about half an hour later the native had removed the dressing and stuck a filthy dirty leaf over the wound with some sort of native gunk underneath. He reckoned we knew nothing about fixing wounds and we didn't argue, anyway, we couldn't have worried less if he lost his leg...it didn't hurt us. The pig was skinned and cooked by the natives for an evening meal, but I still stuck to my chocolate, coffee and cigarettes...I just couldn't face the pig having seen it earlier chewing lumps out of the natives leg.

The following day we reached the river and it was there we were greeted by loads of snakes. It seemed to be a congregating place for every snake in the jungle and we all stepped very carefully even though our heavy leather top boots were sufficient protection against any snake in that area. I noticed that all of them would make a hasty departure into the jungle on our approach and at no time were we bitten even on the boot. Walking along the muddy edge of the river it looked very sullen and sluggish, also very dirty, and the mangroves

did their very best to trip us with roots sticking out through the soft ground. Mosquitoes swarmed in their thousands and I devoted all my energy in swiping the pests as they tried to suck every drop of blood from my face and arms, ... Actually the mosquitoes caused me more bother than anything else in the whole safari. Drifting like logs of wood lay the crocodiles trying hard to be unnoticeable with just their two nostrils sticking out of the water. The water swirled around them as leaves and odd pieces of wood stopped at the obstruction and built up a few minutes before finally drifting down stream. I watched fascinated, trying hard to see this gigantic creature actually move, but apart from the swirl around its nose, there was nothing more to signify it was a real chunk of man-eater. It was too late in the afternoon to expect to see any other animals and I was getting really fed up, so getting the OK from Sam, I upped and shot the croc with the .303. It was an easy shot from a very short range, and the croc did precisely nothing except start to sink on the spot. The natives waded out quickly and with a rope tied around its middle, dragged the thing in... it was sure dead. I was asked later if I wanted the skin and said yes until I had the chance to smell it... Oh Brother! it stunk to high heaven and to have that around in the Yasmé would have made me permanently sea sick. Both Sam and I had had enough of this shooting expedition and started back to Bathurst and semi-civilisation. As things go it had been a complete washout and the time and expense incurred just wasn't worth it... well that ended my attempts at seeing the wild animals of the African Jungle. The following day I started to have head aches and not feel so good, and by the time I reached Yasmé I felt fit for the mortician. Laying on the bunk stripped naked I started to sweat. My temperature had risen to around 200.. I think and every bone in the old body seemed as though it was being split down the middle. I guessed that I had something wrong but was so weak couldn't get up to get hold of a sawbones so I just lay there and hoped. Reading through the medical book I reckoned I had about 50 different types of disease and decided on malaria.... that was IT. Piling blankets over me I took a few special tablets which immediately knocked me out. I have a faint recollection of lying there for weeks.. actually it was two days before I started to feel better and the temperature dropped..... Then... I just staggered around almost falling over preparing the boat for sea. I'd had a belly full of Africa and the sooner I got out the better it would be for me. Still aboard after two more days but feeling a little stronger, I decided that the following day would be my last look at this place. That afternoon I paddled ashore and grabbed a native

boy to give me a hand with all my groceries. Potatoes, eggs, bread, bacon and so it went on until I had all the things I needed to take me across the Atlantic Ocean to the West Indies around 3000 miles away. With the lad trailing astern and all the chow balanced on his head I got clearance from the authorities and at 8.30 the following morning, Yasme was motoring out of Bathurst and down to the Ocean. Keeping to the main channel this time and avoiding the sand banks...I had managed to get my chart corrected whilst I was there and was able to steer a good safe course....within 6 hours we were out in the Atlantic and on our way. This would be the test that would prove Yasme to everyone and there was no turning back from here on in. I hoped to pick up the Trades very soon and once they started to blow it would be impossible to return even if I wanted. I plotted a course which would take me near the Cape Verde Islands and from there I expected to keep on the same Latitude right the way across the Atlantic. It was impossible to get the trade sails up in that first hop to Cape Verde Islands as the wind was almost heading me, but with fore and aft rig up, she certainly made good time and also in the right direction. That part of the trip was one of the roughest AND toughest. Not only were we fighting the head winds, but the Guinea current was also against us too and most of the time I tried to keep the engine ticking over to give us an extra push. The decks were continually wet and I was soaked all the time with the fine spray blowing off the tops of the waves. Odd leaks appeared in the decks and around the hatches. Yasme had been out in the sun for such a long time and all her planks had shrunk. Practically every day for a week I would mop up water and try to move the gear that was getting soaked beneath the deck. Every stitch of clothing and blankets was wet and I took every opportunity offered to get them out in the sun to dry off. It was very hard then as the sun would dry and the spray would wet everything. Once mildew got hold of anything it was finished and my job was to try to prevent it. Generally speaking I managed to save most of the stuff, but quite a few white shirts had to be relegated to rags for cleaning the engine etc. Around 100 miles south east of the Islands I noticed Yasme was rolling a little and getting very sluggish. Glancing into the cabin saw that the floor was covered to a depth of 6" with the local ocean and getting deeper. This was frightening as the amount of water coming in was impossible to handle with the small hand bilge pump and I was fighting a losing battle. Throwing the big engine pump into gear I opened up the throttle as far it would go and disconnected it from the propeller to get the additional power. Still pumping on the hand pump I gazed into the cabin and watched the water

swirl around the floor. The tea jar had fallen into it, boxes of matches, pencils and a brick a brace was floating around but I did notice that with both pumps going we were holding our own; but for how long could this last? I would soon tire of pumping and the engine might stop, in fact I knew it would stop. The water was so high that with the roof it would soon reach the magneto and then...it would be finished. Wanting to find the leak yet afraid to leave the pump I sat there until my arm weighed like a piece of lead. Changing hands made very little difference and the wind and seas weren't helping any either. I wondered if we could make the Cape Verde Islands in time and beach her there, but 100 miles under those conditions would take two whole days and I couldn't pump for that time, gosh, after an hour I was ready to flake out and after that malarial bout I wasn't really up to standard. I just had to find the leak and that's all there was to it. Leaving the pump, arms hanging limply and my right hand fixed permanently into the shape of the pump handle I waded through the cabin wrenching up the floor boards. Apart from the iron ballast and odd pieces of wood and paper nothing could be seen. This was awful, the whole boat was stacked solid with gear from stem to stern and to move the whole works would take days, also, where would I put it? Trying to work systematically I started at the stern pulling every board up and looking into the depths of every cuboard. Drawers I pulled right out to see behind and in the process many other bits of gear dropped in this oily sludgy water. The sight of the oil shook me too. This meant that the water had started to enter the crank case or the gear box and no engine is going to run very long using sea water as a lubricant. Trying hard not to panic I worked my way forward until I opened the door leading into the forepeak. This was the last cabin on Yasme and right in the bows. As I opened the door I was immediately drenched with a jet of water coming from the roof. This was crazy...how could water pour in from the roof? Straining my eyes in the half light...it was dark outside and the tiny bulb in the forepeak was almost hidden with the jet of water I passed through the waterfall and traced the jet with my hand. Eureka!!!! I had sure found the leak. It was coming from the toilet. The valve which was a non-return type wasn't working and had stuck up...maybe with the motion of the boat..I just don't know...all I knew was, there was a jet of water 4" in diameter shooting straight up into the air, striking the cabin roof and then falling straight down and finishing up in the bilge. Grabbing the first thing that came to my hand....it was a bath towel, I stuffed it down the hole and then wedged it with a piece of wood. It was purely a temporary measure but at least it was stopping the boat from filling. The inrush now down to a tiny dribble was easily

handled by the engine pump and it was with a big sigh of relief that I saw the water disappear from the floor of the saloon and heard the rattle of the pump which told me it had completed its job. Still leaving the pump in gear but slowing the engine down, I started on the toilet valve to fix it for good. Removing the big waste pipe I was able to reach the valve OK...it had been jammed open with some stringy seaweed. I cleared it, then closed it up using a chunk of cloth to stop the darn thing opening again. That would have to do until I could strip it completely, but I was very sure it wouldn't leak again. I wanted badly to clear up the mess in the cabin but getting Yasme back on course again took priority. I had been so busy fixing that valve that I had failed to notice what was happening outside. Yasme had turned herself right around and was heading back from where we had come, the mainsail had jibed and in doing so had ripped it straight across in two places. It was trying hard to flap itself to pieces when I got outside, and to be greeted with that after what I had just experienced...well. It was exactly 2am and raining. The seas were a little wild and the wind was far from being a pleasant tropical breeze and I had to get that sail down and sew it up. It was either that or stay where I was with the chance of drifting back over the same ground. Only those that have actually done it can appreciate what it is like to take down a badly torn sail in a bad wind, then try hard to lay it out flat on an area that is hardly big enough to place a pocket handkerchief, after which, to endeavor to sew it up whilst it is soaking wet. Without going into all the gory details of sticking the needle through my hand and leg, trying to hold the sail flat whilst the wind did its level best to blow it into the sea, I finally finished the job. It was by no means a job that would stand inspection from a sailmaker. The sail was a little rotten, but at least it was now in one piece and could be used to propel me forward. Carefully sliding it back up the mast to avoid tearing the darned thing again I managed to get under way again. Throwing all the thread, needles and other gimmicks into the box, I lay back in the cockpit and rested the old body. What a night. Dawn broke almost the same time I finished the job and whilst I felt weary of limb, the tiredness of the brain had gone and I decided it was high time I got cracking on some breakfast. To enter that cabin with all the filthy oil was heart breaking. The floor was littered with every imaginable thing. Many books had been destroyed, and quite a few clothes were so impregnated with oil that I slung them over the side in disgust. The beautiful red carpet I had been so proud of was now a dirty brown color and the oil had congealed into large lumps all over it. As I cleared up the mess, so my feet got blacker and greasier so that

going on deck to check up on things became quite a precarious occupation. I would slide all over the place as my bare oily feet would touch the smooth painted deck and it was over a week before things looked normal again. It took quite a few gallons of gas to clear it up but apart from the smell, it didn't look too bad.

I never actually came close enough to the Cape Verde Islands to see any activity. I used them solely for the purpose of a navigational check to strike off on the next course which would take me to the West Indies. That change of course changed me too. Prior to this I had felt despondent and miserable...everything had gone wrong and it seemed that I would never reach the other side. Sails had ripped, ropes broken and so many tiny things which had built up to knock all my ambitions of sailing the Atlantic right out, but now, I had the full benefit of the real solid Trade Winds and with her two big Yankee ⁿGepas goosewinged out, Yasmé creamed along as though she owned the whole ocean. The decks had dried, all the planks had now expanded to their normal size and the leaks had stopped. I had all my clothing strung out in the rigging looking like a laundry, and the cabin had every ventilator opened to receive that wonderful clean air. The engine I had put away for the duration as I reckoned it would never be needed until I reached the other side. Daily it would be used to keep the dampness out of the magneto and charge the batteries, but after half an hour the gas would be shut off, sea cocks closed and all would be silent aboard except for the surge of the sea as Yasmé bounced along. Those genoas lifted her bows high into the air and with her beautifully shaped counter stern the seas would part as they struck leaving hardly a bubble in the water as she passed through. This was sailing...real ocean sailing and what I had looked forward to for an awful long time. The wind blew strongly every day and night never slackening...always in the same direction and only those who have felt the exhilaration of trade wind sailing can appreciate that steady wind day in and day out. Some times a particularly big wave would swoop up astern and look as though it would break right over Yasmé and crush her beneath its many tons of solid water, but always and every time she would lift herself proudly and with the crest of the wave under her, she would surf along like a tiny dinghy. It seemed to pick her up and throw her forward at a terrific speed, and at first I was very scared as the water hissed alongside. Soon I became used to this sudden lift and the rush and would often look forward to having the next high wave come along. Many times the terrific strain told on the rigging and the sails and I was forced to drop all the sails to carry out repairs. The one trouble with using two sails

for trade wind work was that if one tore at any time, both would have to be taken in and that would automatically stop our headway, not to count a very uncomfortable time whilst I did the sailing. On those light sails I was able to repair them with the sewing machine I had scrounged from my Mother, but where the heavier mainsail was concerned, that had to be sewn by hand all the time. That Machine although very rusty did fine work and also saved a tremendous amount of time; I'd never go to sea without a sewing machine, I think they are the biggest asset one can have aboard. Every day I would studiously take the sun sights and mark a little cross on the chart with a ring around it, and on that great chart showing the thousands of miles of water, that daily record would hardly show on it. 9 days out and I had another big kick. I had come to the fold in the chart which meant instead of seeing Africa and the Atlantic, I would have to turn the chart over and then would see The West Indies and the Atlantic. Whilst I was nowhere near the half way mark, the mere turn over of that chart boosted my morale quite a bit...from here on in I would only see the Americas and Europe could be forgotten. That clean side of the chart was wonderful to look at each day. The other side had become stained with coffee, tea, oil and my sweaty hands for such a long time that there were many times I could hardly see the notations I would make on it daily, but now with this nice clean side facing up, every little cross stood out like a beacon. Day by day the line of dots spread across the chart and neared the Indies. I had left Batgurst on the last day of November 1954 and never dreamed I should reach the other side in time for Xmas, but as time passed and we made such good headway I reckoned that with any sort of luck I should be eating my Christmas Turkey on dry land. Instead of a normal trip across the Atlantic it had now resolved itself into a race to get there before that great day. It was the 14th day of December...the anniversary of the regrettable day I was born and here was I in the middle of one of the greatest Oceans in the world. I just had to have a celebration, but without others there to share my joy it would be tough, but here goes, I was going to have a go and see what I could make of it. Cleaning up the cabin I laid a spotless white tablecloth and ^{even} cleaned the knife fork and spoon...for the first time in months. Next I got out some decent clothes, had a good wash in fresh water and shaved... even put some cream on my hair and combed it...the first time for weeks and was it tangled. Next I got out all the choicest foods in my store and really got cracking on setting up a fine feast. Yasmie sailed herself like a perfect lady all the time and everything aboard was dead steady. Slowly I managed to get everything prepared and at precisely 3pm. everything

was ready for the feast. I had purposely not eaten that day so that I could appreciate all the chow which now covered my tiny saloon table. Making myself comfortable I got stuck into it. There was canned chicken...actually I was going to save that for my Christmas at sea but now reckoned on being ashore for that event, then creamed potatoes, canned peas and carrots topped off with a can of asparagus. After that as desert I scooped a large sized tin of peaches mixed with strawberries and covered with cream and to wash it all down, sunk about three cups of coffee. By then I was so full that I just couldn't get up to take my afternoon sights, but as there was very little chance of my position changing since noon, I just lay back and went to sleep. What a birthday celebration, and with the happy thought of Christmas ahead all my worries disappeared. With the evening, I had removed my Sunday togs and was now down to shorts again. The radio was playing some Spanish music very softly and I was at peace with the world. Day followed day, the miles swept away as I neared the other side and every tiny cross on the chart marked another hundred and twenty miles or so. I had great difficulty in adjusting myself to the change of time as the longitude changed, and I found that it was getting difficult to sleep at the times I was supposed to. Every few days I would alter the ships clock and give myself another hour until I found that I needed to sleep in the day and stay awake at night. Whilst not wishing to go into all the technical details I noticed that my course had swept in a wide circle southward instead of in a straight line, and although I had tried hard to trim the sails to correct it, it still continued...I can only gather that there was a slightly southerly set across the Atlantic besides the westerly one. It looked to me also that instead of striking Antigua my goal, I should be sliding up to it from the south, but as the current was helping me all the time, it didn't bother me an awful lot. There was no light on the Island of Antigua, but there was one on Desirade the tiny island about 30 miles south east of Antigua, and as I couldn't be absolutely sure what time of the day I would sight Antigua, reckoned it would be a good idea to aim for Desirade where at least I should have the light to guide me at night.

It was the 21st of December and according to all my reckoning and navigation, that light on Desirade should appear that night around 11pm. Jumping around the deck, continually checking the compass, and then peering through the binoculars...long before the light should even be there I drove myself frantic with expectations and anxiety. 7pm came and with it darkness that only the tropics can bring. The wind still remained steady from the north east and Yasmine was mulling like a train as she headed towards the Indies.

Walking around like a caged tiger I chain smoked and drank coffee. All attempts at reading were useless as I fretted away there and hoped the time would pass more quickly. All preparations had long been carried out for the landing. My British ensign was flying although it should have been stowed away after sun-set...the yellow quarantine flag was stiff as a board with the strong breeze and I had checked and rechecked the chart and my calculations until I saw logarithms in front of my eyes. That light had to be there on time but of course unless I could make Yasme move faster, it wouldn't appear until 11pm. 9pm came and drifted to 10, then 10.30 and finally 10.45. The log trailing astern coupled with the westerly set told me the light should now be seen if I climbed the mast up to the first set of cross trees. With binocs swinging around my neck I started to shin up the mast. The moon had now risen and the decks shone white as I climbed...those beautiful gecos looked wonderful as they strained but pulling Yasme along. Reaching the crosstrees I straddled myself there and hoisted up the binocs....there was no need...there ahead was a bright white light flashing on the horizon. I had memorised the number of seconds it flashed per minute many times in the past few days and I counted, knowing all the time that it WAS the right light. This couldn't be possible. I had travelled over 3,000 miles without sight of land or ship and with my sextant, pocket watch and a set of tables had landed at exactly the spot I aimed for. I was so excited that almost fell off the mast in my anxiety to get below and log this great event. As I slid down, so the light disappeared below the horizon, but I didn't care then as I knew within a few minutes at the speed we were going it would be visible from the deck all the time. Entering the log with my position, date and time I then started the engine in the vague hope its pitifull couple of horse power would get me to Antigua faster. The engine ran steadily with its usual pops and spurts, never smoothly but at least it continued to grind away. Night turned into day...I hadn't slept all that night but had been fascinated with that bright light getting closer all the time. So as dawn broke, the light went out and there faintly on the horizon I could see the outline of the island. It was quite a fair way off, but having that island as a guide, I changed course very slightly so as to make the harbor of Antigua. Right bang ahead of me was the Island I wanted. As I got closer so it towered higher and I could see the green grass and trees on its steep sides. Looking through the binocs There was no human to be seen, but that was very obvious from the sailing directions and the chart....all the people lived over the other side and would hardly be walking around on those steep sides.

I rather expected to see some signs of other ships or maybe a canoe, but there wasn't a thing there only the Island standing alone and behind it the silhouette of St. Kitts Island. Closer and closer Yasme sailed until I reckoned it was high time I dropped the trade sails and just used a small jib and the engine. The chart told me there was a reef around the part of the island and I didn't want to end this voyage by landing on it. Using my hand bearing compass to get an exact position I found it extremely difficult to see the entrance of the harbor, and whilst I wanted to get closer to make absolutely sure, was still afraid of that reef which was no showing through a long line of white surf. There was quite a strong current sweeping me to the westerly end of the island and I found that the jib and the engine couldn't compete with it and slowly but surely I was being swept to the wrong end. Hoisting the mainsail I managed to hold my own, but still it was really tough going in that fast current to make all the headway I wanted. Creeping slowly up to my original position I tried so hard to find that entrance, but it merged in so well with the background of trees that even though I was only 200 yards away I just couldn't see it. I thought of anchoring but the water was far too deep for that. Well, this was a fine position to be in. I had sailed all these miles to get here, had found the island and now couldn't find the hole to go into to get ashore. The afternoon was wearing away fast and if I didn't hurry up and find that darned entrance I should be stuck out there all night long. Where the heck were all the native canoes I was supposed to see and where were all the boats and ships that are supposed to visit the island? Doubts crept into my head that maybe I had struck another island that had the same characteristics as Antigua, but I soon ruled that out. Somewhere there was a gap...admitted it was only around 500 feet wide but it was there...the book said it was there and I knew darned well that no one had shifted it in the last few months, but to see it was impossible. Why they didn't put a light there I couldn't understand, and as things were going I felt pretty sure I should be there for some time. Never daring to get in too close, I cruised up and down that area, and as I did, so it got darker until the Island disappeared and presented itself to me as a black blob against the skyline. What lousy luck I was getting, the more I thought about it the more peeved I got. There only a few hundred yards away was a perfect anchorage and I was too blind to see it...Oh Well, only one thing to do and that is to steer out to sea and circle until morning and have another go, but what I expected to see then against what I had just seen I hadn't a clue. What the blazes was that? I'm sure I saw a light moving there on

the peak of the island but what anyone was doing there at that time of night was unknown. Oh well, nothing more to do except stooze around. There it was again...another light. I groped into the darkened cabin for the signal lamp and tried a few flashes with it in the general direction of the light. No good, I was just wasting the battery, but as I hadn't anything else to do I may as well amuse myself flashing the light and practicing a little morse code on the unresponsive shore. Up and down all the time, trying ~~hard~~ to keep that misshapen blur in sight all the time. By this time the weather had started to deteriorate and with the swift current flowing and what with the swift current flowing alongside the island I was having a tough time in keeping Yasme right side up. Tacking back and forth finding with every tack I was fast losing ground and drifting to the western end of the island. I managed to keep some sort of position with the engine running on its one cylinder...the other three had long since given up the ghost, but that little extra power at least helped to keep me in sight of the island. Still flashing the lamp at that blur which denoted land and security to me I wandered up and down that stretch of ocean almost crying with annoyance over the whole deal. Looking below at the clock I saw it was then well after 8pm and knew it would be a long miserable night without sleep. Up and down...this was absolute hell and the prospects were just as lousy for the morning, but I had to do it. I had now reefed the mainsail right down and had the smallest jib hoisted, the wind was really rising and bringing with it a very choppy sea so things became very uncomfortable. I had long since forgotteh the fact that I was soaking wet, and sitting there in the cockpit in a pool of water was hardly the thing to build ones morale...I was very unhappy. No answering flashes had come back to my efforts..I didn't expect any so I wasn't disappointed. Still watching the shore I noticed a red light in the distance, then it disappeared and a green one came into view. I sent a series of flashes in their direction and then a blinding searchlight shot out from the centre of the navigation lights of the boat coming toward me. At last...I wondered how they had managed to find me in that blackness, but of course I had all my deck lights on and would be as visible as they. Withing a few minutes I saw the prows of a really sleek motor yacht breaking through the water, the spray thrown high as she tore along at 15 knots through that nasty sea. She was lit up from stem to stern like a Christmas tree, and the rails seemed to be lined with dozens of people. The skipper of the yacht quickly circled me and with a very fine piece of seamanship rounded up alongside and tossed me a line. I soon lashed it to my winch forward and within seconds of my making the hitch we were all under way heading toward safety.

I lashed my helm for a few minutes whilst I ran forward to drop the mainsail, the only the jib up to steady the Yasme, I closed down the throttle of the engine and put this beautiful yacht to take over completely. His powerful searchlight lit up the whole of the mountainous Island as he swept it back and forth looking for the entrance, then though making up his mind on the course, he swung his ship as though to head staright into the side of the island. Making about 7 knots with Yasme almost planing astern he carried on towards what looked to me like a solid wall. I still couldn't see the entrance, but he sure knew his way around there. As we closed the shore so a faint line of surf showed either side of us as he entered the tiny reef fringed pass into the harbor. Directly we entered so the wind was broken by the high mountains and peace settled on the water. Still keeping dead astern of him we wound in and out through the treacherous waters and then came into English Harbor, the finest haven in the whole of the West Indies. It was still very dark but Bill the skipper of the other Yacht soon brought us both safely alongside the harbor wall and we all got tied up for the night. This was sure a bad entry for me after the Atlantic, but I didn't care, I was safe and ashore and was it good to feel good solid dry land under my feet again after all that time at sea. Standing there talking to about 90 people at once the land started to rock and roll under my feet and I really thought I should be land sick. I was invited up to Commander Nicholsons house to meet the crowd and have a spot of chow, but I was so tired and excited at the thought of my accomplishment that it was impossible to eat. Customs formalities were almost negligible here and apart from a few notes taken by a very smart native policeman, that was the end of the red tape. That evening we all sat talking about my crossing and I learnt that this harbor was the favorite port of entry to all yachtsmen who crossed the Atlantic, and I met many there who had already crossed, but no single handers. I suppose it must have been around 3am before the party broke up and we all returned to our boats for a snooze. The following day was spent in straightening up Yasme and getting all the gear ashore to dry it out. The harbor was perfect for yachtsmen. I was able to tie Yasme up alongside the wall which meant that I could go ashore at any odd moment without the thought of having to row in a dinghy. Right alongside there was plenty of grass where I could lay out my sails to dry and there were plenty of places to stow gear whilst I overhauled the interior of the boat....this was a real haven after the Atlantic. I will try to give you a brief idea of the harbor. It is the

only harbor in the West Indies that is hurricane proof being completely enclosed with high mountains. I suppose the maximum depth there is a minimum of 20' so practically any sea going yacht can enter and anchor with safety, also there is plenty of fresh water available and every day a West Indian chap will come around in his car and take orders for grub, so I had very little to worry about on that score. Of help there was plenty...the West Indian la are all willing to give a hand and are all pretty good sailors and able to do practically any work on the boat even to making sails....the pay they get is so pitifully small that I wondered how they were able to live...but they do. English Harbor was Lord Nelsons pet spot, and it was here where he acted as Admiral that all his ships would congregate for overhaul before going out into the Carribean and playing havoc with other ships. The quay still has all the original buildings that were there in Nelsons day...the Admirals House, The Officers quarters etc, and ^aprt from these are placed the mast house, the sail lofts and every other building that was then necessary to maintain a fleet of men-o-war. Whilst many of these buildings had become almost ruins, a collection of citizens of the Island headed by the Governor Sir Kenneth Blackburn formed a society known as "The Friends of English Harbor" and they have now managed to rebuild the entire harbor and make it as it was hundreds of years ago. I though the place very interesting and it reeked of history... even the massive capstans were there where the old galleons would be pulled over onto their sides to clean the bottoms...known as carreening. These capstans would need possibly 40 men to turn to pull the massive wooden ships over and I could visualise this happening as I stood there and gazed over the harbor. The Admirals house has now been converted into a museum where there are exhibited many things used in bygone days...the entire place is historic without being musty as so many museums tend to be. Commander Nicholson and his family have taken over the Pay House where in those days of yore the seamen would draw their measly coppers for months of real hard labor. Surrounding the harbor on the peaks of the hills are still the structures of gun emplacements in remarkably good state or preservation even though they haven't been touched for years, and here and there, I could see the old time cannons with numerous cannon balls lying around. I spent many hours ~~there~~ touring and taking photos, and on rare occasions when I was able to get a lift into the main town St. Johns, would make shopping expeditions in the numerous modern stores. I rarely went to St. Johns as although it was the main town, it had little to interest me and I preferred to wander over the countryside and see the sugar plantations and fields of

cotton which are their main sources of revenue, not forgetting the rum which they make plenty of. at a very cheap price...one could get completely tight there for a few cents. Scattered around the Island are the old sugar mills where the cane would be crushed, but are now nonlonger in use as all this sort of thing is done with modern machinery.

Christmas was drawing near and I was overjoyed one day to hear Christmas carols being sung to the music which at the time sounded like a philharmonic orchestra. I dashed out from the cabin to see a crowd of West Indians or I should really say Antiguan playing instruments which I can truthfully call oil drums. This was the real genuine Antiguan Steel Band and I was amazed what they were doing with these oil drums and the beautiful music that emanated from them. Briefly the drums had been cut at varying depths, the shallower giving the higher range of notes and the deeper giving the base. The lid or top of the drum was hammer concave, and the hammered part had a series of smaller concavities bashed into it, each part giving a different note. Armed with a pair of sticks with leather knobs, these lads would tap or drum on the various parts of the drum and produce some of the finest music in the world. They played classics never once missing a sharp or flat and to accompany the band would be a few of them playing wooden whistles. Their singing was something out of this world and I spent many hours recording it for posterity. If one can be enthralled with music of that type, I sure was, and I would often go many miles to sit and listen to this beautiful music. Guitars were there too, but they seemed to be lost in the drums and the plaintive tone of the whistle....they were good, really good.

After Christmas they would be around the dockyard playing nightly, not for any reward but because they have music in their souls, and to watch them dancing made me want to get up and join in the haunting rhythm. Wherever I went I would hear music, and it really shook me one day to see about ten couples dancing at the airport in the waiting room whilst they waited for their plane to arrive....the music was their own voices and one or two nondancer drumming on the chairs with their fingers...they could make rhythm and music from anything. Christmas time was wonderful. I had my dinner aboard another Englishman's yacht after which we all went into town to paint the joint red. They have some wonderful restaurants there and every one is fitted out with a steel band and plenty of room to dance....the Antiguan would die if you stopped him dancing...even the tiny children will move their bodies to the beat of a drum and I was fascinated to see these tots hardly able to stand, shuffling in the dirt to the chant of the music. They are wonderful people and always so friendly.

New Years Eve came along and a crowd of us went to a breakfast dance in St. Johns. By this time I had learnt the system of their dancing and had no trouble in getting on the floor without making a fool of myself...that music really gets you. So it went on into the night and into the wee small hours and still they all danced, never seeming to tire, but I was fast fading and must have tumbled off to sleep in a corner. I was rudely awakened by the simple process of having my chair tipped up by one of the boys as he screamed at the top of his voice that it was time for breakfast. Bleary eyed and aching in every bone from the dancing and uncomfortable bed, I staggered up the stairs to the eating joint. A couple of anaemic eggs, some stringy bacon and some other green things glared at me from the plate and still feeling half asleep dug into it. First the eggs then the bacon disappeared and I stuck one of these green things in my mouth and started to chew. Slowly my tongue began to burn, then my throat...my eyes started to water and within a few minutes my mouth, felt as though it was on fire....I had chewed a real West Indian pepper, the really potent type and now I was suffering. Spitting the remains out I filled my mouth with water, coffee tea, anything that was liquid to kill this horrible burning. The pain was extruciating and tears came to my eyes as I tried hard to withstand this agony. Five minutes passed and by this time my lips felt as though they had been stroked with a red hot poker, and to make it all worse, the boys screamed with laughter at my predicament. Too much in pain to get mad I just sat there trying every method I could think to ease the pain, but in all, it lasted for four hours before I was able to even speak....Heaven help anyone who even mentions peppers to me

Back in the harbor again and slowly Yasme was beginning to take shape again, her weather worn paint and varnish taking on a new look as each coat was carefully applied and rubbed ~~in~~ down, until very soon she looked eved better than the day we had both left England. Many modifications had been carried out in those preceeding months and with every one, she had become easier to manage for single handed work. I'd had some good fun in Antigua and was soon ready to depart, but had one thing to do before leaving. The Friends O f English Harbor were to have their Annual Acqua Show and I was one of the bloked chbsen to give a hand out. My speciality was water skying, but in this case I had to do my stunts in the dark with only flood lights to show the way. I was hardly confident of my ability to do the water jump amd other antics in that stygian darkness, and the time came for me to take off with the ~~very fast~~ speed boat tearing along at 30 mph. Taking off was perfect and as my partner in the boat rounded the harbor so I made my jump. For a few seconds, flying over

the inclined ramp I felt my skis slide to one side and felt I should come a real smack in the water, but luck stayed with me and as I left the ramp and soared into the air my body straightened up and I made a perfect landing. I thanked my lucky stars that I didn't have to do it again...the rest of the show was comparatively easy and it was a nice ending to a perfect stay in Antigua. I had arranged to leave a week after the show, but who should come into the harbor were my old pals from the Moana. This really called for a celebration and also an alteration of plans, so throwing all the future out of the window I decided to stay on and enjoy their company. We had lots of fun skin diving there. I reckon that the finest swimming in the world was around Antigua and I learnt a lot from them. My camera was going full blast with undersea shots...the coral formations, the beautiful colored tropical fish all made up a new world to me, and I would spend hours in the water never tiring but getting more fascinated with the underwater sights. Chasing the parrot fish with a spear was real good sport and they are no mean adversaries. They would swim in and out of the coral reefs in an endeavor to escape our spears. We never used the "Acqua Lung" for this sport as it made the catch too easy and was hardly giving the fish a fair break, but these parrot fish I reckoned were the smartest I had ever seen. There were also many turtles around, but always they swam too deep for me and in any case, our spears would never penetrate their hard shell. Well, we had lots of sport between us but the time had to come when we parted, and whilst I stayed on for another week to wait for some spare parts for my engine, they pushed on to other fishing grounds in the Caribbean. My next port was to be St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands owned by the United States. They weren't too far away, but the seas were plenty rough at the time and I knew the trip would be an unpleasant one. Clearing the harbor and dodging the reefs that I had come to know so well, I skirted the island and made course to Sabre, a tiny rocky island far to the north. Whilst many of the Islands in the West Indies have no lighthouses, they are visible most of the time against the sky and also there are always the actual lights on the island gleaming through the darkness giving me a guide. I made a very fast passage up to Sabre but didn't try to land owing to the heavy seas, then changing course, headed towards St. Thomas. The beauty about navigation in these waters is that one is able to see all the islands at one time or another and it is not easy to get lost, so in that short trip I had no reason to use celestial navigation and that was another big weight off my mind...how I hate mathematics in any shape or form. Saba left far behind so St. Croix came up on the port hand, then in the distance the lights

of Charlotte Amalie the main harbor of St. Thomas came into view on the starboard hand. With lots of buoys to mark the channel I found very little difficulty in entering the great harbor, and tying up alongside the Customs Wharf waited to be cleared by those very important officials. This was my first sight of American territory and I was awed with the thousands of large American cars running around the place after being in such primitive areas. The American Navy lads came along and supplied me with big fenders to prevent Yasm from banging the quay wall, and later the officials boarded me with their streams of paper I have to admit that whilst there seemed to be sheaves of forms etc to wade through, they were all very helpful and courteous and in very little time I was free to take Yasm from the Quarantine area and put herein the Yacht Basin. Motoring down I was given a mooring by a very cheerful bloke from the yacht club, and was soon ashore to taste some of the delight of real civilisation. Charlotte Amalie is a miniature New York and was so different to an British place I had ever visited. The Island was so tiny yet it had every modern convenience known to man. My first visit was to a drug store where I paid a fantastic price for a glass of real milk. Perhaps this may sound silly to some, but I had lived on canned milk for a year and the thought of real fresh cow juice made my mouth water...I think I drank about 3 quarts to satiate my desires. I had acquired quite a few dollars in different ports I had visited so was able to get by there....my British travelers checks were useless, but as I only had a few of them wasn't worried too much. Actually I found a few Americans who were going to the British West Indies and they very kindly exchanged their dollars for my checks...so everyone was happy. Yasm had taken quite a caning in that short distance and her sails were beginning to show signs of the many hours they had spread themselves to the weather...I will soon have to think about getting some new ones, but there was another problem that would have to take care of itself later. I had one person to see in the Island...Dick Spenceley At the start of my voyage a friend of mine had fitted me up with a small short wave transmitter for emergency use also an old government surplus receiver...the receiver was not working too well maybe because it had fallen off its shelf a few times in the Atlantic crossing and cracked the chassis, and the transmitter hadn't worked at all, but I had been told by someone to call and see Dick as he was about the only chap there who could help me with this busted gear. I had his address so off I went to see him. Climbing up the narrow street jumping for my life every few minutes to dodge the stream of taxis that tore all over the place, I finally reached his house up on the hill....I was to meet my first American friend

