

John Rusher Diary

Volume Two



Ceylon

feeling as if I had just polished off a couple
 bottles of champagne and stayed feeling like
 that for 2 days. The first morning I wrote a
 lot of letters including one to Aunt May - afterwards
 I was slightly worried ~~as to~~ about the reception
 of it but all was well although it must
 have seemed that I really was stinking when I
 wrote it.

I went to a pompous cocktail party at the
 Osborns (Machinson-Machenzie) which was given for Lord
 Incheape who was staying with them - it was
 interesting to meet the strange mixture of people and
 especially the passers with their pig tails and baggy
 trousers - that was I think my only other
 evening party. Lord Incheape seemed very pleasant -
 shy and unassuming and finding his position
 rather difficult to live up to.

Robt went up country to stay with various
 friends - Jarvis found a namesake who was very much
 of his own calibre who looked after him - Peter
 (who had to forswear his trip up country in order to
 supervise the making of a new light naval) stayed
 with the Nicholsons. Chang stays on board.

~~When we were not sure what each of us was~~
 when we were not away from Colombo we
 had all to go down and work in the ship (though
 I didn't care to achieve a great deal apart from
 provisioning which is of course my real job), and the
 yacht club was extremely useful. The members were
 a cheerful lot and very good to us but they
 made an mistake - they suggested we might like
 to crew for them in their landing race. I was said
 at once what we were all thinking but didn't like
 to say crew for you be damned will take you on.
 So they had to take us on! We collected four girls
 to crew for us and thrashed the club in their
 own boats in their own harbours. Very satisfactory.
 I was ~~third~~ to have a bit - Robt was 5th &
 Peter 6th. Bill Dalton Bamford a sweet youngster,
 niece of the Osborns, crewed for us and was
 damned good.

We had difficulty in inducing Chang to go ashore
 but I got him to the market one day. (It was a
 revelation to see the beautiful fruit and vegetable
 he grows up country after the very ~~same~~ narrow
 chais in Singapore).



Sailing from
Colombo
14/2



Tej and Bill came to see us off -

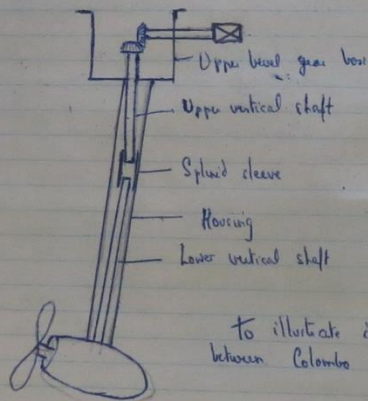


Chang advised each layover to meet first in
land, then, slow English then in land clear
the Malay - and when they understood neither
he turned aside in disgust and said 'bad
skipped black men, no good.'

Although I had investigated the markets, in the end I
let Tej Nicholson (who was tentatively here to help)
do my 'fresh' shopping for me - but it was a
mistake. It's a ~~flat~~ most complicated business -
everything has to be considered from so many points
of view - its probable lasting power - storage -
cost - availability of 'runned' alternatives, and
so on.

Thanks to the Chief Collector of Customs being an
Englishman we managed to get liquor and cigarettes
duty free which was a blessing!
I did record a 12 minute broadcast before we
left, and got 25 chips for my pains.

Eventually we got everything on board and
sailed at 9.30 am on Tuesday 14th. Tej
and Bill came to see us off and sailed out
with us in a 'water-wag'.



to illustrate drive failure
between Colombo & Maikoi.

Feb. 14th

pm 15th to pm 19th

Soon after we had sailed the wind started to get up from NW and we spoke spent a thoroughly unpleasant day and a half hunkering about in a nasty little sea. Pete & Jane and I were all sick and we all felt so lousy in the evening that (for the only time in the voyage so far - Jim writing on July 19th) we couldn't eat a proper supper and had beer and chicken and bananas.

After the blow we had four days of calm and occasional puffs and ran in to all sorts of trouble. One window boom broke right through owing to slatting - we should not have had it up, but to change masts meant lowering the yard and this was dangerous when there is a heavy ~~motion~~ motion. Then the dynamo died on us - one end bearing had gone - which meant carrying oil lamps, a nuisance in hot weather. Then the drive went and with it the reputation of the miserable mechanic who had repaired it in Colombo. And peak halyards were packing at the rate of one a day.
(Slight pause for technicalities -)

(pp 65-66)

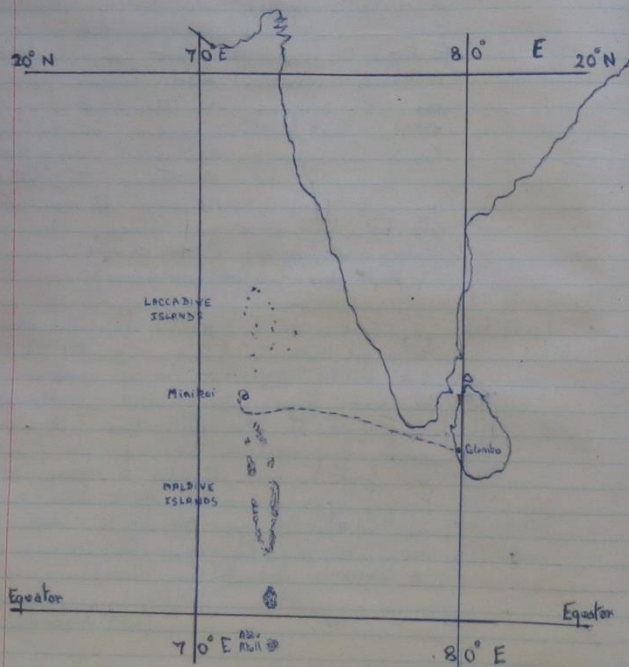
I have already described how the drive had been badly put together in Colombo, so that the upper and lower vertical shafts were out of alignment. When the drive was running this resulted in the spline sleeve which joined the two shafts being beat backwards and forwards every revolution, and it soon became fatigued and fractured. Jane attempted to ~~repair~~ ~~repair~~ it did a temporary repair by cutting off the broken part of the sleeve and refitting the gear to use the shattered, but intact, part - a very fine effort, but of course it could not be trusted to last for long.

(with technicalities)

Feb. 18th

It was altogether an extremely tiresome trip, and, as well as all the other troubles we found on the 18th that we were being set down to the south west by an unexpected current. We were all rather down in the dumps, Robin especially, and he collected us together in the evening ~~to discuss~~ ~~to discuss~~ to discuss a plan. For the immediate future we had three alternatives; to return to Colombo for proper repairs, to make for Maikoi where we might hope to ~~make~~ ~~make~~ repair the window and find a solution for the peak halyard trouble, (but it might be very difficult to get there on account of the current), or to press on.

COLOMBO TO MINIKOI -
FEB 14th TO 21st



The loom of a lighthouse.

Feb. 18th.

From the larger than point of view, if we went to Minikoi, or passed on, should we make for the Seychelles, as intended, or should we abandon the idea of going round the Cape and make for Aden and the Red Sea?

put

Robin put the problems to us (he put them as one problem which encompassed the issue, so I hinted in in the most smug staff college manner and put him right) - and then we gave our opinions, youngest first.

Fortunately we were unanimous - to make for Minikoi and accept up to a weeks delay in getting there, and thereafter to continue with our planned voyage. ~~see above~~ All not to go back to Colombo and not to go try the Red Sea with its bad winds, fearful heat and inhospitable shores.

Feb 19th.

So we moved on towards Minikoi, very slowly but we ~~did~~ make progress. In the evening, when we were all a little bit anxious, it was very hot and there wasn't much wind I had a horrible disappointment.

Oh God I've lost the most enormous fish which I got into while winding in before supper - I wasn't at all ready for a bite - put the bait a too low and hook the line. The first bite of the day. Hell.

But we've just sighted the boom of Minikoi light.

(The boom of a light is the reflection of its beam in the atmosphere - if the air is very damp or cloudy or dusty you often see the boom a long time before the light itself comes up over the horizon).



- it was difficult to see which side of the Bar vessel we should go -

- we hoped they had come out to meet us but in fact they were only going fishing -



the local boats are large and open with thin lipsails

MINIKOI - FEB 21st - 24th



Feb. 20th.

Still going very slowly, and approaching Minikoi from the wrong side - the west - we spent all day getting up to the only passable entrance through the reef which was at the north eastern corner. As the sun set we were motoring ~~the best~~ ^{the best} ~~side~~ ^{side} on the west side towards the entrance and Robin suddenly determined that he would get in that night. The entrance was ~~absolutely~~ narrow and very roughly chafed, there was a heavy swell from the north east, and the west end of a boom vessel ~~on the reef~~ on the reef was not encouraging. But Robin still went on. I was absolutely terrified - Pete I discovered afterwards was terrified too and when Robin at last blew away and said 'sorry, I can't make it tonight', the release from tension was ~~quite~~ ^{quite} ~~relieving~~ ^{relieving}.

Feb. 21st.

So we stood off to the northward for the night and were back off the entrance at 7:30 in the morning. It was ~~only~~ ^{only} daylight, a ~~rather~~ ^{rather} menacing night. Although we knew there was thin fallows of water in the channel it was impossible to see where the channel was - it was even difficult to see which side of the Bar vessel we should go - so we were glad to see one of the islanders large open boats coming out. We hoped they had come to meet us but they were only going fishing, however, we managed to induce them to put with one of the crew (they seem to have plenty to spare) to show us the way in.

It was about 2 1/2 miles to the anchorage off the village and all the way I was thinking that how at last was a place which really lived up to what I expected of it. We were going through the chest blue water picking our way through the coral heads which reared in the most sinister fashion for the sand, to starboard was the reef ~~with the~~ ^{with the} ~~reef~~ ^{reef} showing through the lagoon in a breathtaking series of columns. We had to port the narrow island strip clothed with waving coconut palms and fringed with a sand white beach, and beyond we could see the increasing coast of the beaches.

When we had anchored we went ashore to investigate, and ~~was~~ especially to find out if we could get the minkoo boom repaired, and were conducted around by the Government Amin, a delightful old gentleman, appointed by the Indian Government from among the islanders, to an ~~has~~ ^{has} ~~man~~ ^{man} ~~magistrate~~ ^{magistrate} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~chief~~ ^{chief} ~~constable~~ ^{constable} (and the only one!) and in fact dictator of the island. He led us through the extremely neat village paths (anybody who does not sweep



The men and boys also wear uniform - two light tunics with a band of embroidery just below the knee - dhotis, and shawl heads.



