

# John Rusher Diary

Volume Three



*Boleh*  
*Can do*

11<sup>th</sup>. This morning there was a great cry to host the new mascot but Robin was again it (angry crowd) so instead we hung out the gun to port and hoisted the no 2 work to starboard. Under this rig we did see hoist for four hours, but then the wind began to drop and we hoisted the brown mascot with 2 reefs in — not a very amusing party because we had not done the job before and a lot of things were wrong.

11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>. A foul night — storm and heavy rain all the time — slatting in a lumpy sea most of the time (but not the dangerous slatting we used to have). By morning the wind was light and variable and we shook out the reefs, but early 11 am. it was raining again.

12<sup>th</sup>. The supply situation is not easy mainly because I was not properly briefed before we left Mauritius, but partly because I did not supervise Chang closely enough and ~~and~~ he has used an ~~new~~ <sup>old</sup> plan just ~~what~~ <sup>what</sup> the old plan, stored in sealed tin, has gone bad. But ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~old~~ <sup>old</sup> ~~plan~~ <sup>plan</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~so~~ <sup>so</sup> ~~bad~~ <sup>bad</sup> ~~yet~~ <sup>yet</sup>.

Biscuits have let us down badly, 'Pamers' biscuits are very badly turned — this is ridiculous as they are, nowadays, supplied primarily as emergency stores.

(1700) What a temperamental creature the sea is. We went to sleep this afternoon in a nasty lull, the rain passing over, the ~~only~~ slatting and no wind — by 1530 the sun was shining, there was a gentle swell and no sea, a little haze was blowing and the ship was bowling along beautifully.

13<sup>th</sup>. The haze of yesterday afternoon has been increasing steadily and since noon it has been blowing between 6 and 7. After squalls this morning we took down a reef and shifted jibs to the number 2 work, and at 1600 on the reef and changed to the small working jib. There is a heavy sea running and really rather a lot of wind, but its all from the north-east. It came its uncomfortable, and sometimes a little frightening a watch, but there's a tremendous feeling of exhilaration and achievement and in gaining confidence fast.

(Photos - many places)



13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup>. We had a bloody night - in our respect literally. Robin was passing out some cocoa in the cabin, Thomas in one hand and mug in the other, while there was an extra heavy lurch. He took a header right across the cabin, and cut open his eye eyelids and temple, and smashed the thumb at the same time. I did my best to patch him up, not easy because the deck was covered in blood, cocoa and broken glass and the ship was moving as violently, as she had ever done in the heavy following sea.

As I wrote in my journal on the 13<sup>th</sup> I was getting confidence fast, but Robin still felt that I had not enough experience to compete with the sort of conditions alive at night - and ~~accused me~~ told me this just before I was due to keep the middle. Obviously it was no good arguing so I had to lump it but of course I was thoroughly unhappy - mainly because I believed at the time it was justified ~~as Robin justified me~~ ~~but afterwards~~ ~~Allen & I began to get a better perspective~~. Looking back on it now I realize that while such a decision would have been right 48 hours earlier, and it was on this night just beginning to be wrong, and 48 hours later it would have been entirely unjustified. But it was a pretty heavy start to my birthday.

14<sup>th</sup>. We averaged 7 knots during the 48 hours to noon. I had relief decks and thought it had by then earned a little. I had no trouble at all that surpassed anything of its kind I have ever seen - it was fantastic. The sea was covered with this or four feet of flying spray and mist and one could not face in to it at all. I luffed her about three points until the man was just lifting and she took it very well indeed.

During the forenoon we had some hot bathwater run, a grand drink to a cold climate. The wind went down steadily and just before lunch we shook out a reef and shifted jobs, then it did very quickly and now (1600) we are wallowing about 50 miles south of East London, and wondering what tonight will bring. At least here's hoping that it will be calmly.





At Port Elizabeth  
May 17<sup>th</sup> 1950

May 17<sup>th</sup>.

It was a miserable morning, cold and 'guzzling' with rain as they say in Plymouth. This, seemed to be no activity going on in the very fine, entirely artificial, harbour but we were hailed from the pilot station and called alongside and the port officials soon arrived and gave us clearance.

Finding that we were naval the bustling people arranged for us to go to the South African naval volunteer reserve headquarters, ~~the~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>but</sup>ted at their pier and soon found ourselves among friends. All the permanent staff were in R.N. ratings the senior one a C.P.O. (G), and all the officers had served in the R.N. or S.A.N.F. during the war.

We stayed at Port Elizabeth for few days and, although we were disappointed at having to break our journey like this, ~~and~~ although it is a characteristic little mushroom town, although the weather was poor and we had too many persistent and unwelcome visitors, I was much impressed by ~~the~~ <sup>its</sup> little provincial ~~town~~ <sup>place</sup> ~~and~~ or rather by its cheerful bustling personality.

They call it the city of our armed women. (On the same reason that it is said you can tell a Port Elizabeth man anywhere because he always holds a tin in his hat going round a street corner). What I noticed about their men, that they were all a ~~very~~ <sup>very</sup> ~~well~~ <sup>well</sup> turned out, mostly (it was nearly mid winter) in smart, neat suits, and all with good stockings and shoes. Another feature of which I took a very good view was that the ~~good~~ <sup>good</sup> shop girls, even in Woolworths were ~~never~~ <sup>never</sup> all smart, polite, and helpful. I told this to Cassie Maud Woodrow who we arrived at Simonson and she said 'oh yes, but that's all very well yours are — young men, it's very different for me here.' I had to kiss her fairly a hot cheek for both the ~~adjectives~~.

The first night in harbour I went to pay my respects - at 'the club' a most beautifully kept and well run men's club of the best sort, and was to meet the others at the newly established Skylight roof of the Marine Hotel, but when I reached this place with a pleasant individual who had undertaken to drive me there, ~~and~~ we found a most peculiar atmosphere.

We had gone from the club to this individual home —



The Harbour, Port Elizabeth.



Schwartzkop Yacht Club.

The clubhouse is an ambition to look at - though comfortable inside. It is built in the form of a ship, the prow of which appears to the left of this photograph.

where we found his sweet lady, wife, busy writing to John Macdonald who <sup>thought to be</sup> an old <sup>friend</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>his</sup> <sup>own</sup> <sup>place!</sup> then on to the main where we <sup>enquired</sup> after the other. The manager, a <sup>working</sup> little grey man wearing an American tie had been all out until then, but at the first mention of the Englishmen <sup>kniss</sup> one then, one shot and one fell, we were invited to stay right when we were and several assistants, another manager, waiter and ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> lounge or were called up. Then we were told quite firmly that the people we had described had left and were queer to understand that we also were about to leave! Apparently the infidel people had had the <sup>hagen</sup> <sup>efficiency</sup> to refuse entrance to Robi Pike and have because they were not dressed up to the <sup>series</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>there</sup> <sup>had</sup> <sup>been</sup> <sup>an</sup> <sup>imperial</sup> <sup>now</sup>, and I don't wonder - the great pity of it was that we were not staying long enough in the town to visit on an apology.

Later on we found the others still raging in a pub and we had a huge supper at a <sup>road</sup> <sup>house</sup> <sup>late</sup> - still.

During the rest of our time I saw and I called on the Pibernaughting, SAMP, which was on a cruise with the Natal and received a most friendly welcome. They sent back an officer of the house to call on us, complete with sword, which I suggested he should leave ashore! I took Piberna and down to see The Secret life of Walter Mitty (my third time) which we enjoyed a lot although we had to sit on the stairs because I had booked at the wrong cinema (there was two in the same building). Hugh McWilliam, a charming architect took us in his private Cadillac to lunch at the Schwartzkop Yacht club of which he is Commodore and we ate the local oysters and crabs. The oysters were very like Australian ones, not large but delicious, <sup>smaller</sup> and I had the oyster topped off with three <sup>delicious</sup> crabs. I went out to dine <sup>again</sup> one night with a <sup>retired</sup> M. Cr. called Stuart and his nice South African wife - and the next with some very charming Afrikaners the Hugo Bismans, where we all sang at the piano for hours. At both houses we had <sup>delicious</sup> <sup>lamb</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>mutton</sup> <sup>as</sup> <sup>unobtainable</sup> in



"THE POOP"  
AMSTERDAM HOEK  
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 268  
PORT ELIZABETH

Jan. 17th. 1952.

Dear Commander Kilroy,

For the last couple of years I have had from you a very handsome Christmas card- always without a clue as to your present address, and nothing but the Bath postmark to indicate that you were still in England. So have never been able to write and thank you for these signs of appreciation for the slight kindnesses we were able to show while "Boleh" was in P.E.

I would like to have kept in touch, but once we had seen in our newspapers that you had arrived safely after your long voyage nothing further was heard.

Then, just before Christmas, I got the copy of your book- with an inscription which made it even more acceptable- and I would like you to know how very much I appreciate your kindness in sending me a "personalized" copy.

The story of the voyage of "Boleh" would have been fascinating enough even if I had not met you here, mainly for the reason that there was a most convincing and human aspect on the relationship between the characters who sailed in her. Although the account of the famous Kon-Tiki expedition was interesting there was absolutely no reference to the way in which the members of it reacted towards each other. The impression was that half a dozen characters spent three months on the raft in a state of perpetual honeyed sweetness in their behaviour towards each other! As this was obviously impossible, a false note was struck, and I finished the book thinking that only the half of the tale was told....

