**Ireland – Brazil**

Feb ’90. Spring is just around the corner and my thoughts once again turn towards the ocean, my neighbour Tony O’Mara’s offer to supply a boat last September four months have passed since my boat had to be abandoned in the South Atlantic and the trauma associated with it. For me to be without a boat is like a crab when it loses its shell and I have decided to see Tony. I met him a few days later and said if your offer of a boat still stands I am ready to take off again “come & see me tonight” he said and let me know what it will cost. This was the tricky part if I asked too little there would be a problem for me and if too much would the deal fall through? I figured out I would get a decent boat for €17,000 but said that as I was so well known now that I should have little difficulty in getting sponsorship for the equipment. I thanked him and when I closed my hall door I let out a loud “yee haw”.

Yachting magazines were scanned and I shortlisted 10 boats that I thought suitable all in the U.K with the exception of 1 in Holland. So after writing and studying inventories etc. sent by the owners and already having looked at boats in Ireland I took the ferry and bus to London. Essentially I was seeking a ketch and as speed was not now in my 3 requirements for ocean voyaging seaworthiness, sail handling and comfort were which a ketch provides with its split rig and centre cockpit. The boat in Holland was a “Seadog” class ketch a sister ship of which I had examined in Dublin for sale at 29,000 pounds. The Holland boat was advertised at 16,000 pounds. Her owner an English novelist Sam Llewellyn had used her for researching a novel and had left her there for sale with air fare refunded to buyer. These “Seadog” class has an owners association and I had taken on of their annual publications from the Dublin one while examining her. Many of the boats I looked at in the south of England were not up to scratch so I decided to phone Peter French the Seadog Association Hon Sec and asked him would it be worth my while travelling to Holland to view her. He turned out to be a most kind and helpful man and assured me that the boat would be first class. To fly I did not. I swam or in other words took trains and a ferry. To this day the train from the Hook of Holland up through Holland to the Zuider Zee or Lssezmeer as it is now called is still clear in my mind as it passed through acres of patchwork quilts of tulips of beautiful colours. The Boar “Loon” was lying at the South end of the Zuider Zee.

### As arranged with Sam Llewellyn I got the key of “Loon” from the harbour master at the marina and spent a day examining her to my satisfaction. I phoned both Llewellyn and O’Mara advising “Boat Ok” and booked into a B&B as I could not use the boat until the deal was clinched. As I said in a previous chapter I had lost “All my Floating Assets” when I lost my boat off Cape Town and as one is not earning either voyaging or preparing I was living off my credit cards. I had built up my credit on these cards to €2,400 so that would see me ok until I could arrange sponsorship. In the meantime I arranged for a wind pilot self-steering system to be sent overland from Hamburg in Germany and visited Amsterdam and its ships chandlers where I purchased wet gear, boots, charts and a navigation system and a life raft etc. Some of my friends in Ireland had offered to help me bring the boat back if I bought it so I contacted them through my wife Nancy. After a week without any news from either buyer or seller the Harbour Master said I was wanted on the phone, it was Sam Llewellyn who said “O’Mara was giving him the run around and that if he did not hear from him before noon on the next day the deal was off”. I later learned that Tony when Sam first rang him asked what is the lowest you will take and Sam dropped a bit whereupon Tony been a car dealer continued haggling. Nance again contacted Tony for me as he is not always available and phone calls are expensive for a sea hippie as she calls me. One funny incident occurred in Amsterdam which was only 16.k.m for “Loon” in Maiden. By Accident one day at noon with my backpack I took the wrong side of a canal while footing it to a Chandlery. Eventually Sam rang to say I could take up residence in “Loon” which was nice for me and said he was sending me a cheque for my air fare he said he said also that if he was buying a new boat he would get O’Mara to buy it for him and wished that I would enjoy her as much as he did. Dutch people were very nice to me and the few evenings I went to a pub where they play billiards on a table without pockets I was well received. Maiden is a medium sized town full of tourists visiting mainly a large medieval castle at the canal mouth. My 3 friends, Manfred a German settled in Ireland and the only man I have ever seen eating a salami like a banana and Seanos and John arrived by plane into Schiphol Airport at dusk. We naturally celebrated Manfred saying that whenever he was on the Continent he felt at home. They had only a week’s holiday so we cast off next morning crossing the Zuider Zee to Amsterdam and its North Sea canal which links it to the North Sea. Early the following morning we looked into the North Sea and made Newport that evening. On the following evening we tied up at Zeebrugge a sad place to be after the notorious ferry disaster. Our intention was to make a French port before the channel crossing but we met foggy weather instead and picked over way down channel and using the traffic separation buoys for shipping along with the chart until we headed for the S.E. coast of England where fortunately the fog lifted some 3.N.M off the unmistakable white cliffs of Dover we pulled into Folkestone leaving It the following morning we did an overnight trip to Dartmouth where my pals had to leave. I went up the river in Dartmouth as the Marina then cost €10 per night and anchored and dried cut and fitted the self-steering delivered to me in Holland even anchored I was charged 2.50 per night. After a strong S.E. gale had blown itself out. I got a good forecast for the next few days and left Dartmouth at dusk and after a dry night I approached Kinsale in Co.Cork in a thick mist which did not make life easy but I picked up the natural gas rig 2.5n.m off the Co.Cork coast which was a great help