The women wear ankle length smocks (this was the nearest I could get, they were kindly shy)

Feb 21st

the section of the path in front of the house is at once up before the head man) and through crowds of little boys and old women who at first seemed to be the only inhabitants. Later on the younger women got less shy and allowed themselves to be seen, but they were as shyly curious, frightened of us all the same. The population of the island is astonishingly large - 4000 - and they live by selling their coconut fibre and dried Maas fish (one of the Maas family) to the people of Southern India. The young men spend all their youth away at sea, many of the 'kassan' that we know so well in ships going east on from Mombasa, the island is on the direct route from Aden to Colombo, so they must often see their home during the year they are away yet never have a chance to visit their own people. It is because of this that there is a large and powerful light-house on the island which we visited later. There is also a meteorological reporting station and a wireless installation all run by Indians. The Doctor, a delightful personality, is also an Indian and the light-house keeper English - these are the only people other than the islanders who have their own houses on the island.

People have said that ~~the~~ the administration of Mombasa is perfect Breshism - but this is not true. The authority of the Amin is absolute, and he runs the island as its absolute, albeit benevolent and just, dictator. The laws are few and simple. The people are rigidly divided into four classes and, except that the first women of the second class may be taken to wife by men of the first, there can be no other change of class. The women must all wear the same clothes, the ankle length smocks of no shape and all of the same color - a rather dirty shade of maroon. (This material is specially made and dyed for the island people by a factory in Calcutta). Women of the various classes can be distinguished by their ear-rings - elaborate gold ones for the 1st class, plain gold for the second, and silver for the third. The poor fourth class girls aren't allowed any jewellery at all, but they continue peculiar adornments from times which they wear in and out of holes all the way up the lobes of their ears.

Each family has to give a part of its ~~own~~ own cow and fish to the clan, and each clan to the Amin. The Amin controls all supplies coming in and sees that they are fairly distributed. He also handles all the island's business, and when we left we paid our bill



Chang, Jaws and I
took a picnic lunch ashore
to the lighthouse



I took several photographs
besides these, including one
of Jaws with the crew, but
the Assistant Keeper got proud
and, landing about, kicked my
camera over and spoiled the film.

Feb. 22nd.

for repairs, pilotage and everything in one lump sum to him, Pita and Jaws, driven by necessity but also inspired by the offer of a bottle of champagne by Robie for a solution of the trouble worked on the peak kalyan and drilled a hole through the lead on the mast to take it in the hope that this would hold it rigidly and as to prevent wear on the splice Robie and I painted the ship one side of the slip and were helped by the other two to finish off. Chang and I tried to go the ship chalking but with disastrous results when we laid a blue canvas cover with a lot of Jaws' shirt. In the afternoon we alternately swept and batted over the side, and in the evening we sat and gossiped and watched the stars come out and listened to the roar of the surf.

Feb. 23rd.

On the last day Chang, Jaws and I took a picnic lunch ashore to the lighthouse. We went in a local boat and landed at the pier at the southern end of the lagoon. Then walked up a very lovely palm avenue to the keeper's mess. They flicked out plates and so on for us to use and to our astonishment they were all of the old fashioned wadsworth pattern. I suppose the Board of Trade, having so few to cater for, used Admiralty mess trays as seen rather than having its own specially made.

After lunch we climbed up to the lamp platform. The view was unforgettable. This was the narrow strip of the island itself under its dark green carpet of palm, with thundering breakers all down the eastern shore and on the other side the absolute calm of the lagoon in its wonderful shades of clear blue as far as the reef. Round it all the deep sea, so much darker blue could be seen so far that the little island appeared in all its loneliness, and except little Bald, only two miles away was an insignificant speck.

The lighthouse was a splendid example of British handiwork construction - the whole thing built to last for ever including the clockwork mechanism and the light - both of them with quantities of spars and steel by arrangement just in case anything did go wrong. But here, south of the equator, there were brazen or every floor - wasn't this rather a typical example of an attempt to study consumer requirements?

Chang and Jaws walked back to the village of the station side and collected a lot of shells and coral - Chang would have full of beans and Jaws would have about his shells which he said were worth plenty.



The pilot put up a
consistent performance, but it
wasn't always easy to follow his directions -



Feb. 23rd,

money in Shanghai - something for nothing, always delight-
Chang. I went back by boat to find Robin giving
a tea party to the Amis, found relatives about
after all told. I gave them Eau de Cologne to
put on their foreheads and they got very friendly, pleased,
but obviously extremely apprehensive about the next move.
So the evening we had the charming English doctor (Indian
off to supper. He told us a lot about the island
and its people as we sat out under the stars
afterwards. The lighthouse only gets a relief ship every
6 months, other wise the only contact with the mainland is
by the local boats. It must be a lovely life but he
seemed very happy.

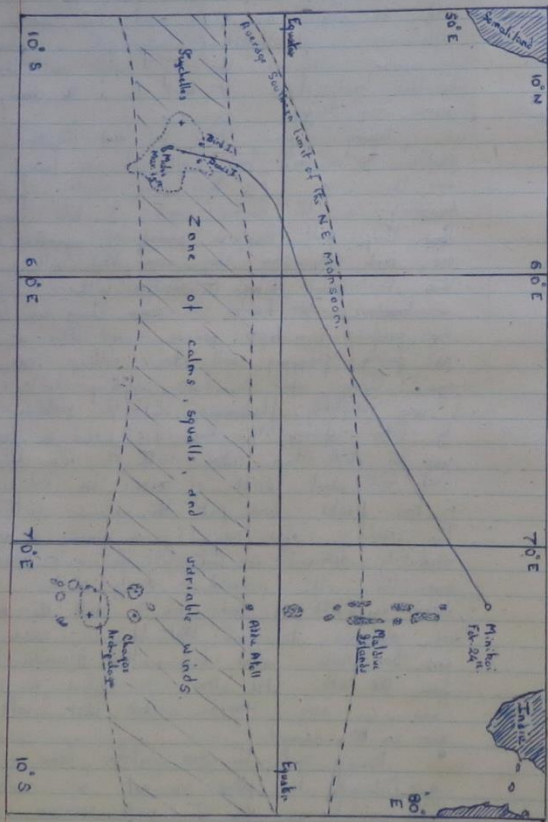
Feb. 22nd.

Having refused Robin for not forgetting about an
turtle & in his book shaft I now find that I have
done the same. There were numbers of large turtles
swimming in the lagoon and I told some little boys
that they could have a packet of cigarettes if they caught
one, and very soon they came back with a monster which
they had hooked through the shoulder with a fish hook tied on
a bamboo. We hauled the damn thing on board - it must
have weighed 3 or 400 pounds - and then it lay quivering
and feebly flapping with tears rolling down from its big
eyes. Chang refused to have anything to do with it and
I was completely flummoxed, but the problem was solved
by Robin refusing to have it held on board. So I
sent the little boys ashore with it and later they came
back with about 40 lb. of meat. We cut the best bits
in to steaks, and put the remainder in the stock pot.
The steaks, cooked only 3 or 4 minutes on each side, were
absolutely delicious - just like the most perfect young beef,
and the other produced a lovely stock. Of course I
looked up in all my books how to make the soup, and
was surprised to find that this is made from the shells
and breast plates. What happens then I wonder to the meat
from the turtles that come to England for soup? Somebody
has a very pleasant racket that I should like to
get in there amongst.

Feb. 24th.

Having got the new willow boom on board and
a fisherman to pilot us out we sailed at 10. The
wind was blowing from the northward easterly so we had
to tack out and the navigation was extremely tricky. The
pilot put up a most consistent performance but, as one
of his eyes pointed west and the other south, it was and
as he sometimes waved his hand to show which way to
go, and sometimes to indicate danger, it wasn't easy to
follow his direction. However, we got at last to the entrance

MINIKOI
TO THE
SEYCHELLES

Feb. 24th.

without touching anything and put her in to her little boat which had followed us out. (It took half an hour to catch us up so we hadn't done too badly - Boleh goes well to windward when, and only when, there is no head sea to stop her).

Working on the wind and current charts we had intended to make for a point about 700 miles north of Mahe, so as to keep the N.E. monsoon for as long as possible, and work our way southward from there. However while we were at Trujillo we got the net. Her reply said firmly that the best plan was to go direct, and that we could hope to hold the monsoon the greater part of the way, so we set course for a point about 150 miles north of Mahe to avoid the eastgoing counter equatorial current as long as possible.

From Colombo to Minikoi we had had little of the monsoon which was ~~the~~ was, in this area blanketed by the mass of India, but we picked it up as soon as we left Minikoi, and set off in a very much happier condition than we had arrived. With the light mainmast and the big spinnaker we were doing a steady 4 1/2 knots, it was glorious weather ~~and so~~ ~~was~~ the pink halcyon tumbler appeared to have been cured. The ~~was~~ we had a run with low boom, and the motor and sails, though not reliable were nevertheless working.

In the evening we managed to make the radio catch up the result, so far, of the general election (we got it from Voice of America) - there were 20 ~~seats~~ ~~seats~~ skill unbartered and the Socialists were 18 ahead. The wretched machine didn't function again so we did not hear the final result for our three seats.

We had a steady flow until the evening of the 27th except for occasional calm periods each night. At times we were going very well in a wally otomy breeze and although we saw a number of fish we came to the conclusion that we were going too fast to catch them.

During this time we tried out the 'rain gear' rig - one boom out each side on bamboo frames, and came to the conclusion that it

24th - 27th



Janus wrapping 'Bogy-wrinkle'
near the masts to protect the
beautiful new light material.
(This bogy-wrinkle was made by
a Japanese Comrade and two
A. Comms. still sewing this time
at Otrium near Jap. Singapore)



(Two's guess)

March 2nd was Elain Bunell's
birthday - we ate the cake and
drank the bottle of rum which
she had given us - dressed
ship and wished her very
many happy returns.

(p. 25.)

would be ideal for trade wind sailing when one could
guarantee that the wind would stay in the same quarter.
But that it was far too much of a nuisance to
set and haul to be used for short periods. Each sail
was attended by no less than seven pieces of string -
foreyard, trawl lashing, sheet, foreguy, after guy, lift
and maintingale. It was not until we had rounded
the Cape and reached the proper trade winds of the South
Atlantic that we capped this rig with the little
Spinnaker and called it 'Raffie' (nearly the spinnaker
itself was the raffie).

