**Atlantic return 1987**

Bay Yacht Sales, the brokerage firm in Newport, advised, when I rang them in December/January, 86/87, that a few clients had looked at "Iniscealtra". By this time I was beginning to get the ocean lust again.

Sometime in January, I decided to sail "Iniscealtra" back to the Shannon, Ireland. Again, Nance and the family gave me their full support.

There is no doubt but that there is a 'bug' called "Sea Fever". You are cured for a while only and then it recurs.

The dangers of an ocean voyage are always there and maybe that is the secret of it; I do not know. What I did know was the beauty, freedom happiness and immensity of it which I love. The bad days and nights are soon forgotten when the sun shines again.

Preparation, to me, is as satisfying as sailing. Planning the route, equipment and rigging is the next best thing to voyaging. There is excitement and satisfaction knowing that what you are doing will depend on the success of the voyage.

Money is always the number one problem and I would say it is the reason why more voyages are not undertaken. I had flown home in 1936 (August) on my credit card and I still owed the bank a balance on this, plus nearly £3,000, which was due to the life assurance company. From whom I had borrowed on my life policies. And, you are not earning whilst voyaging or preparing. This time I said it would be different, as having made it last year, people would realise I had a good idea of what I was about. The big problem, as I see it, is that unless you are ocean racing, in the eyes of the media, very few even, want to hear of you. It is not a spectator sport and as such does not bring in the readies. Also, I am sorry to say, Ireland as compared to England and France is not very maritime minded. Surrounded, as we are, by water, the percentage who take to the water, for pleasure, is low.

I wrote to Bill Mussel, my pal the harbor master, in Newport, and asked him to withdraw "Iniscealtra" from sale and if there would be any charges accruing. Shortly afterwards I received a nice letter from Lois, his wife. The boat was withdrawn from sale, without any charges and she invited me to stay with them until such time as I had the boat in the water, which was very nice of them. Bill and I had got on well from our first meeting and we have a lot in common. He deer hunts every fall in Maine.

The "Cliona", which left Galway Bay the day after I left the Shannon, May '86, had not made America. They met bad weather on the same route as I had taken and developed a leak. Through expert seamanship she survived and made it to Lisbon. Anyone who has sailed in these 40' traditional Hookers will agree that the spars are Viking like and resemble telephone poles.

Having read that she was sponsored by, among others, one of the national newspapers, I got in touch with one of the reporters, whom I had got to know since I hit Newport, having telephoned details of the voyage to them, on reverse charges from Newport and also from Shannon Airport, on my arrival.

To make a long story longer, as we say in Ireland, I travelled to Dublin to see the Features Editor. When he had looked at Helen's scrapbook and photographs, etc., he offered me £500 for an article and said he would put sponsorship to his board. A reporter took me to lunch and interviewed me for the article. The government, unfortunately, fell at this time and a general election took pride of place in the newspaper world. It was a pity as with £5,000 sponsorship my debts would have been cleared and my voyage expenses taken care of. What made it worse was that I had been strung along and when they finally said "no", it was too late to go elsewhere.

Our local newspaper, The Limerick Leader, who I had first approached and given them first option, for after all I was a Limerick man, came across with £1,000. Pan American Airways, through the good offices of two sailing friends who worked at Shannon Airport, gave me a first class sponsored flight to New York.

A list of work to be completed before trials amazed me, as did the estimated cost. Even though the equipment was there since the previous year, most of would need overhauling: - Sails, for instance, along with the V.E.F. and outboard engine; the kicking strap swivel r4 needed stainless steel welding, and the self steering needed to be freed-out, where the bearing had tightened. Both batteries would need recharging and checking and if I had known that I would be making the return voyage, I could have saved myself a lot of trouble.

Lectures and talks, with slides, brought in a few bob and kept me occupied at this stage. The old reliables, like Iniscealtra Sailing Club, individual members, relatives and friends and even neighbours and people I barely knew, were sending me good luck cards with donations.

Captain Eric Healy, of the National Sail Training Vessel, "Asgard IF,' had loaned me charts of the east coast of America, for my first voyage, as indeed had the Limerick Harbour Master, Captain Kevin Donnelly. They had both told me that the North Atlantic was like a large wheel, revolving clockwise, with constant wind and current directions. This is why the old sailing ships took the southern route to America and returned home directly on the top of the wheel, ably assisted by the Gulf Stream, with its prevailing south westerlies.

There are three recommended routes from America to Europe. The "Great Circle" is the shortest at 2,800 miles, but fog and icebergs, until the Grand Banks of Newfoundland are cleared, make this route hazardous, as do the trawlers seeking fish from the best fishing banks in the world.

The next shortest, and the one I planned to sail, is S.E. from Newport into the Gulf Stream, then to a position south of the Grand Banks and from there a great circle route to Ireland.

The third is mainly for boats going to the Mediterranean, by way of the Azores, which gives cruising boats warmer and better weather.

On the eve of my departure from Shannon Airport, a reception was hosted by my friends and supporters. It was a great success and when I left my pockets were bulging with good luck cards, cheques and dollars. The kindness of my friends, that evening, I will never forget.

The following day, at the airport, saw family and friends being hosted by Pan Am in their V.I.P. lounge, plus reporters, cameras, etc. For publicity purposes Pan Am had me photographed in the flight deck with the Boeing's skipper. Later, during flight, he welcomed Skipper Pat Lawless aboard and explained why I was travelling.

A neighbour, from the nearby Met Office, came over to wish me well and as we were heading for the departure gate, Jim Cordon and Johnny Green of Marine Rescue and Coordinator Centre, it was through them that I had facilities to send messages home by ships that I met. Jim, Jhonny and great friends then wished me bon voyage. It was all very heart stabbing.

For one who was not used to all this attention I took it all very calmly. An ocean crossing gives you great inner strength and I have found, since doing it, that very little would ever worry me on land again.

After a luxurious flight to New York and a pleasant train journey, by the shores of Long Island to Providence, Rhode Island, I got a bus to Newport, where Bill Meussel took me straight away to see "Iniscealtra". She had wintered well, in a large auto centre and plumbing supply complex. It was lovely to see her again with those long clean lines. She was immaculate underwater and the mussel-type shells, which the stern wave had deposited, above the waterline, were gone without a trace. Well done yanks.

I was very happy for the next week, sanding, masking, antifouling and boot topping. The weather was perfect and I cycled, with my backpack, both supplied by Bill, three miles to work and three back.

A few things which impressed me, at this stage, were that while Americans jog, they seldom walk or cycle - even kids. Most of the cars were Mercedes, Volvo and B.M.W. Bill and Lois Meussel each had a B.M.W.

Mayor Pat Kirby and his wife, Patsy, had me to dinner and took me to the musical Katz in Providence, which was terrific. One of the she Katz was in a flesh-coloured leotard. We are not used to this in Ireland, but it was nice. That night I confirmed I was a real sailor.

After launching at Fort Adams National Park slipway, I engined across the width of Newport Harbour to Storers Park Quay. It is situated at the start of the causeway to Goat Island. I can still feel the happiness I felt that day at being afloat in "Iniscealtra". I passed every kind and size of sailing boat, including a varnished hull Chinese Junk. "Iniscealtra" was one of the smallest boats in the harbor, for Newport is the centre of sailing in America.

A boat comes alive when put into the water and when I am on board a boat, I come alive also. It is hard to describe, but I feel happier, more competent and self sufficient. Also, the world is ones oyster with the freedom to roam anywhere in the world. That was my happiest day.

Through Mayor Kirby I got telex facilities at the U.S.Y.R.U. headquarters on Goat Island. This allowed me and Eddie McCarthy of the support committee to liaise. I had only to cycle across the causeway to collect fdx messages from home. One of them read:

***"Nance and family, the support committee, commodore and members of I.S.C. and other interested supporters, request confirmation that you and the boat are O.K. for voyage".***

Last year I was berthed at the same quay and met some of the B.O.C. entries, who were berthed there also and pre-paring for the race. This time, nearly a year later and 29,000 miles under their keels, they were approaching Newport.

Bar two or three, who arrived by night, I saw everyone of them finish. Bill Meussel would come alongside, in his Harbour Master's launch and say: "Hi: Pat, so and so is coming up the bay, hop aboard". I met all the B.O.C. Round the World Race sailors in this way. The Meussels threw a dinner party for themiand Mayor Kirby invited me to a Dinner Dance, in their honour, at the Sheraton Hotel on Goat Island. Robin Knox Johnson and I discovered we were both born on St. Patrick's Day. He was born in Northern Ireland in Co. Antrim.

Bill came alongside one day with Robin Knox aboard and said: "Would you like to come and watch a rowing race?". I enjoyed that day. Robin had a bottle of Scotch whiskey, which we drank by the neck; he toasting the south and I the north. Bill, who didn't partake, was really laughing that day. Later, we both adjourned to the Marina Pub, on Goat Island, and he introduced me to a lot of single-handers, who were preparing for the Bermuda Race. Luckily, the Mayor and Patsy arrived and took me to their house for a meal.

I cannot say enough in praise of American hospitality whilst preparing for my voyage - particularly the Meussels and the Kirbys.

In-between these social outings, I was very busy preparing the boat and gear. The sails which needed attention, I myself stitched. I rove a new spare jib halliard; greased jib hanks that had salted up; painted the windvane of the self-steering, with the national colours; stitched the spray hood and did a hundred-and-one other jobs.

Bill's son, Mike, who owned a marina, towed the "Iniscealtra", whose mast was now up, to his marina and fitted a new cable and checked out my V.H.F. radio and did a lot of other work, free of charge.

The biggest expense; apart from launching and food, was the self steering overhaul, which cost me $180 It was money I have well spent and I cannot sing highly enough the praises for it.

Anti-fouling, paint and some tools for the journey, did not amount to much. Mary Hughes, the mother of John, who was dismasted approaching Cape Horn in the "John Young", during the B.O.C. race and sailed to the Falkland Islands under jury rig, very kindly gave me four cartons of provisions. His boat was being wintered in Newport and they were cleaning it out.

The final week in Newport I was taken to the port of Mystic, Connecticut, by a couple who happened to just stop and talk where I was berthed.

A complete book would be needed to describe Mystic. It must be the finest maritime museum, of its kind, in the world. Between the waterfront and village it covered 17 acres. Whaling and fishing boats, cooperage, lobster and salmon shacks, rigging and sail lofts are only a few of its attractions. It is like a trip backwards in time to the mid eighteenth century. The result provided me with a view of life in a New England coastal community as it developed rapidly into the 19th century. And of the couple who had so kindly taken me to see all this? Catherine, had been in the Falkland Islands and sailed from Chile to here. Her husband, George, showed me his house with his boat moored off it, en route.

Everyone in Newport is sailing oriented. Another couple, a father and son, helped me raise the mast and a married couple, walking their dog, spoke to me and arranged to photograph my departure and forward the print to Pan Am in New York, which they did. They also presented me with champagne, a flag and a lovely good luck card.

There were many parties that week. The Babcocks, good friends of Bill and Lois, invited me to their home in Sakonnet Bay, and it was here I heard the most humourous story in the States. Billy Babcock, who owns a sailing boat, like everyone seems to in Newport, every fall goes deer hunting in Maine with Bill. They rent a cabin up there. On this particular day, Bill climbed a tree and said: "I will wait for one to come to me". Billy Babcock went off stalking and returned two hours later and told Bill how he had fallen over a pair of antlers, half buried in the snow. He described how he had dug away the snow and punctured the bloated carcase. They collected two 'maniacs', which is how they referred to the locals, and proceeded to the deer. When they arrived on the scene, one of the maniacs opened up the belly and immediately puked. How I laughed when I heard this story. They salvaged 50% of the meat and the antlers got Babcock into the hall of fame. If you bag a deer, with a horn spread over a certain measurement, you receive a citation. Billy Babcock took it out of his wallet and showed it to me. They are still amused by it, as am I.