Two of my crew who live in Limerick arrived on the Friday evening after the Whit Weekend and we departed early on the following morning to bring “Loon” back to Limerick which we did via Sheep haven a lovely mini fiord in west cork and Valencia Co. Kerry which we entered via the Portmagee Channel and departed via the N.W. entrance and having the bridge to the Island lifted for us. Carrigaholt was made that evening mostly moto-sailing where my crew again left for work. So now the real preparations for the circum navigation began. I had 3 months left before my departure date at the end of August so that my arrival this time in Cape Town would be in the summer months.

I sailed to Limerick where I dropped the masts before my ascent to Killaloe in Lough Dreg via the Ard Na Crush hydro electrical dam with its two fifty foot locks where Brian & Eleanor Cullen had offered me the facilities of their Dreg Marina in Ballina. “Preparation is the essence of success” or so I thought as you will see later, so I set about it with lists of work on the boat, gear, stores, engine spares etc., which were filling pages and nothing delighted me more than ticking them off when finished. I fitted new stainless steel standing rigging as the galvanized and crimped ones were as old as the boat: 20 years and rigging owes you little after that. The one piece of navigational equipment I could not get as a radar alarm which I had on Iniscealtrh and it was invaluable and alarmed when a ships scanner if in operation appeared over the horizon, Locata had made it and it was only great for €200.I.R using minimal power.

I also fitted twin forestays and order twin spinnaker poles as I am a great believer in running with either twin working jibs or genoas as it puts little or no strain on the self- steering so I had now a spare spinnaker pole as one had come with the boat, I had lost one off Iniscealtras off the Cape Verdes Islands, twin headsails also lift a boat due to the angle to the wind unlike a mainsail which pushes the bow down before vertical and assists breaching.

A storm jib and mizzen and working staysail w/jib were bought and the mizzen staysail proved itself in light winds when the mainsail and boom would be slatting as the boat rolled in swells. Along with the light genoa this rig sometimes with the mizzen carried me many, many miles. I swapped the Decca Satellite Nav system for a global positioning satellite navigation which gives the boats position worldwide or is supposed to for as you will see in later chapters it gave me endless problems. I hate saying this as normally these instruments are first class, modern state of the art pieces of modern technology; I suspect the one I got as not new. Anyway that is life and as you shall see later it was one hell of a big disappointment sponsor’s came out of the woodwork fortunately and I had no problem there which was great. I recall in ’86 when I bought “Iniscealtra” which I sold my shirt to do. To sail the Atlantic one of my support committee of 6 Charlie (Gybe) McDonnell who was in charge of sponsorship and my Nav tutor said at one of our weekly meetings “Call into Plunkett Hayes” the sheriff for Limerick & Clare I was golfing with him in Lahinch last weekend and I boned him for a €100, this was awkward for me and the only time I ever had to walk in with my hand out as it normally came via the committee or by post, but I did. Plunkett wished me well and shook my hand and gave me the cheque. Thank you Plunkett.

