Trans-Atlantic Diary

Sloop – Scalza

Contessa-26

February -- March 1984

From: Puerto Rico Gran Canaria, Canary Islands

To: Bridgetown, Barbados, West Indies

Joint owners and crew: K.L. Gems, Captain; R.G. Lipsey, Navigator

Saturday February 4: Up at 5 AM. Worked on the C.D. Howe inflation monitor and several other things. Wendy Dobson came over at 0930 and stayed until 1100. Then came a rush that I was hoping to avoid and I was off to the airport just before 1300. Flight was 1420 to Montreal and then 1830 to Madrid.

Sunday February 5: Big confusion over air ticket in Madrid. They didn't give it back to me when they checked it at the international terminal. Then, after three long walks between the widely separated domestic and international terminals, we got it all sorted out. Then at 0940 I was off to Las Palmos on Gran Canaria. I arrived at 1230 Madrid time, which was 1130 local time. Keith met me, appearing after a mere 15 minutes of waiting and worrying on my part. He had a taxi. The local arrangements in Puerto Rico are in a state of confusion because one of the Norwegians who befriended us on our previous visit has had a stroke and everyone is rallying around him.

Arrived at Scalza about 1300. Everything seems shipshape. Did a bit of work. Then lunch with Keith who broke the news to me that he had to return to London as soon as we reached land in Barbados; I cried with tears of deep frustration; I had cleared things for a long West Indian cruise and I may never find the time again. After lunch, everyone came to the boat; we were especially glad to see Lisa and Od. They had worked for a whole day cleaning up the boat before we arrived. God bless them! At sunset we went off for a meal with Lisa and Thomas; then to bed at 2300 and at last SLEEP.

Monday February 6: I was dragged out of bed by Keith at 0800. We stayed in the house of the chap who has had the stroke and are using Lisa's car. Off to the boat and a lot of hard work. Everything has to be sorted out. Everything has to be cleaned and disinfected from stem to stern. All of the equipment must be checked and faulty stuff replaced; if that is impossible, as it often is, the equipment must be repaired by us. At lunch time we rushed to buy English papers for reviews of Pam's play. Only one was available, which was a bad review. Then lunch, then back to work. In the evening out to dinner with Lisa and Keith. I tried to duck out but Lisa forced me back, along with Keith, to her house. At midnight the son of the stroke victim came back from Las Palmos very depressed. He pleaded with me to stay a while, otherwise Lisa would keep him talking all night. To bed at 0130 and up at 0730.

Tuesday February 7: Much more work, but things are coming together a bit. Saw Jim (the owner of the ship's chandler) who will buy in Las Palmos all of the materials that we need for our repairs. He arranged to have our bottom scrubbed by a scuba diver. This will save us two days work drying the boat out, waiting for the right tide on each side of the hull, and then scraping and painting the hull ourselves. Lisa has now gone to Las Palmos to see the stroke victim, so we are looking after her son, Thomas. We took him out to dinner and then we got to bed at 2300, thank goodness. I had fantastic dreams, but still had a good, and welcome, sleep. During the day we inspected an English

wooden ship. The complement was a retired naval petty officer of 65 or so and his wife who was an RN but seemed rather frail to us. They had started out for Barbados a week or so ago but broke a boom in a squall after two days at sea. They returned to port for repairs which were clearly going to take a long time—is it really that bad out there in the unknown sea?

Wednesday February 8: Up at 0730. Had a very good day on the boat. By evening the sails were in place and we really had a working boat, but we are still waiting for a number of bits and pieces that will allow us to do two or three critical outstanding repairs. Today we met another Englishman called Charlie who is quite knowledgeable. He is in a gaff-rigged, wooden ship just slightly larger than ours, about 28 feet. He is going our way on his fourth crossing and his first single-handed trip. He explained that, by taking the direct course, the other Englishman got into trouble by staying in the lee of the islands for the maximum time and accepting the turbulent air that is in the lee. No doubt, if unwarned, we would have done the same. Charlie advocates sailing 50-100 miles due south to get clear of the island's local weather effects and only then turning SW to get on course for the Cape Verde Islands. We think this is good advice. The general route is to travel approximately 1,000 miles South West, parallel to the coast of Africa, about 200 miles off, to a point between 100 and 150 miles NW of the Cape Verdes and then to turn due west directly towards the West Indies. This evening Keith has gone off to dinner with Lisa, while I am spending my first evening on the boat.

