**Panama – Home**

**Wen. 20.03.96**

**20.25H**

Arrived to Boga Islands 8nm from Panama City. Left Contadora Island at 11.15h with flood tide & arrived 19.00h & after a good passage with a spanking N x E wind. Best sailing for a long time. Averaged 5KN for 38nm. I must say I truly enjoyed my week in Contadora & the many nice friends I made there. Marvellous nightly entertainment at hotel & entertainment staff. Postal & fax facilities at hotel also & superb buffet meals.

**Thur. 21.03.96**

**18.10H**

Went ashore & phoned Dan & had an american breakfast at hotel for $5 U.S. Lovely crispy bacon & 2 eggs & toast & marmalade & tea. Then found post office which had no stamps or envelopes, don’t worry. Toured Tobago, lovely town & surroundings & church. Bought bread, eggs, & tea & 2 glasses water as day was hot. Visited craft shops, etc. & all in all had a lovely day. No bank. Don’t worry.

**Fri. 22.03.96**

Up at 10.30h for Balboa & arrived no hassle at 13.30h. No hassle with a mooring & club provides taxis (water) buckshee if you don’t count regular fee & 35c a foot per day. Went to the post office & got away many letters & cards & parcel of gifts for Dan to distribute. Called to bar of club upon return & had gin and tonic & beer with a Canadian & American couple & I am invited to join the Canadian couple on Monday for transit thro canal, so that will be interesting.

**Saturday 23.03.96**

Slept well last night & in fact, got up at 08.15h. 01.00h when I got back from the pub, so I had 7 hours solid sleep after an exciting & happy day. Had lunch in club again today, bueno. Lovely corvine fish. A cutlet that covered plate with salad, garlic bread & French fries & 2 glasses iced water. Jesus but hot today, 93°, have shade cloth over boom & wind sock over f/match. Must be the big lunch. Spent afternoon on board “Loon” had a siesta, tidying, etc.

**23.00H**

Went ashore to club after Ettiane & Jennie called me on channel 6 to join them for dinner at 18.00. Nice evening with nice amigos.

**24.03.96 Domingo Day 2 Balboa**

**04.35H**

Yesterday I forgot to say I met at the craft market, a retired, full blown U.S. Army General who had fought in 3 wars. The 2nd World War, Vietnam & Korea. Woke to make a piss & found I had enough sleep & that I also felt thirsty, even though I had 2 pots of tea before bunk. Also spoke to a nice U.S. Forces Darkie Army Guy & his missus. Had forgotten how nice Yanks are. Both Yanks told me that the canal will be go downhill slowly after they hand it over in 2,000 A.D. That will be one of my biggest milestones if I am lucky with my health. Balboa on the Pacific Entrance to the Panama Canal is truly fascinating for me, with ships moving out of, or into the canal & water being flushed out of the Peord Miguel & Miraflores Locks.

**Tue 26.03 Day 5**

**10.00H**

Pilot aboard & through locks into Caribbean & Panama Canal yacht club. Overnight on Mandala after a nice day, lunch & dinner at yacht club & pool.

**Good Friday**

Mechanic due but did not appear. Stayed on “Loon” all day, yachtclub closed. Big shower & washed in it.

**Easter Saturday. 6.4. Day 15**

**07.30H**

All yesterday slept. Except for food & fun. Morning pitch black & very humid.

**21.00H**

Had a really beautiful day. Left early & walked to other side of channel via suspension bridge at 100mph.

**Easter Sunday. 7.04 – Day 16**

Mechanic fin engine yesterday. Removed & cleaned injectors – ashore. Also cleaned lower fuel filter. Paid him $150 for materials & labour. Money well spent as engine long overdue for fuel filter, etc. So will ring re transit as arranged maniania. Just as well I discovered fault in pump before canal transit. Tidied boat after mechanic, stowed tools, etc. Had a second breakfast at U.S. Forces Golf Club, bacon & eggs & tea & toast & marmalade. I had a turkey dinner before returning to boat for more tidying, etc.

**Sunday. 31.03. Day 9**

The most relaxing day since I arrived. Arranged with Ettiane to have him & Jennie act as line handlers for my canal transit.

**Mon. 1.04. Day 10**

Visited Canal Office & arranged for “Loon” to be measured maniana. Also bought food in Panama.

**Tue. 02.04. Day 11**

Went downstream at 08.15h after refuel & water intake, at club dock & I off as instructed by V.H.F. Boat measured. Stayed at I as fresh. N/E wind sprung up & stayed until sunset, so came back to club mooring in the dark ok. Shot video of canal traffic & surrounding area. 2 liners & much merchant shipping.

**Wen. 3.04. Day 12**

Paid $204 U.S. to transit canal but advised transit delayed & I am to ring next Monday RE same. Returned to Loon after post office & bank. Discovered a fault in water pump of engine & had mechanic check it out.

Great to have made transit in one day. Ettiane & Jennie got bus back to Balboa. Also porky. Jetty berth at P.C.Y.C. $9 U.S. per day.

**Fri. 12.4. Day 1 Colon**

Spent a relaxing day basking under palm trees alongside jetty & visited local supermarket for supplies around 14.00h. Taxied back & slugged a pitchard of beer at club for $3. Highlight – gin and tonic under palm trees after sunset with blanket on ground, transistor candle, the works. 23.30h – 85°

**Thur. 18. Day 7 – 18th Apr.**

Every day now a few jobs & now only waiting on word from re credit so I can get second G.P.S. & an echo sounder. Fax from Dan, but no mention of credit. He gave me correct no for Gaybo, can’t understand he logging info on book. As I stated in my fax that Marion Malone was on for job as she has been involved & interested from the beginning as was Matt.

**Fri. 19. Day 8 – Colon**

Cristobal – Fax from Dan & credit will be ok next Wen. John “Cherokee”, brought echo sounder & G.P.S. Echo sounder checked by Ettiane & ok & he will check G.P.S.

**Monday. 22.04**

Faxed Tony with instructions to pass onto Dan for Gaybo show – called immigration RE dep’ formalities. Cleaned self-steering rudder & got anti fouling from Pelagio. At 07.30, got Chinese sticks for mossies at super market after faxing. No screws at hardware unless you buy hinges, amazing. Got charts from Ettiane from here to Miami. Researched my notes of voyage for Gaybo interview.

**Tue. 23.04 - 12 Dias Cristobal.**

Printed rudder of s/stg & fitted it back on boat. Be busy topping up diesel – water, etc. & buying stores tomorrow.

**Thur. 25.04. Day 14**

Up early to visit veg market & supermarket which had a hardware section, for paint, engine oil, screws, silicone, etc. So nearly there with stores, etc. Looks like Maniana will finish departure preparations & Saturday will leave for San Blas. Collected gas from tropic gas $9.70 & connect 30lb bottle. Very humid & overcast day with E wind. From N’Y since binge Los Perlos. Shot a few games of pool in club bar, second time since Arrwelli.

**Sunday. 28. Day 17**

Yesterday & last night very hot & humid with mostly overcast skies & trying to rain with much lightening. Stow canned food, fix echo sounder – study charts – Rained from noon to 18.00h. Met Ken & Helen for drinks at club bar.

**Tue. 30.04. Day 20**

Topped up & connected new G.P.S. – Stowed & packed fruit.

**Wen. 1 May. Day 21**

Got final 3 charts of Cuba to be sure from Warren, a nice Kiwi who had been all around its coast & had come from Jamaica to here en route to the South Sea Islands. Programmed & checked new G.P.S.

**Thur. 2 May. Day 22**

Bank – photos – photocopy three charts from Etianne as he gave me an extension lead for new G.P.S. aerial. Filled water tanks – Got remaining food & hardware. Now only a few jobs left before departure Sun.

**Fri. 3 May. Day 23**

Sent fax to Dan advising of departure etc. & sent parcel with presents. El Ray sh/cev for remaining items including cigs, $60 for 3 San Blas Molas and a few knick knacks. Slowly but surely getting remaining items of pre dep list & getting organised.

**Sat. 4 May. Day 24**

Cleaned, sanded & printed engine cover & engine with ali paint. Checked engine – oil, water, fan belt, etc. Washed clothes in club machine, tidied cockpit, connected inner pump to bilge & other miner jobs before dep Maniana. Must pull out fore sails.

**17.00H**

All U.S. boats holding off departure until Monday due to one of them getting a 4 day forecast advising strong NE headwinds & Maniana & then for 3 days mod E x S winds. Miami ex met man now living in Ontario & a friend of one of U.S. Skippers gave above info from Sat weather picture over long distance radio. Amazing people Yanks. So another day to finalise dep’ preparations. Bread.

**Sun. 5.4.96 Day 25**

Very strong wind all day with sun. Tidied deck & cabin, etc. & relaxed under palm trees. Hot.

**Mon. 6.4. Day Zero**

Departed 08.00h with “Lianne” for ground Caymen. Choppy outside breakwaters, or mouth. Ran engine until 14.00h to get clear of onshore seas. Sky overcast 80%. No.3 jib up at 12.45h heading 350°.

**17.50H**

Ship to starboard on visual. No radar signal. Average speed 4KN. Seas more flat & longer since we cleared away shallow coastal after yesterday’s strong winds. Today’s winds NE & F6 though may moderate. Sundown at 18.30h. Now 18.00h & getting dark earlier with the overcast sky.

**21.30H**

Wind still fresh.

**Tue. 7.4 Day 1 – El Caribe**

Still chose hauled with wobbly motion not making life easy today. The longest I have slept yesterday or tonight (now 02.30h) was one hour. Radar alarm working well though getting the odd break lately. Still carrying no.3 jib and one reefed main. Better heading since sunset of 005° true. Little or no var here & G.P.S. also computes it. A totally magic box. Wind though fresh is not hard & is up & down in strength. Spray& white water a plenty. Ideally we should be heading NE to get into the Gulf Stream 50 – 60 odd miles away & go NW to the Gran Cayman with its assistance of 10-50 miles per day. Sorry the Caribbean current. The Gulf Stream commences approximatley off the coast of Savanna, U.S.A. giving 30 – 100nm per day. Difficult moving around in cabin & on deck with short waves instead of smoother Pacific, or long swells of other oceans. Was told in Colon, wind in Caribbean were E’Y 90% of time. My current & wind chart concurs. So we may get a lift soon. Had my alarm clock set for 04.30h yesterday for pre departure & I cannot find it since, wherever I stashed it. But radar alarm just as good.

**06.45H**

Just got the first Caribbean wave top into cockpit. Turned off light at 03.00h & slept until 05.00h & again until 06.00h. Had a pot of coffee this morning for a change. Sea more confused as we have NE & E’Y waves. We are also on a better heading of 020°. Tummy still not settled down to being tossed around & only had one slice of bread, margarine & marmalade. Had a boiled egg yesterday morning pre departure & had another for t last evening. Lunch was sardines & tom. If the wind swings east we can ease of sheets for a better motion. Not the best conditions for settling in. Must plot position. Got a break from shipping or else slept through alarm, though it bleeped just after 06.00h when I got up but I could see nothing in predawn light. Took some nice video shots leaving yacht club & Colon.

**11.00H**

Just finished my real breakfast. Boiled eggs & toast, etc. Giant Tanker passed earlier to starboard heading southwards. More sun today 50% & Barometer up by 3mb for to let me know, one it is working as it had been static for months & two maybe better conditions & three no fucking well harm. Wind eases now & then lately, then comes up again. So maybe, just maybe, I might get a break. 85nm to N at 07.00h for 23m not bad eh.

**12.50H**

Just finished drying myself after going out for shower from the skies. Lovely & cooling & refreshing & I had no problem underdressing as I am naked since 07.00h yesterday. Even last night. Present temp at high noon 96°F, with a warm wind. Not totally acclimatised yet, but not as bad as I was in S & Central Am, where it was in the 90°s.

**21.30H**

Getting a break from shipping but not from wind which is fresh since a rain shower at 17.00h so no let-up in wild motion, which makes movement & cooking very difficult.

**Wen. 8 May. Day 2**

**03.00H**

No let-up in wind though it has veered to give us a better heading of 014° & speed 5KN. Progress good whatever about comfort. 167nm at 03.00h for 43h or an average of over 4KN. Rig of one reefed main & no.3 jib. Just enough & I thought I would have to change jibs a few times as wind stronger in showers. Getting a break from shipping.

**06.00H**

No change in wind or sea conditions. Discovered a leak from port diesel tank yesterday as I smelt diesel. I put washing up liquid in bilge to neutralise it, but have that pumped out, so I will do so again at first opportunity. Opened a lifelong milk yesterday as it is kind to the stomach, which is tender with start of trip & wild motion. Also it saves boiling water which is both not easy & can be dangerous. My wind chart for Caribbean gives winds mod to strong & from an E’Y quarter. We shall see. So far, we have had a NE with a tendency to veer more to the east.

**10.30H**

Still pounding & ploughing to w/ward on starboard tank & close hauled. Had milk & 2 rye vita at 06.00 & porridge at 09.00h. Now I am after a pot of coffee, boiled egg & toast & I notice Barometer up from 1010mb to 1015mb. So we get a break, not easy cooking. Was on deck earlier & got my Caribbean shower while tying I plough & securing chain doubly, tidied & stowed sleeping bag, so I am improving. A better heading of yesterday holding so hopefully it will continue to do so & go to the East & we can free sheets & get a better ride & speed. Though I can’t complain with speed, Sun now gone for some time after a 50/50 earlier sky.

**13.00H**

Wind definitely easing except in rain squalls which hit us every hr or so. But Barometer down by 2mb to 1013mb. Must have grub. Though I had an instant soup & 2 rye vita around 12.00h.

**18.15H**

Sorted out diesel tank problem. I discovered that when I filled tanks to the top & engine for 6 hours yesterday, very little fuel was used due to injectors being overhauled in Balboa & as a result when I hoisted sail & boat heeled, fuel seeped out of filling cap as there is a breather on it to prevent a vacuum in tank. I think I already said that I only used 5 gallons fuel during canal transit. The other problem is oil pressure gauge shows low 2000. Passes Roncador Bank in 10nm to shower.

**03.50H**

Passed 3 Serrana Banks 5nm also to starboard. Feeling sleepy now but I will have to hang on for another while. Having a pot of tea & had a spoon of honey. Chart advises caution as there is a strong current that gets to the west & on to the Queto Suenó bank to port. Then I have a clear run of 90nm. I gather ships don’t use this channel as I have not seen one all day. I hope so. What a time to pass a bank.