That same year after flying back from Boston I met a guy in a Limerick Pub and he said “I know you” I work in Plunkett’s office and after you left he came out and said “I have just been conned out of a €100 by some fucking lunatic who is sailing the Atlantic”. A lot of people must have said the same then and maybe still do but I was unknown then so now sponsors aware of me and of my loss of all my floating assets were more sympathetic and helpful. As I said one is not earning while either preparing or voyaging and unless you have the lolly one needs good friends. In that I was fortunate especially so the Tony O’Mara for without him I would have been boat-less and up that shitty creek. So the 101 jobs were been whittled down and after antifouling and launching I was ready to go down to the sea again.

I motored to Foynes 20.n.m downstream from Limerick with the masts on deck where with the assistance of two tub boat crews my son John been one of them we hoisted the masts, so now at last boat and man were ready. The boat been young at 21 and I also been young at 64 to face the waters and the wild.

I decided to leave from Cappa Pier some twenty n.m from the mouth of the Shannon, the port for Kilrush, Co.Clare where one of my main sponsors Kilrush Creek Marina was completing the Marina. A fellow sailor of many years and a good friend Brendan Trave was administrator of it and the evening before my departure I was given a reception by Brendan for family and friends and Kilrush Urban Council Members at the Galleon in Cappa to see me off.

**Sunday the 26th August at 1300.H**

After kissing my wife and daughter on Cappa Pier, Dan Ryan rowed me out to “Loon” and I hoisted the anchor for another epic voyage. Many sailing boats escorted me as I sailed away leaving eventually only Manfred my buero amigo in Korsika 11. They came alongside at one stage and handed me a hot meal which I enjoyed. Manfred as I said before was a great man for the grub “A True Friend”. We parted off Carrigaholt about 11.N.M. downstream from Cappa and I waved and kept tracking out for the mouth of the Shannon.

Off the coast I stowed the anchor on deck and that evening at 2300.H I was abeam of Inistearaght the most westerly of the Blasket Islands, the most westerly point of Europe. Eventually its light stopped blinking and that was my last sight of home.

The following day at noon I had to reef the main to a w’y F.6-7 which climbed to f.7-8 for some hours and I had to drop the jib. The barometer was reading 998.mb and falling. At 2000 the wind eased and swung S.W and I tacked and by the following morning at 0700.H it had veered N.W and eased to F.5 with the seas moderating and the barometer 1005.m.b with the odd rain squall. We are nearly off the Continental Shelf and with the wind abeam we are going well.

It takes me around 5 days usually to adjust to sea life and the rocking and rolling and cooking and eating at an angle. So if one gets reasonable weather and sea conditions it is a bonus and your system adjusts easily, not so this time I am afraid and I only pick at food every so often.

Wednesday and the sun comes out after two days of mist and showers so life is good and I have my first full breakfast. Saturday sees us under poled genoa and w/jib to an n/y F.5 and on Sunday I got my first message home via a yank an exceptionally nice man. So we continued with mainly N.W & N.E winds light in strength to a position 300.N.W. of Madeira and midway between Lisbon and Santa Maria the most E/Y of the Azores Archipelagos and the 8th September or Day 12. Approx. 1200.N.M. and not bad where another ship gave us a position report and promised to relay a message to home.