In your account of "Boleh's" long voyage, the frequent references to personal tensions gives the impression that the reader is being let in on the big secret- one that almost anyone might guess perhaps, but being allowed to share it somehow makes all the difference. And how well I can understand that the solution to such difficulties was the evening tot- when, as you so neatly described it- all the day's troubles seemed trivial.

I think I have read (and possess) almost every book on cruising ever written, so I don't feel at all patronising when I say that your's is bound to rank high, not only as a work of reference, but as an absorbing yarn- and one that the arm-chair sailer will have difficulty in putting down. As an artist I particularly appreciated the various sketches, and am only sorry that somewhere you did not include the painted design on "Boleh's" stern- though of course I realise that much of its charm was the mellow ocean-bleached colour and this might have been lost in a two-tone process of reproduction.

the shops in Cap Province since the Government introduced a new law for its paper (C) distribution. The only way to get it is to buy it by the caravan direct from the farms. We had run out of cigarettes and could not get any more from the - only, South African cigarette.

My other criticism (and it is meant to be constructive, in the event of a second edition...) is that the spelling of South African names is a bit haywire- you have: Schwartzkop for Swartkops (Yacht Club) Hugh McWilliam for Herbert McWilliams Messrs Koehler for Kohler Bros. Drakenstein for Drakenstein.

But these don't really detract from the story, and I am convinced that your account of the voyage will indeed interest and encourage "those who sometimes dream of doing the same sort of thing".

Here, we are at the height of our racing season, and have been having splendid weather, so that our plywood Sprogs have been breaking records in course times and giving us a great deal of pleasure. In March we all go down to the Gape, where the National Regatta is to be held on Table Bay, followed by the Olympic Games elimination trials, which are to be sailed in these boats- single handed.

So it is just possible that I may get over to Europe this year, for I am determined to have a most determined crack at representing South Africa again.

If you are in touch with the rest of "Boleh's" company I would like to be remembered to them- particularly to John Rusher whose unique combination of talents I much admired.....

Once again, very many thanks for sending me a copy of your book; I really did enjoy it.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Richard H. W. Williams

(P.S. Have just finished another very readable book: "A White Boat From England", by Millar- extremely well written and a good follow-up to a previous one by him called "Isobel and the Sea". To be recommended.....)

than I've ever seen. The boys were let up the whole ship. This morning we have again been motoring in



The Snake park at PE  
 (I failed to go visit the Snake park - and this picture is completely unconnected with our ~~own~~ affairs, but I stuck it in because I think the expressions on Princess Elizabeth's and the old black man's faces are so remarkable. Even the Queen seems to ~~be~~ be a bit apprehensive.)  
 All the snakes in the S.P. are guaranteed poisonous.

### Port Elizabeth to Simonstown.



the shops in Cape Province since the Government introduced a new law for its people (I) ~~the~~ distribution. The only way to get it is to buy it by the carcase ~~and~~ from the farms.

We had run out of cigarettes and could not get any more boards there - only, South Africa. I bought Spring boots, they are called the cigarette for men. Some men!

May 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>.

21<sup>st</sup>.

It blew hard from the southward and was very cold (by our standards) ~~on~~ Friday and Saturday, but by Sunday morning there was a warm northerly breeze and bright sunshine. The new boom and battens which had been made for us above look splendid and we felt very ready to take on the next leg, which we still expected ~~was~~ ~~to~~ be extremely tame. ~~But~~ ~~the~~ ~~after~~ we sailed at 1130 quite a crowd on the jetty to see us off, and the northerly breeze carried us as far as Cape Recife but then it died and we motored in a ~~flat~~ calm with but with a low swell from the south, not to remind us that there was ~~some~~ probably something in store for us later.

But this was not and we reached Simonstown in five days after the quietest passage of the whole voyage. At least when I write quiet I refer to the weather, on board it was not because we used the motor a great deal, and, thanks to the REME operation on the derrick at Mauritius, it kept going and going and going and didn't ever make any expensive noises.

Journal

22<sup>nd</sup>

Mon. 22<sup>nd</sup>. The wind backed during the night and has been westerly all day. This was a sharp blow for a couple of hours this afternoon and now (1100) we're motoring again in to a little lull with no wind at all. The sun has shone all day and it is quite hot out of the wind, we certainly didn't expect this. I don't know what will happen next, but we're keeping everything we've got crossed for good weather!

23<sup>rd</sup>

Tues. 23<sup>rd</sup>. The weather is still outstanding. Although the wind is not very favourable it's all so quiet. Last night the phosphorescence was brighter than I've ever seen. The low wave let up the whole ship. This morning we have again been motoring in





The 'Garden Route' from the  
Cape to Kingena.

May 24<sup>th</sup>.

Bright sunshine, this afternoon there has been a good little breeze, though westerly, 240 miles to go. 'Wed. 24<sup>th</sup>'. We made little progress, and most of that southward until 0700 when the wind had backed enough to go round in the port tack and we averaged 3 knots until 0800, then had to start the motor again. It's about 120 to Agulhas and another 90 on. There is a nasty roll but it certainly could not be described as 'dread' yet (we've dipped an gimbal, under in the dread Agulhas roll!). Yesterday reading 100 voyages we discovered our Hon Company's ship that sighted Cape Point on the 1st May and rounded it on the 16<sup>th</sup> Ugh!

This morning I spent on end of a jacking for the spinaker boom - I find I'm gradually becoming a bit more useful at the rigging business.

It began to blow again during the afternoon and at 17.30 we had a sudden picnic - shift job, down one reef in the main. The wind blew force 5 from East by South for until 2200.

25<sup>th</sup>.

We thought we were 'paid' at last, but once again we were wrong. By 7 in the morning we were off Cape Agulhas, making an easy run to the west in a soft easterly breeze, and a slight sea.

At 9 we started the motor and here we are at noon well past IT, a delicious smelling batch of rolls has just come out of the oven and it's only 70 miles to go. 1700. The breeze went altogether at lunch time, and we have since been making in a glassy swell, seas and penguins playing round the ship, and the sun as bright and hot as ever. Table Mountain 70 miles away was silhouetted by the afterglow.

We had some of the rolls for tea - split and filled with butter and chopped anchovy and cucumber - they were absolutely delicious. We did very well altogether on this trip. As I had expected, the fruit and vegetables at Port Elizabeth were magnificent. There was a wide variety and most of it was very cheap. Meat was not so easy but a dear old man who 'adopted' us took me to the back door of the butcher and introduced me to the boss, and I got some good stuff - no matter to be got even that way though.

False Bay

Vanity was shocked ~~by~~ by the fact that the  
oven was not a nuisance to us that we only kept  
it for baking only, so 'coasts' were ~~the~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~  
However, we did very well, and the pilot chuk,  
sausages (cold pot - no hard soya flour) and pilot  
of pot were especially good. The eggs, huge ones, were lovely too.  
After this I thought that we should really be able  
to go to town when we finally left the Cape, but I  
was ~~to~~ ~~very~~ disappointed at Simonstown. ~~That was~~ ~~was~~  
~~the~~ ~~best~~

May 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup>.26<sup>th</sup>.

It remained calm all that night and the  
drive kept going bravely so. As we ran up in to  
False Bay great schools of fish were all round the ship  
leaping in the water & ~~forming~~ clouds of phosphorescence.  
By the morning we were only three miles from the dockyard  
and we beached alongside between Actaea and Nerube  
at 09:30.  
The ~~evening~~ before I had day dreamt that ~~the~~ ~~best~~  
an arrival at Simonstown would be perfect if we  
could be beached alongside ~~Actaea~~ ~~and~~ ~~if~~ ~~they~~ ~~would~~  
adopt us, let us use their canteen and their bath,  
and look after us for our stay. As it was we were  
put between Actaea and Nerube. David Kellum (whom  
I knew) and Dudley Norman were on the jetty to  
greet us, and as we came alongside they led us  
aboard. Robin to David's house, me to Dudley's, & Peter  
and Jane to the Actaea wash-room, and from there  
onwards were just about as kind and helpful  
as it is possible for ~~the~~ HM ships to be. My first  
act was to have a huge bath, and I had to  
shut the water to make it go down the plug.

We stayed at Sookie for 13 days all together  
till 14:00 on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>. I was and although I  
did not ~~personally~~ ~~manage~~ manage to do all  
the things I think I have listed, it was a very  
pleasant and extremely valuable stay.

The outstanding feature was of course being in a  
dockyard port rather than a commercial one. Every one  
was out not only to help us, but to do it as  
cheerfully as they could and when possible, free. David Kellum's  
Actaea and Dudley Norman's Nerube mothered us, Actaea  
bearing the greater part of the burden, because Robin, Peter and  
Jane were all living there, and nothing was too



At Sumatra  
May 27<sup>th</sup> 1950.

(Was away buying  
a suit)



must a too little for them to take on. They supplied provisions, liquor and cigarettes (no business customs business of course), they had sailors to work on board and they gave us all the stores they could spare (Nigeria helped too but most of the people were on leave so we did not see much of them). Nelson made the Quaterdeck, stowage and stocks available for us to give a cocktail party and decorating the quaterdeck and doing everything to make it a success.

From my own point of view this was the quietest of using D.N.s. sea cabin, having places to stow my gear, being very well looked after by his steward, and above all spending a lot of time with Dudley himself, to whom I was very sorry to say good bye when we left.