Strolling up that steep narrow street lined with neat clean houses I finally found Dicks place. A high wall confronted me alongside a tall bld house...a long veranda stretching full length one end being high in the air the other reaching the road as the slope of the hill merged with it. Somewhat shy about knocking on the door of a perfect stranger I waited a while to pluck up sufficient courage to knock on the door, then hoping Dick wouldn't get too much of a shock at meeting a very scruffy Englishman I banged on that big door and waited. A dog barked and there through a gap in the door noticed a massive retriever...maybe it was an oversize chow I have never been an authority on breeds of dogs, but I must admit it looked a little ferocious peering through that slit. Still I waited and finally the door was opened by a lady who I discovered was Dicks wife. A little hesitant I told her who I was and why I had come and she lost little time in formalities before inviting me in. I have travelled many miles and have yet to find anyone as charming as her. She did all she could to make me feel at home and before very long I was completely at ease and talking of my travels as though I had known her for years. Later Dick came in and after the usual introductions etc we had a long talk about my radio. Its difficult to describe Dick even though I had many associations with him over the following three or four months. Maybe around 50, tall, around 6' and definitely without any spread around the middle...his pipe rarely leaving his mouth was one of those small briar things and the person I knew as Dick would cease to be directly that pipe disappeared. His slow American drawl was friendly and he wasted few words never using four when two would do. He is a great guy and I have a lot to thank him for as this future story will tell...he became a friend, the sort of friend that many people would love to have, the type that money couldn't buy....I once said to him and his wife that should I have the chance to choose another father and mother they would be the ones....that's the sort of people they were. Well, without going into all the fine details I discovered Dick was one of those people known as "Hams" in other words, an Amateur Radio Operator, the hobby being to construct a radio receiver and a transmitter and talk to other hams all over the world using this equipment. Often I would go into his radio "Shack" the term is used by all amateurs world wide regardless of whether their shack be a palace or a broken down old barn in the back yard...."Shack" is the universal term in every country. Dicks shack had some wonderful gear in it, he had been at the game for many years and was also acting as one of the editors of an Amateur Radio Magazine known as "CQ Amateur Radio Magazine" I found great pleasure in listening to people all over the world talking to him and often wondered what it would be like to be in his position....little did I know what

the future would bring for me in that particular line. I spent a lot of time at Dicks house, practically dining with him daily and also attending the local movie house each evening...the movies was his one relaxation away from his radio gear...known as his "RIG" I had plenty of work to do on Yasme, she needed paint and varnish, also the sails were in sorry state having been ripped up pretty badly in her passage from Antigua. The manager of the yacht club was very helpful in every way and gave me a mooring there to work from. All the sails came ashore and I spent many pleasant days sitting in the warm sun sewing the great rips. Actually it was very silly to spend so much time in doing all this work as the sails were pretty rotten, but the treasure chest was pretty low at the time and it looked me as though I should have to get a few more dollars before I should be able to afford a suit of sails, so on I went with the sewing. It was very pleasant there, I would have many people come and talk to me, and the American accent always intrigued me and I soon made lots of friends. I shall always remember the day when Fran the manager of the Yacht Club asked me to crew with him on his Yacht the Aztec. She was a beautiful ship around 60' overall and with her ketch rig would certainly show a good burst of speed. There was to be a race late whilst I would have loved to enter Yasme, her sails were in too bad a shape to attempt anything like that, also she was so laden down with gear that it would have taken several days to unload all of it to make her fast enough to compete with the other yachts, so the crew's job was most acceptable. Everyone aboard was a real sailing type and each of us had a job...mine was to handle the head sails and see they were trimmed right to catch the slightest puff of wind and take every advantage of it. This was to be a good race, the wind had come up pretty high and also the seas were showing lots of white horses. Aztec was heavy and steady and she would relish this type of weather. The gun went off and the yachts, sails gleaming white in the sun swept past the committee boat and out into the sea. The bigger yachts quickly took the lead...Aztec being with them. Once out of the protecting harbor, we heeled hard over with decks awash spray flying high in the air and drenching the crew. This was real sailing and all aboard were thoroughly enjoying themselves. I had stationed myself far out on the bowsprit to watch the set of the head sails, and in that precarious position I stayed calling out instructions to other members of the crew who would either pull in or release the ropes to trim these sails. Being in a mountainous area we had quite a fair amount of sail trimming, but we were holding our own with the faster boats. So as we got further

from land so the wind and seas came higher and more vicious. Carrying every stitch of the new dacron genoa almost pulling the winch from the deck^{ad} we screamed through the water. Aztec leapt ahead of the lighter boats. We were doing fine when suddenly there came a sound from above, the sound all sailors hate...the ripping of canvas. The flying jib, a sail of maybe 500 square feet ripped right across, there was a flapping sound, then the whole sail literally blew itself to pieces leaving nothing but the luff rope hanging from the masthead. This was disastrous to our leading position, I could almost feel Aztec slow down as we lost the power of that terrific sail high above the decks. Try as we would with other sails, none had the same effect as that jib, and slowly we dropped astern. This was heartbreaking to all of us after taking the lead, but that wasn't the end of it. Fran's wife came up from the saloon where she had been preparing some coffee for us and really put the lid on the day.... "There's water over the cabin floor"..... "It's flooding the whole place"..... Fran handed the helm to one of the lads and ran below. I came in from the bowsprit and also had a look. It was a shambles below. I had seen this on the Yasmé once before and known the horror of having a bad leak, but in this case we had a big crew and weren't too far from land. All ideas of continuing the race were abandoned as we swung around to return to the harbor. I left my job as headsail trimmer and went below to get the engine started. Naturally the engine driven bilge pump was gummed up with all the paper that had got into the bilges, so I spent some pleasant times grubbing down there getting it free. With the pump working and two of the boys on the big hand pump we managed to hold our own but it was real tough going. Still holding all sail and engine full out we headed homeward. In place of the exhilaration came a deep despondency over the crew and our main thoughts were to get that ship back to port before she sunk under us. The leak had become worse and now the entire cabin was awash with the chance that soon the engine would be flooded. There were plenty of boats around so we had no fear for our lives, but as with all sailors we wanted to get that ship back in one piece...and we were going to do it. That harbor entrance seemed millions of miles away, and the seas were doing their very best to push us back, but slowly we made it, and once in the shelter of the high mountains, the wind dropped and we headed to the quay wall under power dropping the sails as we approached our haven. It seemed that the leak stopped as I lowered the canvas which led me to believe that the leak was caused through the excessive strain of over canvassing. Reaching the wall we quickly tied up and I stuck a mask on and dived below to inspect the hull. The trouble was very obvious to me once I looked under the boat...the garboard strake, that is

the plank that joins the keel, had come away from its proper position. All the caulking had dropped out leaving a beautiful 1" gap for a length of 8'. As the boat heeled with the wind so the gap would open up more each time permitting the sea to enter...had we decided to drop the sails outside and motored in things would have been less frightening, but we weren't to know that. Borrowing an Acqua Lung, I dived below the Aztec armed with some caulking cotton and a hammer...the normal mallet used for this purpose would have been useless as it is too large and also solid wood. I suppose I spent about an hour down there filling up that crack with cotton, but gradually the leak stopped and so we managed to clear the water out. This was purely a temporary job and later the following day, Fran took the Aztec to a neighboring island and had the job done properly on the slipways where it could be removed from the water altogether. That trip over to Tortola to get Aztec fixed was a really pleasant voyage. Whilst only 20 miles away, we motored through the wide channels made through the mountainous islands, and below us could be seen the coral reefs shining through the clear deep water. The coral whilst being very beautiful and coloured is also the dread of all sailors and fishermen. A reef will tear the bottom out of the toughest boat and will rip nest to pieces very quickly. Should you touch it whilst swimming it will sting and cause a rash, and if you are unfortunate in really rubbing it hard it will take large chunks of flesh off infecting it at the same time...this will really knock you out for quite a while and be very unpleasant...moral....don't touch the darned stuff, even if the girl friend does want some to take home...it loses its color directly its exposed to the air for a while and all you have is a mixed up mess of white rocky coral. Suppose some people like it around the place, but I can't stand it. Whilst in Tortola, this tiny British Island north of the West Indies we spent a while ashore to see the place and found very little of interest other than many pseudo Americanised West Indians. Owing to the large influx of American tourists to the island and also the flow of dollars, they are becoming more American than British, and to my knowledge, is the only British possession that uses American currency more than British. I returned to Tortola, but more of that later. Having put Aztec into seaworthy condition again, we returned to St. Thomas and there I spent some time in using my knowledge as watchmaker to earn a few dollars to carry me on my way. One day Fran came to me and suggested I might be able to help him out. He had bought a sunken wreck in the harbor of St. Johns in Tortola and wished to salvage all the gear possible from it.....this boat had burnt to the water line and had sunk in depths varying from 20 to maybe 150!. My experience at salvage work and use of the Acqua lung

was to prove useful to both Fran and myself. For him it would produce the useful parts of his investment, and to me some really needed bucks to fit out Yasme. Fitting out Aztec for this trip necessitated a lot of work but soon we were on our way and 3 hours later anchored over the wreck, its outline faintly visible through the cloudy water. This was to be a lousy job. Before even starting I knew what we were going to encounter, but I had agreed to do it and that was that. The first day was spent in getting Aztec anchored securely fore and aft to prevent movement from the rise and fall of the tide, then we rigged derricks and tackle to hoist the salvage over the side. Of labor we had recruited about a dozen natives to do all the pulling on the ropes and then off I went over the side with a twin bottle Acqua lung and a lead belt around my middle to investigate the wreck. It had sunk on a steep slope and was lying at an awkward angle, but still not too deep to get all the stuff up. I was troubled mainly with the undercurrents which would pick me up like a feather and throw me against the coral. Even putting long thick pants and jersey didn't prevent me from getting cut up. The darned stuff ripped the clothing to pieces and me too even though I had weighted myself down with all the lead I could find aboard. It was a lousy job, but I worked solidly every day for around 6 to 7 hours before packing in. Much of the stuff had to be sawn away with a steel saw and down there, every stroke was agony and drained my strength very quickly. I suppose the job that would have taken about ten minutes ashore was taking about an hour under a 100' of water, and the few odd times I was forced to use a hammer it was almost a farce. I would swing with all my strength and the hammer would finally hit the target with no more than a slight tap hardly doing anything at all. The whole thing was demoralising and very tiring. Practically all the time I would have a few sharks to keep me company but they kept their distance and never bothered me in any way. It was the smaller fish that became a nuisance, particularly a big grouper. He would swim around me for hours and then hover near my head. Sometimes his scaly body would scrape against me, but never did he attempt to use that great big mouthful of teeth on me. At first I was afraid and prepared to defend myself with a puny knife and spear, but after awhile, I grew quite attached to this old devil who would always keep me company. Now and again he would flip away to swallow a smaller fish that had become too curious, but for the most time, he would glide around and pester me whilst I was at work. This ship had been a fine craft, all her rigging was stainless and every fitting bronze, but to get it all off was truly a chore, but ultimately the whole lot was aboard Aztec and all that was left was the engine. Oh brother, was that a job to

find. Apparently it had fallen from the wreck as she burnt and was somewhere among the deep branch coral that covered the harbor bed. I must have walked and swum miles in my search but finally discovered it down a deep crevice of coral. It had slid down end first and was locked solid in the crack. Cables were lowered and I managed to get a chain around it, but every time the strain was put on, it would twist and fall deeper into the crevice. I must have come up three times to get the bottles of air renewed before we finally got that thing aboard. It was a massive chunk of machinery and directly we got it clear and chocked on the deck, Fran started right away stripping it down and putting all the parts in a barrel full of oil. Well, now we had the engine there was nothing more to do. A local barge was coming to pick up the keel that being too heavy for us to handle, but every thing else of value had been removed and off we went back to St. Thomas. I'd had an unpleasant but interesting time and was sorry to leave my fishy friend, but there was lots to do on Yasme and I was getting a little tired of being on someone else's boat when my own was calling to me.

ON my return I went to see Dick and it was that day he suggested that I incorporate with my trip an Amateur Radio expedition. Now I feel that this will need a little explanation to the uninitiated as it did with me, so here goes, and I hope you get the idea as Ham radio pops up quite often in the rest of the story.

First we must understand that "Hams" have one ambition and that is to be able to talk to other countries in the world or among themselves using equipment they have built themselves. Many will buy proprietary branded receivers and transmitters, but the ultimate aim is the same. There is one branch of Hams known as the "DX" crowd and that branch specialises in reaching as many different countries as they can either by International morse code or by voice using a microphone. Here we must go to another part of the story. Every country in the world has by International law to have a means of identification on the air, e.g. America will use the prefix of W or K, England will use G, Australia VK, New Zealand ZL and so on. After the letter will come a number and then more letters...the number will invariably denote the area of the country concerned as in America W6 would be California, W2 New York and finally the following letters will be given to the individual Ham as his own call...an Amateur Radio Call Book is issued in the United States where anyone can find the owner of any particular call sign. Now that covers the call sign angle, now we come to the "DX" business. Assuming I as an Englishman hold the call sign of G7DW and I call or have contact with an American Ham whose call is W6VUP. After our talk we will exchange signal reports which

are of a technical sort of thing too involved to go into here, and to finish up the contact we will expect the other to send a confirmation of this talk. Now, I as the Englishman will send a card to my friend in the States....to be Brief, the card will say "Thanks for the contact on 4th December 1956 at 0700 G.M.T. your report is R 5, B 7, T9....please QSL"..... The QSL means please reply or acknowledge...across my card usually in big letters will be my call sign G7DW. My American friend will maybe wait for my card before he sends his own or maybe our cards will go together depending how we feel at the time but the main point is, we both get cards and the only difference will be that the call signs on the cards and the report will vary. We now come down to the meat of the thing inasmuch, I now have a card which states most definitely that I have actually made a contact with America and my friend there has my card showing he has contacted England. Now, all the DX boys are after different countries and will spend hours, weeks in fact to get a particularly elusive country where although there may be a ham there operating, his signal may be so weak as impossible to copy or that so many stations are calling that the far off station cannot hear the other bloke... D'you get the idea? I know this sounds awfully complicated but just settle down for a week or so and figure it out or visit a "Ham"...maybe he will do better than I in making this explanation. Now this is where I come in, and this is what Dick told me. There are many countries in the world...that includes islands as well in the Pacific which neither you nor I have never heard of which although they have been issued with a legitimate call sign etc., from the country that governs them, no Ham is in existence there and possibly never will be. If I go there and set up a transmitter and receiver and have an official call sign given me from the controlling government then I can go on the air as a brand new country, and any of the Hams who contact me there in my stay will automatically be able to add another card to their collection....the cards incidentally would come from Dick who handled all that side of things many times I was on islands where there were no facilities for post or air mail, so it became the idea that all the boys who contacted me would send their card to Dick and he would send them one of mine...Got it? Now I've got all that off my chest maybe we can get on with the story. Dick wanted me to go to all the rare Ham Radio spots I could find in my travels get a licence and transmit to all the Hams all over the world. This really got me. Sure I was interested, who wouldn't be, but there were a few snags I could think of, in fact I could talk for hours on the snags that presented themselves...the major ones were, first I didn't have any suitable radio gear, second I didn't possess a Ham licence, and finally and most

important to the whole idea...I didn't have any idea of the International Morse Code, and what I knew about radio you could have put inside a thimble and still had plenty of room to stick your finger. Apparently this didn't seem to bother Dick very much, all he wanted to know was whether I would do the job and leave the rest to him. Here I must take my hat off to Dick....he is a "Ham" and to a Ham, nothing is impossible if it means NEW COUNTRIES. They will do anything. The Ham is a peculiar breed of humanity, men, women, children will get bitten by the bug, and once bitten, unless an extra strong antidote can be found such as getting married or dying, they will go on through life getting more and more afflicted with the disease. Even in extreme cases such as getting married, he will in ~~often cases~~ inflict his wife with the disease and then the whole family will become DX minded...even the baby will tap out morse code with his rattle instead of the unearthly racket they normally make, and as time passes, all other interests in life will disappear in the cloud of Ham Radio. I suppose I could talk for hours on the ways of Hams but we should never get the story finished so let's just assume they are all a little crazy...so are single handed sailors so that puts me at the top of the tree for being completely nuts. Well, Dick really put me through the radio world in theory and I learnt to operate a key to his satisfaction. Armed with this knowledge I took a trip to Tortola where I sat a test to obtain my first Ham certificate....I got it and was then able to operate using the call of VP2VB. At the time of arrival in Tortola the Communications officer wasn't available and I had time to spare so started work on the Administration Building Public Clock which hadn't been running for the last twenty years. It was fun getting that ancient piece of machinery down from its position high on the wall. The entire assembly was packed with birds nests, spiders and other odd insects, and before starting work I had to dip it into a can of gasoline. It was a mess and terribly worn, but with plenty of time on my hands I went to work to make the thing go. Every part was taken out and renewed where possible and after a week it went together and I put it back in its old position of honor. At the first swing of the pendulum it started up with a really good action and I knew that it would go for many years before it needed further attention...that's what I thought. Two days later it stopped, and after climbing the high ladder to check it, found exactly nothing wrong. I started it again and climbed down feeling puzzled. This was a matter of prestige more than cash. Many had told me it was too old to fix and I had argued on that point and here was the thing stopping after only two days. The following morning I looked out from the boat through my binoculars and saw the damn thing had packed up again.

Feeling really rattled I rowed ashore in the dinghy armed with my tools more than ever determined to find the fault or die in the attempt, and the fact that a few locals passed derogatory remarks didn't make me feel any happier. Bagging the ladder against the wall I scrambled up and opened the door of the clock. There hanging on the pendulum was a confounded lizard. This was the cause of all my troubles, but how it got there I hadn't any idea. As I put my hand in to grab it, so it dropped and vanished into the innards of the movement far from my reach. This was too much, balancing there at the top of ~~erratic~~ ^{pendulum} the ladder trying hard to bend my arm into three different ways at once I struggled to get that reptile out, but it was useless. Going to the front of the building I started to undo the screws that would permit me to take the movement out. An hour later I climbed down beaten. I had taken the movement out, searched the case in the wall, but no lizard... not a sign of it, ~~as~~ With murder in my heart put the thing back again and started it up. Going back aboard I got a mouse trap and stuck it in the case, but what to use for bait I hadn't a clue so just left it there set. I was lucky, over two weeks had passed in which I had repaired quite a few more clocks and watches and fixed a few erratic gas engines and still the clock continued to tick and keep excellent time... I had upheld my honor and that was all that mattered.

I had made a friend there from back in St. Thomas.. Ivan Humphrey, and decided to call on him with Yasme. Looking at the chart I found his place was about 4 miles up the coast and by passing through a reef could enter a small harbor. This was too easy, and around 11pm one evening I pushed off along the coast. Actually it was a bit stupid to sail at night in those waters without a moon to see the shore, but I had become overconfident with my abilities as a sailor and using the compass and the trailing log to guide me, off we went. Rounding the point in the harbor was easy as there were quite a few lights to guide me, but after that it was strictly compass and log. The wind had dropped completely and with engine just ticking over we moved slowly through the calm sea with my eyes straining all the time to keep that faint line of surf in sight which denoted the reef. 1 hour had passed and checking the log I found we had travelled just about the right distance and I swung the helm slowing the engine at the same time. Closer and closer came the surf... that faint silvery shred of breaking sea, but nowhere could I see an entrance or break. The chart gave me a 100' gap but that is mighty small and very difficult to see at night and I carried on hoping that it would appear OK. Closer, closer and still I foolishly pushed on when suddenly Yasme came to a grinding halt. We had hit the reef. Rushing below

I slammed the engine in reverse and opened the throttle wide in a vain attempt to get off that vicious reef that was gnawing away at Yasma's keel. Whilst there was no sea running at the time, the swell was gradually pushing us further and further ~~ontact~~ and the engine seemed to have no effect whatsoever. With each rise and fall of that sea, Yasma would crash down with all her weight onto that unyielding reef...the whole ship would shake and the mast shuddered as though it would break off at the base any moment. Cups, jars, books and odd items lying on the table in the saloon fell onto the floor as the vibration shook Yasma. I was terror-stricken and didn't know what to do. The engine I found was far too weak to do any good, it was pitch dark and apart from the surf breaking in a silvery spray, nothing could be seen. Going on deck I cut the dinghy adrift from its blocks and threw it over the side tossing the oars after it. Taking a long rope with my small kedge anchor I lashed one end to the stern of Yasma and then started to row out into the deep water. With half a ton of rope in the dinghy it left little room for my legs and I found that rowing at any speed was well nigh impossible, but gradually I got further and further away until Yasma was a faint outline against the shore. The dinghy came to an abrupt halt as the rope became taut, the anchor slid from between my feet and locked itself in the transom. This was it; leaving the oars, I slid the anchor over the stern and started back to Yasma. It was very easy to get back but the problem of getting aboard was another thing. The surf was really breaking hard around her and with every surge the dinghy would crash itself under her stern and almost fill up. Holding the painter in one hand I made a leap for the stern and pulled myself aboard dragging the dinghy alongside and lashing it securely, then grabbing the rope attached to the anchor I took it right forward to the winch and started pulling in. Gradually the rope took up the slack and became drum tight along the deck straining around the edge of the cabin sides as it led down towards the stern. With every lift of the sea as Yasma would leave her position on the reef I would give a pull on the winch. The anchor had really bitten home in the coral and was holding fast...would the rope hold? that was the question. Still keeping the engine flat out going astern I winched in that rope. There was nothing to show me whether we were actually moving except the gradual growing pile of rope on the deck as it came in. I suppose I must have started around midnight on this job and by 2 a.m. was still pulling. Three times that rope broke as it chafed around the edge of the cabin, but each time I managed to grab it and tie another piece of rope at the break. It was back breaking work and I sweated, wondering all the time whether we were actually moving or the anchor was slipping and dragging through the

coral. At last, Yasme was picked up with the swell and this time she didn't come down with a crash. As this happened so it became easier to haul in the rope, in fact I was able to take it off the winch and drag it in by hand alone. Grabbing the boat hook I sounded over the side and found we were moving astern at a fair lick. Frightened that the rope astern would foul the propellor I dashed into the cabin and threw the engine out of gear. What a relief...I was now in deep water and out of danger. Pulling up a couple of floor boards I inspected the bulges. Apart from a little water which was quite normal, there was no signs of a leak so we were OK there. With the engine quietened I was able to hear the seas breaking on the reef quite clearly, and in my opinion they were still too close for comfort, so grabbing the rope again I started to pull in the anchor. Soon it was up and down, and lashing it, I put the engine into reverse to break out the anchor and brought Yasme around facing out to sea. Directly we were well clear of all dangers I hauled in the rest of the rope and the anchor and headed along the coast. Before I had actually got under way I heard some shouts in the distance but paid little heed to them as one hears all sorts of things under strain, but in this case they were getting louder so I eased up a bit and waited. Very soon along came a native canoe loaded with local lads. They spoke English OK and told me they had seen the lights on Yasme and realised she was on the reef and had come to help me out, I was in no mood to ask then why it had taken them over two hours to reach me, but realising they were only trying to help, had them all come aboard. They tied their canoe astern and helped me get the dinghy aboard...I had lost the oars in my previous troubles but that was a minor item compared with the possible loss of Yasme....I was content, and this crowd of lads had made me feel a lot better. I told them about this pass and they offered to guide me in. Actually I had turned about 100 yards too early and the set of the current had sent my reckonings haywire. Well, off we went in the next attempt to find that elusive pass. I handed the helm over to one of the lads and I handled the engine but kept it dead slow....It was just as well I did as before very long there was another grinding crash as Yasme hit the reef again. This was too much.....local knowledge...PHDOEY!!! etc *!#!*...I slammed Yasme astern again throttle wide open. The engine screamed in anguish as the prop took hold. The natives bawled and shouted to each other, ran around the deck and generally went berseck. One grabbed the boat hook and started pushing, two other jumped over the side and started shoving against the bows and within a few minutes, Yasme was in deep water again. I'd had enough and was fully determined to pull off shore and wait for morning when out of the distance I saw the red and

green lights of another boat approaching. There was a shout and a voice I recognised. Ivan had seen what was happening from his house and had come out in his launch to guide me in. He called me a few names for attempting the impossible...and I agreed with him wholeheartedly and then he took over as pilot. When I actually saw the size of that pass I then realised that I should never have found it in a month of Sundays. It seemed about 10 feet wide and was hardly noticeable in the surge of the seas, but with his aid, I came through safely without any further bother. Pulling up near his tiny jetty, I unloaded my native friend giving them all a packet of cigarettes for their trouble and then adjourned to Ivan's place to sleep it off. The following day I went down and inspected the trouble. Whilst the hull was OK except for a deep scar in the planking, the rudder was finished. Practically half of it had disintegrated and I suppose there was about two square feet left. Nothing could be done there as the rise and fall of the tide is only a few inches so it looked as though I should have to get back to St. Thomas the best I could and effect repairs there; I stayed with Ivan a couple of days...would have stayed longer but was anxious to get back and fix that rudder, and then pushed off into the sea and headed back. I tried to sail Yasme but she wouldn't hold course with that bad rudder so had to carry on under motor all the way...I hoped and prayed the engine wouldn't let me down otherwise I should be in a spot. It took me the whole day to return to St. Thomas, and there safely at anchor I made arrangements with a local company to lift Yasme out of the water with a crane onto the quay wall. This was quite a job. A massive floating crane was towed up and wires were strung around the hull of Yasme and up she went. This was the first time she had been airborne in her career and I held my breath as they swung her high over the water and then intowards the quay wall. Some baulks of timber had been arranged for her to sit down and very soon she was ashore and ready for repairs. Now I was able to examine her more closely the damage seemed a million times worse. To put it bluntly I needed a complete new rudder. The cost of having one made was prohibitive even with my more swollen pocket book. I had worked for other people for quite a while to build up my resources mainly to get some new sails, and now I had all the expense of this rudder wrapped around my neck. Well, there was only one thing to do about it.....DO IT MYSELF. One whole month I devoted in taking the remains of the old rudder out and building a new one, but when it was finished it was twenty times better than the old and much stronger. Suppose every bad thing in life has its good side...I found that the entire rudder post was completely eaten away with teredo worm and also a good part of the blade, so it was just as well I had hit that reef

I had good reason to be thankful that I had smashed up the rudder as later events will tell, but once I had completed the job, I gave her two good coatings of anti-fouling and had her lowered into the water again. Having completed all structural work on Yasme I was then able to spend more time with Dick on this other deal. Returning with that Amateur Radio licence had been quite a feather in my cap, and the next move was for Dick to take. Just at that time a friend of Dick's had arrived from the Windward Islands on one of these DX expeditions. I met Sam Roley for the first time and he had brought with him a complete amateur radio rig which he had been using at all these odd spots in the Islands. Well, Dick decided to buy all this gear from Sam and install it on Yasme for the future expedition, and then we got a couple of generators from another Ham and lots of other bits and pieces which all made up a complete set of equipment capable of setting me up for the job. Here I have to say that the Hams in America all went out of their way to give all assistance in this venture, and every day there came along another piece of gear until very soon we had everything. Dick and I spent many days fitting everything in Yasme. Antennas were strung up and tested, lots of new wiring was installed until all was ready for the next move. We had checked and double checked everything...my knowledge of radio was small, but I had plenty of books aboard on the subject and now it was up to me whether I made a success or a mess of it...I was on my own again. With the completion of this, I started taking on stores, and on August 1st 1955 the anniversary of my departure from England I set sail for Panama via the Caribbean Sea. Scheduled to leave at noon, everything worked out fine barring the fact that there was very little wind; however, Dick, his wife and kids were there to see me off and of course quite a few locals on the quay wall. As the 12 o'clock siren blew, the anchor was being stowed the sails were up and with a few circles to enable the photographers to get some shots, I headed out through the channel into open sea. The wind, what there was of it gave a few very disheartened puffs, decided it wasn't worth it anyway and then died away leaving me with a flat calm, ~~and~~ an oily sea, a very sticky heat, and a 35° roll on the boat that threatened to throw me overboard at the first opportunity. Forced to have the engine running, the temperature rose to over 100, and the heat even set the jars of jam bubbling in the drawers of the galley. I was feeling thoroughly fed up and completely browned off having spent several months ashore with Dick and his family, and this business of sailing around the world single handed had lost its appeal completely, and feeling very sorry for myself, I just sat in the cockpit and gazed at the slatting sails hoping the boat would sink or even develop a leak, anything to

et out of that infernal roll which was slowly making me feel sick, but nothing untoward
ppened except the wind failed to put in an appearance and the engine had started its old
unt of only firing on three cylinders. Slowly we moved out of sight of St. Thomas and
ought of all the fun I'd had there kept passing through my mind and only made me feel sadder
think this was one of the first times I had really felt the effects of solitude for many
onths, but the thought that now I had an efficient radio aboard where I could talk to Dick
any time certainly eased things a bit. Actually I had arranged with Dick that I would keep
chedules with him at various times so that I could pass the news and also ~~xxxx~~ tell him
ere I had sunk if it happened that I had an argument with another ship. These little talks
ertainly helped to kill the solitude and very often there would be several hams who would get
on the talk as I went along. Two days out and only 150 miles covered...all with the
ngine...the sails remained up all the time in the hope that maybe a little wind might come
nd help me on my way. To top all this, a warning came over the radio to tell me that a
urricane was forming in the Atlantic and was heading my way. This little incident gave me
ood for thought and I went into the heaving cabin to plot its course hourly wondering what
he heck was going to happen next. After a little figuring it worked out that "Connie" the
ame given to the hurricane would catch me a "fourpenny" one and I hadn't even got my
mbrella with me; anyway, I did the next best thing, cursed the engine, the weather, the
boat and anything else I could think of, then got out the heavy weather sails hanking them
in readiness for the blow. Time whizzing by and still no wind, but all the time the glass
is falling fast foretelling the impending disaster. The engine had developed hiccups and
as now firing on only two of its four cylinders....water in the tank; OK switch to the other
ank; a darn good idea but the pipe line blocked and the engine only ran for around 5 minutes
efore giving up the ghost altogether. Ah! another brain wave, get a can of gas and syphon
direct to the carburetter via a rubber pipe. After swallowing a couple of pints of octane
...lousy stuff....Scotch is much better...finally got the engine running again, but after
n minutes or so it started its old stunts of spitting and finally stopped. Discovered the
at ~~of the engine~~ had melted the pipe and the engine wouldn't run on a mixture of rubber
nd gas...the stink of burnt rubber and gas was overpowering, and dripping with perspiration
stuck my head out into the open air for a breather. Lo and behold I felt the soft touch on
cheek of a breeze coming from the east. I dropped the wrench...on my toe of course, tore
t of the cabin along the deck removing one toenail on a cleat on the deck, and hoisted every

bit of light canvas available...the storm sails dropping in heaps as I released their halyard. The breeze increased, and before long we were bowling along at a steady 5 knots. Now came the \$64,000 question. Could I make enough headway to avoid the coming hurricane which was approaching my position slowly every hour. Feeling a little better for this break in the weather I grabbed myself a cup of coffee and then got cracking on the job of clearing the choked pipelines, cleaning the carburetter and straining the gas in the other tank. This little bit of business took around 8 hours...ashore it would have taken 3....you try stripping a carburetter etc., etc., in a space around 3 square feet and a red hot exhaust pipe in close proximity. The jobs were carried out OK but I still have a few burns...one in a very awkward place which kept me standing for some time afterwards...more comfortable than sitting. The wind held in my favor for two days then fizzled out and left us rolling all over the place in a really nasty sea. On with the engine and hope for the best, Connie was advancing all the time and chasing me...pity she didn't wear skirts, I wouldn't have been in such a hurry. This calm was the forerunner of the hurricane. I wasn't fooling myself one little bit. I had plotted the course of that blow for several hours and whatever way I figured, I just couldn't get out of its way. With all the light canvas down and storm sails up again I plodded on with hope in my heart. Food.....(that eating habit I picked up as a kid) became increasingly more difficult to prepare. One needed to be a contortionist plus an acrobat to cook anything. I did on one occasion try to make some pancakes, but gave it up as a bad job after removing them the floor under the primus stove several times; they never taste as good mixed with kerosene and lube oil, dunno why. Anyway, I had plenty of coffee and biscuits, so they filled the hole for the time being. I did on one occasion decide to open up a tin of sausages I had bought in Africa...I must have been an optimist. Directly I pierced the can there was a minor explosion. The lid blew off and very defunct "snorkers" were sprayed with the force of an atom bomb over the galley, the charts and of course ME. I feel very sure that a skunk couldn't have competed with the pong from that can of sausages, and for the next few days it took great will power, plus a handkerchief over my nose to enter the cabin to carry out my duties. Shortly after the sausage episode, good news came over the air that Connie had changed her course: could it be the aroma from our "snorkers"? I doubt it, but I felt I was reasonably safe and breathed a little easier. Returning to the chart I plotted Connie's position and it looked although I should dodge the centre of the hurricane, the outer ring would hit me,

and there wasn't a darn thing I could do about it. I steered Yasme due south in a vain attempt to get further away from that centre...any ship caught in that part of a hurricane has had it and no-one can help you...my only chance was to steer away from its course and hope. Still no wind but the glass had sunk two more tenths and still falling. The tiny nib on the barograph traced the line on its chart and I thought it would soon go right off it and slip beneath the drum holding the chart. The engine was now firing on all cylinders...I really think it knew what was coming and was as concerned as I about getting to heck out of this area. The heat became almost solid in the cabin and apart from checking the chart I stayed out in the cockpit pouring an occasional bucket over my head to cool off. I had taken all the sail down now except a small jib to steady her...I didn't dare get caught in a hurricane with any sail up. The sea was now glassy calm and everywhere around us was hazed up, the oppressive heat even on the deck was enough to drive me nuts, and try as I would, Yasme wouldn't go faster. I spent the intervening time in pouring buckets of water over the deck to stop the paint bubbling. All gear had been lashed down and I had two flasks of coffee ready...I waited. Around an hour later there came a puff of wind...not much..it just ruffled the surface of that glassy calm and then fell away....then another puff..a little longer this time but not enough to fill the tiny storm jib....There was a faint whistling in the rigging and everything darkened over. Whilst no clouds were visible, the sky seemed to turn into a semi-twilight and still it got hotter. Then it started, from a puff it started to build up into a crescendo of sound. Yasme heeled slightly, the jib filled and we ran off before that wind. So it built up until the wind shrieked in the rigging like devils released from hell. I was a fool to have even tried to leave that small jib up in the first place, but it was up and nothing was going to make me get out of that cockpit where I had safely esconced myself, lashed in with a thick leather belt. How it blew. The sea that had started to build up with breaking waves had been completely flattened with the force of the wind and as we sped along almost planing the bow wave sent out showers of spray to port and starboard. This was only the beginning, I knew that and settled myself down to wait for the rest to come. The wind increased steadily and now the sky was completely blotted out with a deep purple haze that seemed to come lower and lower almost touching the mast top. My knuckles gleamed white as I clutched the helm trying hard all the time to keep Yasme heading before the wind. One second off course and she would broach to. If this happened, nothing could save us in that holocaust of maniacal wind. We should turn beam on or capsized in seconds. I just had to keep her going dead ahead.

I wanted so much to heave to, but the mere thought of trying to bring her round up into wind was out of the question...all I had to do was to wait for that sail to blow out then things would be easier, but as much as it blew, that sail refused to blow apart. Minutes seeming like hours passed and still we flew on over that dead flat sea, always heading slightly south of west...one thing about it, we were dead on course and I was going where I wanted, but I should have much preferred to ease up a bit...even a flat calm was better than this anxiety. For two hours it built up to its pitch and the log astern was screaming in anguish as it was forced to rotate at three times its normal speed. I just couldn't believe my eyes. That log had been reading 160 before the blow and now it read 193...all these miles in two hours. It was fantastic, but the wind was easing very quickly as it completed its circular course and headed north west. As quickly as it arrived it disappeared and left us in a filthy calm with the seas going haywire. Without the influence of the wind, the seas lost all semblance of their usual order and threw Yasme in every direction at once. Turning on the engine had no effect as more often than not the stern was way out of the water leaving the prop to beat into thin air. As we fell into a trough the engine would take over and slow right up, and then as we rose again, it would over-rev and scream as though every part of it would fly apart. I had to slow the engine down to a slow tick-over to avoid this, then it was utterly useless. Hardening in the jib made no difference whatsoever and I was forced to sit there and hope that very soon we should have some sort of wind to steady us. I managed to get the generator started and got my rig going. I just had to tell Dick what had happened and that I was OK. I knew he would be worried and before very long we were talking to each other. I can assure you it was far from being an easy job. Try to imagine yourself in a very small cabin which lurches from side to side at odd moments and at angles of 35°. Seat yourself on a very unsteady stool and then try to operate a morse key with an occasional dive into the cockpit to put the boat on course. These conditions are a slight underestimation, but I think you will understand that there were many times when I was trying to operate whilst lying on the floor of the cabin with the ear-phone cord wrapped around my neck nearly choking me. Well, like everything else in life, the wind had come, it had gone, and now it had returned in a more modified form and slowly Yasme headed toward Panama with no other damage than ^{the canvas dinghy cover} ~~lost~~...it had taken off sometime in the blow. The day before arrival in Cristobal was quite a sticky time for the whole crew aboard Yasme. A strong westerly current had made navigation more than usually difficult, and it was essential that a definite fix be made that day.

Ten minutes before noon I am sitting on the cabin roof with the sextant ready to shoot the sun, waiting very patiently for it to reach its zenith. Five minutes to go and I see a dirty black cloud coming from the west...three minutes to go and its getting closer; can I get that sight before the squall hits me?....I doubt it....so, one mad rush to the cockpit to see the sextant, that MUST NOT get damaged, then another rush to the headsails to get them down; halyards to loosen, sails to haul in before they go over the side, then lash them down to the deck. I had just got the sails lashed when the squall hit me. YASME practically stationary at the time, heeled to an angle of 45° , the rail went under, and with decks awash, spray flying everywhere, and under bare poles, she took the bit in her teeth and hared away at over 8 knots down wind. A few seconds later I heard a terrific crack and thought something had busted, but it was only the canvas cockpit awning that had ripped loose from its moorings, and the last I saw of it, it was on its way back to St. Thomas. For thirty minutes we went like the clappers of hell, the rain came down solid, and the seas were flattened with the force of the wind. Then, as though someone had moved a switch, it suddenly became calm, and there we were again, blown back in the wrong direction around five miles with no wind, and with that infernal roll. Well regardless of the lost noon sight, and the awning, somehow we managed to hit Cristobal on the nose, and with the engine plugging away on one cylinder, and the gas almost gone, we dropped the hook in the harbor at 10.30 am, 13th August, after one of the worst trips I have ever made since leaving England. Tired out and very hungry, I made my peace with the powers that be and was greeted by three Hams from the Balboa side of the Canal. This Hamming business is one of the finest camaraderies in the world in my opinion. Where-ever one may be in the world, providing there is another Ham there, he will come to greet you and do all he can to make your stay a happy one. He will spend hours of his time in helping to repair your radio, loan you his car, make you a guest at his home for an unlimited period, and if needs be, will even find you a date...Hi! This habit often works out with any other radio personel in a place. I just can't figure it out, but there seems to be something among the radio men of the world that makes them stick together regardless of Nationality, Religion or what have you, and I found that after I had become a Ham, wherever I went, the path was always much smoother in the new country. These lads whipped me off in a car to Balboa, filled me solid with the finest food I have tasted for some time, then gave me a bunk....pardon me, a bed to sleep.... Do you know fellers and gals, I was dead beat, and fit to drop, but to sleep in a real bed that didn't move was impossible, so I got our three friends

to jostle the bed all night so that I could slumber in comfort....you don't have to believe this last part!!!! But anyway, I did get a good nap, and that was all that mattered.

The following day I was taken back to Cristobal to prepare for the Panama Canal Transit. This was something I had looked forward to for some time, yet I had heard so many reports from small boat owners of the risks incurred that in the back of my mind I felt a little scared. However, the authorities arranged that I be ready to shove off at 6.45 am with the engine running...they didn't know my engine, or perhaps they were optimists, but at 6.45 am on the dot, the pilot was there with one of my Ham friends and his son, Dick and Dick Jr...Dick is a Captain in the U.S. Navy, so I had a good crew to help out....and...the engine actually fired on all four cylinders for the first time in months. Five minutes later we were off on the first part of the trip. The first set of locks appeared at 7.10 on schedule, and, accompanied by a larger British Yacht, The "Happy Return", we tucked ourselves in behind a large cargo boat. By arrangement with the other yacht, I tied up alongside him, and he took up his position against the wall with many rubber tires alongside to protect him from the rough concrete walls of the lock. When all was secure to the Pilots satisfaction, the lock gates closed on us, and there we were in a massive deep cavern with walls towering over 40' above us. I might add here that both of the yachts were issued with a full blown pilot...they normally take liners and large cargo boats through...so this was something a little different for them. We waited a few seconds, then the water started to rush into the chamber. Never in my life have I experienced that feeling inside of me that came in those next seven minutes. How can I, a very "Ham" writer, possibly explain my emotions at that time? At first I was mildly interested, then my interest turned to panic as the two yachts were thrown into the centre of the lock with the ropes holding us to the side quivering with the terrific strain imposed on them. One of my forward lines, a rope 1½" in diameter snapped, and the pilot threw another rope to the other yacht just in time to prevent any damage. The next minute, we were thrown like corks against the lock wall, and I really thought that both of us would be crushed and sunk in this fantastic turmoil. The other yacht had the major part of the work to do, inasmuch as they were handling the ropes that were attached to the side of the lock, and as we rose they had to haul them in, keeping them taut all the time to prevent us being thrown outward into the lock. When you come to think that the total weight of the two yachts was around 60 tons, and that ~~the~~ four men were trying to prevent the terrific undercurrent from taking over completely and smashing the boats....well.

To give you a better idea, these locks are 1,000 feet long, 110 feet wide, and the water rises 27 to 30 feet in 7 minutes. So put your imagination to work, and you will realise that this was no picnic for any of us. Naturally larger ships are controlled and kept in the centre of the locks by steel cables from either side which are controlled by small engines on rails known as "mules", but smaller craft are not so fortunate, and have to control their own activities with hand lines up the steep walls. We experienced this twice more going up, and finally cruised into the Gatun Lake. this part of the trip was most pleasant, as Yasme, her engine now completely defunct, remained tied alongside the other yacht, and all I had to do was to sight see. The lake is man made, and of course fresh water, and it is this lake that supplies the water to control the locks, everything being done by gravity. there were still trees sticking out above the surface of the water, even though the original forest land in the valley had been submerged for many years, but we steered well clear of them, and kept to the buoyed channel. Ultimately we hit the down locks and this was far more comfortable as whilst there was quite a fair amount of surging in the water, it didn't throw us about half as much, and the handling of the shore lines was much easier, as all we had to do was to pay them out instead of hauling them in....this was the part where I helped. Three of these locks with nothing exceptional happening, and then we cruised into the Pacific Ocean. Whilst neither of us had suffered damage in the locks, a dirty great tramp steamer belted by flat out, and his wash caused us to crash together so much that one of the big cleats bolted through my decks was torn right out...we both cursed our arrival in the Pacific, but after getting tied up to the moorings very kindly supplied to us by the Balboa Yacht Club we simmered down and went ashore to enjoy some more home cooked chow.

We were very thankful to be tied up after that hectic journey and I do believe that most small boat owners, whilst wanting to experience the transit of the Panama Canal, once having done it, never wish to do it again, and I must say very emphatically that I am one of them. I'd rather cross the Atlantic twenty times than have that experience again. Well, directly I had really got settled there, many of my Ham friends came along to give me a hand out to fit Yasme for her next voyage. I had a wonderful time in Balboa, and was made a guest of Dick Mann all the time. No-one could have been kinder to me and he and his wife spent many hours driving me around this great city showing me the sights. I did want to go into the interior there, but time was against me, and I had to put up with local stuff. I suppose both Cristobal and Balboa are very much alike in many ways, except that Balboa is mainly

American, and many of the shops have become Americanised. The people speak mainly Spanish and as my knowledge of that language is down to about two words, I had very few long conversations with the locals...but they had long ones with me...I didn't understand a darn word they said, but we were all very happy. I suppose I could write for hours about this fantastic place but I think we all want to get on with the rest of the voyage. Well, I had Yasme taken out of the water at the club and gave her a good coating of anti-fouling in readiness for the greatest voyage she would ever take. I examined her from stem to stern, every tiny item was checked and double checked....she had to be perfect, as once I left, there would be no turning back, and I had over 6,000 miles to go without sight of land so I made sure that nothing was loose. The sails worried me a bit as they were getting rotten, but my pocket book was still pretty thin and the cost of having new ones made in that area would have been prohibitive so I had to make do and hope that I wouldn't have bad weather. Well, with Yasme back in the water again and all stores stowed I was ready to shove off....this was to be my biggest trip of all time and I hoped and prayed it would be a success. One thing I have forgotten here which I feel is of some importance.....I had been fed up for some time with having warm water to drink, and every time I opened a can of corned beef it would fall out onto the plate with a big splosh instead of a solid lump so decided to build me a deep freeze aboard. Chasing around Balboa scrap yards I found an old refrigerator box, and by sawing it to size and removing half the doorway of the Yasme, finally got it inside the cabin. There was a large cuboard in the saloon which I then removed and stuck the box in its place. Having got all this little lot tidied up, built up a freezing unit which I installed in the forepeak and then ran the pipe lines to the box in the saloon so that I wouldn't have to put up with the racket of the compressor whilst I was asleep. With the forepeak door closed, all that could be heard was a slight hum, and the thing froze up beautifully. Through this little idea, I was able to take on quite a few different types of food such as steak etc., and for some time afterwards was able to have home cooked meals aboard...that deep freeze did a fine job, and the amount of gas ~~it~~ used to generate the current, ^{to drive it} was almost negligible. I also bought 20 government surplus five gallon gas cans there too, and with the tanks all filled and these cans, ~~I~~ was able to carry just under 500 gallons of gas. I knew the cans wouldn't last a long time, but as they were emptied into the main tanks I could dump them overboard....one of the main things I found was to keep the tanks filled all the time as condensation would soon fill 'em up with water....and that does sure give plenty trouble....I know.