The sat/nav since departing had given no reading and I am to blame myself for not having checked it as I went downstream from Killaloe to Cappa. At the moment there was no hassle as I was not near land and I knew I would meet ships which would give me a position although I always asked them to confirm my position also dr. or dead reckoning and n.m travelled and your compass course is reasonably accurate but not for weeks on end. I had a sextant which I had used for the trips to Newport and back, back I had not brought an Admiralty Nautical Almanac which is needed for the daily declination of the Sun for a noon sextant sight, What am I? Don’t say it.

Like the stubborn mule I am I kept going assuming that the G.P.S. (Global Positioning by Satellite) would sort itself out.

**9th September. Day 13.**

After a day of heavy rain and under shortened sail we had to drop the lot and lie ahull overnight to the E/Y gale with much lightening but by 0830.H the following morning we were underway with full main and w/jib to a N/Y F.5.

**Tuesday 11th September. Day 15.**

120N.M to clear Madeira to Port.

**Wednesday.**

Ship and position.

**Friday.**

Ship-message home and position by a tanker. 1.330 nautical miles to date

**Saturday 15th September.**

Position. Name of ship “Churchilll” English of course. Many ships now as we are abeam of the Straits of Gibralter. Another ship, altered course to have a look at me, Russian, No English but wished me Bon Voyage.

Monday. Palma is the most N/W Island of the Canaries, to port. 730nm now to the Cape Verdes Islands.

**Wednesday 19th September. Day 23.**

At 1400.h I took down the genoa after flying it for 130.h or over 5 days.

**Saturday 22nd September. Day 26.**

Good progress and wind steadying at N.E. are we in the Trades? Estimate Cape Verdes 240nm distance.

**Monday 23rd September. Day 27.**

Another ship position only. Twin w/jibs up now for 73 hours.

**Tuesday 25th September. Day 29.**

Twins up now 94 hours or 4 days defiantly in the Trades. How those well found wool and grain clippers must have romped in these conditions.

**Wednesday 26th September. Day 30.**

A miracle, the Sat Nav gives us a fix and it tallies with our D.R. position so that is ok. The last fix it gave was on the 1st of September. Sun every day now with barometer steady around 1016 MB huge temperature.

**Saturday 29th September.**

Giant Liberian Ship heading north, message home. Seas very boisterous now with constant N/E winds and we roll a lot as we go down wind. The old sea shanty line “Rolling down to Rio”,

**Wednesday 3rd October.**

We are approaching the area of the Doldrums, from July to Sept they are in about Latitude 150’N off the African Coast and 10’N off the S/A coast. The Cape Verdes which are well inside the Trades in winter are just on the N’edge of the Doldrums in summer.

The N.E. Trades stretch South and S.W of the Canaries as far as the Doldrums. The winds are steady in direction and speed averaging 10-12 knots in the norther part the winds tend to be more North than East and in the southern more E’ than N’ along the N’ edge of the Doldrums the wind is E/Y the winds and weather of the N/E Trades is seldom troublesome and alters little from summer to winter. The Rainfall is small and gales uncommon. The doldrums are varies between seasons and are located between 10’-15’N. winds are usually light and variable which gives one plenty to do trimming and changing sales. But squalls which reach gale force occasionally and thunder are a regular feature but seldom last long. Thunder as I found out is worse at night and worse on the African side than the Americans.

We had the Cape Verdes abeam last Friday the 25th September. The heat is increasing 90’f in cabin today.

This afternoon as we were reaching to an E.S.E wind under genoa and main the cabin darkened and I sprang out naked into heavy rain and before I could drop the genoa the water was white with a gale force winds and the genoa pulled the wire out of its sleeve for 15.feet and before you could say Jack Robinson or so I thought it was crazy again. After that experience I was more than careful but only met one more of those vicious squalls when I had the furling genoa set and it being the old type it worked on swivels and difficult to furl at times especially in strong winds. I only got 2/3rds of it furled when it jammed and I had the devils won time of it securing it by lashing as it flogged every which way.