That first day, after I had scraped myself clean, got my dirty clothes away to the laundry, and my mail (the first I had had since Colombo) and generally got myself organized, I rang up Louis Maud Woodhouse and told her the news and she told me a circumstance that to announce my arrival. She was just sitting off with her niece Tania Khanan for a picnic so on Dudley's orders I invited them to call at Naside on their way. They appeared an hour late. Maud was dining in the Citroen and when she met me, she was as full of life as ever (she's just over 80).

After a glass of whisky in Naside we all went on to Nelson at David's invitation for more sky. Maud was a terrific success, especially with her statement well you had I regard myself as an old party out to paddock, and I find this a very adequate paddock, and Tania was not far behind with her good looks and extreme chic (she is fashion mistress of some rag, called Woman and Beauty).

In the evening David took Peter and me to a very pleasant and amusing buffet supper dance given by Summons, the local SO who did the cam staff. Cass or I and his attractive wife, then how to had in Naside and very ready for it too.

The next day I had a vital mission to perform. I was genuinely in the state ~~that~~ so often reported by women, having not a stitch to wear, so and with a little of introduction from Dudley to the Managing Director of the show (Pleasant) and having made a few arrangements for my Friday. There a charming woman of excellent taste, to help me in my selection, chose some clothes for me.

May 27<sup>th</sup>



Having found it impossible to cover the ship near Swinerton Robin arranged to have her hoisted out. I think <sup>was</sup> this was the only <sup>work</sup> thing we paid for.



I set off for Capitan early to get rigged out. It was a most successful expedition I got a very well fitting reach me down suit (the first I've bought since I was 13) shoes ties and socks, all at a remarkably low price. And left the ship looking like a city slicker and immensely proud of myself. ~~the~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> the slight disadvantage pointed me, from then on - nobody would believe that I was one of those sailors.

That afternoon I was taken to the races by Maud and Tavis - a very pleasant ~~came~~ <sup>came</sup> with ~~lawn~~ <sup>lawn</sup> in the enclosure and plenty of room to move about, but the minimum bet was ten bob and as I had ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> got managed to raise any money and was having to borrow from Maud I didn't do much betting.

Then home to supper, and we sat up very late filling in the long long gap since I saw M. last, much of it occupied by a ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> highly ~~descriptive~~ <sup>descriptive</sup> description of escape from St Raphael to Bordeaux by ~~logua~~ <sup>logua</sup> between June 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> 1940. He found Bordeaux hopeless, but ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~eventually~~ <sup>eventually</sup> ~~left~~ <sup>left</sup> got away two days later from Bayonne. 'of course I was younger then, but I shouldn't like to do it again'.

[Although it does not belong in this book, ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> should be explained that the Rev Woodham was rector of Tibratay when the Doolyches were at Bards and the Skinnors at White Ladies Aston - ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~distance~~ <sup>distance</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~only~~ <sup>only</sup> ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~church~~ <sup>church</sup> ~~actually~~ <sup>actually</sup> saw a great deal of each other and so M. is probably my mother's oldest friend].

I stayed five days with M. and had great fun in the evenings listening to stories of the old days, and having quite a lot of things about my dear old Mother that I was very glad to hear - ~~especially~~ <sup>especially</sup> ~~quite~~ <sup>quite</sup> life in a country parish sixty years ago was ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~so~~ <sup>so</sup> ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> I used to fear her elderly life had been. He looked through old photograph albums too, always an entertaining pastime, and ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> came across some photographs of Pitt and me, and Tavis ~~dived~~ <sup>dived</sup> for mine of Henry and Anthony, and ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> put them together, and said well, there's no doubt about them.

He also had a quick trip round the peninsula in the car, so I saw a little of the local country with its vineyards and lovely views across Faln Bay to the eastwards - and out on the Atlantic to the west.



Hoisting out at Sumatran

Shaving clean sheathing -  
had foaming on the lead keel.

One postscript: I went to visit Dudley N on night to dance Swedish country dance - but was kind of  
Dance - I have met of the sailing ones and love them - but was kind of  
when we got this first time dance - but was kind of  
(The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall, a most attractive dance among them) and altogether  
we would through English dance, all different, and of which I only knew four.

Ms. hour is some 40 minutes train journey from  
Sumatran, so if I was to achieve any work ~~on~~ at all  
it meant getting up at an unreasonably hour which  
I did but without much avail because the first  
morning I got on a train going the wrong way, on the  
second was a holiday so all the train schedules were  
changed and I had to wait an hour, and the third  
I just missed the train!

Of the remaining eight days I stayed seven  
in Newcastle and one night at the Thorns. This  
hour at Wyndham is being extended so half of it is  
neglected and they make me up a bed of two huge  
sofas, I think it was the most comfortable thing I've  
ever slept on. I was taken to Kelvington one night,  
another I went out with Dudley N. to have a really  
excellent gill at an Antler near road house, and I had  
lunch in Captain time at a well run little restaurant called  
the Leg Royal - Mrs Hugh Fielding for luncheon with me once  
and though we had the best lunch I could raise it was  
a pretty inadequate return for the hospitality of the hour  
in Mauritius. ~~Also~~ We all went to dinner with the C. C.  
Vic Admiral McLeary when everyone wore 'short frock' for a  
benefit because it was so difficult for us to get  
turn at dress up, and I went dancing  
with the Amant supply office and his wife. There was a  
fournoon party too given by the Hays - Captain ~~of the~~  
Dorset Superintendent of the dockyard and just being relieved by  
Captain Kelly who lived near us in Herwell.

A lot of people came to call on us on board  
including the C. C. who came by himself and stayed for  
the greater of an hour, and was very friendly. One good American  
lady stood on the jetty and ~~was with the~~ ~~because~~ and said  
say I wanted see Peter so I stuck my head up and  
told her I was very sorry he was ~~all~~ Lieutenant Commodore  
Apple was ashore, ~~there were~~ ~~says~~ but I should be delighted  
if she would come on board. She said yes she might but  
she did it want to see the ~~the~~ Peter Apple she wanted  
to see Peter Parker. It was on Betty Hutchison who knew  
Peter in the Blooms in '38. An old Parker man, Bammm,  
also came down to see me and had a glass of beer, but  
could not stay long.

Thank to Astor, who was extremely ~~kind~~ helpful with  
it, we gave an odd but very successful drinks party  
on Sunday forenoon - odd because we had such a  
remarkable cross section of the people to it.

The Master, Boatman, Carpenter, Ships  
Steward and Cook of the Junk-Yacht  
"Boleh"

would be honoured if you will take a glass with them

at

H.M. Dockyard, Simonstown

on

Sunday, 4th June, at 11-30 a.m.

There will be a lightning auction of drawings by R.N.A. at about noon.

Please bring this invitation card with you and show it at the Dockyard Gate.

TO: BOLEH.

FROM: C IN C R.A.

UNCLASSIFIED.

The following is being made; Admiralty (for C.N.I.)  
From C IN C R.A.

After a short stay at Simonstown the Junk-yacht "Boleh" left today bound Salcombe (Devon) via St. Helena, Ascension and the Azores.

2... This unique and steady craft which was built at Singapore to the design of her own master and owner, Commander R.A. KILROY D.F.C.R.N. is following in the tradition of the TAI MO SHAN.

3... She has attracted much attention from the Cape Peninsula. South African memories of the pioneering days are still fresh and this modern example by the Royal Navy of a similar spirit has rung a bell in many hearts and called forth considerable appreciative comment in the press.

4... The crew, all of whom are fighting fit and whose tough weather beaten appearance is in keeping with their hardy and enterprising, reports all set fair for the next 18000 miles leg of their passage. They expect to arrive in England XXXX sometime in September.

5... 2 1430 May also refers.

..... 11003.

R/N 1/L 3.O.R. 10065 A.L.L. 6/5/50

DIST .X.N.2,3,4.E.L.M.E.82.W.R.N.1. (BOLEH (3)).

All the navy we had met from the C in C down, Dockyard from heads of departments to chagrmen, the Naafi manager and a number of Capitan people and others from up the line who had never been near the dockyard. David Kilburn, <sup>referred</sup> with Robin and his eyes got wider and wider as he saw the assortment coming on board. As I said, it was a success, but really we had too many people to compete with, especially as many of them were strangers to each other so had to be looked after by us.

Maud was not to going to miss anything and not only came to the party, but insisted on being taken on board Boleh, which was lying alongside for the occasion, and tripped down the ladder and over the gangway with no trouble at all.

It was very right and proper that we should have a lot of dockyard people to the party - they had done a tremendous lot for us, and it was very nearly all 'on the nod'. Pete of course knew the routine way of the rigging shop and sail loft very well and got right in with them at the beginning, they did a great deal of work both on the sails and the rigging, refitting, patching and so on; while Dave worked on the boat house people for his side of the job. I had only one job I wanted done, the provision and fitting of a really proper watertight lamp for the compass (our previous one was very low made and liable to get full of sea water) and the electrical people did that for me.

He had been rather worried about James' leave, it appeared that he was going to be late on it, and the C in C had undertaken at once to make a personal signal to the Director of Dockyards. This would be made and James got an extension of three months almost by return. It wasn't a bad signal - I wrote the draft. The C in C also made the honours stuck opposite, we did not have a hand in the drafting.