**08.25H**

Hit the bunk at 04.00h & woke at 05.00h & 07.00h & all ok, so you can relax for now. I expect to navigate next channel & banks. Rosalind Bank & Thunder Knoll Channel 45nm long & 10nm wide. I estimate another 7 hours for channel 60 except for last 2 hours, it will be in darkness. At present we are hitting 7KN. No let-up in F.6 ENE wind. Barometer steady at 1013mb since midnight.

**13.10H**

Clear skies since 11.00h. Shot a video of Caribbean. First since one I shot leaving Colon Harbour. Excellent headway 345nm in 77 hours (or 3 days & 5 h). At 13.15h 255nm remaining.

**08.30H**

Arrival in Grand Caymen if these conditions hold. No squall shower s today. Just a steady F.6 from E x N. Good progress but at times tense. Worrying about gear failure always at sea in wild conditions & more so when you get it bang on at start of trip, after balmy Pacific sailing. But if I don’t carry sail, when will I get there? So another night without sleep.

**Fri. 10.5. Day 4**

**03.00H**

Entered Rosalind Bank & Thunder Knoll Channel at 22.50h & now expect to clear Thunder Knoll Bank to port at 05.00h & Rosalind Bank to starboard at 07.00h. Hitting up to 9KN with 1KN current & smooth water due to being on the lee of Rosalind Bank. Spoke to a Yank in sailboat going south. This trip for me is a first in “Loon” as I never did such speed over so many days (4 days at 08.00h) or 489nm or an average of 122nm per day. If I keep this up should make Caymen in 5 days. 07.00 Nearly clear of Rosalind Bank to starboard & beginning to lose its projection & feeling swells & waves coming with E’Y wind now from Haiti & Jamaica. We are on a steady course & speed. At 06.00h g/town 154nm & bearing 352° T 7 “Loons”, heading is 008°. So we make it if Caribbean current does not push us beyond it. We have 26nm up on our sleeve so that may do the trick. If so I reckon 08.00 Maniana. Wind has eased somewhat overnight but is now whining again.

**18.15H**

Took a nap at 11.30h & when I awoke wind had eased to F.5 so undid reef in main & though wind strength up & down since, held on to full main. Lost 5’ of long with a wind shift but making it back slowly now. 81°23’ G/town long, our present long 81°02. Will be tight & I don’t want to pinch her too much. Must get a fix. 17.00h since last one. Had first of vacuum pack of rashers (6) for dinner in good cooking conditions. Borderline. Giant tanker crossed of our bow on horizon at 15.00h. First ship for some time. Have not seen one bird this trip.

**19.00H**

Seems we are being pushed E by the Caribbean current which runs S of Cayman Islands. 90nm now remaining. Wind easing has speed down to 5.5KN which does not help either. At this rate an afternoon landfall.

**Sat. 11 May. Day 5**

**00.15H**

Had dozed a lot yesterday after two sleepless nights & as a result I am awake after hitting el bunks at 20.30h. Now 69nm left to Cayman. So shower passed to aft of us. Later heading read 000°. How bad. We now have 17nm in hand. Will be a close one. At 4KN estimated arrival of 17.00h.

**04.30H**

A heavy rain shower has left us 59nm from target, with little vento.

**04.50H**

No panic, wind back to give us 4KN at 002° ok but 60nm at 4KN gives E.T.A. of 20.00h in darkness. We have 22nm to play with which is a 1/3 of 6.nm so I can now afford to head direct to Cayman, which is what I am doing from now at 05.45h. We are reaching to light winds at 4KN. Temp at 82° lowest for a long time. Good light in sky now at this time. Cayman 10° of latitude N of Colon or 600nm. Sunrise may stabilise conditions as we have another shower to starboard bow, which is activating radar alarm with its lightening. Boom giving the odd slap as we have 2 meter swells.

**07.45H**

Breeze steadied but light, 3KN who gives a shit. I don’t. All hatches open for a change. After an early pot of tea 05.00h & an hour’s doze, I am now enjoying life with 8 tocini. Mini bacon rashers to you & a fried huevo (egg). So how bad after a good night’s sleep. Must pull out a pot of marmalade. Brown bread like most things, mouldy & I only bought it last Sunday. So life could be a hell of a lot worse on this beautiful morning. Sun & a breeze & nearing port.

**08.40H**

Was refixing lower piston hank on no.3 jib, when the first bird appeared. He or she landed on pulpit & various other parts of boat including self-steering, as I disturbed him many times doing boat work. A wader, like a small egret & I have many photos of this bird but shrewd looking bird. He left at 19.30h when he saw the lights of Grand Cayman. No daw & I was more than glad to help him. Wind backed to NE at 17.00h & was a surprise. 20.30h & 8nm from harbour. Was busy today preparing for port & navigation & from now on will be more so. Port entry in darkness always tricky.

**Sunday 12th May**

**00.15H**

Moored to a buoy at 23.00h after making repeated attempts to contact Port Control Pilot Station & any sailboat without success. So I was fooling around for some time & was lucky enough to spot mooring buddy thank God. So I am in the Cayman I’s & looking in at Georgetown, named no doubt by someone trying to please some George King. Never had such a leg with such tricky navigation & tonight was not easy either. But we arrived safely & that is what counts. So I am having a boiled egg & rye vita & the old pot of tea. Had a wash in a basin after 6 days of salt, after I tidied “Loon”, before my t or supper or early breakfast. I know I am tired but I will stay up a while & relax as I feel I would not sleep yet. Hope to F there are no mossies here. Glad to be in but it hasn’t really hit me yet. So I will see what happens in the morning & thank Christ I have no G.P.S. or compass to watch & maybe I will kneel to Him, if not in a church in the cockpit, for He is always around to provide for weary sailors. Did he not knock around with fishermen? So He understands. So these are my thoughts after a tough leg yet so it seems. Actually, I just now be settling down to sea again, if I was on a long haul & boy was it fast & furious. Buenos Noches Spindlers when you read this you know your Da is as tough as F man, but stiff. Boy am I going to relax & enjoy. No post today but I will try & fax if poss.

**06.30H**

Having boiled eggs, rye vita & a pot of tea. after looking around at a beautiful, low coastline & crystal clear water. After I washed my hair, so now I am cleansed. Slept well, lovely to wake up to peace. No wonder I was confused last night. Saw by predawn light. E.S.B. poles have red lights atop them.

**07.00H**

What looks like a big white liver approaches on the western horizon. Feeling hot already with temp 85° both enhanced & coming no doubt. Must put up shade cloth.

**07.20H**

Took photo of liver which just ate. While finishing a mug of tea. Never felt so relaxed & content. 2 tall ships one a mile to S. Chart shows a hotel just directly in shore of me. Failed to get “Lianne” on V.H.F. Maybe he is not in yet. Have a list of jobs to do I made out having breakfast including a fax if possible. Though I am in no hurry to go ashore yet. Though I know I owe it to my family & supporters to give them the word.

**18.00H**

Getting a few jobs done on “Loon” in between eating & dozing but very relaxed & happy to be in this beautiful island. Nature always amazes. Hope my wader amigo made it yesterday like I did & is also resting & eating, enjoy, my pilot to Cayman. Nice to sit in cockpit & to look at this lovely island with its trees, beaches & lovely villas, some with gazebos. Second of the tall ships sailing N now.

**Mon. 13 May. Day 2 Cayman I’s**

Up at 06.00h to tighten st/gland, check engine oil & water etc. & fuel & put out fenders & warps. Radioed port security at 08.00h for customs & inn clearance. Cleared alongside customs & inn control station & they let me lie alongside while I faxed Dan & posted 13 letters, went to bank & had fish & chips. Washed clothes when I near Etianne, upon leaving customs dock. Dinner aboard “Lianne”.

**Tue. 14 May. Day 3**

Two liners when I woke at 06.00h. Went ashore at 10.00h & faxed Dan with post office fax no. Rang yacht club $15 C.I. per day or $16.50 U.S. or £10 Irish. Left mayors letter for retyping over Chile to Cayman. Will collect Maniana. Met Etianne & we drank from 17.00h until 22.00h. Did me good.

**Wen. 15 May. Day 4**

Checked fuel – wrote N.Z. & Chile, Nance, Christy & Nell. Tidied ropes. Estimated time & nm to Cuba & Florida & Ch/Pelke & Shannon. Went ashore.

**16.00H**

Posted no faxes, maybe Maniana. Had a nice meal steak and kidney pie with mushy peas & chips, ice cream dessert & gin and tonic & back by 20.00h. No showers today. Yesterday had a thunder storm at 16.00h with much rain & fresh winds. Spoke to skipper of “Nancy”, the ex-Baltic Schooner, built in Sweden 1902, & now being used for taking tourists on sunset cruises, while ashore as I saw her tied up at Custom House Dock prior to leaving on a cruise for 2.5 hours. He gave me good info on Florida Passage & Fort Lauderdale Port. A nice man.

**Thur. 16 May. Day 5**

**08.30H**

Making out notes of boat work & G/town wants after breakfast of boiled egg. Ran engine.

**09.00H**

After checking oil level for an hour & oil pressure gauge down. Lift to shore from Deusa & invited to their boat at 18.30h. Had a busy day in G/town. Posted & got fax. Jim collected typed envelope & letter (Kennys) for Governor & hired bike and cycled it to his residence. Cycled to yacht club & arranged to berth there this Sat. Arranged with mechanic of “Nancy” to have him look at engine oil press’ Maniana.

**08.00H**

When I called to yacht club, they advised an Angela was looking for me through port security. So p/security gave me her no & I found out she is a banker who Tony O’M contacted to look me up. I am to ring her Maniana. A busy day.

**Fri. 17 May. Day 6**

**07.30H**

Also got a note from port security to ring Donal McGonagles daughter? Will do it today. Must get ready for mechanic at 08.00h.

**09.45H**

No sign of my mechanic. Rang Mary McMahon & Angela after going ashore earlier. Angela was contacted by Tony O’Mara & Mary by her dad, Donal. Met Aiden Doherty through Angela, who is an ass. Gen manager of a big bank & we all arranged to meet that evening at the Cayman Arms at 19.15h. Cycled for first time towards S end of island & enjoyed it. Met as arranged for drinks & as it was raining hard, Mary invited me to her apt where I slept in a king sized bed.

**Sat. 18 May.**

Up early & had a lovely bath & b/fast & Mary drove me to Customs Dock, where we got a lift to “Loon” where she took photos for her dad, whom she is also sending notes of my trip to. Cycled to bike hire shop & returned bike & then to Marys Hotel where the Queen stayed. Then to the Cracked Cinch where Angela Doyle had arranged for me to meet the living legend, Bob Soto, who introduced diving to the Cayman Islands. He treated me to drinks & a meal, as his wife owned the restaurant & bar. Then, Thomas the manager, drove me to Marys for another bread and butter & bath.

**Sunday. 19th May**

Her flatmate then drove me to the dock & I am on “Loon” since, as shortly after I boarded, it blew & rained all day. Though since sunset wind has eased. Got myself organised for morrow & did some work on “Loon”. Maniana is discovery day. A holiday, so I will go ashore to arrange for customs departure clearance on Tuesday. I will also go to airport & get duty free cigs & booze.

**Mon. 20th Day 9**

Hit the sack early last evening & as a result, I am up now having a pot of tea at 01.30h & it is still lashing. But wind average. Collected 5 galls water in bucket & a basin from Awning (Dooger) yesterday. Very little to do now on “Loon” before dep.

**09.30H**

Up since 07.00h & wrote cards & letters. Still incessant rain with 8-10KN of wind. Diverted water from deck which is clean into deck plus filling plug. So I will soon have full tanks with sweet water. Finished Panamanian rashers for breakfast.

**10.30H**

Looks like another full day of rain. Doing interior work on “Loon”.

**18.30H**

Rain ceased at 17.00h. Did many small, but needy pre dep jobs. Confined to boat since 09.00h yesterday with rain. Wind freshened when rain ceased. Maniana.

**Tue. 21 May.**

**01.00H**

Just after saucepan of porridge & now having a pot of tea. Expect to leave today, if I get through immigration & customs & get other jobs fin early. Will go ashore at 08.00h.

**06.00H**

Slept well after going back to bunk at 01.30h. Took a doss yesterday afternoon & it always disturbs a good night sleep. 5” of rain in 24 hours according to the radio. Wind down somewhat since last night but a bigger swell has us rolling. Wind is nearly S’Y this morning that accounts for swells coming around the S end of Islands.

**06.45H**

Saw 2 cruise ships I as sun tries to burn off stratus layers. A busy day ashore since 08.30h until now.

**17.00H**

Sun & clouds with still fresh winds. Visited customs & left them my hand grenades. Bank – Aiden Doherty – post office & faxed Dan but receceived no fax’s (7” of rain yesterday am). Supermarket – was advised by Bob Soto to leave Maniana as low moving N & I will be behind it. So will take expert local advice & leave Maniana. Fell tired anyway.

**Wen. 22 May**

**06.30H**

Wind has eased. Swells also down somewhat. Radio this morning said 7” rain fell with low pressure, so off we pop as soon as I finish my tea & toast & marmalade. Helved on strong genoa to starboard, stowed fenders & had a job lifting I in swells & fresh wind. Eventually departed at 08.00h under engine & genoa. 5.5KN. Course to Gabo San Antonio 304°. Temperature 87°. Barometer 1012mb.

**09.30H**

Engine off at 09.30h & batteries up after 2 hours. Speed down to 3.5kn so will finish a pot of tea & review. Glad I waited until today as I slept well & feel rested & motion no problem after past few days rolling at I. Not like being pitchforked from black water at Cristobel – Colon, into a rough ride to Cayman, after a month between canal terminals.

**14.00H**

Wind eased & as we were broad reaching, have full main up since 10.00h. Put her more on the wind for speed. Now 3.5KN. Not bad. At 12.30h 4KN. But heading now 252 instead of 300°. Barometer steady, temperature 88°. A nice day to start & eating well. Boiled egg 06.30h, instant spuds with chopped scallions & coffee at 11.30h.

**15.30H**

Now a Welsh rarebit with more chopped scallions & a pot of tea & I forgot I had tea & biscuit at 09.30h. I am half thinking of going straight to Cape Hatteras & see what time I take before deciding further. Water no problem but stores could be as they were. Astro dear in Cayman as was everything else. So I bought little stores & what I did came to 60 C.I. $ for 2 plastic shopping bags or £52 I.R. for 2 tubs margarine, 1 biscuit, 1 oatmeal, 1 cream crackers, 1 ribena, 1 med tonic water, 1 pack rashers, 1 carton cigs, 2 tins con/milk, 3 oranges, 10 limes.

**8.00H**

Tomatoes & bread with pot of tea for tea. Radio Cayman fading now & then. Hatches open hours after departure & since. Wind eased with speed now 3.5KN. Barometer down by 1mb, temperature steady at 87° since 09.30h.