Thursday February 9: I am writing this on Friday and already each day has melded into each other day. Thursday morning there was more work on the boat, then lunch at the dockside bar, then off to the town for provisions. We say what we want and Leon's supermarket delivers it tomorrow (we hope). Then we buy fishing gear. Keith insists on gear that seems too light to me, although he originally said it was my decision. No doubt, when the gear fails, he will have forgotten his decision in the store and it will be my fault; but that is just the way life is. We finished at the boat very late and then went back to Lisa's. Then to a Norwegian restaurant for a meal of pork, boiled potatoes and gravy. A dull meal, but a welcome change from Spanish food. I got to bed about 2400 but Lisa, who is a terrible night hawk, kept Keith up till 0330.

Friday February 10: Spent the morning on odds and ends. The wood to repair the combing on the bow never arrived so we have to leave the bow unrepaired (not a serious structural matter). At 1300 Keith went off to try to find bulbs for our navigation lights — this was our third attempt to get the right bulbs; we really don't want to sail without lights! But we begin to wonder if we may have to. At 1315 all our supplies arrive and are set on the dock until Keith returns. At 1500, Keith arrives back having combed the island to no effect. He cannot find the bulbs that we need, so we make do with the ones that are too strong and from which we must cut off one of the two clips to make

them fit. We hope they will work (no one wants to be at sea without lights). In any case they are only back ups to our trusty oil navigation light that Keith has had repaired in England after it failed on the trip to Madeira.

Spent all afternoon stowing the supplies. The water weighs an enormous amount and the food is very bulky—clearly there would not have been room for a third man even if he was half the size of Doug! We are now heavily laden, but we are only 2 inches lower in the water than before the supplies came aboard. This shows just how buoyant our little 26 ft. boat is; nonetheless, we are nearly an inch below the water line and, with our low freeboard, even an inch matters a great deal.

We got home just in time for a bath and then out for a thank-you dinner with our Norwegian friends. Lisa guides us to a very expensive restaurant with food that was not too bad. Then to a bar crawl that ended with us getting back to their village at about 0300. They all went on to another party while I went thankfully to bed. (I am still very tired from my exertions in the last week before I left Toronto.)

Saturday February 11: Arrive at the boat at 0800 and engage, rather desperately, in a lot of last minute work. Its amazing just how much there is to do even after a week of full-time work from dawn to sunset. Off to the quay to pay off Jim (very reasonable). Keith goes to buy last minute supplies and, when stowing them, we realise that Leon has omitted the butter and cheese from our order that he delivered yesterday.

At 1430 our Norwegian friends arrive and we set out in a nice breeze for a shake-down sail with them all on board. We anchor for a picnic that they have prepared and then sail back home. Od and I drive to Arginigan to see Leon. He is very upset that his driver did not deliver the cheese and butter. He gives us the missing supplies and a bottle of whiskey as a token of regret. When we get back, Lisa, Thomas., Keith and I sit on the boat and relax for a while watching the sunset. Then Keith goes to phone Pam. (I have had a welcome conversation with Diana at noon.) Keith returns very upset. Some business deals seem not to be going well in London. I think that, if we were committed to anything less that a transatlantic crossing starting tomorrow morning, Keith would have returned to London directly, My heart goes out to him. At 2200 we are back at our place. I am in bed by 2300, but Lisa keeps Keith up talking most of the night. I don't know where he finds the stamina and I suspect he will spend the first two days at sea sleeping.

Sunday February 12: I get up at 0600, shower and shave and wash my hair for what may be the last time in five weeks! Then I sort and pack my clothes. I am ready by 0700 but Keith doesn't show up until after 0800, having had almost no sleep. (Lisa really is a merciless nighthawk.) We arrive at the boat about 0845. We make a couple of last minute repairs and cast off at 0915. (This really is it; there is nothing but 3,000 miles of ocean between us and the New World!)

DAY ONE AT SEA now begins. We motor out of the harbour (a very rare thing for Keith who likes to sail into and out of everything). Outside of the breakwater, we raise sails in a force 3, easterly breeze.