My provisioning went smoothly except in one important respect. I got all I could from the naval victualling stores, some of it through Newlands and the rest from the dockyard. <sup>and</sup> <sup>kept</sup> <sup>up</sup> the work through all that the Naafi had to offer and completed the dry provisions (groceries) at two big supplies cafes. I had was a bit of a job because it meant two visits to every each, first to see what they had and then, having

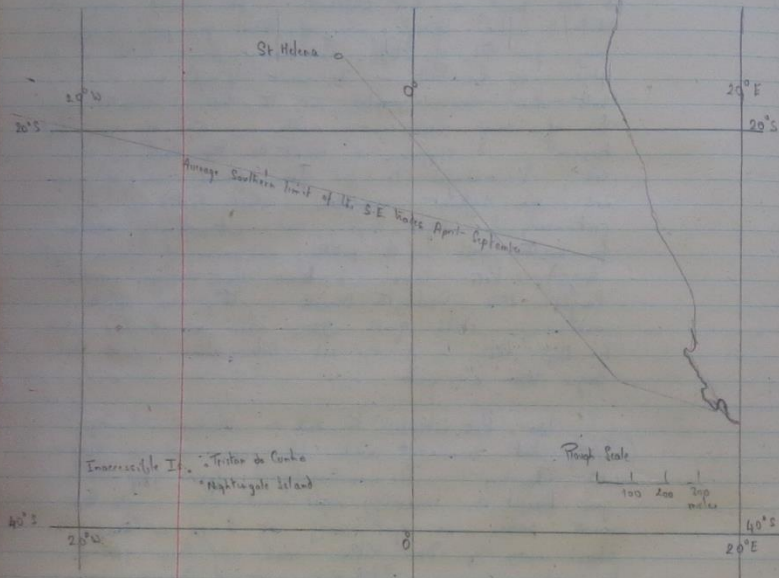
worked out what to get, to order it, but we got quite a wide variety of stuff and it was all reasonably cheap.

But the first provisions were disappointing. These were ~~not~~ The navy could only supply potatoes and dull things like canned (as I expected), but when instead of the wonderful variety of fruit and vegetables I had found in Port Elizabeth, the local shops (I think I worked through some of ~~the~~ greenhouses) had a very poor lot of stuff. The only decent butcher in the place did his bit - I went through his cold room with him and pointed out the bits I wanted - but he of course had no mutton, and no young beef. However, I suppose we didn't do too badly in the end, I managed to get five different cuts of meat and nine different vegetables which lasted us continuously for eight days and intermittently ~~for~~ for another week (the potatoes and onions of course kept longer). Peter loves and knows about oranges and he brought 150 Washington Navel - they were delicious and were still quite good when we finished them ten days later - I did not believe they would last longer than a week.

(5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>) We had intended to sail on Monday or Tuesday but a north wester blew up and we held on until Thursday. The meteorological types gave us a good forecast on Wednesday night and after a few last minute papers we got away at 2 pm on Thursday, cheered away by David Kellum and a large part of his ship's company, while a number of Nicobar sailors came down to the beach to give us a 'chuck-up', ~~that~~ of an wag giving the old thumb sign for a 'lift'!

By the time we got out of harbour there was a fair southerly breeze blowing which made it awkward to get out of Table Bay, so we noticed our ~~own~~ own sails to help the sail as far as Cape Point which we rounded late in the evening. We had a splendid curry for supper, made of fresh crayfish tails and some manufactured curry powder which I have to confess I prefer to the freshly made Malay stuff we got in Singapore. I had (very stupidly - but as usual) taken a couple of

## SIMONSTOWN TO ST HELENA



glames of whiskey which is guaranteed to make me seasick when there is possibility of seasickness is in the office, and being put my feet bowl in the egg sea, but this was soon left and the second bowl stayed.

And late that evening as I said we went round Cape Point and, with the wind astern now, were making off the miles towards home and all it means. But from every other point of view we were much further on. Perhaps it was not all plain sailing (whatever plain sailing may be) but there was a certainty of a good deal of trade wind sailing which must be about as plain as sailing could be. We had our great lighters behind us; we were pointing more or less in the right direction at last, and we were all very naturally in very high spirits.

The southerly wind ~~took~~ <sup>took</sup> us along well, but it was accompanied by ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> nasty cross swells on the bow and quarter which produced perhaps the most awkward motion we had but ~~even~~ <sup>even</sup> worse than did nothing to damp our spirits. ~~But~~ <sup>But</sup> there were a little chafers when the next afternoon ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> wind died slowly and we had ~~lost~~ <sup>lost</sup> most of the night for several hours.

For the first time since Singapore to Colombo there was no doubt about the route on this trip. As soon as we had made some working, to get clear in case of westerly gales, it was as straight for St. Helena as the wind would let us lead. We expected variable winds, mostly from the west, ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> at first, ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~reason~~ <sup>reason</sup> as ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~put~~ <sup>put</sup> ~~up~~ <sup>up</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~south~~ <sup>south</sup> ~~east~~ <sup>east</sup> ~~trade~~ <sup>trade</sup> when we reached 25° South so we had about 600 miles to go before we could settle down to steady trade wind sailing — or that's what we thought! On the 10<sup>th</sup> we had a south easterly breeze backing round to north and the next day this went on blowing steadily for two and a half days. Then on the 12<sup>th</sup>, when we had only done just over 400 miles, this westerly wind backed round to SSE and for three and a half days blew steadily and strongly. Of course we were all delighted; by some freak we had picked up the trade

June 9<sup>th</sup>

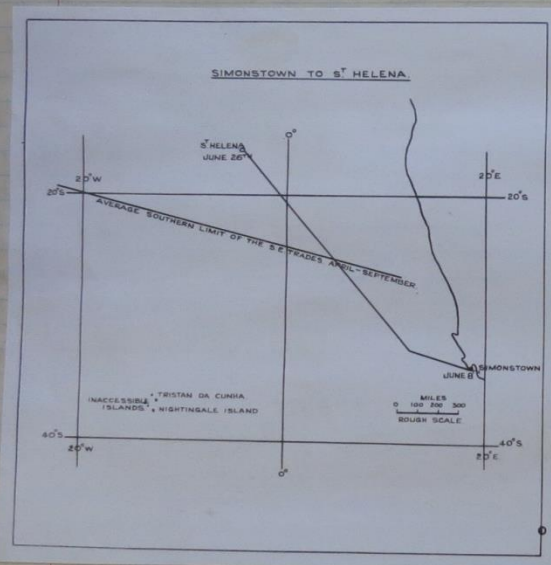
10<sup>th</sup>

10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>

12<sup>th</sup>

12<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>





long before it was expected, we were doing over 150 miles a days, we were going to make a record passage, and so on. It is easy to say 'had it we ~~had~~ learnt an lesson even yet' but we had looked forward so much to the trades, and we had not met it ~~before~~ yet, and we were convinced that this was ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup>.

10<sup>th</sup>.

June 10<sup>th</sup>. Everybody is eating enormously, I suppose because of the combination of cool weather and fast food. 'Poor Pete has a rotten wash again, it can't be the food this time, it is damn bad luck, surely the quacks ought to be able to find some cure'.

11<sup>th</sup>.

11<sup>th</sup>. The westerly has kept going, backing slowly to S x W, and we still going well. ~~is~~ The whole aspect of the sea and sky is ~~entirely~~ entirely different here from the southern Indian ocean. ~~The~~ The noise and colour of the sea, the formation of the clouds and the ~~shades~~ shades of the sky are all changed, and the sunrise and sunset have ~~changed~~ changed colour schemes; we might have gone to another quarter of the earth instead of only a few hundred miles. Yesterday there were great banks of cirrus stretching from horizon to horizon and moving northwards. Today it's still a bit cold but the clouds are almost like wind cumulus (little puffy low jobs) and the sea has taken on a much kinder aspect.

During the afternoon I saw just a couple of seals nuzzling each other and then a pair of albatrosses obviously making nesting noise. It's supposed to be mid-winter here at present, not spring.

I saw an albatross do an extraordinarily stupid thing one day around this time. It had just taken off with the usual frantic pulling and fuss, its legs were tucked away and it was thoroughly airborne, when it apparently felt a sudden unbearable itch on its back. It whipped its head round and dug its beak in to the itch, ~~and~~ completely lost control and 'spun in' landing half way over on to its back.

## On Seasickness

One of the standard questions we are asked every where is ~~What do you know about seasickness?~~ about seasickness, so I must try to set down our experiences of this cure of small boats, which proved us so astonishingly little. Below we left Suvaiva Pete and I were both ~~seasick~~ <sup>nauseous</sup> ~~found~~ about its likelihood and probable effects. I especially because I have been an addict for years. I had tried to get hold of a new and highly spoken of drug called Dramamine but failed because it turned out to be American. (It has none of the doping effect of the new time drugs and does not have to be taken until the feeling starts, both great advantages). During the Christmas trial trip Pete and I were both sick (after it must be admitted, far too much Christmas fare both solid and liquid), so it was with some misgiving (on this account only) that I looked forward to the trip.

But seasickness has proved nothing like the menace I expected. I have only been ill three times and felt ~~nauseous~~ rather dizzy twice, and all except one of these occasions ~~was~~ were just after leaving harbor, Pete has been about the same, I have been only sick once (a direct result of a Rangare) and Robin too. The facts are: that the motion of a ship like Bolek, although violent sometimes, is so much more natural than that of a powered ship and that one spends so long at sea that a day or two of feeling second rate at the beginning of a trip is relatively insignificant.