We fix ~~rather~~ especially well at this time too -
Chicken skewers with red wine - Christmas pudding and
hardy butter - bread or tongue with an old fashioned
sauce called 'Wau-wau', rice and Chinese dried
mushrooms - and I made ~~quite~~ some quite respectable
fruit cakes. As had happened too often before I again
neglected my journal in favour of letter writing.

28th - 1st March

We set - ship
way for away on the 28th -
we didn't see another in
the open sea until July 17th

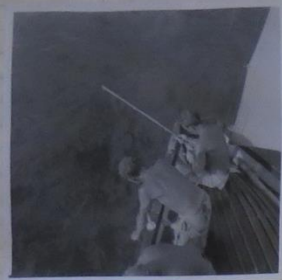
The night of the 27th/28th was foul - calms
and storms, a wind all over the place, and alternate
heavy rain and drizzle, and although the rain
stopped in the morning we had a day and a
half of real dolomium weather. We made many cautions
comments about the net. men of Poona. But in the
afternoon of the 1st we again the good old monsoon
began to blow again and all was well though there
were still occasional squalls at night.

Mar. 4th

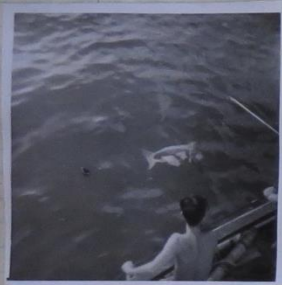
Unfortunately this did not last long, eased by the
fount we were in difficulties again, and the water
got more and more turbulent the whole way to the
Seychelles.

Mar. 5th

By the evening of the 5th we had realised that
our net ~~was~~ advice was entirely wrong and that
we were in for a very difficult passage - although it
was ~~clearly~~ glorious weather by ordinary standards there
was no wind, and we were all a bit depressed
when I suddenly got a monumental hit and, worked
the net machinery properly, and held it. The
excitement was intense as I played it, which I
had to do ~~slowly~~ extremely carefully as I was very
doubtful about the strength of the line. Janus made
a lark up guff and after 50 minutes we at last
got the thing on board - a most beautiful dorado (the
teen dolphin) I suppose it was between 20 and
25 pounds - it was just over 44" long and had



Notes The Dode.



- we lay for hours bed-ridden -



the most glorious coloring I have ever seen, dark blue and silver on top, gold and creamy white underneath and speckled with cerulean blue spots ~~all over~~. The dorsal fin was extended all the way from its high blunt forehead to the tail, which was of dull gold.

By the time I had landed it I was completely worn out with the excitement and the unworked exercise so I have cut it up and very soon a large pie was cooking with white wine, garlic and herbs for supper. We put in Robert's Christmas Spoon in accordance with the manual of Naval Cooking, Chapter I article 6 - but it did not turn black! The next day we had the fish fried for breakfast, cold with mayonnaise for lunch and in a pie for supper, and it was delicious! ~~bother~~

Looking back in my journal I find perhaps we caught this lovely fish at least because I gave King Neptune just a very little whisky last night. We offered him small libations from time to time ~~at the~~ and he nearly always responded.

5th - 13th

From the fifth until the evening of the 13th we had a rotten time. Again and again we thought a huge had come to stay, but always it did after a few hours if not less. It was very hot (the sun was coming north to meet us and it actually passed overhead between the 12th and 13th), we couldn't afford to drink much because we had no idea how long our water would have to last, and day after day we lay for hours bed-ridden with all the gear slapping from side to side in a sickening fashion - an awful way being hurt!

Poor Peter got very constipated - Chang also to a lesser extent - and this didn't help at all. I had never realized what a wretched thing it is and how incredibly lucky I am to have a well organized set of insides. Should we thank God in our prayers for a blessing like this? for it certainly is an extremely valuable one. After all we thank Him for recovery from illness so why not thank Him much more for something which helps to prevent it.

As a result of this Peter's blood got badly out of order and he began to develop a really hard ball on his elbow which grew in to a fine headed carbuncle. He kept going remarkably well out of



Moken Dorade.



could be felt fearfully run down and was extremely short tempered with us all. I did my best to heat it and of course studied the books we had brought, but that didn't help at all as they flatly contradicted each other. Eventually I tried to cut it open with a sterilized razor blade but didn't go anything like deep enough - then Chang and Peta together, eggs on by Jansen, penced it with the tweezers and that helped a lot.

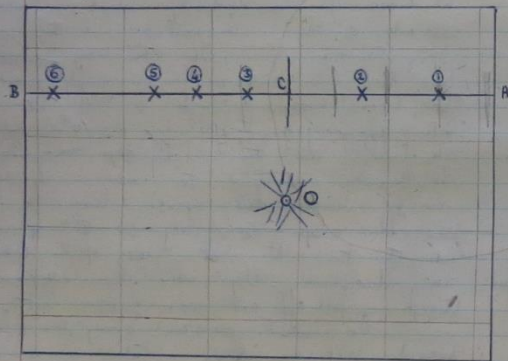
Mon. 19th - 13th

By the 19th we had left the helpful westerly drift induced by the NE monsoon, and were in the east-gang counter-equatorial current which averages 25 miles a day. We were just over 100 miles north of Maki, but ~~the~~ ~~was~~ ~~gang~~ so slowly that it was all we could do to stem the current. We seemed to be absolutely stuck - we could do 25 miles a day to the westward - the current was doing 25 miles a day the other way - and if we tried to make south west we simply went south east. We did manage to make a little bit south - 14 miles from noon on the 10th to noon 14th. only 5 the next 24 hours, and then a big days run - 26 miles! On inspection we tried the motor on the 10th and it ran on Jansen's ~~old~~ repaired skeen, for fair hours then blew up. Not only did the splash go again but this time the ~~oil~~ end of the bottom casting of the an aluminium alloy which had corroded right through fell off and was of course lost.

drive

On several occasions during these four days Peter suggested that we should take a risk and attempt to make skeen to the south, accepting the set east but hoping that we might be lucky, pick up some sharks and get on to the Seychelles bank before we were swept unthinkingly eastwards. These ideas got very short shrift from Peter who was in no mood for reasoned argument although his boat had burst on the 9th and he felt ~~rather~~ a little better.

We were meeting squalls two or three times a day and although they were usually rather unpleasant they provided some variety, gave us a chance of a fresh water bath, and always held the hope that they heralded a change in the weather. I was on watch when one rather particularly heavy one hit us & took it too far on the bow; the wind went round for a sui generis as it arrived and caught us in the wrong way.



VERY HIGH LATITUDE METHOD -
SUN TO THE NORTHWARD

- A-B is the line of the Sun's declination, that is, the line along which the sun appears to travel over the sea.
- X¹ to X⁵ are the positions the sun was in at the times the observations were taken.
- O is the observed ship's position.
- X¹O, X²O etc are the true zenith distances (obtained from by converting the observed altitudes and subtracting them from 90°).
- C is the position of the sun at mer. alt.
- The lines of latitude and longitude are $\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ apart.

(barbar)

carrying the main boom across against the old weather runner and breaking it. It was bad luck but if I had realized the danger I should have been able to avoid it.

Mon. 10th - 11th
12th.

No land at all came to give us a hope on the 10th and 11th, but we got a fair sky on the 12th that looked as if it was really going to last and I wrote in my journal we had got to the stage of seriously considering going on to Madagascar or back to the north, with the attendant misadventure of rationing water and food for the much longer passage, but for the moment, and what a glorious moment, all that is forgotten.

13th.

This haze did during the night, but the next morning it began to blow again and, almost before we realized it, all our troubles were over. We sighted the leeward of Dennis island light at 7:30 pm and by the next morning we were well past it, on the Seychelles bank, and only 35 miles short of Madagascar, and most important of all, out of that damnable easterly current.

14th.

At 9 I have work each on the sun passed overhead between the 12th and 13th, and on both these days Peter used the very high altitude method of obtaining a position. This is a most entertaining and satisfactory affair which takes only very few minutes and is in fact the basis of all celestial navigation. Although it is a simple can if I ever had to explain the basic principles of such sights to anybody, I should start with this method.

14th.

There was still very little wind about and we went very slowly all that day - but, in the night I was glad of it because the end had come so suddenly that I had several letters to finish off, star lists to make out, and a number of other small jobs to do before getting in to Raibaru.

During the middle watch Peter got in fairly close to Victoria and I had a wonderful morning (2 to 5) sailing, standing in front of the mast and the South of St Ann's island smelling the exotic scent of the land and trying to pick out the landmarks, while the old moon was in the east with both Venus and Jupiter almost alongside it.



Arrival in Mahé - the last bottle of 'Tiger'.

Cypripedium

March 15th

made a magnificent display.

After turning in at 5 I didn't wake up till 7:20 when we were ready in to see better - a pity because Mahé really looked incredibly beautiful in the early morning sun.

The Port Officer, Chief of Police and Medical Officer of Health were on board as soon as we had anchored, and gave us a grand welcome - they all seem very cheerful and full of beans in spite of the heat - and quite a large body of locals who appear to have nothing else to do stood on the jetty and gaped.

It is always a joy to arrive in harbor (though it must be admitted, nearly always a joy to leave too!) and we savoured it to the full that morning.

This was never meant to be a guide book and so I don't intend to wander off in to details like Mahé, population 35000, capital town Victoria, and so on which can be got from a gazetteer. ~~The book would also give a group of islands of volcanic origin north-east of Madagascar and if it is a good one it might also describe the astonishing formations of the lava outcrops, and the way in which the palm trees and a thousand other beautiful tropical plants and trees grow in every crevice and shelf of the rocks up to the highest peaks. But I am afraid it would not describe the light of the sun on that early morning, and the way it shows on these rocks and through the early smoke of Victoria's houses.~~

Of course we only saw Mahé, the chief island of the group but having seen it, I can well understand the tradition that Pralin island was the Garden of Eden. By modern ideas the island is poor and the general standard of living is low, but the people, who are of incredibly varied types, African, Indian and European all mixed in every possible combination, seem completely contented and very cheerful and they are undoubtedly well fed.

Just at present, with the prices of copra and patchouly and cinchona and vanilla are sky high there is a great deal of money coming in, but it all goes in to very few hands and is not paid on in increased wages. (We found the same

Mahe

thing applies in Mauritius and St. Helena. This is a matter one can argue about for hours - it all seems extremely unfair, but one has to admit that the employees & can produce arguments which are both cogent and logical.