These squalls only it me during daylight hours and left very confused seas after them funnily enough I met the squalls within 3 days of each other and I was in the Doldrums this time for three weeks. Previously I only took 7 days to clear this trick area in “Iniscealtra” they say there are gates in the Doldrums that let you slip through them and one can be lucky. The engine which I used in the many calms was tedious in the near equatorial heat and I found that using a compass course hand steering was very tiring. 4 hours was the longest I could stick it and as I wasn’t in a race I did not push it.

On one of those 4 hour stints in my tropical clothes my light pyjamas and hat and socks for insteps the back of my hands blistered. Since then I have got wise and always rigged a canopy over the cockpit which also lets a breeze filter through. So after much sail changing with winds of many directions and Monsoon type rain accompanied by lightning and many thunder clouds on the horizon that played “Molly Bawn” with whatever wind I had, we cleared the Doldrums at N3’ O7’, W.15’33 according to my Sat Nav which agreed with my D.R. on the 31st October. Two ships gave me positions while in the Doldrums, one on the 5th September which confirmed that message was received and Portishead Radio and sent to Ireland. That was nice for me to know that my family, friends and supporters knew I was “ok” and making the miles. I also got a position on the 26th October from a very rusty Korean fishing boat of 5’36N, 16’ 42’W so 300,000 NM off the African coast between Freetown in Sierra Leone and Monrovia in Liberia. If you look up your Atlas or my track you will see that we had come around the N.W. bulge of Africa towards the Bay of Guinea this the route of the old sailing ships and as the Atlantic Ocean is at its narrowest here between Cape St. Roque Brazil and Sierra Leona and with its strong west bound Equatorial currents one could be carried N’ of Cape St. Roque with its outlying Islands extending some 250.dim offshore which are new and dangerous. Also there are the St.Peter & St.Paul rocks some 1/3 of the way across from Brazil.

The S.E. Trades are forward of the Port beam on the course to the Islands of Trinidad and Martin Vaz, some 600,000.nm off the Brazilian coast, and 1,800 n.m distant and I found them tougher that the N.E. trade which were on my tail. Now there was wind forces of between 5 and 6 and on one occasion force 7 with many rain squalls and showers and the odd severe lighting storm.

**Friday 16th November Day 80.**

My transistor picked up faintly some Brazilian static. I was now 16 days without getting a fix on the Sat Nav and not having sighted a ship I estimate my position and d.r at some 250,000 N.M. off the Brazil Port of Porto Seavro. The Brazilian current which was now assisting us south and runs at up to 3.kn decided me on moving towards the coast. Sailing when you know where you are is fine but sailing blind in a large ocean is defiantly not all nice. No signpost as far as the coast was concerned. My transistor would give me a fair idea and its volume as I approached it, but Portuguese which is spoken throughout Brazil would be of no help in identifying my position.

**Friday 23rd November. Day 87.**

My transistor on high volume now gave many stations to the East. At 1130.h I sighted a ship who answered me on the V.H.F. Radio a’35 which gave me a position 18’43’S – 37’35’W which on my chart showed us 145.nm off Caraveelas Port they declined to send a message. My chart of the South Atlantic Ocean would not give me any details for entering the many harbours in Brazil and as the chart showed many islands dotted off this area I decided to head S.W. for Vittoria which I knew to be a large Port by the coast was clear. We had now lost the S.E. Trades and were getting mainly N.E. winds as generally winds follow Ocean currents with the odd south & S.E which I assumed to be extensions of the S.E. Trades.

As I said previously I remember speaking in Dublin one time to Captain Eric Healy when he was the skipper of the “Ascard” Ireland’s national sail training vessel and I said to him those old voyagers who sailed away into uncharted waters on voyages of discovery were great men and he said “They were the lucky ones” how true so I hoped I would also be lucky, it only takes one rock to finish a voyage and also a life.