Well, that's the way it was at Panama, and any rest I thought I'd have was purely imaginary.. even whilst asleep I would dream of what had to be done the next day, but although there were thousands of jobs undone, I reckoned I was as near ready as I should ever be.

October 3~~rd~~ was decided on to depart, but just as was ready to move off, the darned refrigerator decided to stop friging and there was mad dash to get all the food ashore whilst I fixed the darn thing...it seemed to me that everything was going wrong at the same time, but better here than out at sea, and it was the eighth at noon I finally got away...a whole week late.

With a favorable tide and wind dead against me I motored down the buoyed channel from Balboa ...Dick, his son and wife came along to pilot me out in a friends Yacht, and with all sails set and engine flat out to beat the wind, we both made a fair passage for around six miles when Dick then decided he'd had quite enough and turned his boat around giving a last final wave of farewell. Well, I was on my own again and ahead was a distance of six thousand miles or more without sight of land. The weather of course was lousy. I had been warned by many sailing skippers and also had referred to the sailing directions to get the knowledge that I was heading into one of the worst patches of water known to man, and to a point south of the Galapagos would be a real stinker....I prepared for the worst. The worst arrived immediately on the first night in the form of gales which made it impossible to steer the correct course. I had a dead header with the wind and was forced to resort to that hated system of tacking to make any headway at all. The seas were short and pushed Yasmé back all the time even though the engine was helping in a half hearted way. The skies were dark with low cloud and it rained...not the soft tropical rain I had been accustomed, but a hard cold sleet that numbed the marrow of my bones. It was impossible to carry full sail at any time and reefed down it was tough to beat into that wind and really get anyplace, but slowly we cleared the land and was soon alone in that vast Gulf of Panama with its changeable weather and nasty seas. My sails which have been for some time on the rotten side, took a real beating from the wind which meant that every hour or so I had to drop either the mainsail or the jib and start sewing. This business of sewing may appear easy to some of you sitting comfortably in your easy chairs or at a modern electric sewing machine, but you try to handle 500 square feet of wall canvas in half a gale in a confined space, then try to sew up a great rip bearing in mind that once the sail is down there is no means of steadying the boat which then proceeds to do everything under the sun (rain* that is) except turn upside down. There is no room in which to spread the sail out so that one can ensure the tear is nice and even

before it is sewn, so quite often when the sail is repaired, one finds that whilst one end of the rip starts off nicely and the ends meet, by the time I have reached the other end of it, owing to the stretch of the canvas, there will be about a foot or so of canvas left over. ...this means of course that I have to start all over unpicking the thing...the ladies no doubt will understand my position better. the actual sewing is another job too. One is compelled to use a heavy waxed thread in long lengths and also a dirty great needle to bung it through the canvas. Naturally the thread gets tangled as it flies around in the wind, often the needle will slip and dig a hole in my hand. Oh yes, sewing at sea is great fun...I don't think! Well, finally, after about 4 or 5 hours of sewing and unpicking, the sail is ready to hoist up the mast. As it gradually slides up, there is another flap, the leach of the sail gets caught around the cross tree and...Rrrrip...away it goes again. It's really heartbreaking trying to maintain rotten sails under those conditions, but that's the way it has to be, and when I come to think about it, if it weren't for these little things happening, life would be awfully boring for me out there alone, so it's just as well my sails do tear in gales, especially at night around 2 a.m. Time is creeping along, but although I look at the log turning sluggishly astern, we don't seem to have moved very far. You must bear in mind that I took on an extra half a ton of gas in Panama, and this extra load was making Yasme very sluggish, particularly as it was mostly on deck. I had long since stopped the engine as with these great seas breaking over the bows all the time, the engine was far too weak to make any appreciable difference, so I just had to put up with this interminable slogging into the weather all the time. By noon two days later, I had covered the magnificent distance of 40 miles and I doubt if you could have found an unhappier person than me. All my plans for a fast crossing were being blown up in wild seas and sewing, and I was, quite frankly, beginning to get a little fed up. By the tenth of October, whilst land was invisible, I could still see the glow of Panama lighthouse and it seemed to me that I would never see the last of it, in fact I felt that for every mile of headway I was making, the wind and current would push me back two. Needless to say the amount of sleep I was getting was exactly NIL, and I was being rudely reminded every second of that "wonderful" trip from St. Thomas....Huh!...the joys of sailing in the tropics...PHOOEY!!! etc etc., The weather remained bad. Days were slipping past and I was beginning to worry about my position. Since leaving port I had been unable to get any sights owing to the fact of a deficiency of sun, and with all this tacking etc., it was impossible to calculate my position...to put it bluntly, I was lost. Believe it or not, here

I was in the tropics and my first ten days from Panama were spent without a sight of Old Sol. This I found hard to believe myself, but there it was....and there I was with a lot of very damp water around me and not the faintest clue of my whereabouts....Even my log line had been bitten through by a shark...I hope the metal rotator choked the bligher, so I didn't even know how far I had travelled. Quite a spot to be in! As near as I could judge Malpelo Island was in close proximity....too close, and that place to all you landlubbers is a goodly sized plank of rock sticking out of the sea some 240 miles off the Colombian coast. Naturally it doesn't have a light on it, and in comparison with the size of the sea, it was like the proverbial "needle in the haystack" to locate. I felt that if there was the vaguest chance of hitting it...I WOULD....and in the dark too! At this point I put on the old thinking cap and decided it was high time I used all this radio gear for another purpose other than just chattering to the boys. Contacting one of the Hams in Panama I asked him to contact the local AFB and request that they get their direction finding loop cranked up and try to give me a position line. Whilst he was getting this little chore organised, another ham broke in and told me he would get the DF station on Puerto Rico to give me a position line too. Thus, I got two lines which, although not dead accurate did give me some idea where I was, and that was.....TOO darned close to Malpelo Island which figured about twenty miles away and a twenty mile error was quite possible owing to the angles of the bearings. There I was again, with a sailboat with no sails...they were all down being repaired, ~~and~~ and engine without any horses...that had given up the ghost with water in the tank, and a sea running that would have made even the toughest of sailors feel ~~lumpy~~ lumpy. The rain ~~beat~~ beat down, and my visibility from the deck was about three miles. I knew this island was 800' high so, according to the book of rules, I should be able to spot it about 25 miles off. They failed to mention however, in this famous book, how far I could see in pouring rain and twenty foot seas breaking over the entire bast...they never think of these minor incidentals when they write the book...darned idiots!, anyway, I decided the only thing to ~~do~~ do was to climb the mast. I expect many of you have climbed trees, ropes, antenna towers and the like, but no man can write in plain English just how to climb an ordinary, everyday, mast. I will now give you my version of this very simple operation. First you stagger along the deck taking care that an odd wave doesn't wash you over the side. You wear no clothes as that would be a waste of time as they would only get soaked anyway. By sheer grit you actually reach the base of the mast having lost one toenail on a deck cleat and a slice of skin by being thrown against some odd

projecting gadget...these small items you ignore...there is more to come later. With both arms and legs wrapped around the mast, you look up into the wild gray yonder and, there about 3,000 feet up, you see the first set of crosstrees. These become your first goal, and it will be there that you will be able to take your first precarious rest--so-- with both eyes closed, you dig your nails into the varnish of the mast, clench your knees and pull like blazes. This goes on for maybe a couple of hours and hopefully you look up and expect to see those crosstrees within hands grasp but Oh no....and when you get up enough nerve to look down you find your progress has been in the order of eight feet. Well, you don't have to be discouraged...remember the old school tie and all that sort of thing...no turning back Old Boy, so off you go again, eyes closed etc., etc., until, ages later, you do finally reach the crosstrees and, with a gasp, you struggle into a sitting position astride them, hanging on like grim death as each convulsion of the boat below seeks to shake you loose. You might have thought it rough on deck. Now, twenty to thirty feet higher where every movement is magnified twenty times, you wonder how in the heck you are going to hang on with your fast waning strength, but this is no time to think about feeling groggy and tired, you still have the rest of the mast to climb. Finally it comes back to you that you really climbed this far for a purpose, but at that height, there is still no sign of that elusive island. Having regained a little composure and strength you stand up on the crosstrees and start the next lap. Only another twenty feet...that's not much, so here we go. There seems to be no power left in your body to hoist yourself higher. Every iota of strength is needed to just hold on. The inside of your legs are chafed and you feel them sticking to the smooth mast as the blood runs. Your hands become stiff and your fingertips bleed with the clutching and pulling your entire weight. By this time you are really getting into the swing of the thing and actually enjoying yourself....BUT, if you felt anything like me...well...what I said at the time is unprintable and I decided that I would forget about the rest of the climb and get to heck down on deck. Getting down sounds easy doesn't it? Just hang around the mast and slide down slowly...but that's what you think! by gosh! Coming down was worse than going up. I was reasonably fresh when I started to climb but by now I felt as though I'd been keelhauled, but down I have to go and there it is. By devious means I manage to swing myself off the crosstrees and get the old fingernails...what there is left of them, into the varnish. I wrapped my legs around in the approved fashion and the downward trip started. Halfway down I found that I was stuck. A loose rope had gotten itself wrapped around my neck and I was nearly choking. I dared not let go of

the mast as the motion of the boat would have thrown me off and, in the meantime, my weight was gradually pulling the rope tighter around my neck! What to do? Drown or get hung? The only solution was to climb up again and release the hangmans knot. Needless to say, I finally did reach the bottom and, after crawling along the deck scrambled into the cabin and dropped into my bunk feeling far more dead than alive...my entire body felt as though a train had run over it, my hands and legs stung with the loss of skin, and to make things worse, all that for nothing...I hadn't sighted the island. That night was a bad one for me and, for most part, was spent on deck straining my ears for the sound of surf and with my eyes popping out in the vain endeavor to see through the blinding wind and rain. Well, the night used itself up on a very unappreciative audience of one. My luck was in; I hadn't hit the island! That day, for the first time on the trip the sun actually broke through and, armed with the sextant, stop watch book, and pencil I nipped onto the deck ready to shoot the sun. Just as I was about to get a shot, the sun hid itself behind a cloud as though it were ashamed to show itself after all this time. To spare you the technical details and moments of agony : I did finally manage to get that shot and later managed to get a noon sight too. So for the first time in ten days I actually knew where I was and, I assure you, it wasn't very far from that wretched island. From that day onward the weather brightened considerably but it was still intensely cold. I wore trousers and wollen pullover all the time and at night had to use three blankets to keep warm. Who the heck said it was got around the equator? My first visitor aboard was a tiny bird the size of a sparrow who perched himself on the after rail looking very tired out. I tried to offer him some water but he took off again. later whilst doing a spot of chart work, he flew right into the cabin and perched there on the galley stove. This time I left some "zmk" "coke" in a saucer with breadcrumbs alongside and before long he was making a real pig of himself....Wonder where he picked up the "coke" habit? must have been a "Yank" bird. At any rate he must have only dropped in for a drink as about an hour later he buzzed off again.

Shortly after that I noticed that our friends the sharks had returned. I had had a recent experience with them in the Atlantib and the Carribbean but never had they come in such large numbers, such large sizes, or so close to the ship. I first waved a welcome to them but after hearing some resounding bangs at the stern went out to investigate and found that the blighter were scratching themselves on my rudder. As these fish represented quite large chunks of sea food I was afriad that some damage might be done to my steering gear. So, out came the 303 rifle and did I have some fun. They were so close I just couldn't miss/ The first one I got

plumb between the eyes. As the bullet hit, a great splash occurred as he leapt out of the water. Then he swam in tight circles upside down and finally disappeared in the depths. The next one didn't get a chance to disappear for I split the nose of the bullet before loading. It tore the tail right off of him and very shortly afterwards he turned the sea into a bloody mess in his death throes. Directly his pals saw he was disabled there was a terrific scurry in the water as they teamed up and tore him to pieces. The whole thing took a few seconds, for shortly afterwards they were all back again trailing the boat as though nothing had happened and not seeming to worry that periodically their friends were being potted. In all I must have put about six of them out of commission before they realised that trailing the boat wasn't a healthy occupation and the remainder scrambled. Now I want you to know that there were plenty of other jobs to do besides potting sharks and feeding "coke" to birds. The sails ripped as a matter of course daily and there was the cooking, not forgetting a major item, bread baking. Baking bread on a primus stove in a tin oven can be a very simple thing, at least, that's what I thought. First you get the cook book and read all about it. Flour water salt and yeast. I ~~had~~ hadn't any yeast so baking powder had to do the job. Next, you mix the ingredients into a dough. Naturally, in measuring out the flour, the flour bag fell over when the boat rolled so there was flour on the chart table, ~~in~~ the drawers, all over the floor and me too. Oh well, what's a spot of flour between friends? Next we pour in the water and mix. I tried mixing with a fork and got no place, so decided to use my hand. This was a mistake. In the first place, my hands were pretty dirty through fixing the carburetor on the engine and, as you know, at sea you only wash your hands once a week to conserve fresh water. (That's a good ~~an~~ excuse as any.) Anyway I wiped my hands fairly clean on a piece of sotton waste and then started to mix the dough. After about ten minutes of this I noticed that the bowl was almost empty but there seemed to be plenty on my arms and body, and of course, on the floor. It seemed impossible to get it all off my hands. I scraped it with a knife, but the knife got smothered. Just at that moment Yasmé decided to go off course so I had to nip out into the cockpit to attend the ~~the~~ tiller. leaving about half a pound of dough on this member. After a real struggle however, I ~~did~~ did manage to get most of the mess back into the bowl and noticed that it had now become a slightly brownish color, but thought that maybe that was how it got after mixing, anyway I then started on the next stage. Heat the oven. OK. I started up the stove, heated the oven, moulded the dough into small balls, placed them on a greased tray and deposited the works in the oven. Things went ~~with~~ fairly well for a while then a lurch of the boat sent me to the deck

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and all the nicely spaced balls slid back into a corner of the oven and formed a large lump. I tried to get them spaced again but was rewarded with a few burns so I decided to let well alone and hope for the best. Next Stage...leave in the oven for thirty minutes and test with a metal skewer. If the skewer comes out dry they are done. Two hours later and the skewer still comes out wet. Another two hours passed during which the stove ran out of kerosene and in the refilling process a pressurised stream of neat kerosene sprayed all over my masterpieces. The rolls finally seemed to fulfill the conditions stated in the book and I removed them, placing them on a clean plate. The baking process had seemed to make them strangely heavy. When I went through to cut one with a knife, it slid down over the side and nearly took off a finger. Further efforts with sturdier tools such as a chisel convinced me that my bread baking efforts were not too successful. Not to be outdone, however, I decided to use them for bait and, for many weeks afterwards I didn't see a single shark.

Things went fairly well until the great morning when I woke up and sighted the Galapagos Islands ahead. This was at 6 am on Oct 31st. Then I began to figure the best way of passing them without hitting any of the tiny islands and reefs in which they abound. The book of words tells little on the currents in that area, particularly through the islands themselves, and I decided owing to a strong North westerly current that seemed to prevail in the northern part of the group to clear them from the north, but as I got closer, night overtook me and, with it, a lot of worriestoo. I had known my position almost to an inch in the morning, but with all these queer currents and then a heavy mist that settled over the islands I was at a loss as to where I was again. I kept the boat on the prearranged course and tried to work out the strength of the currents and my drift, but things just didn't turn out as I planned. Naturally there was no sleep for me that night, but I'm used to that now. Every moment was spent standing at the tiller and straining my eyes to every point of the compass. One minute there wasn't a thing to be seen and the next, out of the mist, a massive great rock would loom up out of the sea dead ahead. I swung the helm quickly to avoid a head on crash and then dashed into the cabin to check the chart and find out who had put the darned thing in the way. The chart was of no help at all. In frustration I dashed out onto the deck peering through my night binoculars for any other odd chunk of rock that may be kicking around...what a place! ^{Once} the mist lifted for a short while and I got a few snap bearings of the landscape, and also noticed that I was well clear of any other islands, but with that queer surge of current I couldn't be sure of anything... I could feel it bubbling around the boat and trying hard to

and all the nicely spaced balls slid back into a corner of the oven and formed a large lump. I tried to get them spaced again but was rewarded with a few burns so I decided to let well alone and hope for the best. Next Stage...leave in the oven for thirty minutes and test with a metal skewer. If the skewer comes out dry they are done. Two hours later and the skewer still comes out wet. Another two hours passed during which the stove ran out of kerosene and in the refilling process a pressurised stream of neat kerosene sprayed all over my masterpieces. The rolls finally seemed to fulfill the conditions stated in the book and I removed them, placing them on a clean plate. The baking process had seemed to make them strangely heavy. When I went through to cut one with a knife, it slid down over the side and nearly took off a finger. Further efforts with sturdier tools such as a chisel convinced me that my bread baking efforts were not too successful. Not to be outdone, however, I decided to use them for bait and, for many weeks afterwards I didn't see a single shark.

Things went fairly well until the great morning when I woke up and sighted the Galapagos Islands ahead. This was at 6 am on Oct 31st. Then I began to figure the best way of passing them without hitting any of the tiny islands and reefs in which they abound. The book of words tells little on the currents in that area, particularly through the islands themselves, and I decided owing to a strong North westerly current that seemed to prevail in the northern part of the group to clear them from the north, but as I got closer, night overtook me and, with it, a lot of worriestoo. I had known my position almost to an inch in the morning, but with all these queer currents and then a heavy mist that settled over the islands I was at a loss as to where I was again. I kept the boat on the prearranged course and tried to work out the strength of the currents and my drift, but things just didn't turn out as I planned. Naturally there was no sleep for me that night, but I'm used to that now. Every moment was spent standing at the tiller and straining my eyes to every point of the compass. One minute there wasn't a thing to be seen and the next, out of the mist, a massive great rock would loom up out of the sea dead ahead. I swung the helm quickly to avoid a head on crash and then dashed into the cabin to check the chart and find out who had put the darned thing in the way. The chart was of no help at all. In frustration I dashed out onto the deck peering through my night binoculars for any other odd chunk of rock that may be kicking around...what a place! ^{Once} the mist lifted for a short while and I got a few snap bearings of the landscape, and also noticed that I was well clear of any other islands, but with that queer surge of current I couldn't be sure of anything...I could feel it bubbling around the boat and trying hard to

throw me off course. With this temporary break in the mist I went below to try to fit in the bearings with the chart but, quite honestly, you may as well have given me the first 5 sets of numbers that came into your head for all the use they were. As much as I tried inscribing these bearings on tracing paper, they just wouldn't fit any of the islands depicted on the chart...this naturally implied that I just didn't know where the heck I was, and neither was I anywhere where I thought I might be...so where did I go from here? Naturally, I blamed the chart and the compass, someone had to be wrong and it couldn't be me. That's one of the assets of being alone on a boat, you can blame any inanimate object and never have an argument, anyway, that wasn't helping me in my present predicament, so I took my own advice and stayed on course. The entire night was spent in avoiding rocks and islands when they appeared. Heaven knows how many reefs I must have unwittingly passed over without touching. I prayed for that mist to lift. There was a full moon, and without the mist I would be reasonably safe providing I could keep my eyes open, and of course, my glasses were glued to my eyes every moment for any change in the surface which would denote a reef awash.

Finally dawn broke without a sound, and the mist departed in peace. All around me were islands some big, some small, and not one of them seemed to tally with my assumed position. Here I want to impress on my readers that my position had to be "assumed" at all times as there were no lights on these islands to aid navigation, the land was obscured by mist about 99% of the time, and celestial navigation was out of the question. Add all these together and mix in a rough sea, uncertain currents and not much wind and you have me, a single handed sailor who wondered if he would be around to see the next dawn! So, I kept going south west knowing that, with any sort of luck, I would eventually reach open waters. As the day lengthened, so the mist cleared and I was able to get my first sights. Now, I thought, I shall know exactly where I am. In my log I had entered that I had passed the equator about an hour ago according to my reckoning, but when I worked out my sights they just wouldn't tally up with my assumed position. Again I took sights and they worked out about the same. I might doubt the chart and the compass, but I will never doubt the sun, and these sights revealed to me that the current plus my very erratic course through the night had taken me through the whole group of the Galapagos Islands and at the time of taking those sights, I was about ten miles west of Isla Sant Maria, which if you care to look on the map, will show you that I had cleared the whole lot safely and had, in actual fact, crossed the equator some twelve hours ago. My actual distance covered in 24 hours was just on 200 miles; perhaps this will give you

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some idea of the rate of these currents. I had figured that I had covered around 75 miles! well, that was that, and now, getting completely clear of the islands, I would be able to lay a course to Tahiti, that fabulous place of the South Seas,

Having successfully navigated through the Galapagos, I then had to consider the large puddle of water that had to be negotiated before I sighted land again, and you can bet your life I made darn good care that everything was in top top condition before leaving the shadows of those very unwelcome Islands. Well, the old tub seemed to be OK apart from my sails which were fit for the deep six, but I still keep patching them and hoping they will carry me that extra few thousand miles. The wind up till now had been pretty rough on me, backing and veering, squally and calm, never giving me much rest, and making it extremely difficult to get Yasme to sail herself, so in consequence, the amount of sleep I got was negligible. But now I was heading for the true trade wind area, and looking forward to some really nice daily runs with fair winds...that's what I thought...blinkin' optimist! It was extremely cold all the time and ~~small~~ could have thought I was back home again having to wear winter clothing in an endeavor to keep warm, and here we were only a few miles south of the equator. Having cleared all the local dangers, I streamed out the old fishing line hoping I may be able to get a fish before the sharks got it. Before very long I had a terrific bite, and the rod bent almost double with the strain. The reel screamed as about 1000 feet of nylon shot out, and momentarily I didn't quite know what to do as I was busy steering the boat. I lashed the tiller, grabbed the rod out of the socket I had built for it on the stern and then started a real fight with my oversize catch. My rod and reel were never intended for big game hunting, and my ambitions have never reached the height of giant sail fish, etc., but it seemed to me that here was one of the biggest fish in the whole ocean on the end. It appeared to take hours to reel that line in, and every now and again I would see something jump out of the water in the surf astern, but could never quite see clearly exactly what it was. Finally I brought the hook nearer the boat and discovered my wonderful catch...a full size man-o-war bird. Apparently it had swooped down on the bait that danced over the surface...it consisted of a piece of rag, which it had swallowed, then in its struggles had wound the line around its neck. I realize that later I would be called all sorts of liar from the fisherman's angle so made a special point to get the camera out of store and get a couple of shots of my famous catch. Having disposed of the carcass by the simple method of cutting the line, I decided I was a rotten fisherman, stowed the line, and opened a tin of "Spam"...at least, that was much easier to catch!

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The few islands south of Galapagos held no interest for me at all, being from all appearance just a volcanic ash heap, and certainly most uninviting whichever way you looked at them, and in any case I was rather keen to get on my way and see this fabulous Tahiti. Very soon the island of Isabella faded into the distance astern, and quite frankly, I never even looked astern to see it disappear through the mist...I just couldn't have cared less about the place and I was very pleased to be out in the open sea again away from all the dangers of the land. As I gradually drew away, so the wind dropped, and there we were with sails slatting all over the place making an awful row, so on went the iron horse again, and we chugged along at a steady 3 knots flat out. By this time a really big swell had come up, and walking around the boat became quite an acrobatic feat, particularly as I had no sail up to steady her. This state of affairs lasted for 24 hours, and what with the heat and fumes from the engine, I was getting ready to jump over the side to get away from it all. But, like all things, the calm came to an end, and a spanking breeze came up which sent us belting along at a steady 6 knots. I had noticed that the boat was getting a little sluggish in many respects, and lying full length on the deck and peering over the side at the underbody of Yasme noticed that she was covered from stem to stern with some sort of sucker fish or worm. They were even stuck on my nice new anti-fouling, and from what I could see, they seemed to thrive on it, because as fast as I got a wooden scraper and shifted them, they were back again within a few hours...

what some fish will do for a free ride! 4th November....really doing fine, breeze now working according to the book of words* but for how long? Caught a really big fish today...about 14 lbs, but as I had just had a big meal of my favorite fruit "Spam" as per usual, and didn't feel like keeping the fish for 24 hours, I threw it back...that was the last fish I caught on the whole journey to Tahiti....don't even know now why I ever fished...I hate the darn things and never ate one of my catch in the whole voyage. Nothing very exciting happening, just cruising along steadily and having a snooze in the cabin, when out of the distance comes the roar of a dirty great siren which scared the pants off me. Just imagine being miles from anywhere, everything dead quiet except for the comforting bubble of the sea around the stem, in a half stupid reverie on the bunk, then to have this awful screech come blasting in your ears. I am not normally scared or frightened of anything but this certainly made me jump. I shot out of the cabin, and there within a hundred yards or so was a large British ship apparently checking up on a lone yacht sailing on its own. I grabbed my British ensign and hoisted it up the mast

distance. I was so excited that I forgot completely to ask them for some bread, which, incidentally, I had been without for some time. But it made me feel really good to see the ship, though I still cannot figure out what she was doing in that area, as, according to the chart I was way off the normal shipping routes...good job she didn't come up in the night 'cos I never used my lights in those areas...no point in it...just aint no boats...Famous last words! Every day after this was routine. Sometimes good, sometimes bad winds, but always managing to cover at least 100 miles a day, and always in the right direction, which was something to be said in favor of the variables we were getting. I don't know why it was but every time a wire stay busted or a rope chafed through, you could bet your bottom dollar it would happen around 2 to 3 a.m. That meant working in pitch darkness, freezing cold, and invariably with the boat out of control with that part broken. On one occasion I had one of the main back stays break in a particularly nasty patch of sea, and to see the way that unstayed mast whipped about made me feel really bad. Coupled with that, I had the old business of having to climb to the top of the mast to reeve a new wire...Oh boy...do we have lots of fun at sea.... Between all these little incidents I work my tiny amateur radio gear and talk to the Hams all over the world, also I give my position to every one of them I talk to and also the condition of the weather etc.,...this helps considerably from a safety angle...at least, if anything happens to me, they will at least have a good idea where I sank. But, generally speaking, it was a great comfort aboard, and certainly knocked hell out of solitude, but one has to experience that type of solitude that comes in a small boat miles from anywhere to really appreciate the value of a rig. I was very pleased too, with the fact that at no time was I off the air with troubles. The receiver, transmitter and generator never once gave any bother worth talking about, and I found that with the generator, provided I gave it daily maintenance it worked 100% OK all the time doing its job for radio, lights and the deep freeze. 13th November was one of my big days. I started a new chart, and this had the Marquesas and the Society group of islands on it. I was nowhere near the half way mark, but you have no idea what effect it has on ones morale to discard one chart and start a new one, particularly when ones goal is on that one...also that day I put the ships clock back another hour. Every day brought me nearer to the International date line, and although I wouldn't see it on this trip, it wouldn't be very long before I should be gaining a whole day. But, quite frankly, when that time comes, I am not at all sure what I shall do with it. One cannot just put it in the bosuns locker or put it in the bank, but apart from that, the

gradual gaining of time as one progresses westward is most awkward, as it becomes more difficult to turn in each day. One's habits don't alter as quickly as the longitude, and I am beginning to find I am ready for bed around noon each day. As I gradually neared the Marquesas^a, the wind started its stunts again, veering and backing, then dropping altogether and leaving me in a big swell with no wind to control the boat. I'd had a pretty good run to date with per trade winds, and as was to be expected now that I was nearing the typhoon season, the weather was changing. I was hoping and praying that I'd reach some sort of land before anything decided to hit me....I've had my fill of hurricanes, and don't fancy being in another, not this trip anyway. The old motor did some good service for several hours on these calm days, and ^aapart from the heat, everything went fine...I've omitted the fact that every day was a sewing day for me as my sails were getting to such a state that I was dead scared to hoist them too quickly in case they split as they went up, also, whenever the wind got a little higher than usual, I had to pull them down quickly. else no canvas left. I haven't any idea whether this part of the story is boring you at all, but if it is, you have some idea of what I went through daily. But try to hold up, as in the next chapter, we actually sight real, solid, honest to goodness land. It was roughly 8 weeks since last sighting land, when

right bang ahead, just where my sun sights said it would be was Nuka Hiva the chief island of the Marquesa group. What a wonderful feeling of relief to see that massive great island looming up out of the early morning mist. Looking through the binoculars, I could see faintly the green patches on the island, and as time went by, so I was able to discern the various parts and an occasional animal grazing on the mountain sides. I got really excited. Although there was quite a good breeze blowing, I stuck on the old engine to get that additional speed to arrive there as soon as possible. The entrance to the main bay in Nuka Hiva... Taiohae Bay..is guarded by two great rocks or islands about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile apart...known as the Eastern and western sentinels, and fortunately there are no outlying dangers except a small rock awash which is easily seen, so my entry was comparatively easy. It was quite pleasant cruise into still waters after being tossed around for such a long time, and as I slowly motored down to the anchorage, several of the natives came to greet me in their outrigger canoes..pirogues, which to the uninitiated, are logs of wood hollowed out and shaped in the form of a canoe, and attached by means of two long poles lashed athwartships another piece of wood resting in the water...this is the outrigger and steadies the boat and stops it from turning over in the rough seas of that area. Before very long I was surrounded by these

smiling Polynesians who put bananas, papaya, mangoes and other native fruit on my decks, although none of us could understand the other, there was a feeling of really deep friendship between us. They are wonderful sailors themselves, and the camaraderie of the sea is something that knows no bounds. They guided me to a safe anchorage, and without any request from myself they clambered aboard and assisted with tidying the sails and cleaning up the decks generally. In no time at all, Yasme was looking spick and span, and safely anchored, and there waiting ashore at the end of a small stone jetty was the Commissioner of Police and the Port Doctor. With the aid of one of the canoes they came aboard and were more than charming to me in the offers of assistance, etc.,...After the usual formalities had been completed, I was invited ashore to the Commissioner's house for dinner...only the Doctor spoke English, but as I had a little knowledge of French there was no problems from the language viewpoint. His house was constructed on the side of the mountain, and he told me that it had only just been completed by the local natives. It was semi-European style with a strong flavor of native... very beautiful, very cool, and also very comfortable. It was fitted with electricity, fridge and all the other modern inconveniences. His wife had devoted a lot of time in laying out a beautiful garden surrounded with fruit trees of all types, and the whole looked a picture. Neither he nor his wife spoke English at all, but with my scrappy knowledge of the language we had a wonderful evening together. I left around 11 p.m. and a native pirogue had been put at my disposal to save launching my dinghy. Perhaps I shouldn't admit this, but after seeing the way those natives handled the canoes, I thought it would be an easy matter for me to reach Yasme from the shore....that's what I thought. It seemed to me that every time I stuck the paddle in the water, the canoe would perform a beautiful circle, and I would land back exactly where I started. After about a dozen attempts, I realised that somehow or another I wasn't doing this right, so decided to stick the paddle in the water on the other side of the canoe. That was all very fine, but then I found I was performing nice circles the other way. Finally it entered my thick head that if I stuck the paddle first one side then the other I might reach some place, and I must agree that after paddling for maybe a couple of hours I actually covered the distance of 100 yards to Yasme....I am still trying to figure out how those natives manage to steer a straight course only using the paddle on one side, but I suppose I should have to ^{stay} saty there for a long time to get the knack. Had a wonderful night's sleep...No worry about being on course or running into unexpected squalls, just perfect peace and quiet. Turned out about 7:30 a.m. but apparently the natives had beaten me, as I found that they had put

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some more fruit and also some fish on the cockpit seat, but of the natives, I saw not a si
Their kindness in my short stay was something one doesn't expect in this hard businesslike
world, and it really shook me, if you get what I mean. So, I had breakfast. Shortly after,
one of the natives who had a smattering of English offered to clean off the sucker fish fr
the bottom of Yasme. He dived down and did a wonderful job, but would accept no payment, s
I gave him some canned foods which are like gold dust on these islands. .what I thought wa
funny was the fact that although I gave him a choice, he chose canned FISH....Canned fish
that part of the world where one only has to put your hand in the water to have your choic
....what characters they were. But still later on, he returned to the boat with a basketfu
of limes, bananas....it seemed nothing could quench their ardour in kindness and gift givi
I went ashore afterwards, but this time with the aid of a native to paddle that confounded
canoe and called on the only Britisher on the Island, Bob McKitrick, a Scotsman from the C
Country who had spent the best part of his life trading in the islands, and who at the tim
was running a store. He kept me interested for some time ruminating in the past; he was a
square rig sailor of the old days, and the tales he had to tell would fill many pages if I
had time to write about them. I stayed for lunch with him and his Marquesan wife, and ther
learnt what native food was like, also experiencing my first tastex of raw fish and poi...
made of crushed bread fruit..one eats it with the first two fingers...forks not allowed.
These foods whilst alien to my taste, were not really bad....yet in actual fact I just cou
get myself to like them....its very difficult to explain, but I think you know what I mean
After our Kai-kai....food to you, I left to tour a little of the island to get a few photo
I was rather tied up for time so didn't have the opportunity to get around the entire isla
but what I did see was very pretty. Of people, there are now very few to what there were a
hundred or so years ago. The original Marquesans whilst always warring among themselves we
plentiful on the islands, but with the coming of the Spanish, British, French and other
"civilised" peoples, unnecessary shooting and disease had almost wiped out the population a
now there are only a handful of people there, and most of them far too old to even get the
coconuts from their own trees. They are very poor, but still proud and will accept no char
I had spoken to the Doctor earlier in the day about the chances of getting some photos and
recordings of the native dancing and singing, and he arranged that the evening would be
devoted for that purpose. He organised a party of the lads and girls to appear at the grou
of his house for a musical session with their guitars and ukeleles. Around 4 p.m. I arrive

at his house, and his wife, a most beautiful Tahitian girl danced for me in the garden, and permitted me to take snapshots of her. Shortly afterwards the gang arrived, and they really went to town on their home-made instruments. These people are good in more ways than one. Their voices, I feel very sure, would make them a fortune in any opera company, and the rhythm they have would make the finest swing band sound like a lot of raw amateurs. I was kept enthralled for two hours, and for the benefit of the future, I had the movie camera churning and the tape recorder going all the time. This tape recorder really got them. They had never seen one before and when I played back one of their tunes, they nearly went crazy with laughter. Naturally the whole village was there for the "Jam Session" and they all joined in the singing and dancing. Even the tiny children were dancing in their own little way. It seemed to me they were born with rhythm in their souls, and in many respects, reminded me of the West Indians. We were getting very near to the end of the evening when suddenly, one of the natives came running up to the Doctor, who in turn told me that the seas had started to build up pretty badly in the bay, Yasme was adrift and was being blown onto the reef at the foot of the bay. My heart leapt to my mouth.... Was this the end of the voyage? Was I going to find Yasme who had brought me all those thousands of miles lying helpless on the reef, broken and smashed with seas breaking over her? For the moment my brain was in a turmoil... I just couldn't think... it seemed to me that amid all this happiness was the stark reality of tragedy, and I was afraid to go down to the beach for fear of what I would find there.

Snapping out of my dream, I ran top speed down the side of the mountain in the darkness, tripping over stones, odd roots, falling down I don't know how many times, but somehow picked myself up again and literally falling down the path. My feet seemed like lead, and ahead of me was that impenetrable darkness, and yet somehow I managed to get to the beach with my hands and knees dripping with blood from the numerous lacerations caused by the falls. The natives had arrived en bloc, and before many minutes had elapsed there were many pirogues skating over the terrifically high surf, all of them headed toward Yasme. I strained my eyes but just couldn't penetrate the intense darkness and spray that was being thrown up, but somehow, the natives knew where she lay, and finally we came alongside with the canoe almost mounting the deck in one instant, and almost capsizing in the next as Yasme crunched down in the trough of the breakers. How I scrambled aboard I shall never know to this day, but somehow I and 6 or 7 natives managed it. I found that I had been negligent in using a rope to anchor Yasme instead of the chain, for with the heavy seas then running, she had turned

and twisted and finally the rope had chafed through on the coral, and there she was slowly but surely being blown onto that reef somewhere astern in the darkness. I knew for an absolute fact that the engine wouldn't start, at least, not in the time I had left, so with the aid of the natives I unshipped my biggest anchor, attached the heavy 3/8" chain to it, and, praying to God there was still time, threw it over the side and waited. By this time I had put on deck lights, and we could all see the seas breaking on the reef astern of us. The chain was gradually payed out and we waited. Still she drifted back, nearer and nearer to the reef... ..would she ever stop? I was sorely tempted to draw in some of the chain, but common sense told me it would be the most foolish thing to do, so we waited. The seas were really piling up to a terrific height, and Yasme was tossed around like a cork....when would all this stop? I watched the anchor chain hanging vertically from the bows of the boat (would it never take the strain?) The natives were silent, and for the first time in my stay, I saw a look of real seriousness on their faces...the strain was telling on all of us, but there was nothing more we could do. Minutes passed seeming like hours, then the chain started to rise from its vertical position and take the strain. There was an awful grating sound which made me think she had touched the reef, but no, it was only the turns in the chain being pulled out...this was it...was the chain going to hold? Was the anchor going to really bite in? All these things passed through our minds as gradually we felt Yasme pull up and steady herself...a few more nasty grating sounds and then she settled down, the chain stretched as taut as one of the natives guitar strings* but I had faith in that chain, and it didn't let me down. We all breathed a great big sigh of relief, and the expressions on those kindly natives faces would have to be seen to be appreciated. That dead serious look seemed to melt away, and back came some of the most wonderful smiles I have seen in many a day. A cheer went up from them and echoed by all ashore. By that time I had a chance to look around me and weigh up the position. The reef was around 50 yards astern and we were safe, but I lost very little time in getting the engine started. When it was nicely warmed up and running smoothly, the native boys hauled in the anchor chain again, and when the anchor was weighed, I stuck in the clutch and we moved out and away from that reef to a better anchorage and dropped the hook again, but this time we were about 300 yards from the reef and clear of all dangers. I then unstowed another anchor and we dropped that just to be absolutely sure. I realize that for their help I should have lost Yasme for sure. Perhaps the God of Chance may have been there to assist me in my trouble. I don't know, but for half an hour I really thought that Yasme was finished.