The upper classes consist of British officials, a small number of retired people (mostly soldiers), a considerable section of upper class Sycharles of French descent, and several families of Indian and Tamil descent and shopkeepers of whom the latter own much of the property in the islands.

~~the 2 islands - so much - it - water - cap~~
It is all very well to go on putting down facts but they can become very tedious - I wish so much I could describe the real spirit of the islands. I suppose the basic fact is that they are nowadays a backwater, off the shipping routes, with no air service and only an occasional steamer calling (sometimes each month, sometimes not for six or eight weeks). So there is really very little urgency about anything and life is taken as it comes and at no quicker a pace than is absolutely necessary.

Then what about the little things that stick in my mind. The hundreds of quantities of fish in the fashion which Chang used to catch for breakfast - rather like mechanical they have an enthusiastic habit of swimming in shoals on the surface, every one with its eyes just above the water so that all you see is a ruffling of the surface and ten thousand stares. We tried to spear some but had no success for every time one threw the spear that was a terrific swoosh and down they went to pop up a minute later a hundred yards away. I shall always remember too the mangoes and avocados pears - the perpetual air of Sunday because all the women wear hats, great picture hats made locally which contrast oddly with the almost universal bare feet - and the wild animals in the Mami Hotel!

As soon after we arrived Peter went off to stay in the Brau Vallen Hotel on the other side of the island, the day and night later - in the hope that it might get his blood in order quickly and cure his deadly ailment, and I took a room in the Mami Hotel close to the ship. Peter wasn't being idle, for he took



- HE sent us round the island in his own - with a member of the Port Welfare committee -



the light material with him to do some modifications as his holiday task. Robi, Jawn and Charles stayed on board. (It was much the last thing to get up in this way as we had quite enough of each other at sea.) The Empire was adequate, and a change; Mrs de St Jove and her two daughters were charming (and so good for my French!) and the food reminds me at once of Van Horn's comments on the French colonies, but what bits and what animals. The centipedes, however, were six inches long and there were cages of them, and every cockroach was a monster with staring eyes and great bristles, which he waggled at me just to show how he reviled ~~any~~ ^{any} intrusion. Ugh.

H.E. Doctor Selwyn Clark was very kind to us - he had us to lunch, and later visited Robi and me to dinner. It is ~~unusual~~ ^{most} unusual for a doctor in the Colonial Service to get a ^{reward} ~~reward~~ for a doctor in the island is by way of a reward for very fine work when he was captured in Hong Kong ~~in 1942~~ by the Japanese at whose hands he had a dreadful time. He also sent Robin Chang and me round the island in his car with a very charming if slightly pugilist Swiss girl to conduct us. (She was a member of the Port Welfare committee so before we met her we expected some joyful old bag and was most agreeably surprised).

The judge M.D. Hym, who used to captain Summit and is a grand character had Jawn and me to lunch - a most entertaining party when we talked and ate and drank all to excess for about three hours and both went fast asleep in our chairs after a dinner party given by the composer (Harry Lenny) in the evening as a result.

Unfortunately for the islands a battle royal rages continually between these two - the Governor, a most humanitarian man, perhaps pandering a little too much to the people and the Judge taking the opposite and old-fashioned point of view.

We used to go to the Lychnis club on most of the evenings and sometimes not then for a nightcap or two before we departed - the first night Jawn stayed with me at the club while Robi went back early to the ship ~~early~~ where he was faced with a ~~difficult~~ ^{tricky} situation. Few of the local beachers - ~~swabbers~~ ^{swabbers} no better than they should be, had come to call on us and were sitting on the jitty. Obviously they could not be taken on board - but at the same time



Shawing has the ship
stowed.

it would be rather unwise to send them packing, so Robin fetched a bottle from the ship, sat and drank it with them out of china mugs, and when it was finished wrote them on their way rejoicing.

Meanwhile the drive had been taken ashore to the only local firm of marine engineers, who declared that they could mend it, make new parts, and turn out a really good job. They also undertook to fit a new bearing to the dynamo. This was all very gratifying because we had not had much hope of getting the job done here.

They did all these jobs work, and returned the drive in six days. Apart from one rather stupid fitting error they appeared to have done a sound job. And then a boy arrived on a bicycle with the bill. Robin was out of the ship, so we opened it and found to our horror - Rs. 1498 50 - a hundred and ten pounds. At first we couldn't believe it, obviously the decimal point was in the wrong place, but as they had added in the date - or something, it couldn't be true. But it was.

And then the argument started, and this would squabble did Jim afraid seriously man the perfection of our stay in this lovely place, quite apart of course from the great expense to poor Robin. For 2 1/2 days Robin and Tom went at it hammer and tongs, arguing that the price was ridiculous and pointing out that the head mechanic of the firm, recently from Bombay, had obviously based it on the inflated costs there, while in Singapore the price for the job could not have been more than £30 and at Make £25, would they have been fair.

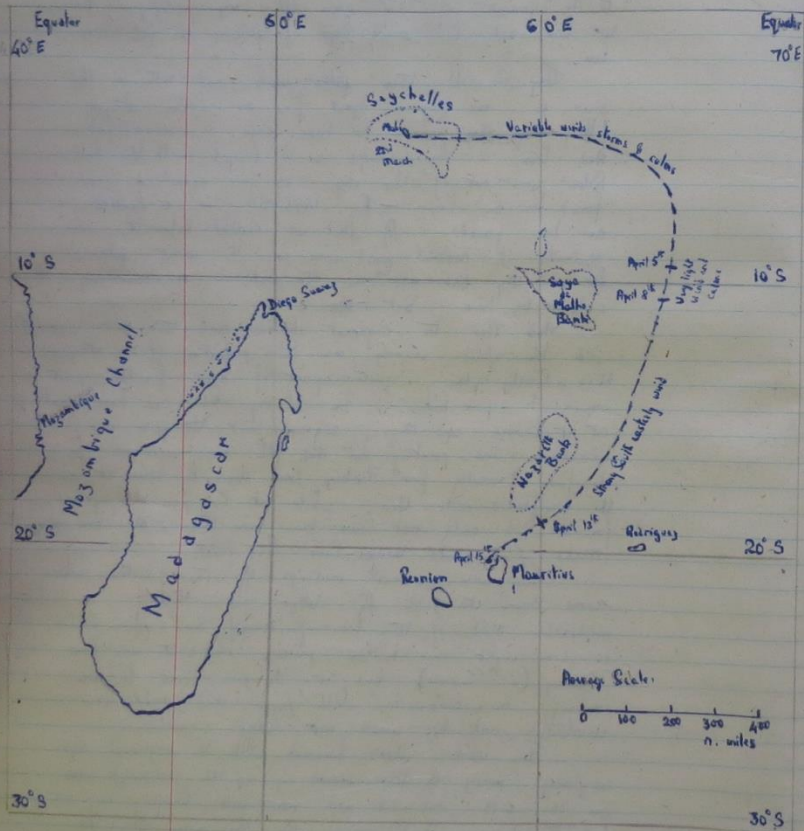
There were several meetings of the directors, who came down to £82 by cutting out their overheads. Most of them were friends of ours and wanted to come right down to our price, but the man from Bombay (a Sarawan) had set the price and he was working on commission, both 'faci' and pocket were involved, and he would not budge.

The whole island hummed with the argument and everybody (many of them mixed up in the company) was on one side, but it was no good hanging on, we had to get on with the voyage, so the only thing for Robin to do was to give the 2 local lawyers a power of attorney - and still, which we did, and until now (July 24th) we have still not had the result.

(It is rather hard to be Mad - unpaid :- on the little hotel office which is now by the Government way Sunday, and stayed on breakfast in the town square. This was my first 'live' breakfast and I found myself full of confidence!)

SEYCHELLES TO MAURITIUS

MARCH 23rd TO APRIL 15th



March 23rd

After waiting all day to hear the result of the battle, and receiving a series of contradictory messages from Robin every half hour or so, we at last saw him coming from the pitty at 5:30. As he came within hail he called out we're away and we set to making sail as hard as we could go for fear that some wretched new argument would crop up to delay us. We had some slight difficulty in hauling off, but we got away in half an hour and in the gathering dusk as we slid away with thank goodness a fresh westerly to help us, we sat on the upper with a glass of whisky and heard Robin's story.

Instead of making south for Diego Suarez, we were headed east en route for Mauritius for we had had radically to change our plans, which had been partly necessitated by delays and partly by our failure properly to appreciate the situation when we left Colombo. When we had sailed from there on February 14th, we failed to realize that even under favorable circumstances, we could not reach the Mozambique Channel before the season of southeasters. We should therefore have changed our plan then, and have followed the route of the old East Indianmen south through the doldrums to pick up the south east trade, and then away west to Mauritius, as later.

The Mozambique channel was hopeless by March 23rd, and it was no good trying to get down the east coast of Madagascar, so the only thing to do was to make back eastward for 5 or 600 miles along the equator, then strike south until we picked up the south east trade, and so to Mauritius, missing out Diego Suarez altogether. I was of course terribly disappointed about this, because Frank and Elizabeth Bishop had ~~set~~ ~~the~~ ~~best~~ ~~easy~~ had good plans for us, and the French navy were also planning to fly us up to Tananarive for a momentary party, but it was quite inevitable. Incidentally see the advice about the route was almost the only sound advice we received on such matters throughout the trip - it came from the Port Captain (Sawyer) and the Captain of a Government fishing boat who had tried the other route in a schooner at this time of the year - and arrived back at Mahé 18 days later.

I had been looking forward also to making Captain Anderson and his lady wife ~~the~~ ~~an~~ ~~eye~~ a very cheerful complexion I had met in Shanghai.

"GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECHO" JANUARY 18, 1953

Local man on 15,000-mile Trip in "Noah's Ark"

Calling Mrs. Rusher, of Cheltenham (id # 411) address unknown).

THIS is to inform you that your husband, Lieut-Commander John James Sherwood Rusher, R.N., left Singapore early to-day in a 46-foot 16-ton Singapore-built "Junk yachi" on a 15,000 miles voyage home.

The yacht is said to resemble Noah's Ark, and the voyage is expected to take seven months.

The owner of the vessel, says a Rester message, is Commander Robin Kilroy, formerly commanding officer of the Loyang boom defence depot, Singapore, who describes his craft—the *Boah*—as a dhoni.

With him are George Jarvis of the Royal Navy, deckyard, Singapore; Lieut-Comdr. Peter Aquin, of Falmouth, Devon; and Lieut-Comdr. John Rusher, of Cheltenham. Kilroy and Jarvis come from Salcombe, Devon.