**Day 90. 26th November.**

A polish ship -19’20.S-38’45’W which put us 75.nm offshore in clear water at 1330.h. my chart showed a port name Portccel approximately 50.nm 5’ so I headed for it allowing for the Brazilian current. We were reaching under full main and working jib and that evening the N’Y wind freshened and I put a reef in the MWN and then a second one, mainly to avoid a land fall in darkness. At 0200.h I set my alarm clock for every hour and at 0600.h rose to the alarm and heard what I took to be a jet plane until I discovered it was surf breaking on a beach. I will never know how near I was to going aground as the echo sounder was the last thing on my mind. I put on the engine and vamoosed out to sea pronto and skirted the coast, the outline of which I could now see in the pre-dawn light. With daylight I could see a low coastline of sand hills and palm trees and surf rolling up on miles of sandy shore with a clear sky and brilliant sunshine. It was a beautiful sight after 91 days at sea. The colours of the land especially, mostly greens and my first introduction to the Tropics. The sea had many different and beautiful colours as it deepened from the shore, a sight to behold after so many days of blacks and greys.

No sign of habitation as I continued South and after rounding a low sandy point with a large lighthouse I could see signs of what I took to be a town or city with a couple of smoke stacks. I don’t know why but I assumed the Portocel to have a river. Going between the offshore Port and starboard buoys I entered the Port between two long mole arms inside which was a large Quay and a huge industrial complex. After tying up at the quay with help of two dark skinned men I was taken to an office where a pretty secretary who spoke English told me through her boss I was at the largest Wood Pulp Factory in the World and the Harbour was man made especially for the export of wood pulp. A nice man who got someone to bring me to the canteen where I had fresh milk and a nice meal. There was no town or river only a giant industrial area, some 5m from the area the workers lived which had been built to house them. Two of the staff who befriended me were keen on sailing. Eduardo & Edmundo and brought me fruit and fresh milk, bread & butter and veg on the following day. Wherever I have travelled I met only nice friendly people with the same interests as myself except Panama I am sorry to say and also Ecuador. The workers there who manned the line boat for shipping took me to where they kept their boat, inside the hole where I could haul “Loon” in and hop ashore not that there was much to go ashore for except to walk which was nice.

Vittoria Port some 60.nm south is a big city with a Yacht Marina but I was slow to head for it after 91days at sea, depending on meeting the odd ship for my position. Also the near loss of my boat on the shore had taken its toll and I was hesitant to put to sea again, in fact I found I did not want to. Until 5 days after I arrived and a ship entered the harbour and when the customs men who arrived to check her found out I was there I was asked to report at the checkout office where I was grilled and then through a stevedore who spoke English they said I could not stay there as it was not a port of entry and that I was to be gone by 0600.h the following morning or I would be put in jail I refused saying that I wanted to rest after so many days at sea and needed another 3-4 days in fact I found that I was nervous to go to sea again after sailing nearly blind for so long. All this took over an hour and I even asked for an Irish Consul or whatever. I told them I would go to jail and left it at that and I returned to “Loon” and packed a holdall with clothes, books, cigs etc. for my jail stay.

The following morning at 0600.h I saw two men coming out the mole and I said this is it, but they were only workers. At 100.h Eduardo called and told me that the Boss Man of the Plant had got onto a friend with the Police and had got me an extension of 4 days, but that I could not leave the plant, he also told me that I was lucky, he said “Have you ever seen a Brazilian jail” I expected their jails to be akin to ours where I believe one can play pool etc. He said no and that I was very lucky.

The captain of the ship who had heard of me sent word to come aboard that evening for dinner. He was Swedish and a most kind man and after dining with him and the ships agent, a Scot and an ex Sea Captain from Vittoria he told me to bring my dirty clothes the next day and he would have them washed for me. When I arrived next day he had a chart of Vittoria Harbour. During another nice meal the ships agent marked in the Yacht Marina on the chart. I have found in my voyages that sailors whether on large boats of small on land or on the sea were always kind and helpful to me. At sea when I spoke to ships on the radio they often asked was I ok for food and water. There is a brotherhood of the sea.