About this time, Robin Knox asked me if I wanted two first class crewmen for the return voyage. They wanted to get back to England, after working on some of the B.O.C. boats. I declined gracefully - anyway, I would not have had room for them. If anyone had told me a little over 18 months before this that I would be in America, not to mind crossing the Atlantic, I would have laughed. Here I was in one of the yachting centres of the world, talking to and being tied up next to the best single-handers in the world. You never know what is around the corner.

I had to buy an American gas cylinder as my Irish tanks could not be refilled. Bertie Reed, A the South African, gave me a spare regulator which he had.

The days seem to fly, without much to show for them. Never the less, work items on the list are few. Summer is in full swing and shrubs and trees, of every kind, are beautiful, as are all the pretty girls with their brown legs and tee shirts.

Cleaned and painted a few rust spots on pot handles, cooker and gimbals. Greased all blocks and swivels.

Had been checking my V.H.F. radio on all channels lately and on channel sixteen one day I heard the coastguard repeatedly telling guys to get off it and clear it.

Eventually, they said: "Will you get off Channel 16,you drug addicts". Some things can only happen in America.

My back was giving me a bit of trouble, at this time, for which I blamed the bike, having to lift it on and off the boat and the quay.

Saw a beautiful, but sad ceremony, at the end of the pier to which I am tied. It is Memorial Day and a band played a lament and the water was layered with wreaths and lovely flowers.

Was invited out to a 200' motor yacht, with a crew of 24, by its owner who came ashore by tender. I refused graciously.

On the Thursday before departure I sailed to a mooring under Goat Island, by arrangement with Bill. I was to leave the following Saturday and wanted to tune up the rigging under sail. He came out later with a dinghy for me. I cannot say enough about the kindness which I received from him and his wife, Lois.

Friday was pre-departure day. During it I bought fruit, vegetables, eggs, milks long life and powdered bacon etc. When these were stowed, I rowed ashore for my last evening in Newport. The Meussels had arranged a cocktail party at their home for 5 p.m. so that I could have a good sleep before sailing. Pat Kirby and his wife, Patsy, the Babcocks, neighbours and friends attended. I was speaking with a lady who told me she was divorced and she promised to come out in one of the launches to see me off the next day, and she promised to wave her 'bra', which indeed she did. I shot a few games of pool after that with a fellow Irishman and had a reasonably early night.

Funnily enough, I slept well that night, as I also had the night before setting out from Ireland. It is the first day at sea that I am apt to be nervous and a little excited.

Saturday 6/6/87 saw me up early, 0600 hours, tidying the cabin, writing cards and preparing for my 1000 hours departure. I had already prepared a compass bearing that would take me from the Brenton Reef Light to the Gulf Stream.

Just before 1000 hours, three launches came out - Bill Meussel, Mike, his son, in the Oldport marina launch; Brian Tuck an Englishman, and the Babcocks in their ketch. The Mayor and all the nice people I had met were in them. They escorted me out of Newport Harbour but not before each of them handed me care-packs of tins, fruit, bottles, books, and letters to be posted in Ireland to relatives. Mudvill's pub had sent one, as had a neighbour of the Meussels. Judy even waved her bra.

I will never forget that departure. The Newporters are great people and my stay there was one of the highlights of my voyages. Being Irish in the USA is a help, as there are 49 million Irish American out of a population of some 250 million. Amazing when you consider the Irish republic has less than 4 million. If I had not crossed an ocean, I would imagine I would have been just another one of the throng of tourist that stroll around Newport’s wharves.

Newporters love the sea and sailing. Their history takes in whaling, slaving and rum running. In fact, the first aggressive act in the fight for independence took place there. (First meeting of the revolution?)

The Coastguards had given me a three-day offshore weather forecast, which predicted moderate northerly winds. A Force 3-4 carried us swiftly out to Brenton Reef light. Ideal sailing in sun with plenty of company. Quite a few boats were going north to Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard/ and the islands around Nantucket.

At 1600 hours the wind eased and backed to the west. At 1800 hours the wind veered north but went so light l had to drop the main, which was flagging in a light swell. I was in my bare feet when dropping the main and when I was coming back into the cockpit, my foot hit the winch cleat. Noticed blood on floor and find I have a loose flap of skin, just behind my toes, which I cut off and after cleaning and bandaged it up. No more bare feet after that. Carried on under No. 2, reaching at about 2 knots until - Sunday at 0830 hours, when the wind left us.

The excitement of the voyage can be tiring. I have only eaten light food, such as Tapioca, bread and butter, jam, biscuits, etc. Will break myself into sea life gradually, bearing in mind my mistake leaving the Shannon last year.

Took anchor and chain and warp from bow and stowed them. Depth on Echo Sounder, 95', so nearly off continental shelf.

Saw a lot of large, double dorsal fin fish, swimming near boat yesterday. Took them to be swordfish.

When I reach the Gulf Stream, will be approximately 100 miles from Newport. My course then will be east for 900 miles to clear the southern tip of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. The ocean shoals from 3,000 feet to 290 feet at the Banks, so I will lay a course to clear it by 300 miles, for safety. Days run: - 60 miles.

**1200 hours** - Now close reaching under main and no. 2 - wind now southerly, Force 3 - at maximum speed. Course: 120° for Gulf Stream, which I estimate to be only another 40 miles. Very little swell or wave action. The ocean is very kind now.

**1630 hours** - Wind backing to S.E. Approaching shipping lanes - two on horizon.

Slept well last night, except for two fishing vessels, all lit up, hitting for Providence. One was on a collision course, or else curious, and I switched on my navigation lights.

Lumpy confused swell is throwing us around and I have not got my sea legs back yet. The first day out was nice.

**MONDAY**

**0100 hours** - Wind up and confused sea. Are we entering the Gulf Stream? Heavy rain. Reaching with south wind; maximum speed. Find I have to push myself, since leaving Newport, to get anything done. Must be the soft living! Self steering working great guns. Hope to cross shipping lanes in daylight today. Barometer has been falling steadily since noon yesterday, 5 MB, to 1019 M.B. Bore off for comfort, as we were close reaching. Doubt if I will sleep anymore tonight, unless motion eases.

Finishing off rice and raisins, left since yesterday and will then decide if she needs a reef.

**0230 hours** - Took main down. Thunder and lightning, with heavy rain. Wind still South, Force 6-7. Will reach under No. 2 for night. (Went to sleep on floor using bunk cushions).

**0730 hours** Heavy rain all night until now. Wind held true during night. They say: "How do you kill the time?" Am up since 0700 hours in pitch dark; tensioned port shroud, which was slack; changed jib sheet, which had frayed; adjusted Nellie and now.

**0900 hours**, preparing porridge.

Still under No. 2 jib. Very short and confused sea.

Never heard nor saw such thunder and lightning as last night. Can still smell it. Was lighting up sky after dawn. Will never know what wind force we had last night, but it was not nice. Taking odd crests on deck and cabin top.

Must take water temperature. Yes, in Gulf Steam - Temp. between 80o - 90o.

Altered course to 120° to clear Grand Banks. Must have cleared east bound shipping lane during night. Radar alarm was bleeping throughout night with lightning and possibly shipping. Will never know! Having two kippers.

**1100 hours** - First sit down today. Sun came out and wind eased. Now under main. Superb sailing but bouncy, on broad reach. Wind South - Force 4.

Was up most of night so might get a kip now. Whatever I do, I cannot keep boat tidy.

Had my first shower of voyage, went out to check and took a wave over head and shoulders.

**1315 hours** - Woke to find boat pressed. Took reef in main. Wind now Force 5. Sun clear with hazy sky. Long swell from west with waves from south, causing very lumpy sea. Galloping white horses everywhere, with the odd one attempting to jump the boat. Barometer up x 1 M.B. - dropped 7 M.B. in last 24 hours. Hard to get a cup to your mouth.

Another lovely note from Helen today. Put on 'oilies', going on deck and found it in pocket. Must open parcel she sent me, marked "To be opened at sea". Me life on you Nellie, more lovely notes with sweets and chocolate.

**1900 hours** - Just took down No. 2 and double reefed main. Barometer, still dropping. Force 5-6 now and getting dark. Double reefed main is only marginally bigger than trysail.

That is that, for the night, I hope. Sun sparky and watery looking; sea wild now with big wave tops breaking.

A little over two days out and safety harness being used quite a lot. Mother Carey's Chickens on my wake. Easily known we got wind today, saw my first Shearwater, or 'Gliders', as I call them. You only see them when there is wind afoot.

**Tuesday**

**0300 hours** - Just after taking down close reefed main. Wind: West - Force 8 and running under mast and Nellie in command. Was on wrong heading. Should have had top 6" of wash board up, but it was very humid - cabin wet!

**0630** **hours** - DAWN, shows big lumps of ocean piling up. You can hear the hiss of foam as we surf on a wavecrest.

**1100 hours** - Wind down to Force 6. Hoisted No. 2 jib, which I had lashed to both jackstays. Sun is out and with wind still westerly, we are tearing S.of E. for Erin.

Working very hard for last 36 hours, grabbing sleep and grub, when I can. Robing and rolling, with water on deck and in cockpit. Can feel my stomach muscles tender.

Cabin very humid and untidy. One sleeping bag now wet. I hate putting up the top washboard, as I have to close the mushroom vent in cabin top in these conditions.

**1500 hours** - Still flying along with Gulf Stream assistance of 10-70 miles per day. Wind now Force 4.

At noon had made 308 miles by D.R.

Was emptying a basin, standing in hatchway, when a hissing wave hit the transom and flies into cockpit. I held the basin in front of the hatch and saved most of it from entering the cabin. Another vest and short johns for the laundry bag. Managed to boil two eggs and put them in mug for tea.

**WEDNESDAY**

**0530 hours** - Woke after reasonable sleep, although I was up checking occasionally. Wind now S.W. - Force 4-5.

**0630 hours** - Changed down to storm jib. S.W. - Force 6-7.

No. 2 was up for 19 hours. She will not hold course under storm jib in these seas. Breaking waves keep turning her, either to port or starboard. It is a pity, as we were doing maximum speed. Put her on a more northerly course and find she will hold it better. Leeway, surface drift and the Gulf Stream are still assisting us westwards.

Dull and overcast, with heavy rain showers. Was nearly on top of a whale. After changing jibs, I was aft adjusting Nellie when I caught a movement out of the corner of my eye. I was looking down at a whale, cruising effortlessly at trough level. The easy power was something to see - like a submarine. This guy was a dirty brown colour. Have they sensors that allow them to hone in on a sailing boat? Or, were we on a collision course, which he narrowly avoided? Anyway, it was a wonderful close-up of the biggest mammal known to man; forty feet I would estimate the distance. I never saw the head or tail of any of the whales I came across.

**1100 hours** - Wind veered west and now Force 7-8. Barometer 1013 M.B, dropped 4 M.B. in last 9 hours.

It is not waves which cause problems, however big, but the breaking crests, they are the real fury. One of them has just split the port dodger down the centre. It will have to flap away. It is still very humid and the thought of oilies and boots does not grab me. It is like a sauna cabin temperature 70° but a few things make it all worthwhile: The blue of the Gulf Stream and knowing it cannot last forever. Wind during the day is never as bad as by night. Fortunately, approaching the longest day, we have a very short night. During the day you can occupy yourself. I find, looking at the ocean, in any wind, fascinating, but at night, when you try to sleep, the sounds seem to be magnified, especially the whine in the rigging.

**1310 hours** - Had a cup of cocoa and biscuits this morning, must now get something into me: An orange, two tapioca tubs and a packet of crisps and lo and behold a sudden drop of wind to Force 4-5. This allows me to run with it and makes motion much easier. Strong winds up to now. The last three days have tired me. The motion makes moving around very difficult and the constant noise of the rigging and waves is tiring.

Now I can open the mushroom vent on cabin top. A few grilled rashers, bread and butter and tea lift my spirits, as does the sun, which now appears.

On desired course again at 6 knots. Noon D.R. plotting shows 434 miles. Last 24 hours shows 126 miles. I am allowing 30 miles per day for Gulf Stream, or half of its 10-70 miles flow.