Also aboard is a Chinese cook named Chan.

The *Boah* is 40 feet overall, has an auxiliary engine, and carries a large brown sail.

Commander Kilroy built her, helped by Malay shipwrights.

The port of destination is in Devon.

Lieut-Comdr. Rusher is one of two brothers born at Pershore. One entered the R.A.F. and the other the Royal Navy, and both have distinguished war records.

Lieut-Comdr. Rusher, whose home is given as Cheltenham, and whose wife lives in the town, was awarded the D.S.C. in 1944 for bravery and resolution while escorting a convoy to Malta. He was also mentioned in despatches.

He received the rank of Lieutenant-Commander in February, 1942. In September, 1948, he was posted to the C-in-C, Far Eastern Fleet, for duty with the Joint Planning Staff, and in February, 1949, to the Intelligence Staff of the C-in-C, Far Eastern Section.

His brother, Wing-Commander Douglas Henry Sherwood Rusher, lived in Pershore until about two years ago, when it is reported that he went abroad with his family. He was awarded the D.S.O. in 1918, as "a gallant leader who has taken part in 40 sorties," and who distinguished himself at El Alamein.

March 23rd

This was obviously going to be a damned difficult passage anyhow and to add to the worries of recent going through the cyclone area during the season, albeit its back end.

For this reason we had (or rather Peter had) bought a 'Bush' radio so that we could pick up the cyclone warnings from Mauritius, and what a joy it proved to be. For the first month of the voyage I had felt glad to be out of touch with world affairs for my eighteen months on the front intelligence staff. The next month I began to feel a bit of a woid, and by this time I really wanted me again to know what was going on and it turned out to be plenty. (Our old ex RAAF radio had proved to be quite useless after all.)

As I wrote, we were making for the eastward, and we hoped to call at Fuzaki island which belonged to Harry Seery, to see his plantations, pigeon fishery and especially his red deer (brought from England and thriving in this strange place). However we got carried past it by the current and woods and could not afford the time to beat back - a pity.

24th

And the ~~so~~ next westerly breeze fell all that day, Friday, ^{24th} until 6. Then we put on the engine and away it went - for precisely 5 1/2 hours. At 11:30 pm there was a ghastly quaking rain and 2 seconds later Bob (whom I had just called for the middle (he was keeping it's middle while I looked out for the north) was switching off the engine as I was putting the gear lever - to neutral.

24/25

All the night ^{24/25} we drifted - the calm - with the sea helping us to the eastward - and - the morning (25th) dawn set to work the skipper

March 25th

"GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECHO" JANUARY 19, 1930

LOCAL WIFE GETS 'NOAH'S ARK' MESSAGE

THE "Echo's" message to Mrs. Risher that her husband, Lieut-Commander John James Sherwood Risher, R.N., left Singapore yesterday in a 16-ton ("Noah's Ark") junk yacht on a 35,000 mile voyage to England got home last night—at Chitra, Battledown-approach, Cheltenham.

Mrs. Risher told the "Echo" to-day that she knew of her husband's intention to make the voyage with four others—and a Chinese cook—but the message brought news that the adventure had actually started.

She and her two sons—Jeremy (11) and Anthony (8)—now have a seven-months' wait to the time when the Boleh is expected to lower its brown sail and put in at Salcombe, Devon.

Among those on the quay will be Mrs. Risher and the two boys, and their uncle, Wing Commander D. H. S. Risher, formerly of Pershore, who now farms at Tolme, Devon.

FIRST STOP COLOMBO

Jeremy and Anthony will have an exciting story to tell when they return to school near Brighton to-morrow.

Although the wait will be a long one, Mrs. Risher expects to be well informed as to progress. She has the detailed route, marked with the vessel's scheduled ports of call.

The voyage is by way of the Cape, and the first port of call should be Colombo on February 4.

She has no fear as to the gastronomic well-being of her husband, for she has heard that the voyagers spent Christmas Day aboard to test the cooking arrangements, and enjoyed an excellent dinner.

Before her marriage Mrs. Risher was Miss Betty Whitaker, of Charlton Kings.

Lt-Commander Risher, aged 36, is one of the two sons of the late Dr. and Mrs. J. G. Risher, of Pershore. He went far East three years ago next July.

March 25th.

The drive down completely and found a fearful mess. In the bottom casing the fan and aft drive had been fitted with nothing to dig it forward, and the lower roller ball bearings of the vertical drive had fractured almost all round its ~~case~~ lower rim as a result of being hit by the lower horizontal drive when it dropped out of its bearings. It took 2 1/2 all day, but he got it finished by 3 pm. That was yesterday — we have not yet

(tried it again — goodness knows what will happen then).

And after that I wrote:—

Well, then it is. We have a drive which has a 75% change of blowing up at any moment. It has cost up to £100 in repairs in 2 months, and we are still no forwarder. A pity.

March 25th - ~~Wed~~
- 30th

We had no I wrote above expected this to be a furious trip — at least until we turned southwards — but considering when we began we really made quite good progress. We began making our way round to the southward on the 30th of ~~Sept~~ and had then averaged 6.3 miles a day. If we were leaving to write had for it, changing sails and sailing to catch every puff, but we had two periods of steady ~~sea~~ north westerlies. For the eastgoing current, which had been such a nuisance before was now on our side too, and the drive kept going a good deal longer than I expected. It blew up finally on the morning of the 29th.



Tunny and Jaws

March 25th - 27th.

This was one rather depressing feature of this first part of the trip — although we had all had a grand lunch at Mate's, not near too much of each other, and had a real change, we were as much at odds ~~with~~ as we had been when we arrived there. Remarks were miscellaneous, this was far too many functions, and very discussion became just an argument and then a battle. Suddenly however after a few days we all seemed to realize simultaneously that this simply wouldn't do and must stop, ~~and~~ we all began to be particularly nice to each other, the rows stopped altogether, and thank goodness nothing like it has ever cropped up again.

March 26th —

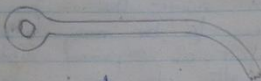
On the other hand there was one most encouraging fact, at least we began to catch fish. We were being followed by very large schools of tunny from the 26th onwards ~~and~~ that day ~~two~~ but over before that, on the 24th. I hooked two of them on Jaws' line while I was on watch. Let out a haul for Jaws who came flying up the hatch and played and landed them.

26th.

That was enough fish to last for a couple of days so we did not try again till the 26th when the same combination — I on watch tending the line, Jaws having rigged it and standing by below — hooked a fairly sizable. Again Jaws came up the hatch like a rocket and hauled the fish in steadily. He got it nearly alongside, ~~and~~ then it suddenly made a great effort and he had to give it some rope but just as he was doing this I saw a swirl in the water astern and there were two sharks coming up at full speed towards the small of blood. Called out look out — sharks and Jaws hauled in as hard as he could, but when the fish was right alongside the bigger of the two sharks got to it and bit it off clean just behind the head. Poor Jaws was left standing there with a great bloody head dangling from his line and looking so useful that I had to boot with milt, but it was damned bad luck. The flesh on the head alone gave us a grand breakfast so it must have been some fish.

29th.

Jaws caught another very fine tunny on the 29th (we could have caught as many as we liked, for they were still following us in huge numbers, but it was useless to catch them unless we could eat them and



March 31st -

This was drawn by tracing round the actual hook concerned - no cheating.

one couldn't eat tunny all the time), but then he had a run of bad luck and lost three fly boats complete with tracers in two days. He wasn't daunted by this and proceeded to melt down some lead and cast more in a home made mould, while the feathers from a chicken we had killed and eaten two days out were useful for completing the job.

Mon. 31st

I lost one whopper too. I wasn't doing much fishing at this time - our fisherman was quite enough - but I had one go and after only about a few minutes had a tug of war with a fish, which ended very suddenly when my hook broke off at the crown. Soon after this I saw a hook straighten out by another fish! However he caught another fine one the next day and found in its gut several of the most peculiar little fish I've ever seen. They were more or less round, up to 2" long, with piggy snouts and thick little curly tails, and eyes sticking out on top and below, ahead and astern. What a stomach ache they must have given ~~the~~ the tunny.

As well as seeing a lot of tunny and some some Dorado there were whales about too, I don't remember ever having seen them so close to the equator before. Altogether we had three schools at this time, two of them we thought Complanadis (though this is not certain) and the other ordinary (? sperm?)

April 1st. 2d.

It was at this time that we got our only decent bags of flying fish. Most ocean voyagers have warned that all they had to do at any time was in the tropics was to hang a light in the rigging and the flying fish came in board and gave themselves up. ~~But this~~ certainly didn't happen to us. Occasionally there would be one or two about the ship in the morning, and although we tried showing a light it didn't seem to encourage them, but on the 1st and 2d it was a very different story. We had a full moon on the port side, a strong breeze from starboard, and I think the most important factor, the large schools of tunny were hawking. The flying fish told they went crazy. Anyhow we got eight the first night, and the next evening there was a bombardment when we were sitting on the upper deck dining having our tea. They were coming whirling over every few seconds - some hitting the ship's side, some the sails, some even splatting against us (and going at about 40 they hurt!).



1.



2.



3.



4.

Sunset 7th April.

April 2nd.

Jawee Chang and I were diving again and again in to the scum as we found another quick flip flipping while Robin and Pete were collecting those that arrived in the cockpit. After half an hour we all got uncontrollable giggles, but then been 21 fish in the bucket. Another seven came aboard during the night too, so we had them fresh for breakfast and served for lunch and they were absolutely delicious.

Chang had had an unfortunate accident at Maku when, trying to let out some cable, I had hooked the middle bar of the third finger of his right hand. The was put in plaster by the local quack (a most charming individual, half Danish and half Siamese, who looks just like Edward G. Robinson). Not of course it was a great handicap in Chang's work. However, he insisted on carrying on and would only allow me to do the boring part. As for Chang, it was bad luck and annoying for him, especially as I'm afraid the bone wasn't very well set (not I think Dr. Chutiansai's fault but the nurse's).

Apr. 4th.

We had fairly steady westerly and norwesterly winds on the 1st and 2nd, very little wind on the 3rd, and then a light easterly on the 4th, but still managed to make just over 60 miles a day. It was usually calm at night, and blew during the forenoon, but there were a lot of squalls about and they arrived at all sorts of odd and inconvenient times. From the 3rd onwards we kept on seeing signs of the SE trade (or so we thought) and felt we must surely be getting to it soon, but we were so wrong.

