

AN EXCERPT FROM THE LOG OF "\*\*\*\*\*"

DAY ONE Time 0830 Position: Aboard "\*\*\*\*\*" at anchor, Gibraltar Harbour  
Well, this is it. After protracted repairs the engine is in fine working order, the wind is set fair, the sea is calm, the oceans of the world await, and yet. . . I could go now, but its probably best to check things over again and go tomorrow. I mean, what's one more day when all is said and done? I'm sure Henry the navigator didn't rush into things; he probably went and got an extra gas bottle just to be on the safe side. After all, the North West Passage wasn't going to go away was it? Or was that Magellan? Anyway, better safe than sorry, I'll nip over to the chandlers in the inflatable.

Time: 1000 Disaster! Inflatable was secured by rope to the coach roof, ready for voyage. My Waggoner's hitch with Carrick Bend proved impossible to undo. Went to get marlin spike from bosun's locker. Locker door jammed. Forced open locker door with dividers. Door gave easier than anticipated. Surprise caused dividers to slip, creating 3-inch gash in right bicep. After a little while located First Aid Kit (Note: To Calor gas add Elastoplast). Sellotaped bicep. Got marlin spike from bosun's locker. Proceeded to coach roof. Wake of passing motor cruiser caused me to trip and measure my full length along toe rail. Marlin spike imbedded in thigh. Sellotaped thigh. Hobbled back on to coach roof. Attacked knot with some venom. Very neat 1cm hole in inflatable. In disgust threw marlin spike. Marlin spike bounced off inflatable into water. Went below. Drank three quarters of medicinal gin supplies. Got puncture repair kit and bread knife. Hacked at rope securing inflatable. Watched puncture repair kit roll off coach roof into water. Made lunge at puncture repair kit. Severed main artery in left wrist. (Note: to Calor gas and Elastoplast, add Sellotape.) Passed out.

DAY TWO Time: 0830 Position: Gibraltar Hospital. Dizzy spells have eased this morning. Nurse has just been in to check my plasma drip. She says I was very lucky. If it hadn't been for the fact that she was rowing across the harbour on her way to work and, passing "\*\*\*\*\*" had heard my frantic call for help, I could have bled to death. I pointed out to the good woman that I was calling on Channel 16, and

therefore everyone would have heard me and I hadn't especially needed her. She pointed out that, as she came on board seconds before I passed out and had witnessed me screaming my Pan Pan Medico into the hand bearing compass, it was highly unlikely that anyone but her and God had heard me. As God wasn't on the water that morning but she was, could I please be a little less off-hand and a damn' sight more grateful. I demanded immediate discharge, as I was about to embark on my circumnavigation. She suggested that judging by my various self-inflicted wounds I was more likely to embark on circumcision. Apparently, this was funny. Moments later I hurriedly left for the chandlers and purchased the required items: gas bottle (large), Elastoplast, Sellotape, marlin spike, puncture repair kit.

Time 1100 Position: Gibraltar to La Linea ferry. Unpleasant altercation with ferryman over my request for him to divert and drop me off on "\*\*\*\*\*". He considered it too far out of his way. I pointed out that I was about to go round the world and that a few hundred yards out of his way seemed insignificant compared to the oceans I was to cross. That quietened him.

Time: 1130 Position: Alongside La Linea ferry terminal. Bastard!

Time: 1145 Position: Still alongside La Linea Have taken up offer of kindly holiday-maker to carry me over to "\*\*\*\*\*" in his small speedboat. At the moment we're waiting for his family and 'Woofles' to join us. Charming man.

Time: 1200 Position: Still alongside at La Linea. His wife, five children, his parents and Woofles have arrived, along with numerous cool boxes, six packs and dog biscuits. Some difficulty in arranging everyone, but now all settled. I am precariously perched on the bow with Woofles and my supplies. The gas bottle seemed a little insecure, so have threaded Woofles' lead through the ring on top of the bottle and thence looped it round my wrist to leave hands free to hold onto the rail and bag of supplies.

Time: 1200 and 30 secs Hit "\*\*\*\*\*" doing 18 knots Family speedboat ricocheted backwards, shooting gas bottle off bow into water. Woofles and I, being secured to same, followed one half second later and sank like stones.

DAY THREE Time: 0830 Position: Gibraltar Hospital Ringing in ears has abated this morning. Nurse took great delight in telling me how lucky I was that Woofles had the presence of mind to bite through the lead, and that his capacity for survival seemed a lot better than mine. And also, because Woofles didn't smoke, he could hold his breath for longer, at least until he returned to the surface. I pointed out that Woofles' eyesight wasn't all that great, for not only had he bitten through his lead but also my other wrist, causing me to take a sharp intake of breath 20 ft under the sea. In the circumstances, it's hardly surprising I ended up with lungs full of water.

Time: 1100 Position: Sheppard's Boatyard. Boatyard man has just inspected damage caused by lunatic in speedboat, and says it will take six weeks to repair. Ah well, there's always next season. Asked boatyard to fix inflatable whilst they're at it.