**Thur. 23 May. Day 1**

**04.00H**

Hit the bunk at 20.00h & slept well. Plenty of nature’s fireworks in the sky this morning. Sweet lightning. Just after a pan of porridge & have a pot of tea made now. Good progress overnight. 64nm at 03.45h for less than 20h. Temperature 84° & humid. Humidity 82% in Cayman.

 **07.55H**

Up since 07.00h after a restful night. Will plot run for day one (24h 08.00h to 08.00h) in 5h. 82nm or average 3.5KN.

**08.50H**

You might ask what my daily routine is in reasonable conditions – check deck & sails & rigging & heading. Sun cream this morning. I am just after a body & hair wash. Plot days run & depending on how I feel, may do a few jobs on a list that is never fin. Breakfast at 07.00h this morning so now at nearly 09.00h it is time for a coffee & biscuit & then we will see. Bar a ship off N point of Islands, I have neither seen a ship or any bird life. I find it hard to understand rec’ only two fax’s in Cayman Jim’s & Frenchs especially Dan, whose fax I was looking forward to as he is always on with news and events. I send so many letters and cards. Evidence of Sargasso weed in Caribbean since leaving Colon. Yesterday at times fairly thick. Sun taking its time burning of strains & other clouds today. Thunderstorm over horizon off over starboard bow.

**10.45H**

Eating again after a 30. M nap after reading for a while again instant spuds with last of scallions chopped. A thunder storm on port side now. Has the sky darkened, also having a mug of instant soup. Had to jump up & ease main, but worst of it gone astern. Ducked it and the rain these thunder storms must be the tail end of the low that has passed W of Cayman. Before I lost Cayman radio yesterday it was in the gulf of mexico. Which is only 600nm from my position to the centre of the gulf.

**11.10H**

Light rain. Never a dull minute hopefully the electrical display will clear up the weather. Rain persisted for past half hour, & has taken wind. So until it eases no vento. Amigo.

**12.00H**

Rain ceased & wind F4 from NE x E. Sky overcast. Temperature down today. 95° having boiled spuds & onions, with rashers & ribena drink. Spuds ok.

**16.30H**

Under thin genoas since 15.00H a S wind went to the S.E F.4.

**17.30H**

Many cuban stations now on radio. Having fried egg & spuds left since dinner now. Day cloudy 90% today. With temperature down to 83° now.

**19.30H**

Have shorts & a t-shirt on for first time since dep Cayman ship of starboard beam on same hog. Wind light & genoas grumpy as a shower passed. Maybe it will pick up again. Though I doubt it. Watching ship I saw a light dipping off port bow on horizon. As it turned out this ship passed my bows fairly close. Another light but bright on starboard horizon. A trawler. So had a late superb of 4 rashers & tea and toast. Bunk 10.30h & Breeze stabilised.

**Friday 24. May**

Wind did steady & excellent headway overnight woke at 00.00h & 02.45h & beautiful. Also at 06.00h & Turned on radio to lovely Spanish music, I got up around 06.30h. Now 0715h & I am nearly fin my breakfast of boiled egg, toast, jam, & a pot of tea. Feel Bueno this morning after a good night’s sleep& oh what a beautiful morning with twin genoas pushing & pulling us over swells to Cabo San Antonio. I can’t figure out if radio is giving mexican or spanish. But it is nice with a rooster crowing between music. Gas. Saw my first bird yesterday which resembled and albatross but colour was dark & this morning saw 5 white birds flying over the sea surface like pelicanos. Too far to put a name on Car. Be sparse of bird, fish and mammal life. A first for me after my voyaging. Though I did see flying fish 2.3 day out from Colon. Found a sardine sized one on foredeck though yesterday while changing headsails.

**08.30H**

Struck genoa & unspoiled starboard one & hoisted mizzen st/sle as heading was too high.

**1100H**

Having lunch of beetroot. Chopped clams both tinned & having tea. Now with fig rolls at 13.00h as a ship goes SE to starboard back to twin genoas poled since 10.30h as wind changed a lot today. 90nm to E end of Cuba. So if wind holds, will round it around 13.00h Maniana ship to starboard on same heading.

**15.00H**

Wind holding well but swinging a lot E to SE. with much adjusting of well barometer steady at 19.00h & a good sunset temperature 86 °. Sun after noon until sunset at 19.10H.

**19.35H**

Have shorts & t-shirt on again this evening.

**Sat 25, May**

**07.00H**

Had 3 ships around me after midnight, one near to starboard on same course due on stern horizon going NW & another of port bow Hog SW & none since. Wind steady now & giving us 4kn at 03.00h was fresher & speed 5KN since yesterday after direction fluctuating but between E’ & SE. A fine mug. Slept on& off to alarm clock. In t-shirt & shorts temp down past few nights & will continue to do so as N.E progress N. Must check engine oil & water & f/belt. 30nm from Cuba’s E cape of San Antonio at 07.00h & if present wind hold should around it. At noon or later as current is funnelled through the channel. A distance of 120nm between Mexico and Cuba.

**19.10H**

First sit down I’ve got since I got up at 07.00h. Checked engine, hanked w/jib under port genoa in case. Plotted days run. 90nm but that is in a crows flight, we actually sailed app 100nm or more, total for 3days 266nm. Having or about to have porridge. Only had tea earlier & cold at that, which was in mug since last night always get a little nervous & apprehensive approaching land. 23nm now to cape. More Job on list. Must site tripod for video camera where it is not on left but fixed somewhere I can mount camera. Rounding Cuba in daylight a bonus. Good light for filming as we have only cumulus humulus or cotton wool clavas which denote fine weather. Barometer steady 1014mb temp 88 ° but I was grilling rashers I will eat as soon as kettle boils. Now listening to radio Cuba & Spanish style musicians. As perfect a day as one could request. A Caribbean blue sea decorated with white horses. Etianne must have kept my chart of Fort Lauderdale when he was photo copying as I can’t find it. But not to worry as I am sure there will be shipping & sport craft entering and leaving port. I hope. Will read for a whole shortly / maybe doss, as I did not get a lot of sleep last night & will get less for next 3 nights in Florida straits.

**12.00H**

Cuba sighted. Very low lying, unpoling jibs & dropping starboard one prior to hoisting main when I saw land.

**16.30H**

Have been fairly busy since rounded E’ end of Cuba. Cabo San Antonio at 1400h. 3.25 days out of Gran Cayman Islands passed within one mile of it & got good video & still shots of L/house close mauled now as we try & keep to Cuba shore. To avoid shipping lanes. Which is why I hugged Cabo San Antonio to keep to w/ward mainly. Blue sky since 130.0h & hot.. Spoke a Canadian yacht around 1500h who gave me info on Fort Lauderdale, as I loaned charts to Etianne & he never gave me back the Fort Lauderdale one. So we are now in the Gulf of Florida, or straits of carrying full main & no. 3 jib to a nice wind that is giving us 4.5KN was careful with sun & drying wind today, hat & pyjama top when out. Lovely to see the green trees & shady beaches & where it was shallow with a sand pit the colours were indescribable. Sea state reasonable in lee of land but we are being rushed out as we head NE with ES Enwinds, Gulf stream is assisting.

**18.30H**

Temperature 90°. Barometer steady at 1014mb.

**19.15H**

Wind steadied after sunset but now a large thunder storm well ahead of us.But some display of energetic electricity. Tried photo’ing it with still camera. Should have used video having a late tea of bacon and egg. So may try later. Little sleep tonight as we are skirting close reefs. Want to keep near shore as I can, ships outside me in the shipping lanes & as I said I also want to keep up to w/ward. We are not heading NNW instead of N x E. Sat out in cockpit after sunset in the cool of evening with a pot of tea.

**Sunday 26. May**

Many ship last night & again this morning. Was dossing at one over hr now & again by alarm clock. Got 3 during night & with dawn, got a few more if not awakened by radar alarm bleeping. Still no birdling, wind light all night & now at 09.30h. 16nm offshore & 8nm outside reef. Cloudless blue sky. Will be hotter today. 86° now. Baromoter steady at 1015mb. 80nm for day 4, 300nm remains. Must have a wash. Had 2 scrambled eggs & last 3 rashers with toast & a pot of tea & paying for it in heat already. But after little yesterday I was ravenous.

**10.45H**

Have only sat down now apart from breakfast. between plotting- washing even hair & feet. Cleaned off dirt of table bulkhead & just now changed no.3 jib for big genoa which is light as wind is this morning.

**17.50H**

Ran engine for 2 hours at 11.30h as wind light & from NE. Also batteries needed a boost as I had navigation light on last night. Other than that did little during heat of day. Was reading & must have fallen asleep & it was 17.10h when I awoke. I thought it was morning until I saw sun. Having a bread, butter and jam with an apple now for my tea. Had chicken noodles for dinner. Will have more energy now as sun gets low for a few jobs. Saw white bird similar to wader I gave a lift to Cayman to. Today I decided when I started engine to go for it as wind was NE & sails & engine had me heading nearly N. so we are still heading N. to get the full ass of the gulf stream & a fav’ wind. On latitude & longitude is 240nm to a line of SE corner of Florida & straits are app 90nm wide so diagonally which is directed imagine would be 270. M. Today was hot at 92 °. Barometer steady at 1500.MB. Breeze up now as I write at 18.15h. Will finish my tea & have a look. Maybe an evening breeze comes in these latitudes like last evening. It seems to be a good or better heading & angle and angle of sun I can see in cockpit.

**19.20H**

Sunset a few mins later as we head slowly north this evening. A nice time of day after heat of sun. As far as I know we are in the gulf stream, which gives a lift of 25-40 NM p/day in this area. Wind now giving a better heading 1010° & has steadied. Hopefully it will veer S/E’y.

**Mon 27 May. Day 5**

Woke at 01.00h after sleeping well for 4h to find wind up & on desired course.

**06.20H**

So changed genoa for less & took one reef in main, with no loss of speed. More comfort & less strain on sails & gear & hull. So now at 02.10h after plotting track & what a delight it was to see the line directed to Miami. I am having the auld pot of tea & a few figgers (fig rolls). Wind had veered to S/E while I was asleep. Great. Saw a flock of 20 gulls yesterday. Thin white under & blackish o/head, with a forked tail. No fish or mammals. Back to a bucking and leaping ride. Woke at 06.00h & wind eased. Saw another gull in the distance this morning. 90nm for 25h. At 0715h today ok another fine day thank God. not a cloud. Just finished a pot of tea and porridge now at 07.40h. That will do for now. Got 7 hours sleep in two shifts last night. Had an unusual dream before I woke this morning, arranged for Rita Bourke to meet the Greasa. With a view to marriage. The small fat man who is dead was there also. Must change no 3 jib for big light genoa.

**09.45H**

Since crossing ship lanes have not seen a ship since yesterday a/noon. Still have a few grapes left. Engine on since 09.30h as boom was thrashing. 7.1 speed to 6.5kn would normally be 4-4.5KN. Gulf stream giving 2-3KN assisstance. Great.

**12.45H**

Still not sailing though breeze up slightly. Super tanker, decks awash to port horizon. Having pasta with a tomato chopped into it & crackers dipped in margarine I poured the oil from.

**1530H**

I had stopped engine at 13.30h as a light breeze arrived & with Gulf Stream, gave us 5KN But I had to restart engine at 14.00h & drop genoa as wind nearly gone & only comes in patches, so I have to assist Nellie & every so often cabin hot at 92°. Phew. But making the miles, even though we are heading N of desired course wind NEY.

**19.15H**

Another sunset bright & red. On port tack since 19.00h as wind is now easterly & I don’t want to go too near key west shoals. Doing 3.3 knots as wind steaded but still light. Sea as flat as you could ask for. Had stopped engine earlier.

**1700H**

Had a tin of sausages with bread for tea. not weather for big meals. 89 °.

**22.10H**

Dossed for 2 hours. Wind still E’y which is on the nose. Only good thing is it is a lovely half moonlit night.

**Tue 28. May. Day 6.**

**07.00H**

Woke at 06.00h after good night’s rest. Woke at 03.30h. & 05.00h. & both time heading s/s.e to E’y breeze at 3.5 KN Wind at 0600 more favourable & we are now on a N.E’Y heading in the axis of Gulf Stream at 7KN motor sailing on port tack as I put her about before starting engine. No use in dawdling when we are on a proper heading & it looks like another hot day. Sun just off port bow now. Since it appeared at 05.50h to say put on your sun oil and hat today old chap. For past two nights we got the wind at night. So we don’t know if it will hold today. Brillo if it did. 7.8KN now at 07.30h & engine only ticking over.

**08.30H**

Wind light now switched off engine to check oil /we are down to 3KN, most of it from Gulf Stream. Under sails and engine 7KN 09.30h motor sailing again. After oil and wat check-up at 7.5KN plotted at 08.15 from present position to 20nm s/e of Florida in centre of Gulf Stream 155 nm which at 7KN as app 07.30h. Departure on wind holding. Florida Keys radio communication station is giving S.E 8-10kn winds offshore from today. Fort Lauderdale another 60nm so hopefully Fort Lauderdale estimated time of arrival 14.30h. maniana or at least in daylight h’s.

**13.00H**

Wind showing first hint of dying, had to drop genoa as when it backs we go off course. Seem to be doing ok under main, & are amazingly doing 8.3KN great speed. Though we are meandering in calm patches or wind shifts. Took a video shot around 11.00h. Will be another day with conditions at present. Eating better today, more relaxed I would imagine. Had 3 sausages & an egg for breakfast early. Coffee 09.30h. Boiled egg & tea 11.30h with toast & I am hungry again now.

**1600H**

Motor and main to a headwind E’y at 7.3KN was becalmed prior to that since 13.45h.

**20.30H**

Wind still over E. was hoping for a shift at s/set which is an h water this evening. Key West radio time. Had forgotten about daylight saving time. Will stop engine at 21.30h. Had tomato & turkey sandwich for lunch & anchovies & cheese & crackers for tea with coffee & biscuit in between for aft ten.

**21.20H**

Off engine & up no 3 on starboard tack. Wind now NE x E. Had a wash earlier, thunder and lightning again tonight, but not as bad as 2 nights ago. Fork lightening & I saw a flash like a river coming down & hitting the sea. That no conductor could take.

**Wen 29 May Day 7.**

Was awakened at 04.00h by V.H.F roaring with interference at first thought it was ship nearby jamming radar alarm. Back to bunk after switching of V.H.F & radar alarm bleeped for ship to starboard going E. I could not switch it off in case another ship app & after a while it was like a phone ringing alongside you bed. I got up and switched the F’ thing off. So now at 05.30h I am having a pot of tea. Just enough wind to keep sails filled. Speed 2.7KN. Most of it gulf stream. Hot & humid 86 °.