Like on earlier Robin and, to a much less extent, Pete were also getting a bit apprehensive of cyclones too. We simply could not get maximum radios on the 'Bush' (we had had it once but not again), and Robin, who is a self-confident incurable pessimist, saw signs of an approaching cyclone in every cloud and every swell. I was convinced he was wrong because I knew the 'feel' of cyclone weather so well, and fortunately my conviction was correct. Robin's wrong wasn't helped at all by a most depressing pamphlet issued by Carl East Indies which painted the coast of a cyclone in the most lurid terms - 'the whining roar of the hurricane, can now be heard' - 'the unimaginable fury of the storm' - 'in the centre it is still blowing half a gale, but by comparison with what has

One thing I failed to read —

During this trip we saw again and again a most strange phenomenon that none of us had noticed before. We were in deep water — around 2000 fathoms — and far from shores and away from strong currents and yet we kept on meeting apparent reefs. These were when there was practically no wind we would suddenly find ourselves in a little ways beaking all round us so noisy that ordinary conversation was difficult. It was as if we had run in to sandbars. This was a most unquieted sea and chatted sound was a few and far between — I wished we had a sounding machine on board and thought what fun it we could find and name a Babel or an Elizabeth shoal.



gone, but it seems calm — but the wind is yet to come, and so on.

April 5th - 8th.

From the 5th onwards for the three days, after South, when we really did expect the trade, we were flat becalmed and did only 55 miles altogether. Apart from the lack of sailing wind the weather was heavy, and on the 7th (Good Friday) I wondered whether the annual pilgrimage up Brydon Hill from Peshaw was getting the same sort of variable light sunshine, gentle breeze and lovely blue sky. In fact we did not only didn't fast on Good Friday, but had a special treat — a treacle pudding made by me which varied treacle from every pore and was so light it had to be held down on one's plate. (I had to do something to make up for having entirely forgotten to buy a Hot Cross bun).

We whittled away a lot of the time playing Sultans ('Backshop') which was rather fun — played two-a-side and caused great discussion, but we soon gave it up when the wind did at last come.

April 8th.

Early Saturday was a very eventful day. There was a slight scare at breakfast when Dave, who has refitted his 12 foot blonde bus, announced his intention of carrying out firing trials. We all begged him, if not to desert, at least to land it right forward and fire it with a target from aft, but he laughed us to scorn. However — he hasn't fired it yet thank goodness.

A bit later along there an empty 'Godson's' little one the side and three sharks turned up very quickly to investigate it. While the others were watching them I saw a large sword in the water beyond and then a large fin emerged towards us, and it turned out to be a large swordfish. It came close up to the ship (some misperceiving the situation by saying they do say those things can go through 4" of Teak!) and came back twice — we are all prepared to swear it was longer than an RNSEA dinghy (14 feet) and Robin was certain it was well over 15.

There were three dorades playing round the ship afterwards and we were trying to catch one, when a shoal of small fish appeared on the surface about 100 yards away. They must have seen the dorades and the dorades them at the same moment. In a flash the

April 8th.

shoal in a terrific squall and off went the boards after them, ~~the boards~~ seeming only to go in the most hasty way but in fact going like streaks. Then during the 1st day we got sea a wind at last. It was from the south east, and we thought it was the trade, but later it turned out to be from a strong anticyclone which was a little whimsical but nevertheless blew us almost all the way to Mankins.

To end up the excitement of the day, I was on watch at 10 (p.m.) when I saw alongside the ship the black shape of a dorade with little flicks of phosphorescence coming from it. It was staying ~~exactly~~ in the same place about two feet below the water and perhaps 6" from the ship's side, so steady that I thought we might be able to get the gaff in to it, so I called Larber. He had me a tin line, but the fish was too deep (we were doing 4 knots) and the work was deflecting the gaff, when Pete who had come up to watch the fun noticed that there were several other dorades swimming in to the star ship in the line were then curving out and away and back in again. So Larber lay on the gunwale forward and let a go from there. All the time he was talking to the dorade 'come on my beauty, just a bit closer see in, that's right' then a grunt as he tried to drive the gaff in and 'hell, missed him again'. But he did actually touch two and really gaffed a third and got it on board. It was a lovely fish, about 25 pounds, but sad to relate when he had got it on board it flapped itself off the gaff, across the ship and over the lee scupper before either Larber or Peter could do anything about it.

April 9th - 10th.
Early Sunday / Monday.

longing for but the combination of the trade and an anticyclone gave us a go but more than we expected and we were caught with the light mainsail up in a wind which at times reached force 7. The was a squall well from the east, and quite a nasty ~~top~~ ^{top} squall, and the ship ~~because~~ ^{because} ~~was~~ ^{was} most uncomfortable as well as ^{very} wet. As I have written before we could not, with the original rig, shift the mainsail



P.E.



P.E.



P.E. Big One. 12/4/50



without lowering the yard, and although we had realized this was a defect which must be remedied we had not appreciated how serious it might be, for it proved impossible to lower the yard fully - a heavy weight. On this occasion, the light mainmast stood well up for some to a blow, for which it was never designed ~~stands~~ for 36 hours, from Saturday evening to Monday morning, when we lowered the yard and Pete most courageously went up and undid the bolt at the yard head. We stand that sail away ~~the~~ ~~last~~ ~~etc~~ and kept going for 24 hours on the 20. 2 working it alone then the weather moderated slightly and we hoisted the top section of the heavy white mainmast in four steps now through the bulk. Pete again having to climb the mast to secure the head.

April 10th.
11th.

I note in my journal that morning (Tuesday) -

The sea has been thoroughly confused all the time, but the swell and the wind have varied their direction considerably, and a succession of heavy squalls has added to the trouble so we are all wet though the ship is thoroughly damp inside, and we are all rather tired of it. However, we have all been more or less immune from seasickness, and we have made 180 miles in the past 48 hours -

12th - 13th.

The blow went on until the evening of the 12th by which time we had got within easy striking distance of Maniwa and had almost made up for our long struggle before. Looking back on it, however, I feel that we ought to have been in much higher spirits than we were in fact were, as this was our first proper blow and we had come through it without any noticeable troubles in spite of having made mistakes. But the sprays that had clogged up were very ~~serious~~ ~~and~~ it must be admitted, extremely ~~serious~~.

First of all the ship had got ~~so~~ ~~most~~ ~~fairly~~ ~~wet~~. The worst part was at the joint of the shrouds toward mast platform and the ship's side, but there were ~~several~~ ~~of~~ ~~minor~~ ~~ones~~ ~~at~~ ~~many~~ ~~points~~ on



Taking it grass over the lee gunwale.
quinivale



the decks. To make matters worse we had stupidly left a ventilator open forward under the dinghy, but the water sluicing about the forecastle. As a result of all these leaks not only had our beds and the settee cushions all got soaked through, but there was a great deal of water in the bilges and although we pumped out very frequently this had sluiced up the ship's side and once again soaked everything in the cat lockers and behind the beds. My clothes brought in especially this time (it was my turn of course the port side had had theirs after the muddy mess.) and they became a sodden

Another material trouble, albeit a minor one was also a thorough nuisance. The piston crank which the jibs are attached ^{round} to the fore stay were coming off one after another, as a result of thoroughly bad design and finish (Messrs Simpson Lawrence and Co.). This meant frequent changes of jibs (which involved a soaking for us each time) followed by frantic sewing by Pete and myself. As well, this was the trouble about mainmast hoisting and lowering which I have already explained.

So much for the material trouble. None of them were basic or irreparable, but added together they made life ~~extremely tedious~~ really rather unpleasant.

But there was one other snag, a personal one, and therefore much worse. Although Pete and I have who had both had a lot of experience of this sort of thing, remained full of confidence, John, who is without known permission, was very nervous about his ship in this its first real trial, and so afraid I began to fidget and get thoroughly down in the dumps both about the ship itself and about my own ability to handle her. Looking back on it now I realize that I entirely failed to appreciate that this was my first experience of a heavy blow at sea under sail - had I remembered this I should not have been half as worried - but at the time I was thoroughly depressed.

I should record here, to complete the story, that after one more gale I was once again confident and that ~~the gale~~ ^{the} ~~was~~ ^{no} longer expected ^{to} ~~be~~ ^{to} ~~come~~ ^{to} with any day.

April 13th/14th

The wind began to fall in the evening of the 13th. but we kept going under the virtually double reef mainmast and the small jib. Because we could not reach Port Louis by nightfall on the 14th and so wanted to avoid getting there during the night.

We sighted Round Island at 3:45 pm and coasted down during the night hoping well clear to avoid the ~~steep~~ ^{long} currents which run close in to the coast. Another good reason for hoping well off was that we had no paper large scale chart of the island, and were working on a tracing Peter took from a compass chart when we were at Mahé.

April 15th

Once again the morning sun shone on a very beautiful scene as we came slowly up to harbor. ~~Port Louis~~ From the coast up to the foot of the mountains the ground rises in a series of gentle hills, carpeted with the red green of sugar cane, interspersed with plantation of palms and very variety of tropical tree and shrub, and beyond this the fantastically shaped steep ~~side~~ ^{side} of the island ~~is~~ ^{is} each one with its plume of cloud gathered for the warm damp east wind.

Again too we had a grand reception and although of course nobody had expected us in Mauritius there being very soon a crowd of visitors who all seemed to have read and heard all about the ship.

The sailing directions describe so many instructions and regulations for Port Louis harbor, especially during the cyclone season, that we half expected to be berthed way out in the roadstead and to have all sorts of difficulties with the port authorities, but it was quite the reverse. The Captain of the Port was on board but his number two and a '25' ~~river~~ ^{river} called Booker (no 2) took charge of us and could not have been kinder. They berthed us alongside one of their tugs at a pontoon in front of the Customs House, and gave us every facility one could possibly want - scowls to work in - a place to dry our sails and so on. The Customs people however friendly, but insisted on sticking to the letter of their law, and

on sealing up our detriable stacks, or rather those we did not require a basket, in of course we have no wire str or lockable cupboards, so the good Customs men appeared with two great brown paper bags in to which they loaded whisky, gin, beer and cigarettes. These wrapped bags were then left on board and not only were they thoroughly in the way throughout our stay, but within two days both had got soaked with rain and had burst open. However, this didn't damp the temperance of the Customs characters who solemnly and finally removed the seals before we sailed.