Well, after that little episode, we all tramped ashore and returned to the Doctors house, but somehow the evening had been spoilt, and it was difficult to reproduce that atmosphere of jollity again after all that had happened, so everyone went home and I stayed with the Doc whilst he fixed up my cuts and bruises, then we had dinner. It was a fitting end to a hectic day for everyone. Around 11p.m. I said goodbye to the Doc and the Commissioner and returned to Yasme. By this time the seas were really piling up owing to the wind blowing in the harbor, and life aboard was far from comfortable. I decided there and then that this was no place for me, and the wisest thing would be to up anchor and get to heck out before it got too bad to do anything. I was thinking all the time that this was the typhoon season and under the present conditions, I should be far better off at sea...to be locked in that bay in a typhoon would have been disastrous for both Yasme and myself, so I got cracking on pulling in those two anchors. With the engine to help out I did get them both aboard but it took over two hours working on that heaving deck and blustery wind, and with all ready, I hoisted a small jib and headed out of Talohae Bay into the Pacific, changed course directly was clear of the two great Sentinel rocks at the entrance, and headed for my next spot.... Tahiti- about 800 miles away. As you can well imagine the weather was far from being good that night, and I was rather hoping for a decent breeze in the right direction so that I could set up the trade wind sails and get a nights rest, but my luck was right out. I had to sit at the helm all night long, and my only means of keeping awake was to drink strong black coffee... hate it that way, but I just had to stay awake being so close to land. Several times I nearly dropped off to sleep, tho' that particular area was hardly the place to take a nap. The wind was blowing hard on shore all the time, and it only needed a few minutes inattention at the helm to let her swing her head around and head for the shore, so I had to force myself to keep awake, and it was a really tough job. Morning came with Nuka Hiva still in sight, but fortunately now astern. The wind had also gone around a bit and was more favorable for self steering, but I dare not hoist those great genoas with the present strong wind, so stayed with the reefed mainsail and small jib. Well, there we were again, heading for real troubles. The next little load of islands (I should say atolls) ahead of me are known as the Tuamotos, or more aptly "The Dangerous Archipeligo". By now the weather had really deteriorated, and I could never bank on the wind holding the same direction for more than half an hour, which meant changing tacks every so often to make any ^{Headway} headway. How I grew to hate pulling those ropes every hour or so! my hands were sore from my last little episode of falling on the rock

and by being continuously wet, they just wouldn't heal up, so the tail end of the ropes were red with ~~the~~ blood all the time. My sleep consisted of cat naps ~~of maybe~~ 30 minutes each,,, was afraid to sleep longer in case she giped in the queer winds we were getting. This filthy weather lasted all the way, and taking sights of the sun when I needed them so badly was becoming more difficult every day. We were then on the edge of the Tuamotos, and ahead were dozens of dangerous reef fringed coral atolls, most of them visible for three miles on a clear day, and here I was with continual rain squalls blotting out the sun, the sky and the sea too. Try to put yourself in my position. When I was way out in the Pacific with plenty of room- well, I could go to sleep comfortably with the happy thought that if we changed course in the night, I could easily correct it the following day, and there weren't any odd islands lying around the place to argue with. But here my navigation had to be exactly BANG on the nose, with absolutely no room for error. I took every available opportunity to take sights of the sun and the stars...even almost took sights of the mast head light in my anxiety to know where I was...I had to be absolutely certain ALL the time of my position. Needless to say I rarely used my Ham radio on that part of the trip. I was dead scared to take my eyes off the sea for one moment...that moment might have been the last one had I chanced it, but my lonely vigil was rewarded on the morning of 6th December, as, just peeping over the horizon were the two atolls of Manihi and Ahe, and through the binocs I could see the palm trees outlined against the sky. What a relief to know that my ^{FIRST} landfall had been perfect. This gave me quite a bit of confidence in my navigation, and it was in a happier frame of mind that I steered very carefully past these very nasty pieces of coral stuck in the middle of the ocean. The currents there were quite unpredictable, so even though I could see the atolls quite clearly, I did not for one moment ease up in my vigilance. This was just as well, as I found there was quite a strong set of current ~~towards~~ ^{away from} these atolls, and to be absolutely sure of clearing them, I nipped below and got the engine going to help me counteract the sideways drift which was quite considerable...I dare not trust the wind...it varied too much. The next part of my navigation had to be worked very carefully, as I had other atolls ^{AHEAD} ahead and was to arrive at each one in daylight, so it meant careful control of the amount of sail I had to keep the speed exactly right, so that through the hours of darkness I would be in open water. This may appear to be a simple matter to some people, but when one has to contend with unknown currents and varying winds, it makes you think quite a bit, also the sailing directions give absolutely no help whatsoever. Daylight came as per usual, the old luck held

and as each day passed, the atolls appeared exactly where they should and at exactly the time I had planned. Finally the last atoll, the biggest of them all appeared on the port hand as dawn broke....the island of Aratua. After this, it was plain sailing, and though the wind was dead ahead, I was contented and happy for the first time. I had actually passed through the whole archipelago without a single error, so I think I had good reason to pat myself on the back. I had planned on arriving at Papeete at 4 p.m. local time, but on arrival at Tahiti found that with the filthy head wind had coupled itself to a swift current that was pushing hard to the other end of the island. The engine was now running very erratically and had resorted to its old system of firing on one cylinder, also I was almost out of gas only having about 5 gallons left with quite a fair distance to go. Squalls were prevalent all the time and they would blot out the entire island when they hit. I could see the barrier reef which completely surrounds the island, and with that wind, I was a little afraid of being washed to it. I had been in communication with Tahiti for some time before on my Ham rig, and had been talking to my friend there Roland who was also a Ham, and he told me he would be waiting for me on the jetty at our prearranged time, but owing to these winds etc., I was still off Venus Point Lighthouse at 4pm with still 7 miles to go. Now for the uninformed, I will not tell you that Tahiti is a very pretty island and all that sort of thing, they also have some very charming and beautiful young ladies there too, but as far as I was concerned at that moment, the fact that there was a dirty great reef in the way with very few entrances in it made it all very unattractive.....Oh to be a sailor!.....

Fearing the worst, I went forward and prepared the anchor should I get a little too close, though even now I cannot think why I did it as the reefs there rise sheer from the sea, and as I didn't have 20 miles of cable aboard, it was pretty pointless in dropping the old hook but I thought I may as well have it hanging over the side. It gave me a false sense of security and who knows, it might catch up on some odd piece of coral before I hit the reef.

Lo and behold! the old luck was holding out. Out of the distance through the blinding rain squall coming at about 14 knots towards me was a large launch....just at the right moment that as in a few minutes or so, twilight would be here. In almost seconds, he drew alongside never once touching Yasme and started yelling in English for a rope so that he could tow me in, and informing me at the same time that Roland had become worried at my non arrival on shore. He had realised the weather conditions etc., and had asked the pilot boat to come out to me and there it was. I threw them a line and directly the tow started, I dropped all the sail

lashed them down and adjourned to the cockpit to steer. Then came the fastest passage of the entire trip. The skipper of that boat gave me the finest tow I had ever had (I'VE HAD PLA and his seamanship was 100%. Many times I thought the rope would break, but he kept that taut all the time, and never once let it snatch. Whilst we were in open sea, he took it nice and steady, but directly he entered the pass through the reef, he really opened her out, and the old Yasme planed over the surface of the water at 10 knots.

I was really thrilled with finish to one of the longest trips I had ever undertaken, and we entered Papeete Harbor, so he eased up and cast my tow line adrift, leaving me to anchor in deep water. He came alongside again and after a talk, arranged that in the morning he would guide me to a berth near the town quay wall where I should be able to walk ashore without having to use the dinghy. With that, he left me, but gave me the OK to go ashore tonight providing I didn't take anything with me...meaning of course that I wasn't to take a dutiable stuff with me. Well, I had arrived in Tahiti exactly two months after leaving Panama and had covered 6,300 miles, and at precisely 6pm, two hours late of my prearranged time of arrival, I had dropped the hook in Papeete harbor. My sails had ripped repeatedly all the way. I had been lost in the Galapagos and nearly lost Yasme on a reef, but we were here in one piece without any damage or trouble, and once again I had the Hams to thank for some very opportune assistance...without it, who knows what may have happened...its hard to say. With the pilots OK to buzz off ashore I lost very little time in getting myself cleaned up and slinging the dinghy over the side....it immediately filled up with the local Pacific air and sunk to its gunwales....the long period of exposure to the sun had opened up every seam and it was as much use as a cullender, but with my trousers rolled up and a bucket to bail it out I jumped in and headed for shore. Quite frankly, I hadn't a clue where I was heading, except for the fact that I saw some lights and went towards them, only to find I had landed up in the local French Naval Base. The guard, very much on the alert, warned me off, but my ~~complete~~ lack of knowledge of the French language made our conversation a little difficult, and it finally finished up with him assisting me to get the dinghy out of the water, and then taking me to the officers mess. Drinks were soon flowing there, and within 15 minutes, one of the officers who spoke English invited me out to dinner. I explained to him that I had arranged to meet Roland, so before we adjourned for chow, he made a detour around the town to try to find him, without success....I learnt later that Roland had an appointment and couldn't wait. Our next movement was to a local restaurant, and there I saw my first Tahitian "Wahines"

.....DAMES to you, and somehow, I seemed to lose my appetite....how would you feel, not ha
 seen a real, live woman for two months? I knew at that moment my stay in Tahiti was going
 be a humdinger, and by the time I had tucked a load of real French cooking beneath my belt
 I felt like a King. By this time it was getting pretty late, and the loss of sleep, coupl
 with the food and pleasant atmosphere, was making me feel drowsy, so my friend took me bac
 to the Base, and there I embarked once again for the Ysame. Now I expect most of you would
 have fallen asleep on the bunk without even removing your clothes, but I found the continu
 strain over the past few weeks of being alert at all times had made me more awake than ever
 and finally, I had to resort to a strong knock-out drop to get any shuteye. I awoke bright
 early....well, -- early, anyway. I don't know about being bright. I was feeling a little
 bleary eyed, and my mouth tas ed like I'd been eating a mixture of seaweed and glue. I
 crawled out of my bunk, realising where I was at the same time, and slipping a pair of trun
 on. fellout of the cockpit into the sea. It was wonderful. It knocked all the cobwebs out,
 and feeling really refreshed, I climbed aboard and fixed myself up with a King sized break-
 fast. It was now around 9 am and there was no sign the pilot boat and I was getting a litt
 led up sitting out here in the middle of the harbor with all that loveliness ashore, so
 nipping below, I started up the engine, then hoisting the anchor, cruised over to the quay
 side where I saw other yachts moored up. Dropping the anchor out into deep water, I went as
 into the quay wall, and as I neared it, so many helpers jumped aboard to give a hand with
 this important business of mooring up. In no time at all they were busy coiling up ropes an
 stowing sails....the ship was in a real mess, but they all knew their job, and within twent
 minutes, Yasme looked a picture again. Having got Yasme cleared up, they all went ashore
 whilst I awaited Customs to arrive. A certain gentleman, whom I shall always remember as th
 "Banana Man" took several photos of Yasme on arrival and finished up with throwing me a lar
 bag of bananas....he was the Chilean Consul, and afterwards, we got to know each other quit
 well. Finally, Customs arrived for clearance, and I must admit they made things very easy fo
 me. The officials were very decent in every way, in spite of the fact that I didn't speak t
 language. Permission was readily granted without any fuss, bother or red tape to bring all r
 radio gear ashore, plus my tiny motor scooter and lots of other equipment. I found that this
 is customary here with all yachtsmen that providing they ask permission in the proper way,
 no obstacles are placed in their way to bring stuff ashore.....thats more than I can say for
 some places I have visited, and I must admit that th customs, police and other officials di

all in their power to make my entry into Papeete an easy and happy one. Never have I seen many people to greet me. They were standing about 6 deep, and remarks in Tahitian, French English were being passed back and forth about my single handed voyage. Apparently I was the first single handed Englishman to arrive there from Britain, and as all Tahitians are sea going people, they naturally appreciate anything out of the ordinary dealing with the sea. Within a few hours, I had made many friends, and they never seemed to tire of asking me questions about my voyage in their queer pidgin English. For one of the few times in my life I felt really important, and the words of praise from these people, who quite frankly, have forgotten more about the sea than I shall ever know, made me feel very happy. My first visit was to the British Consul to pay my respects and ^{check on} ~~also~~ mail. In the latter I was greatly disappointed...there were very few letters, apparently since Christmas time had delayed quite a bit of it, so it looked as though I was in for a big wait for my next mail. The Consul, Freddy Devenish, was quite a feller, and it was my one regret that all British Consulates throughout the world weren't supplied with a similar type of bloke. He had rec'd a letter from Dick in the Virgin Islands advising him of my arrival and a request to fit me out with a licence to operate my Ham gear. On my arrival, I must admit that he lost no time in getting on the phone to the top man, and within a week I was furnished with a brand new French Amateur Radio Licence, which meant that I could transmit to anyone in the world at any time, providing of course I obeyed their laws. The next problem was where to put my radio and also all the other gear I had to remove from the boat. I had to be reasonably close to Yasme so that I could operate the rig for my expedition work, and still be able to carry out all the painting etc., on Yasme, when, Lo and behold, a very portly gentleman who is known to everyone in Papeete as "Oscar" came forward with the very kind offer of the use of his home and storage shed to put all this stuff. Oscar Nordman, to give him his full title, became more than a friend to me in my subsequent stay. His assistance in filling in all the necessary papers and forms saved me lots of time...and money too, and he also gave me a dry store room to put all my sails. What more could I ask? He was always available to advise me what to do, where to go, and to tell me all those little things that go to make a person stay in a foreign port a happy one....I know I shall never forget Oscar. Here I have to branch off from the sailing side of things to explain the business of putting up antennas to operate my radio gear...this is something I shall always remember, as it reminds me of the happy times I spent climbing the mast of Yasme, except in this case I had to climb a darn

higher. Matters were made easy to start with by the use of a long ladder, but after that I was on my own, That tree, believe it or not was over 90 feet high, and by the time I had reached the top, I hated everything dealing with radio and you know why....I had left the darned insulators down below. Well, I lit a cigarette, as at, and looked around me, thinking. what the heck, what am I doing climbing trees like a great big school kid? below I had my usual audience, but to endeavor to ask one of them totie the insulators onto the wire if drpped it down to them was beyond my linguistic abilities, and I realise it would be far easier in the long run to go down again. Oh boy, that trip down the tree was a darn sight : difficult than sliding down the mast of Yasme. I have no doubt that many of you have climb trees and can appreciate what I say when I tell you that the descent is far more difficult. Thenthought that I would have to do this again didn't make me feel any happier, but the th thought also came into my head that all the Hams would appreciate my very fine climbing efforts....I wonder.....I bet all you mugs would have laughed your blinkin' heads off to s me in that predicament. By the end of the day I had finally rigged one end of the antenna, Now the next part was to get on top of an adjacent building and fix the other end there. This meant climbing out onto a very narrow papapet, and as usual, the inhabitants of the hotel had their wash hanging out to dry, so when I came along with my nice dirty hands to f this darned chunk of wire, their remarks to me, mainly in Tahitian were definitely far fro complimentary. I just smiled in a stupid sort of way, and hoped they understood that there were many more thousands of people like me called "Hams" in the world, and we were all slightly touched....we had to be to do what I was doing. Finally the recieving antenna was fixed, and to finish off, rigged a transmitting one too just for the hell of it, and led t straight into Oscars home. Well, to finish thax episode in this epic about radio, I spent several hours daily operating and making contact with Hams world wise, and devoted other hours in sightseeing etc., Papeete is the only real town here, acting as a port of entry and s center for all the locals to come in and have a good time on their evenings off in th numerous night clubs and bars...the entire place is fitted out with all modern inconvenienc but from a general standpoint, time does not exist, and to get a job done here is literally imopssible within a few weeks....I know...it took one man three weeks to connect a bottle c freon gas to my refrigerator unit, and for his very fast workmanship, he charged me the sum 500 francs....around 5 bucks for a job that should have taken about 10 cents worth of time. had the gas, but no darn connector, so he held the whip hand. Everything here is expensive

so don't expect to come here and live for \$5 a week. One can if you get a taste for native food live fairly cheaply; I will give you an example of one week end I spent with some Tahitian friends. I drove out of the town on my tiny scooter for maybe three or four miles, then after going off the beaten track a short way, came to a small clearing in the forest of palm and mangoe trees. Situated right in the center were three small huts, all built of the coconut tree. First about 6 uprights are buried in the ground made of the trunk of the tree, then cross members are added...same tree. Then about 4 men or women will get plating the palm fronds...leaves to you, and by a very nifty system, lay them in such a fashion as to form a roof, which I will tell you right now is 100% watertight. Next they build a sort of half wall of the same material, leaving the ends of the hut open. The floor is usually well tamped earth, but sometimes will have woven mats covering it. The furniture, consisting of tables and stools is usually made of a wood called Tou. This is Tahitian for the name of the tree, and I must admit it is admirable for the purpose, being very hard, and when polished, looks like a million dollars. Next we come to the cooking arrangements. These consist of a fire which first started with shavings, and then the other wood that is kicking around the joint is piled up to make a really good blaze. This in turn heats a lot of big stones about the size of coconuts which are buried in a hole in the ground. When the stones are hot enough, the food such as a chunk of pig will be wrapped in banana leaves and buried under the stones, then the fire will be rebuilt on top of the stones. When the meat is finally removed, it is really well done...far better than we can do in our modern stoves, and it's then plonked on the table for everyone to have his fill. Naturally, other things such as stews etc are placed on the stones. This is an admirable form of cooking as there is very little smoke, and the meat tastes good that way. Incidentally, these fires are built inside a hut which is always used as the cookhouse. Having disposed of the cooking arrangements we come to the actual food itself. The meat is invariably suckling pig of which there seems to be a great abundance on the island. In fact, in certain parts, there are thousands running wild. There is beef as well but most of that is imported. Fish as you can well understand is more than plentiful, and these people know about a million ways of preparing it. Fruits are in abundance everywhere. This is the sort of meal I experienced on my first day in this little Tahitian compound. Before we sat down to food, Tahitian beer was passed around. (Oh boy, is this stuff potent! I have never tasted the "moonshine" of American prohibition days, although I have heard of it but I really think that Tahitian beer would have given those lads of that day some creative

ideas. As far as I could gather, the idea is this. First they crush up some bananas and pineapple, mix with brown sugar and water. This they leave for a few days, and then..... Wow!!!!!! Now I am one of those blokes permanently on the waggon, but one has to accept everything from these very kind people, so just to be sociable, I knock back maybe a small wineglassful of this liquor.....I seem to remember waking up about two hours later, and with a head I had. I had been carried into one of the huts and when I awoke was greeted by two of the prettiest gals I had seen for years. They were putting a damp cloth on my head and generally fussing around me....and it was no dream either...I stayed in that condition a little longer than was really necessary....wouldn't you? I had to get up and join the others although I could have thought of much better ways of passing the time instead of eating!!! Well, having got over that miniature jag, we all sat down to eat, although there was quite a bit of good natured "chipping" pointed at me for my inability to take the poison of Papeete. First came the concoction consisting of raw fish, tomatoes and lots of green stuff mixed with this is the hors-d'oeuvre. After that comes the banana poi, made of bananas and the flower of the magnioc plant, all cooked together, then comes some more raw fish and fried fish with other vegetables. Having disposed of this we come to shredded coconut mixed with bananas... I thought this was really good, then we had loads of roast pig with sweet potatoes, and other vegetables that I can't even pronounce. Let alone try to record them here. For bread we ate the bread fruit, which has a taste similar to bread, but a tendency to be on the dry side. For butter we had the avocado pear, which when opened up has a soft interior tasting like butter. I thought it was a little sickly, but that's only my opinion! Coffee, locally grown, roasted and ground, was made, with coconut milk in lieu of cream...that was darn good, and to find out, there were several types of locally grown fruit to eat..mangoes, pineapple, pawpaw, orange and other fruits far too numerous to mention. Now you can see that the genuine Tahitian has lived in the past, and will continue to live in the future, completely off the soil around his own little shack, until such time as civilisation completely encourages him to eat canned foods, where he will then die at an early age and suffer with all our diseases, and of course be much happier according to our way of thinking!!!!!! In years gone by, from what I could gather, the Tahitian had no real need to work...after all, he had a good roof over his head and food in abundance within arms reach, so why should he go into our civilised world and work for eight hours a day to earn lots of money? I know, as you do too, that the True Tahitian will eventually die out, but at the moment he is in many ways like his forefathers, and I am

very happy that I can see and live with them in my lifetime. Now to proceed with the weaker entertainment. After we had all eaten our fill, and I can assure you "mine host" continuously pressed me to eat all the time (afterwards I could hardly move), we all settled down outside the hut and the music began. Guitars and ukes were brought out, and the whole company started to sing, and within a short time many of them were dancing too. I must confess right now to describe this music is an impossibility to me. It had a rhythm I had never experienced before, and the singing was so well harmonised that one would think they had rehearsed many hours before. The dancing once again, I defy any man to write about. The Tahitian has a way of moving his body and that goes for the gals too, that really gets you, and I sat there enthralled for some hours just happy to watch, and all the time there was this beautiful singing in the background. One or two of the girls dragged me into the center of the ring of dancers and tried to get me into the swing of the thing, but somehow, whilst I was as enthusiastic as they were, my body just wouldn't wiggle the same way or at the right time, and before very long, many of them were standing back and watching my vain attempts to copy their style of dancing...and having a good laugh at my expense too....I didn't mind one little bit as those gals certainly made me happy out there. Naturally, my tape recorder was going all the time, and in the odd moments when I wasn't dancing, the old camera was churning out the film for posterity. This party carried on right through the night until daybreak before finally breaking up....no-one seemed to tire and they continued to eat and drink all the time where they got the energy I could never quite figure...I was almost dead around 2 a.m. but the girls kept me awake, and I didn't mind that one little bit. Gradually everyone drifted homeward, and I was invited to stay the rest of the day to help finish up the rest of the grub and to keep the girls company....I much preferred the latter part of the invitation. Late that afternoon, a friend came along to pick me up and all my gear, but before I was permitted to leave, my host filled every spare gap in the car with all types of fruit, far more than I could eat in weeks....all for me. How can I express my feelings about these kindly people? Nowhere in the world have I quite met up with this type of hospitality... please don't misunderstand me as I have received wonderful treatment at most of my stops, but this Tahitian "treatment" was so different that I find it impossible to express myself. The typhoon season doesn't really affect Tahiti proper, but the effects of it made me suffer in my attempts to get the varnishing and painting done. The last time I had fitted out Yasu was in St. Thomas, and since then she had travelled well over 7,500 miles through some pret-

tough weather. Every bit of varnish had been washed off, and the paint work looked like no bodies business. Every sail had to be sewn as they had all been ripped somewhere, so what painting, sewing, and also keeping this Amateur Radio expedition running daily, there was little time to spare for sight seeing, so contented myself with my half dozen girl friends. The evenings can be spent very pleasantly in a variety of ways, but many prefer the local and night clubs....The Zizou Bar, Quinns, The Col Bleu and Le Tropiques were just a few places where one could forget the world, and whilst there are many other joints bigger or smaller, I found that the majority preferred these places. I liked to go to the Zizou bar, which, although very tiny, always played Tahitian music and was very badly lit, so that one could have an extremely pleasant evening in any way one likes there. Now I expect my readers will think that as I prefer to sail alone everywhere that I can ignore women and still be happy. Well, to tell you the truth....I can manage quite well...I can also ignore women, but I would be happy, and there's no need for anyone to be unhappy particularly in Tahiti...I wasn't. One of the virtues of the Tahitian Wahine is, she isn't like the typical "B" girl that one meets in the majority of bars and night clubs...she is not a "Gold Digger" either, and if she likes you, then the mere fact that you return that liking is sufficient, and they will be quite happy and content with a bottle of beer and an occasional dance in the club. Lust in itself will get you nowhere, and the girls whilst fairly free, will boycott any man that tries to go too far and take advantage of them. One thing I liked about those girls...they never stole another gals feller....I saw instances of what happened later when one went against that unwritten code. One of the big days there is when the schooners arrive or leave. They are always loaded well below the normal water line with a collection of people, animals, fridges, boxes of goods, and all sorts of other things. The decks are crammed solid as they carry the cargoes of goods and humanity from one island to another. This happens about once a week, and I got quite a kick out of watching this great big crowd sorting out their belongings. All the time they are in a good humor, and never have I seen a quarrel on these days. Another amusing experience is to travel by bus there. the bus is usually crammed solid with people and on top are the overflow of passengers and all their boxes of goods and odd animals...pigs, goats, chickens are all bunged on top, and there they bounce around until the owner gets off. I went on a short trip for the heck of it, and they made room for me in the already overcrowded bus....it was solid on its springs and groaned with the terrific weight of people and off we went. Going only a distance of half a mile, it stopped and picked up some more people, even

though I couldn't see where they went in that already packed bus. I had to smile in one particular instance. Someone yelled for the bus to stop, and after catching it, told the driver that the rest of the family would arrive later, so, most of us got out, had a stroll around, and when the rest of the family arrived, being eight in all, we all somehow squeezed in again and off we went. Every time I saw something worth photographing, the driver always stopped for me, and never once did I hear a complaint from anyone. Naturally, many of them had their guitars, and there we were bowling along the road at breakneck speed with everyone singing their heads off. When on odd occasions we would stop to let someone alight, it was quite a performance to find their luggage. I doubt very much whether these busses ran on any sort of schedule. In fact, I might even say I doubt whether anything on this island ran to any specific timetable but nobody seemed to worry, and they are always happy. I did notice on one or two occasions in the late evening, several of the Tahitian lads would get aroused over something...usually a woman, in fact always a woman, and there would be a fight. Now these lads are really beefy, and I should hate to be at the wrong end of their fist if they ever threw a punch at me. I don't know why it was, but these lads are never really satisfied until one has actually knocked the other clean out; then the victor will go away with his gals telling the how good he was and precisely how the battle was fought. The poor blighter that gets the KO may or may not have someone help him up, in which case he either lies there until he comes around, or maybe some kind hearted bloke will drag him into the side of the road out of harm's way. I'm afraid the vanquished here are not very popular. One evening I noticed a big crowd and being nosy like everyone else, I pushed my way through to have a look. Lying on the floor literally tearing each others hair out, were two Tahitian girls, and were they going it. No one attempted to stop them, and they really showed me how tough they were. The fight lasted maybe twenty minutes, and then the local gendarmerie took over. Even when the police had grabbed both girls, they were still struggling and trying to knock each others block off... what stamina they must have!...I think that maybe they could show the lads a few things about all in scrapping. This little difference of opinion was over one gal trying to take the other bloke....Wow!!!! Fortunately these sorts of fights are rare, and I learnt afterwards that whenever there is any sort of fighting going on, its much better to have an appointment the opposite way....it is quite possible for a member of the audience to get drawn into the argument in the heat of the moment, and I didn't want any International complications to set in, also I hate having my face used as a punchbag...I aint no beauty now, but what I've got I would like

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to preserve to match up with my passport photograph. Another great event I was privileged to watch was the Annual Regatta where all the members of other islands will come to race against each other in their pirogues. These boats are reputed to be the fastest in the world, and when manned by a super crew, they really go....many will exceed 20 knots. There were single hulled pirogues with the outrigger, and also the double hulled. Some were manned with men, others allgals, and did they make those hollowed out chunks of tree nip through the water. The last race of the day was strictly for the Wahines, and they started away...all dressed in native costume and looking very picturesque. When they had reached the far end of the course, which incidentally was around 4 miles away, a dirty great squall came up and down came lots of very wet water. It just dropped in buckets full, and the girls had all their time cut baling the pirogues. I was watching them through the binocs, and saw that half were bailing and the others paddling like blazes. There were fourteen of these lovely Tahitian specimens of femininity in each double canoe, and to see the way they put them through their paces was a sight for sore eyes. As the race drew to a close, the rain came down heavier, and they paddled and bailed even faster, and then the race was over....but did they all fall over their paddles like a set of Varsity Blues at the end of a race....not likely, they all started again in the vicinity to see who could reach the shore first, and although they all looked a little bedraggled and wet, they were as usual, all laughing and full of life..... what gals!..... The race had coincided with the arrival of two French Warships, and they stayed for a week, and was that a week. I do believe that every girl in Tahiti and practically 95% of the girls from the adjacent islands were there in Papeete to look after the sailors. Every bar was overflowing, and dancing and singing went on interminably every day and all through the night, no one seemed to tire of the continual jollity. The whole town was lit up, as were all the sailors, and of course, the local lads didn't go much on it as I do believe that most of them lost their girl friends that week. The time ultimately came for all the tars to get back aboard, and as the two ships pulled out of the harbor, thousands of Wahines stood and watched their old loves depart. The water was thick with the flowers that had been thrown over the side by the sailors, as all of them had been fitted out ashore with the usual garlands around their necks and upon their heads. These garlands are made of the Tahitian flower called Tiare, and the garlands around their necks are called Hei Tiare.....thats Tahitian lingo to you. Anyway, the local superstition goes that if the garlands drift back to the shore, the person will return, and vice versa.

irectly the ships cleared the pass, off went the girls back to their old boy friends, and those that didn't have the old ones came looking for any odd bloke that happened to be kicking round the joint....needless to say, I'd got myself already fixed up long before the ships came in, so I wasn't worried....much.

It may interest you that whilst I write this, I have Wahine sitting by my sidestrictly for the purpose of getting the true facts down..... anyway, she is teaching me a little French and Tahitian (what else is she teaching me? Is that your business?.....you learn to be a Ham) Oh! life can be really wonderful here....one gains a lot of experience, and also loses all the inhibitions of civilisation that have been drummed into him, but for my part, I have to work a little too much, and have very little time for relaxation, so it looks as though I am going to have to sail around the world again one day with a little more time and money to spare, then I can stay in Tahiti a little longer and not have to worry about getting to all the odd spots of the world for radio expeditions.

get away from my pet subjectradio....phooey! and to discuss other things...I can't see any point in it, but I suppose I have to, I noticed that practically all the shops here are run by Chinamen, and although I covered the place pretty well, have no recollection of seeing a Tahitian running a store. The Chinese are very enterprising business people, and from what I can gather, originally came to the islands as laborers but soon turned the tables and became the men of substance with the Tahitians doing the laboring for them. It is a little odd to walk into these stores and find many wares described in Chinese. Since I've been here, I've had my hair cut by a Chinaman, a Frenchman, and a Tahitian girl, and the one good thing I can say about this system is, I can sit back and relax without having someone gassing to me all the time....."I no Comprenez....Francais, Tahitian, Chinese" and that stops all the talk pronto about business etc., here, there is no income tax, but the local government gets it another way, and that's by taxing every darn thing that comes on the island. The Chinese are not the only people who have stuff imported and they have to pay that import tax, also they are taxed every other way. The government finds it much easier to let the Chinese get the goods out of the Tahitian and then make the Chinaman pay later on tax...it works out fine that way. Copra was one of the exports of the island, but that had fallen to such a low price that it nowhere covers the expenses of the island. The cost of shipping it plus the fact that much today has replaced copra synthetically that it doesn't really pay them to even bother with it. A fair income is made from the visitors because this is a pleasure resort, but even this is seasonal, and at the present moment, very few visitors are arriving. Some years ago

pearling was quite a profitable industry in the surrounding islands, but once again the market seems to have fallen on pearls...seems they can't produce anything that is needed around here ~~etc.~~...except Wahines....now how the heck did I come to get around to women again? Having spent a lot of time here taking photographs, I also had the job of processing them too. I had all the gear aboard for developing etc., also an enlarger, but working under the high temperatures was quite a problem, and I found it extremely difficult to produce good photos enlarged up to say 8" x 10" without showing excessive grain. I had the deep freeze aboard, but even with that it was still tough when I came to actually developing the prints. I was determined to develop all my film whilst at each location, as once I had left, there would be no chance afterwards to reproduce any bad shots, so I got into the habit of just processing the film and forgetting about the prints....sea water was pretty good for washing the film, and sure saved my fresh, but I always gave them a good rinse afterwards in fresh. So much for the film angle.....the recordings which were taken on tape I would advise anyone else to send them back to a more temperate climate as I found they had a tendency to shrink which mucked up the whole recording....I fiddled with the recording head for hours before I realised the actual trouble was in the tape. Well, I had done everything possible that could be done in this exotic spot of the south Pacific. I had made many friends and was loathe to depart, but as far as I could see, I had an expedition to finish and it wouldn't get done by sitting back here.

All good things come to na end as I then realised, and I prepared to leave Tahiti after one of the most enjoyable stays of my whole trip. Most of you are aware what it's like to leave true friends behind. In my short stay I had made many, and leaving them is one of the unhappy things that I have to contend with on a voyage such as this. The hazards of the sea are many...they can be handled by brains or brawn; parting from ones friends is a trouble of the heart, and not so easily solved, and it was really tough for me to have to make the break. Needless to say, all the assistance I required to put Yasme in trim was readily volunteered by my many friends. During the last week prior to departure, Yasme was a hive of activity whilst everyone did what they could to assist in those many tiny jobs that take so much time. I will not discuss here the thousand and one jobs that are essential to fit out a small boat for sea, but one needs every bit of assistance that can be obtained, and here that presented no problem. Numerous invitations came for last suppers and dinners etc., but time was moving along too fast to accept them all. Finally I went to my old friends place out in the country for a real Tahitian dinner and dancing session, such as I'd had before, and

there I had the time of my life to celebrate my last evening in Tahiti. Food and wine there were in plenty, but although I had my fill of food, I had learned my lesson with the Tahitian beer, and left it strictly alone, having no intention of finding myself with a hangover the following morning. The party, held in my honor, packed up around midnight at my request...I would have a tough time in the next twenty four hours and needed every bit of sleep possible, so it was a very unhappy bloke that finally departed from that party to spend the last night asleep in Papeete aboard Yasme. At 7am the following morning, around twenty of my friends arrived to see me off. They were all laden down with presents of fruit, cooked chickens and a pig, in fact, there was enough food there to feed a crew of ten men for a week and still leave a surplus. Where to stow it all was quite a problem, and I couldn't refuse any of it...one doesn't deliberately hurt friends feelings, so I was forced to find a spot for it all in my already overcrowded cabin, but as all my work was on deck, I thought that there would be ample time later to dispose of all the unwanted food...all that I couldn't eat would have to be turfed over the side later. With everything ready, radio gear all aboard and the minimum amount of gas possible stowed....(it was around a buck a gallon there so didn't want to take any more than actually required)....I felt I was ready for sea. Hauling up the anchor was quite a problem though manpower was available in plenty. One doesn't haul in 60 fathoms of chain and a heavy anchor that has been embedded in coral and mud for three months without some sort of bother. These Tahitian lads are pretty tough, but it took us all of an hour to get that chain and anchor aboard. It was a real mess, having developed a variety of marine life on its entire length, and Oh brother, did it hum. There was no time in which to clean it and remove all the sea weed, so it had to be stowed in the chain locker as it was, and it was well over two weeks before the smell subsided sufficiently for me to go into the cabin without almost passing out. Some how or another, departure time was delayed owing to the usual unforeseen circumstances.....my girl friend was one of them, anyway, I decided to wait until after lunch before buzzing off. This decision was favorable to everyone there, so we all tramped off to a large cafe for chow. Back to the boat, and by this time, the crowd had materially increased, everyone coming up and putting garlands of flowers around my neck and on my head until I looked like a walking flower show. With the arrival of the others, there came many more gifts of food, and the decks of Yasme were so full up that I had great difficulty in walking around without putting my foot into a stem of bananas. Everyone was talking at once in Tahitian and trying to move around on the Yasme, so you have a good idea of

of the chaos aboard. Time was passing, so I cast of the lines holding Yasme to another yacht and with my crowd of friends still aboard, cruised around in circles until out of the distance came the bows of the pilot boat, creaming through the still waters towards me, and there at the wheel, was my good friend the Port Captain. Well, this was it.....all my friends reluctantly climbed aboard the pilot boat, and there I stood despondently in the cockpit alone....alone for the first time in three months. I wished and hoped that something would happen to delay my departure, I felt so unhappy....there wasn't a dry eye among us... that means me too, then very slowly, the pilot boat pulled ahead and guided me through the passage of Papeete, whilst Yasme, her old engine chugging along trailed astern, feeling I am very sure as miserable as I. We passed through that reef infested water out into the open sea, and the pilot boat, its duty now performed, circled me once before heading back to port. My friends all waved...some were crying.....I was among one of these too, then, they disappeared around the bend of the pass and I was alone again...alone for how long....would I return again to that wonderful place? those thoughts passed through my mind as I cast those garlands over the side, watching them disappear slowly astern in the wash of Yasme as she headed further and further out to sea. Whether those flowers floated back to the shores of Tahiti I shall never know, but in my heart I know I shall return again some day.

Once clear of all the dangers and with ample sea room, up went my poor excuses for sails. For three weeks I had worked on them solidly to make them carry out their functions, but as I hoisted up the jib, it ripped right across even though the breeze was very light. The main-sail managed to creep its forlorn way up the mast until it reached the top, and although it got there without incident, I could see, that given the slightest provocation, it would fall apart. The thing was to prevent it flapping around too much. I knew that whilst the wind remained steady it would hold out, but once let it luff, and "PINI"!!!! The wind what there was of it was reasonably steady, but there was a bad swell on, the aftermath of a recent cyclone or typhoon in Fiji. Hardly a day to start a voyage of this type! Quite frankly, I should have had more sense than to leave directly after a cyclone....there is always a lack of wind, and also a vicious swell running, but then, I wasn't to know that when I had made my original departure date....I was to regret my decision to leave exactly as asked later, but I wasn't to know that, and there we were, Yasme and I, on our way with pleasant memories of the past, nevertheless in a crestfallen mood. Trimming the sails to get Yasme to sail herself is always a lousy job at the start of a voyage, and it invariably takes a couple of hours to

get her balanced just right, This just wasn't my day. I tried everything I knew, but the wind fluctuated so much that she just wouldn't hold course more than a few minutes at a time. Finally, the wind gave up the ghost altogether and without way on her, we lost all sense of equilibrium and started the old stunt of rolling all over the place. The fruit in the cabin was tossed all over the place, innumerable bits of gear insufficiently lashed down were thrown into odd spots and inaccessible places not to be found again for many moons....good job I had my wooden leg screwed on at the time. Finally, not being able to stand this rolling, I stuck on the old iron horse, and soon we were chuffing along on the usual three cylinders....three bangs and a pop; around three knots, hardly pleasant, but it least cut down the roll and moved us along in the right direction. Nightfall came. There was a deathly silence except for the infernal clatter from the engine, and astern, in the distance, the lights of Papeete shone out as though to give me a last farewell. The sky was brilliant with the myriads of stars and the moon, just risen, made a silvery glow over the whole sea....all I needed was a breeze, and then we should have perfect sailing conditions...but that wasn't to be. Sleep and I didn't keep company that night. My initiation back to the ocean, the awful smell from the rotten seaweed on the anchor chain, the heat from the engine, and my utter misery at leaving my friends were hardly conducive to sleep, so I just sat there in the cockpit with the tiller in my hand, being sprayed with an oily mist from the exhaust of Yasmes engine. I kept looking astern, even though I realised it was only making me feel more despondent, but the urge was strong, and it was a very unhappy Danny that sat there around midnight with his thoughts, gazing at the very faint outline of that wonderful fantastic place Tahiti with all its charm and gaiety. How I wished at the time the mast would snap or something would happen to necessitate my return, but no, apart from the lack of wind, everything went fine, and I could find no logical excuse to return. That night barring steering the boat, exactly nothing was done. No cooking, no radio contacts, in fact no nothing, and I think you can understand why. Daybreak brought a slight breeze, and also a hunger too, but first, get the....I nearly called them sails....up. This time they actually went up without ripping, and with the engine now silent we cruised along at a steady four knots. We were in utter silence except for that satisfying swish from the bow wave and the faint hum of the propeller freewheeling. To prepare food in the cabin was entirely out of the question due to the awful stench, so I tore into the load of fruit and drank dozens of cups of coffee to brighten the old head. I wanted badly then to contact some of my radio friends, but the time was all wrong for that, and I knew I

would have to wait quite a while before the schedule times would arrive, so I just sat there doing nothing and making myself feel worse than ever...how can a guy get like that? Oh well, I realised it would wear off in the end, but it was hell waiting for that time to elapse and the weather conditions did not give me any opportunity to do anything else except just sit and think about Tahiti....in any case, it made me feel better to feel miserable, so what the heck. I made some semblance of order in the cabin. In other words I picked up everything that happened to be in the way and slung it in a heap on one side of the cabin, thereby leaving one side clear and the other a mixture of fruit, books, radio gear, clothing and a load of wire that had come unwound from its reel. A tangled mess, but I couldn't have cared less. Getting back to sea routine again presented no problem and the entire crew remained free from seasickness, regardless of the aroma below and the rolling of the boat....all we had to do now was to get the old brain clear and endeavor to forget the past. At long last it was time to switch on the rig and talk to Dick in the Virgin Islands. Oh boy! someone to talk to, even though it was only in morse code....that radio certainly takes the solitude out of this deal. My generator started without protest, and within a few minutes I was listening to Dick coming blasting through with his high powered transmitter. Conditions were so good that Dick decided to come on phone instead. I think Dick must have known how I felt when he decided that he would talk to me in his own voice rather than the impersonal touch of code. Perhaps you don't know what it is like to hear a friends voice in ym circumstances, but I can assure you, it was worth a million bucks. That little talk was the beginning of the end of my gloom period, and shortly afterwards when he had signed off, the wind came up, the sails stopped ripping, and even the seaweed stopped making the boat smell like a garbage heap. The Yasme seemed to cheer up too, and before very long I started singing, which although it makes me feel good, certainly annoys the birds and keeps the sharks at a respectable distance. Whilst in this mood I got a whole stack of grub organised, then sat back and waited for the time to come when I should be able to talk to Joe, another Ham in Tahiti I had met. As usual, Joe was late for his sked... he is a real Tahitian so I expected it, but he was there....good old Joe, one of my best friends. When it came my turn to talk to him, my throat became paralyzed, a lump seemed to be blocking my voice altogether, and when he told me he had my girl friend there in his shack, it was quite a few minutes before I could get out what I wanted to say. Darn it all, as much as I got a kick out of hearing those familiar voices, it knocked me right back into the depths of despondency again. but I wouldn't have missed that little talk on all the radio in the world.