**09.40H**

Got up at 08.40h yesterday time 07.40h so an excuse. Picked through last of whole meal bread for breakfast with rem of anchovy & marmalade. Got another yank radio station which may give a weather synopsis. 95nm at 08.00h with 150nm remaining to Fort Lauderdale.

**12.30H**

Becalmed since 11.00h. Straits like glass. Lying down reading too hot for anything else.

**19.25H**

A breeze since 18.45h so engine and main since. Just fin’ a nice outlet of dolphin. Not the mammal, but fish dolphin one of the sport fishing guys gave me. Nice guys. They were near me & hauling them in goodo. Yes that fish was nice. Have more for breakfast. had a tin of mixed veg with it. Will now have other half. Of tinned fruit I opened today after sardines. Too hot for much food today. Breeze from the N, this evening was variable in direction at1st, but now has settled down.

**21.00H**

We have outriders. One ship off port bow & another off starboard bow, both of which passed us earlier. Spent until now 00.45h adjusting Nellie & trimming sails, I hoisted no.3 jib to a fresh wind an hr before wind died & left us in a sea fret. A tiring day but we hate the miles motor sailing 100 nm now to Fort Lauderdale & we are doing 3KN just drifting now. What little wind we have is SW.

**Thur 30. May**

**06.00H**

4h sleep & woke to a still s.w wind which with twin genoas is giving 5.5KN radar alarm woke me it is still bleeping from f’all. Drifted 13 nm since 01.20h with Gulf Stream.

**07.00H**

Had some dolphin & cold & delicious for breakfast. & now as I finished last of bread and butter this morning, a rye vita & marmalade with the auld pot of tea. Last look I gave we were going too high.

**08.55H**

Yes wind swung to N.W so no we have full main light generally & are sailing full & bye. 80nm for 84.m. at 09.00h thirsty, must have been m/hsse I had on fish. A busy morning & going since now.

**09.20H**

Plotting post & studying land approaches, checking engine oil-water & fore belt. 3 s/bound ships since daylight & one n/bound, which I just gave way to. Now at 10.50h took photo of it. 2 more on stern horizon. Dropped genoa to manoeuvre & started engine & with main & motor ticking over 8.2KN.

**11.30H**

Ships, 2 ahead, 1 abeam to starboard & one off each quarter. Had the remaining dolphin fish for elevenses.

**Fri- 31 May,**

**09.30H**

So me hearties / all you scurvy dogs. I am in Fort Lauderdale U.S.A. after being towed in from HBR mouth as my engine o/heated due to a water pump problem. Requested a tow from a ketch nearby who ignored my calls and signs as it was near. Nice sailors, huh! Eventually called him on V.H.F & I must say a nice guy, who was in the immigration area brought me to a nice berth at municipal jetty, for $130.U.S. Julian Massey by name & born in Derry so I was lucky. The luck of the Irish. He called back in his car & he & his girlfriend took me to an Irish pub for a pint of Guinness & to an eating house. Back to boat at 01.00h was awakened this morning by clerk of jetties at 08.45h who asked me to sign in at his office. Slept very well & feel relaxed & happy after a tiring day a 06.00h to 15.00h covered 101nm in the axis of the Gulf Stream. Which is at 24m. days run 200nm p/day & that for “Loon” is only phenomenal. But I went for it & got here. At times doing 9KN last 2.n. fresh headwind after second thunder storm. Must call to dock office first & then phone Dan.

**11.40H**

90°. 13.00h checked into municipal docks. As they call themselves 39 cents per foot per day. Rang Clive at shop. Dan at home, so tried ringing him without success. As Clive asked for a fax no which I got from dock master. Put sh/cloth over boom & now having lunch in cockpit & generally unwinding while watching much river traffic. I am at a finger jetty on river bank, or boulevard, which goes under a lifting bridge, & I am on the second jetty upstream of bridge. So there is plenty to watch & see. Going to doss for a while now.

**15.00H**

Slept for over an hour checking through free marine package included in a nice plastic briefcase. Will go to post office, phone customs and get food etc. around 16.00h when it gets cooler. 94 ° cabin temp.

**June 1’st Sat**

Up since 06:30 OH as I want to get an early start to customs / immigration & post office - for Neils & Manos cards & card to Cayman is advising I arrived ok. Also a fax to Dan with a no, so I can receive faxes. Walked, bused & taxied as customs & immigration at different places. I am back on board after a nice veg omelette & coffee at same cáfe as yesterday, at 15.00h making out work-want & city lists. For pre departure customs very obliging & helpful.

**17.45H**

Tightened stern gland & water hose, Gas will see me home. 20.00h got a lot of work done today, as sky clouded, in late afternoon. Checked all running & standing rigging & shackles, etc. & tightened & adjusted as reqd. also rudder gland. Have Jim Kenny’s letter for typing out, Chilean for Monday, which I will get to mooring office. A fruitful & enjoyable day. I also have washed a few clothes & towels & t towels since arriving. But not too many, as this climate does not require much clobber.

**Sunday- 2 June**

The number of pleasure craft moving up and down the inter coastal today is only amazing, every few seconds. The bulk of them power boats. Got a few more jobs on the list / had an hour snooze before lunch which I am just fin now at 15.15h. No clouds today & hot. All boats have sun awnings in this tropical climate.

**17.50H**

Having tea & biscuit now after waking up again as I was reading & dozed off for another Hr. will go for a walk now shortly as I have only been on shore this morning to enquire of faxes, sadly no. some very pretty girls walking the bridge today. Also jogging & skating. Must be 40° high where I am & they can’t hear my feeble whistle, must get out my auld fog horn.

**21.30H**

Back after a beach front walk & 2 beers & just finished 6 rashers & 2 eggs. Tired now after heat of day & walking which is good for my health.

**Mon -3 June**

**00.45H**

Woke to piss & found after hitting El Bunko, I can’t sleep & the same applied last night, only tonight I was thirsty after rashers, so I willed what I did last night & write a letter wrote to Ted Russell last night & tonight I will write Pajero. 04.30 & woke again. Must be because I dossed yesterday, so from now on no day siestas. Will do a few jobs on boat work list. As I feel I have enough sleep.

**15.45H**

Just back from Bank, post office. Left beat at 11.00h. Bought food also & ice, & a cooler box. So much walking, which I enjoyed & which is also good for my sea legs. Saw lovely shops and had a nice lunch. Rabbit & pasta & milk $7. Having a pot of tea & a biscuit now in cockpit. Rang Dan at cottage ok & told him sent fax to Mara, etc. phoned him at 23.45h his time. Went to Maguires Irish pub & had nice grub & pints to falsify poused to it for $1 & cabbed it back for $7 total $24 £16 I.R not bad.

**Tues - 4 June**

Woke to rain at 0830H which lasted an hour. Was lucky to have taken in from cockpit a lot of gear last evening. As I have table fixed for past 3-4 days. Tea cloth the lot. & also tools I was using. Pulled out no. 3 jib for repairs. Got faxes. Dan – Carl O’Mara & Betty worked on a lot of small but important jobs, rang Dan.

**Wed 5 June**

A great day, Mike who is a no. 1 mechanic did a great job on my water pump & also adjusted the valves. Was very lucky as he is berthed next to me. Also got my sail taken for repairs by another guy at this dock so it pays to be at a working man’s deck. Must go to a chandlery Maniana to get a port & potty as I have to have it by law. I also need a solar panel as my old ones are kaput. Took Mike for a great seafood meal. The best I ever had. But expensive. But my engine is ticking over like new. So I am more than happy as I lay down to sleep now at 2200H. A very productive and enjoyable day.

**Thurs – 6 June**

**0630H**

Slept from 2200H.

**0720H**

Finished boiled egg, breakfast in cockpit & making notes etc. Must go shopping soon. Posted & faxed Dan – Banked – Phoned Gay Byrne Show & arranged a hotel for 0400H local time interview. Also visited a hardware store & got fittings to fit solar panel. Also got a plug for video to charge battery. Had a few jars & a game of pool before going to hotel.

**Fri. 7 June**

Gay Byrne interview went off well. Got fax from Dan I failed to get yesterday. So I rang him & MR was very pleased with Gaybo & I. Late up at 0930H after Gaybo, so day has flown. Fitted new solar panel & met the Mayor who came down with camera crew. A nice man, 42 years old. So it is now 1530h & I am only having lunch now of a tin of green beans & bread & butter with S/W spread & lemon as it is hot at 96o. Did a few more jobs. Linette came & offered to put a patch on my fav’ 3’tan shorts, as I did not know my arse was hanging out while Mayor & I met. Then Brian her hub’ asked me for drinks & a meal aboard their H/boat. So it is now 2000H & I will have an early night, as I have lots of jobs to do tomorrow. Never left the dock area, or rode bike today since I came back from hotel this morning. Tidied cabin which was in shit between yesterday’s shopping & then Gaybo’s research correspondent & hotel. Work at 2300H to humidity & heat & was having a pot of tea. when my neighbours gave me a call to come over for a beer & guitar session.

**Sat 8 June**

**0145H**

Back now after rash & egg as I find the early mornings & evening are cooler & you eat more than by day. Was in post office at 0905H faxing Dan & cycled to supermarket. Fin buying, except perishables which I leave until I’ve had to get taxi with food to boat, & also back to supermarket again to collect my bike. No o/y’s on Saturday & if so would have cost $10. Anyway. Was stowing food when Scott Breckenridge showed up & invited me to his home for a meal & a tour of Fort Lauderdale. Bill had rung him. A nice family so that took up a full day. Sent Bill a message & internet & his son’s machine. So I am tired, & will have an early night.

**Sunday 9 June**

**0845H**

Slept well & will have to get ice as cooler box is thawed. Only have small jobs left now except customs & diesel, which I will attend to Maniana. Put oil into gearbox of wheel & various other Mickey Mouse jobs. Rang Nance then.

**1700H**

Rang Nance and did above jobs, until a violent thunder storm broke over city & we still have it with wind – lightning - & torrential rain. Radio advising people not to move out due to a possible tornado warning.

**Mon 10 June**

Up bright & early & visited customs & got clearance. Called S/Mnnon way back & got them to bring me back to boat with engine / oil etc. Went back in van & got lost cycling back & it took me 2 hours of cycling to get back to “Loon”. Fell asleep for an hour as it was hot today. Went out and had 4 beers & it is now 0100H.

**Tue 11 June**

Must stand by phone at 0900H as Dan is to ring. Will hit the bunk now at 0110H – O800 H. Slept until now. Will stand by phone shortly. Enquire from Dock Master re a bakery. As I go to s/market for the perishable foods & veg early & I don’t like supermarket bread. Must buy video camera tapes & collect photos for posting before departure.

**1530H**

Will be lucky to have work fin before departure. Have yet to buy more presents for grandchildren & post Dan photos. Morning taken up buying perishables, have 2 cooler boxes, one a present from a nearby boat & one Styrofoam I bought to assist butter & margarine etc. to last longer. Got block ice for them, so I will see how things go.

**2000H**

Yes we depart Maniana. Got a lot of work off list & only a few left for morning. Will stop at a fuel dock in river for diesel top up.

**Wen - 12 June**

D-Day for final leg of voyage, work at 0700H & got up at 0800H. So now at 0830 I have finished my breakfast of tea, toast & marmalade. Had a couple of gins & a meal in a Jap’ rest’ last night. Slept well but late. Can’t have it every way. Must check battery & bolts. Bring back bike (pay Deck Master) Bend F/Sails – Dip diesel tanks, Depart jetty 1015H & fuel dock 1130H. Now 1500H & doing 8KN in Gulf Stream.

**1610H**

Excellent progress & heading N.N.E. with an easterly wind. Have main up since 1200H & genoa since 1330H. Have engine ticking over until we haul away from shore. At 1415H we were 10nm offshore and now 12NM. We also escaped thunder storms as sky was black over Fort Lauderdale with thunder and lightning when outside. All in all a good day for a departure. Though the word I got before I left was that there was a water spout offshore. It seems US Coastguards warned of it. A sea tornado I would imagine. Lost sight of land a 1650H. Flying fish since port exit.

**1730H**

Dolphins, which I have not seen for a long, long time. Wind N.E. for most of the day & night. Trying to rain for past 2 hours. Still have engine ticking over & still on 8KN. Had a tine of smoked clams at 1300H with bread and butter.

**1500H**

Instant spuds with a boiled egg & toast. Had tea & biscuit during afternoon noon. Barometer 1019mb. Engine off 2125h as a nice breeze developed but now at 2220H had to drop sails – what wind we now have is from the S.E. but we are making 4KN over the ground with the aid of Gulf Stream. Tried to sleep but a cruise liner bleeped radar alarm & then sails flapping before I took them down. Could hear music coming down wind from liner.

**Thur – 13 June Day 1**

**0030H**

Radar bleeper again another cruise liner. Will have to wait for it to scram before I can sleep again. But we are sailing again at 6.5KN to an easterly breeze. Having a cocoa now & bread and jam.

**06.50H**

Slept from 0330H last night until now. After another cruise ship kept me on my toes. Had to drop sails again & we are still becalmed, though doing 4.1KN over the ground. Before I eventually got to sleep I had to close skylight as a heavy shower hit us. 105 NM since 1300H yesterday for 18 hours. Slept in my shorts & t-shirt for first time in awhile last night. But I imagine I will soon be disrobing as sun climbs.

**1020H**

A glassy Atlantic as I have bacon & egg. Yank rasher wafer thin but tasty. Gulf Stream busy with shipping. 2 this morning. 5 last night, we have reached the average N’ limit of N/E Trades, so I imagine we are in a mini Doldrums before we pick up the S westerlies.

**1130H**

An easterly puff that is filling light Genoa & speed 4KN & breeze though light still filling Genoa. It all helps & we are bringing the latitude up 28o N’ now. Still on 4 KN, having a tin of smoked oyster with lettuce & bread and butter for lunch. Hot now with sun 90o. Days run at 1300H.

**1540H**

Dozed for an hour & radar alarm woke me for a ship going S. Breeze though still light is holding from the E. Getting an easterly moderate swell now that we are N’ of The Bahamas & its banks. Open water now except for Bermuda Islands which lies 700 M to the NNE 5.5kn.

**1615H**

6KN. Sun & cumulous all day. Bar a few early morning showers.

**Fri. June 14**

**0230H**

Still carrying main & l’t genoa. Speed 5 KN. As we have left what I take to be a fishing boat astern, after waking to radar alarm. What I take to be an O.S.A.S. buoy is flashing on starboard horizon. 0320H 20M after hitting the bunk, another alarm to a ship astern heading for US coast which a good few have done lately including cruise ships.