Some of the waves, last night, were like being hit by a wall. Changing jibs this morning was not easy, even though I wore the safety harness, I had one hand for the ship and the other for myself.

The decision to get into wet gear, harness, and do it, is the hardest. Once you are out, it is not too bad. I devised a plan for hauling back the No. 2 jib. I attach the spring clip at the foot of it to the safety line abreast of the mast. This way I can use both hands getting back into the cockpit, where I can haul the sheet aft and unhook the clip at the staunchion.

Those strong winds were more or less on my tail, which gave me an average of 100 miles per day. Would not like to think of what a strong easterly could do against the Gulf Stream.

**1400 hours** - Wind has veered N.W. and is still Force 4-5. Just came in from cockpit, where I smoked two cigarettes while admiring the beauty of the ocean. Plenty of Gulf weed around. Nellie got a great testing these last few days. What about that whale the other morning? Humidity now gone. Torn dodger now tied to top safety line.

Am enjoying the break since 1230 hours, when the wind eased. Tidying and navigating, etc., since. So far did not even get time to think of sextant. With over two thousand miles to go yet, what is the rush. With these following winds my D.R. should be O.K.

During one of the heavy rain squalls today, I put all my salt-soaked clothes on the cockpit seats. After wringing them, I went for a bucket. I knew it, before I got back, I heard the big whoosh. All the clothes were floating in the cockpit, worse than ever. You would want to like ocean voyaging!

**2000 hours** - Still under storm jib. Wind now north with wind force consistent at force'5. Scrambled eggs with cheese for tea. Temperature down to 60.

Have two bottles of gin and champagne aboard - departure gifts - but do not feel like drinking on my own. Sea motion wild with wind shift.

**THURSDAY - Day 5**

**0530 hours** – Rose - Wind still north - Force 4-5. Sea motion still wild. Back o floor until 0630 hours. A great night's sleep.

After an orange and porridge. Changed up to No. 2 jib.

**1500 hours** - Wind now N.W. - Force 4. Could carry reefed main, but boom would fly around with wind on port quarter. Looking forward to this sea going down. It is a constant carnival of hurdy gurdies. Anyway, I want to finish off a work-list, which I have made out.

Foredeck as dangerous today as in a gale. Colour of ocean, a beautiful blue. Visibility excellent. In spite of discomfort, I am thoroughly enjoying it all. The boat is taking it all in her stride), and doing 5 knots. 577 miles to-date.

Down to my last pair of clean short johns. Steeped salted clothes in bucket of fresh water. A good drying day, if we do not get a slop aboard.

Nellie is only great and was well worth the $180, for overhaul.

Just after four rashers in a sandwich. Pan flew out of grill and spilt grease.

Just as well I did not put up main, taking all she can get now. Doing maximum speed. Wind up as is Barometer x 6 M.B. to 1021 M.B.

Rashers are kind of high, so unwrapped them and put them under spray hood in sun.

Must trim my beard and tash which I can now chew.

Course now 1100 to offset 1 eway and surface drift with this north wind. Plotted my position on chart - 400 miles to go to clear Grand Bank.

**1700 hours** - Close reefed, main up and doing 6-7 knots. Wind easing since main went up. Veering N.E. Let out second reef and by 1800 hours, full main. Wind getting steadily lighter.

Dinner: Spuds, 4 rashers and pineapple rings. Got my clothes dry, and aired under sprayhood. Very warm now with sea motion much improved.

**1900 hours** - Sails down - slatting in light N.E. wind; sun setting clean and red. Barometer 1024 M.B.

**FRIDAY - Day 6**

Woke to S.E. wind - Force 2 at 0400 hours. Up main and No.2. 6 knots. Porridge and tea. Getting smart, put cloth under bucket in cockpit, while, having my constitutional. Nine hours becalmed last night.

Taking advantage of ideal conditions to get a lot of work of done. 4 Sealed V.H.F. and navigation light glands on cabin top. Checked rigging, staunchions, shackles, etc. Oiled tools, as I had them out anyway. The biggest boon is that I can open fore hatch for first time and let the sun and air freshen and warm the cabin. Last year it leaked and I had to seal it. This year I did a good job on it at Newport.

I find I am only now getting to know the boat again and finding my feet on boat and water.

Must have a real breakfast now. A good night's sleep makes all the difference, I feel like a new man today. The ocean is calm.

Would like to meet a ship and get word home. Nearly a week out now; I am sure they are all worrying.

Wind now Force 1-2 - S.E., up and-down. Keeping my fingers crossed that it will hold. Barometer 1027 M.B - highest so far.

**0930 hours** - Grilled four rashes and cut Mary's homemade brown bread. Put on remainder four rashers for later, as I think another day will not help them. (I ate one of them also. Grand breakfast, bread really beautiful, like Mary herself, Ohio marmelade, and tea.

We are skirting the limit of southern line of drifting ice, for June.

**1000 hours** - Wind up and doing maximum speed. Lashings of Gulf weed. Saw my first Portuguese man-of-war. The sky is tossed with mares tails and all sorts of Cirrus, along with mackerel (Cirro Cumulus).

**1130 hours** - Wind now S.S.E. Are we on the 7 o'c of a high? Barometer 1028 M.B. Maximum speed.

**1300 hours** - Dining, like the lord that I am: Salmon, mixed veg., cold spuds, tomato, fruit salad and grapefruit juice.

**1400 hours** - Wind veered south broad reaching in ideal conditions at maximum seed.

Blue sky; temperature 77 degree

**1530 hours** - Took in firs reef - wind south, Force 3-4. Sky changing – temperature 79 degrees.

Nellie was under pressure holding course on reach, before reefing. She is a great, indicator of wind strength.

Just noticed that ribbons on main shrouds are up at spreaders. Also, one of my tennis balls, at end of spreader, is gone. Starboard dodger is also gale-worn, with two small splits.

**1700 hours** - Sun now diffused and watery and short cross swell, is causing us to roll

Had my last rasher for tea and will have to wait until I reach Ireland for my next bacon meal.

M.R.C.C., The Irish Coast Guards, had given me another passage plan. I had notified them of my departure in Newport. It is interesting to note that they had notified, Halifax, Falmouth, Plymouth, Edinburgh, Portishead, Reykjavik Delgadd, The Irish Naval Service and Air Corps, Valentia and Malin Head, along with the New York Coastguards, giving each a description and sail number of the "Iniscealtra, even to colour of life-raft. This is a superb service, even if they had me down as a "possible casualty risk". (I discovered later that solo fliers are are also classified as this.)

They had given me the same facilities as on the East to West voyage, regarding V.H.F. contacts with shipping, to get my position home. It is a great facility.

**1930 hours** - Will leave rig up for Might. This decision is always the result of studying the weather symptoms, clouds, sunset, rising moon, if any, and barometer. The latter had dropped 4 M.B. to 1024 M.B. during last twelve hours.

**SATURDAY, June 13 - Day 7**

**0530 hours** - Did not wake with my usual pep - was on deck last night at 0300 hours, dropping main. Wind still south, Force 5.

**0800 hours** - A.1 again after porridge, boiled egg and brown bread. Grand sunny morning and flying under No.2 jib. Just screwed chronometer to bulkhead, as it was only held by drawing pins, which I thought would be O.K.

Will be on a more northerly course after passing Grand Banks, where I will have a better chance of sighting shipping.

Was out checking that boom and mainsail were secure, when I got another wave. Shirt, vest, pants and johns wet - good enough for me, I am inclined to forego getting into wet gear for a few minutes deck work, or self steering adjustments.

Russian Roulette, I call it. You look astern and judge the waves and say, "now". It generally pays off but you are caught every now and again.

Barometer dropped last night x 3 M.B. to 1025 M.B., so I am not expecting any real action.

If this is summer North Atlantic, would hate to see it in winter. The following or reaching winds are great and we are doing great speed over the ground. Yesterday at noon showed 676 miles for six days most of it under storm or no. 2 jib. It is peculiar that these westerlies are not called "trades" as other prevailing winds are.

Odd jollop of sea still coming aboard. The ocean is now a mottled carpet of Gulf weed. It is both beautiful and wonderful, blue, clear, clean, fresh and vital.

Noon and we are now on a great circle course for the Shannon River, after 850 miles.

Would sail a boat forever, but find navigation does not come easily. I never had a natural aptitude for maths, but find it satisfying to see our track on the chart progressing well.

Short confused sea with plenty of whitecaps. Had my first beans today with brown bread. You would eat out here what you would never dream of even looking at, at home.

Would like to sit out in cockpit and hand-steer for a while. It is a lovely fresh day but there are lumps of waves flying about us.

Twelve hours under No. 2 jib - now at 5 knots.

**1500 hours** - Short shower. Wind still south now for 24 hrs. Could carry reefed main wind force 4, if not for very confused short sea.

Will have to fit yankee gas bottle at first opportunity, as last of Irish gas running low.Brought two 2 bottles, last year, which lasted well. Unbroken blue sky.

Getting through jobs-list in spite of rolling. Lockers are emptying and have to be tidied. Must have a good meal, if possible, this evening. Only eating snacks by day.

**1700 hours** - Had chopped ham with cold spuds and mayonnaise, followed by stewed apple, in a plastic tub, from Mudvilles Pub gift pack.

**1800 hours** - Just put up-main, with one reef. Wind down to around Force 3.

**1930 hours** - Main down, wind still south but up to Force 4-5 again. 5 knots, under no. 2.

**2230 hours** - Confused sea, still with us. Swell from west, waves from southand both have whitecaps. BUNK.

**SUNDAY - Day 8**

**0500 hours** - Still on course at 90M - was half expecting her not to be. South wind with us now two days - speed 5-6 knots – Force 5 wind.

**0730 hours** - Back to bunk until now. Must be a worrying time for all at home. Was noisy during night, would say wind was up. Feeling great, as always when I get a good sleep.

Brown bread, blackcurrant jam and tea (did not think gas would boil kettle). Find I am only smoking ten fags a dayand was on a pack a day in Newport.

Must say I am well settled to ocean life now and find I am completely in tune with it.

Swell from west longer and deeper today, so motion is more lively. Must be some dirt to the west. Newport/Bermuda Singlehanded Race starting today. Are they getting it?

Brought a lot of sweets this time and find they are great. Licquorice is nice, also, as are crisps. These make up for the tasty food, like bacon, sausages and chips. Had a few kippers, which Bill Neussel gave me and they were superb.

I looked for dried, smoked or salted fish in Newport but could not find any, it is very tasty and I prefer it to tinned beef or stews. Have dried soup powders, and onion and shrimp bisque, which are really nice. Also, they are a change from tea, as I do not drink coffee.

**1230 hours** - Very wild motion with odd thump of wave coming on board. Cockpit half full now and then. Sun is helping to make things look brighter and it is getting warm - temperature 72° - hatch closed and bottom washboard up. They were all up last night and locked. Would be lost without sprayhood. I notice the bottom 6", at each side of it where the bolt rope is in a groove, have been blown out by the following winds.

Just plotted track on chart; best days run so far at 165 miles. Total distance in eight days was 997 miles, nearly one-third of voyage. Last 26 hours was under No. 2 jib, except for 12 hours under main.