Joel's final "bon soir and bon voyage Dannee" and the promise of another contact later put me back again on top of the world, and then I just sat back there and waited for the next schedule to turn up with Jock, a good Ham friend of mine in New Zealand. Right on time old Jock came through, his cheery voice dispelling all the gloom as he talked to me about the painting job he was doing to his house. To hear his infectious laugh, his jovial way of speaking, how could I possibly remain miserable, and very soon, I was laughing with him. He certainly knows how to bring a body out of the depths of despair....how I enjoy my talks with Jock, and what a variety of sensations I was experiencing that day. That Ham radio was a life saver to me in more ways than one, and one can have good friends all over the world...as I did, and yet never actually meet them. One can travel all over the world too, as I did, and yet still talk to the same friends all the time...distance has no meaning to Ham radio, but it has a comforting way about it that could never be equalled by any other hobby. Every day I would keep these skeds, but to talk for long periods to other hams was out of the question. My gas was getting very low through this strange lack of wind, and I was forced to conserve every drop for future use. Two days out and Moorea still in sight. The wind, which up to now had been variable, dropped altogether, and there we were, stationary, with hardly a ripple on the water. It seemed sacrilege to destroy the complete silence with the clatter and heat of the engine, but hanging around in this spot wasn't doing any good, and neither was it getting me anywhere. All the time there was the terrific set to the west which was slowly but surely pushing me off course, so I had no alternative but to start up the engine. That calm seemed to last for ever....never a semblance of a breeze, and that poor little engine ran continuously for four days getting hotter and hotter, and running increasingly more erratic. I didn't dare stop it even to top up with oil, as I knew it would never start again. We had left Tahiti with only three cylinders operating and as time passed, it was barely firing on one, but still it used the same amount of gas as though it were working on all four. Supplies of fuel were getting dangerously low, and what with the engine in that state and no wind, you will have some idea of the spot I was in. I began to wonder whether it would be better to return to Tahiti for more gas or carry on in the vague hope that a wind would come up. That evening while talking to Dick I discussed the whole thing, but no solution was arrived at. Later when I was having my talk with Jock, another Ham stationed on an island called Rarotonga broke in on the talk and informed me that he had heard of my difficulty and had arranged with the local government to have a boat sent to Rarotonga Atoll, near Moihiki, which was around the half way

mark for me. This cheered me considerably, and all my worries disappeared. The fact that both Penrhyn and Manihiki were way off my original course didn't bother me...the mere fact that the gas was available was all that mattered, and in a later talk with Joe in Tahiti, he told me that there were no further supplies of gas there, so although I had reached the point of no return as far as gas was concerned, it also seemed that all my problems were solved....the old Hams came up trumps again, and in any case, I realised that it would be just as tough to reach Canton Island my next stop as to return to Tahiti, so with all this fine news, I plugged on. Now before we go any further I want all you landlubbers to understand the general situation: There was a strong current setting the Yasme to the west at a rate of about 25 miles per day. Without wind or engine Canton Island would be impossible to reach, so it wasn't a question of just stooing around the joint amasing the sharks and sunbat~~hing~~ until a wind came up. I had to keep moving else Canton Island wouldn't be seeing me that year. Now Penrhyn Island was considerably north of my course, and as time went by I realised that, even knowing the gas was there, with the tiny amount of power I had available and no wind, it would be impossible to make. A later contact with the Ham in Raratonga informed me that the gas had originally been at Manihiki, which was right smack on my course, and had been taken from there to Penrhyn since they thought I was going to call there. Now there wasn't any gas left at Manihiki, what a joke! Yes, it w s a great big joke, but I wasn't laughing. I checked on my gas supply and found I could cover around 400 miles with the engine running at its normal efficiency....that is, on three cylinders with the fourth piston being pushed around by the others. I realised then there was but one alternative; to strip the engine ~~right~~ down completely and do my best to get it running better. Many of you fellows sitting back there in your overstuffed armchairs with a miniature workshop in your garage and every facility available may say "Why, that's no problem"...but you just don't know. You haven't seen the installation of Yasmes Engine, which although nicely situated for normal maintenance and minor repairs (if you don't mind getting your arm burnt now and again) is far from being nicely organised for the major work I was contemplating. Now I wont go into all the gory details such as barked knuckles, odd fingers lost here and there, etc. Removing the cylinder head without damaging the gasket, getting valve springs depressed without a special tool to do the job in a boiling hot cabin with the ship rolling all over the show was far from being a simple matter. Every time I put down a spanner, an engine part or a nut, although it would only be for a couple of seconds, you could

bet your bottom dollar that when I went to pick it up, there it was....gone. In one particular instance which is still vivid in my mind, a special nut dropped into the bilges. This meant lying full length in the saloon, getting my arm worked in between water pipes, wiring and many projecting parts of the engine to reach that hole called the bilge. This struggle took maybe 15 minutes, and my arm seemed to lose itself in the maze of pipes and what have you. Finally my hand reached a soft greasy mess...I'd struck oil...that meant I had now found the surface of the bilge water. Now to get to the bottom of it. With my arm stretched to its fullest extent I still had a long way to go. Somehow or another I managed to squeeze my shoulder down into the hole and fumble around in this glutinous mess. I encountered something else other than the nut, wondering what I had discovered I slid my shoulder and arm out gingerly, ripping off about three layers of skin, and found it was a spoon I had lost about three months ago. Well, after counting ten, I made the big dive again. It was a little easier this time since the entire upper portion of my body had a layer of black oil on it and my arm sort of oozed around the corners. In my travels around the bilge I discovered three pencils, one eraser, a fork, a comb without any teeth, one fish hook, a very defunct spud, but NO NUT. By this time, my temper was getting just a little frayed. I considered removing the entire engine to find the nut, but after considering a little further thought that maybe it would be easier to look in the junk box for another. Naturally I found every type of nut, bolt, and washer except the right one. Major discoveries were made in this junk box such as a certain fitting I had lost years ago, also another gadget I'd built three weeks ago to fit on the deck...my mind wandered off the job in hand as I started out of the cabin with this find to install it right away....I suddenly caught myself....what the heck WAS I doing? I was supposed to be fixing the ruddy engine!!!! To heck with the nut, I decided that when the time came to replace it, I would just ignore the fact that it was missing. Perhaps the engine would go better, who knows. By this time, every part of the galley, cockpit and myself, had become coated with this black goeey substance. It didn't look too good, but then I thought that maybe it would preserve the wood and keep the termites out....it was nice to think that, but underneath those thoughts were others which told me that the whole darn mess had to be cleaned up. Time was creeping on. I had started this project around 6 a.m. and with the arrival of dusk I was working in ~~the~~ semi darkness (the batteries were down of course). That didn't really matter since I didn't know what the heck I was doing/. If a piston happened to get put in upside down the engine

would run backwards...maybe, and I could just turn the boat around and we could go...coming, if you get what I mean. Well, to make a long story longer, I did by sheer luck finally get the engine together around three the following morning. Apart from a big end bearing and two piston rings I had nothing left over and the engine looked exactly the same as when I'd started. I couldn't find where to put the piston rings, so, since I had discovered that there was a lot of space under the inspection cover of the gear box, I unscrewed that and dropped the odd pieces inside....out of sight, out of mind. Now the big moment had arrive. Everything seemed OK so I took a deep breath and pressed the starter button. I pressed the button again, and kept on pressing until I nearly pushed the button through the panel. Apart from a dismal moan from the starter and a horrible death rattle from the solenoid, there wasn't a bleat from the engine. It then penetrated my befuddled brain that maybe the batteries were too weak to turn the engine over. Considering the amount of power the engine gave me, an ordinary flashlight battery should have spun the starter like a top, but there I was, with a completely assembled engine just bursting to send its deep throated roar into the slence of the night, and not a whistle in the batteries. This famous engine of mine cannot be started by hand like a normal one, so that meant I would have to charge the batteries from the auxiliary charging plant. I have had this plant ever since it graduated from being a motor cycle engine and a car generator and it has always started without a murmur. This time it joined the general strike and although I pulled that starter cord until I wore out my arm, It just wouldn't have it...On one pull, the knot at the end of the rope parted company with the rest of the cord and I took a beautiful backward dive into the cockpit...here the writer feels it better not to state exactly what was said in the heat of the moment.

Well, I hated to admit it, but after diagnosing the trouble discovered that a valve was sticking up...consequently...no compression etc. There I was with another engine to strip down. Still no wind, but now the sea had developed an unrythmic roll which was tough for me to synchronise my body with...I sort of leaned to port when I should have laene to starboard, and any sailing types among you will realise that can be fatal. On several ocassions I nearly went over the side. This wouldn't have mattered too much as Yasme was dead still and even the sharks had become disinterested with the lack of activity...at any rate, I didn't see any around. Back to the job, working on the deck it was much cooler, but also much darker. The show must go on, so down came the motor and the sticky valve was fixed. This time I was a little more fortunate in what was left over and only had a couple of nuts. I realised they

must have come from the engine somewhere. I discovered a small hole in the top of the engine which, when you take out the spark plug, has lots of room inside, so realising that the nuts must have come from some integral part of the engine, dropped them in the hole. At least I knew they wouldn't get lost, and when the time came, I could always fit them in the right place. Lady Luck smiled on me for the first time in almost 24 hours. After flooding the carburettor, the little engine needed only one pull to start it, and apart from the rattle of the two nuts (which became quite musical in the end) it ran very smoothly. I kept it going until the batteries were oozing with amps. In fact, they oozed so much that acid got pumped out of them all over the place. I realised this was happening when I had a look at them with a match.....the explosion of the battery gas loosened three teeth. The time was ripe to press that button again. Off with the charging plany and once again the suspense of pushing that button....This time there was a high pitched whirr, a few wheezes, a whine, a couple of clonks, and a faint chugging with a limp. I knew then that the engine was actually going. As it gradually warmed to the task of keeping going the speed increased, and there at last I had succeeded in making something work. After she was running I opened up the inspection cover where I had stuck the odd bits that were left over and found that the coffee grinder action in the gear box had nicely mashed up all the parts. I must admit that it ran much quieter then than it had in a long time....think I'll patent the idea. By this time it was daylight and my old friends the sharks had joined the convoy, complete with striped pilot fish at their noses.....could never quite figure out why the shark never swallowed the darn things. All my tiredness had gone, so after removing the best part of the grease and oil from the galley and feeding it to the sharks, I got cracking on some grub for myself. Oh boy, was it good to sit out there in the early morning sunshine with a plate of eggs and bacon, and loads of coffee. There was that ~~early~~ chilly bite in the air that comes in the **early** morning in the tropics, and it was really exhilarating to sit there and rest whilst Yasme churned her way through the water at a steady 4 to 5 knots. I don't know how long I sat there meditating, but I reckoned that I had earned a rest. That day I did precisely nothing except just sit and dream in that glorious sunshine, and as the day wore on, I had that feeling that comes with successful accomplishment. The engine had run smoothly all day long without even a hiccup. Just before dusk seen I felt a faint breeze caress my bare back. At first it was hardly discernible and I thought it was imagination, but ten minutes later I really felt it. Being a pessimist at heart, I refused to think it would stop, so I just sat there and ignored it.

not daring to go to all the trouble of hoisting the sails only to have to haul them down again....I'd had some of this before! Half an hour later the wind made itself felt to such an extent that I just couldn't ignore it anymore. I nipped smartly along the deck and hoisted everything she could scurry, even a couple of shirts and a bed sheet. The wind continued to blow with ever increasing force so I decided it would be a good thing to give the engine a rest and save the gas. How that wind blew! It certainly made up for all the time it had been asleep. I was forced to take down all the extra sail I had put up and was left with a very tattered reefed mainsail and jib which pulled us through the water at 7 knots. The seas which up till then had been almost flat, now built themselves into ten foot high monsters which crashed against the beam as we plugged on towards Canton Island. The old Yasme lifted herself proudly over every wave, never once taking a drop on board. This was real sailing at last, the sort you read about in books but very seldom see or experience. I had the feeling that this wind had come to stay, and I was right too....how it blew, and how happy it made me feel to know that we didn't have to worry about the gas situation any more. I knew then that, providing I did not use the radio more than once a day for my skeds, I should be OK for gas in an emergency. From the time that the trade wind came up until 24 hours later we covered 150 miles by sight. We had a certain amount of assistance from the current, and I could tell by the log astern and the whine of the freewheeling propellor that we were sure piling up the sea miles. From then on squalls became more frequent, concentrating around midnight and two in the morning...just to be plain cussed. For the uninitiated, a squall is something that can be seen arriving in 99 cases out of a 100, and usually doesn't cause any bother providing one takes reasonable care in getting the sails down. However dark the night, one can always see the squall that is going to hit you coming up on the windward side...the sky is always that tiny bit blacker in that particular area. Some will hit you within five minutes of being sighted, whilst others take over an hour to creep up. The result is the same. A wind of gale force hits your ship, then the rain comes...always rain, and it comes horizontally like millions of sharp needles cutting your face to pieces. You can either run before it with all sail up, or you can drop everything and heave to, but heaven help you if it strikes you abeam with everything up. As you are all aware, my sails were in a pitiful state, so I had to be ready for every blow that came along. When the first puff came, I had through long association with these squalls found that I could just manage to get everything onto the deck in three minutes before the full blast hit me. This gave me a chance to stay

below and rest, even if I didn't sleep soundly. I did on one occasion decide to run before a squall thinking it would only last a short time. It kept up for almost an hour and blew me miles off course...miles I could ill afford to spare. Coming up into the wind would have left no sails thereby solving the problem of having to sew them, but it certainly wouldn't get me to Canton Island, so I took no more chances. There was no dearth of wind now, even though it never blew from the same direction for more than 6 hours at a time. The seas picked up to fantastic heights, and as they were coming on the beam, made life really uncomfortable. I had been used to the seas being astern all the time, but owing to this westerly set coupled with the loss of northing through the bad engine, I had to steer almost due north to hold my course, and this meant that I was crossing the trade winds and currents actually sailing in the troughs and on the peaks of the waves. One minute Yasme would be balancing precariously on the crown of a wave and in the next, she would slide down the side of the wave till she reached the bottom. Directly we hit the trough, so all the sails would flap as the wind would be broken by the high seas. This business set up a roll that almost lay Yasme over to 35° to the surface of the sea. At no time was I able to prepare any food, but was forced to live on fruit that by now had started to go a little rotten. Daily I would spend a few minutes sorting out that pile of grub in the cabin and throwing stacks of it over the side....the smell from it competed quite successfully with the smell from my anchor chain...it was wonderful!!!! The sails held together somehow, how I shall never know, but in that case I was lucky. Daily I was in contact with Canton Island via Ham radio...Howard Johnson, an American there had a rig, and he gave me weather reports daily, not that they were any use to me...the weather was bad all the time, so what the heck! Now I was heading for the Phoenix Group of Islands..actually they are atolls, which means in most cases they are made of coral and rarely stick out of the water more than a few feet. Some have coconut trees which help to sight them, but Phoenix and Canton have none at all, and can only be seen from my decks when I am almost on top of them. You can see by this that navigation had to be exact to find them. The tide and current charts were about as helpful as an old boot since they the current has a westerly set of 10 to 25 miles a day. That makes it very easy to lay off course, ~~exactly~~ as at the end of a days run, I can be as much as 15 miles off course. Finding a tiny coral atoll under these circumstances didn't make me feel any too optimistic. I did on several occasions talk via radio to the British Resident Commissioner on Canton and asked his advice on these currents. He kindly informed me that even the local fishing

boats knew nothing about the currents, and to make me feel really good, also told me that ships had overshot the island altogether, and unless I had plenty of power available, I just wouldn't be able to beat my way back....Huh! plenty of power.....If I missed that Island, would have to forget about it as it would have needed about 100 times more power than I had aboard to fight that current and sea. This made everything easy for me...I would either hit Canton on the nose, or miss it by 15 miles...it was as simple as that. That day I took my usual sights, and according to the first set, Phoenix Island should be within 5 miles on the port bow, so just to check my navigation, I nipped out onto the deck and had a look around. Well....I was really shaken because, right where my sights said I was....I actually was, and there as large as life, just peeping above the horizon was a golden strip of land. Sometimes it disappeared beneath the waves as Yasmie dropped into a trough, then as we rose like an elevator the island would appear again. Considering this Island is only about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile long and sticking out of the water about a foot, it gave me a heck of a kick to know my navigation was correct after traveling around 1700 miles. I suddenly realized that it was now noon and as had about 80 miles to go, I should arrive at Canton Island in the hours of darkness. I considered going to Phoenix and anchoring off until the following day, but lack of a good chart of the island, and the thought that there would be plenty of lights on Canton, also a full moon to help me decided the issue to carry on....I didn't realize how wrong that decision was until much later. Phoenix Island as a stopping place was out anyway since it wasn't inhabited, and if I got into any trouble I should be stuck, so over the radio I told Howard that I had sighted Phoenix and was pushing on, but allowing 30 miles for the set owing to the strong winds and currents I was experiencing. I also passed on the dope that I should probably arrive around midnight, given FAVORABLE wind. The wind was sure strong, but the sea held me up considerably. Howard explained to me that the aircraft beacon was visible for 25 miles IF there were any clouds...the light would reflect down; but if there were no clouds, then it would be visible for 7 miles. Naturally every cloud was on vacation....I don't know where they were, but they certainly weren't in the place I wanted them. I realized that this was going to be a sort of hit and miss stuff, and if by chance I missed the island in the night I should have to do my best to hold my position until I could get further sights...this part I wasn't too sure about. I maintained radio contact every half hour with Howard and it was decided that the airdrome would put on all their landing lights when I reckoned I was close enough to see the glow from them. I checked the log astern, and figured that I should be around

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20 miles off the island, but even though I climbed the mast several times, not a light could be seen. The sky remained brightly lit and clear by that full moon just to make things more difficult for me....the reflection of it from the sea made it physically impossible for me to see a thing, and I knew that unless I saw a good light, then just seeing the island at all would be impossible. Howards radio signals had built up to a terrific strength and I could hear the aircraft beacon signal blatting through the speaker, but still nothing could be seen. The time had come when I reckoned that I should be able to sight the glare of the landing lights on the island and gave Howard the OK to have them switched on. I climbed up the mast nearly getting thrown off several times in my anxiety to reach the top, but still not a sight of anything except the sivery flash of the sea. I scanned the horizon for 360° with binocs many times, but still no luck. I told him I would send up a signal flare in the vain hope he would see it, and using the old time system I sent up a couple of red ones. Back came a negative report and then I was really worried. Those flares should be sighted as much as 30 miles, and unless he was blind or I was miles off course, I just couldn't figure it out. What wouldn't I have done for a nice bunch of cumulus clouds to drift across the island! Through the entire voyage clouds had popped up when I didn't need them obliterating the sun and spoiling my sights, and now..... My field of visibility from the deck was 3 miles. The light on the island was 25' high making it visible to me around 7 miles, but the light was also situated at the farthest end of the island.....AND, as the island was 9 miles long, it would mean that I should hit the island, bounce over the reefs etc for 2 miles...THEN I would see the light. A good idea, but hardly practicable. The suspense was killing me when the Commissioner Mr. Laxton had the bright idea of motoring to the end of the island with his motor and flashing the headlights out to sea. I knew then that, according to Confucious (or was it some other ball player), that unless I sighted something pretty soon, there was going to be an awful grinding sound, and the Yasmé Amateur Radio Expedition would be over. I decided to start up the engine just to be on the safe side....that little bit of extra power might come in usefull. This was it; I lashed the tiller, putting the old tub on course, and then climbed the mast with the binoculars wrapped around my neck. I clung to that mast with the wind going full blast and every movement multiplied ten fold, scanning the horizon for that elusive light. Minutes passed....they seemed like hours, still nothing to see...was that a light ahead?....no, it couldn't possibly be, absolutley impossible...too low, now its moving...is it?... now its gone. There I was imagining things all over again. One sees all sorts of things under ~~the~~

strain. The confounded binoculars had misted up and I was getting the glinting on the surface of the sea from the moon reflection. Must have another look without the glasses + time. Trying to hold myself on the mast and control the binocs was too tough. Why I brought the darn things anyway I couldn't figure...they were too darned heavy and cumbersome, and with the misting up, they were worse than useless. One minute I was atop a wave and the next minute into the trough, all the time waiting for the crash that would denote the end of Yasme...and me. Still staring ahead.....YES, there IS a light there. Its flashing. I must control myself and count the seconds it stays off or on....which way was it, I just can't remember...and now I rathom my brain to try to think what the light actually does on the island. Is it 5 seconds on and ten off, or is it around the other way....is it colored or white? my brain was in a turmoil, but the light was there. Somehow the flashes weren't regular...some were 5 secs long...others 15; then I tumbled to it. Paul Laxton was on the tip of the island flashing his headlights, and I was right on course. Canton Island was exactly where it had been put on the chart. In no time I was back in the cabin screaming incoherently into the microphone that I had sighted the car lights. I acknowledged Pauls lights with a few flashes from my mast head light and then told Howard that I should be in or und two hours from now. Now I didn't care about using the gas, and with the engine going flat out, and all the canvas pulling we went along like a train. The dull light from the watery moon now low on the horizon permitted me to see the reef infested shores. It was well I had stuck on the engine for as soon as I got in the lee of the island I could feel terrific current pulling me into the shore. The wind swung round and there was quite a tussle resetting the sails for the new direction of the wind. I managed to keep well clear all dangers, even though it was a tough job to keep off those wicked looking reefs. Soon, I came within range of the aircraft beacon and that with other lights, navigation became lots easier. Out of the distance two tiny navigation lights materialized, and slowly the faint outline of a launch came toward me. Aboard was Paul Laxton the British Commissioner, Howard my Ham radio friend, and Ben Zvolanek the Island Manager and a fine Gilbertese crew to greet me. Everyone clambered aboard Yasme whilst still under way, leaving one man to steer the launch and to guide me to an anchorage. In ot time at all, my sails were down and stowed and the anchor made ready. As the tide was running out full blast from the lagoon, was impracticable to enter it at that time so, the anchor was dropped just outside the pass until the current eased up. What a greeting to have from complete strangers! it was only

after everything had quietened down that I realised the great strain I had undergone in previous few hours. All I wanted to do was to collapse and sleep, but I was forced to ho until 7.30 a.m. when the 14 knot current sweeping through the pass subsided sufficiently me to enter. When the time came to haul in the anchor we found it had stuck, but with half dozen beefy Gilbertese lads on the job, the anchor chain was soon brought in....minus the anchor...the shackle had sheered completely...this was the second anchor I had lost since leaving England. With a now favorable current, Yasme chugged into the lagoon, and with all the help aboard, we were soon moored up to the jetty. Howard and Paul Laxton the Commis: discussed the fact as to which side of the pass I would like to go, and whilst I should have preferred to stay on the British side, there was the snag that arose of lack of power to d my radio gear, so, boarding Howards car, I went to stay at his place and installed all my in his shack ready to work on the expedition when I had accustomed myself to the place.... wash't too easy.as you can see by the following

Canton Island.....As I lie here in the luxuriant grass, moist with the evening dew, the sun gradually sinking below the horizon casts its golden beams through the waving palms causing flickering shadows to dance around me; the tiny waterfalls and babbling brooks, pick up the last rays of light and throw fascinating reflections onto the surrounding fruit trees. Dusk maidens sit at my side, stroking my brow, caressing me, and feeding me with the wonderful fruits in which the island abounds, softly singing and making me dream ofdream....Yes, that's exactly what I am doing, DREAMING. Huh!!!! Canton Island, dew, babbling brooks..... babbling HOOEY. What the heck do you blokes think this place is?....Tahiti? First, let me inform you...there just aint no trees, brooks, waterfalls, in fact, there just aint nothing here.....not even fressg water, and, as for women...that was wishful thinking. All this joint consists of is a horseshoe shaped chunk of coral about 9 miles by 4, and around 10 feet high if you'r wearing elevator shoes. The sun burns down onto the glistening white coral, and if you have any respect for your eyes, you wither close 'em or wear sun specs. On this excuse for an island live a certain number of Americans, British and Gilbertese natives, all who, in my opinion deserve a great big gold medal and a pension at 30 for their bravery in staying here to maintain the air strip.....personally I'd rather cross the Atlantic in a canoe than live here for any time.....I must have aged around 50 years in my three month stay....haven't quite got over it yet.....pardon me whilst I remove my beard from the typewriter!!!! This joint was apparently discovered, much to his regret, by a certain American sailing type

in 1854 (When I was a lad.....Hm!....Quite a young lad) Anyway, this bloke ran his ship
one of the reefs in which this place specializes, and, on coming ashore, found that no a-
craft were due, ⁱⁿ For a few years, and the only inhabitants seemed to be a few motheaten bit
and thousands of hermit crabs, all of which showed a complete lack of interest in his ar-
....the birds all went on being eaten by the moths, and the crabs crawled back into their
shells leaving the skipper and his crew to fend for themselves. Naturally this lack of
hospitality rather upset the skipper...he being a Southern man...so he ups and gets out t
sea with his crew ~~in~~ the small boats arriving at Guam around 3,000 miles away some time
later....much later. For this famous discovery, the island was called Canton...think i
the name of his ship....the island has been called other things...not to be mentioned her
However, later on the British called in to the island and stuck up a beacon....possibly t
warn people off....why they want to go there I cannot fathom, maybe there were some crazy
Hams around in those days like me. Well, the British planted a few thousand coconut trees
but even that tree, renowned for its toughness just couldn't take it, and the majority
turned up their toes and died....now what do you think about that? Anyway, the Americans
and the British got together on the deal...neither quite knowing at the time why they want
the place....and after discussing it in the White House and in Parliament for about 50 yea
having a few poker deals etc., and still coming out even, they decided to rule the joint
together and called it a Condominium....what a name for such a tiny spot. Well, now it is
used as an air strip for ~~kites~~ ^{kites} flying back and forth from Australia and the United States
for refuelling. The Americans do most of the servicing etc., the British supply the native
labor, and so they live together as one big happy family. hoping and praying that the suppl
boat from Honolulu isn't late...it usually is....

Poor old Yasmie had rather a bad caning from Tahiti...I'd not do that trip again for all the
money or Radio Expeditions ~~in~~ the world.....I wonder....I'm mug enough for anything these
days. When I think of all the hours spent sewing those rotten sails together only to arrive
here with a deck load of scraps and tatters of cloth...it made my heart bleed; but, when I
learnt that a complete set of new ones were on the way...made of Dacron...a present from the
Radio Hams of the United States...my joy knew no bounds. J₁₁st to think that I could put away
that sewing machine...even throw it over the side for the duration...all my needles, thread
etc., could be put away and forgotten...what a wonderful feeling. It would turn the rest of
the voyage into a pleasure cruise instead of a sewing bee. All the shiny varnish work had

disappeared leaving drab bare wood, the white paint had blistered and fallen off leaving undercoating showing through, the decks were streaked with red rust marks from the gas carried there, and dirty oil marks smeared the whole water line....Yasme looked a mess from stem to stern and I knew that I was going to have a lot of work in this place. There was of course my radio work to do, and whilst I had only arranged to be here for a month, I knew I would be nearer two before I finally got away. First, Howard and I completely gutted Yasme of all loose gear. It took us a full day to get all the junk out, all the things I had collected that might come in handy. The dockside was piled high with every imaginable sort of gear, quite frankly, I didn't know where to start to move it all. We used an old truck to move the stuff to a disused warehouse. It took four trips carrying about a ton and a half a time to clear it away, and even then there was quite a lot more junk aboard that I just didn't have the strength to move. To endeavor to sort it all out was impossible, so we piled it all in one big heap, turned our backs on it and changed the subject....it was too much to think about the time. The following day I got cracking removing the engine. By around 5pm it was all ready to lift out. I was so smothered in grease and oil that some darned idiot stuck the hook of the winch right in my ear thinking I was the engine to be lifted. Having removed the hook stuck it in the appropriate place, we started hauling on the winch. That winch was made to lift two tons, but would that engine shift? would it heck. It took me about twenty minutes to discover that there were still a couple of 3" bolts holding it down; I feel sure we must have put a kink in the keel of Yasme on that effort....that makes two of us now with a kink. Well, with the assistance of two stout lads from the American supply boat, the winch with Howard pulling, and of course I assisted by grunting for them every time they took the strain we finally got the engine ashore, and there it lay in all its black greasy glory. How I'd cursed that engine in the past, and other times I could have kissed it, but just at that moment I felt more like shoving it over the side of the dock and forgetting that such things as internal combustion engines ever existed. We finally hoisted it onto the truck and bunged it on top of all the other junk in the warehouse, then tried hard to forget about the whole thing. The mere idea of stripping that engine was loathsome to me, but it had to be done and whilst I was quite a while making up my mind, the day finally came when I actually got it into the workshops there and started on the job of giving it a complete overhaul. To continue with this thrilling episode of the engine; I did finally manage to get it stripped right down to the last bolt. Those old piston rings I'd stuck in the gear box had done a fi-

Job on the teeth of the wheels. Half the teeth were missing, yet it still went OK, which again proves my point that these engine manufacturers always put more teeth on the wheel than necessary. Well, to tell you the truth, there was really nothing wrong with the engine even after I'd stripped it all down. There were four broken piston rings and the magneto shorting out in about a dozen places, a main bearing was rattling a bit and there was a hole in a piston where the top of a valve had fallen through it, but apart from these small things the engine was in perfect condition and I felt annoyed that I had spent all that time stripping it down for nothing. Mark you, it did need a coat of paint badly, so that helped to ease my feelings. I made a good job of the painting too. It looked real good, although I am real sure that no-one can see the fine paint job I did on the cylinder walls...used first grade enamel too. The pistons were a bit hard to put back afterwards, but belting them lightly with a sledge hammer made them slide in beautifully.....Here I must say that I have a New Zealand Ham to thank for all the spare parts required for that engine....it was his bit towards the expedition, and it was certainly appreciated. Well, finally the engine was assembled again and there she stood in all her fresh painted glory on a couple of chunks of wood, glistening from every pore, and only waiting for me to connect her up to a battery etc. Now, as I said before, there she stood. I'd fixed up an old gas tank, coupled the hose pipe to the thing, and then, armed with the handle I started to wind....did I wind? Blimey! I wound that thing until it almost seized up, but not a sound from it. Then I got real mad and gave it a kick. When I returned from the hospital, complete with crutch, I decided to have one last pull just for the hell of it. Crikey! it started first pull, before I could even get a full wind on the handle....Eureka(isn't that what Newton yelled when Eve threw an apple at him? ...maybe I'm wrong, it was Pythagorus and his theorem...yes that's it, anyway, to disregard all these ancient blokes, all I knew was, the old iron horse was actually going...mark you a little erratic, but going 'round. Then, I thought I'd be real daring and give it the gun. The darned thing gave a loud bang, three gasps, and then died on me, finally falling out of its wooden chocks and laying on its side...dead. By golly, I beat the living daylights out of it with my crutch, but apart from busting a couple of spark plugs and the crutch, the thing stayed dead. After much cogitation...good word that...finally decided that the magneto had spoken its last spark, and there would have to be a replacement before I could ever dream of it operating. To say the least, it was disappointing, but I had half expected this would happen in the end, so got cracking on the Ham radio and organised a new one to be

led out from England. Ten days later the magneto arrived packed in lots of insulating material so that all the sparks couldn't leak out in the mail. By this time I had installed the engine, lined it up, and was all ready to go to town with the new magneto. Half an hour later it was on, and then the big moment again. This time, no handle, just press the button. This is where I shall shake all of you.....I pressed the button and away she went without bang or a splutter...what a relief. I had never heard that engine sound so good since the day it was originally installed, and I hoped then, that it would be the end of all my engine troubles....it was. Having disposed of the engine, next came the problem of getting all paint and varnishing down. By this time I had just about had enough of working 18 hours a day. What with the engine and the radio work, the more ~~work~~ I thought about painting, the less I felt inclined to start on the job, but here Lady Luck smiled on me in the form of The British Commissioner, Paul Laxton. With his aid, I was able to get some of the Gilbertese lads to work on, and in one week, we had turned the Yasme from a dirty old hulk into a thing of beauty again. Those lads were sure good workers, and never once did I have to chase them. I found that many of them would wander down to the boat when I busy on the radio side of things and either push on with the job or maybe clean up the boat. Invariably when I arrived in the evening, they had all disappeared, and...I just couldn't get them to accept anything for their work. They had one thing in common with the Tahitians.....they were always cheerful and ready to help out. I must tell you about an incident that really put me on top of the world. The Commissioner told me the lads and ladies had invited me to one of their ceremonial dances which was to be held in my honor. Once again I find myself in the same difficulty of describing the dancing and singing. First it was totally different in every respect to the Tahitian style, or for that matter, any other style I had seen before. The music consisted mainly of singing and the banging of drums, but the harmony that emanated from around 40 of them, children included, was something out of this world. The dancing was carried out in the typical grass skirts, but was much slower than Tahitian style. They expressed themselves more by complicated hand movements than with the body. I must admit that whilst I couldn't understand the words, the hand movements gave a very good impression of the story of the song, and needless to say, the tape recorder was running all the time...and the camera. Up till now, I had very little chance in which to explore the island, but as work progressed on the Yasme, I took time off to stroll around the place, and see what the last war had left behind. I was really shaken to see the amount of gear strewn about the place in the form of

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transport, buildings and odd chunks of equipment...even to a complete dry cleaners shop. The majority of this stuff was on the south side of the pass...now taken over by the British to accommodate the natives and of course the residence of the Commissioner. The north side which was comparatively new, having only recently been built for the new air strip, also had quite a good sized scrap heap to show. Many of the buildings had been taken down and ~~re~~ reerected in more suitable positions, but the majority of the other stuff had decomposed to such an extent through rust and rot that it was useless, being a mechanically minded person it almost made me weep to see this utter waste, but it has been proven that the cost of ~~salv~~ salvage and transport back to civilisation would cost more than the stuff is worth, so here it must lie until it finally crumbles back to its original state and disappears. Many times I have seen scenes such as this in the movies, but never did I think I should see it in real life....lets hope I don't have to see it again. To shoot into the subject for the keen fishing types... this place is the proverbial fishermen's heaven. Never in all my travels have I seen ~~so~~ so many fish of varying sizes, shapes and types. One doesn't need to be an expert to catch them either, I have watched children catching them as fast as they could bait the hook....they don't even have a barb on the hook either. When trolling, one considers it a bad catch unless he can bring back a catch of 300 lbs or more in a couple of hours. The place abounds in tuna, bonito, and of course our old friend the shark. I have on many occasions seen tuns of 100 to 150 lbs brought in using a hand line....(small note here.. Yasme will be available for fishing trips...everything supplied except beer and scotch)....so much for all that. I had the Yasme tied up to one of the finger piers which were used in the old seaplane days. The pier was very rickety, and I knew that one day I would eventually land in the drink when the pier collapsed under my weight. To make a good job of the topsides and scrub ~~the deck~~ and anti-foul the bottom, we decided to take her to the South side of the pass where she could be beached with comparative safety, We waited for one of the highest tides, then with the engine flat out, drove her straight up onto the sandy beachone of the few sandy spots in the whole island. Everything has been organised...there were two poles stuck in the beach to lean her against, but unfortunately we couldn't get her far enough up on that tide to utilise the poles. So the native lads got hold of a few oil drums and stuck them under the bilges. As the tide dropped, the lads got cracking with scrubbing brushes cleaning of the barnacles and weed. With the terrific heat of the sun it was soon dry enough to slap on the paint. Did those lads work fast! One the one tide, they

the entire job of both painting the bottom and the topsides. I had to raise the water line another 3" as the extra gear coupled with extra gas too made her sink far below her normal line. Having completed all the painting possible under the circumstances...we never quite managed to reach the bottom of the keel as it was buried in the sand...we all waited for the tide to rise to take her off. Gradually, the water rose and she became buoyant. All the oil drums were whipped out, and then with all the lads pushing and the engine going full blast astar, the old girl slid gracefully back into her own element again...ready for another little trip across the ocean. The weather had been most kind to us that day: the wind, usually most boisterous, had dropped considerably and the waters of the lagoon had taken pity on me and had remaine calm throughout the entire operation, so we were all most happy about it. We loaded back all the deck gear that had been removed to lighten her and then, with quite a crowd of the lads aboard, we made a few circles in the lagoon and tootled back. Very soon I was safely tied up at the old finger pier, and with the aid of some of the boys, did some more mast climbing to fit all the running rigging that we had taken down for cleaning and greasing. I also completely rewired the whole system of lights on the mast with screened cable....it looked quite pretty...and all the lights worked too...for a change. Between us we gave the mast two coats of varnish, just to make it a little more slippery when I have to climb it at sea...I love doing things the hard way.

I managed to get hold of two heavy galvanized 55 gallon gas drums from Standard Oil, brazed a couple of tubes with caps to put in the gas, then installed one in the stern and one on the foredeck...I was just making sure I didn't run short of gas again as I did on that trip up from Tahiti. These extra drums, coupled with a whole load of 5 gallon gas on the deck brought up my capacity to the region of around 500 gals....so it looked as though I should have to be mighty careful where I dropped my cigarette ends...Hi!

Another little project I managed to get done was to install one of my generators on the top of the cabin roof instead of the fore deck. Whilst it had given good service in that position for around ten thousand miles it wasn't helping any to have it half submerged every time the seas got a little rough. Now, in its new position, it was nice and high and I didn't think I should have any trouble with it there...the space it used to occupy was taken up by the new gas tank. Today was the greatest day of my whole life...my new sails arrived from Hard Sails of New York. To the uninitiated in sailing, it is very difficult for them to appreciate the pleasure I got out of receiving them. They were beautifully made in Orlon, from Alexander

rt and Brothers of New York City, with stainless steel luff wires, in fact they were something I had never dreamed I should get in all my life, and quite frankly, I felt almost scared to to put them up in case they got dirty or something. Naturally, I didn't have the themt then to fit them but just sat there and gazed at them....boy, did they give me a kick. It was blowing a 40 knot squall at the time, and from the look of the sky it appeared it would continue to do so for many hours, so reckoned it would be a while before I should be able to hoist and check them....the time wouldn't come fast enough for me to try them out.