**0900H**

Got an uninterrupted sleep after that until 0700H. Had to drop main as wind has swung to south & put up another genoa to starboard. So we roll to the N’ on 30o N’ with Jacksonville 100 M to port. “I’m going down to Jackson”. The same latitude as the Canaries, so it is hot.

**1130H**

Wind was slowly swinging to W of S. So I dropped genoa & hoisted mizzen. Wind just filling sails. Spent morning tidying Dr’s.

**0240H**

Having crab meat &lettuce, & bread & butt for lunch with a fruit drink.

**1400H**

Wind light & sails giving odd flap. S/Y in direction now. 107 M for second day.

**1500H**

Wind now S.E. so twin genoas again.

**1900H**

Wind steadied in strength & we are doing 4-5KN since. Boiled spuds & onions today & had 3 sausages from vacuum pack. No ships since last night, which leads me to believe we are E’ of G/Str., or else we are off the coastal traffic. Also had a good wash, hair the lot. Sun appeared watery this afternoon, before high grey sky hid it. Barometer down by 3MB since yesterday to 1020MB.

**Sat June 15** Day 3.

**0150H**

Woke to a fine rain & a wind shift to the W. So dropped l’t genoa.

**O315H**

Tried to go back to sleep, so got up & I am now having a pot of tea & bread and butter sandwiches. Wind is now nil & Genoa growling, but I will leave it up as I saw a clearance in the sky in a lightning flash. We are drifting to the N. E.

**0345H**

Dropped other genoa. 300 M made since departure so we have reached the area where the Gulf Stream flows to the N.E. so that will be our heading now until we are on the same latitude as Cape Charles. V.A. 540 M away. Radar alarm. Sleeping good since I woke to light flashes.

**0930H**

Woke at 0700 H to a thunder storm with strong winds & rain etc. so back to bunk. Now little wind. I have strong genoa poled up to a southerly wind speed 2.8KN while I have more Franks (Frankfurters) 2 with fried spuds & an egg. I seem to be gaining well a lot lately. Whole sky is leaden & ready to unleash more ferocious thunder storms. So we keep near the wall. Barometer down by 2MB to 1018mb. Temp 80o.

**0910H**

Heavy rain now. Read for a while & watched 2 ships. Did 3 jobs on worklist – stashed books & drinking glasses & bottoms.

**1300H**

Rain ceased leaving a high light grey sky. Just hear d on radio a lottery worth 123 Mill $. Also I am using Breakstone’s butter & Horniman’s Tea. Up poled port genoa. 4.3KN to light breeze. The Gulf Stream is flowing strongly here. 105M.

**1600H**

4.5KN now for a light breeze. Sun now for an hr or more. Having last of 2 Franks now with 4 rashers & last of yesterday’s spuds. Got a burst of energy before lunch. Tightened stern gland & syphoned 5 gallons & tidied cockpit lockers.

**1700H**

Down starboard poled Genoa for a N/E heading. 5KN.

**1900H**

Breeze steadied, hoisted main, 6.5KN. Coolers thrived after 3.5 days with block ice. We now have Georgia to Port, with Jacksonville, then South Carolina with its Charleston – then N’ Carolina with Cape Hatteras. Then Virginia where we turn E. x N on the same latitude as Cape Charles or Lisbon to cross the North Atlantic. 2.760M. Today’s temperature pleasant, 78 this morning 54o afternoon.

**Sunday – 16 June**

**0625H**

Slept well after I turned off radar alarm at 0200h as lightning was non-stop to the W. Good progress overnight as wind held. So it looks promising for a good run. Another 12M & we reach the latitude of Bermuda. Sky full of though clouds and the W. but clearing to southwards, will have to run engine today as navigation lights taking its toll by night. Cut my hair yesterday.

**0930H**

5 hours since 0730 F’g up wind direction & keeping me on my toes this Sunday morning. Have engine running for batteries.

**1100 H**

Becalmed in a sea. Fret that I can only attribute to the Gulf Stream. Now we are doing 4.5KN. Just drifting. Though we are being tossed around good.

**1200H**

Hoisted genoa to a southerly rain squall which eases the tossing around. Wind will die after it I presume. Nothing but shower today & short breaking waves. Even when no wind 5.9KN. Lunch – bought 2 salamis & I enjoyed the lot one I opened with bread and butter and a pot of coffee.

**1300H**

Showers gone & seas down somewhat, wind now S.W. & the first & just filling genoa.

**1330H**

Showers back & becalmed again.

**1600H**

Still becalmed & Showers gone. Hot out now.

**1930H**

Have genoa up for past hour & now main 7.6KN.

**1945H**

8.7 KN. Sunset 20.15h

**2120H**

11KN.

**Mon. June 17**

**0400 H**

Still going well. 7 KN. Thunder & lightening last night. Now 0915h & not long up to a Bueno morning. Wind still there 5.5KN.

**1130H**

Hardly a cloud now & only for breeze is holding it would be hot. 87o. 60 m now to put Cape Hatteras a beam to port. Passed Cape Fear & frying pan shoals overnight. Did some maintenance work & tidying.

**1300H**

Hard for me to credit. 155m. A seagull type bird white with black leading wings & tips with a needle tail flying around boat. Cape Lookout abeam. Cape Hatteras 60m distant to port.

**1420H**

Up poled genoa to starboard main & loose genoa to port up since yesterday that I saw more dolphins. Sargasso weed has been with us since Colon. No sign of my tailed bird since.

**1700H**

Still going strongly. 6.5KN. Had tea, toast & marmalade after getting up. Then later bacon & egg. Lunch was salami & noodles with bread and butter & a ribena drink with a Kiwi for dessert. Now I am having an orange drink & a few blueberry roll, similar to Fig rolls. F’g radar alarm bleeping most of the day for F’ sake. All that I can see.

**1940H**

Cape Hatteras abeam x 60m. Dropped poled starboard genoa to hold heading. Up until now we had been running parallel to the coast. Beyond Hatteras the coast runs north x Norfolk, the U.S. Navy’s E’ Coast Base & Ch/Peake Bay. So we will be edging away from that coastline for 220 m where we then head E x N to cross the North Atlantic.

**2015H**

Sunset red & clear wind direction for past 2 days. S.-to S.E.

**Tue June 18 Day 6.**

**0245N**

Up poled genoa to starboard again to hold heading. Dropped main and poled port genoa. Wind had swung to W of 5. What I took to be a coastguard cutter was off our port when I came on deck, but it veered off when I put on cabin lights. I already had mast head running lights & radar alarm on but he was running silently. Drugs? Making a pan of porridge. The first glow of dawn, and there is lighting the sky to the E now at 0425H. Now 0700H & I had gone back to the bunk around 06ooH. Having a mug of coffee. Wind 6.3 KN. But I would say we are E of main Gulf Stream current. Present course should bring us into it. Any other time 6.3KN would be great. 11 KN of previous night has me ruined. 1300 H. 145M. We are average 130 miles per day. Have been busy since. Rain showers came out of the W & enveloped the whole sky. I dropped port genoa anticipating thunder squalls. But we did not get either. But I had a shower in the cockpit followed by spuds & onions & bacon dinner, with a Kiwi to follow. Have main up now, & unpoled starboard genoa as the wind is now W/y. One good thing is we are now N of the Hurricane Belt. 110 M to way point where we veer E x N with the Gulf Stream. We have passed the mouth of CH/Peake Bay 180M to port. Poled & up now at 1400H. Speed 6.8KN.

**1800H**

7KN. Dropped main & we are now running under twin poled Genoas on an E x N heading at 8KN. So we are now on a heading for the Shannon with a W x S wind. No Sargasso weed today. Temperature more comfortable for past few days, an agreeable 82o now. So now I will have a fag & read. As I was working on deck, bending on W/jibs under Genoas, as I imagine as we edge N’ we will meet fresher winds. At present we are on 36o 25’ N’ 72o 42’W & I will edge to 38oN & 60o W. as my next W/point.

**Wen June 19th Day 7.**

**0030H**

Dropped sails becalmed, but drifting to the E. at 4.5KN. Woke at 0530H after a good sleep, to a very light easterly breeze. Rose at 0730H & have engine on since. Now 0830H. I am finished my breakfast of 6 rashers an egg and a potato left since yesterday. Did not use running lights last night as Batteries low. Relied on radar alarm. 2 ships yesterday & one last night before midnight. I do not expect to meet many from here on. We have a high mottled sky. Barometer 1020MB and rising. Temperature 80o

**1300H**

Becalmed for past hour. Finished last of bread & lettuce for lunch with a tin of clams & anchovies. Blue skies & hot 87o 120 M.

**1715H**

Just finished bleeding fuel supply & have it running again. Too hot until now. 37 o Still no wind for sails but enough in the right direction for Nell while under engine. 7.5 KN. Must make a pot of tea. Too hot for one since B/fast. 2 ships today inbound. So we are now heading for home & family after 3 years of ocean roving & exploring. Westerly winds anytime from now on. Frequently we are on 37o N - 71o W. Averaged 127 miles per day for 7 days. Rolling like a bitch since I stopped engine now at 1830H. Barometer down by 5mb to 1015MB since 0830H. Back to rye vita again. Having some now with cheese & a mug of coffee at 2000H. Did some work in cabin tidying & stashing stuff away.

**2230H**

Up 2 poled genoas to a SW breeze. 5KN.

**Thur June 20th Day 8.**

**0430H**

Went to sleep with genoas growling owe mainly to swells, I was awakened at 0340H to a rolling motion you only get from sunning at speed. So checked heading from bunk compass & OK. But could not sleep, so here I am after entering position on chart & thinking of something to either eat or drink as we go downwind to a SxW’y at 7KN.

**0500H**

It is rye vita & butter & marmalade with a pot of tea.

**0715H**

Raining since 0400H & for past hour or & rain now ceased & sky brightening. Went back to bunk at 0600H & got up now. Having a coffee & biscuit.

**0830H**

Long Islands radio said today is the first day of summer. Having 7 rashers & an egg as I write, though the number is deceptive as rashers are grilled they are 3” long & wafer thin but extremely tasty & lasting well.

**1000H**

Struck starboard genoa & hoisted mizzen as speed down to 3.8KN even though chart shows we are in gulf stream, I think we are north of it, so we are now heading nearly E. in a fret that I can only assume is due to the Gulf Stream as even though sails are barely filling wind which we have from WxS would not kick up any waves. Temperature 80o Barometer 1013MB down by 2mb since last evening.

**1100H**

Having first of salami & rye vita & pot of tea while a black sky covers a quarter of the horizon to S/E for past 2 hours passed uneventfully. Long Islands radio forecasting thundery conditions. Cleaned more woodwork with turps to remove grease my hands left over the years. Shorts & t-shirt night & morning now but they are off now for past hour until sundown. Delighted to have found another salami when I looked which makes 3. I thought I only bought 2 in the rush the day before departure. They are so convenient & tasty. Used the last pack of 80z. Butter of which I had four. Could have bought more as it lasted well. But I have margarine & tinned butter. As usual the wind died & we are becalmed. Drifting at 2KN.

**1300H**

100M 1,000M to date or average of 125 miles per day. Engine stalled again yesterday after one and a half hours. I failed to start it today. Not a big deal while we have sun for solar panels, but a nuisance.

**1430H**

Had pork & beans & instant mash, but couldn’t find any pork. Having a coffee & biscuit now.

**1645H**

Heavy rain now, after light rain & fresh wind since 1530H. Wind S.S.W. Barometer now 1008 MB down by 5mb since 1000H. Thunder and lightning also. Good headway. Nothing but thunder storms since I entered the Florida Straits & they usually F’ up the wind. Wind easing now since heavy rain.

**1800H**

Still torrential rain. Wind still SSW & light, with Genoa growling. Just put light on in cabin. Also t-shirt & shorts.

**2200H**

Hit the bunk to rain at 2000H & woke at 2130H to find rain gone & also wind. Much lightning on horizon skyline. Don’t know again where the waves are coming from as along with swells we are being F’d around goodo. It was dangerous on deck dropping Genoa.

**Fri June 21 Day 9.**

**0740H**

Temperature 78o and barometer 1008mb. Genoa up since 2400H last night to a N wind which we still have, will hoist main as soon as I finish boiled egg. Sky overcast & grey. As it is, engine batty is the old est. Yesterday’s trying to start engine has it down by .5 on volt more lights batty is new since Panama & is fully up. So I will let solar panel bring up engine battery before I try again. We should be getting S.W. to W. winds from here on in anytime now as we are in the area of the westerlies. But as Claude said, “Met is the most inexact science known to man” and I have plenty of reasons to credit this. Though generally you can take the world’s winds & currents as gospel. Barometer steady since last evening at 1008mb.

**0830M**

Main up.

**1000H**

Felt peckish & now having 5 rashers & rye vita & coffee. Excellent progress as we breathe at 60 o Sea life is healthy.

**1300H**

Was conserving power & switched on GPS. For a plot after 13M & found we were heading too far N. We are now - 39 o N, 680 48’ W, so adjusted heading to E. Daily run down to 75M.

**1630H**

Have genoa to port. Poled for some time & also poled starboard genoa as wind is now WxN. Sky overcast & grey all day which is a nice change from sun. Also a reminder of home water which is a change from south and central America & Florida. No thunder storms today for a change. Sky was brilliant last night with lightning.

**1800H**

Dropped main to hold heading. Wind now WxN. Good headway all day. Still overcast. Barometer same as yesterday. Temperature 78 o and had 2 scrambled eggs with chicken cheese, & half an onion for tea for a change.

**Sat. 22 June Day 10.**

**0825H**

Woke at 0630H but did not arise until 0730H as we were on course. A great night’s sleep woke only at 0300H & all OK. Hoisted mizzen to balance genoa which I unpoled as the wind is now N. again & fresh. Temperature 71o A big plunge, due to the N’ wind. Sky still overcast. I have cords & a shirt over, t-shirt & shorts for the second time this trip, as I put them on also two nights ago going on deck at Midnight. Having 5 rashers & an egg with a pot of tea and rye vita for breakfast. Will leave on Cords & shirt until temp rises. We are not at the normal S’ Limit of drifting ice for summer yet which is brought S’ by The Cabot & Labrador currents. It is 600M to the E’ of US & I plan to skirt it & the Grand Banks of New Foundland. Yanks very conscious of fat in food. Could not get full cream powdered milk in 2 big supermarkers & food items are adv’ with low fat content & calories etc. Overcast sky inclined to depress after so much sun up until now. But it is also a welcome relief for a change. Good progress. Barometer steady at 1008mb.

**1000H**

Up main on pullover & socks. Blue sky now. Barometer steady. Temperature down to 67o. Amazing.