**1530 hours** - Wind still steady from South - force 6-7. Making excellent progress reaching under no. 2 jib now for 20 hours. 4 Sky now hazy, with visibility reduced. White water everywhere. Radar alarm bleeped. After switching from distant to local I can hear the swish of radar signal. Looked out starboard window, as the port one heeled down and said: "Oh: Jesus". Coming out of the mist was a forest of derricks on a bulk carrier. There was little I could do to alter course. I switched on the V.H.F. and immediately a voice said: "Are you alright?" I said “yes if you get out of my way”. Not a very nice reply to the question but this is how I reacted to the shock. Whether or not they picked me up on their radar or saw me visually, I shall never know. The main thing is that they saw met and fair dues to them. I told them I was bound for the River Shannon in Ireland, and asked them to please confirm my position and relay it to Portishead. In between talking and jotting down the position co-ordinates and identifying "Iniscealtra" by the phonetic alphabet, I was more than happy to see she had altered course and was going ahead of me. This may all seem easy, as you read this, but I will never forget how difficult it was. It is not nice to see a big ship bearing down on you out of a mist. You have to get pencil and paper and the phonetic alphabet and both hands are occupied in a sea motion that is trying hard to throw you. In between this, you are trying to look out in seas that only give you visibility on the crests. I did not know until my return that she was a Japanese ship. The M.R.C.C. gave me a file which they had kept on men and the following is the message received:-

**"Mount Fuji to Falmouth. Met sailboat "Iniscealtra" at 14.19.48A in position 39-15-2 N - 55-22-6. W. Bound for Ireland. Wish to advise all concerned, he is well and fine” Master.**

Captain Alviola, I had asked for his name, also gave me a Greenwich time check, which showed me to be two minutes fast. He was a very nice man. Before we lost radio range I called the captain and asked him for the ships name and he said “did you not read it as we passed you?” At that time I was too busy getting my coordinates etc.

The Iniscealtra under jib, must have looked tiny on that wild seascape that day, when viewed from the high bridge. Before I switched on the VHF the must have thought I was in trouble.

After entering my position on the chart, I discovered that we were 90 miles ahead of our confirmed position and had, therefore, over-estimated our speed. In fact I had done
what a lot of sailors do, i.e., had not made allowance for going up and down over the swells and waves, which if flattened out would show a greater distance travelled. Amazingly, to me, my position on the chart was dead on my track line. Dead reckoning, if tracked with fair winds, can be very accurate.

So far conditions for the use of a sextant had not been good. Anyway, as I said earlier, there was no rush, seeing that there were two thousand miles of clear ocean ahead of us.

The Watchman Locata Radar Alarm had Droved itself and even if the Mount Fuji had not seen me, I would probably have been able to manoeuvre clear of her. Also, it was nice to know it was working. Its drain on power is minimal and it is a real boon to the single-hander. Apart from my land­fall, the Mount Fuji experience was the most exciting moment of the voyage.

My mind now was much easier, knowing that my family would have news of my progress. One of my biggest worries at sea, apart from wind and gear failure, was worrying about my family worrying about me, that is, when I got the time to think of them for you get very little time out here. The three questions most asked when I returned to Ireland, last year, were: "How did you sleep? What did you eat? "How did you put down the time?

Funnily enough, none of them asked: What did you miss most? What were your thoughts? I did not get much time on the second voyage for either. On the first voyage of 56 days, I thought of my family a lot, especially my daughter, whom I love dearly. The sons will surely forgive me for that, for it is only natural. Her notes popping up in socks, food containers, etc., proved that.

Very pleased with my navigation after today. A great boost to my morale.

**1830 hours** - South wind - force 6. Must celebrate for tea. Gas still low and will have to wait for better conditions to fit new tank in stern locker.

Would not say no to a hot bath, or a game of snooker with the Queen of the Beize herself. A bit cooler this evening - put on pants, shirt, pullover and socks.

Tea:- Pumpernickel bread, which is holding great, sardines and mayonnaise, fig rolls and an after dinner mint. Must check navigation lights, tonight. Great to know V.H.F. and radar working. Also, my radar reflector, which is pop rivetted on brackets above the jib halliard sheave.

Under No. 2 jib now for 32 hours at near maximum speed.

Apart from sea motion, there is no hassle on boat or gear. Navigation lights O.K. well done Mike Kinsella. NIGHT ALL.

**MONDAY Day 9**

**0430 hours** - Still on course. Wind force 5-6. Night wild, but slept well. Getting used to rolling now. Scrambled eggs were easy to cook today; brown bread is showing signs of mould. Gas still low, but working - the rolling is doing some good.

Is this constant strong southerly wind the 9 o'c. of an Azores High? Strength and direction holding very true now for nearly three days.

No other news new, except that I used bucket in cabin again today, much better than being showered on it, in cockpit.

Barometer more or less steady at 1019 M.B., but falling slowly. Odd waves in cockpit. Sun seldom seen today, owing to Stratus. Dawn now is at 0400 hours, as I still keep this journal by my wrist watch, which is East Coast, U.S.A., time.

**0940 hours** - Wind veered S.W. which puts it on starboard quarter, instead of abeam. Motion easier and less water coming aboard. Had my last cup of shrimp bisque. The Americans call prawns shrimps. It was from Mary Bruins gift pack.

You do not get the feeling of speed running as you do when reaching. You feel like hoisting sail. Have only seen Gulf weed so far on this trip. Last year, when going across, the ocean was littered with flotsom and jetsam, but that was on the steamer route. It was pickled with junk around the Azores.

**1600 hours** - Been busy since, tidying lockers, which keep emptying. Sun peeping through clouds now and then. Barometer now 1014 M.B., down x 3 M.B.

Had lunch of beans and now studying Irish coast lights and radio beacons. Wrote them down for reference. Plotted days run of 150 miles - 1,047 miles to-date. Not bad for 9 days. Rained for a while, not a day for deck work. Have top 6" washboard out. Hefty waves have now built up; long and high with most of them breaking. We surf on them with Nellie keeping us on the straight and narrow. She never seems to tire, God bless her.

**1930 hours** - Force 5-6-7 all day. Plenty of surfing waves. Holding on, hoping glass would rise. Nellie under pressure and boat taking it well. Changed down to storm jib, after a broach. Do not want any damage to Nellie. Wind then eased to Force 5-6. No. 2 up again. Very confused and irregular sea with very deep troughs for length. Most confused sea yet. Saw my first rogue wave today. A giant lump, isolated 1and towering up to the sky like a mushroom. Not nice. S.W. wind true now for 12 hours. Cloud is low but any windows in it show a clear blue sky. We shall see.

Things you never notice on land, mean a lot out here. Am relying on my weather observations for rig tonight. Glass now 1015 M.B.

Cabin bound for last two days, but I read books on weather and navigation, which I look at nearly every day. Apart from deck work, cooking and tidying, navigation, the log and this journal, writing keeps me more than occupied. And, looking at the ocean, of course. You see a high wave coming, you look up at it and say: "This will surely come in on us". It barely reaches the top of the transom and off we go. She is a great boat with terrific directional stability. Will leave up no. 2. Night all.

**TUESDAY - Day 10**

**0400 hours** Conditions similar to yesterday but glass down another 3 M.B. to 1014 M.B. About force 6 now; still S.W. Plenty Stratus overhead. Boat surfing on crests. Boat speed surfing very difficult to estimate. I think 12-15 knots, if that can be possible. Anyway, we are making great progress.

**0600 hours** - Had two boiled eggs in a cup. Tricky. Did you ever have to make and eat your breakfast on a carnival hurdy gurdy? Don't know how my stomach is putting up with it, but I enjoyed those eggs, brown bread and tea. Hunger is the best sauce, and you are always that out here. I relish tinned stew and meat balls and burgers, which I would only feed to the dogs at home.

Just been broached, could see bright green water through all port windows.

Have changed down to storm jib. A sail change in oilies and harness, is like a sauna and swim combined, even though I only wear short johns underneath. Was nervous of any damage which could be done to Nellie. Losing the mast, or Nellie, are what I watch for most. I have often found we go just as fast after reducing sail.

Had been getting the odd broach, but nothing as severe as that one.

**1100 hours** - Wind now veered to w.xS., with a rise x 2 MB in barometer. Have had sustained strong winds now for four days. Sun trying, to burn off Stratus.

Only allowing 20 miles per day for Gulf Stream from now on. Its velocity decreases from 10-35 miles per day from here onwards.

Noon run = 122 miles. Total to date = 1,269 miles.

We are now east of the southern tip of the Grand Banks and 100 miles south of them. New compass course today of 80°M and on great circle.

Conserving gas in case weather will not permit change of cylinders. Will also have to fit new regulator with U.S. tank. Had a quick look in stern locker this morning, outboard engine was nearly upside down, even though it was tied down. If I had my way again, I would never have brought it, dead weight, including petrol. I used it twice only and that was in Newport Harbour.

**1700 hours** - Raining, wind backed S.W., still force 5-6. If I ever do another ocean voyage, I will have two fore­stays. Apart from being able to set twin jibs easier, it gives more strength of mind. Both the cap shrouds and lowers lead aft, and together with the backstay, that makes 5 shrouds aft of the mast. The single forestay often worried me. The spare jib halliard was made fast to the pulpit base, but it would have made a poor sub­stitute.

The swaged terminals on the shrouds often worried me, also. On my previous boats all the shrouds were spliced after rounding thimbles, and you could see the strength. Maybe I am old fashioned, but in future I would go for the spliced type.

Sea motion decreasing with rain somewhat. Got another broach which gybed jib. With this confused sea you can get a wave from any angle. If it breaks, you go where it says so. Fortunately, it does not happen too often.

**1900 hours** - Rain stopped and wind W.S.W. and down to force 5. Seas building up again. I think I am underestimating wind strengths when running. There is a constant whine in the rigging. NIGHT ALL.

**WEDNESDAY - Day 11**

**0200 hours** - S.W., Force 4. Big improvement in sea. Still music in rigging. When changing jibs yesterday, she lay beam onto the sea and the noise from the rigging was hard to believe.

**0400 hours** - Cross-swell nearly gone and motion now much easier. Getting a break at last. Plenty of work to be done, if it flattens more.

**0700 hours** - Working hard for last three hours: Sail change, adjusting Nellie, tidying cabin, bringing cushions up to bunk, breakfast, bucket, etc., but on a morning like this who cares - it is a real pleasure. Sun peeping out and Barometer up x 2 M.B. to 1018 M.B.

Last few days very tiring. I estimated wave lengths at 300 yards, crest to crest, the troughs or valleys I call them are difficult to judge.

A lot of salt laden clothes waiting for wash. Matches being used are damp.

**0830 hours** - More rain. Have clothes in cockpit for a rinse. Eating yesterday's rice leftovers with raisins.

**1130** **hours** - Wind now W.S.W. and rising. Just put up storm jib, held on to No. 2 until we broached. Waves building up from west again with other waves from wind direction.

**1245 hours** - Just finished peasand tinned beef, which was older than I am, but I ate it nevertheless. Had two tins of haddock, which was lovely. They don't wait for the fish to get old before canning.

Nellie is only great, have only barely touched the tiller since leaving Newport, it being lashed amidships also extends the keel, which immensely helps our directional stability. Switched to brown sugar in my tea (now), which makes it much tastier with powdered milk.

Wind seems to be easing. Your ears become very sensitive to the string orchestra. Not so many breaking waves either. Still plenty of Gulf weed keeping us company.

Another 120 miles logged. If we keep this up - only another four days to the half-way mark.

**1400 hours** - Wind still W.S.W. and up again to force 6. Crest just into cockpit. I have a foot pedal in the cabin, which pumps my drinking water to a nozzle in the cockpit. I had just pumped some into a saucepan, when it came aboard. I pulled back so fast, all the water in the pot spilled over me and into the cabin. It is peculiar how all the big waves are coming from the west, even though the wind is from South of West. Is it the Gulf Stream flow? All the washboards have been up now for ages, except for an inch or two of sliding hatch.

**1740 hours** - Blue sky now and all the big waves have gone, flattened by the Labrador Current. I looked out and saw a wave action, like you see in the Shannon, where two currents meet, but more magnified. It is indescribable, but full of life and strength, a tumble of waves going every which way, jumping up as if in joy. Glad I met it in daylight, not alone to see it, but I would have been at a loss, at night, to understand it. That was one of the highlights of the voyage.

**THURSDAY - Day 12**

**0500 hours** - S.W., Force 6. Nellie must have tired last night, awoke to find us reaching at 115°M. Clutch must have slipped. Now on desired 80°M. Barometer 1017 M.B. Good night's sleep off and on. Have just looked back through log book and bar an hour or two, wind has never gone below Force 4.

Not getting a chance to do jobs on work-list. Gas will be critical today, I imagine, but it is not essential. Would like to check on all rigging, screws, shackles and self steering bolts.