Excuse me jumping around like this, but these little things come into my mind at odd moments. A few days before the arrival of the sails, the lads took me out in one of their outrigger canoes....what an experience for a deep sea man. It was around twenty feet long and had I suppose about 100 square feet of sail up on a peculiar triangular type of mast. At the time there was little or no wind, yet it slid through the water like a surf boat. As we got further away from the shore the wind came up and before long we were skimming along around 15 to 20 knots. As it heeled to the ever increasing wind, so the outrigger left the water, but the idea was to keep it just skimming the surface to keep up the speed....this meant that we had to move around to get the correct balance at all times...one slip, and the whole thing would have turned turtle. The way that canoe pointed up into wind has been a source of wonderment to me ever since...it was amazing, never have I seen a modern yacht that could point so well. The amusing part of all this was when we had to come about to tack. One of the lads would grab the center pole of the mast whilst another another lifted the other part of the mast from the bows. With a very smart maneuver the mast from the bows was taken from one end of the canoe to the other, and the bows of the canoe then became the stern and vice versa (hope you've figured all that out)....and in a matter of seconds we were off at breakneck speed on another tack, spray flying everywhere as we headed across the lagoon. It was great fun, and although we were kept on the move, balancing and bilging out, I wouldn't have missed that trip for anything. These canoes are made entirely of wood and tied together at the joints of the planking etc., with string woven by the women from coconut fibres. These canoes differ quite considerably from other parts of the world inasmuch they are not hollowed out of a solid chunk of wood. They are actually built of planks, each plank being lapped to the other by the use of charcoal. The charcoal when rubbed on one piece of wood will rub off on the edge of the adjoining piece and show the high spots, and considering the primitive tools used, the joints are perfect. Tiny holes are drilled along the planks which are then joined together with this

coconut fibre string. This particular canoe had been out in the sun for some time, yet on being placed in the water, it hardly leaked at all. The design hasn't changed in centuries, and the shape of the canoe is hardly symmetrical. It has a slight twist somewhere along its length which although many have tried to copy in the European world, have never succeeded. I was told this twist enables the canoes to ride out heavy seas, cross broken water which were it not incorporated would capsize the canoe immediately...it was far too involved for me to figure out, and to explain it in fine detail would take hours. I didn't have that knowledge, and certainly wouldn't have the skill to build one myself.

One of the highlights of my stay was the celebration of the Queen of England's Birthday. The Commissioner in full dress uniform had quite a smart turn out with his police force, and as the flag was broken out, so the rifles were brought up to the salute and a volley fired. I was quite impressed with the parade. The National Anthem, sung by the whole of the Gilbertese people, rang out with such force that one would have thought that a full military band was leading them....it gave me food for thought in those brief moments, and I wondered how the folks at home were taking this day. The parade over, everyone tramped back to the village for a good feed and that evening they presented themselves at the Americans Club House to give everyone a perfect evening's entertainment with their singing and dancing. The few Fijians employed there on the island by the Pan American Airways were there too in their ceremonial dress, and they gave us an example of their very tuneful singing and dancing as well. On the whole, the evening turned out very successfully, and the audience certainly showed their enthusiasm. It was just as well these little incidents occur here to break the monotony otherwise I really think everyone would go completely nuts.

Departure had been delayed a couple of days awaiting mail, so the time was spent in giving Yasme a general cleaning. I noticed one of the Gilbertese natives gazing enviously at the boat so I invited him aboard to look around. His lack of English did not prevent him from showing his enthusiasm and before long he was assisting in the cleaning up process. This spontaneous action of helping out seemed to be prevalent with all the Gilbertese and this laddie, not ~~quite~~ content with working four about four hours, came back the next morning just before departure to do some more! What embarrassed me considerably was his insistence that I accept a small pile of dimes and pennies which he carefully placed on the saloon table. Another gift was a wonderful hand woven sleeping mat. He indicated that the money, amounting to about two dollars, would help me out. Whilst happy to accept the mat and yet loath to hurt his feelings I had

to refuse the money and it was only by making a big show with my hands that I was able to convince him that the money was not necessary...how the heck does one thank a feller for that sort of gesture when one is unable to converse in the normal way? - Well I was very touched over the whole business and really regretted having to say goodbye to him. Later that morning the British Commissioner and the Island Manager complete with their respective wives and a whole crowd of Gilbertese came to the quay to see the departure. The Commissioner had his launch ready and in piled everyone there to pilot me through the pass. At precisely 11 a.m. with the engine ticking over nicely, the shore lines were cast off and the Yasme moved sedately astern from the quay that had been her home for the last three months. Once clear in the lagoon over went the helm, engine full ahead, and with the launch leading the way, Yasme creamed through the pass feeling, I should think, as happy as I to be at sea again. Within ten minutes we were out of the sheltered lagoon and into the Pacific with its big swell. Directly we had sufficient sea room, up went my new Orlon sails to be christened with one of the finest trade winds I had known for some time. It took but a few minutes to trim Yasme to the easterly wind then shutting off the engine and giving my friends a final wave, we headed west at a pleasant 7 knots....to what, I wasn't sure, but my course was layed so I should strike up in the near future with Nauru Island...just another tiny spot out there in the wide Pacific.

I had been given a regal sendoff. What a start for a voyage.... the wind was perfect, the sea was smooth, and with my new sails I really thought that this was going to be an uneventful trip....huh! ruddy optimist...that's me. My joy at leaving Canton Island was unbounded. Only those stationed there can really appreciate this point. As it faded happily into the distance astern, I heaved a great big sigh of relief and looked forward to the next spot. For several days things ran smoothly, the wind held its position and generally speaking it was turning out to be a real luxury cruise. My fridge was working fine, and it was quite a pleasure to have a few cool drinks and unlimited ice available but...there was a slight snag. Everything I took out was frozen solid, and for the first time in my experience I took an egg out and broke the cup on it, I tried waiting for the egg to thaw out (cabin temperature at 104). Finally in desperation, I just chucked a couple in the pan, minus the shells, but with a few small portions of broken china attached to improve the flavor. I watched the two perfectly formed virgin eggs fry, retaining their shape all the time. To see these two pieces of hen fruit chasing each other around the pan was quite amusing, and it certainly saved me a lot of time having to turn them over at the appropriate

time...needless to say, they didn't quite have the right flavor in the end. There is a slight rolling movement on Yasme in the tradewinds, and I had to open that fridge door at precisely the right moment. Misjudgement of the roll results in the entire contents being flung onto the cabin floor. One has to get the roll just right, open the door, remove the article and close the door again before the whole lot gets flung in your face....maybe I'll fix it with automativ gyro one day... The old Yasme was really making fine time. We should certainly make Nauru in record time. But, like all good things, they have to end sometime. One evening after I had just been chatting to Dick on the Radio, flat calm settled in and I was forced to start up the old iron horse. This time she ran perfectly, but the heat in the cabin was enough to cook by,,,..boy, was it hot! The old tub will steer herself fine under sail alone, but once set the engine going and she will turn in circles continuously, never holding course for longer than a few minutes. I had to sit at the blinkin' helm, and after avoiding that chore for such a long time, it nearly drove me nuts to have to sit there and lose a lot of sleeping hours. No grub, no radio, no sleep, no nothing unless I switched off and let her drift, then I had to put up with the infernal rolling. Radio schedules had to be kept to a minimum in this period...the few minutes on the rig would send Yasme cruising back to Canton again as she swung around, and I couldn't think of anything worse than that...Wow! I was getting really disgusted with this interminable glassy calm and the fumes from the engine which were giving me a stinking headache....Oh for a breeze again.

My friendsthe sharks displayed great interest in my movements and a couple of dolphins played around all the time, so I was never short of company. The sharks were ably disposed of with a few slugs in the right place and the dolphin were left to gambol to their hearts content. They are friendly fish, and on several occasions I was able to give them a light dig with the boat hook...they seemed to enjoy it and came back for more. I could have speared them very easily, but I have never yet killed anything other than sharks unless it was for ~~food~~ food. My taste for tropical fish has never been developed so they are left strictly alone...
...I stick to Spam. The calm stayed for 24 hours, Since I daren't leave Yasme to drift while entering the Gilbert group of atalls, this meant sticking at the helm and in consequence, no sleep/ They are not a particularly easy group to pass through unless one has exceptionally keen eyesight. The majority of the atolls are only visible when one is almost atop of them, which leaves very little time to change course. The following evening after finishing my talk with Dick...giving him all the dope...my position etc., I started up the engine again to

get a move on. All the sails had been lowered and lashed to the deck and we were completely under power...just like a motor boat. I had noticed earlier a slight breeze in my face but attributed it to the forward motion of the boat. After my talk with Dick, sitting out there at the helm, it seemed to be increasing in strength. This was most odd, as I was right in the trade wind area, and any wind...according to the wind charts anyway...must automatically come from the east, southeast or northeast, in other words , more or less behind me. This wind was coming from the WEST. Of course I had heard of the dangerous westerlies in this area, butacording to these famous wind charts...they weren't supposed to be kicking around until November, so I just thought it must be my imagination when I felt this breeze in my face. Imagination was out when this slight breeze turned itself into a full westerly gale. The sky, which up to that point, had been reasonably clear with the typical tropical stars lighting up the ship and the ocean, then turned itself into a black murky smudge, and everything was blotted out. For 30 minutes the wind built itself up in force, screaming through the rigging like a Banshee out of hell then it started to rain. I can hardly call it rain, it just fell out of the skies in sheets....the wind picked it up and threw it across Yasme horizontally. At the initial blow Yasme staggered a bit, then she seemed to steady herself up a bit, and with engine running at half throttle she held her position in the storm. Whilst the sea was whipped up into a raging maelstrom, and spray was flung everywhere, still Yasme held her position with hardly a movement other than a gentle rise and fall as the big seas lifted her on each crest. Two large buckets on the deck were filled in just over an hour and for the first time in my voyage, water seeped in through the cabin roof and around the window frames. I Twice had to go forward to lash the sails more securely, and it was literally impossible to stand up against the force of that wind to make my way forawrd along the decks....I thought rather ironically of my earlier thoughts of nothing happening on this trip. My one dread was the wind getting into those furled sails on the deck. Had that happened they wuld have been ripped to pieces, and possibly ripped up half the deck fittings too when they finally went, but Lady Luck stayed with me and everything stayed put. This blow lasted a full 18 hours, and in this time I got myself hopelessly lost. Prior to this blow I had been unabke to take any satisfactory sights owing to excessive clouds, and was steering strictly on judgement.... generally known in the sailing world as 'Dead Reckoning'...if you don't reckon right.... your dead. By this time this blow had started to fizzle out it was dark again, and whilst the wind had left us completely, it had left behind it a disgusting sea which did everything to

Yasme except turn her upside down. A thick mist..once again a very unusual thing to happen in that part of the world...settled down and visibility dropped to around 100 feet. I knew I was somewhere in the Gulbert Islands, but where I could Only GUESS. If I continued to use the engine I could never hope to hear the seas breaking on a reef, and I was travelling too fast, even at half throttle, to get out of trouble should a reef materialise out of the murk. To stop the engine meant that Yasme would immediately be left in the power of the very doubtful current, which might or might not set her onto a reef. It was all very disconcerting. At the time I hadn't slept for three days and was feeling just a little bit tired.

I had grown almost accustomed to benzedrine and it had hardly any effect on me...I was still tired. Shutting off the engine I devoted all my time on the deck straining my eyes through the binoculars, and my ears were almost flapping trying to hear that deadly sound of seas breaking on a reef. Many times I wanted to just lie down and collapse with sheer exhaustion.. even the drug had no effect on my senses, and the feeling of drowsiness kept coming on. To have seated myself at that time would have been utterly stupid...I would have dropped off to sleep in a second. I just had to force myself to walk around on that very restricted deck space, and continually take swigs of coffee to even keep reasonably awake. It's funny the things that pass through ones mind at times like that, and I was trying hard to figure out whether the seas breaking on a reef could be heard in a flat calm....they sure could....by golly they could! Out of that deathly silence, came a very distant swish of water, with periodical silences. Where it was, I just hadn't a clue, but as the seconds ticked away, so that swish became more apparent. I reasoned that I must be getting closer as the sound became louder, and it was obvious to me that a current must be pushing me on, but which way were we drifting? Everywhere was thick mist, and to look at the surface of the water conveyed nothing to my dulled senses...it looked exactly the same all around and yet I knew we were approaching something alien to the open sea. Perhaps I should have got all nautical and entered in the log the exact time I heard the noise, and also noted the mileage on the patent log astern, but one does not think of these minor items when ones ship may suddenly become a wreck. The suspense was terrible; I kept on hearing this deadly sound, and yet, it seemed to get no louder....maybe I was going nuts....I just don't know, I was feeling terrible....tiredness makes one imagine all sorts of things, and yet I knew I hadn't imagined that sound. I was dying to rush into the cabin to start up the engine, but realised that the noise would blot out the sound of the sea on the reef. I kept worrying whether the engine would star

if I sighted the reef, or whether it would play one of its dirty tricks and just fail to go at the right moment. Visibility still remained at almost nil, so I just stayed put on deck and tried my best to penetrate the mist. How I prayed at that moment that the noise would get louder. I just had to sight that reef. The thought of the noise disappearing was not enough. I knew it was there and just HAD to see it, then I knew I could steer away from it with the engine. Time dragged on, and I nearly screamed in desperation. A quick glance at my watch told me it was time for my chat with Jock in New Zealand, but I dare not start up the generator. By this time the sea had settled to a glassy calm, and I thought that if I did strike that reef I would be able to get offeasily enough. That was wishful thinking. The swell whilst not apparent, was so big that the Yasme had she come within range, would be picked and thrown with such force as to be literally smashed in pieces with one blow.

I then thought how far off this reef was from the actual island itself, and how long it would take me to reach the island...providing I knew in which direction it lay. A moment of panic came over me for a few minutes and I hastened to release the lashings on my matchbox sized dinghy. The rowlocks were nowhere to be seen, and in the darkness I could only find one oar....I thought what a fool I was not to have things like that available. Well, there was no time to go looking for the bits that were missing, and I hated to move anything that would cause even the slightest noise, so just forgot the entire thing and went on listening and looking. Perhaps it was an hour, maybe 5 minutes, I just don't know...my senses by then had become extremely acute and all tiredness had left me....there, no more than a stone's throw, was a faint line of surf. I didn't stop to make sure or even take a second look, but shot into the cabin and pressed the starter button of the engine. What a feeling of relief when it burst into song at first touch....a few seconds to warm up....it seemed like a few hours, and then very gingerly, in with the clutch, and a fast run to the cockpit to swing the tiller over. With the helm hard over Yasme picked up way and swung in a wide circle to the opposite direction, and whilst she was slowly swinging, I leapt out onto the deck and cast my eyes astern...there it was, the cause of all my worries for the last several hours. That long line of surf, just like a silver streak in the water, but beneath it I knew were some of the most dangerous and vicious reefs in the world. No-one can appreciate the feeling of relief that swept through the whole of my body, and as I throttled down the engine to dead slow, I just collapsed on the cockpit seat with utter exhaustion. My eyes were aching, my whole body felt as though it had been given the biggest beating of my life, and yet I was happy for the first

time in many hours. As the Yasme slowly forged ahead, now steering due North, I carefully checked the log astern and noted the revelant facts. A very rough check of the chart gave me an approximate position, after taking into consideration my drift eyc., and I knew then that, providing I headed Due North, no harm could come to me. I realised thatvthis weather couldn't last forever; that before long the sun would be breaking through enough for me to get an exaet position.

The rest of the night was spent sitting in the cockpit with the engine just ticking over. Whilst I was reasonably sure of my position, I was in no great hurry to get anyplace that might put me near another reef. By daybreak it was very washed out crew aboard Yasme...but, still afloat.

Perfect sights were taken that day and my position pinpointed. I found that my dead reckoning position wasn't out more than a few miles....dead

lucky! The flat calm still persisted, but the mist had cleared completely and I felt at peace once again. I made several halfhearted attempts at eating, but the suspense of the past hours plus an excess of coffee and cigarettes had put me right off. By this time I was in open water and free from all dangers. I knew that another sleepless night would really knock me out so I switched off the engine, left the old girl to drift and dived into my bunk. Sleep came hard, but when it did it was almost permanent. I slept for 7 hours and I felt Like I had the biggest hangover in the world on awajing. A few buckets of sea water over the old head put me back in the land of the living. I noticed that whilst attempting to comeout of my coma that the Yasme had set up a slightly different motion, and on poking my head through the cabin doors, found much to my delight, a slight breeze....in the right direction this time. The sails soon went up and it was quite a relief to be under way again without having to sit at the helm all the time.

I was feeling on top of the world and soon was brewing up some chow and loads of coffee. By the time I had eaten 4 solid eggs...(half fried, half frozen) and two large slices of bacon (in the same condition) I felt ready for a couple of hurricames.

When schedule time came for old Jock, I started up the generator and then switched on the transmitter. Not a spark, not a blinkin' whistle out of the old transmitter... seemed to me that bad luck was going to pursue me again, but no worry...I had plenty of transmitters aboard, so all it meant was hooking another one up. After a while I got another fixed...switched it on...OH NO! Not again....yes that one had gone out on me too! What more could happen? I dragged out the last one, but had that strange feeling that comes at times. I wasn't wrong either...three transmitters, and not one of them working; I wanted to sling the whole lot over the side. Now as I once told you before, to work upon a radio on board

Yasme is not a simple job, but I did have a go. The first place I stuck the prods of the test meter gave me a wonderful flash. The needle of the meter swung over and nearly poked a hole in the other side of the dial, there was a slight smell of burning insulation, and then...one test meter out of commission. I knew I wasn't going to keep any skeds for some time, so just put all the tubes back and odd pieces of wire etc., and tried to forget about the whole thing. I realised that many of the lads with whom I kept daily radio contact were going to wonder at my silence, but at the time there wasn't a thing I could do about it. I was so fed up I just couldn't have cared less. I decided that the best plane would be to make for Ocean Island (which was on my route) which, with any luck, I should sight within 24 hours. I thought I could borrow a meter there and get back on the air to notify everyone that I was at least still above the surface of the Pacific. A fine breeze had come up and we made really fine way. Around noon the following day Ocean Island loomed up right where it was put a few years ago. At least my navigation was right, so I had something to be thankful for. My arrival at Ocean Island was totally unexpected. They knew I was on the tri from Canton, but my schedule didn't call for a stop there. Cruising up the massive buoys alongside the island was quite an experience. Before many minutes had elapsed a launch came alongsied to tie me up. Formalities were short and soon the Yasme was swinging to the buoy whilst I was ashore having one of the biggest meals in some time. The island was heaven for me. After spending three months on that barren atoll of Canton, and then to be among trees and grass again, and to be able to climb a hill.....all these things may appear trivial to you, but to me they meant everything. The population consisted of Gilbertese, Australians, New Zealanders and British, all devoted to the job of getting phosphate from the island. Those people there were marvelous. They treated me like a King, and whilst my stay was only 24 hours I think that I must have covered practically everything of interest on the island. Captain Town, the Port Captain, took me under his wing and we visited practically every European on the island. I also found the time to give a talk to the children at the local school, which gave them a break from the normal procedure. I saw in that short time how the phosphate was dug, transferred to a crushing mill, dried, loaded into barges, and taken out to the British Phosphate ships tied up to the buoys. The whole episode of Ocean Island was like a swift kaleidoscope. I saw so many things in these few hours that I find it very difficult to write about them all. Naturally my camera was going full blast. These phosphate islands (Nauru is one also) were originally under the water, but now are several hundred

feet high. Apparently volcanic action pushed them up, and now one can see coral heads all over the island about 100' above sea level and pick up fossilized shells. Whilst the shell is no longer in existence, the actual shape of the shell is there to see in the form of a solid chunk of phosphate. The phosphate is between all these coral heads, and when discovered many years ago the phosphate was dug by hand. Today, with the latest equipment to do this work many thousands of tons are dug and exported each week. There is sufficient there to be worked for the next 50 years. The coral heads were quite unique, looking like something from the stone ages. Other parts of the island were equally interesting, but there was too much to see in too little time. The Japs had the island during the war and in several places there is still evidence of their occupation. One glaring example was the British Residency that had been completely machine gunned and then deroofted to obtain the timber. My entire stay was devoted to sight seeing, eating, talking, and being introduced to the many islanders. I sincerely regretted having to part company with those wonderfully sociable islanders, but time was creeping on, and with the thought of the future bad weather, I was forced to leave. Ocean Island had received a radio message via Australia that I was overdue and that no radio contact had been made with me for three days. Fortunately an air-sea rescue plane had only been made ready and my arrival at Ocean Island had stopped any further action. I believe I have one or two Hams and a very alert government service to thank for their kind thoughts and prompt action. Departure from Ocean Island was made around 11pm., as I wanted to hit Nauru in daylight. I had 167 miles to go and planned to arrive there 36 hours later. What I didn't plan was, one hour after departure, the wind dropping and leaving me in a flat calm again. This was most annoying, as I thought I would have a fine sail all the way, but that's the way the luck goes. On with the iron horse, and at an average of 5 knots we plugged along in the middle of the night hoping that a breeze would come up at any moment. Sometime in the night I went way off course when I fell asleep at the helm. Not knowing when I had fallen asleep made it rather difficult to determine my position when I woke up. At daylight I found the sky covered with clouds, so any sights to obtain my position were out. I was really mad with myself over this. Having only a short distance to go I did not have the usual opportunity to take sights on another day to fix my position. I just held course and hoped for the best. By 10am. I realised that I must be off course since I should have sighted the island on the horizon. This knocked out all my ideas of arrival at noon, so I stopped the engine and decided to drift around until I could get a noon sight and figure my exact latitude. The old sun crept up to its zenith

and with the sextant reading, I quickly worked it out.....SEVEN MILES South off course...what a clot I'd been to go to sleep. I must have slumbered for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. I swung the Yasme round onto the new course, and within $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours Nauru peeped over the horizon dead ahead. I was beating against the current and a very slight breeze had sprung up, so that little trip took over four hours before I managed to tie up at the buoy off the island ...the time was 5:30 pm. My arrival at Nauru Island was 4 hours late...Cocktail time for all those ashore. Everyone had finished work, and all the boats had been removed from the water. I was surprised to see that despite the late hour they were lowering a launch into the water with their big crane, and shortly afterwards the Port Doctor and Chief of Customs were aboard. The formalities took but a few minutes and they were most considerate in every respect. I elected to stay aboard for the night as I realised it would cause them great inconvenience to bring me back later.... the custom there is to remove all the craft from the water daily after work and stow them in a big shed, and after arriving 5 hours late, I didn't want to put them to any more bother. It was a relief to stay aboard that night, the trip from Ocean island had hardly been a comfortable one, and I'd forgotten when I'd had a really good night's sleep. Directly my visitors had departed, I hit the sack for a well earned snooze. Tired as I was, I passed a pretty restless night as Yasme insisted on having minor arguments with the buoy. The continual thumping through the night kept me on deck fending her off with a boat hook and trying to put some old rubber tyres between ~~them~~ the two of them. Only those of you that have had the experience of keeping a yacht from a buoy can appreciate my troubles. The lack of wind, which normally would have kept the Yasme from the buoy, made things doubly difficult. Day broke without a sound except for that infernal thud from the buoy, and by this time I had practically taken up a permanent location on the foredeck armed with a boat-hook and fender. What a night that was, and it wasn't until around 8 am that a slight breeze came up which kept Yasme from bumping. I had felt pretty rough the night before, but now I was a wreck! My nice clean whites donned that previous evening looked as though they had been used to clean down the engine. After cleaning up I came up on deck to find many Nauruan lads with their outrigger canoes gathered around. Although I had a fat head and felt like nothing on earth, the sight of all those smiling faces soon brought my temper down to normal. The rapt expressions on their faces when they learned that I had travelled from England alone was really something to see. One of them took me ashore in his canoe, and armed with the ship's papers and attired in a clean set of whites, I stepped ashore to be greeted by Harry Freegard, an Englishman like

myself. In no time at all I was having a much needed shower, and afterwards was filled solid with chow. Naturally the conversation went around to the voyage, and later that day when I talked myself hoarse, Harry took me for a fast trip around the Island. By this time it was getting pretty late, so I wasn't able to see to much, but after my experience at Canton Island, that wonderful sunset on Nauru lighting the whole sky and casting long shadows through the trees made me feel on top of the world again.

My first day at Nauru had come to an end, but in those few hours I had been introduced to countless people, all of whom were interested in hearing about my voyages. Dinner invitations poured in and I was overwhelmed with everyone's friendliness. What a day that was for me...I didn't dream that I could have been so happy, and that night after being taken aboard again, I slept the sleep of ^{perfect} contentment. Even Yasme decided to keep clear of that infernal buoy for one evening. Early the following morning saw me ashore making an appointment with Mr. Cameron, the Island Manager, and although he was very busy, saw me right away. Seeing important people always gave me a feeling of apprehension, but I need not have felt that way, because directly I got into his office, he made me feel at home, even inviting me to take morning tea with him. After initial introductions, little time was lost in telling him of my purpose of the voyage and reasons for visiting the Island. I feel that I must have babbled to him for hours with an assortment of facts dealing with radio, sailing, the last place etc etc. In fact, I must have got the poor chap completely bewildered with so much talk, and yet, he listened most attentively the whole time, rarely interrupting. I suppose I could have gone on talking for ever, but eventually, I did dry up much to Mr Camerons joy, I should think. He wasted very little time after hearing my story in getting proper living accomodation organised wher I could live and operate my radio gear, and to top it all off, then arranged to have an antenna put up for me. Now this antenna wasn't anything cheap or shoddy, but the real thing done in the right way. Some chaps came along and dug a couple of deep holes around 200' apart, and into them were cemented two forty foot steelpoles. The usual wire was strung between them, and finally a long metal earthing rod was sunk into the ground leaving me with nothing to do except bring all my gear ashore and couple it all up to the two wires coming in the house. Little time was lost after that and I immediately started work contacting the Hams all over the world. Being a completely new country from the Hams viewpoint, I was overwhelmed with calls coming through the receiver, and the first day, I stuck there for a solid 14 hours just sending out

reports etc. Much of my radio gear had suffered in the last voyage mainly through the terrific beating it had had in the storms, and whilst there was nothing very serious wrong it all took time to fix. Once again I was helped out with one of the chaps on the Island. Les Wright, the Commercial Radio Operator of the Island came forward and offered to overhaul every piece of equipment on the boat in his spare time. He had been a Ham when in New Zealand and his interest in the project was fantastic. Hour after hour he spent with me in the evenings testing and helping me with my work...had I been a King, I couldn't have been treated better. Working on radio, and enjoying the company of the Islanders kept me away from Yasme more than I should, and one day whilst checking the boat, I found that the floor boards were covered with water to a depth of 6" and by the looks of things it was rising pretty fast. I knew immediately what had happened...the buoy had opened up the stem through continual thumping and it was coming in fast...too fast for comfort. This put me in quite a spot as beaching facilities at Nauru were exactly NIL. The buoy she was tied too had a chain attached going down to 450 fathoms, and as one neared the shore, the reef came up sheer from the bottom. The tiny harbor was too shallow at low tide to be any use and I got a little worried. A temporary repair could have been done OK, but it wouldn't last five minutes when I got under weigh, so off I went to see Mr Cameron. I felt that he might be able to suggest something to fix the damage, and after my talk with him, he called the Port Captain and his assistant for a conference on the deal. Later, they went out to Yasme armed with a tape measure, and within half an hour they had all the measurements required, and then started doing a little measuring ashore on the big overhead crane. The following morning at 7 the Yasme was towed into the harbor, tied up under the crane, all her deck gear put ashore, and the mast unstepped and lifted out...the first time since leaving England. After that, she was slowly brought under another larger crane which projected over the wharf, and then with the aid of the Nauruan lads, steel wire slings were put under her. I dived below to ensure they were all resting on the iron keel, and then very gradually, the crane took the strain. The crane was normally used for lifting out the massive barges at night, and had a maximum lift of 20 tons, so I didn't need to worry about the wires breaking...Did I say I didn't need to worry? I was very busy taking photos, but had to stop as my heart came up into my mouth as Yasme became airborne and swung there 30' above the water. She swayed there for a few moments and then slowly was swung

in over the wharf to be lowered onto some heavy wooden chocks. The slings were then readjusted and she was lifted again and slowly drawn backwards into the boat shed. It was a masterpiece of crane work as there was hardly $\frac{1}{4}$ " clearance as she swept backwards through the supporting girders of the crane, and when she arrived at her spot, not a tiny bit of paint had been removed. Once in position, heavy wooden shores were placed to hold her steady, and several of the lads got cracking scrubbing off the accumulation of seafood that had joined me on the last voyage from Canton Island. The generosity and kindness of Mr Cameron is hard to believe. "I never once did I think that anyone would have gone to all that trouble, but as he said, "We can't have you leaving here and sinking on the way". Having Yasme ashore simplified matters considerably in respect of fixing the stem, but what I didn't expect to find was a chunk of the keel infested with teredo worm...the worst boring pest known to the sailor. With so much help from everyone there it became a simple matter to slice out the offending piece of timber and replace it with new stuff, and I feel that should MR Cameron ever read this, I can only apologise for all the trouble I caused...he never once refused a request from me in my whole stay, and with his backing, I was able to turn Yasme into something of beauty and solid seaworthiness again. I left her there until the time came to depart and in the meantime carried on with my radio work. Here I will try not to get technical, but for good transmission one must have good antennas and whilst the wire strung up was doing a fine job, I still needed something that would be better still....I needed a beam. This gadget is quite a contraption to the uninitiated, but to the Ham it is a great necessity and it was here that Mr Cameron authorised all the help needed to construct one. I had all the material, but it needed drill presses and other equipment far too big to be carried aboard. Within 24 hours the beam was built and the time came for it to be erected. Actually, I was due to leave in two days, but I had to put it up to find out if it worked. First a 40 foot 2" diameter pole was put up and stayed then came the problem of taking the beam to the top and fixing it...the beam is 33 feet wide and twelve feet deep and although very light is quite a handful in any wind. Now the pole being only 2" in diameter gave me plenty of misgivings as to its strength to support the beam, let alone myself at the top to fit it, so being one of the brave types, I looked around for volunteers to climb the pole. The lads here had no fears whatsoever, and in a few seconds one had climbed to the top with a rope, and there, swaying in the breeze he

looked like a blob in the sky. He didn't seem to worry. The end of the rope was attached to the beam and the lad at the top started to pull. As it rose in the air, it narrowly missed a high tension wire which had it touched would have frizzled the lad to a cinder. We managed to avoid having roast meat that day. Part way up, the beam jammed up in the bracing wires, and before I could say a word, another lad had shinned up the pole to help the other. That really worried me. The two of them got the beam to the top, struggled for quite a while, but couldn't get it to sit in the correct position. A cal came to the crowd below, and in a few seconds a third member was at the top of that 40' pole. Certainly it swayed, and I shuddered and closed my eyes a few times, but they still remained at the top complete with beam, rope and the electrical leads hanging down. Finally, with the three of them fighting the wind, the beam dropped into position, and from below came a hearty cheer for a job well done. I sure breathed a great big sigh of relief when those lads were on solid ground again, but the beam was up, and when I connected it to the radio, it worked 100% fine. With my radio and boat repair work completed I took time off to see a little of the Island which had given me so much pleasure, and here one of the Nauruan Lads came along with his car and took me around. It was a Sunday morning, fine as usual and off we went. The Island is run by the British Phosphates Commission, and is strictly a commercial venture, therefore it hasn't been turned into a miniature Tahiti. Nonetheless it has some charming views and beautiful beaches.

We passed ^{the} two massive Cantilevers, girderlike structures built for transporting via a moveable belt, the phosphate which has first been dried, from the warehouses to the ships which are moored off the island. It is impossible for the ships to come alongside a dock for loading, so they are moored some distance off and these cantilevers are swung out over the sea so that they are directly over the holds of the ships. The operator, who sits at the end of the cantilever, directs the supply of phosphate which pours through a large pipe, and within 24 hours the average cargo ship can be filled. I watched several ships being loaded and was impressed with the smooth running of the whole operation.

After leaving the cantilevers and the warehouses, we passed the Administration area. This was very well laid out, and I had occasion to meet Jimmie McConnachie, a Scot from the old Country who was acting as Chief Police Super. He had quite a lot to tell me about his own travels, and I will say his police organisation was really something to see. We had quite

a few good times during my short stay, and I must admit that it is a rare thing for a police wallah to be a sociable type...he was the exception.....Incidentally, I got my Nauruan Driving licence through Jimmy...just for the heck of it, something for my collection. Along the coast I found Japanese aircraft in varying states of decay. They were the few that didn't quite make it when the Americans decided to take the place back. Also littered about the place were old Jap pill boxes and odd chunks of fortifications, with a few rusty shooting irons embedded in the concrete; hardly picturesque, but they are gradually becoming overgrown with the bush, and in a few years, you won't be able to see 'em.

We left the commercial part of the island and came to the native part, where along the beaches were erected wooden platforms about 12' high which the Nauruans build for the bosun birds to roost. The birds are quite tame, and I noticed several sitting quite contentedly on perches outside the native houses. On approaching one, I found it quite friendly. Continuing, the road wended its way through beautifully shaded groves of trees where everything was cool and very quiet. Looking through the palm fronds, stretched before me was one of the most picturesque sights I have seen in many a day....Anibare Bay. As the sea swept along this curving bay, the water seemed to change color from blue to green, and then would turn into a white foam as it broke upon the sandy beach. With the palms swaying in the background, and the sun setting, I only wished I could have been an artist to portray this wondrous scene. Leaving the bay, we then worked our way a little higher on the island and there, hidden away in the foliage, were deep caves, many with underground lakes in them. We both stopped at one of these for a swim, and the water took our breath away with its icy cold touch. With a torch over our heads, we swam deeper into the cave until the entrance was but a tiny speck of light behind, and yet the lake seemed to go on forever. We both decided that it would be unwise to go further as the chill water was tending to give us cramp, so we turned around and swam back to the welcome daylight and warm sun which soon dried our chilled bodies. The island is honeycombed with caves and deep holes, and many of the people of the island spend days exploring them. To do this, one must have proper equipment; ropes, torches, etc., and also plenty of nerve.

After cooling off, we climbed to the top of the island and there saw a fantastic sight. This island was once under the sea and was originally a coral atoll, but through the ages it has been pushed up to its present height around 100 feet. The island being mainly phosphat has been excavated, and where the coral has been removed, there stands the coral heads

towering into the sky to heights of over 40' looking like an enlarged Stonehenge, or a mass of Easter Island Idols. The entire island, although originally flat, will eventually appear like this. They figure with continual digging will give labor to the men and women of the island for the next fifty years, and brother, the way these people dig it out, you can bet there is plenty there.

On the return trip I stopped in to see the Education boss. He very kindly gave me the OK to get a recording of the Nauruan school kids singing, but he insisted they have a rehearsal first. That suited me fine, and a few days later he gave me the OK to appear with the recorder. The school buildings were quite impressive and these kids get a wonderful education, but they certainly don't need educating where singing is concerned. There were about 50 of them, ranging from 10 to 14. Those kids kept me sitting on the edge of my chair. I have heard plenty singing in my time, good, bad, and indifferent, by professionals and amateurs, but these kids sure lead the field all the way for their harmony, and I was entranced with the entire performance. I have often cursed carrying that recorder around but this was one time I thanked my lucky stars I had it with me....what a pity my readers cannot hear this through the medium of writing...perhaps one day you might be lucky, who knows. Well, it seemed to me that I had seen practically everything worth seeing and had done everything too, also the time was getting mighty short....the weather was catching up on me fast and I was now a week late in getting away, so it was decided to get Yasme back into the water immediately and stow all the gear aboard. The arrangements were soon made to make the big lift, and on the appointed day, Yasme in all her painted glory, glistening from every pore, was gradually lowered back into the water. Everything went off without a hitch. Although I had been treated like a Lord, I was getting itchy feet, and wanted to be on the move again. It was a Sunday morning exactly five weeks after arrival that many of my friends came down to see me off as I was paddled out in an outrigger canoe to Yasme. The weather was perfect, a fine breeze was coming from the northeast, and the sea was relatively calm; it looked as though I was in for a fine trip. With engine ticking over, I cruised up to one end of the island, turned, hoisted all the trade wind sails so my friends on the quay could see Yasme in all her glory, scudding along with every stitch of canvas pulling. It was a wonderful sendoff, and it was with a mild feeling of despondency that I left that island of happiness, but with the fine breeze

and the gentle seas, I soon forgot my unhappiness and looked forward to the future voyage. I really expected the trip to be a short, easy and very comfortable....thats the trouble x with me, I expect too much in life, and usually get a kick in the ear for my trouble. Whilst the weather had been perfect on leaving, the new sails doing a fine job as Yasme creamed through the seas, but as I cleared Nauru and reached the open sea, the confounded wind dropped and left us rolling around in an oily calm. This meant sticking the engine on again, and the thoughts of having it on all night to maintain some sort of position was hateful, but thats the way it had to be, and by noon the following day, I had managed to cover the wonderful distance of 100 miles, mainly under power. Realy, I was getting utterly fed up with this type of weather. Since the day I had left Tahiti I'd had lousy winds, bad seas, and in general things had been tough. But then, I had taken the unorthodox route for sail boats, and could only expect what I got...and I got it too..with a vengeance. Two days out, boiling sun, no wind, and the engine purring away, with this poor clot sitting at the helm all the time with the wonderful aroma of exhaust gasses drifting around his beak. I had plenty of chow, but every time I nipped into the cabin to get something organised, the old tub would sheer off course. This wasn't so bad when I was able to reach the tiller quickly, but when the time came for taking sights, which necessitated sitting on the cabin roof for maybe half an hour with the tiller way out of reach, that's when I really did cuss. Just imagine sitting there trying to get the sun lined up in that midget telescope, then, without warning, you find the sun has slid around the edge of the sail somewhere and can't be found. Of course, the darn boat had altered course, so it means very carefully climbing back into the cockpit, putting the so and so back on course, and then searching for the sun again. What you don't know is, the sun doesn't hang around for anyone, and what with large chunks of cloud butting in on the landscape all the time, it really makes even the most good natured bloke tear his hair out...incidentally, I am almost bald now...wonderful head of skin. In addition to the lack of wind I found that Yasme had developed a leak and seemed to be taking quite a fair amount of water. It didn't bother me ver much, except I had to pump the darn thing out every hour. The engine driven bilge pump did the job fine until it decided to seize up with a chunk of string in the gears, and this meant sitting down there in the bilges with the engine roaring away about 6" from my stern and stripping the pump down.... it was difficlpt to sit down for a few days afterwards...that engine exhaust pipe WAS hot.

I was thoroughly enjoying myself, and I bet my reader is real envious of all the pleasure I was getting out of this sport they call yachting.

I finally found the leak, but couldn't fix it right then. It was the engine water pump leaking around the gland. It was pushing $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon through the engine every few seconds and $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon into the bilges...as though the bilges wanted cooling...it was methat needed the cooling; anyway, it was gratifying to know the troublewas mechanical and easily fixed, and not in the hull, where it wouldn have been a different story.