I recall one early morning coming down the North Atlantic and I spotted what I took to be an iceberg lit up and the now sun on the western horizon and I said it cannot be, not down here, it turned out to be the white bridge of a giant tanker. When I contacted them they said where are you and when I told them the skipper came on and we chatted. When he heard I was solo and 40 days out of Ireland he said by Christ that is what you call seamanship, I did not tell him that until I met him that I did not know my position.

At 0600.h on the morning after my 4 days of grace I departed Pertocell and motor sailed in light winds to Vittoria where off the harbour I saw a pilot boat approach whose skipper told me to follow him, so I was piloted to the Marina and as we entered it I could hear the pilot’s wolf whistle on the V.H.F. radio. The pilot boat was at the request of the ships agent. T.V. cameras were awaiting me as it was the bi centenary of the discovery of Brazil and a Portuguese who found it by accident as they thought I did. Portuguese speaking Brazil must be one of the few South American countries that does not speak Spanish.

My neighbour at the marina was a New Zealander and a mining engineer who worked in the Amazonian rain forest for 6 months of the year, he was married to a lovely Amazonian lady and together they had bought a boat in England and sailed it down. He had an apartment in Vittoria and they invited me to spend the night with them which I enjoyed as it was my first night in a house in 3 months. After a lover breakfast of bacon, sausages and eggs my friend took me to Immigration where I met the same dark skinned man who wanted me to leave Portocell. He spoke through Robin and told me that if he left me stay there his job was on the line. He also told me that being white I would stand out like a sore thumb. There are 3 types of police he said he was a Federal and the others were the Military and the traffic police and that if any of them approached me and said military and the traffic police and that if any of them approached me and said give me €50 or you go to jail show them this and he gave me a card with his status and photo on it. A nice introduction to Brazil would you say which put me off it straight away.

The Yacht Club had a high security fence with an armed guard at its gate and I seldom left it, only going to the supermarket or else out with Robin and his wife. The ships agent and his wife took me out one evening to a nice hotel for a meal and I recall an Irish girl Mairead Collins from Castletroy in Limerick calling one day inviting me to a hacienda in the mountains where she was holidaying, but in the meantime my two sailing friends from the plant in Portocell called and Eduardo invited me to his house in the estate especially built to house the workers where I spent a week with his family and two lovely young daughters who were learning English at school. Their Mum shoes Dad was Italian had good English so I had no problem there.

It was now approaching Xmas and I had already decided to get an Irish crew to sail the boat home and fly back. No more than the trauma of losing my boat off Cape Town and being taken aboard a ship, I had now no wish to continue the voyage.

Arranging with the Yacht Club to leave “Loon” there until the delivery crew arrived; I got Eduardo whose wife arranged my flights and tickets to bring me to the local airport where I got a flight to Rio, where I was told not to leave the Airport as it was dangerous.

So much for Brazil, I can’t say I liked it or its way of life and its corrupt ways but I also met very nice people there as indeed I met in any county I visited especially at Sailing Clubs where people there have much in common. The Yacht Club in Vittoria was more of a social club with high powered day boats for water ski-in and flying around the beaches.

Arriving in Shannon on Xmas eve from Heathrow in London I was met by my family, friends and loyal supporters.

Having already told them and phone from Brazil that I was calling a halt to the voyage saying that the heat in the Doldrums had run me down and also the failure of my sat/nav they accepted this but I felt guilty at letting my sponsors and supporters down. How was I going to tell them that through my stupidly neglecting to bring a Nautical Almanac the whole voyage was sacrificed I didn’t and until they read this they will know. They had believed in me and I had let them down.

Now looking back I don’t mind as time heals all wounds, it is not too bad after losing a boat due to storm damage but to pack in another attempt with Mickey Mouse excuses was another.

But as you will read my third attempt paid off and made up for the bad days.