Have mushroom vent open on cabin roof. If it does take a heavy dollup, will wipe it up. Have to keep it closed at night in these conditions.

Confined to barracks again today. The one factor that makes up for it is the great progress and favourable winds. Temperature 65° and humid. Only put on vest, shirt and short johns today. Have been sleeping in pelt since leaving Newport, with one sleeping bag. It is far from brass monkey weather.

**1200 hours** - Sky clearing here and there, otherwise no change. At least when you are running, there is no con­stant angle of heel. If Nellie slips again, I will hand-
steer for a while, as I am fed up of this solitary con­finement.

Had to close mushroom vent, seas up again. Two factors which are helping greatly, are, Nellie is doing a superb job and the Barometer is steady at 1017 M.B. Will only have to wait it out.

Read for a while, wedged on cabin floor with sail bags.

**1530 hours** - Another broach. Force 6-7 now, so decided to hand-steer. Sky nearly clear. Stuck it for 31 hours. Very long seas with big crests - very few came aboard, but I am, nevertheless, wet through in spite of a one-piece and padded wet gear. Discovered why Nell was slipping: There was oil on clutch plates which I cleaned off and she is now fine again. Towelled down and felt very refreshed and exhilerated after what was the most exciting sail of my life.

Had Hot Can cooked when jib gybed and cabin in a mess. Tidied it up and ate remains of it. Two half mugs of tea - I found out early on last voyage, you can never have a full mug at sea. Also had some After Dinner Mints, which I am sparing they are lovely plus, the ould fag of course.

**1830 hours** - Wind now S.W., Force - 5. Rained off and on since dawn. Heavy rain for last hour. Sky now brightening to N.W. Still have a fair lumpy sea after prolonged strong wind.

When crossing last year, I found the average length of strong winds was eighteen hours, the longest being two days and three nights. This crossing is different with ten days of it so far.

Was thankful did not get today's wind by night. Too tired to plot day's run, will leave it until tomorrow.

Barometer up x 1 M.B. to 1018 M.B. It was steady all day. I notice it always drops X 1 M.B. at sunset, so maybe we, get a break, could do with it. The stern locker badly needs attention, I could hear something rolling there today and the rigging I have not checked for days.

Getting dark now at 1900 hours, by my wristwatch, G.M.T. shows 2300 hours. They are watching T.V. at home and the lads are probably playing snooker or pool and having a pint. God, but I really enjoyed that bit of tiller steering today. She is one GREAT BOAT.

An odd big wave hits us now and then - otherwise O.K. NIGHT ALL.

**FRIDAY - Day 13**

**0500 hours** - Reasonably comfortable day with a fine drizzle. S.W., Force 3-4 - boat on course 80°M.

**0700 hours** - Barometer-down x 2 M.B. Wind very steady in direction. Odd lop of spray from wave top. Must go out and fix stern locker contents; change gas bottle,and check rigging. Under storm jib now since 1100 hours Wed. 0840 hours - Just back having attended to above. Now raining heavily, so unless I get into oiles, boots and cap again, I wont know if I opened gas valve or not, as gas is not working. Cannot play Russian Roulette in the rain.

So far I have not had the time to feel lonely. I keep Helen's notes on a dog clip and reading them is great for the morale. Also, Nance's last letter before departure is often read, particularly the line "Thinking of you every wave of your trip". Nearly everyone I met in Ireland, after the first crossing, asked me how did I survive the loneliness. To be really honest all I can say is: "You are too busy". What counts most out here is survival and you are very conscious of that. Everytime you go on deck you are conscious of it. I never go forward without timing the roll of the boat on a wave and the same on returning to the cockpit. Once I was spread-eagled across the sprayhood, with the roll, but I was thrown the right way. Next comes: Arrival. You are always trying to get the best speed and watching the course, without being too hard on the rig. After that you are doing everything a housewife does in her kitchen. So between navigation, which is time consuming and often difficult, especially chart work in a seaway, and the other hundred and one jobs, there is only time left for that great healer: SLEEP.

**1100 hours** - Ducked out and switched on gas, which is not working. I have a suspicion that salt water got into the pipe when it fell to the bottom of the locker. When I had to change the regulators. (It was in fact four days later before I got it working at half cock. The pipe had to be blown out and the jets, which had oxydised, due to the salt, cleaned out. Until then I survived on cold tinned food and powdered milk. How I missed hot tea. Hot Can was great though.) Everything, at this stage, was damp and clammy.

Plotted 240 miles, for the last two days.

1400 hours - Still raining. Have to have hatch and vent closed. Had vent open this morning and got sea water on book I was reading. Matchbox I am using is damp.

Down to my last two slices of brown Pumpernickel bread, but still have some of Mary's wholemeal cake left.

**1530 hours** - Rain ceased and Sun making first effort at showing itself. Barometer now down to 1014 M.B. Miss the cuppa and was going to have scrambled eggs for lunch--ham and onion sandwich instead. Will we get more wind after all that rain? Under storm jib now for three days.

**1800 hours** - Raining again. It will get dark early tonight, as sky very overcast. Comber just into cockpit and over cabin top.

Getting dark earlier each evening as I move east. Have had no opportunity yet for a sunsight, even though I have sextant out and ready since Wednesday. Will need to practice anyway. Was very pleased with last position from Capt. Alviola. Running as I am, if I am judging my speed properly, my chart track should be accurate by D.R. It will be interesting to see after six days. Might get a fine day tomorrow. Could do with it to fix gas and dry clothes, after last few days.

**SATURDAY - Day 14**

**0700 hours** - Up since 0500 hours. Working on gas pipe and cooker. Got water from pipe line.

Cloudy day and fresh after all the rain. Sun water looking. Barometer down to 1013 M.B, wind S.S.W., Force 4.

Gas flickered for 5 minutes and went out. Hung out rain washing of last few days. Am now again on to slates, i.e., Rye King and Ryvita.

Just got clothes in before shower of rain hits us. On same latitude as Cap Finisterre.

1000 hours - Sun out for last hour or so with odd Cumulus, but they are gathering again. All-in-all, a fine day and we are on course. Wind veered S.W. and adjusted Nell.

1030 hours - Spoke with tanker skipper, who confirmed my position and promised to send message to Portishead. A (Panamanian ship bound for the Gulf from St. Lawrence.) He gave me his D.R. position. The following was received by M.R.C.C., at Shannon, on the same day:-

**"In Pos'n 430 27' N. 410 46' W. Contact with sailing vessel "Iniscealtra". Mr. Patrick Lawless. Everything Please pass to his family, as I understand he had arrangement with you to do so.**

**Regards.**

**MASTER"**

I was amused to see, upon return, that he did not class me as the Pan Am captain but Captain Pat Lawless but I did not mind. It is a spectacular service for a single hander. It is also nice to speak with a human being again.

When I first spotted him he was on the horizon, coming 1354-1/4 6(; i1; towards ate. I waited until he was going astern of me before trying to contact him, so that he might see me.

My Radar Alarm had not bleeped, so I assumed he was on visual. No reply. I was beginning to think my battery had gone for a Burton, when I got through. Four Norwegian officers, with a Panamanian crew. She looked a fine vessel, ploughing away for the Med.

**1230 hours** - Just finished my lunch of Tuna, onions, tomatoes, slates and cold milk. Washboards, hatch and vent closed all day, owing to spray flying. Wind now Force 5-6 and surfing again. Nell holding well since I de-oiled clutch plates. Sun-shining and cabin like a laundry. Being swung around every so often but Nell brings us back again. Looked back through log book and find it was last Sunday since I had the main up and that was for 12 hours. Writing and reading on floor, jammed in with a sail bag at my back and side. Having the odd sweep of horizon, which the waves make very difficult. Eating sweets or liquorice, and smoking. We broached on a crest, just now, and what was left of port dodger is now flapping. Will have to take them off, when I can.

**1630 hours** - Just after coming in. Took dodger off; the noise it was making was annoying me. Tiller steered for two hours. Wind now down from Force 6-7 to Force 4-5 and veering slowly. I find lately that the wind eases around this time. Is it the sun declining? Wind now nearly from the west. Nellie did one magnificent job today but just could not hold on big breaking crests. I saw green water through port windows again today.

**1800 hours** -Force 4 and very confused sea. Towelled down after coming in and feel great in day clothes. Lately when I go out, I only wear a vest and short johns under oilies to save on dry clothes. Apart from seawater, you perspire in oilskins and I am running out of dry clothes.

Sun going down behind grey bank; a few clouds on horizon and plenty of Cirrus, Mares Tails and whisps of every tossed shape, all pink hued, which I do not like. So, goodnight all and God bless.

**SUNDAY - Day 15**

**0500 hours** - S.S.W. - Force 4. The longest day of the year. Another day of Force 4-5-6, eased to Force 4 at 1700 hours. Barometer steady at 1013 M.B. until 1800 hours.

Got a bit of work done today. Gas giving half pressure on one ring and grill. Tiller steered again for three hours to stop broaching.

**MONDAY - Day 16**

**0330 hours** - N.W., Force 3-4. Changed up No. 2 Jib. Beautiful day with Cirro-Cumulus. Woke to sun rising and knew we were on wrong heading - it was shining through port windows. Was up at 0100 hours last night. Heavy rain with thunder and lightning and we were on course.

**0430 hours** - After porridge. Put up main with one reef. Barometer up x 2 M.B. to 1016 M.B. Have S.W. and N.W. seas fighting it out now, but no great wave height of last few days.

Feels funny but comfortable to have bunk to leeward again. Have my Monday wash high on backstay. Cool now with north in wind.

**0700 hours** - Was letting out reef to put up full main and saw ship, under boom, coming west to starboard. Spoke with Yugoslavian, who told me he was steaming south of ice limit before turning up for Canada. I did not ask him to report me as I had got word home last Saturday, but he gave me a position. Asked him if he had his Radar on and he said that in good visibility they had it on standby. A nice guy.

**1000 hours** - Most perfect day of voyage. Chartwork shows 1,280 miles to Shannon. Busy sorting out clothes for drying and airing. Tidying lockers, all rigging checked and self steering holding bolts.

**1230 hours** - Lunch of sardines, onion, tomato (2 left) with cream crackers. Unbroken blue sky. Speed 5 knots. Wind veered N.N.W., Force 3. If it decreases will find it difficult to keep main full. Have a downhaul on it now. Short lumpy sea.

**1715 hours** - Main down, wind has backed to W. and light. Jib flopping now and then as we are rolling. Still a hefty swell from W. after the last week of wind. Smaller waves from today's N.W. wind causing a pretty confused sea. All clothes now aired and tidied away. Got a lot of work done today. Barometer up to 1018 M.B.

**1830 hours** - Becalmed. Finest day so far but getting cool now with sunset, which showed large and red. First day forages without spray and breaking crest coming aboard.

**TUESDAY - Day 17**

**0430 hours** - Wind W. by N., Force 2. Up No. 2, doing 2 knots. Swell from south today; the ocean is never idle. Jib flopping with odd big swell. Had a great sleep last night, Temperature 55°. Kept pants and shirt on in sleeping bag. Radar alarm bleeped twice during the night for no apparent reason. Submarines? Will never know.

**0700 hours** - Dolphin escort. Wind veered N.W. and jib holding full. Plenty of Portuguese men-of-war today. On same Latitude now as centre of Bay of Biscay. Swell from south due to a depression, which Yugoslavian skipper said was below us. Cannot complain as I need a break. Have a lot of work done on repairs and maintenance. Could have full main and Genoa up if sea were smooth. If my aunt had balls she would be my uncle. We are off course by 20° to keep jib full. Heading N.E. instead of E.N.E. Not worried about going high as the Labrador Current must be pushing us south. Another 200 miles and we will have it on our stern, along with the Gulf Stream.

Am thinking of my second breakfast as it is now 4 hours since my dawn one. Now fried eggs and tomatoes. Opened a different pack of crisp bread and find they are caraway flavored. UGH! Always read the small print. Am putting eggs into water to see if they will float, as some are a bit high. I have them in the bilge, but with the Gulf Stream at 70° to 80° it is not helping.