**1130H**

Eating again, smoked herring & rye vita & margarine. though I had coffee & biscuit at 1015H. A 20o drop in temperature is bound to make one eat. I also have socks & tackies on since after betting main. So we are under full working R/G. Sun welcome with this wind off the ice. No humidity today. Excellent progress. No ships lately & no thunder storms or showers.

**1300H**

Miles per day disappointing after so many days of 100 miles per day & over. We have our 1st decent swell of B.M. today. Plotted 2.610 NM to the Shannon which at 50NM per day gives an estimated time of arrival. 24.07 & at 70 NM p/day 28.07. So I imagine we should arrive on or before the Aug. W/E Bank Holiday which gives us 43 days at 60 miles per day.

**2000H**

Becalmed. Barometer & temperature same as this morning.

**Sunday 23 June Day 11**

**0630H**

Awake & up at 0530H to a southerly breeze. Genoa & main up now as I have breakfast of 5 rashers last of pack & strong but tasty & an egg that was cracked. I would say I woke with breeze. Nice to be moving again. Temp and Barometer still steady. But this southerly wind should rise temp. I feel it hot now in shirt & pants after breakfast. Navigation even with G.P.S. occupies me daily, a lot, as I plot my route. My desired heading at present is to skirt the Grand Banks, before I take The Great Circle route home to the Shannon. Fog abounds on the Grand Banks & the Gulf Stream skirts it also before it flows to Europe. Cooking & eating, sail handling, maintenance of standing & running rigging & scanning horizon, plus tidying also keeps one busy. I am the Captain – crew – navigator, Cook, cabin boy & bosun, plus engineer & ship’s carpenter. Se we have today 720M to cover before we are clear of the Grand Banks of New Foundland, which I believe was once the world’s greatest international fishing grounds. That is, before the vacuum cleaners skimmed it.

**0735H**

Temperature climbing 75o Barometer still steady at 1008. But the dominant swell today is from the S.W. so we may at last be coming into the S.W. winds which the wind chart forecast long before this. We shall see.

**1800H**

50M past few days with calms & light winds taking its toll of miles per day had to harden sheets a while ago as wind went light but we are reaching again now. Went on to chart for N/part of Atlantic today, & we are keeping to track. I have marked on it for past 24 hours. 2 previous days we meandered. Hopefully breeze will hold.

**1630H**

Dropped main earlier as wind went from S to W.. I poled starboard genoa which I hoisted & then poled port one & in no time wind increased & went NW So now we are under starboard genoa only to hold heading in a fresh wind that has already kicked up a sea. Barometer down by 5mb since morning to 1003mb.

**1945H**

I am just in after dropping poled Genoa which we were reaching to at a high speed. So we are now lying ahull & there is a nice whine in the rigging. Barometer still on 1003mb. The low is to the E of us & with the seas as they are I imagine it will be daylight before I go on deck. Bar the noise we are snug & I will read now before bunk. Temperature 72o

**Mon 24 June Day 12.**

**0600H**

Someone is praying for me. I woke at 0515H & got up & looked out hatch & saw a ship ¼ mile away on my stern heading straight for me. Got on VHF & he answered my second call asking how far from ship I was & by this time I was a little downwind of him so I advised the Greek to turn to Port which he did. A dramatic situation after a wild night. He is to send a message. Temp 76 o and wind still northerly & decreasing. Will shortly hoist a sail.

**0805H**

Hoisted W/jib after tea and rye vita & marmalade – having a boiled egg now with coffee. Still a whine in the rigging. Hope El Greco sent message. He asked me a lot of questions about my voyaging & also my name. He said he was from Greece. They were bound for Sweden from Newport News in Norfolk V.A. That was the closest shave I have ever had with a ship & only for I saw it, I imagine it would have been a near one. Barometer up by 3mb at 1008mb at 0615H & now 1012mb.

**1030H**

Dozed for three quarters of an hour & hoisted mizzen & now on a 90o heading. As prior to that we were on 120 o and speed 4KN yesterdays. Westerlies did not last long, northerlies seem to persist. Unusual? The usual lumpy seas or se fret after strong winds are with us. Eating again. This time 5 rashers & tea. Hard to make mileage lately, between calms & a near gale. Sun breaking through now.

**1300H**

65M, not bad considering we had sails down for 16M.

**1600H**

Still the same conditions & same rig. It seems a big change from pulling curtains to keep the sun out to wearing cords & P/over & from being naked to oilskins. But I got a good start to break me into sea life & the wild seas of yesterday & today. Disconnected echo sounder & stashed it this morning. Apart from navigation & eating I am reading. Mostly sun now with med white cumulus. Temperature 73 o. Barometer 1013mb.

**1815H**

We will probably see a sunset this evening.

**1945H**

Sunset was nice. Put clocks forward 1 hour as we have covered 15 o of longitude since Florida.

**Tue 25 June Day 13.**

**0615H**

S/ rose round & red at 0545H. Had just got up & dropped sails as no wind. For how long wind died I will never know as I slept very cosily in a sleeping bag for the first time in ages. The previous night I was cold with only shorts & t-shirt & a sheet which maybe saved my life with ship as I don’t normally get up that early. 70o Barometer steady 1013mb.

**0845H**

Working since. Replaced light Genoa with stronger one. Checked engine battery volts & still a quarter up. Cleaned & greased terminals, & el’ joins covered engine & dipped fuel tanks & other small jobs. What wind we have is S/y though earlier it was N/y. Sun last evening bespoke wind & red sky this sunset also. So now I have prepared & we are ready if it comes. We had 80M done at 0625H & we were on 6.5KN at 1900H last evening. So today’s run should be an improvement, espy so if we get a breeze.

**1050H**

Hard to know where the swells are coming from today, they are so confused. But I have a Genoa up just now which is barely filling to a S breeze which be a state is not helping at all. I have a feeling we are in for more wind.

**1145H**

Genoa filling well now. Having an early lunch. A tin of chick’ salad & a tin of beetroot.

**1300H**

Gulf stream strong here. 7.5KN to a light breeze. Barometer 1015mb. Temperature 78o.

**1430H**

80o breeze holding good.

**1630H**

Breeze freshened by now SxW wind. Barometer 1013mb. Down by 2mb.

**1800H**

1 reef in main & no. 3 jib.

**1900H**

Barometer 1012mb.

**2000H**

Dropped 1 reefed main speed 8KN. Wind fresh now. Barometer steady.

**Wen 26 June Day 14.**

**0100H**

Dropped no. 3 & lying a hull. Near gale. 100M since 1300H. Not easy trying to sleep & I feared for my sail & rigging. Strong whine in rigging, but seas not as bad with this S/wind as N/y.

**0700H**

Heavy rain. Temperature 76o and barometer 1007mb. Down 5mb overnight. Wind now S.W. A mild gale. Between wind & Gulf Stream we are being pushed E.

**0900H**

Got up at 0830H & now having 5 rashers & a pot of tea. Sky grey with odd white spots. Plenty of lightning activating radar alarm but no thunder, so it is sheet lightening. Rain ceased. Maybe we are into the S/W’s at last. Difficult moving around cabin. Sea very lumpy & confused espy with wind shift. But I slept well until 0700H. After striking no. 3 last night.

**1050H**

Wind swung quickly to N.W. after a shower. So low is moving away E. Will read for another while & let seas settle.

**1145H**

Wind reduced dramatically & I have hoisted strong Genoa to a N/E wind – Speed 6KN. Bloody great, & hard to credit, for less than 23 hours & lying a hull for eleven of them. Would say we were doing 11KN before I dropped no. 3 this sunset. Good on ya Gulf Stream & “Loon”. Back to Jocks & t-shirt since temperature up. Elated with good progress.

**1345H**

Spaghetti, instant spud & salami for lunch with a mug of life long milk & a mug of tea. Now sky still overcast.

**1450H**

Up mizzen st/p’le.

**1500H**

Sun out through a fine stratus. The odd bit of Sargasso weed still about. Hope the Greek sent message on Monday.

**1800H**

Poled & hoisted port genoa.

**1900H**

Dropped mizzen St/Sle.

**2100H**

Dropped port genoa. Nellie slipped clutch as wind is now N.W. & quartering waves have built up. Barometer 1009mb.

**Thur 27 June Day 15.**

**0220H**

We broached & Nell slipped the clutch. If it happens again will lie a hull. Waves & wind have built up. Great headway. Wind went WxN. Made cocoa & having a biscuit. 7M from 40o N, 57o 47W. Moon was pink as it declined.

**0615H.**

Down Genoa. Up W/jib. Pretty fresh wind & impressive seas this sunset. 115M at 0700H. Must have lost my wrist watch on deck. I had already fixed the strap twice. Last pack of marg. nearly finished. Got tinned butter in Cayman Islands., must pull it out. Wind nearly westerly. Barometer 1011.5mb up 2.5mb since last evening. A wild fresh day sun & clouds.

**1000H**

Maybe we are in the westerlies at last.

**1030N**

Poled storm jib to port to stop broaching.

**1630H**

Down storm jib and poled no. 3.

**Fri 28 June Day 16**

**0415H**

Becalmed. Awoke to sails growling.

**0930H**

Best night’s sleep ever. Bar dropping sails. Still becalmed. Just after weetabix, long life milk for a change. Could not find the butter yesterday in any of the lockers. So I am on P/nut butt’. Drifted 20M since 0400H for 5.5 hours. So the Gulf is still strong which accounts for my excellent mileage with wind lately. Barometer 1024mb and temperature 83o with sun & cumulus.

**0945H**

Up l’t genoa to a W/y puff. As nice a day as one could wish for. Having 6 rash from last vacuum pack. It’s a hard life thank God. Took photo of a flying fish I found on deck earlier. Like old time times in the nude again. Never dressed when I got up with high press and temp’.

**1300H**

Dropped Genoa. Wind too light. 155M.

**1700H**

L’t genoa up again. S’y genoa has been up and down since trying to fill. We are presently doing 4KN to the E’ with mainly the ass’ of the Gulfer. Sun all day, 85o.

**1900H**

Ocean nearly glassy.Took a photo of a Portuguese Man of War wherever he came from, maybe hatched out of or from an egg in Sargasso weed. The ocean is at peace today.

**1945H**

What wind we now have is from the E. Another 3o of longitude or 130m & I will be changing clocks again. We are making such progress eastward. Sunset shortly now, & I am going to have a Rum & Coke as I don’t expect to be sailing tonight. Barometer 1027mb. A container ship passed our E horizon yesterday & now at 2100H the lights of a ship heading N.W, are on horizon which makes 3 ships I have seen since I headed E.

**Sat 29 June Day 17.**

**0100H**

Genoa up as I woke to a S.E. breeze. Woke at 0545H & compass showed we were heading W & back to AM’. So changed tack & we are now at 0900H, heading; S x E to an N x E wind. Luckily it does not happen often.

**0930H**

Another wind shift & another tack. Wind now S.E. Saw the back & dorsal fin of a whale twice while changing jibs.

**1030H**

Now & a heavy rain from a black mass that covered 180 o of windward horizon. No chance of wind direction thank God. Had enough of that this morning. Unusual conditions for a high barometer of 1026mb.

**1120H**

Wind fresh now & from S.S.W. so good headway under genoa. Chewing the last rasher as I write of 3 that were left after breakfast when I had 4.

**2100H**

Wind mighty steady in strength & direction since 1120H with excellent progress. Sun & cumulus also. Had a good dinner of tinned ham & beans & inst. spuds & for tea. I finished the ham & beans. A nice change of food.

**Sunday 30 June Day 18.**

**0820H**

Rose at 0800 H as I woke last night at 0130H mainly because I was too hot in da Bag & also the motion, which has been wild as wind is strong. Anyway I slept again around 0300H after tea & reading. Over 100 M done since 1300H yesterday at 0800H. Speed 8-9KN. Confined to cabin since 1200H yesterday, as we have odd slosh from breaking wave crests, but pop my head out of hatch occ’y.

**1300H**

165M Great. 9 KN as I plotted. Barometer 1031mb. Temperature 80o 100M now & we are clear of area for limit of south drifting ice. Half way mark of total M of trip & we are half way across the North Atlantic to home.

**1600H**

Wind down by .5kn. Big ship going W to port horizon. Sun & cumulus all day. Was out in cockpit for first time in 24 hours. Pumped bilge & all OK.

**1700H**

Spoke to a yacht out of Massachusetts with 8 aboard bound for Crosshaven. Crossed my bows, & I could see the crew clearly. Wind now light & Genoa giving odd growl. Put clock forward 1 hour after another 15o longitude.

**Monday July 1 Day 19 –**

**0430H**

Woke & Genoa growling so dropped it. Lovely. Full moonlit night. Having cocoa & biscuit.

**1000H**

No wind but a beautiful morning. Slept until now as I read upon waking this S/Set earlier. A prop’ engine plane making a drone in the sky, but I can’t see it. Breakfast of pot of tea & rye vita & marmalade. Still have not found tinned butter. Have my mug on the table as rolling is minimal. Have a tea cloth I bought in the biggest Chandlery in the world in Fort Lauderdale. Trying to write a letter a da to all the amigos I met in my travels for posting in K/rush as I will have little time there for writing.

**1230H**

Not a cloud in the sky now since I hoisted a poled l’t genoa to port for a light breeze from the S.W. an hour ago. Barometer high & rising at 1035mb. Temp 70o & breeze is just nice & cool for the 1st time, even in sun which is unusual. Just fin an egg & a pot of tea. Aired sleeping bags. Fixed Genoa tack Strap with a smaller shackle as old one was kinking. Pumped bilge (must tighten ST/Gland). Stashed dirty clothes. Checked port lockers for butter & pulled out some food. Now I will check starboard lockers & maybe tighten St/Gland.

**1300H**

300M more & we are half way home. Today we are past the Ice Area & we are now on the Great Circle Route Home, our heading N.E.

**1900H**

Both genoas filling to a nice S.W. breeze since hoisted. Sky still blue. Boiled a few spuds & onions for dinner & had salami with them. Just now I had fried spuds & 2 eggs.

**Tue July 2 Day 20 –**

**0330H**

Genoas growling awakened me to another clear night. S.W. wind is light, but speed 2.5KN. Having the usual Cocoa & biscuit & Gas Pan. 55M since 1300H so OK. Barometer down by 2mb to 1022mb. Temp 70o. No hassle in the castle. Batteries nearly fully charged & solar panel after past few sunny days.

**0500H**

Up again. Genoa still growling & I was going to drop them, but we are doing 2KN. Dawn is appearing. So breeze may steady. So I am having an early breakfast of salami & rye vita & tea. A heavy dew again last night.

**0540H**

Sun up & breeze seems to be steadying.