Among the visitors on the first day was a chief Gunner Mate called Williams whom I had known at Dumport gunnery school and was delighted to see again — he is now second in command of the Mauritius KIVUPT under Commander Noel Whatley — we saw a lot of them both during our stay, a somewhat dangerous pair. This was also a pleasant looking individual with a moustache who said he had come to ask us to be honorary members of the Gymbkhana club, and to offer two beds in his home. I liked the look of him so much that I jumped at this invitation, and when he said is there anything else I can do I gave him my kitbags, soaking wet as they were and shivering of mud and big water, and asked him to take them away and get them sorted out and dried.

As I have said I had been really rather depressed, but ~~was~~ the combination of the lovely morning, ~~and~~ the friendly reception, and above all ~~getting~~ getting my ~~soiled~~ wet bags out of the ship cheered me up immensely.

That evening we drove up to Vacoas, 15 miles away in the hills (only about 1200 feet but wonderfully cool) where we were ~~met~~ met by Hugh Fairbank and his delightful homely and cook took charge of me, bathed me and fitted me out in Hugh's clothes and I was able to turn up at Noel Whatley for dinner ~~drum~~ drum up to the mine.

Pete stayed with Whatley, ~~Robert~~ Robert and I decided again to live on board, and I stayed the whole time with Hugh.

We had ~~four~~ four days in Mauritius, perhaps a little too long (we were delayed for ~~three~~ three days at the end by a threatening cyclone), but I really



Grand Bay
Maunabo

did enjoy it very much indeed. Hugh's wife was away in South Africa and I was glad to have company like in the house, and we got on as if we had known each other all our lives. Each morning he took me to the ship on his way to the office, and every evening we went back up for the heat of Port Louis to the lovely cool of Vacoas. The weather was unkind it rained for five days, which much interfered with our work on land, but we had two perfect days when we went out to Grand Bay, by the Shillings seaside longchairs for bathing and large meals.

It was a pity that there was so much to do on board but we had a lot of tailoring to make and repairing to do. I had two scuttles (not holes!) to take out and re-rubber, and a good deal of work on the electric, as well as my usual harbor job of getting supplies. The sails and rigging require considerable work, especially including fitting up a peak balyard for the main, and above all there were the leaks and the stove to be mended.

~~Fortunately~~ The local detachment of R.E.M.E. came to an end over the dunes, they took it away and did a splendid job, including making and fitting a solid single vertical shaft, and it ~~the~~ lasted for many hundreds of miles without breaking again, though ~~it~~ they changed nothing (of course). What a contrast with the Seychelles shark!

The rain was tiresome because it prevented me from seeing as much of the very beautiful island, but I met a fine cross section of the people. Hugh took me to two very British parties - a supper dance when we had ~~the~~ danced Scottish country dances till we could hardly stand - and a cocktail party when I met quantities of people including the Bishop, a magnificent old man who disappears thoroughly of the other half of his diocese (the Seychelles), a very depraved part of the world. I fear! We went to lunch with Sir Hilary and Lady (Bole's aunt) Blood at Redoubt (Government House). They must have thought we stowed on board for they gave



Leaving Maurice - 24th April.

This was the last photograph taken of the ship with the wishbone gear fitted - it shows this gear very well indeed, also the arrangement of the main boom.

The lower end of the peak balyard fitted by Peter in Maurice can just be seen dangling from its cleat immediately abaft the after mast and above the upper wishbone.

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we are en route back then we went round the town and saw the portraits of the French governors. They had a huge fire blazing & in the sitting room it was lovely to see it, and the first I had seen for years.

We spent one very amusing evening at the Disco club (the French sporting club) and another, eating vast numbers of the little local oysters, at the gymkhana club. Looking back it seems as if I had gone out every night, but in fact I had two or three quiet evenings with Hugh and Jim down in the same pub, and I also got in a broadcast 'live', and in French (nine tenths of the nearly half million population speak French). (Supp 335-340)

The second survey I managed to make & which seems and finds that they had Choral Endiant (with common!) By the time it was over I was longing for breakfast, but it was a delightful service and the choir (black men in white surplis, attractive coffee cabinet girls in surplis with quaker collars and maton bonnets, and little fair haired white boys in bright blue tunics with bay surplis and ruffs) was excellent. (P.S. & keep her)

I had been very worried about getting cold weather gear for the next leg of the trip, and we got very little at Maurice but I did manage to buy a U.S. Army blanket (100% virgin wool - what is a 100% virgin?) and the RACOC very hurriedly sorted up two gas capers which was very useful later.

I think that about sums up my activities in this happy place. I suppose I shall never go there again, ~~at least~~ I shall dearly love to!

By the time ~~before~~ the cyclone ~~necessity~~ that had gone, the crew was back, sail was aboard and stores embarked and we were all set. We sailed at 1015 on Monday morning and were escorted out of harbour by the Rivik main launch with Whately, Booth, Hugh Feilding, & CRO Williams and Booth took some excellent photographs of the ship. It was slow going at first and we were becalmed in the evening but later we got a breeze of the steady and pushed up a fine steady breeze.

April 24th.



Sailing from

April 24th.

We had another splendid wind of the strong Mauritanian mountains and lively colours, as we coasted down to the southward this first day, but the going was too slow, and we were glad when late in the evening the easterly wind came round the bottom of the island and pushed us on our way.

Mauritius — 24th April.



Chang on the saddle.

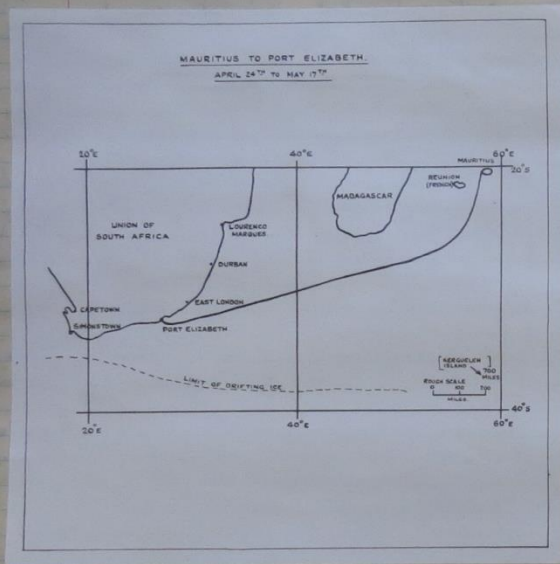
Food Affairs.

I find I have written virtually nothing whatsoever about the food business for some weeks — not that there is much to write that is of general interest. The food continued to be good and we were managing plenty of variety, Chang was requiring less and less guidance and never forget what he had been told. At first I found myself having to teach him a great deal, which was tiresome for us both and he could not understand how this could be for he had been in service for twenty years. It was not until much later that I found he had always been a home boy and had never done any cooking until he went to Loyang with Robin and had then picked it up as he went along.

I have written many details of stocks etc and some notes on food in small ships for Robin's book or possibly publication in the Yachting World or elsewhere, and have stuck a copy in at the end of this volume, so need not go in too much detail here.

There were a good many difficulties both on the planning (me) and the execution side (Chang), but there were I think entirely offset by the remarkably tolerant attitude of the others. Of course there were complaints from time to time, but they were very rare, far rarer than in a mess where (I had expected them to be a great deal more frequent), and were usually invariably directed at the planning rather than the execution. The main complaints were usually of my intolerance of suggestions, I found an intolerance which he was much more macho I find, than when I had done catering elsewhere, and which was also apparent as a strongly in Peter on rigging and navigation matters and in Dave on his sides of the house. Probably I suppose.

On the credit side the one thing which I think worth mentioning was the success of experiment. Again and again I thought of, Chang produced, and we all enjoyed, menus which I can describe as rather home were run. They were invariably simple, they had to be, but for instance how many people have eaten trips with great peas, carrots and rice (an attractive colour combination, so important in food, as well as being very good indeed), lamb, for bacon and boiled rice, sauced flying fish, kidney cooked with



white wine and Chinese dried
ordinary European things with Chinese sweet and sour
sauces, or *Alvocado* peas and tomato salad? And I wonder
how often American fried chicken has been eaten with
that wonderful Chinese mixture which I learnt from an
Phoenix Park cook. *gasp* powdered ginger root, chillie,
and garlic with fresh lime juice?

That reminds me of one other thing that should
be recorded here. When I went marketing in Mauritius I
bought six pounds of good looking *heavenly* artichokes
and when I brought them on board Chang sheathed with
laughter "what Tuan John wanchu buy six pounds
guige" —

April 25th - May 2nd

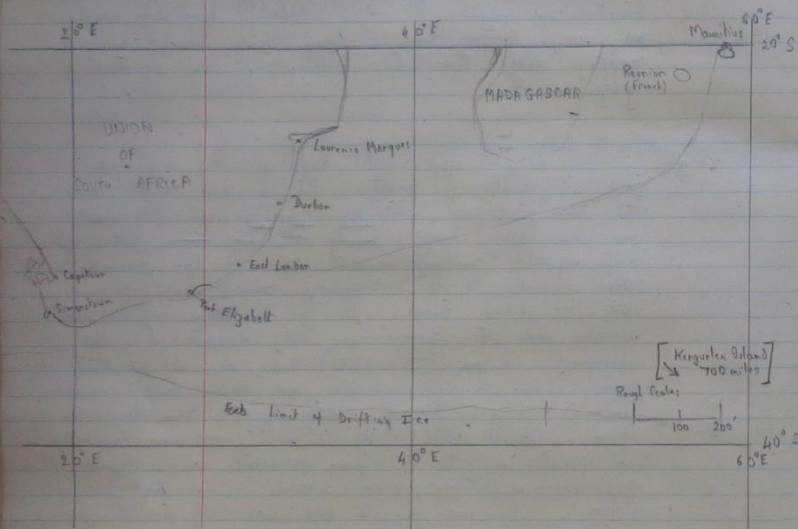
For the first eight days of this trip we
had a variety of weather, but the wind remained mainly
the east, though varying from ~~NE~~ ~~to~~ ~~SE~~ and from light
gale to strong breeze. ~~mostly~~ ~~to~~ ~~from~~ We
had expected southwesterly winds and for this reason
stood well to the southward after leaving Mauritius,
but they never came. The first three days we went along
shadily with the genns and heavy mainmast (as in the
photographs on pp 135-137) and we all had a
good chance to get ourselves ~~more~~ ~~more~~ ~~settled~~ in properly
and to do a lot of ~~little~~ chores. Then the trouble
began. On the night of the 27th/28th we were becalmed
in a lull with the heavy mainmast set, and an
old enemy 'slatting' began, worse I think than ever
before. The next day the wind was all over the place
and we were continuously shifting sails to try and cope
with it. Altogether we had thirteen sail movements up
to 6 p.m. and tempers got pretty short, and there was
a good deal of bickering both ~~between~~ ~~between~~ the crew
working forward and ~~back~~ ~~at~~ the tiller and among ourselves
as we ~~worked~~ ~~forward~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~sails~~, but ~~however~~ ~~the~~
~~difficult~~ ~~was~~ ~~we~~ ~~were~~ ~~back~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~heavy~~
main sail and genns and all appeared to be well.
But we went on for long. The wind dropped again
the slatting started, and in a few minutes both ~~main~~ ~~boom~~
booms snapped off at their forward end. We spent an
hour clearing away the debris and resetting the light
mainmast and once again called it a day. That evening
the weather was kind to us for an hour, it was
broke the air and the sea was warm and the light
moonlight shone and we ~~set~~ ~~our~~ ~~eyes~~ ~~at~~ ~~helped~~ ~~the~~
working lights to ~~keep~~ ~~standing~~ ~~up~~ ~~see~~ ~~across~~ ~~the~~ ~~trough~~ ~~of~~
gear on the deck

25th - 27th

27th/28th

28th

MAURITIUS TO PORT ELIZABETH

April 28th

We didn't stop to discuss the next step but all went off to bed when as soon as we had finished, all of us completely tired out.