Three days out and up comes a spot of wind. Oh Boy, what a relief to put that engine back into cold storage again. To be able to sit back whilst Yasme ste ered herself, and also to have the oppoartunity to fix that leaky pump without having water squirting in my eye all the time I worked. This breeze lated until just after midnight, then, as I slept soundly below, I was suddenly awakened by the most unearthly crash. What the...heck was that? I shot out on deck and discovered that one of the 20 foot booms holding the Yankee genoa had jumped out of its socket and was doing its darndest to bore a hole through the generator mounted on the foredeck. The point of the boom had lodged between the cylinder head and the gas tank, and whilst it made a good location for the end of the boom, it was hardly helpful to the good running of the generator. It had already cut through the HT lead, and was now doing its level best to drill a hole through the gas tank. Naturally, just at that momeht the wind decided to increase in strength, and that of course increased the pressure on the tank. I tried with all my puny strength to lug the boom out of its self made niche, but it had really got itself wedged. Then I cussed long and loud and with much feeling. Just when I had got a good breeze, this had to happen, and the only way out was to take all the canvas down to get the boom relocated. I suppose many of you think that to drop two genoas is just a matter of releasing two ropes and collecting the canvas on deck...thats x what you think. I reckon that the pull on those twpesails might be around a couple of tons, and when the wind is showing off a bitm well, they can do a lot of damage if you let em go. As per usual it was pitch dark; its always dark when anything happens; never quite figured it out, but there it is. All the deck lights on now to get those beautiful new sails in without them running amok and in turn either taking me over the side, or getting themselves into the drink and then under the boat...both pretty disastrous. They had to come down fast otherwise I'd have no generator left. so I re/leased the halyard on the offending sail. The

pull came off the tiller as the sail dropped and the other sail wrenched the tiller over hard, slewing the old tub around in a half circle, then backing itself. No damage was done, but the backed sail enveloped me completely, and there I was on a frantically pitching deck with a few hundred square feet of Orlon sail draped around me. How I loved "Hard Sails" of New York who had supplied those sails at that time! I cursed their toughness. As much as I fought with that fabric, so it seemed to hold me down. I know ordinary fabric would have ripped under the terrific strain imposed on them. When a great chunk of stuff like that gets backed with a 40 mph wind, and is being jerked around by me, caught up on the deck winch and a few deck cleats, and still remains in one piece, well.. Maybe three days later I got out of my shroud, and after fumbling around for a while, found the right rope to get the blighter down. By now the wind had really picked up and there I was, with every stitch of canvas on the deck when it should have been flying and sending the Yasmé along around 7 knots. Soon as I got clear of the mess I stuck the boom back into its socket and started to hoist the sails together, as is my custom. Halfway up one stuck. I jiggled the ropes, let the sails down a bit and then hoisted 'em again, but they just wouldn't budge above the halfway mark. Whilst I was playing around, the sails filled, what there was of them above the deck, and the old tub was fairly screaming through the water. I watched the surplus sail creeping over the edge of the rail, dead scared it would get under the boat and snap the booms with the strain. I knew darned well that I couldn't stop the creeping, so I tugged, pulled, and cursed, but still that rope stuck. Yes, you are are right..dead right. Up that stick I clambered into the darkness above, and there I fumbled around with about 50 ropes to find the one that was jamming. Why is it an ordinary piece of rope can get itself tied up into 20 knots, and yet the two ends are fixed? There was enough tangle up that stick to give the average bloke about three weeks work to clear, but my persuader, known as a knife did wonders in the emergency, Yes, once again you've hit it. I cut the wrong rope. Now I had to climb all the way to the top of the mast to find the end of the halyard. or at least, a useable rope that could be attached to the sail so that I could hoist it up. I will say that the air was much purer up there...I don't wonder after what had been said at the lower levels. Without going into a lot of minor details, such as skinned knuckles, shins and an odd broken leg, I did strange as it may seem, actually get that rope down. Ultimately I got the two sails up, quite expecting after all that treatment to find that

treatment to find that the port sail had got a rip in it. As I said before, they were tough, and there wasn't a blemish on either sail. That night, Yasme really showed me what she could do, With a gale force wind behind her and a fair sea, she sped along at a steady 7 knots. The prop screamed as it freewheeled, and the high pitched noise almost drove me mad. I stuck the engine in gear to stop it. What a night of sailing that was...the best of the trip. The next day the wind threw its hand in and left me in the usual lousy flat calm. Oh well, it was good fun whilst it lasted. I had to stick the iron horse on again, and worse still, fix the generator which was at the other end of the ship. Need I tell you how much fun I had running back and forth along the deck? I would take a screw on the generator, nip to the stern to put Yasme back on course as she veered around, return to the generator to find the screw had vanished. Replacing the new HT lead on that generator took me exactly $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and I reckon I ran about 6 miles back and forth along the deck doing it. I invented ten different cuss words....this sailing certainly broadens ones mind. Having had a thorough days enjoyment, I decided it was time I figured out my position and to determine the time I should sight land. Naturally, it turned out to be that I would sight that first chunk of shore in the evening, so that meant another night without any sleep. One can't turn in when there might be an odd island popping up at any odd moment, so I had to spend the rest of the night standing there on deck peering through the binoculars. The wind was fitful that night, calms and squalls kept me company cutting visibility to almost nil, but at daybreak, the faint outline of Malatia loomed above the clouds. Approaching that mountainous island, the wind dropped altogether and we were subjected to sudden bursts of wind that seemed to materialise from nowhere, so I decide to get all the canvas in until I was well clear of land. We seemed to sail for hours and still get no closer to that mass in the distance, but the old engine plugged along quite happily and kept us on the move. Suddenly, the sky seemed to clear as though by magic, and there ahead loomed Malatia with its densely wooded forests, spirals of smoke climbing lazily into the cloudless blue sky from some natives fire. I knew that I dare not land on this wild island with its head hunters and cannibals that are still in existence there, and I certainly didn't have any ambitions to be served up for someones supper that evening. I learned that very few white men had visited the island, and only one had ever penetrated deep into the bush and emerged in one piece. He was a very old missionary (probably too tough to eat)

and was still kicking around the joint someplace. I closed the shore until most things were visible to the naked eye, and whilst I saw one or two native huts between the trees, never once sighted a native: I might add that my engine was running at all times and the old shooting irons were fully loaded and ready to hand. Malatia swept by very slowly and ahead loomed several islands, the main one being Florida Island. The reefs were faintly visible around all of these islands, and whilst the sea was very calm, I knew exactly what a reef could do to Yasme should she strike one, so gave them a wide berth at all times. The next job, as I saw it, was to cross a large puddle to get to Honiara. This chunk of wetness is called Iron Bottom Sound, and whilst Honiara was almost due south, the wind started to blow like stink from the south east, and in that very narrow channel, the seas soon built up into man sized waves. With reefed mainsail and engine, Yasme stuck her nose into it, and we plugged along at a steady three knots. The seas were breaking over the bows making things very uncomfortable, and whilst Yasme strained to make her southing, the wind and currents were forcing her more and more westward. Just over half way across the Sound was Salvo Island, just a mere 1700 feet high, but with many tide rips around it and an odd reef here and there just to keep everyones spirits up and to keep this business of sailing interesting. Yasme was slowly but surely being forced onto this tiny volcanic island, and by the time I got within three miles of it, decided that I would have to change course and pass it on my port hand instead of starboard as the chances of clearing it were almost nil. I went below to plot another course and noticed directly that Yasme had altered her motion. Wondering what the heck had happened and thinking I had got into a tide rip, I skidded out onto the deck only to find that the wind had changed direction, and was now blowing in my favor. It seemed that the wind was hitting the island and rebounding making everything fine for us. Well, that suited me fine, so I let the sheet out and with the big genoa pulling like a train, Yasme swept by the island at top speed with every stitch of canvas flying. The tide rips were visible from the deck and I thought then what would happen if by some queer chance the wind should fail, but one gets to know whether a wind will hold or not, and this one kept blowing hard all the time...all the way to Honiara.

Honiara is not an easy place to find in the late afternoon as a thick haze settles over the whole place, and I scanned the land ahead of me for some time before I was able to pick out a few boats. As there were no outlying dangers, it was an easy matter to sail direct

into the anchorage. Seven days out from Nauru I dropped anchor into Honiara coral, having covered around 700 miles of really lousy sailing. We had arrived without any damage and apart from my having a fat head, everything looked rosy. Customs lost very little time in coming aboard, then I was left to myself. I rather expected to have a few visitors, but not a soul came out to greet me, and really, I felt far lonelier than I had been in all the past thousands of miles at sea. This is something I had hardly expected, but one has to accustom oneself to all sorts of places. I knew from the moment I stepped ashore that I wasn't staying long enough to even get a haircut. Mooring around trying to find a suitable location to rig up all my radio gear was a tough job. No one seemed to care whether I had arrived or not, and for the first time in many months, I felt really despondent. After my wonderful experiences in Nauru and then to arrive in a dump like this was a real shaker, but I kept up the search for a couple of days until I actually found one good natured bloke in the entire community who offered his help. Hewton Amos, the secretary of the local Copra Board was my angel there, and with his help, I was able to get all my radio gear installed and operating. He did all he could under the circumstances to help out, but the unsociability of the local inhabitants decided me to make my stay as short as possible, and it was exactly two weeks later that I pulled up stakes and loaded Yasme ready to leave. It may seem silly but I hardly took my camera out in the entire stay, but devoted practically every moment to my radio work. With my only friend there to see me off, I pulled the anchor aboard and left at 3p.m. on the following Saturday...actual time stayed thirteen days. It takes a lot to make me feel fed up, but that place sure knew how to do it, and although it was stupid to leave as dusk was settling, I just had to get out and feel the freedom of the sea again. I was very tired having been working pretty hard for those 13 days, but the mere thought of staying in that place another 12 or 13 hours gave me a big pain, and it was in a happy frame of mind that Yasme and I with engine chugging crept out of Honiara and into the open sea. As is usual in these parts, no wind. I didn't care. I was getting away from the place and was aboard my beloved Yasme with the feel of the ocean pushing all the unpleasant feelings from my thoughts. Only a true sailor knows that feeling, its wonderful. Progress was slow for the sea was like the proverbial mill pond. Several times I thought there was a puff of wind and hoisted the sails, but nothing came of it, so down they came again, The engine purred quite happily, actually firing on all four cylinders...it seemed as happy as I to be at sea again. We plodded along the edge of the coast at around 4 knots

gradually leaving Honiara astern. slowly, very slowly, we rounded the tip of Guadalcanal, and the dim light from Cape Esperance shone weakly in the distance...even the light looked fed up with the place. The evening was perfect, the sky covered with myriads of stars, and high in the heavens a very thin slice of moon shed its silvery glow over the mountains, casting deep shadows everywhere. The sea glistened like crystal. Along the coast countless tiny lights sparkled, slowly moving backwards and forwards. They were the natives with their pressure lamps night fishing. The fish attracted to the light are made easy prey for the spears of the natives, and it has become the custom around here to fish mainly at night. As I cleared Cape Esperance, and the light vanished between the headlands, so I noticed a couple of flashing lights appear on the shore. Apparently the harbor authorities at Coughlan Harbor seeing my navigation lights must have assumed I was entering the port, and had switched on the harbor entrance lights. Seeing that I maintained course they switched them off. Why Oh Why didn't I accept their offer and enter the harbor at that time? I should have had a good night's rest and missed what was to come later...but, I didn't. I did expect that once I rounded the tip of the island I would have an offshore wind, but it remained a deadly calm. The sea had now developed a terrific swell, causing Yasme to do some of the most unearthly rolling. I tried putting up a large jib and sheeting it in hard to break the roll, but nothing seemed to help. It looked as though I was in for a tough night. Cooking was impossible since nothing would remain on the stove, so I settled myself in the cockpit with a flask of coffee and a bag of fruit. It was hardly a satisfying meal for one who hadn't eaten for over 24 hours, but under the circumstances, it was the best I could do. There had been some satisfaction in getting away before scheduled time, but with this infernal rolling and lack of wind, I was beginning to wonder what I had gained in leaving early. Right through the night the calm persisted, so the old iron horse had to plug away to keep us on the move. Several times during the night I was shaken from my lethargy by a slight puff of air disturbing the stillness. Up would go the sails, but it was nothing at all; my pulling of ropes went for nothing. I might add here that to pull up around a thousand square feet of canvas at 2 to 3 am on a boat with a 45° roll is no easy job. It's tough enough to hoist the darned things on a level deck, but when one has to curl one's toes around any slight projection to maintain some sort of balance, and still exert enough power to hoist the sails...need I say more. All this at the bewitching hour of 2 am when one gets the feeling that death is just around the corner...what a life! Then after all the work of getting the darned things

up, I'd have to pull 'em down again 5 minutes afterwards. That night was hell, and by morning I had covered the terrific distance of 50 miles. As I looked astern, towering over me was...GUADALCANAL. I just couldn't seem to lose the darned place, and from all appearances it would be with me for some time to come. It was another taste of yesterday. Still no wind and the sea looking as though it hadn't had a ripple to mar its surface in all its days. Occasionally a large chunk of sea food would cavort around the boat, now and then trying to become airborne. Interesting, but I needed wind..even a one mile per hour wind would do to steady Yasme, but we weren't that lucky. Breakfast was the same as dinner last night, except that the coffee was luke warm and had a bitter taste. I looked again at the wind charts to buoy up my spirits, but I was beginning to lose all faith in wind and weather charts. Around noon, my prayers were answered when out of the southeast came a zephyr... that's a polite name for a wind that is nearly. It was enough to stop the rolling. I brewed some fresh coffee and got out the frying pan and the eggs. By this time I didn't bother to thaw out the eggs, just stuck em straight in the pan...shells and all, and propped around them, standing like soldiers, were strips of ice bound bacon. Slowly the heat melted the ice, which in turn mixed with the fat. They didn't seem to like each other. There followed a series of minor explosions and not having any clothes on, I had to vacate the galley at top speed. When the explosions had died down I grabbed a large storm coat and approached the galley to view the results. The bacon had subsided back into the pan, even to the point of turning up its toes, so I knew all the fight had been knocked out of that. The eggs had split into mixed yolks, whites, and shells, whilst the fat continued to grumble and mutter deep in its throat, being the winner all round. After futile attempts to separate the shells from the rest of the eggs, gave it up as a bad job, ate the bacon and threw the rest to the fish...hope they enjoyed it. After "chow" I decided to take a few sights just for the hell of it. Its nice to know where the heck you are. Just at that moment the sun went on strike, so I plonked down a mark on the chart with the abrevaition "D.R." alongside. This means that I hope I am there, but am more likely to be fifty miles from it. The breeze, what there was of it, continued through the day and evening, but I still had to keep the engine running to make any headway. As night fell, I knew it was going to be another sleepless night. The poor old Yasme doesn't like steering herself with the engine on, so that means perpetual watch at the helm unless I want her to go in circles. By now I was half dead, and my eyes were aching with the strain of keeping open. I had covered such a short

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distance since leaving Guadalcanal that I just had to keep going to get any place, Sure, I had plenty of food and fuel aboard, but who the heck wants to sit around in the ocean for ever waiting for a wind? As was usual, I had my talk with Jock in New Zealand. It was a very short but comforting one, and afterwards, I settled myself at the helm wrapped in a duffle coat and blanket. It was almost freezing, and a thin miserable rain fell continuously, penetrating through to my bones...I felt like death. As I sat there with the breeze blowing from the southeast, I noticed in the northwest a terrific black cloud building up. The night was moonless and dark, but this cloud was blacker still and stood out for miles across the horizon. Being on the leeward side I didn't pay much attention to it, assuming that whatever was building up would blow away from me..thats what I thought.. Stretching myself out in the cockpit in a vain endeavor to get comfortable on the hard seat, I finally got myself in a position where the incessant rolling of the boat didn't try to saw off my prominent bones. Lying there in a half stupor, without any warning... IT HAPPENED... One second I was lying in a horizontal position, the next I was vertical actually standing on the sides of the cockpit coaming. For some unaccountable reason. the wind had swung a complete 180°, and I was getting the full blast of a hurricane, cyclone or what the heck you care to call it with ALL CANVAS up. Yasme was thrown absolutel flat, and the cross trees on the mast were actually in the water; the engine which had been running steadily suddenly screamed as the prop was lifted out of the water. Water poured into the cockpit and flooded into the cabin, and I could hear it flooding through the forward hatch which was wide open. Panic stricken, I clambered out of the cockpit and crawled along the side decks to free the jib halyard and sheet. I had already cut the mainsheet to free the mainsail. The wind screamed through the rigging and the towering seas broke right over Yasme, trying hard to sweep me from my precarious position and to sink her as soon as possible. Above all the noise I could hear the gush of water as Yasme gradually filled up. In those fleeting seconds I saw the lashings around the dinghy snap like cotton and deck gear of all types drop over the side. Cans of gas, ropes, canvas awnings all slid into the seething black waters. I was terror stricken. I watched in a daze while a small bucket floated away, somehow surviving the turmoil...it looked so pitiful as it floated away with assorted gear bobbing around it. One lifebelt available...how log could I exist in those shark infested waters even if I managed to reach it? The wind picked up the rain and swept it across the prostrated Yasme holding her down.

This was it...I'd had a good run and this was the end. I would cling to life as long as possible, but I knew that in this deserted part of the ocean, my chances of survival were precisely nil. Somehow I crawled back into the cockpit..in that befuddled brain of mine the cockpit meant security; it was a false sense for the cockpit was almost full of water. Then my brain started to click a little more logically and I knew why I had wanted to return to the cockpit...to close the doors and try to stop the flood of water pouring into the cabin. Afterwards I realised that I had managed to close the forward hatch too. So many things happened in those few seconds that my mind just wouldn't work fast enough to be aware of what was going on. I reached the cockpit, blood pouring from dozens of unfelt minor gashes picked up on the way. With numbed fingers I fumbled with the catches holding the doors back, then, as they became freed, the water slammed them shut with a force that nearly burst them inward. As they closed, so the water was temporarily prevented from pouring into the cabin but still the Yasme was down. Would she ever come up?

The sails were in the awter creating a suction effect, but what to do about it? I picked my way forward again to try to drag the sails inboard. The halyards had become tangled holding the sails in position. I lay along the mast trying hard to grab a handful of taut wet canvass. My nails broke, and blood flooded over everything as I made a superhuman effort to pull those sails in. Oh if I only had my knife to cut those ropes adrift, but all my knives were somewhere in the bilges under my feet. How long I struggled there in that maelstrom of rain and wind I shall never know, but slowly, the sails started to come inboard. I strained every muscle of my body in a last endeavor. I just had to get that sail out of the water. Slowly, so very slowly, the sail built itself up around me, and, as it came in, so Yasme gave a terrific lurch...was this her final gesture before taking the final plunge? Sluggishly, she slewed around, coming up into the wind, then, so very slowly, the mast left the water...the sea making one final clutch to hold it, but Yasme was the stronger this time, and with a funny sort of shake, she rose up just like a fighter that had been almost counted out. For a moment, I was spellbound, Could this be possible? was I dreaming?...There was Yasme lying about 4 points off the wind, rolling sluggishly, but nevertheless, upright. How I thanked God in those few moments. I just stood there in the cockpit and cried with relief, My body was in an awful state with bruises and cuts, but I was alive and Yasme was afloat. My spirits, and it wasn't until then that I realised that the main engine was still running. My luck had changed, and while I knew Yasme had taken a severe caning, I knew she

would be OK in the end. I grabbed the gear that was trailing over the side, also managing to pull the dinghy back aboard. It took courage to enter the cabin. I don't know what I expected to see, but it sure was an utter shambles. Books, papers, tea, sugar etc., were sloshing around in about a foot of water that covered the floor...and there was two feet more below the flooring so you can imagine the amount of water that was in her. First thing, to get shot of all the water. If she got another lay down nothing would save her for the water would tend to throw her more quickly. The king sized bilge pump I had connected to the main engine was soon in operation, and within 3/4 hour, the sucking sound from the pump told me that Yasme was now free of all that water and once again buoyant. By this time, I had hoisted a small storm jib and hove too, and Yasme was lying fairly easily in the high seas. The wind continued to build up in strength and the seas appeared to get bigger and bigger. Outside, it was as black as pitch and the rain fell in torrents, but I and Yasme were safe. Looking up, I could see the sickly glow from the mast head light as it reflected against the rain. I thought. Who the heck is going to see that in this lousy weather? I turned it out and saved my batteries.

Every drawer on the port side had snapped its lock and had distributed the contents over the floor in a beautiful mess. A 5 gallon drum of oil in the forepeak had broken adrift, and although the cap had come off, fortunately for me, very little oil had leaked out over the floor. Two cans of insecticide had busted open and a bottle of after shave lotion had also added to the mess giving a wonderful assortment of odors throughout the ship. All the radio gear was OK, having been well fitted and screwed down on the port side. Had it been on the starboard, nothing would have stopped it from being flung out and that would have been the end of my radio expedition for some time. Apart from the glorious mess, I found very little material damage in the cabin. There was a large loss of food and reading material through breakage and water, but other than that, there was absolutely nothing to worry about...Huh!!! My biggest shock came when I got the deck lights switched on and discovered that not only had I lost 8 cans of gas and all my heavy ropes, but my brand new Orlon mainsail and No. 2 jib had disappeared over the side. They had been stowed under the dinghy for safety!!!! and when the dinghy had gone over, well, that when the sails went too. To even consider looking for them was out of the question. The sea had gone mad, visibility was nil, and my position unknown. It was a terrific wrench to lose those wonderful sails, but when I see

the philosophical side of it all, I considered myself very lucky to be alive and in a position to write about it. Having sorted myself out, I decided it was high time I got some of the gear put back into its original place. Yasme had a dangerous list..so would you if you had a few tons of gear stuck on one side. What a job that was. I thought I would never find a place to put all the stuff that was strewn about the floor. Its a funny thing about a drawer. One can invariably put twice as much stuff in it over a period of months than can be put in when one has but a few minutes to stow it. I found that when all the drawers were filled, there was still a surplus sufficient to fill another three, so stuck it all in an empty sail bag and stowed it away forward.

As the shock of fear wore off and I lost my numbness, so I started to sweat, and was forced to lie down for some time to recoup and stop the trembling of my whole body. The Yasme although riding fairly steadily, would periodically give a dirty lurch as she fell off the top of one of those mountainous waves, and I would be thrown off the bunk and across the cabin. Glancing at the clock to see if it was still functioning after its recent dousing, I noticed it was time for my schedule with Dick. I imagined him for a few moments sitting there in his comfortable radio shack in the Virgin Islands without a care in the world, and with those thoughts to comfort me, I gave him a call on my transmitter. Within a few moments he was answering me and complaining that I was five kilocycles off frequency. Little did he know as he said that that only a short while ago I was nearly off the frequency for good. Anyway, I gave him all the dope about the cyclone and also my approximate position. Dick being a real sympathetic sort of bloke pointed out to me that this little episode had certainly given me something to write about in my next article... I swore then that I would give up writing. If I have to almost lose my boat and my neck, both being very valuable to me to get a story, then it might be better if I give it up. By the time I had finished my talk with Dick I noticed that the wind had abated considerably and it was high time I got out and got a little canvas up that stick. I went out to hoist the jib. The ropes were in an unholy mess. Wires, and halyards were all tangled up, tied into knots, and wrapped around the mast and sails...It was such a mess that I gave it up temporarily and went back into the cabin to think about it. After two days without any sleep my weary body sure needed a rest, but sitting there in the cabin wasn't helping, so I went outside to review the mess again. It was still pitch dark, and whilst the deck lights were on, they didn't illuminate the top of the mast, and that was where the worst mess was.

I just had to get some sail on her, and the only solution, as much as I dreaded the thought of it, was to climb the mast and work from the top down. I was clean out of strength by them as you can well imagine, but I could see no alternative. To put up a sail, one has to have a rope coming from the mast head, and that's all there is to it. "Ever have I done it in the sort of sea that was running that night. It was utter lunacy to attempt it in my present state of health, but it had to be done.

My muscles ached and my bones creaked as I slowly climbed that slender piece of wood. I dare not look down. Every lurch of the Yasm threatened to tear me loose and throw me into the black void below. The faint glow of the mast head light came level with my eyes...I had reached the top. I hardly had the strength to hang on. I tied a cord around my waist and lashed it to the mast. Seconds seemed like hours. The cord bit into my waist as my weight gradually fell against it, but it eased my aching muscles long enough to fumble around the mess of lines at the mast head. I lost all sense of time as I struggled to clear the tangle. I could hear the crash of the waves as they built up and collapsed, and occasionally I would hear a breaker fall on the deck many feet below making the whole ship shudder with the shock. Apart from these sounds I was completely isolated from the world. My body had become almost immune from pain. I have no recollection of coming down the mast, except I do know I somehow found a useable halyard and hoisted a sail. My next awareness was being stretched on the bunk feeling more dead than alive. Yasm had now ceased her fantastic lurching and settled down to a slow roll. Several times I tried to get up and start the engine, but my body completely ignored my brain and I lay there in a semi stupor. Queer dreams flitted through my befuddled brain. My mind seemed to completely disassociate itself from my body, and I felt light in the head...I must have slept, I don't know, but later the whole world seemed to have come to a standstill. Dragging my aching body off the bunk, I staggered out into the cockpit, and around me was peace. The sea had turned itself into a flat mirror, the rising sun sent a shimmer into the sky as it penetrated the early morning mist, and Yasm was dead still; not a movement, not a sound anywhere. I looked around the decks and was shaken to see the chaos. The dinghy was still half over the side and the decks were in a shambles. My body was a mass of pain, and was covered in patches where I had tried to cover the many abrasions. Any movement was a major effort, manual labor an impossibility. I left the one sail up and started the engine, settling myself in the cockpit with one hand on the tiller letting the day use itself up.

I needed sights very badly, but the sky was completely clouded. I dreaded the coming night wondering what it would bring with it, and yet knowing that I could do nothing to prevent a repetition of the night before..my strength was gone, all I could do was to steer and hope. Twilight came and, as is usual in the tropics, darkness fell almost immediately afterwards. The moon was completely hidden behind the clouds and what few stars there were at first, soon vanished. Around 8pm I felt something in the air that wasn't quite normal. I scanned the horizon, looking for that dreaded cloud bank, but nothing could be seen except the low lying clouds and a faint haze everywhere. Something was brewing. Next a fine misty rain ~~was~~ settled in and with it came a slight breeze. Dragging myself from the cockpit, I stumbled along the deck fighting the agony of my stiffening muscles and got the jib down...I had got to the state where I was frightened to carry anything up the mast. With the sail down, the Yasme lost all semblance of steadiness and reverted to that sickening roll, but the engine plugged along faithfully. Then, dead astern, I noticed a low dirty black cloud. With the wind dead ahead it would appear impossible that it could come anywhere near the boat, but IT DID. With a sudden gust it hit Yasme dead astern. The screaming in the rigging put seven different sorts of fears into me, but I was ready for this one, and after the first gust, bang went the cabin doors, the hatches were slid shut, and with the engine going at half speed. I let it do its darndest blowing me in the right direction. Many times it tried to broach Yasme...to swing her around so that she would be beam on to the seas and the wind, but I was having any this time, and every time that wind tried to creep around, so I would counteract it with a touch on the helm in the right direction. Knowing I had the master hand gave me renewed strength. My aches and pains were forgotten in this fight against the elements, and I knew that providing I could keep awake, I would win. By gosh, that wind did its darndest to get me into trouble, but being prepared made all the difference in the world. Apart from a severe wetting no damage was caused. It blew like that for two hours, than as before, it fizzled out and left behind a flat calm and a very disturbed sea. All that night I ran with the engine and a pocket sized handkerchief sail up, and sitting there at the helm feeling more weary than ever I finally slept. When I awoke, I found that I was heading back the way I had come. We moved along that day, the first fair breeze of the whole trip, but by 6pm. with night soon to fall, I had to decide whether to sit up all night watching for those vicious black clouds. Whichever way I decided, I knew I should feel like wet rag in

the morning...and people actually go sailing for pleasure! My sights that evening put me position at Lat. $10^{\circ} 57'$ south, Long. 156° East. That doesn't mean much to my reader, but marked on the chart told me that ten miles on my starboard hand were the treacherous Pocklington reefs; too close for comfort to my way of thinking. With luck and a fair breeze I might sight land the next day...Rossel Island.

After those sights, the clouds folded in and mastered the heavens, and that's the way it ~~st~~ stayed for the rest of the time. I endeavoured to maintain some sort of steady course, but the natural inclination was to veer away from the land at all times..those reefs would put fear into anyone. Naturally I got further from land than was really necessary, in fact at one time I must have been over 60 miles from the coast. The winds were building up into gale force and not knowing my true position was beginning to bother me. I was in contact at all times with Port Moresby and other lads in Australia, but they were unable to give me any help. They tried to find a suitable shore station fitted with direction finding equipment capable of picking up my signals, but apparently my frequency was an odd one, and not used for normal DF purposes. Four days passed without a sight, and according to my reckoning I should be just about arriving at Moresby. With gale force winds, 40 foot seas, and visibility down to almost Zero in the blinding rain, I dared not close the shore to look for the guiding lights. I knew that should I sight a reef, there would be no time to swing Yasme out to sea and clear it. Things were beginning to look a little grim. Whilst I was in continual contact with Captain Hawley, the port Captain at Moresby, there was little he could do for me. Yasme was taking water fast and the king sized bilge pump was going full blast all the time to keep her clear. The seas were breaking clean over the decks even though we were hove to and hardly moving, and the gear still piled on the port side was giving her a dangerous list. I was too weak to shift the stuff. Four days now...no sleep, hardly any food, and still this stinking weather. Would it ever calm down? I knew that I had passed Moresby, but I could ^{do} nothing to prevent a further drift to westward. With the tiny engine plugging away heading into those mountainous seas, it was a futile gesture as we were tossed around like a matchbox at the full mercy of the elements. I could have saved a lot of worry and discomfort by running before the highwind and seas, but it would have put me so far past Moresby that it may have taken several days to get back again, and it seemed to me that providing I could hold some sort of position, the storm would ultimately abate sufficiently for me to make my way into Port.

I had taken benzdrine until it poured out of my ears in an endeavor to stay awake, but still my head would fall to my chest and it seemed impossible that I would be able to keep my eyes open for another second. I dare not sit down, but spent my time in standing up on the deck with the blinding rain beating into my face to fight off the fatigue that would have rendered me senseless in a few seconds were I to relax. I was wrapped in a thick duffle coat, long since soaked through, and I stood there and shivered in the bitter cold of the evening, hoping and praying for the morning to come. I kept both the main engine and the generator running at all times, for had I allowed them to stop, I felt sure that it would have been impossible to get them started again with the violent movement of the boat, and as far as I was concerned, I wouldn't have had the power to swing that generator on the foredeck. I had no recollection of the night passing for my mind seemed to have ceased to function, and my body had become rigid and stiff, my hands welded into one position as they clutched the rigging to steady myself through the night. I knew I couldn't last out much longer. I was now entering the fifth day of this hell, something had to happen today. The morning broke with thick clouds everywhere, the seas still piling high, occasionally breaking over the decks, but the rain had now turned into a miserable drizzle causing me great discomfort as it trickled down my neck. At 8 a.m. I was in contact with Frank in Port Moresby and told him of the night's happenings, and exactly how I felt without mincing my words. Also told him I would try to get some sights if the sky decided to clear and would pass them on as soon as possible. Frank decided to stand by the rest of the morning and wait for me to see what happened in the sights department. I climbed out onto the cabin roof hoping that the sun would put up an extra big effort for me, but with those thick cloud banks, it didn't seem very likely. Crouching there on that violently cavorting roof, trying hard to keep the sextant dry, trying to hold the chronometer between my knees, and most important of all, trying to keep myself from being thrown over the side. I had a very vague idea where the sun was, also the approximate angle, but sitting there with the sextant glued to my eyes and swinging it across the heavens seemed such a futile waste of time. My arm ached with the strain, and my right eye kept closing with the effort. Would those clouds ever break up? Sometime later...when, I just don't know, the sun appeared in the sky as a hazy ball, trying hard to penetrate the clouds without great success. It had no real form, but it was at least a guide and better than nothing. I took a chance and shot several rough sights, checking the time and jotting each one down in my sodden note book. After taking maybe six shots, the cloud

banks took over again, and the sun disappeared. I climbed painfully back into the cabin and told Frank what had happened. He waited whilst I worked out these very doubtful sights, and on completion, passed my position line on to Captain Hawley. This line alone told us all that I had passed Moresby, but we still needed another sun check later to determine the exact position. We all settled down to wait for further activity from the sun, and in the meantime, continuous repartee between various Hams in Australia and other countries was passed back and forth. It certainly built up my morale to be able to speak to all these lads under the present conditions, and they all did a fine job in keeping the frequency clear so that I had complete freedom at all times to pass on an emergency message should the occasion arise. The morning dragged on until 10 am arrived, and I then scrambled back into my old position on the cabin roof. A sudden rift in the clouds gave me the opportunity to take a few more shots as it peeped through the massive cloud banks. Never have I taken sights so quickly..I got seven in less than 4 minutes..every one noted with the angle and the time to a split second. I thanked God most fervently in those few minutes, and worked up enough energy to get back to the cabin. Under normal conditions, I hate mathematics, logs, cosines, etc., but under these circumstances where every second counted, my brain refused to function at all. The figures in the tables whirled around in front of my eyes, my notebook was soaking wet, and to decipher the figures was a job unto itself. I plugged through the calculations and finally arrived at another position line. Having had a better set of sights at 10, I cancelled out those doubtful ones taken earlier, and passed on the news that I would wait until noon and hope that we got a good sight then for Latitude...would I be lucky at noon? Back to the cabin roof. I lashed a rope around my body to hold me in place. I was getting fed up trying to hold the sextant etc., and also myself. A thin drizzle of rain beat in my face, smearing the sextant mirrors and lenses. Five minutes to twelve and still no signs of the sun; three minutes, two minutes..this just couldn't happen to me...I HAVE to get that noon sights. My sextant was set at the approximate angle, and many times I imagined I saw the sun and worked the micrometer screw.. How crazy a man gets after 5 days without sleep! My imagination was playing all sorts of silly tricks because I am sure I saw the sun. The sextant screw seemed to work automatically, I wasn't aware of touching it. Slowly the sun rose to its zenith, and slowly the screw turned..for a few seconds, the sun remained stationary, then with a funny sort of hop, dropped suddenly.. the screw stopped turning, somehow, a figure appeared in the log book, and then I found myself seated at

the chart table working out the sight. I cannot be sure how it happened, but according to the figures in the sight book, I had worked out a set of three positions, and all seemed to come within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of each other! This couldn't be possible, but a recheck brought the same results. Frank passed the position onto Captain Hawley and it was then we all realised that I was ten miles past Moresby and about twenty miles south of it. I swung Yasme around in an endeavor to make a favorable course, but it was hopeless. For three hours, with reefed mainsail and jib helped along with the engine I covered the sum total of one half mile by log. I was forced all the time to sit at the helm as each wave did its darndest to through Yasme off course. This was utterly impossible to carry on like this, and I knew that fatigue would win eventually. Captain Hawley had told me repeatedly that I only need say the word, and assistance would be forthcoming immediately. Visions of fantastic salvage bills, and worse visions of brave men losing their lives in those terrible seas made me loathe to accept this offer, but finally, I realised I could hold out no longer trying to beat those seas and accepted his offer. Within 15 minutes of my request an air sea rescue craft was at sea heading for my last known position. I was so relieved, I just sat there in the cabin and cried like a baby. Call me what you like, that feeling of relief cannot be put into words ..no man can find the words so that others can feel as I did.

The rescue launch started at 5.30 p.m. and gradually, the storm, as though afraid it would be cheated of its prey, increased its fury. Yasme lost all resemblance to a yacht, and became just a piece of scrap wood tossed about the ocean. Radio contact was maintained with Frank and he passed on the dope to me as the rescue launch would pass back to the shore base its progress. We all knew exactly what was happening all the time. The arrangement was made that the rescue launch would fire a series of three lights, and I would reply should I sight them...how time dragged on. I was told that the launch would arrive at 7.30 pm. I strained my eyes into the inky blackness, but nothing could be seen. The rain had increased until it was difficult to see the mast head light...that light was their only guide should they sight my flare. I prayed that the electrical system would remain intact for a few more hours. 7.30 arrived and with it a message to say that the boat had been delayed and would arrive at 8. I knew it was futile to even try to sight the rescue boat since it was hardly larger than the Yasme, so I stayed at the radio and waited instructions from Frank. Time dragged on...then, "VK9TW, VK9TW, this is VK9FN...first flare will go up in precisely one minute.. break." I shot back, "Roger, ROGER, ROGER..OK Frank," then tore out on deck armed with my

flare gun. I tried to look in every direction at the same time. I realised it was it was next to impossible to sight anything in that raging sea. First I looked astern and then to port. A fast glance to starboard but nothing...only inky blackness and rain. I felt in my heart that I was being over optimistic and that the chances of seeing the light even if they did find me was impossible, but still I strained my eyes and hoped. Had that minute passed? I wasn't sure. My heart sank and I felt that everything was against me. Well, one last look forward...Yes! Ther it was! A red streak in that storm rent sky. Its tiny glow lighting up the clouds for a few seconds as it performed a wide arc and then streaked down to be lost in the mountainous seas. I was so shaken that I couldn't bring my gun up. Finally I snapped out of my coma and away went my flare. It climbed into the sky and its glow lit up the Yasme and she appeared to look like a ghost ship. Somehow I fell into the cabin and flashed the news to Frank, whi in turn told me that the launch skipper had also sighted my flare and mast head light. After the good news had passed back and forth, I went out and stood in the cockpit. First their navigation lights beacme visible, then the whole ship appeared, boucing around like a cork. She was a powerful job, flat bottomed and designed for speed. but she was hindered badly with those seas and her manouverability had been cut down considerably. Carefully she circled Yasme, sometimes towering 40' above her, sometimes 40' below as the seas took her over, but her skipper was a fine seaman and always managed to keep at a reasonable distance away. Thre^e times I tried to pass a line to him, but each time it fell short...my strength was fast giving out. Finally, the skipper of the launch managed with a fantastiv throw to get a light line over to me. I grabbed it, and although my fingers were numbwith cold and almost raw, I tied on the towing hawser coiled on the foredeck which was quickly drawn through the sheave and onto the launch. Slowly he circled Yasme to strike the right position to take the initial strain, and then, very slowly. off we went en route for Port Moresby. Whilst this launch was capable of 15 knots and more, the mountainous seas and flimsy towing line, the waterlogged state of Yasme all cut down her speed to around three knots. I was having a hell of a time aboard Yasme and I knew that the skipper and the crew of the launch were having it a lot worse...at least, I did have some canvas up to steady me, but they had nothing and were rolling rail under all the time. I sat and stood in the cockpit in a stupor the whole trip. Several times I stuck my head out into the wind and rain to clear the cobwebs away, but fell back into a stupor directly I sat down again.

The tow had started at 8pm and many times through the night I clawed my way out of the overwhelming desire to sleep wondering what was happening. I remember on two occasions the launch circling the Yasme for no apparent reason, and we were moving so slowly that I found it impossible to steer Yasme properly. I cursed the skipper fluently for those apparently unnecessary circles, but afterwards discovered that the towing line had parted and the circling was to ease the strain whilst they made a secure connection again. Many times the Yasme was in a trough of a wave and the launch in another so that we were often invisible to each other, the towing line parting the intervening wave and the interminable twanging being our only means of actual visible contact. How that line held as it was drawn bow tight every few seconds I shall never know, and it never occurred to me what the consequences would be should it part at the Yasme end, but as luck would have it, it always parted at the launch end, and they with their full crew were able to fix it before we parted company. As you can well imagine, all idea of time was lost to my befuddled brain. I do remember on one occasion seeing a light ahead...this apparently was the leading light to enter Port Moresby harbor. After that, I lost all interest and screwed myself up in the cockpit in a vain effort to get warm. I don't know what aroused me, but I jumped up from the cockpit seat and found that the launch was no longer visible. In the distance I could see lights, but here we were adrift in the open sea. Realisation of the situation came when I felt the thump of the seas under the stern and knew I was no longer under tow. I pushed the helm hard over to try to get Yasme up into the seas and to prevent the tiny sail from flapping itself to pieces, but she refused to shift her position and just wallowed about like a duck with a broken wing and completely out of control. Where had the launch gone? Not a sign anywhere, the only sound being the crash of the waves as they swept the decks and the interminable scream of the wind through the rigging. The reefed mainsail was almost flapping itself to pieces, and the boom was throwing its weight around, sweeping the entire deck, ready to brain me at any odd moment should I meet up with it. Scrambling from the cockpit, I staggered forward to see what had happened and saw that the tow line had finally chafed through at my end and had parted...I was adrift! What to do now. As I came aft, there in the distance astern I saw a faint light which I decided was the launch, so jumping into the cabin, I put the engine into gear and opened up the throttle. Very sluggishly Yasme turned in a half circle and headed toward the faint light, but the reefed sail was pulling her head around too much and I was forced to get out and drop it.