There is now very wise advice in John Illingworth's book on <sup>seasickness</sup> ~~seasickness~~ to the effect that one should avoid red meat and any sort of alcohol for two days before going to sea. No doubt it is effective. It was, in Bolek, invariably impossible.

Perhaps it is appropriate to record here that I have now experienced the sensation that the earth is rolling about when I have just gone ashore, but Robin felt it in Port Elizabeth for a day and I have not felt it for a few minutes on several occasions. Pete has ~~experienced~~ <sup>noticed</sup> ~~never~~ <sup>noticed</sup> found it happen to him during this voyage.

June 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>

June 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> Back again to the genoa (with the heavy main sail) a.m. on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and the wind kept fairly steady in the south at force 4 all day until about 4 p.m. Then the occasional pumping of the boom in calm patches took the slot at the forward end, just as happened to the old boom in the Malacca Strait. By then it appeared that we were getting in to the trade, so we hoisted the main, boom out the second genoa and have been running on this (main genoa) rig for 24 hours now. The wind has increased steadily and is now blowing a good force 6 - we're logging a steady 7 knots and all seems to be well, but it's a good deal to put on two light genoas and two bamboo booms.

(They must have been sailing ~~at~~ 9 hours effectively - the motor which cannot cut more than 4 effectively, drove us at 5 knots in perfect condition).

of course they are fairly stayed and shuddered - we've run in to the trade in 29° South, which is when some of the old clipper ships used to pick it up at this time of the year, but is contrary to the Sumatran met. people's advice that we could not expect it before 25° South - we really should be all set for a damn good run to St Helena. Prince II took 16 days from Capetown, let's hope we beat that.

June 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>

June 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> What an incredibly different trip this is from all that has gone before. By noon today, 15<sup>th</sup>, the wind having held splendidly, we have completed both half the way from Sumatran to St Helena and from Singapore to England. For the last three days we've averaged 160 miles a day, double our average to date and at last, we really are heading roughly towards England.

Below, rounding the Cape first, I think all felt that it was bad joss to talk of our arrival at home, and even to think much of it. All the time we had bogged ahead of us (I suppose we still have a few but they are not by one), but the biggest one of all, the Cape, is past and over (although it turned out to be no boggy at all).



{ Ruffe  
Gadgt square  
Skyraher  
(Ptc.)



Polin's Jan crossing  
the ruffe yard.

'So now we can think about our animal, and even talk about it at last.'

Our confidence has gone up too, the whole atmosphere is becoming one of a sense of achievement instead of a slightly given determination to 'bush on'.

All this has of course been immensely helped by this wonderful trade wind. It varies a little between force 3 and force 5, but it keeps on blowing us along.

This morning we took out in the quest rig we have carried yet. 'Ruffe'. Both jibs boomed out with another bamboo crossed as a yard for the small sprit, which was hoisted at the main yard and sheeted through leading blocks on the bamboo square yard. It's blowing 3 to 4 and we're still making a nice 5 knots. We hoisted the rig in a special little Ruffe cocktail mixed by Janic - a real hille - if ever a human perpetuated such a drink, he would never be allowed to touch a ~~shake~~ <sup>shake</sup> again.

June 16<sup>th</sup>.

'June 16<sup>th</sup>. The wind has fallen very light and we are only making about two knots, which is frightfully disappointing, but at least it's still south - easterly.'

(late) Now the wind has veered to south west and is getting lighter and lighter.

17<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>.

So went all our high hopes that we should do a record run up the South Atlantic. For the next five days we had a succession of calms and variable light winds which had only one virtue, that none of them came from the north.

17<sup>th</sup>.

'June 17<sup>th</sup>. (That's Sunday)'

(It was not Sunday, but Saturday. It is a measure of our recklessness from the day to day cares of life that we could never remember what day it was without looking up the calendar.)

1700. The wind has gone altogether now, so we have shipped the drier and are making. Nothing is certain but the unpredictability of the phrase has been applied to many things, and lately



Robin - author



especially 'to ~~the~~ Chinese politics, but how  
how it does apply to the wind and sea.  
For once we had allowed ourselves to get  
confident that the wind would last and that  
we were sure to make a fast passage, and we  
did this because well how dangerous it was. Of  
course we were wrong, wrong ever has when  
~~there~~ virtually only one wind is shown on the  
wind chart. Once again we learnt our lesson.

But it was much warmer, clothes were  
coming off ~~the~~ and shirts that had not  
seen the sun for weeks were reappearing, men all  
white again which was richening after the tan it  
had had. The others had kept their belts, Robin  
especially who's skin has the texture of leather and the  
colour of mahogany. I had my fruit paper  
bag built on the 16th and it wasn't as cold  
as I had expected but it led to a little  
tragedy. The bucket, faithful friend for  
the whole voyage, came off the line while  
I was dipping for water and was lost. I  
was glad afterwards that it was I who  
lost it because I had bought the little string  
and had got fond of it and should have been  
famous with anybody else who lost it.  
The good weather gave us a splendid  
chance to do a lot of neglected work about  
the ship. I completely rewired the electric aft with  
some fittings I had got from Actaem, and cleared  
a fault on the mast head light and did a  
number of other odd jobs. Peter was 'intense'  
decoding Jane's diary, 'shipwrighting' and Chang  
mending the bilge pump and returning stores, while Robin  
worked how often how at his book.

We had been given by Hugh McWilliam  
(Port Elizabeth) the book of the Kaitiaki Expedition,  
and it got around to me at this time and  
I thoroughly enjoyed this wonderful tale of sai wai  
Norwegians who set off in a raft to prove an  
idea and found it. I was much struck both  
by the similarities of the two voyages and by their  
great contrasts, or rather by similarities of experiences  
and impressions, and contrasts between the voyages themselves.

This was one of the small but marked differences which I have not mentioned that we always wear some clothes while in Kootik. It may appear to have been most of the time. Ours is not by rule or agreement - it has just happened that way and never even been discussed.

Many times I saw across a passage which might so easily have been written by one of us, but the one which struck me most forcibly was where the author did not like to so his little craft from an explosion as it made him realize its insignificance in the vastness of the sea; a fact which ~~was~~ <sup>necessarily</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> more obvious from on board because of their narrow horizon. Again and again I've been struck by this, ~~and~~ <sup>especially</sup> ~~especially~~ <sup>especially</sup> ~~what~~ <sup>what</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~all~~ <sup>all</sup> ~~when~~ <sup>when</sup> ~~I~~ <sup>I</sup> ~~first~~ <sup>first</sup> ~~saw~~ <sup>saw</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~top~~ <sup>top</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~light~~ <sup>light</sup> ~~house~~ <sup>house</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~Munchoi~~ <sup>Munchoi</sup>.

The great contrast between the two voyages is I think in the modesty of our ~~little~~ <sup>little</sup> ~~affair~~ <sup>affair</sup> compared with them. Perhaps if I were the way modest it could be accused of being false, maybe instead I mean shyness. This, I believe, is all very right and proper as ~~betting~~ <sup>betting</sup> a ~~possibly~~ <sup>possibly</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~voyage~~ <sup>voyage</sup> which we have tried to make as safe and sure as we could, as opposed to a most gallant but nonetheless dangerous exploit. We have all had enough experience of the sea to remember the greatest respect for it - the Kootik men had had none. This is essentially a private affair - there was a ~~great~~ <sup>great</sup> ~~publicized~~ <sup>publicized</sup> ~~adventure~~ <sup>adventure</sup>, ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> had to be much publicized as it could not be undertaken without ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~outside~~ <sup>outside</sup> ~~backing~~ <sup>backing</sup>; basically too they were out to make money, or at least a living while we are fortunate in ~~yet~~ <sup>yet</sup> ~~still~~ <sup>still</sup> ~~having~~ <sup>having</sup> ~~our~~ <sup>our</sup> ~~half~~ <sup>half</sup> ~~pay~~ <sup>pay</sup>.

As well as getting financial backing the Kootik obtained a lot of food and equipment for us on trial; and many times before we started I was asked why didn't we write to Cashings, Hardy's and a hundred other firms and ask them to supply stuff for the voyage. One day ~~several~~ <sup>several</sup> ~~people~~ <sup>people</sup> ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> ~~discussing~~ <sup>discussing</sup> ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> ~~things~~ <sup>things</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~mess~~ <sup>mess</sup>, and Marilyn Evans said 'yes that's all very well but comes to its logical conclusion ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~they~~ <sup>they</sup> ~~would~~ <sup>would</sup> ~~have~~ <sup>have</sup> ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> ~~main~~ <sup>main</sup> ~~sail~~ <sup>sail</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~get~~ <sup>get</sup> ~~well~~ <sup>well</sup> ~~on~~ <sup>on</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~pieces~~ <sup>pieces</sup> - which summed it up very well. But this is just one matter in which I wish I had had the nerve to try it on - photography.

For many reasons we have not got the photographs we might have had; and one of them is of course a lack of the right sort of equipment, and I do so wish now I had written to Ted Layton and asked him to let me have had me some gear, ~~and~~ especially a 16 mm. magazine loading cine camera with a very wide aperture and telephoto lenses. I could have got some really magnificent material. One 'get away' from Ascension - the whale that regaled us - Robin the party at Murihei, and many other things in that lovely place - Johnathon the tortoise at St Helena - that huge swordfish north of Mauritius and many other big fish.