I went on my journal — I was really very glad to see the last of them (the wishbones), for their horrible slatting almost hurt physically, and to see the manual billowing to windward again and again, ~~almost~~ viciously trying to break ~~the~~ ^{the} booms gave rise to agonies of apprehension. I went on — "One basic thing about the wishbone gear that was involved was that Robin designed the hull expressly for to reach and run well, but not to go to windward," yet he fitted this patent gear for windward work — ~~the~~ ^{the} wishbones. But this was all very well, we couldn't get far with only a light cotton manual.

The next day was perfect, just like the Muskegan in the late spring, and though we made little progress it gave us a chance to do a lot of work on the upper deck. We spent the whole forenoon clearing up the wreckage, while Dave cut up two of the wishbones and fitted an extension to the main boom so that we could use it instead of bamboos, with the light manual — now the only manual we had. There was a great discussion on what to do about the heavy main, and all the time the dunnies in full working order and for once not the culprit in the trouble, was ~~used~~ ^{used} ~~as the~~ ^{as the} ~~only~~ ^{only} ~~thing~~ ^{thing} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~do~~ ^{do} ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~gear~~ ^{gear} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~for~~ ^{for} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~soon~~ ^{soon} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~gear~~ ^{gear} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~obviously~~ ^{obviously} ~~checking~~ ^{checking} ~~quietly~~ ^{quietly} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~stuff~~ ^{stuff} ~~about~~ ^{about} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~bad~~ ^{bad} ~~behavior~~ ^{behavior} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~those~~ ^{those} ~~droopful~~ ^{droopful} ~~wishbones~~ ^{wishbones} —

This was the day I went a half pay — but we quite forgot this crew for a celebration! The only other notable event was that we heard the Cup Final from start to finish on the radio — a BBC relay from Salisbury (S.R.).

in the left
side of my
head and
left eye

Sometimes or another I caught a wretched 'dry' cold at this time and for the sake I was thoroughly miserable with it ^{together with} eight cuts and bumps on my hands which continued to hurt and would not heal. It was the only time during the voyage (so far — Aug 4th) that I have been run down so ^{there} ^{was} ^{nothing} ^{anxiety} ^{to} ^{complain} ^{of} but I felt wretched — and my journal certainly reflects it!

April 30th.

I had occasional outbreaks in my journal, mainly to relate my feelings, and which it would be profitable to report to the committee on our triple control of sailing, rigging and construction affairs. Many times I am certain that we should have achieved a better or a quicker answer if either Robin, Peter or James had made the decision, each in his own sphere, and the other two had abided by it, but in this matter of the heavy mainsail the committee did produce a first class answer.

Briefly, they decided to sew the three parts of each of the heavy main sail in to one, and to fit 2 full length battens through the whole width of the sail with some sort of roller fitting (this was not decided in detail at first) ~~at the~~ at the forward end of each batten to run on the jacking. Peter undertook to ~~cut~~ saw up the heavy mainsail in 14 ft. strips and make it for three days, while James made a splendid pair of battens from urethane staves. The sail was ready for hoisting by the 4th but we did not get an opportunity to try it until the 7th. Unluckily when we were rigging it Peter slipped the end of one of the new battens over the bow and it broke off inside the pressure of the water, so we had to resort to use a bamboo, but even so the new arrangement was a great success. The sail looked thoroughly workmanlike and strong - above all it looked as if we could be confident of its performance. It was all most encouraging.

April 30th - May 2nd

The weather was still very variable these three days though the wind remained easterly and helped us at least did not hinder us. We had to do a lot of sail shifting and were working for every mile we made. In the evening of the 2nd the wind died altogether and after remaining dead in the water for two hours we gave up trying, hoisted the 1st (light) mainsail and lashed the tiller. It was very rarely that we have been able to go all together below and on this occasion on the other it was an excuse for a party. ~~and~~ Every one was in high spirits and we tackled a Daily Telegraph crossword & ~~then~~ picked up ~~the~~ ~~rest~~ ~~of~~ and made hay of it then all turned in, Robin on the upper deck in case the wind came back. We had picked up a number of old Daily Telegraphs in Mauritius (I got them from a French bookshop) and

May 4th
7th

The Radio Telegraph with their crosswires and (albeit slow) news were ^{a great boon} ~~very~~ ^{popular}. We played no more Julland, and crosswires became the staple spare time occupation for the rest of the voyage. Sometimes the watchkeeper could join in fully, but when the weather was bad he would be too busy as an occasional difficult job as a bow to wavy and heep him occupied.

By this time we were once again hungry for news of the great world too, we had really got very out of touch, and we devoured the news columns, and especially the reports of the election.

We saw our first albatross early in the morning of the 2nd, a very long way from its home at Kerguelen but one usually picks them up about this latitude. From this time until we reached the same latitude on the other side of Africa we were rarely without one or two of them swooping and wheeling about the ship in that wonderful effortless flight that puts all man made flying machines to shame.

This first one suffered a very serious indignity his first afternoon with us. Chang came to sit on the upper deck after lunch and seeing him cruise out in plenty more big ducks, ten pound fatter fatter and the albatross uttering really appalling language which I am sorry I could not understand flew away for some hours.

I saw a most odd fish that same night. It was about the size and shape of a sole, quite white, and floating on the top of the water, and as we came up to it it suddenly spat at me a little squirt of water which came higher than the cockpit rail. None of the other believe a word of this and Bobi maintains I went to sleep or watch and dream it.

May 20 - 14th

Between the 3rd and the 14th we obviously ran in to two or maybe even three disturbances of some sort or another and we made grand progress. The wind was mostly from the eastward but it went round quite regularly, starting in the South west in the morning of the 14th, and making altogether one and a half complete circles.



Janne mending the boom
once again! - 5th May.



May 2^d.

4th.

5th-6th

7th.

This weather was headed by a shower which sent Robin below on the night of the 2^d/3^d. Then a south westerly which sprang up early in the morning (of the 2^d) and later backed to south and south east and drove us along splendidly. Kate still it went on round to the east and although there a rather unpleasant lull came with it we were still going very well indeed all this day and the next going until the evening. Then, without warning and with no apparent reason it suddenly shifted nearly 90 degrees, gybed the ship and broke the boom against the weather vane. I was on watch and at first (as I wrote before we arrived at Mauvies) I was not happy at my ability to handle the ship in difficult conditions. I was furious at myself for letting it happen. Then I remembered that as we started to gybe I called out to Robin to come up. In a flash we were gybing - he came straight up, and as he went forward he called out something about the boom. I looked at the compass and already I had got round nearly 90 degrees and was only just starting to cure the gybe. The whole thing took I suppose forty seconds so I began to realize that I had done the right thing - and done it about as quickly as could be.

We changed the boom for two bamboos (one that Pete had won at bridge in Mahi) lashed together, but decided that it was really blowing too hard for the light mainmast (still all we had) and went on withed under the large working jib alone until the next morning, making just under four knots through the night.

We set the upper section of the heavy white mainmast after breakfast and went quite well, but of course this was not enough to take us along fast unless it blew really hard, nor was it big enough to hold the ship steady and she went on rolling like a very old cow. We stayed under this rig until the morning of the 7th, by which time the wind had backed round to south and completed its first circle. It was still quite warm by day and there was plenty of sunshine but as soon as the sun set it seemed (to us with our thin flannel) to get very chilly, nor was the night improved by the heavy thunder storms and rain which occurred at this time.

This was always one or two albatross round us now and when one was at the tiller this was often nothing else to look at in the whole expanse of sea and sky. Sometimes they would sit on the water right in the track of the ship, gazing and sleepy, until we were nearly on top of them. Then they would be a lot of albatross had language and a terrific flurry of paddling legs and flapping wings as they made their long take off run. It was when Robin had watched several of these very close that he suddenly reached the true explanation of how the Dodo (of which we had ^{never} had a lot in Mauritius) was ^{actually} as it lived only there) looked ~~at~~ Obviously, he said, and I surely agree with him, a remote ancestor of this great fat water object was an albatross which decided that the rigours of life at sea, mostly in the roaring gales of the southern ocean, held no attraction for him. So he took his wife to settle in the most beautiful land he knew, and they founded a family which lived ~~happily~~ more and more happily as it got more and more degenerate until at last it was so degenerate and ~~unhappy~~ (and happy) that it died away.

May 7th
8th

We set the light main sail and gaff on the morning of the 7th and went well until the next afternoon, but we were expecting heavier weather as we got more and more to the southward. So when Peter had ~~finished~~ completed the work on the red heavy main sail, sewing the pieces together and fitting ballon pockets we hoisted it - I note in my journal "it really looks extremely good and should do us good".
And it did!

It was on the eighth that we finally decided that we must give Durban a miss and make for the Cape, possibly for Swinerton, but prepared to call at East London or Port Elizabeth if shelter of necessity. We had already passed the latitude of Durban, we were well on in those ~~latitude~~ parts of the world that we had hoped to be, and we were all (unhappily as it turned out) very apprehensive of rounding the Cape so late in the winter. Also the