**1000H**

Breeze did steady. 4KN. Only up now after distant night’s sleep to another lovely day. A tin of clams for my breakfast for a change. Mileage will be up today. Must put on sun cream, my face felt dry last evening. 76o now & no chill in breeze Shearwaters & stormy petrels always with us since leaving coast. Stormy Petrels never seem to cease their ballet of the ocean. I have seen them on nights of the moon pirouetting. Must have a wash & change t-shirt & pyjama legs.

**1200H**

Washed & cleaned bilges, then washed myself, hair the lot & have a clean t-shirt on & nothing else. Having a green pea instant soup now with crackers & peanut butter, as it is tasty.

**1300H**

90M

**1700H**

Big ship on same course, on starboard horizon. Made first of pancake mix with jam. Have given up looking for butt’. Barometer 1030MB falling very slowly. Down by 5mb since midday yesterday. 81o

**2200H**

Another good s/set breeze. Good now since noon. 6KN now. Genoa’s up now since yesterday around noon.

**Wen July 3 Day 21**

**0435H**

Becalmed. But I can’t complain. Good winds lately & conditions exc. & 90M since 1300H. Slept well until sheets thumping on deck woke me. Sky is bright to the E. Just had a pan of porridge which was lovely. 150M to half way. Average daily run 104M. Current strong as we drift at 3.5KN. Only prob. Going on deck these five nights is your arse & knees get wet from the dew while dropping sails.

**0930H**

Poled genoa to a S.W. breeze. Barometer steady at 1030mb. But more cumulus clouds, some big. Speed 3.5KN, 2 of it current. We drifted 10m with current in 5 hours which is OK. Must have breakfast: Sleeping late these days when I have the chance. Wind has eased. That is why I only hoisted one Genoa as I guessed we would only get wind from big shower. This North Atlantic crossing is so far much cushier than 1987 one when I got 21 days of very strong winds out of 28, & it was the same time of the year. I think I have lost the pot I put on prior to leaving F.A. which is no harm. Many months of easy living is central and South America & Caribbean, with rich food & easy sailing in the Pacific took its toll on my avoirdupois. Only combed my hair yesterday after washing for first time after many days. A different lifestyle.

**1300H**

No change except that sky is all blue now.

**1700H**

Becalmed.

**2230H**

Still becalmed. Sun set clear & with a hint of wind. Moon has just risen now full & with an orange colour.

**Thur July4 Day 22 –**

**0430H**

Awoke to a breeze S.W. Up twin poled genoas. Very little current overnight or yesterday, when becalmed. Speed 4KN. Today is a big day in the USA. Mileage will be poor today. A fine morning with a clear sun up.

**0830H**

Breeze steadied in strength. 5.5KN but swung S. It seems we are following a slow moving ridge of M/Press “these past few days”. Barometer high & steady 1032mb. Temperature 76o Had porridge, anchovies & rye vita & tea earlier, before I went back to bunk at 0600H & now having a coffee & biscuit. Clear blue skies.

**1300H**

63M.

**1730H**

Breeze holding well since 0430H with good headway. Eating well today, 3 spuds & onions for lunch with salami & now fried spuds & an egg & salami. I sailed through the Bermuda Triangle without realising it until I read of it in a book today. Wind swung nearly S this afternoon.

**Fri July5 Day 23**

**0855H**

Woke at 0330H & adjust Nell & got up at 0815H & adjust Nell again. Wind now S.W. Poled Genoas up now 24 hours to a nice breeze. 80M since 1300H. Just had another pan of porridge, this lovely clear morning. Opened another long life milk & it makes the difference! We have a swell from the N.W. & together with waves kicked up from wind we are rolling a lot as we do downwind. The colour of the ocean has lost its blue these past few days, as The Cabot & Labrador currents bring down colder water from the ice.

**1100H**

Been working since. Washing & cleaning grime off cabin. Vinyl lining panels & roof. Cabin now looks cleaner & brighter. Speed 5KN. We were pushed a little N yesterday with southerly wind. More than I intended. Our course is N.E. anyway. Today sees us on 45oN. 43oW. We are on the same latitude as the centre of the Bay of Biscay. Today’s run will see us at my half way mark.

**1300H**

105M. Speed 6KN & we are half way.

**1415H**

Was dozing & radar alarm bleeped to a ship on my port horizon. He came abeam & I could read “Limea Meyicana” on his starboard side. After 3 calls he came on & said he could not hear me that I was too far away. Called again & no reply. The B’s, it would have been nice to have got word to home. That’s life. Just spent 10 mins being entertained by dolphins with a pronounced white belly & bottle nose. Good breeze all day. On my last pack biscuit.

**Sat 6 July Day 24**

**0745H**

A high mottled o/cast sky wind lessened during night. Speed 5KN Current must be strong here. Seas down from yesterdays. 90M since 1300H. I folded chart yesterday so that I can see Ireland when I am plotting. 1300M at 1300H. Sky beginning to open now. Can’t believe the good weather I am getting & the gentle winds. If these conditions and mileage hold 2 weeks should see me into The Shannon. Saw a ship’s lights going diagonally across my port bow last night. Before I hit the bunk at 2300H.

**1100H**

Clear blue skies now.

**1700H**

The odd Portuguese Man of War to be seen. Also many jet trails showing in the clear sky. We must be passing the N/York to Europe routes. Twin poled genoas now flying for 2 days. This morning with excellent progress in ideal conditions. No shortage of birds on this leg.

**Sunday July 7 Day 25**

**0530H**

We have a damp sea mist with low visibility. Good headway now overnight. A bright morning in spite of pre-dawn mist.

**0600H**

90M should be another good day’s run. Visibility 3-400 yards. Had porridge now. Pullover on over t-shirt lately, since we hit the ice waters. 47o 35’N – 39o 00’ W. This morning.

**0915H**

Dropped genoa, 3 days to the HR that twin poled Genoas had flown. Due to holding a course as wind now S.W. more than wind strength, though there is a fresh breeze. Barometer down by 4mb to 1025MB.

**1200H**

Sky brightening & more vis. but no direct sun. Always feel itchy to plot course when I know we are doing well & to see my track inching closer to home.

**1300H**

120M. 1180M remaining. Speed 5.5KN

**1700H**

Visibility down again. A sea has kicked up with wind & we take an odd crest. Still good h/way under port loose genoa.

**1900H**

A cold damp day for once who has left the Tropics behind. Temperature 69o. Barometer falling slowly since yesterday by 8mb to 1022MB now. But continued good progress reading and eating today, bar plotting this morning. Only went out to drop genoa & unpole port one.

**Mon. July 8 Day 26**

**0630H**

Dropped Genoa as Nell slipped & in view of the seas decided to lie a hull. 90M since 1300H or average of over 5KN for 17H. A nice whine in the rigging now. Barometer 1020.5MB. Must put on the kettle. Temperature 65o. A big change from the 90os. Poor visibility again today. We are today on the same latitude as The English Channel. Found my wrist watch I thought I had lost on the floor. It must have been caught in the cuff of oilers. Wind now S x W.

**1100H**

Wind eased up no. 3, 5.5KN.

**1300H**

115M. Barometer steady since 1030H at 1019mb. But a rough ride as we go E. with a 5 wind.

**1600H**

5.7KN under no. 3 & taking the odd comber over cabin top as we reach E. Sun shining through now & mist has cleared though sky is still not clear. Barometer up by 1mb to 1020mb. One gets used to the noise of waves thumping hull. But excellent progress.

**1815H**

Have been breaking the odd bad egg, which is not surprising cons’ the heat up until a week ago. But just now I have had 2 fried in my small 5” diameter straight walled pan. Must put clocks forward after another 15o of longitude tonight. 2 hours’ time off now with home & I soon look forward to receiving RTE news & music. 1.075.m now at 1300H. Visibility down again as sun declines.

**Tue. July 9 Day 27.**

**0920H**

Wind down speed 4.5KN. Barometer up by 4.5mb overnight to 1024.5mb. Temp down 65o, so things moving up & down on another damp misty day with very poor visibility. 75M since 1300H. My pan of porridge should be cool now. Put a pyjama for over t-shirt before putting on pullover & put on my first socks in over a year. Have first jocks on since yesterday also. No wonder there is arthritis in Corbally. That 75M is deceptive as we were lying a hull for 4.5 hours or it would be 95-100. Seas still impressive & it will take some time for them to settle. Sky is brighter today so maybe this mist will clear. Can’t believe the mileage we are making. At this rate our estimated time of arrival should be on or around 22.07. Had one great sleep last night in my heavy sleeping bag so we have deffo left La Tropica. Woke at 0615H & slept again until 0900H. Wind is still SxW & we are broad reaching to the E. Will have to stitch light Genoa I struck yesterday as bolt rope pulled through 2 foot of canvas. Solar panel has my lights batty fully charged. Must check engine battery when weather allows. Put clocks forward last night. Uno hr. No wonder I got up at 0900H.

**1300H**

95M. Stitching heavy sleeping bag. Which is 7 years old now & bought in Holland like the boat. Third successive day I have heard sonic booms. Today’s was directly overhead. Previously I heard them much nearer the coast. Today we are in the hundreds, 980 M from The Shannon. 1530M I was wrong. Mist is as thick as ever. Wind though not as strong as yesterday is giving 4.5KN. Still under no. 3.

**1900H**

Had a good tea, as I had a good dinner of a big onion chopped into a s/pan of Spaghetti & an instant pasta & cheese, along with a tin of mixed veg for tea remainder of dinner with salami & pancakes. Third full day of mist now & I miss the blue sky with its heartening & heating sun & blue ocean. Cheesed off grey but h/way making up for it. Nice to be in the hundreds instead of thousands of miles. Again looking forward to R.T.E. & B.B.C. for news and music. Barometer up to 1028mb now by 3mb since morning temperature 65o.

 **Wen. July 10 Day 28.**

**0915H**

Another good night’s sleep. Woke at sometime during night, & at 0700H & back to cot until 0900H. Conditions as yesterday. Wind still fresh, 5.5KN under No. 3 & bad visibility, (95M). 3 days now under No. 3 to S x W winds. A wilder motion this morning as seas have built up with 3 days of strong winds, & we have a whine in the rigging. Barometer up by 1mb to 1028mb. Temp. 63o. Porridge again for breakfast. It is nice in this damp weather & good organic food. Natural unlike canned & dried foods. Unlikely I will meet ships unless one going from South America to Scandinavia or as I near Irish Coast. But in good conditions for V.H.F. I could get a message from 100M to Valentia. I hope El Greco sent that message or you will be all worried after a month.

**1130H**

Amazingly radar alarm bleeped for 20M after talking about shipping. Did not see it though I scanned extensively. Called on V.H.F 4 times saying I could not see ship but that my radar alarm told me I was near a ship, but to no avail. Pity. Wind has swung to S.S.W. & visibility has improved.

**1300H**

115M - excellent headway under no. 3 “loon”, living up to its reputation in heavy winds. Must be the day before yesterday since I have been out of cabin. 865M. Now at 1300M. Finished last of spuds for dinner with 2 onions I boiled with them & made instant soup with the water.

**1700H**

Wind has eased speed 4.5kn. Seas down also with less water coming over “Loon”. Visibility still poor. But motion easier. I have not seen a bird since this sea mist descended & would not blame them.

**Thur 11 July Day 29**

**0030H**

Woke & found I could not sleep, so got up & tried radio & I got BBC 0850M. Great to have got B.B.C. world news last night. Wind has been light since I woke at 0600H. Vis improved, but still a damp day. Speed 3KN. Wind now W. But one can go out which is also great. 70M since 1300H. We can’t be breaking records every day.

**0945H**

 Genoa up & poled to starboard & I poled no. 3 which has been up solo for 4 days & pulled us 460 odd M. Sun just visibility through clouds so maybe day will clear. Barometer down by 2mb to 1026mb.

**1000H**

We have sun & a blue sky & I suspect wind will die as jibs growling & grumbling. But who gives a F when we have sun after 4 days of piss. I have my change of clothes out airing for changing into after a good wash. No wonder the old gods had to do with the sun. I am a diff’ person today & it is a delight for me after being cooped up in dampness. Looking forward to better reception on radio now as we draw nearer. Night time only at present. We are today on the same latitude as Lands’ End, Cornwall.

**1130H**

My morale is sky high today. Even though a dry mist has enveloped us. Wind holding & light. Speed 3KN. Just had a tin of crab meat & a pot of tea.

**1300H**

90M. 775 M left. Dropped no. 3 & hoisted mizzen St/Sle as wind went N.W.

**1815H**

Ghosting along at 3KN on a reasonably smooth sea. But a dry fog and poor visibility. I made scrambled eggs for tea with diced cheese. 4 eggs left after dipping in water where 4 floated.

**Fri 12 July Day 30**

**0845H**

Adjusted Nell last night before sleeping at 2300H & struck mizzen as wind has swung westerly & we were heading N’. Just now adjusted Nell again as wind now S.W. but good & constant headway overnight under Genoa. Wind fresher this morning 4KN. Slept well. Barometer down overnight by 6mb to 1019mb. Temperature 64o but no mist & there are even a few small bright spots in an otherwise leaden sky. Must have my porridge 60M since 1800H in a mostly N/E direction.

**1030H**

Stitched luff rope of genoa where it split from canvas. Mist back again for part hour. 5KN under starboard poled genoa.

**1100H**

Up poled no. 3 to port. 6.5KN. Having a pot of tea, rye vita & peanut butter & salami for elevenses. Salami is the only tasty food I have now. Bacon was also tasty & anchovies. Sardines & tinned veg. & spaghetti & beans etc. are OK but lack tastiness. Crab & clams OK too. Have some tins of Tom’s, must make some soup, also asparagus spears.

**1230H**

Barometer down by 3mb to 1016mb. Temperature 67o. Still a dull grey sky, but dry with better visibility.

**1300H**

3,000NM in 30 days. Not bad. 695M to the Shannon today. Very satisfied with days run considering yesterday’s light winds. I always said that if you can sail at even low speeds for the 24 hours. you make the mileage. Today time 12 July & Northern Ireland would not be a nice place to be from what I heard on B.B.C. 4 last evening. Dolphins again today. Day finer now but still overcast. A nice fresh breeze.

**1800H**

Sea mist again for some time. Good progress with S.W. wind 6KN.

**Sat 13 July** **Day 31**

**0600H**

Woke at 0530H & cabin compass, compass showed we were going S’E so I dropped port poled no. 3 & we are on a 70o heading once more. Wind had swung N/Y. 75M since 1300H, or 17H. I’m happy with that. Normally at this time the light awakes NE & I go back to sleep after checking compass, which I will do shortly. Morning grey & clear.