I thought often of writing to T.C. to ask him to lend me some gear, but, partly because of this shyne I did not, and it is one of my very few regrets.

June 17<sup>th</sup> (cont)

17<sup>th</sup> June (continued) The wind has been getting up from the south west, and at 1745 we unrigged 'Raffa' and hoisted the normal rig. The most wonderful evening, the first for many weeks. After we had shifted sails we sat on the upper and drank whisky for a little, then I sat with Sam and heard how they catch cods and wrinkles (wrinkles to him) in the Salcombe estuary, and of cabs and how they used to pass it at his old home. We watched the little new moon hanging in the after glass and decided life was very good.

18<sup>th</sup>

18<sup>th</sup> June Another very active forenoon - We kept going on the main and bolt genes (no boom out) until 1130 today in a gradually fading southerly breeze. Then it died altogether so we lowered everything and motored. At last it is beginning to be really warm again and I sunbathed during the afternoon.

19<sup>th</sup>

19<sup>th</sup> June We motored until 0130 last night, then hoisted 'Raffa' rig again and got on slowly until lunch time, then set the light main and now on on the starboard gibe with a light gentle breeze on the quarter. Yet another active forenoon, mostly done below as we had an first rain for weeks. I am

working on the electric, repairing aft and ~~being~~ fitting up a signalling flasher, quite a satisfactory business but of course regarded with scorn both by 'sailors' and 'engineers' just as the poor S.E.E. department is a doxyard.

June 20<sup>th</sup>.

20<sup>th</sup> June. No abatement about to day - it looks as if they have decided that it's getting too hot and have gone off back to their busy southern ocean <sup>for some</sup>

Yet another extremely active day - of course within as perfect for it - dry and not too hot - little rain - & we were all sleeping fairly well at night so feel up to work. Sam & Peter were mearning up for the rigging schedule - P. at being having to spend with his rat which gets no better - we finished off wiring - fitting stowages for spare compass light bulb, and stand by tender - & painting 'main switchboard' and guard rail structure. The sea like mammalade boat & hull - difficult to find paint mammalade, toast & butter

and job at the same time!

We made little headway yesterday and last night but hopes rose early this morning (4.30) when a good easterly got up. Alas it has not stayed and now (16.00) we are drifting along under the Raffle rig again, a most unsuitable affair for such changeable winds.

This weather really is rather unkind. We've had 3 days of it now and it should be extremely rare in these latitudes at this time of the year. Maybe tomorrow will bring a change; there are only about 500 miles to go

I also write in my journal that I believed that the torch problem had been solved at last. Our original supply of torches and all that we had been able to buy as far as the Cap were useless, they were all made of tin, none of them were waterproof and they were always going wrong. At least now I





had bought some American plastic jibs and Robin another American one covered with rubber (I tried to get a second of this but the shop had no more that works), and it did at this time appear that they were going to stand up to their job. Unfortunately though they have not: now (August 18<sup>th</sup>) both plastic ones are out of commission. The rubber covered one is still all right, but I'm afraid, only because I have kept it down below.

June 21<sup>st</sup>.

21<sup>st</sup> June. Wednesday. Midweek day. Another unsatisfactory 24 hours, occasional puffs for an hour or two, but mostly light air. We rose the motor again early in the night, then set raffle rig but did very little good with it, and had another 2½ hours of motoring later. That leaves us 16 hours of motor of which Robin wants to keep 9 in reserve.

I think a critical reader would probably ~~say~~ remark around this part of this affair that when the drive kept on going wrong we moaned calmly about it, but that now when it kept on plugging away it was not appreciated. The fact was that nobody ever dared to ~~say~~ or notice a speck of its good performance; if it had gone wrong afterwards he would inevitably have been blamed for offending the fates.

Still more work going on in the morning, mostly below because it was drizzling. I have made an appendix on food for Robin's book, and today draw out complete wiring diagrams for the ship's book. It's time we saw a ship.

June 22<sup>nd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>

For the last four and a half days of the voyage we had south easterly winds, though they were very light and variable and could hardly be described as the trade. However, they took us along quite well at 80 miles a day or so, and we arrived at St Helena early in the morning on Monday 26<sup>th</sup>.

June 22<sup>nd</sup>.'22<sup>nd</sup> June. Thursday

We seem to have picked up the trade again at last - but rather southerly than easterly and very variable - strength. A grand sail last night and this forenoon but none now it has been lighter.

Further writing during the forenoon. I scullid the starboard side and made the mast. Then making funder.

I haven't really been fair about today because during the forenoon - early afternoon and last day it has been quite perfect. Clear blue sky, bright sun, and a good breeze with only a very slight sea earlier - Robt writing on watch a.m. - and again writing but perched on his mattress below the house in the afternoon. During the last day going slowly but steadily, & a wonderful sunset and light stay later. I was the great bear for the first time for a long time - the breeze as well and felt so much that they ~~was~~ meant the two parts of my life, steady family, Peshawar and all that, and the wanderer. The wanderer really had it now (and a very good thing too .....)

At last now we allow ourselves to talk about our arrival in England. We speak a long time during the last night and I was glad to hear Robt intends to clear off soon after and does not want us to stay and work. There is so very much to do before I get to work, yet I must find a job and finish my pay, as soon as the boys have gone back to school.

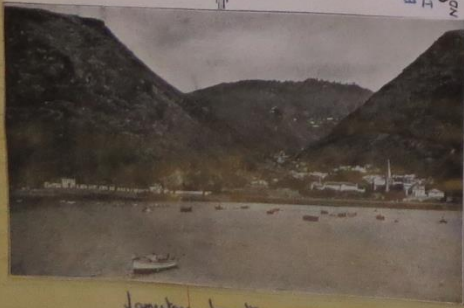
June 23<sup>rd</sup>.'23<sup>rd</sup> June Friday

Only 230 miles to go at noon today; the breeze is holding most of the time but there are occasional lulls.

We've seen no albatrosses since Tuesday. They were probably getting a bit 'sweaty' and decided to poke off.



MAP OF  
ST. HELENA.



Jamestown, from the anchorage.



June 24<sup>th</sup>.

24<sup>th</sup>. June Saturday. Still going on the main geyser. The wind is variable but there has been an occasional good blow for a few hours. It's 130 miles to go so we shall get in on Sunday evening.

I have been busy nearly all day finishing off my magazine opus (for Kolar's book) on food in small ships on long voyages in the tropics. I am sure it is much the best, most detailed, and most authoritative thing of its kind that has yet been.

June 25<sup>th</sup>.

25<sup>th</sup>. June Sunday. The wind has been in fits and starts all day and now it's away in the west and we have set the light main sail and both geyser. Some claims to have sighted St. Helena, in any case it's obviously there, covered in rain storm. No doubt the locals will say when we complain about it that we brought the bad weather with us.

June 26<sup>th</sup>.

But it didn't rain after all. We sighted the island in the evening and kept round the east side during the night to arrive off Jamestown very early in the morning.

As it began to get light all we could see of this reputedly so fertile island was great towering cliffs of lava with not a speck of green grass on them. But as we came round the eastern corner we caught a glimpse of green high in the hills above Jamestown.

There were no signs of life in Jamestown (it is really only a village, with one street squeezed in to the bottom of a fissure in the lava cliffs) when we passed. It seemed to a busy at 7.30 o'clock and nobody took any notice of us until well past 9. This was a great blessing because it gave us a chance to have breakfast and to clean up and square off before the doctor and other officials arrived. I had a bath in the usual way, ~~before~~ which worried some who spoke darkly of girls with high



Jamestown.

It is really only a village, with one street squeezed in to the bottom of a fissure in the lava cliffs.



powered glasses watching me from the shore . . . .  
 O'Leary, the O.C. Polio, a most excellent character from the Somerset Constabulary, took me ashore early and sent me round the shops with his senior constable corporal, a fine old St Helenaian with 45 years service, and I have rarely spent such a delightful hour in my life. Every man, woman and child we met spoke to the corporal who is obviously a great favorite and the obviously homing ~~with~~ who I was, smiled and said good morning to me. All the shopkeepers rather embarrassedly left their other customers and came to greet me and to ask if they could help, and evidently nothing was too much trouble for them. It wasn't in any way a 'triumphal progress', - ~~to~~ ~~reach~~ my feelings were simply that I was being treated in exactly the opposite way from that a tripper normally gets. They all knew about me as I said (and many of them ~~could~~ ~~to~~ heard a great deal about all our doings in the ship) and they seemed to have only one care as far as we were concerned that we should go away with pleasant recollection of the island.

The people are a ~~strong~~ blend of British and Indian (Indians brought there in the old Honorable East India Company's ships) and with admixtures of many other breeds and colors; in color ~~and~~ in their features and build are not unlike those of the white in the remote parts of Eric. ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~speech~~ ~~and~~ ~~manner~~ - unmistakably British, ~~the~~ British are ~~scarcely~~ people of fifty years ago. Their speech and manner, and especially their charming manners, are unmistakably English. ~~and~~ ~~are~~ ~~like~~ ~~them~~

although the one I saw requires the majority are swarthy

very like those

of the country people of fifty years ago. When we got back to the police station in the beautiful old square at the bottom of the village street I met O'Leary's predecessor, Bill Heane who is about to retire. He was one of the Royal Marine of the island's garrison when it was withdrawn in 1910 and he stayed behind in the police as. ~~as~~ ~~was~~ ~~is~~ ~~he~~ ~~is~~ ~~he~~ ~~is~~ ~~he~~ ~~is~~ Fat, red-faced and a tremendous old character he greeted me with wot the bloody 'ell do you think your doin' puttin' around the world in a bloody silly little thing like that then? Late on we had a dot of his together and people started telling stories about him. There was many of them but the best was of his most serious ship up.