Yasme immediately went crazy without the sail, but I was able to hold a better course and keep the light dead ahead. As much as I opened the throttle of that engine, the light always seemed to be just out of reach and I found that my body was leaning forward as though its position might assist in our forward motion. Keeping the light in sight we plodded on at around 2 to 3 knots, the beam seas doing their very best to capsize Yasme. The night disappeared, and there ahead came the faint tinge of a new day about to break. With the light came the faint outline of land, and there about a mile away, the tiny rescue launch appeared bouncing around on the horizon. On the portside was great chunk of mountain sticking out of the water and I knew it wouldn't be long before I should be in its lee and in sheltered waters. Gradually Yasme forged ahead and into the welcoming shelter of the land, and as things calmed, so the rescue launch turned and came back towards us showing me the way to the anchorage. Within ten minutes of this turn, Yasme was at anchor and safe in Port Moresby. It had been 9 days of absolute hell...and just about 12 hours under tow. It was an experience I hadn't had before and certainly never wanted again. It did, as Dick told me, give me plenty of material for the article I wrote for the "CQ" Amateur Radio Magazine. Clearance with customs, a short stay in the hospital to fix my many abrasions then lots of food and a long sleep...I'd had enough.

Port Moresby. I fully intended to rest and tidy up Yasme for her future radio work, but somehow, things just wouldn't go right. The trip from Honiara had been a real stinker, and the Yasme whilst being free from actual damage, was a mess below and all her varnish work wanted redoing. I was feeling rough, but with a good anchorage and pleasant surroundings, I soon decided it wasn't such a bad life after all. The port captain, Captain Hawley, did all in his power to help me to obtain a shack to fit up my radio gear, but it seemed that places such as that were at a premium and we were unlucky. I was beginning to get a little discouraged when he had a brainwave. Stowed in a warehouse was the salvaged cabin off an old ship that had foundered on a reef many moons ago. He arranged that it be lifted with a crane and set down within a hundred yards of Yasme's moorings, and with it, came the power line to operate all the gear. What more could I ask. I had plenty of assistance to hoist the 40' steel pole for the beam antenna, but the fun came when we tried to bang in the steel spikes to hold the bracing wires. The ground was solid rock, and all we seemed to do was to bend the spikes, but never to get them to penetrate

the ground. Whilst all this was going on, several of the New Guinea lads decided to have a chat and forget that they were supposed to be holding the wires...TIMBER! There was a mad scramble to dodge as it came crashing down. No-one was hurt, but there was a nasty bend in the pipe...a little unsafe for future use, particularly if I had to climb it, but everyone had a good laugh and up it went again. By dusk, the beam was erected on the pole and I switched on the radio. The static that came through the receiver nearly deafened me, and the only station I could hear was a local "Ham" about 500 yards away. He told me that owing to the copper mines in the area, there was a strong copper dust deposit on all the insulators, and the electrical leakage was causing this infernal clatter. The answer was rain, to wash the insulators clean. Rain! That was a laugh! They hadn't heard of rain for years, so it seemed to me that my radio work would be seriously impeded. With this in mind I decided I would get Yasme ready as soon as possible and get away. The cyclone season wasn't too far off and I welcomed the opportunity to get away as soon as possible. I decided to get one of the local lads to give a hand in fitting out Yasme. That's where I made my biggest mistake. With thousands of them around it should present no problem.. that's what you think. I found a real dyed-in-the-wool New Guinea Boy, complete with a great big smile, a big head of fuzzy hair, holes through his nose and ears, betel nut stained teeth and a sad lack of knowledge of the English language. With the aid of signs etc., we finally agreed on a wage, and then came the problem of trying to tell him what I wanted done. I painted half the deck before he finally got the idea, then he took up the brush and painted every other thing there EXCEPT the deck. The windows, the varnish and the brasswork all got their share, but the deck remained its same dirty shade of yellow.. end of boy number one..call in the coroner. Had a go with a boy from another tribe and tried to teach him how to scrape the old varnish off. Within five minutes he had scored the wood so badly I had to take a plane to it to smooth it down again..I nearly went nuts..end of boy No.2. I gave up any thoughts of assistance after that and decided I would get more done working alone, but in that climate I found that ten minutes work in the sun necessitate twenty minutes rest. Very little work got done in the daytime, and at night, it got too dark and too humid to paint or varnish. I did try varnishing once or twice, but the dust thrown up by a local bulldozer resulted in an interesting sandy beach finish. In the end I gave up and hoped that the wood wouldn't crack all over the place before I hit a better location.

My activities on radio and painting being slightly hindered, I had ample opportunity to see around the place, and apart from the heat, it wasn't a bad joint. The town was fitted with all modern inconveniences, and seemed to be doing a roaring trade. Exports consisted mainly of copra, copper and gold..I never had a chance to stake a claim..the gold in them thar hills was way out in the bush where the canibals grow and the headhunters still thrive. I had no inclination for either free haircuts or to be served up as a hors d'oeuvre, so I stayed put. Whilst anxious to get away, one of the lads working for the local aircraft company offered to take me up into the mountains to Sogari on his motor cycle. I accepted, and that was the second big mistake I made in my short sojourn in Port Moresby. We started out early on a Sunday morning heading out into the hills, his bike chugging away quite happily, and me sitting astride the pillion. Bowling down the tarmac roads at 50 mph was quite pleasant and certainly cooled us off, even though waves of excessive heat would strike us in the face occasionally. As we neared the foothills, so the roads started to deteriorate, but still he kept up his speed. I screamed and shouted at him to take it easy, but he was a little nuts I think and only opened up the throttle a little wider. It was bad enough on the rough roads, but as we started to climb into the mountains, there were many times I closed my eyes as we neared a drop that would send us into eternity. Climbing higher he was forced to slow down owing to the steepness of the trail, but as we hit each bend and his front wheel skidded, my heart jumped into my mouth with the expectations that we should carreen over the edge. I gave up shouting in the end and settled myself down for an early and unpleasant death. So as we climbed, so the road narrowed to a ridged track and I dreaded the thought that very soon another vehicle would turn the corner at the same speed and that would end it all. Climbing still higher the air got thinner and colder, and looking down, we could see the road twisting and turning miles below us. It seemed impossible that we had traversed that narrow trail, and I grew quite giddy gazing into the depths below. Finally, the road levelled and he pulled into a slight alcove to rest...I needed the rest, but he was concerned with his confounded motor cycle overheating. For two pins I would have pushed the infernal machine over the side, but the thought of being stranded up there in the evening mist made me change my mind. I climbed aboard again, my stern feeling as though I had been belted with a rock for the last three weeks..by golly! was I sore! I suppose it was maybe half an hour later that I heard

another sound over and above the roar of the bike, and as he pulled up again, there to our left were the Sogari waterfalls. Never have I seen such a splendid sight as those thousands of tons of water cascading down into the depths many thousands of feet below. From where we were stationed, it seemed that a tiny stream emerged from the valleys of the mountains, wandered between two banks of trees, slid over the edge of a narrow precipice. From there, the water seemed to increase in volume, strike another projecting rock another thousand feet or so lower, then burst outward into the centre of the valley in a magnificent cloud of spray falling headlong into the depths to roar away in the river deep down. I wondered what it would be like to slide down in that waterfall. If I could miss that projecting precipice, it would be a thrilling episode in my life to fall through space into the deep waters below...or were they deep? Maybe it might be a little safer to go back via that two wheeled monster after all. I took several photographs, then we continued onto Sogari village. Here was the police training depot for Papua, and I have to admit that those New Guinea boys sure made fine smart policemen. Also they had a fine school up there, but my attempts at taking snaps of the pupils met with failure...they just didn't like the idea of having the camera pointing at them, and dived into the undergrowth. I wanted to go further in and enter the bush or jungle, but here my friend showed much displeasure, in fact, he told me straight that if I wanted to go further, I'd have to go alone. The headhunters were still quite active in that area, and as he had already seen a few shrunken heads, he had no wish to join some of his ancestors in that particular way. Not being particularly a brave sort of bloke myself, but still not admitting the fact, I ridiculed his attitude and then helped him to turn his motorcycle back the way we had come. I still wonder whether I convinced him that I wanted to go on? I doubt it. The return trip, much to my surprise was no where as frightening as the going side of it, and apart from a few hair-raising experiences at some particularly nasty bends and meeting two or three cars coming in the opposite direction, we actually reached the foothills without any bother. Arriving back on the good roads again, I breathed a great big sigh of relief, and as Yasme came into view, I swore I would never again risk my neck as a pillion rider climbing the mountains of New Guinea, or for that matter, any other mountains. It had been a wonderful experience. I'm glad I had it, but wild horses wouldn't get me to do it again. It was that day that I met my old friends of the Yacht Moana. They had caught up with me

again. It seemed strange that after traversing so many miles we should cross each others paths. What a reunion that was. I was so overjoyed I ran up and embraced Pierre in the typical French style..many thought we were crazy, but my joy at seeing him after so long was unbounded. He and his crew trouped aboard the Moana for a celebration party, and it was then that the bomb dropped on my joy. They were to leave the following day, and I was unable to follow them owing to lack of sails. This was really a smack in the eye for me, and the following morning, I almost wept as they cleared the harbor en route for the Torres Straits and home. I often wonder if things would have turned out the same way had I been able to leave at the same time. Fate had a funny way of playing her cards, and it seemed to me that although we had met so many times in the past, it was never to be that we should accompany each other on a voyage. I was getting a little worried about the weather about then, the North Westerlies were due any time, and it meant I should have a lousy trip to Port Darwin, bit still I couldn't leave without my new mainsail. It had been promised in 15 days, and it arrived hang on time...Hard Sails had kept their word and sent a really fine mainsail which fitted like a glove. With the sail bent onto the mast and boom, I hoisted it and watched it billow out in the gentle breeze. It filled to perfection. Not a crease, not a blemish; it set perfectly. I had been prepared to sail for quite a few days, and with the arrival of the sail, I lost little time in getting clearance from Customs. With all paper work completed, charts checked and fuel tanks full, Yasme backed out of the little niche near the harbor wall into the open bay, then with plenty of sea room, I hoisted her new mainsail and jib. Majestically, Yasme cruised with the light wind the whole length of the harbor showing her paces to an admiring crowd. I was so proud as she swept along, the calm waters only broken by her bow wave, leaving behind her a faint line of bubbles in her wake. I shouted with exhilaration. Back to sea again, new places, new faces to see..no man knows that feeling unless he is a sailor. The wind held steady and Yasme picked up speed until we were skipping along at 7 knots. The sun shone out of a cloudless sky, in fact the whole day was perfect, and we were on our way again to taste new waters. What a day that was for me, no man could have been happier. For five miles we cruised towards the narrow pass which split the Barrier reef around Port Moresby. Upon entering it, the seas went mad as they broke and boiled on those jagged teeth passing swiftly alongside us. Undercurrents wrenched at the tiller and I started the engine to be absolutely sure we would keep out of trouble, but fortunately, the wind held good, and

Yasme battled her way through under sail alone and finally entered the infamous Gulf of Papua, the graveyard of many fine ships both in peace and war. I still wonder what I would have done had I known what the next 48 hours would bring, but we, as pitiful humans are not permitted to know the future.

As we cleared the reefs the seas turned nasty as Yasme strained and pitched through the choppy shallow waters, but with the wind holding so well, we were soon out into deep water where the seas calmed and made Yasme more compatible. I held course for about three hours to clear the reef, and then swung around to head towards our goal, at the same time hoisting the trade wind sails and dropping the main and jib. Within half an hour, I had trimmed Yasme to hold her own course, then went below to mark the chart and enter up the log. With any sort of luck, our next landfall would be Bramble Cay with its bright light to guide us and to open up the dangerous Torres Straits. That afternoon and evening were perfect. Whilst there was quite a big swell, Yasme sailed smoothly, and I enjoyed to the full the pleasures of sitting in the cockpit and eating my fill, the gentle tropical breezes whispering around my ears, and the glittering stars illuminating my backcloth like a stage set. I really thought this was to be the one trip which would be perfect...how wrong I was AGAIN. Turned in around 1am and enjoyed a perfect night's rest, arising at daybreak to get a perfect set of sights which checked with my course and log. This was real pleasure yachting I thought as I lolled around in the cockpit scoffing bacon and eggs, and as the morning passed, so my 10 o/c sights were jotted down as I grabbed them from a cloudfree sky. Noon arrived, and with it my latitude. I crossed it with my earlier sights and went below to sharpen my pencil and put a tiny cross on the chart. It is a wonderful feeling to be miles from land, and yet with the aid of a sextant, a few tables and a Nautical Almanac, to be able to determine one's position anywhere in the whole wide world. At that time, I felt the richest man in the world. That afternoon I had my usual talks with Jock in New Zealand and Frank in Moresby and also gave them both my position at noon that day...little did I realise how important that position check would be later that day...it was then 24th October 1956. The time 6pm ships mean time.

Blissfully unconscious of what the future might bring, Yasme sailed on her way, never varying more than a degree off course, and as evening fell, the sky turned a brilliant red as the sun sunk below the horizon dead ahead and Yasme plowed on...to her destruction.

7 pm that evening. Slight wind N.E. Sky 10/10 cloud. Sea slight swell. No moon. On course. Position Lat. $9^{\circ} 10''$ South. Long. $145^{\circ} 5''$ East...that is the last entry in my log to my recollection. I had just finished my talk with Jock and had left the tiny generator running to boost up the refrigerator. Built myself a three decker and sat out in the cockpit with a cup of coffee reading a book by the faint glow from the cockpit light. Everything was peaceful, and my mind wandered away from the book as I thought of all the new lands I would see in the future. Perhaps some would say I should have been sitting out on the deck armed with binoculars just looking for trouble, or others would preferred me sitting on the cross-trees halfway up the mast, but from my point of view, I was doing exactly what I thought I should have done at the time..sitting in the cockpit dreaming. It was odd that I should do what I did then. I got up, leaving my coffee and book to gaze around the cabin at my worldly wealth. The curios that hung on the cabin walls, the little knick-knacks I had picked up from odd corners of the globe, all the things that made that cabin into something I called home. Absentmindedly, I opened a drawer to look for something when suddenly, there was a horrible grinding crash and I was thrown onto the cabin floor. Stunned for a second, I just couldn't make out what had happened so far out there in the ocean. I tried to convince myself we had hit a piece of drift wood, maybe collided with a whale, anything but the truth...the horror of all sailors...a reef. Deep in my heart, there was no fooling myself. Yasme had steered herself to her own death and for all I knew mine too. The comforting silence of before had changed to a terrific roaring as Yasme with all canvas flying forced herself further and further onto the jagged teeth of that reef. The grating and grinding was deafening as her whole weight was lifted by each swell and slammed down onto that unyielding rock, and as she stopped, so the seas would break right over her, flooding the cockpit and pouring into the cabin. Somehow, I found myself in the cockpit looking around, trying hard to comprehend what had actually gone wrong. My sights were right, I knew that, and a fast check on the chart told me no reef was there, and yet, here we were with Yasme grinding out her life and me in a flat spin. My brain went into top gear...Maybe its only a small reef, maybe I shall be able to sail right over it.. impossible to back her off. If I drop sail she will lose all stability and keel over. Start up the engine and try to motor her over the reef. With all sail and the engine coupled with the swell that lifted her every few seconds, maybe I could bump her all the way into ^{Deep} clear

water. I knew that most reefs have a deep part in the center. If we could only reach that part I could anchor until morning and keep her afloat without that infernal crashing and banging. It can't be a big reef else they'd have put it on the chart. It must be a small one that they missed. Sure, we'll get her off OK. What am I worrying about. We had been in worse positions than this before and got away with it. Yasme can take it and so can I. I could feel the engine roaring away. It screamed in anguish as the prop came clear of the water but we were moving forward. We had to be moving, we just couldn't be on a reef. In a minute we shall be in deep water and all this fuss will have been for nothing. Maybe there'll be a tiny scratch on the keel. My thoughts went haywire. I'm dreaming for sure and will wake up in a minute and find its nothing but an awful nightmare...I've been reading too many old sea stories...these crazy thoughts swept through my mind in a fraction of a second, but reality was there with its claws out, and I wasn't fooling anyone with dreams. Looking ahead I could see the light shade of green denoting the reef, but still another 50 yards was a black void telling me so very plainly that deep water was within easy range. Could we make it? I prayed to God fervently that Yasme would ultimately lift herself free from those tortuous reefs, but nature took its course, and before Yasme could fight her way clear, so the sea, that invincible enemy of man and ships alike, dropped away from her as the tide fell. Yasme, losing all buoyancy, came to a shuddering standstill, only rising and falling as an extra big wave lifted her high, then throwing her down with increased intensity onto the reef, trying hard to break her back. Thinking that the tide may rise later and free her, I staggered forward and cast the anchor over, but my prayers went to nought as she gradually settled, never to rise again, firmly on the reef. God was good in some respects. My tiny generator situated on the foredeck had continued to pop away without a murmur, even though the seas were breaking over it. It seemed to bear a charmed life. I ran below and switched on my radio gear and listened to all the hams chatting to each other all over the world. Little did they know there was stark tragedy going on as they sat in their comfortable chairs and passed on idle chatter. My hand trembled as I grasped the microphone and switched on the transmitter. Thoughts swept through my mind that maybe the set had been damaged with the severe shocks it must have encountered, but I forced myself to give the boys a call, trying hard to control my voice, to stop myself from shrieking unintelligibly. "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday"...my voice seemed to belong to another person as I called the international distress call through the microphone.

"Yacht Yasme on a reef, please clear the frequency" I must have repeated this a dozen times. I just don't know. I switched off the transmitter and listened. Not a sound from the receiver. It had gone dead. What had happened? it was OK a minute ago. Had the generator stopped-no, the lights were still burning in the cabin. Must be the receiver out of ~~commission~~ commission. Please God, this can't happen to me now. Realisation of the circumstances struck me. The receiver was OK. The boys had heard my call for help and had cleared the frequency and were waiting for me to say something. I switched the transmitter on again but my voice wouldn't come out. My mouth opened and closed yet no sound came out. Fright had struck me temporarily dumb as I stood there sweating and gagging. I tried to tell myself to say something..."Danny, for Gods sake tell them what has happened..the generator will stop any moment. It has to stop. Yasme is heeling hard over and the generator will stop through lack of gas" A voice seemed to come from the distance. I couldn't recognise it, but it said..."SOS, SOS, Yacht Yasme on a reef--position, Lat 9° 10" Long 145° 5", taking water fast, she wont hold up much longer, for Gods sake get a flying boat, anything out to me"...Somehow the transmitter was turned off. I have no recollection of doing it myself, and out of the babble of voices spewing from the receiver came one signal, far stronger than anyone else. It was an Australian Ham answering my call, and his VK2AUR plowing ~~in~~ through the thousands of miles separating us broke me from my dumb stupor. Thank God he had heard me; thank God the boys had been listening. All this was a nightmare difficult to reconstruct into logical reasoning, but I have the faint recollection of answering him and requesting that he get hold of Frank in Port Moresby for aid. I closed down the transmitter and waited, listening to the voices from far off getting the wheels moving, organising, all doing their very best to save the life of a very insignificant person 135 miles from the nearest land. Whilst this was going on, I scrambled out onto the deck where the seas were breaking over Yasme, forcing her still lower in the water. Chances of clearing the fast filling boat were hopeless. My main engine had long ceased to function which put the big bilge pump out of commission, and the tiny hand pump was utterly useless to handle this inflow. I had to get the dinghy over the side, get fresh water in it and the flare pistol. Whats happened to the cartridges? they were in my hand, but I didn't know it. I wedged the pistol and flares on the cabin roof and struggled with the lashings on the dinghy. They had tightened up with the water and the knots defied my numbed fingers. I tried to break the rope with my bare hands, but it was too tough. I was going mad with

frustration. Would nothing go right? I screamed at my own stupidity...the knife was hanging around my neck from a lanyard. Suddenly the dinghy was cut loose and dropped straight over the side from the steeply sloping deck landing upside down in the water. I grabbed the painter so stop it drifting away, and with my feet braced against the rail, exerted every bit of my fast waning strength in an attempt to turn it right side up. Superhuman strength flowed through my muscles as I pulled it in and turned it right way up. It was full of water, but that didn't matter for I could bail it out later. Realising the painter was too short, I cut off a long length of rope and tied it to the dinghy letting it drift far away from the stricken Yasme. With nothing more to do on deck I went below again to join in the chatter on the transmitter. Somehow, Frank had been raised and was passing on the new to me. He had Captain Hawley in his shack and this is what I heard. First, no rescue launch could come out to me. I understood that quite well as the chances were that the launch would also get wrecked on the same reef. Second, a flying boat would take off at dawn and head for my last known position. Obviously it couldn't take off from Moresby in the dark owing to a lack of lights, and more obviously, if it did get off, it could hardly hang around with me until morning, and the chances of it landing in the dark either here or at Moresby were hopeless. The best that could be done was for me to wait until dawn....Well, I assured Captain Hawley that I would stay around, and that I had some pleasant company in the shape of a few hammer-head sharks, and for him not to worry. With these last comments, I turned back the conversation to him and stood by to wait. As time passed, so I kept up a running commentary as to the height of the water in the cabin, but I knew that very soon, this forced jollity on my part would break down...and so would I. I went out on deck to check the dinghy thinking it was high time I got a few stores into it, and started to pull in the rope. At first it seemed too easy to pull it, then it went slack. The rope was long and I thought that the dinghy had drifted out of sight, but the stark realisation of what had happened soon struck me. As I pulled in the rope, so I came to the end. All that was left was a tiny piece of wood which I recognised as the stem. I knew then that it had somehow drifted under the counter of Yasme, and she had rolled on it in her death throes, crushing it to pieces...my only means of survival had gone! My lifebelt had broken away long before, not that it would have been any use in those shark infested waters...what to do now? I clambered back into the cabin, the water was now up to my waist, and found the rig working OK and the generator popping away oblivious to its

surroundings and conditions. The band was quiet. Now and again one of the boys would pass a fast message, then dead quiet again. I called Frank for the last and final time, telling him that Yasme had settled completely and the water was around my waist. As I talked, the generator started to pop and splutter..I knew this was it. The light started to dim and brighten, then with a final splutter from the generator, the lights in the cabin glared for seconds at full brilliance and everything went quiet and dark. I was at last totally and completely alone. I had started this trip alone, had been alone for 2½ years, and it looked as though I would finish it alone, alone with my beloved ship that had carried me over half way around the world. I tried the emergency battery lighting and found that it still operated even though the batteries had been partly submerged for some time. Among the debris I found my flashlight which I stuffed into my belt. I fumbled under the water for the switch to the mast head light and switched that on as a guide to any aircraft that might be around...it went out about ten minutes afterwards. Though I had sufficient buoyant stuff around to make a lifebelt, it would be of little use. The school of sharks cruising around would make short work of me, and my chances of survival were exactly NIL. Yasme was tough, but she couldn't take much more of this battering on the reef. Up till now, she hadn't become holed, but her planking was opening up, and even if I could have bulged her out, it would have leaked in faster than I could have handled it, so I gave up any thoughts of trying to empty her. By midnight the roar of the surf had quietened with the change of the tide, but how long would it take to rise and how high were two questions that were to bother me for a long time afterwards. By this time the moon had risen, and its ghostly glow shone down on us, maybe for the last time. To get my thoughts off the apparently hopeless situation and to prevent myself from losing all reason, I decided to make some attempt to salvage the radio gear, and any other stuff that might strike my eye. whilst the tide was at its lowest. The cabin was a nightmare. The floorboards were floating around with mattresses, books, and all sorts of things that I had treasured and collected over the years. I struggled to keep upright as my life floated past me through the cabin doors and into the open sea. Spools of negatives depicting rare spots in the world, a hand carved cigarette box presented to me in Ocean Island, two wooden images given to me by a chief of one of the islands...they all floated past me into oblivion. The sea is cruel. I tore my thoughts away from those things and back to the job in hand. First I managed to get my Collins receiver out. It had always been my

pet, then came a couple of transmitters and other odd gear. These had all been stowed in the after cabin and were comparatively easy to remove. Then, I stepped down into the main saloon, one foot lower. With this drop, so the water rose almost to my chest leaving me with exactly one foot of air space throughout the length of the cabin. On the port side, still clear of the water I saw one big transmitter still dry. It was heavy, and my footing was precarious. The floor was now at 45° and had become smothered in oil. I tried so hard to carry that piece of equipment out, but as I turned with it stretched out in front of me so a big wave surged through the cabin sweeping me off my feet. The transmitter fell with me across my chest, and as I lay there beneath 5' of water pinned down, so other pieces of gear became dislodged and fell across my body. I struggled to get that weight off my chest. It had happened so suddenly that I hadn't had a chance to take a breath before being submerged and my lungs were bursting. Drowned in 5' of water in the Papuan Gulf! Here I was being drowned by the very thing I was trying to save. This was funny. I wanted to laugh. I wanted to scream with hysteria with the irony of the whole thing, but life is sweet under any circumstances, and my mind rejected all thoughts of drowning. It made me mad to think I had tried to save the gear, and in my clumsiness, and completely ruined it. I tried to think of how to save it if I were able to get it back to the surface. Silly thoughts, but when one is nearing the end, funny things happen to one's mind. Panic set in as it does in these cases and I struggled out from under, spitting gallons of water from my bursting lungs. Still more than ever determined to salvage something, I grabbed another transmitter, still high and dry, but by this time, the tide was rising fast, and before I was able to turn around to make my exit, another wave swept in and I was forced to drop my load. I had to make a mad dash to clear that cabin. The tide had risen a foot in a few seconds and the air space available was negligible. Climbing back into the after cabin I took a few breaths of air and then made my way onto the deck, trying hard to hold myself aboard as the rising seas swept the entire length of Yasme. The tide gradually enveloped the lower parts of Yasme, climbing slowly and inexorably. Finding some odd ~~xxxx~~ lengths of timber, I built a rickety scaffolding on the cabin roof in a last attempt to keep my salvaged gear clear of the water. When would it stop? It had to stop some time, but when? I gazed at the chronometer which ticked away the minutes towards my doom and ~~xxx~~ realised that dawn was only a couple of hours away. Would they find me? That was the all

prevailing question in my mind. Having flown for many years, I knew how difficult it was to sight a tiny object in the sea, and as Yasmé gradually became submerged, I knew my chances of being sighted gradually diminished. The water was now lapping around my rickety scaffolding and I tried to raise it some more, but now, my strength had gone completely and the effort to carry my own weight was almost more than I could manage. It occurred to me that I had left around \$200 in the forepeak in my little cash box. I knew exactly where it was and also knew I could put my hands on it in the dark...who doesn't know where their money is? I scrambled forward holding onto the rigging until I was dead over the open forward hatch, then taking a deep breath, I released my hold and dropped feet first down through the opening. As I fell, so my foot slid into an open drawer. My weight forced the drawer closed, and try as I would, I could find no solid place to put my other foot to free the trapped one. The more I struggled, the more the drawer closed tighter, and I was fast losing consciousness. I struggled and pushed, trying hard not to suck in water to my aching lungs. It was agony, and thoughts passed through my mind of natives who had their feet trapped in clam shells and had to cut them off to save being drowned. My hand automatically went to my knife, but I knew I neither had the strength, nor the guts to do it, and finally, my old friend PANIC took over and my foot was free. I shot to the surface gulping in the life-giving air, striking out at the same time to reach the mast a few feet away. That swim to cover three feet was the toughest I have ever encountered and I reckoned that my life was worth more than all the money in the world as I finally reached safety. By this time, the entire boat had become submerged, and I hoisted my half dead body onto the mast, strapping myself to it with the last vestige of strength. Looking astern, I watched the platform with all my salvaged gear get submerged, then a large wave swept the whole thing, and in seconds it all disappeared. All that work for nothing, but I still think it saved my sanity, even though it didn't save the gear. I had lost all idea of time. My chronometer had long since gone. The mast had become unstayed and I knew it wouldn't last very long, but it was my only refuge. Lack of fresh water was beginning to make me dizzy, and as the sun rose and became hotter, I tried to twist my body around the mast to make a shade. My imagination was playing all sorts of tricks..I could have sworn I saw a shark come out of the cabin. My eyelids, encrusted with salt, blurred everything. I knuckled my eyes with my free hand and I looked again. Yes, there they were

three of them circling Yasme, just waiting for the inevitable. I was determined to put up a fight, though armed only with a pitifully small clasp knife...how ridiculous can one get? Nothing to do now except wait. Would a boat or a plane ever arrive? The chances of seeing me were one in a million; I had no false illusions about my present position, but still couldn't believe this was the end. I had long since given up staring at the sky. My eyes were aching and stinging, my whole body felt like lead, and it took every ounce of my strength to cling to the mast. The continual roar of the breaking surface of the reef began to sound like a plane. Just as a man in the desert sees mirages, so I kept seeing imaginary airplanes flying toward me. I knew I was fast losing my senses, but clung to the last stages of sanity by convincing myself all the time that my rescue was only an hour away. Soon this paid off. There was a slightly different tone. Not much, but I knew it was different to the seas on the reef. The plane should come from the east...lets see, the sun rises in the east...or is it the west? The east..I lifted my head and stared into the rising sun, but the strain was too much. All I could see were spots jumping around like miniature demons, and tears came to my eyes as they stung with the pain. It must be an airplane...I creaked my head around and, not believing my blurred eyesight, saw a faint speck circling far out to the north west then heading towards Yasme. The roar of his engines increased until they blotted out all sound from that dreaded reef. It rose in pitch until it became a scream as he swooped low over Yasme, and as he swept away into the distance, so the roar faded and the reef took over the sound effects. I cried with relief and the clusters of salt around my eyes greedily sucked up the drops of moisture and made my eyes ache even more. The pilot waved to me as he circled, but for me to reply was too much of an effort, and I just hung there waiting for the next episode in this drama. Twice more he circled very low and my eye caught the flashing of a signal lamp. What on earth was he trying to tell me? Come to that, what the heck could he tell me that could be of any use? I have never been very good at reading a blinker under perfect conditions, but to read one traveling at 120 mph in a circle, sometimes being obliterated by the sun, and at other times by the wing of the plane; couple these facts with eyes that can hardly see and a very foggy brain and you will see what I was attempting. How many times he circled I shall never know, but finally it penetrated my befuddled brain that a rescue launch was on its way and would arrive about 4 pm that afternoon. This started me laughing. It was

now just after 8am, and that meant I would have to hang there for another 8 hours. A rising tide, no strength, and a handhold which was likely to disappear at any moment and a school of sharks waiting patiently for me to keep them company...yes, this was very funny. I gave them a wave to say I understood...they circled once more and headed east. As they disappear all my chances of survival went with them, for I knew that I could never last another 8 hours, and the way the mast was swaying in the surging sea, I knew too that it would break long before the launch arrived. There was about another 6' of mast left to climb, but by then, I didn't care anymore; I became like a statue attached to the mast, never moving, with my eyes closed..just waiting of the end that I knew must inevitably come.

The roar of the surf became a lullaby. I felt myself falling asleep and had to mentally shake myself back to consciousness. I just couldn't fall asleep now. There was still that vague chance if I could hang on, but absolutely none if I should fall asleep and drop into the drink...the sharks would see to that. Later..much later, maybe around 10am, another faint dron. Could the plane have come back? No that was impossible. I reckoned out his speed plus time for refuelling and realised it would have been impossible to have returned in such a short time. Imagination, thats what it was. By gosh, the roar that almost burst my eardrums a few seconds later was no imagination. The terrific scream of high powered engines and a semi gale force of wind that almost knocked me from the mast washed out all ideas of sleep, drowning, and sharks right out of my mind. My head snapped up with a click, my eyes unglued themselves from thick layers of encrusted salt, and there soaring high in the sky was a R.A.A.F 4 engined Lincoln Bomber. That old feeling of exhilaration came back and I screwed myself around on the mast to gaze with wonderment at this new visitor. But...and I had to look again to be sure..it was a land plane. What use could he be? Impossible! A seaplane, a helicopter...these things I could understand, but not a landplane. He circled Yasme, sometimes very low, then climbing quite high. He seemed to taunt me..these things I imagined in my twisted brain..sometimes he would climb into the sky and disappear into the blue, then, from nowhere, he would scream down as though on a bombing run. My thoughts went back to my old days with the R.A.F. and the old Wellington Bombers...all sorts of things passed through my mind as he continually corceled and dived around my solitary position. Then it came to me. These dummy runs were for a good reason. He swept away into the distance and then almost touching the water he came towards Yasme. The low drone of his engines built up to an ear

shattering roar. Something fell from the bomb bays and it hit the water. Thank God... its a dinghy! It gradually took form as its tiny cylinder of CO₂ inflated it to full size, and there floating towards me was my life saver. Slowly, so very slowly, that dinghy floated nearer. I swore with anguish whenever a little puff of wind would make it veer away. Closer and closer it came, but not in a straight line. I knew then it would drift past my starboard hand. The currents had got hold of it and were taking it from my reach. Now it was almost level with Yasme, but so far away. My eyes automatically looked along the submerged length of Yasme for a heaving line, something I could throw out to maybe hook onto it, but there was nothing to be seen, only water several feet deep over the hull. I had only seconds in which to make up my mind. The decision had to be made quickly. To stay aboard Yasme until the mast broke when I should be easy meat for the sharks, or to swim to the dinghy and take my chances with the sharks. What would YOU DO?

The mast might last a minute or several hours, I didn't know, but when it did go, I would go with it. The dinghy was about 400 yards away now, with every second taking it further from my grasp. I stood a chance of making it if I had the strength to swim that distance.. but could I. My brain started running in high gear and it occurred to me that the idea of the repeated dummy runs was also to scare the sharks away, and it was with my heart in my mouth that I finally lowered myself into the water and struck out for the dinghy. I tried so hard to avoid unnecessary splashing to keep the sharks away, but as the dinghy ~~max~~ became nearer, all caution was thrown to the winds as I struck out with all my last failing strength to reach it before it drifted that extra few feet. Gradually the dinghy took shape as I neared it, that orange colored ballon bobbing around on the water. Only 12 feet more and my whole body was screaming in agony with the exertion. The next few minutes seemed like hours and then the dinghy was within reach. The most ironical thing happened just then. Written in large black letters on the side of the dinghy ~~were~~ the following words, "LADDER ON OTHER SIDE"...this was funny, it would be just my luck to have a shark pop up just as I swam to the other side for that damned ladder. To hell with the ladder..I'd had enough. I'm not chancing another ten feet in this water to make my entry into the dinghy an easy one. I grabbed a handfull of the loose rubber of the bottom of the dinghy and hauled myself aboard with a superhuman pull. As I sprawled headfirst inside, so the dinghy spun like a top, listing badly as it gradually slowed down. I struggled to pull myself up to look out through the entrance and saw that a big patch of the rubberised fabric had been ripped

away by a shark. To make a very crude pun, I can only gather I was exactly one foot ahead of that shark, and when I found that the remaining buoyancy bags were keeping the raft afloat, I thumbed my fingers to my nose at the dozen or so sharks that were thrashing around outside. Saved at last...thank God, and it was with those thanks that I decided to try to paddle back to Yasme with the hope that I may be able to salvage some of those fine Dacron sails. Lying in the bottom of the dinghy were two tiny paddles designed to fit over the hands, but although I paddled hard, the current was far too strong and I was too weak, and finally I collapsed back into the dinghy beaten and exhausted. As I lay there, the water I had brought aboard had turned a deep blood red, and glancing down at my body I saw I was cut from head to foot with tiny gashes. That headlong dash through the coral reef must have been responsible. I seemed to remember it shallowing as I swam through the edge, and my tattered shorts seemed to bear this out too. I think I must have collapsed with fatigue and slept, I just don't seem to remember, but it was the noise of the plane swooping that aroused me. Looking out, the bomber was still circling, and as I gave a half hearted wave, he swept in and dropped a load of supplies. No one will ever know how I struggled to reach them, but my strength was gone, and all I could do was to stroke the water. They drifted away. The pilot made a second attempt, but once again, I just couldn't make it. My mind tried so hard to telegraph my hands, but somewhere in the system, the communications had broken down. I lay there and slept again. I awoke again feeling terribly cold and saw the Lincoln bomber still circling, and as far as I could gather, he had been cruising around for several hours, and unless he was equipped with overload tanks I knew he would have to return to base for refuelling. My supposition was correct as shortly afterwards he made several runs alongside the dinghy dropping smoke markers; then, with the typical salute, he flew into the southwest and disappeared. I realpsed into a semi coma not caring very much, my mind a blank. My tongue had swollen to twice its normal size and my lips were covered in blisters, but none of this seemed to worry me. I was content where I was. No more fears of the mast breaking, no thoughts of big seas washing me off the deck, no bothers about sharks...I slept. Hours later, it must have been around 4.30 pm that afternoon I awoke shivering, lying in a pool of water in the dinghy and looked out. There in the distance was a Catalina seaplane from Qantas Airways circling above me. As he came lower I gave him a wave and saw him return it, then, much to my surprise he came lower and still lower, finally making one of the finest landings on a rough sea I have ever seen,

How he controlled that plane in those seas I shall never know. As it touched the water so it bounced into the air several times, finally slowing and then swinging towards me. For a few seconds he remained motionless with engines ticking over, then opening up his throttles, taxied through the high seas toward my raft. What a pilot! He did a magnificent job, and all my worries disappeared as he closed with the dinghy. His props gleamed as he came nearer, then with a few chuffs, his port engine stopped as the dinghy swept beneath his port wing. Willing hands assisted me into the bows of the plane, and as his engines burst into song, my lifesaving dinghy slowly drifted alongside to be lost astern as we taxied into the lee of the reef for a takeoff. We bounced around quite a bit, but that plane with a masters hand at the stick did a perfect takeoff, and with a few tiny bumps, we became airborne. He circled Yasme several times, and the reef stood out in relief from 500'. Yasmes grave was hardly a pleasant one as I looked below. The mast had broken and was floating on the surface, held there by the odd wire shrouds and halyards. Yasme, although completely submerged, was completely visible in the crystal water, and I wept as we circled and gave her a salute, It was a salute to a brave ship. She had taken me years to build. I had travelled around 40,000 miles in her, She had survived two hurricanes, a cyclone and many gales, and this was her reward after 2½ years of faithful service. I was heartbroken as we headed east back to Port Moresby, and I have little recollection of the trip or the landing. Newspapermen were there in their hordes to ask inane questions and to take photographs. How I hated them for their cheap publicity about a fine ship. The Red Cross took me under their wing in the shape of a kindly bloke known as Don Etheridge. He patched up my wounds and fixed me up with clothing and accomodation..I shall never forget him. I wont go into the details of how I searched Moresby for someone to assist me in the salvage of Yasme. Let it be said that no-one was interested. She wasn't insured, and the way I saw it, no-one wanted to take the chance of going out to her and getting nothing in return. Maybe I'm a little sentimental and they were businesslike...I just don't know. Realising I could do no good in Moresby, I spoke to Don about getting down to Sydney. I felt that I could get something organised there. Within half an hour of my request, he came running up with a plane ticket to Sydney. Within another hour, I was airborne, and three hours later, in Sydney with a host of my Ham friends to look after me. Well, I stayed with the boys there for a while and regained a little strength, then a few

message came through from Dick in the Virgin Islands. He offered to pay my fare back to England if that was what I wanted....but, that wasn't quite what I had in mind. I was then and still am, trying to be the first Englishman to sail around the world single handed, and those famous words "The Show Must Go On" will continue to flit through my mind for ever, even though my thoughts continue to turn to that grim day when all my possessions, ambitions and almost myself were destroyed. Perhaps to some, the destruction of an inanimate object would mean just the loss of its actual monetary value, but to a sailor, his ship is his all, and he looks upon her as something that money cannot buy. I shall get another ship one day. She will never be as good, or as strong as Yasme, but I will call her Yasme II in memory of the finest little ship that ever sailed the seas. I am in America now, lecturing to all my friends the Hams. They are as keen as I to see another Yasme take to the oceans, and I feel that it won't be so very long before I shall be writing about Yasme II and her SUCCESSFUL VOYAGE AROUND THE WORLD...who knows what the future may bring. The ways of the sea are strange, and no man can foretell how it will react. whether it will treat you kindly as it did with me many times, or whether it will show its temper. It is unpredictable, but that is what gives me the fun out of sailing and is SO DIFFERENT to all those other things I tried.