**0930 hours** - N.W. wind now, Force 3 and can hold course. Sky dotted with cumulus humilis, or clouds of fine weather, cotton wool clouds. Will have a snooze now. Took my first noon sight today. Beginning to hear jet planes and see trails. Barometer 1020 M.B. up x 3 since dawn. We are rolling a lot in cross seas but making good progress. Temperature now 650 and but for sun it would be cool.

**1700 hours** - Find it hard to believe day nearly gone. Just after a creamy chicken and sweet corn hot cup with crackers - would not look at them at home, but very tasty out here. It’s either the U.S. flavour or the sea air, but very tasty. Wind now Force 2, so have jib whiskered to keep it full. Lucky to have any wind today. Not a cloud in sight now, and it is lovely to look at the unbroken horizon. No rocks or reefs - a feeling of security exists.

**1820 hours** – Sunset - rosy and red, showing a pink hue on some upper Cirrus.

**2130 hours** - BECALMED

**WEDNESDAY Day 18**

**0430 hours** - Wind E.S.E., Force 2. Barometer down x 3 M.B. to 1018 M.B. Replaced main for storm main.

**0500 hours** - Close reaching at 5 knots. Sun rose red this morning and we now have divided Strato-Cumulus.

**0700 hours** —Strata-Cumulus filling in. Moderate sea.

**0800 hours** - Spoke with Norwegian out of Cape Canaveral, bound for Flushing in the Netherlands. Skipper to send report.

Had last two eggs, the rest were bad. Sky now overcast with fine drizzle. Wind has backed 150 and we are now pointing as high as possible at 600, instead of desired 750.

**1100 hours** - Replaced No. 2 with storm jib. Wind up now to force 5. Barometer falling slowly. Now on 750 since sail change as she balances very well under this rig. Doing a steady 6.knots. Norwegian Captain gave a good weather forecast, but said there was a depression south of us moving east. Raining now. No great sea motion, biggest swell is from the west and on our stern. Had a snooze since, while spuds were boiling and just finished one of my best meals: Mince and onions in spaghetti sauce, with spuds and peas.

**1330 hours** - Wind veered to S. by E. and we are now broad reaching at maximum speed. I held that Norwegian ship today for a long time; we were more or less on the same course. Normally, I have found, if you spot a ship on the horizon, it disappears in twenty minutes. My horizon is only three miles and they are with me in ten minutes.

1600 hours - Barometer falling steadily - 1014 M.B. A hotch potch of intermingling swells and waves are now making a very lumpy seaway.

**1800 hours** - Barometer 1011 N.B., a drop of 7 M.B. in nine hours. Wind has backed to E.xS and freshened to Force 6-7 Took storm main down for night and lashed the helm half-alee. No big seas running and if it were not for the whine in the rigging, would say it was only Force 3. Still raining. Is the heavy rain keeping the seas down? Visibility now poor.

**THURSDAY - Day 19**

**0300 hours** - Woke and thought my watch was wrong, as it is bright. Normally, lately, light wakes me at 0330 hours. Have we made that much easting? Wind now S. by W., Force 4-5. Barometer 1003 M.B. falling, a drop of 8 M.B. overnight. 15 M.B. down since 0900 hours yesterday. Are we in for it again? The night was wild enough, but not above Force 6-7. The way the glass was falling, I thought I might have too much in a jib. HITTING THE BUNK.

**0430 hours** - Backed to S.S.W. Porridge and slates with jam and tea. Would be lost without those plate springs over kettle and pot; they even keep my mug upright between the two springs, I can lift it out and put it back between them.

Sea motion bad now. Big swell, rom W.S.W., with waves from S.S.W. Went back to the bag for an hour. Having tea and crackers (last pack).

**0630 hours** - Storm main up and running east. Wind has veered to west. Rain easing.

1000 hours - Wind up. Down main. Rain stopped. Dipped bucket overboard and it was swept out of my hand - have a spare. Sky brightening to west.

**1100 hours** - Had a nice dinner of fried corned beef with onions and potatoes, left over since yesterday. Had a snooze, as I did not get much sleep last night.

**1130 hours** - Adjusted Nellie. Flying along. Wind now N.x W., Force 5-6. Rigging whining again. Barometer going up, now 1005 M.B.

**1400 hours** - Sky overcast, but dry and bright. Waves slapping into cockpit and over cabin top. Wind on port quarter since wind shift to N.W. Nellie doing a great job.

**1700 hours** - Snoozing a lot today. Looked out a while ago, as I often do, and saw a log about 14' long - it was only 30' from us and was covered with shells of some kind. First bit of flotsam in a long time. God only knows what you pass and do not see.

Will soon be approaching shipping lanes, so will have to be alert. 1815 hours - Sundown. NIGHT ALL.

**FRIDAY JUNE 26, - Day 20**

**0130 hours** - Woke to brightness, sky showing light of rising sun. On course, so back to sleeping bag.

**0400 hours** - Hoisted storm main. Wind still holding N.W. Lovely morning, sky clearing with sun. Must have missed a blow yesterday and the night before when barometer plummeted. Large swell from south today, against the standard one from S.W., which we nearly always have, plus smaller waves being kicked up by N.W. wind, which are making for a very lively sea motion. Had a great sleep of seven hours last night and feel A.1. Needed if after previous night. Had a ship on the Locata early last night, but very distant.

**0600 hours** - Wind now west and we are running fast. Now on same Latitude as Brest at North tip of Biscay. Had my last Onion Hot Cup with the last of crackers. Lovely sunny fresh day. Nellie doing a superb job as we are going with the following wind. Barometer 1008 M.B. A little less than 900 miles now remaining.

Gulf Stream not as strong now - 0 to 20 miles per day. I am allowing 10 miles assistance per day.

**1400 hours** - Dropped storm main and still doing 5 knots under storm jib. Been busy all day: Sextant- noon sight; Lunch of sardines, last tomato, onion and last apple; checking course, sails1and adjusting Nell. Big N.W. cross-swell now coming across waves. Glad I took down main. You always carry sail when you would not dream of putting it up. Storm jib up three days at 1100 hours today. It is a great sail and still as good as the day I bought the boat. Have plenty of work to do if ocean calms. Must change battery for one, in case I do not get a chance when approaching coast, although I have only made 4 V.H.F. contacts. The Locata uses minimal current and other than that, barometer checking, navigation lights, and very little use of cabin lights, which means I do not use much power. Barometer is low at 1008 M.B. for such a clear day.

Great not having to get into gear when going out, although I got a shirt and pullover wet today, taking the noon sight.

**1600 hours** - Cuppa with a snack pack of peanut butter and biscuits and a bag of crisps. Saw a Windog (A butt of a rainbow on the horizon) to south under dark Cumulus. I have a habit of scanning the horizon every half hour or so.

**1700 hours** - Making good headway. Shower masses on horizon now. Would dearly love a big bag of chips now, or rashers, black pudding, eggs and toast. I am trying to think of something tasty for tea. The only thing I can come up with is Tomato Hot Cup, so I have the kettle on. I have piles of tinned meats, veg. and fruit, but they do not grab me.

**1815 hours** - Sun setting. Two big rain showers on horizon. So far they have kept clear of us. NIGHT, NIGHT.

**SATURDAY - Day 21**

**0300 hours** - A wild night with showers and squalls, but slept O.K. Plenty of big showers moving and one now hitting us. Wind increases with them up to Force 7 with Force 5-6 in between. Heavy rain, as always, helps to keep seas down a little. Wind S.S.W. and comfortable under storm jib. Showers approach from the west and go across the wind at an angle. Have never seen it before. Sun in between and large Cumulus. Not easy keeping mug to gob.

**0636 hours** - Gybed jib. Going too high at 65. On 80 now.

Odd big breaking wave broaching us, but Nell quickly brings us back again. Very little water coming aboard - an odd slap from abeam only.

**0600 hours** - Showers easing and clouds thinning. Day much as yesterday but wind stronger - a steady Force 6. Another day confined to barracks. Was just shaking one of two Pan Am 1st Class serviettes, which I took as souvenirs. I always use them on the bunk when eating as they hold crumbs. They also help to keep dish from sliding around. Whoosh: A big buggering wave sloshed over the washboard and hit the cooker and chart table, which occupy the port bunk. Dried it up and am back on floor. Never took bunk cushions up this morning. Motion too wild. The one good thing about all this wind is it is pushing us steadily home.

Plotted yesterday's run of 130 miles. Whine in rigging seems to be easing. S.S.W. now, Force 5-6. Barometer 1005 M.B., falling slowly. More blue in sky.

**0930 hours** - Large Cumulus filling in. Large black shower masses back again with wind up to Force 6-7 in them. Broaching again.

**1430 hours** - Wind increased steadily until now when it veered west, Force 7. Had some spuds with a tin of veg. and beef sometime ago. You do not feel like cooking in these conditions, but you can't live on snacks and Hot Cups. When it is cooked you are glad. Is it lethargy, or what?

Waves from wind are now much bigger and longer, but are being hindered by cross-swells from N.W. and South. It is difficult to judge wind strength – the noise in rigging, wave crests, speed of boat, spray from crests being blown away and water on deck are a fair indication.

**1500 hours** - Lying a hull facing south. Wind now Force 8-9. We are at a constant angle of heel. Except for rolling, motion is easy enough. Got a bad broach before taking down a jib, which gives you the message, very fast. Barometer 1004. Taking very little water aboard, Every now and then you get a breaking wave, which thumps us below the waterline.

Feeling much happier now, than running at speed. Nellie was under pressure and I was anxious she would suffer no damage. Wind howling now in rigging and sky covered with large Cumulus.

**1800 hours** - Barometer steady at 1004 M.B. Kettle on for cocoa.

**SUNDAY - Day 22**

**0300 hours** - Slept well enough, considering angle and rolling. Noise of breaking waves and rigging tiring. Wind down to Force 7 since 0300 hours, when I set Nell. We are now under bare pole and rigging. Motion much easier. Just finished porridge.

**0500 hours** - Wind still west but increasing steadily. Storm jib up. Very long deep waves with plenty of lumps in between.

Had only one cross swell today, from N.W. Sky clearing to west. A spectacular morning, to say the least. You get the feeling of the immense power of the ocean. Sky now blue, bar the odd Cumulus.

**0600 hours** - Force 5-6 now. Hope we get a break today, although seas will take a while to settle after yesterday's and last night's wind. Plenty of big galloping white horses charging down on us. Not easy to scan the horizon this morning.

**0800 hours** - Barometer 1008 M.B.

**1300 hours** - Barometer 1009 M.B.

Logged 55 miles, 9 hour sailing, with 15 hours lying a hull. Same Latitude now as Cherbourg with 660 miles remaining.

Expect to see plenty of shipping from now on. Had a tin of savoury mince and onions with spuds, left from yesterday, mixed through it and a whole tin of fruit for dessert.

**1400 hours** - Have long johns on today for first time. West wind now Force 4-5 - very cold. Was out, adjusting Nellie and checking foredeck. Spinnaker uphaul was flapping last night. Great to see rise of 4 M.B. since last night. Could do with a rest from this prolonged strong wind. Seas settling down a little: big swell with lumps between. But no heavy water coming aboard, but plenty in cockpit and over cabin all morning. Took my charts for Irish West Coast.

**1800 hours** **-** dusk. Wind still from west, force5-6. Barometer 1010. Temperature 54°. Will leave storm jib up.

**MONDAY - Day 23**

**0400 hours** - Wind was up a few times during the night and had veered to W.x N. Barometer 1016 M.B., up 3 M.B. since midnight. Sky overcast with Strato-Cumulus. Sea motion much easier.

**0700 hours** - Force 4-5. Cooler than yesterday. Extra pullover on today. Saw a pair of white, forked-tailed birds, smaller than Shear Waters and giving a high chirpy sound.

**1000 hours** - Opened a tin of sausage and veg., along with a tin of mushrooms and have half of each in a pot for dinner. Sun out now and then as sky is clearing. 1019 M.B. Wind now N.W. and we are romping along under storm jib.