THE HOUSE NAPOLEON SLEPT IN ON FIRST NIGHT OF HIS ARRIVAL IN ST. HELENA.

(The house Peter and I saw slept in on their first night - the 'local', is a bit further up the street).



GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
PLANTATION,  
ST. HELENA,  
SOUTH ATLANTIC.

The busiest day for everyone in a little place like Jamestown is when a ship calls, and on that day the busiest man in the place should reasonably be the Chief of Police, who is also in charge of immigration and much concerned with passengers, the ~~good~~ behavior of sailors ashore and many other such matters.

But not old Bill Heave. Very early in his police career he got it he understood that ship day was his day off ~~and so~~, and he used invariably to spend the day with ~~his friends~~ the Captain and Chief Stewards of the ships, all of whom he knew well.

This routine went ~~without~~ well for some years until one day the ship was two hours on her way before Bill Heave was found flat out and snoring in the Captain's bed.

But he got away with it. Almost before he was up a signal had been sent to the Commodore telling ~~him~~ what had happened and a reply had been received instructing Mr Heave to proceed to Ascension in order to inspect the (two) police there (Ascension is governed from St Helena) and to return by the next ship!

I spent the afternoon on board watching Elang and our delightful old swimmer of a boatman, Isaac Williams, fishing, then ashore with Robin at 6 and out to dinner with the Colonial Secretary, Rankin, ~~an old~~ ~~contemporary~~ of his. It was ~~delightfully~~ ~~and~~ ~~also~~ ~~pleasantly~~ ~~very~~ ~~pleasant~~ good evening, eating and drinking and talking on board off.

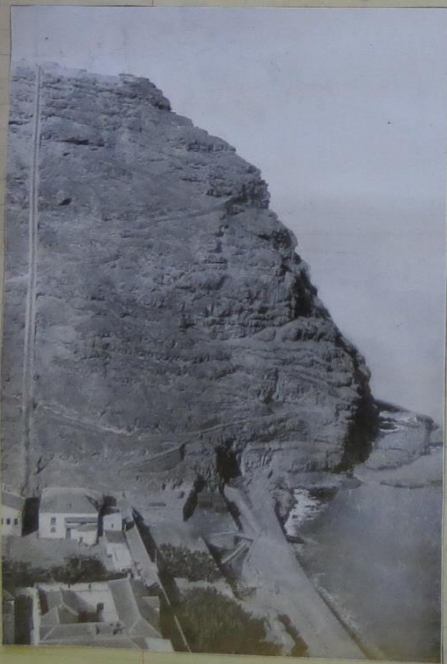
Cool at

June 27<sup>th</sup>.

I completed my shopping in the forenoon, had a couple of beers at the local, looked round the church, and got back on board ~~just in time~~ to find a dozen or more callers. We were due at Government House for lunch in less than an hour and had to change, get ashore, and make several miles to ~~get~~ ~~the~~ ~~top~~ of the hill. ~~When~~ ~~things~~ ~~began~~ ~~to~~ ~~look~~ ~~desperate~~ Robin stood it, called away and we changed in a panic - I saw and I eventually waiting behind because he couldn't find his shoes. However, we just made it by one and had an amusing lunch party at a large and very fine round table. After lunch Lu Gray, boy and the ADC showed us round 'Plantation -



Jonathan.

Cliffs on one side  
of Jamestown, with  
Jacob's ladder —

← these photographs show →  
well the unbelievable  
contrast between the  
barrenness of the  
lava cliffs and the  
lush pastures and  
trees of the interior.

which most I think to very like a minor English  
country house ~~was~~ in the middle of the last century.  
We were introduced to the housekeeper, who had been  
there 38 years and has ruled so many governors  
that they ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> very ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> one of very little account to  
her. ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~then~~ <sup>then</sup> we met Jonathan, an even older  
inhabitant, said to be 200, and from his battered  
appearance and wided old eye it might be 2000.  
In the afternoon HE sent us round the interior of  
the island in his car. The contrast between the awful



The Interior.

lava cliffs of the coast and this lovely green pasture  
and arable country was unbelievable. We didn't see  
it very well because there was a lot of mist and  
drizzle about, but when we got to Longwood the sun



Longwood



Robin  
Sir G. Vay.



Peter and Jonathan.



was shining again and we ~~must~~ had a thrilling half hour then, not doing anything, much, not really looking around much, but just soaking it in. Nobody seemed to be in charge, there were no tents, no guides, no hand postcard stalls, no souvenir shops, but just one gardener. He was a most courteous and intelligent St Helenaian (like all the rest he knew ~~English~~ who we were and was just naturally friendly) who didn't 'show us round' at all. He just talked ~~about~~ of Napoleon's life, then, of the people who were there with him, of his hatred of the British troops (there was a large garrison at the time to guard the bogy man, and many of these were camped near Longwood) and especially how he objected to their seeing him <sup>for the reason he had all the garden borders cut down 3 or 4 feet, so that he could walk strolls in the garden wearing his red coat.</sup> ~~Especially~~ He was only a very little man; but there was only one fence that stood between him and the domination of the world, and that a far bigger world than Alexander or Genghis Khan ever dreamed of.

The home at Longwood is in a dreadful state now, it is eaten through and through by white ants and the French Government (to whom the property was presented about 1860) are always supposed to be 'doing something about it' but nothing happens. If only they would preserve it properly there no doubt there would be a much better revenue from tourists which would be very useful to the British colony of St Helena...

After Longwood we called on an old doctor and his wife who have retired there. I recognized a photograph of their son (Ray) a Lt. RNVR who was in Campden. They told us what a perfect place St Helena is for old retired people and I agree so much, but it certainly wouldn't do for youngsters, as we found out later when Peter and I went out to dinner with the old Mr Selman and his young wife. He is a wonderful old boy, immensely rich and very active. He came to St Helena during the war as a survivor and met and married her. We ~~soon~~ had a good dinner and a lot of wine and (very unkindly) tried to lead her back to the ship with us to 'contain the party' when we left, but a stabilising element in the shape of his 'Mum' absolutely prevented any untoward happenings.



No. of the  
St. Helens police force.



Chang and  
Isaac Williams



June 28th.

Pete and I got back on board very late, and went to bed even later, but we were stirred out of bed by Robin at an unaccountable hour. The sailing day is always hectic so much so cannot be done until the last, and on this occasion it was particularly so because the Governor was coming on board and we had to get the ship cleaned up for him. Not long before HE was due they appeared about 20 boy scouts with a chat from Robin saying he had told them to come on board and look round - then a dead sheep and 2 live cohes with all the rest of the stores - the Robin and laws and then HE and his party. Chang made tea for the guests but unfortunately there weren't quite enough cups to go round so Robin gave 8 of us had to have beer instead.

As they left, calling good luck - waving and so on, Sir G. J. suddenly stood up in the boat and in the most solemn dramatic day fashion lifted his hat and held it just above his head for a minute - perhaps his hat it seemed more. He couldn't make out whether this was in anticipation of any loss - as a token of some other sort of respect - or because he couldn't think of anything else to do. Really most embarrassing.

Jane and I followed ashore shortly after to check up some ends of bill etc. - then met in the local for a beer before we came back on board. Of course we soon found ourselves involved in a session and when we got away at last were received with the blackest of umbrae and the highest of chidgen by the others who had been preparing for sea - an ~~very~~ unnecessary matyism, & filler.

We got away after lunch, but made very slow progress for the rest of the day in changeable light winds which we flamed on ~~either~~ ~~seen~~ the islands unhelpfully with the flow of the air. However we were fairly sure we should very soon get in the trade again and we ~~spoke~~ ~~ventured~~ very contented, though Pete and I both admitted to being a little languid. (The SF Helianthus never speaks of being tired but is often 'languid' - a word which I like a lot because it seems to require no cause).



## ST HELENA TO ASCENSION

To Brazil 1200 miles

Ascension

1200 miles

St Helena → To African coast 1200 miles  
 → To Cape 1700 miles

And that about all there is to it - two little islands  
 in the S Atlantic hundreds of miles from anywhere.

June 29<sup>th</sup>.

I was woken at 7 by the cocks crowing and for a few seconds was completely baffled. These wretched birds, what a nuisance they were: I can think of only one good reason for taking poultry to sea in a small ship, and that is that however miserable one ~~may~~ feel, they would always be so much wiser that life might appear better by contrast.

The wind remained fair all day, but by 18.00, after much sail changing during the day, we were making a good few knots under the light mainmast and gennac with a steady suit westerly breeze (gale) 19.30. I have only a minute before supper but I must write quickly that at the moment we all seem to be even happier than usual, an almost overwhelming feeling of utter contentment.

(Must have been the whisky)

June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Friday 30<sup>th</sup>. After much mulling about with the sail plan yesterday we found the birds again in the evening and soon then have been going very well indeed. We kept the light mainmast and gennac on till midnight then hoisted and braced out the second gennac, and this morning changed to 'reefer'. I'm reading an Agatha Christie and enjoying it enormously, how human the people are. It was the most heavenly night, full moon, though still not ~~so~~ very warm. 'Cocks much better today.'