**0900H**

Just finished a boiled egg & tried radio & got RTE 1 no problem. Great. Gerry Daly after the news.

**0930H**

Unpoled starboard genoa & hoisted main. Wind still northerly & cold but dry.

**1045H**

Wind has eased & just filling sails. I had to harden sheets as wind went EOFN. Having an instant soup & crackers to combat the cold breeze coming from Polar Regions.

**1345H**

Becalmed due more to swells, though wind is light from the N.W. Having an orange, 1st this trip. Seldom eat fruit, except the odd apple. I can’t tell you when I last washed. Too cold to take off my clothes. My t-shirt must be on for 2 weeks under a pyjama top & pullover. My but that orange is nice. A nice & diff taste. Had instant mash spuds & beans & pork. But could not find the pork. Mixed with a half tin of toms. Nice to hear RTE and to know I am getting near home 610M today. Sky grey & overcast.

**1500H**

Still becalmed. Went up to scan & could see a pod of whales, 400 yards away circling around in one area. Spouting & showing their backs.

**1830H**

Still no wind. RTE said a ridge of high pressure is approaching from the W. so we are in its centre I would imagine. Felt the day long, maybe it is not moving. In fact I can’t remember when we were last becalmed. Barometer up by 3mb to 1024mb. Family & friends must be anxious now. I hope the Greek at least sent message. More dolphins today.

**2030H**

Will be surprised. If we get wind before morning. A tedious day which I mostly spent cooking, reading & listening to the radio. Would like to get a message of life to let all know I am OK & not too far from The Shannon.

**Sunday July 14 Day 32**

**0330H**

Woke to a light breeze from the E. So after a bowl of weetaix & a mug of tea hit the bunk again, in the hope that the wind would have swung to a fair one by late morning.

0935H

Whatever else one great sleep. Woke at 0905H east wind now has a little S’ in it which would only bring us N. & I am OK for Northing. Thank you. Barometer up by 3mb to 1028mb. Temperature 62o. Mist down again. A wet one & no radio reception today. So what else is new pussycat and to cap it all we have lost 12M to the W & gained 2M to the N. Fresh wind now. I miss walking when at sea as I have always loved to step it out with a stick and dog. But then I love the sea & you can’t have it all. Today & yesterday will set us back, & we were doing great. We are on the lower circle of high pressure & if moves E. our wind should go to the S. I am presently 105M S’ of the mouth of The Shannon & 620M W’ of it & with the N/E Atlantic current which I did not see any evidence of yesterday & the prevailing SW’ winds I imagine I am OK where I am. So I will play it cool & see if we get a S or W wind today. I am down to reading J.A. Michener’s Caribbean for the second time as I have gone through my other novels, most of them crap.

**1030H**

MIN & No. 3 as wind went, went S x E more & gave us a slant. So we are now heading N.E. or 45o & maybe it will improve. Our desired heading is 70o. A rough ride now as we go to W/ward. At least we will gain a few miles. So our new 24 hours day starts at 1030H. Speed 5KN.

**1500H**

52o heading. Mist still thick.

**1715H**

Fine rain now & wind S/y. We are well due a break now from these leaden & gunmetal grey skies after what must be a week of mist & semi fog bar one day in between. Went through presents of bracelets, necklaces, shells & purses etc. to give me something to do. I also have posters, cloth material, belts, flags etc. for adults plus a few mugs & knickknacks. Great that the wind wend around. I also should be thankful for a calm North Atlantic crossing without big seas or swells like I got in 1987. Miss the radio today. Not a glimmer due to poor visibility. But from now on it should improve daily if I make Da Mila’s. Feel the energy to do something like walking & singing in the rain, but I am cabin bound.

**1900H**

Sky showing odd streaks of brightness, to the S’ & o/head an odd patch. Hopefully we will clear this drizzle & see a few stars & the moon tonight. Ye Gods but I found Today cold 62O a big change from 90o & my blood is thin from a year in the Tropics. Had a big dinner of pasta with an onion & a tin of mixed veg & now just fin a tin of ravioli. Hot cup of soup at eleven with tea & coffee between meals also. Have an anorak for the past hr. Good steady progress since 1030H.

**Mon – July 15 Day 32.**

**0245H**

Hard to make a few miles lately with head winds, & light winds. Woke to sails growling, & as we had been Br/reaching I hardened up & we are now doing one knot, with sails giving odd growl. Only for sea being reasonably flat we would be dropping sails, which I think I will have to do anyway. We also have a fine drizzle. Barometer up by 2mb to 1030mb. Temperature up also to 67 O.

**0900H**

Great sleep again. A dry fog now. & still just enough wind to fill sails as we head N.E. at 1KN to an NE puff. Barometer steady at 1030mb. Temperature 65o. Slow boat to China. 40 odd M’s in nearly two days. Not easy making long’. RTE 1 clear at full volume today which is a good sign of the weather. Always nice to hear from your country, espy after 3 years. My porridge must be cool now. Ocean as flat as be damned. Otherwise sails would be growling. Oatmeal left will do for another 2.3 days. Then cornflakes & weetabix. 67M. S of Shannon Latitude today. Slowly being pushed N.E. these past few days. 540M now. I feel good today. It’s not cold. Fog has cleared & I think we will get sun today. Also we are nearing home & RTE 1 is great for my morale.

**1030H**

Sun showing & breeze 2.5KN.

**1130H**

75o T. 4.5KN. 1300H 70M for 2 days. In a N.W. direction.

**1500H**

A hazy sun allowed me to air clothes on floor of cockpit & I washed & changed out of old t-short & pyjama top into a clean t-shirt & beach shirt & a pullover.

**1925H**

Having my last egg for tea though I have powdered eggs to see me home. Good steady progress now for some time. RTE 1 on & clear most of the day. So nice for me after 3 years. Hazy sun since 1030H.

**Tue July 16 Day 33**

**0900H**

Main & No. 3 up now for 2 days. Only problem is that for the past 4 days with E. & S.E. wind. We have been pushed further to the N’ than I would like to be. Since 1300H on the 11/7 we have made 160m N. in a N. E/y heading. This morning a slight improvement, but from now on we would want to be heading due E. as we are on the same latitude as Tralee Bay. At 0900 H, 460M from the Shannon. God provides. We shall see. Would be nice to meet a ship & get a message home. We are at the mercy of the winds. Barometer 1027.5mb down by 1.5mb. Temperature OK at 65o 1200H wind has eased speed 2.5KN. Day overcast but visibility good. One thing weather & sea conditions excellent.

**1300H**

95M How bad. Another 75m to the E’ & we are only 1 hour ahead of Irish time.

**1630H.**

Little change except we are now heading E. Mizzen up since noon.

**1830H**

Sky clearing now for a while. Saw another pod of small whales spouting & circling some distance away, but they had dorsal fins like a shark. Slow but steady progress in perfect conditions.

**Wen July 17 Day 34.**

**0745H**

This lovely sunny morning just after dropping main as wind is now gone & N/Atlantic like a mirror. Left genoa & mizzen up as I think sun will create a breeze. Waiting for the last of porridge to cool. No problem lately with RTE reception. Sky last evening, I saw alto stratus. So I anticipate a breeze before long. Sun & blue skies since dawn. A sun cream day. 40M since 1300H 10 of them to the N’. I decided to have a look at the engine & discovered after dipping oil that water must be getting into the oil as the dipstick tube is o/flowing so that a/c’s for dirty bilge water I have been pumping out lately. So what else to do this fine morning? I have a tin of blue paint I bought, so I might as well have “Loon” looking well for arrival. So I start with cabin top. Dawdling along in swells under mizzen & genoa. Came in not because I was cold as I had my sweat off on deck while painting, but because it is tasty & I have not much tasty food left except salami. Paint is a darker blue than Arctic blue which was nicer, but it is good to be occupied. 410M to go today.

**1215H**

Finished painting c/top & enjoyed being on deck in the warm sun. Also the exercise. Sky greyed up now, we were becalmed for an hour or more. But have mizzen & light genoa pulling us along to a S.W. puff now. So we are going E. for a change.

**1300H**

Becalmed 400 M off Loop Head. Hoping for a breeze as what air this is now is south westerly.

**Thur July 18 Day 35.**

**0800H**

& under main & genoa. Speed 3KN. Great & with a S x W wind we are h heading E x S. Barometer down by 2.5mb overnight to 1024.5mb. Was up at 0500H & we were still becalmed. Sky overcast. Good to be under way again after 24 hours. Becalmed. Yesterday I noticed we drifted back 2M & this morning another 3. So where is the North Atlantic current? We have the biggest & longest swell from the W. today. For some time. On my pack of long life milk. But have plenty of powdered & tinned.

**1230H**

Getting odd patches of sun. Wind steady. Tad light. Beginning to get excited now we are only 400M to entering The Shannon. If this wind hold I will be changing clocks this evening at 20oW. Long to put us only one hour. ahead of Irish time. Biggest swells today for a long time.

**1930H**

Wind steadied 4.5KN. Put clocks forward. Barometer falling slowly 1.5mb since morning to 1023mb. Sky overcast.

**Fri July 19 Day 36.**

**0930 H**

Good h/way overnight. 65M since 1300H. 335 M left now & still no ship. I will call any ship in the area from today on, until I get within Shannon Radio (or Valentia). Wind southerly since yesterday & we are broad reaching. Sun breaking out here & there. Slept late this morning with change of hour. Though I woke at 0500H & got RTE 1 forecast. High now centred in N. Sea so let us hope this fair wind & weather will sail us into the Shannon. This morning sees us on the latitude in the centre of the mouth of the Shannon. Speed 5KN. Barometer steady. Temperature up 68o & nice.

**1200H**

Tidied out aft cabin & pulled out flag. Bagged dirty clothes & washed a dirty fender. RTE forecast giving southerly winds until Sunday, has my last halfcup just now. RTE great company & with less volume required daily was listening for a request from John Creedon this morning & Maxi yesterday. But then no one knows I am so near.

**1300H**

80M 4,000 odd M to date & 320 remaining.

**1930H**

Little change, except that sky is now overcast. Warm air meeting cold again. Barometer up by 1.5mb 1025mb. Maybe we can carry this weather home. Estimated time of arrival Monday or Tuesday if wind holds. Temperature 67o.

**Sat July 20 Day 37.**

**0830H**

Vis down to half a mile with mist. Good h/way 85m since 1300H. But wind light now since I wakened at 0630m. Speed 3.5KN. Barometer steady 1023mb. Temperature 65o. Corn Flakes this morning & coffee. Little change in RTE forecast. The last few miles are always the longest & I find it difficult to get to sleep these past few nights due to excitement I presume. The chart is well worn lately checking upon miles remaining for how often does one finish the remaining miles on a circumnavigation. 225. M this morning. Main & genoa up for 48 H at 0800H.

**1300H**

100M. 215M left. We still have a thick sea mist. Speed 3.5KN.

**1600H**

Breeze freshened speed 5.5KN. Wind southerly now for over 2 days.

**2000H**

Wind increased so I dropped genoa & hoisted No. 3 & took one reef in main. Heavy rain. Speed 4.3KN. Barometer down by 4mb to 1019mb since morning. RTE forecast rain at 1830H. 170M. Now. We were doing 7KN before shortening sail. A night for the pub in Ballyferriter. I will put clocks to Irish time this evening.

**Sunday July 21 Day 37.**

**0700H**

No. 3. Just filling a damp morning though visibility is OK. A trawler not under power & whose radar is not on to starboard Quarter when I woke. Tried calling it without success. 70m snice 1300H. 145 left. So that is the first of the fishing fleet. Did not think they would be 70M off the Continental Shelf. On previous occasions off the Irish coast fishing boats never communicate. Maybe they are illegal. Last evenings rain was the first I have seen bar shower, since the Tropical deluge of 37 hours in the Caymen Islands when I filled my water tanks off the deck by diverting the flow with a cloth into the tanks opening. When am I going to see a ship & get a message home? It now looks like I will have to wait until I am in range of Shannon Radio (Valentia). App’ 100 NM. If Jim is not home he would need notice of arrival. I will try Valencia later today. RTE forecast rain today & tomorrow with southerly winds.

**0900H**

Mizzen st/sle up since 0830H. We have another trawler off our bow. Morning dried up, but still overcast.

**1130H**

Breeze freshened. Down mizzen ST/SLE up full main. Speed 5KN. Still raining. Oilskins lately.

**1300H**

85m. 130M left.

**1500H**

Under twin poled Genoas, as wind is now from the W x S. Speed 4.5kn. The sun is out & is only wonderful in a clear sky.

**1700H**

Sun did not stay out long, but it is a clear day with a view of the horizon. Another trawler & no reply. This one … near & steaming W. 115M now 2130H. Sun again for the past few hours in a clear sky & we shall see the sunset shortly. At present, it looks watery & diffused. We shall see. Heard 2 Trawler strippers (English) on V.H.F. Earlier could not see sunset as it set as it went behind a mist bank clear but pale.

**2200H**

Just got Shannon Radio’s W/Fast. A bit garbled. So I will try them in the morning.

**Mon July 22 Day 38.**

**0130 H**

 Two trawlers one on port & one on starboard Horizon’s. We are now 185 M from the Shannon & approaching the Continental Shelf, so I can expect many trawlers from here on. If I sail 80M in the next 22H it will be a night entrance into the Shannon. We shall see I can always slow down.

**0800H**

More Trawlers. One off each bow. Got a break since one’s last evening. 65M since 1300H & 65M left. We are 10M inside Continental Shelf. Wind light speed 2.8KN. Gannets cruising 1130H. So far have failed to reach Valencia. Having an early dinner of macaroni – last onion – grated cheese & 2 eggs (powdered) & salami. I have a nice feeling that I am in Ireland. Sun breaking through now. If sky clears I should be able to see land as Brandon Mountain is reputed to be visible at 50M & we are now 45M from it & 55 M from Valentia Radio. Will try later.

**1300H**

80M yesterday 50M to Shannon & also Valentia. Mizzen St/Sle & Genoa now to hold course. 3.3KN.

**1600H**

Eventually made radio contact & spoke to Nance. Advising I should enter the Shannon at dawn if wind holds. Yahoo.

**1640H**

Dan just rang and the Brandon Range now visible off my starboard ow & also the Blasket Islands & Kerry Coast.

**2200H**

Loop Head light visible.

**0315H**

Dropped Mizzen ST/SLE & hoisted main & now at 0345H.

**0500H**

Dropped main as we would be in Kilrush too early.

Dawn broke off KillCredan Lighthouse. Oh to see the green of Ireland, gain after 3 years and 3 day. Anchored off Querrin & ate & wash. I was escorted me to Kilrush Marina on the 23 July 1996.