**1200 hours** - Plenty of sun now. Motion wild again with a quartering wind N.W., Force 5. A beautiful fresh clear day. Hatch and washboards closed, due to crests.

Days run = 106 miles. 554 miles left, according to my D.R. position on chart. Now past point of Great Circle Route, where we go down.

**1430 hours** - N.W.x N. Force 4-5. Hoisted storm main. Wind easing.

**TUESDAY, Day 24**

Wind held true and steady overnight. 0800 hours - N.W. Force 3-4.

**0900 hours** - Noon sight.

**1300 hours** - Wind shifting 5° to 10° last three hours.

**1500 hours** - Wind backed to West and eased to Force 3. Vanged boom.

**1630 hours** - Main slatting, but doing 3-4 knots. 1730 hours - BE ALMED.

**WEDNESDAY - Day 25**

**0200 hours** - S.W. breeze - Force 3. Up main and jib. Had a great sleep and feel great. No water coming aboard. Past few days gave me a rest. Without oilies and boots.

**1000 hours** - Wind backed to the south. Now broad reaching at maximum speed. Had my second breakfast since: Porridge, slates, cheese and tea. Spent a lot of time on navigation. Laid off a course on final leg of Great Circle Route. My noon sight of yesterday put me 50 miles behind my D.R. position, but after six days, which included a gale, I am more than satisfied. 458 miles left. Would like to meet a ship to confirm my navigation and get a message home.

Had to dump butter, which was not nice for last few days. I bought salted butter, thinking it would hold. I imagine it was made with a view to being kept in a fridge. So,

I am now onto either: Honey, jam or marmalade.

Saw my first seagulls this morning.

Making excellent headway, but getting very bored with remaining food - little variety. Miss butter, bread eggs, fresh milk, tomatoes and bacon. Must cook some rice today.

Took another noon sight, which confirms yesterday's. Days run = 130 miles.

**1430 hours** - Still doing maximum Seed. Had a tin of corned beef hash, for dinner, with half a grapefruit, before and after it.

Hearing sonic booms again. Radar alarm bleeped furiously for no apparent reason, unless submarines. Temperature 62, with southerly wind.

Playing Russian Roulette again these last few days, adjusting Nell. Have got away with it so far, saves me getting into wet gear.

**1900 hours** - Just had rice with raisins and honey for supper. Showers around for last hour, but slow moving. Will leave rig up for night. NIGHT AGAIN.

**THURSDAY - Day 26**

**0400 hours** - Just up, and still romping along. Checked at 0030 hours and 0200 hours, during night.

It is satisfying to find you have covered miles by night, and in the right direction. Wind still south, Force 3-4. If this wind and weather holds it will make a landfall much faster and easier. Can hardly wait to plot days run.

Can feel myself getting excited and apprehensive, approaching land. Will rig transistor to V.H.F. aerial after plotting days run and see if I can pick up R.T.E. I failed to get batteries for my transistor in America and am relying on batteries I had since last year.

**0600 hours** - Ship just passed to port, going west. Could see lettering on her stern, but could not make contact. Pity, would like to have got word home. After eight days, to see a ship, so near to land, it is disappointing not to get a reply. If I do not get a reply from the next ship, I will change batteries, although it will not be easy with this sea motion.

**0800 hours** - 1023 M.B. Wind steady.

Took another noon sight. Will leave it for a while to work out. It is tiring on the eyes, trying to keep the sun on the horizon.

**1200 hours** - Working hard since, between lunch and navigation. Confirmed today's run at 130 miles. Maths or navigation do not come easily to me, but it is very satisfying, when finished, to find you know where you are -333 miles left.

Four pairs of socks airing under sprayhood, washed them last night. First time I used fresh water, except for cooking. Temperature 630, highest for two weeks and have pullover off.

**0230 hours** - 1024 M.B. Can get R.T.E. and B.B.C. on transistor. Will be able to get weather forecast, approaching coast.

**1600 hours** - Dinner of beef and veg. with a tin of tomatoes. I read once that tomatoes hold all their vitamins, when tinned.

Plenty of sonic booms and contrails in sky. Locata bleeping for no reason again. Planes must activate it.

Looking forward to being on land again. Great to have transistor for company.

**1600 hours** - Wind eased during last hour - lucky to be broad reaching; could never keep sails full otherwise. Moderate swell from west with waves from southerly wind, causing us to roll. Just changed up to No. 2 jib. Wind now S. x W., Force 3-4. Could have full main up, but feel tired, after a busy day. Will see tomorrow. Beginning to smoke more, now that we are getting near land.

**FRIDAY - Day 27**

**0100 hours** - Wind backed to south again. 1024 M.B. As and from to-

day, changing to Irish time. My eldest son, Jim, had given me a present of an earphone radio, which I had forgotten, and it is giving a good reception to Irish and European stations. It is magic to me as the other would only work when hooked up to V.H.F. aerial and earthed to keel. Great to be in touch with Ireland. I forget that I am wearing earphones, at times, and get tangled up.

Amazed to have sighted only one ship these last nine days. Lucky, in one way, but would dearly love to get word home. You must all be very worried, as I am, thinking of you.

Today is lovely, if a little hazy. Sea is as smooth as you can get it.

Under full main and Genoa since 0700 hours. Wind now S. x E., Force 3-4. We are pointing at 1000M, by 0900 hours can make 90°M.

**1500 hours** - 180 miles from Inisteracht Light, which lies off the Blasket Island group, the most westerly light in Europe. Also, saw a ship on horizon, going west. If this wind holds, should be in the Shannon on Sunday.

Listening to radio often now, and find it is relaxing and takes my mind off landfall, which is always a worry after so many days at sea.

**2030 hours** - Weather forecast gives a ridge of high pressure, extending from Azores to Scandinavia. Days run = 114 miles. Clear blue sky all day. Wind still holding from S.E., since early yesterday.

Cannot wait to see Mount Brandon, which is the second highest mountain in Ireland. It lies to the South West of the mouth of the Shannon and is 3,129 feet high.

I had made out a list of aids to assist my landfall, while at sea and they may be of interest:

* Contrails
* Shipping
* Radio
* R.D.F.
* Echosounder
* Birds
* Trawlers

The contrails certainly let you know you are near busy Europe, but to give an indication of a position, are useless. The sky today would remind one of the railway lines of some great marshalling yard.

Shipping, though I have only seen two in the last nine days, and these in the last two days, tell me I am opposite the Western approaches.

The transistor is directional and is giving me bearings, as 410 it did approaching Newport, last year. It is very reassuring.

The Echosounder is, unfortunately, not working as I could not get batteries for it either in the States.

Birds, like the seagulls are beautiful to see.

Will leave rig up for night.

**SATURDAY - Day 28**

**0500 hours** - On course during the night, good headway made. Two trawlers on eastern horizon. Perfect morning. On bucket in cockpit, watching dolphins playing and the first Gannet I have seen, diving nearby.

Have never felt better than this morning and attribute it to trawlers, birds and jets, plus the radio, which makes me feel at home. Have kettle on again for second cuppa, first time, so far. I bought a large unbreakable mug in a Newport giant supermarket, for 99 cents, full of hot coffee, and it is normally ample.

Passed within 300 yards of one trawler and could hear the crew's voices. They did not answer my V.H.F. call. It would be nice to have spoken with them. They were too busy.

We are lucky to be pointing in this light S.E. wind, otherwise could never keep sails full.

Medium swell coming from west and south. Not a white horse, or a foal to be seen. Another clear sunny day. Doing a handy 4 knots, and will be happy to keep it up. Not a cloud in sight. Temp. 58° and already have pullover off. Would love bacon and eggs and toast now. Have a tin of beans on now, for breakfast, really enjoy them with slates.

**1300 hours** - Ideal sailing conditions. Doing 4-5 knots now. Sky cloudless. Tidied cabin and cockpit lockers; cleaned and disinfected bilges, which had built up a sludge; oiled rusting tools and checked rigging and Nellie. Will have to think of dinner soon. Heading E.S.E. for last hour. Had tuna with raw onion, followed by a tin of peaches. Days run = 114 miles. 80 miles left now to Inistearacht.

**1800 hours** - Wind now easterly, Force 2.

**1900 hours** - BECALMED. Swell very reasonable for Atlantic. Have had Gannets diving around boat all day.

**2200 hours** - Sun went down over horizon in a ball of fire. Changed battery today.

**SUNDAY - Day 29**

**0500 hours** - Still becalmed. What wind we have is from the east. 1025 M.B.

**0700 hours** - Mixed swells keeping us rolling, biggest from the west. Will hear what the Met Boys have to say: "Light winds"!

**1000 hours** - Going to be a trying day - not a puff now. Rolling not so bad, at least you can stay on the bunk, if you are on your back.

Just finished what was left of yesterday's tuna, with a tin of peas. Three seagulls sitting on the water, 10' to 12" feet astern and they will not eat 'slates'.

**1200 hours** - Still becalmed.

Plenty of flies around, but not Irish, they have a coloured back, like a wasp. Killing them off, as they are a real nuisance - I am not used to them. Am watching two of them on the wind vane.

Getting ready for a sextant sight. Checked water tank and find 7-10 gallons left; clothes out airing, everywhere.

**1500 hours** - Still rolling. Three trawlers to north.

Did another wash, now that water is not a problem. Sextant sight was far from easy, due to rolling. Will calculate it later, too warm - we are not going anywhere, anyway. Noon sight shows we are 50-60 miles from land.

Sailing since 1700 hours to light N.W. wind, giving us 3 knots. Logged 16 miles yesterday.

**MONDAY, 6th July - Day 28**

**0400 hours** - N.W. wind holding well, now Force 3-4 - 6 knots. Barometer 1021 M.B.

**0500 hours** - Changed to storm main and jib. N.W. wind now Force 4-5.

**0700 hours** - N.W., Force 3-4. Changed up to No. 2 jib.

4-5 knots. Should sight Kerry Mountains today if wind holds.

**1200 hours** - I think I can see land, there is a dark blue patch on horizon. Could it be clouds? Plenty of which there are. Decided after standing on the goose neck, and holding the mast, I would have some grub, and, will not look for an hour.

Had a tin of chicken peas with slates and two mugs of tea. Waited until 1330 hours - to be sure. Yes, lovely Irish land. Thank God. Excited as bedamned. Will now be able to get word home, after twelve days, as I close with Valentia Radio Station.

**1400 hours** - Can now distinguish between hills and mountains, they are still blue coloured. So far I cannot identify the shape of Mount Brandon. Who cares anyway, it is land and Irish land. I have sailed from Kinsale and Baltimore, the west coast often. I think I recognize Mount Gabriel in Co. Cork.

**2100 hours** - Can barely see the green colour on the land.

**2130 hours** - Picked out the Fastnet Lighthouse, blinking away to starboard. Decided to try to contact Lightkeepers. Immediately after calling Fastnet Lightkeepers, Valentia came in loud and clear. They asked for my position. I advised the Fastnet Rock was to starboard of me. They were exceptionally nice. I told them I was 28 days out of Rhode Island, bound for the Shannon. They asked for my home number and said they would contact my family and call back. At this stage, I was not too sure of my battery, so I told them I would listen every 5 minutes after the hour. At 2205 they called saying they had spoken with Helen. I gave an E.T.A. of two days, upon request, and they asked me to make contact again the following day.

The W.N.W. wind had held a steady Force 4-5 since 0200 hours, but I still held, on to the No. 2 jib and storm main. Spray had been flying and now at 2300 hours it was easing somewhat. We were at 2350 on the starboard tack, so I hit the bunk. Midnight on R.T.E. gave a ridge of high pressure over Ireland with N.W. winds, Force 1-4 for the West Coast, with clear skies.

**TUESDAY, JULY 7th - Day 29**

**0700 hours** - Glad I was pushed south. Captain Healy of the Irish National Sail Training Vessel, "Asgard II", advised me to approach Ireland from the N.W. Fortunately, I did not take his advice, as the Cork and Kerry mountain scenery, as seen from seaward at dawn, is only spectacular.