In my journal I wrote of the cochule although they both looked as if they had been booming the family for some time. Now that I've eaten them I really can't give them even the courtesy title any more.



The big whale.  
1st July.

See also p. 263



July 1st.

'Saturday 1st. The S.E. trade still with us all day and we're going extremely well. In spite of a very poor first day's run we are half way already (19.00). At present we're carrying the true gennoon only, we hoisted the 'raffa' yesterday evening with a broken headboard.

Pidun was (as usual) on watch for the forenoon and he called out that a large whale was around so we all went up and watched it for a some time circling ~~the ship~~ <sup>the ship</sup> - Then the other went below and I fetched my camera and the whale went away.

Next an hour later it came back again, so and I was determined to get a photograph if I could so I climbed up the mast and ~~erected~~ sat in the cross tree and this time the whale really showed off - he gambolled round and round the ship puffing and wallowing, crossing only just ahead of the stern and once was doing a half roll on the crest of a wave to show off his white front. On one occasion he even came right alongside the ship. We wondered if he thought we were a huss whale but we ~~thought~~ <sup>thought</sup> he found his eye out in time - he was a good deal longer than especially longer than Bob and must have weighed two or three tons as much!

When the whale first appeared Chang had just cut the throat of a cat and I was feathering it, it seemed a curious combination of circumstances. We had it for supper and for some reason or other Chang had one of his fish slip up and boiled it for just one hour! If ever it was practically uneatable.

July 2nd.

'Sunday 2nd. There's still a grand S.E. wind and we're going well. Occasional showers but they don't seem to matter.

'As in so many affairs, when all goes well it becomes a little dull and there is nothing to write of.

'It's still pretty cool for 10° South - I was 2 sweaters on watch last night.

July 3rd.

Monday 3rd. 6 hours plus all the time and today the overcast has cleared away, there are no more showers and the bluish sea and sparkling white foam are just like they appear in all the paintings of clippings in the books.

July 4th.

~~Ascension Island sighted at 10.00 and we~~  
~~to the island at 10.15~~

We sighted Ascension at 10 a.m. and I spent my watch (2 to 5) coasting about a mile off watching the beaches in the moonlight and listening to their roar on the coast. I turned in after my watch but was out again at ten to six and we were secured to a buoy off Garrison by six. We had been sighted from the cable station as we came round the corner and the leading lights were switched on for us.

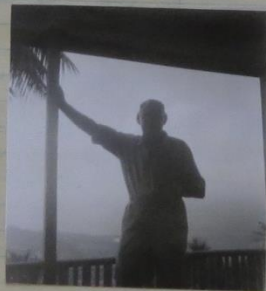
After we had secured I went back to bed again and was woken by a strange voice almost at my ear - Gery Hudson, who combines the duty of 'Port Captain' with many other jobs had come to meet us. He was evidently not feeling at all well and when a voice apparently coming out of the ship's side just behind him suddenly said 'Good morning' he very nearly fell flat on his face.

We spent the forenoon cleaning ship and preparing to paint the cabin, then packed our gear and went ashore at 11 to meet the community at the club. It seemed to be a clear love-fest affair for them and they gave us a most cheerful welcome as well as a bit of gin. Each of us had been allocated to a family - Robin to the Assengers (manager) Peter to the Cox's, James to the Goodlys, myself to the Williams and Chang was going to be looked after in the 'Leading Hand's' mess of St Helenian workers, a title which has many other things in the island is a relic of the naval days.

After the service in the club we were all led away by our hosts - see the Williams turning out to be a most friendly elderly couple who were soon to retire. They soon after lunch I went to bed and slept soundly undisturbed by tremendous vibrations from next door which the old boy was having his regular afternoon sleep. As we went about we were more and more impressed by the excellent way



At the bay - Ascension -  
 request for trade wind reg.



Williams.  
 (Governor of Pungalo at  
 Beer Mountain)

in which the community asked their life with the maximum of comfort and that they work from 7 to 1 and the stop for the day was one of the best and most sensible things & arrangements.

July 4<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>.

~~After the first~~  
~~the second~~  
~~the third~~  
~~the fourth~~

So afraid that  
 after all I have  
 written pages and  
 pages.

I have written before that this is not intended to be a guide book, but rather a story from my personal & angle of our voyage and an affair and of the people that we met, so I shall not write a great deal about Ascension island itself. Peter Lee who was so greatly attracted by the place, has written a very able description of it which has gone in to Robin's book, and this may be an appropriate place to mention that reading this affair does not excuse anybody from buying at least one copy of THE BOOK.

Ascension is a tiny volcanic island in the South Atlantic, utterly barren except for a few acres at the peak, its highest peak, lacking harbours, minerals or any other natural product, and having intrinsically not nothing to recommend it, but which yet it has been so important for to us for a neighbourhood and being open for sea seasons over a century. During the nineteenth century it was used as a base for the gunboats patrolling engaged in intercepting slaves, and the little repair yard is there still; then both the Western Telegraph and Eastern Telegraph companies found it a convenient place to use as a link for their cable to South America and the Cape respectively. Until 1923 the island was commissioned as an HM ship, but the gunboats had been (mostly Royal Navy) had gradually been withdrawn, and the cable companies took over the island completely.

Nowadays the manager of Cables and Wireless runs the island - he is always referred to as the Magistrate - and the whole population are employees of Cables and Wireless. There are about 2 dozen British people with their wives and families, and some 150 St Helenians who do the chores of the affair about 200 in all. C and W. manage the whole thing and maintain their own quarters, have their own shop, import on their own account everything they need, manage their own farm, and generally run

conduct the place in the ~~wise~~ way of the old confidential report entirely to their own satisfaction. They know all they have taken care to impose no taxes whatever on anything, whiskey, imported by the band and bottled on the island, is the fine 4/5 a bottle, and a most beautiful blend too. They have their own special blend, and very fine it is too. The administration ~~is~~ is just done ~~through~~ ~~the~~ in every way as well as in the supply of whiskey and ~~being~~ ~~the~~ the banishment of work for the afternoon! Cable and wireless have been much helped too (they are the first to admit it) by the work done by the garrison to make the place habitable, and recently they have had an additional inheritance in the shape of very large quantities of goods left behind by the American air force at the end of the war.

The Americans did some wonderful pieces of engineering work in the Pacific during the war, but now can have been more remarkable than their effort at Ascension. The decision to build an airbase there so that light bombers could be ferried to the desert was must have been taken about the time of Pearl Harbor, for the first survey party landed on Christmas day 1941 from a cruise. Three months later the air strip was operating, and in this time they had dug a thousand yard runway through a sizeable hill and over the most appalling ground and built a town ~~was~~ which was entirely self contained even as to water (so made by a distilling plant). Every bit of gear and supplies had had to be landed over a small jetty with one medium and one small crane, unless this is always a swell morning, sometimes very heavy, and unless only small boats can lie alongside, and before any work could be started, a road had to be made to the site.

'Garrison' when the cable station and wireless receiver and transmitter are installed, and where all the European staff live, is an ~~little~~ ~~unimpressive~~ collection of wooden huts, ~~and~~ but comfortably furnished and complete with church, ~~water~~ ~~from~~ ~~the~~ ~~jetty~~, ~~and~~ ~~very~~ ~~recent~~ ~~buildings~~, post office, hospital and club. Most of the buildings ~~are~~ ~~a~~ ~~few~~ were built by the Royal Marine's of the old garrison; ~~and~~ it is a pity that most of them have been ~~ruined~~ ~~so~~ that the air is invisible because it's the only worth while view!





gunboats on their duty off west Africa used  
 sometimes to have outbreaks of yellow fever. This was  
 no case, so the only thing to do was to  
 land those who were ~~quarantined~~ <sup>summed up</sup> and leave  
 them to it, and here at Comforters cove on  
 little party of six or seven were put ashore.  
 Food and water ~~from~~ was brought from Garrison  
 each day and left at the edge of the  
 area, and so long as any of them could  
 crawl he would fetch these. ~~When~~ One by one  
 they died and the living covered the bodies  
 with stones where they lay. The last man  
 stayed where he fell —

Chang was looked after very well in the  
 leading Hand mess and was taken sightseeing too —  
 I met him several times being pushed along the  
 road sitting bolt upright in a very ancient  
 side car with a St. Helonian driving and another  
 on the pillion, all three chattering away as  
 hard as they could go and gleaning all  
 the time.

Robin spent five days writing while the rest  
 of us washed, sandpapered and painted the cabin  
 and made quite a good job of it. We were  
 very glad when it was done, not only did it  
 all look so much better, but the light ~~in the~~  
~~cabin~~ was tremendously improved.

While we were doing this the bottom was  
 being cleared for us by swarms of swarming looking  
~~fish~~ <sup>blackfish</sup>. There is a great number of  
 these all round the coast of Ascension, you can  
 catch them in buckets full at any beach, but  
 they are scarcely edible; the cats of the island ~~love~~  
 on them.

No other live things belong to the island, but besides  
 the donkeys ~~let~~ ~~as~~ ~~described~~ ~~by~~ two very  
 different creatures come here to lay their eggs. Every  
 night millions of widow-makers, described as tropical swallows  
 but in fact a species of tern, come in tens of  
 thousands to nest, and very large numbers of  
 turtles come up the beaches at night ~~between~~ in  
 the early part of the year to dig deep holes and  
 lay their hundred or so eggs. The people go down to