The Skellig Rocks are showing up to the North, as is the Brandon Rangeiand Mt. Eagle to the East. Dursey Island, with the Bull, Cow and Calf, is framed by a large joggle of mountain peaks. South of us is Mizzen Head, where our Prime Minister, Charlie Haughey, lost his boat in poor visibility.

I had wrongly assumed that the Gulf Stream was pushing us up the west coast as I approached land. In fact, I had allowed for it. What I did not allow for was that it also flowed through the western approaches and the Irish Sea.

Had a Hot Can of beef casserole with slates for breakfast. Will have porridge for ll’s. My appetite is enormous since landfall. Anxiety before that had me only nibbling.

We have a north wind now of Force 3-4, which is the first header of the voyage. It will slow down my E.T.A., but I cannot complain.

Sat in cockpit, after breakfast, admiring Mount Eagle and Mount Brandon, with a mug of tea and a cigarette. Feel very relaxed for the first time in days.

**1100 hours** - Wind still north, but down, Force 2-3. Full main and Genoa.

**1500 hours** - Passed to leeward of Skellig Michael to see Gannets. Too close, and lost wind for a time, but not the smell of "guano", I would say you could shovel it off, the rock is white-washed with it. Had a good dinner of spuds and peas with a tin of sausage and veg. Am eating voraciously.

Am making good progress in spite of head wind. Was 40 miles south of my expected landfall, last evening, but after 3,000 miles, I am happy. The weather has been kind to me. As I write here today, in Kerry, which is not too far from my landfall, visibility is down to 1,000 yards, with rain and wind. A landfall with weather which we had for 90% of the voyage, could have been very tricky indeed. Again, I was fortunate with a daylight landfall.

**1800 hours** - Contacted Valentia again, advising I was mid-way across Dingle Bay and heading for the Blasket Island Sound, which I hope to get through before dark. Making good progress despite headwind. Dusk now as I glide through the smoothest water of the voyage, in the lee of the Great Blasket Island. Was fortunate to have last of spring flood through the Sound. The Sound is notorious for its strength of tidal flow. The Blasket Archipeligo stretches westward for about 9 miles. The Sound is approximately one mile wide, which causes very bad overfalls in certain wind and tide conditions.

**2100 hours** - Now approaching top tide; wind N.E. barely filling sails. On starboard tack to clear Islands, as I do not fancy drifting back through tricky channels in the dark on a strong ebb tide. Cleared Inistooskert (Northern Island) and continued out to sea. Slept sitting up, fitfully, in cockpit. Three ships passed me, coming south from the Shannon.

**0300 hours** - Decided to have a sleep, sitting up in cabin, I was getting cold in the cockpit. A wind shift at this stage could bring me into danger in a few hours.

**0700 hours** - Woke up to broad daylight, stretched out on bunk, the wind had died and the boom flying about had wakened me.

Brandon Mountain was abeam, 3 miles to the East. R.T.E. forecasting S.W. Winds, Force 3-4 and sure enough at 1000 hours a light S.W. was filling the No. 2 Jib.

Shortly afterward I was able to hoist the main and a poled out Genoa. We were on course for Kerry Head, the southern most headland of the Shannon.

**1200 hours** - Contacted Valentia again. Told them I was half-way across Tralee Bay; gave them my destination, i.e., Tarbert, which I hoped to reach that evening, if the wind held. Tarbert Island is joined to the mainland by a causeway. It lies approximately 25 miles inside the mouth of the river. There is a ferry operating from it to the opposite shore in Co. Clare. This I knew would facilitate my family and friends.

You might wonder why I did not make radio telephone calls. I had not the channel on my V.H.F, the channels I had on my old, but good, Seavoice V.H.F. were 6-8-12-14-16-25-26-27.

The wind held steady at Force 3-4 from the S.W.

**1200 hours** - Kerry Head abeam and we are in the Shannon. I could see another sailing boat approaching from the north.

It turned out to be Manfred and his crew, to welcome me back. You may recall, Manfred was the gentleman at the dance, run of his back pocket. Shortly after my son, Pat, Jnr., joined us in his own boat. It was great to see them.

**0600 hours** - The wind eased. I tried to raise Valentia, without success, to tell them it would be dark before I made Tarbert. The Skipper of the Tarbert Ferry came on instead. John, my son, was on board and we had a great chat. I told him we would make Tarbert after dark.

**0700 hours** - Wind minimal.

**8000 hours** - I heard the unmistakeable sound of Brian Cullen's seaplane. Brian runs Derg Marineron Lough Derg, where he gave me facilities before my first voyage. He landed in smooth water and taxied alongside. It was nice of him and I was beginning to feel at home again.

We were only a few miles from Tarbert when a launch, chartered by The Limerick Leader newspaper, arrived with cameramen. After the usual photos, I dropped my sails for the last time on my voyage and accepted a tow.

My nephew, John Lavery, was on board, along with his wife, Catherine. John told me there was a large crowd on the pier awaiting me. Indeed there was, as we rounded Cook's Point I saw the pier crowded with my family, friends, supporters and the great people of Tarbert, and they were all cheering and waving. It was marvellous to see them all, especially Nance, Helen and the boys, my support committee and their wives, Betty, my sister and sailing friends from the estuary and lake.

I will never forget the emotion I felt that evening on the pier, after tying up, hugging Nance and Helen. Eddie McCarthy, of my support committee, handed me a bottle of champers and I sprayed the lot.

We walked to the Shannon Bar, run by my old friend. Liz had lovely salmon sandwiches made, I remember them well. Gin and tonics were appearing faster than I could down them.

That night we stayed with Nancy's sister, Joan. The breakfast of bacon, sausages, pudding, eggs, bread and butter was stupendous. Then, back to the Island for T.V. and Radio interviews.

I left Tarbert the next day and proceeded leisurely up the Shannon, escorted by Joe Cusack in his Southern Comfort. Joe had bushed my rudder pintles last year before departure.

We stopped at Foynes, tying up alongside son John's tug. I thank Joe, his skipper, for his words of encouragement. A lovely salad was had in the saloon. From there I went to New Quay, Askeaton. Harry Blackwell was waiting for me in his fishing boat, at the mouth of the Deel River. Nance hails from Askeaton. There is a lovely winding sail up the Askeaton River, passing islands, rocks and mudflats. I used to moor the Galway Hooker there. In the winter I spent many a day wildfowling and the spring would see me salmon fishing on its upper reaches. It is about half an hours sails in from the Shannon to a very sheltered and hospitable place. Had more celebrations in Askeaton and stayed the night with the Blackwells. Another lovely breakfast. The next day, Saturday, I sailed up to Limerick with Harry Blackwell escorting me in his fishing boat. We stopped en route to say hello to Johnny Greene of Greene's Island. It was here I used to sail down to in my open boat, as a teenager. Over the years Johnny and I shot geese, duck, plover, curlew and snipe. Johnny joined Harry and I hauled the anchor for my last nine miles to Limerick.

As we approached Limerick Docks, we were joined by other boats with my friends shouting and waving. Going through the dock gates, fire fighting hoses arched over us. A large crowd was assembled on the pier, including the Deputy Mayor, Chairman and members of the Limerick Harbour Commissioners, family, relations, support committee and friends. That evening, in the Limerick Boat Club, a reception was held in my honour.

There is very little more I can say. The following day the Limerick Harbour Commissioner gave me a reception and presentation in their chambers. I was made an honorary member of Limerick Boat Club, Iniscealtra Sailing Club and Garrykennedy Sailing Club and the Limerick City Council gave me a Civic Reception.

I write here in Gortadoo, looking across Smerwick Harbour to Mount Brandon on the Dingle Penninsula, Co. Kerry. Sometimes, when I tire, I walk down the few yards to the deserted strand and there I sweep the horizon, as I often did daily, while at sea. There is some magic out there. I have seen it. I hope you also do. People ask me: "What are your next plans?" At present I am satisfied, but who knows. Time only can tell.

**Gortadoo,**

**Ballyferriter, Co. Kerry.**

**October, 1987**

**Reflections**

Perhaps the biggest event in my two voyages was my first departure. I was alone, the wind and weather were not good and there was the unknown ocean awaiting me, 4,000 miles of it, but I went and was glad I did. During my life I have always found that in any difficult situation, the first step is the hardest and after that each step is easier.

In the many books I had read on ocean voyages, gear failure was common. Shrouds coming adrift or parting. Maybe I was lucky, but I was always conscious of it and maintenance was always attended to and never forgotten. I never over-pressed "Iniscealtra". We met two strong gales on both voyages, the worst being on Lat. 36 N., going across. On more than one occasion, during that, I found myself lying on the inside of the topside. The following morning my ribbons on the capping shrouds were up to the spreaders. My Irish friends told me later that I was in a Force 9 tail end of a hurricane as they were plotting my track, from my position reports. I only mention this because many people have asked me about strong winds encountered. Choosing the right time for favorable weather and day light is a must.

I was also fortunate not to have met winds opposing the Gulf Stream. If I were doing it again, I would keep further south than the position I was at, below the Grand Banks.

In dirty weather, where the Labrador Current meets the Gulf Stream, it could be very tricky.

The most useful items aboard were the two small plate springs, without them I would seldom have been able to cook. Not once did they let a kettle or pot go astray. The gimbals on the stove were never used. After the first day, the cooker was fixed in the rigid position. Before doing that, it was like the giant wheel at a carnival.

I had a bare seven months to prepare and plan my voyage, and without my magnificent seven's invaluable assistance, I doubt would have succeeded. Maybe a lot of people have dreams of voyaging, my seven told me they had and said it was the nearest they could come to doing it. In fact they all enjoyed it, even though they had, at times, to really work hard.

On the outward voyage, the heat was rough, but I never burned, as I was always careful. This route requires plenty of light-salad type food. Fruit was great and grapefruit which I seldom eat at home, came into its own, it lasted until the end and was delicious in the heat. I should have brought more fruit drinks, as it is usually too warm for tea. A lighter Genoa and Main would be useful on this route, as I found my sails were too heavy for the light winds often encountered.

Half tins of food are plenty big for a single hander. There is nothing worse than to see unfinished beans, spinach, or what have you, waiting for the next meal if not around the cabin sole. I was always careful of hot water and sharp knives.

The greatest facility I had was undoubtedly being able to get messages of my progress home. To know that my family and friends knew of my safety and well-being was a great morale booster. The captains and mates with whom I spoke were always nice to me. Some of them likened me to Ulysses or the Flying Dutchman. Most of them enquired if I was O.K. for food and water. Maybe I brightened their day also. At least I hope I did. There is a great brotherhood amongst seafarers no creed or racial barriers exist out there.

The log not working produced no hassle whatsoever. I found I was able to judge speed very accurately, by dropping papers or rubbish overboard. If anything, I over-judged it.

I carried three batteries outward and one was the original, which I got with "Iniscealtra", there was one cell gone but it carried me beyond the Azores, where I dumped it. The second brought me to Newport and I had, therefore, one spare upon arrival. After lying up all winter, the same two batteries brought me home. I seldom used lights at night, being asleep, anyway. The navigation lights were seldom used either. The Radar Alarm was one of the most useful pieces of equipment I carried. All my electrics were working after both voyages, which is a great tribute to Mike Kinsella, who fitted them, complete with a fuse box.

John. Harrington, of my support committee, kindly made and fitted a boarding ladder to "Iniscealtra" When I fitted the log to its bracket, I found the line was touching it and maybe that is why it malfunctioned. Anyway, I unbolted the ladder and let it sink to the bottom. If I had fallen overboard, unless in a calm, I doubt I would have been able to grab it. The self steering auxiliary rudder would have served as one, just as well. I doubt if a rope, trailed astern, would have been of any assistance if I had gone overboard, unless in light weather.

My main purpose in writing these notes, apart from setting it dawn for my grand-children, is not to make money, which would be useful if it is ever published as it is an expensive sport anyway, but to inspire other sailors to believe in the magic of their dreams.