It is now 1230 and we have been making about 4kts in a light wind. All morning we have been doing last minute stowing and minor adjustments to rigging etc. By 1130 Gran Canaria has disappeared astern. No more land for a month!

We are now steering nearly due south. This is supposed to get us away from the wind effects of the Canaries as fast as possible — the Canaries stick 12,000 feet straight out of the bare ocean, and they disturb the winds for more that a hundred miles to the leeward. After 50 miles and no turbulence, we alter course a bit toward the west, which puts us on a course that is parallel to the coast of Africa. This heads us for the magic point 150 miles NW of the Cape Verde Islands where we should be well within the Trade Winds.

About 1500, the wind falls to nearly zero and we start the motor. The day passes uneventfully. Keith sleeps most of the time and I don't feel hungry—although I never get seasick, it takes time to get used to the motion and, in the meantime, my appetite seems to suffer. Several larger ships, all going north, pass us 1-2 miles to port.

It is not nearly so warm as last Autumn when we sailed from Madeira to the Canaries when we were able to keep watch all night in shorts and bare feet. Now one wants shoes, socks and a sweater. In spite of this, the weather is delightful, just like an English summer in the day, and cool enough for a blanket at night.

At 2345 the wind comes up and we cut the motor. Keith took watch and we recorded 80 miles on our first day out. Although we have done it all before, and nothing will ever again come up to the time last September when Cape Finnisterre disappeared astern leaving us with five days to Madeira and no navigational experience, I am still a little queasy at the thought of what lies ahead; there is a lot of water, a lot of miles, and a lot of unexpected things that could occur. Nonetheless, the overriding feeling is of exhilaration; this is it; a lifetime dream is now coming true—not too many people are lucky enough, and resourceful enough, to realise such dreams!

Day 2; Monday February 13: Keith wakes me to take watch at 0400. I dose in the cockpit until 0700 and watch the dawn. Early in the morning I looked up through the mist and saw an island with cliffs and a lighthouse. My God, thought I, we must have gone in a circle (and we wouldn't have been the first to have done that) and have arrived back at Gran Canaria! But on closer inspection, it turned out to be a super tanker!—you have to see one through the mist in the middle of the ocean to know just how VAST they really are!

Then, when I had come to terms with what I saw, I wash, shave, and do a few chores. Keith wakes at 0830 and we enjoy a good breakfast. Before Keith awoke, I saw the first porpoises of the trip; they came right along side. Then I looked up at an angle I might just as easily never have turned to and I saw two killer whales, with their great dorsal fins and

their large white eye patches. They where about ½ mile off and going away from the boat travelling due north. They took no notice of us.

At 1030 we did our first sun sight. My position line was 22 miles away from Keith's! Our guess is that one of us read the watch wrong when the other took his sight. Then we spent an hour trying to remember how to handle the navigational tables. Then we took our "noon" sight at 1322 GMT, Greenwich Mean Time, being the time on which the ship is still working. Our navigational calculations showed us to be within two miles of our DR position, which seemed pretty good to us. (Indeed, it seemed fantastic but we weren't going to say that to each other!) Then we lunched and both had a snooze. I awoke at 1630 and tended to the mung beans and, just as I finished, Keith awoke. It was 1715.

We both sat in the cockpit to watch the sunset. Once again, the wind slackened off at sunset. But it was not as much as yesterday, so we stayed on sail. Keith is still feeling the effects of the sea so he slept, except for 2400 – 0300, and I stood watch for the rest of the night.

Position At Noon Day 2

Lat.	26^{o} 17' N
Long.	17^{o} 0' W
Distance travelled (since leaving Gran Canaria)	126m
Average speed over the day	4.71kts
Average speed travelled for the trip	4.71kts

Day 3; Tuesday February 14: Wind stays at a steady force 4 from the East with just a touch of South in it. (In other words it's coming at us straight off Africa.) We are batting along at over 100 miles a day. We see hardly any ships now and look forward to the time when we will not need to mount continuous watch so we can sleep, and be awake, together. We keep thinking that we have caught the Trades, but we haven't, because the Trade Winds are NE and that is not the wind we now have. Also the Trades are supposed to be signalled by puffy, white, "steam-engine" clouds, and we have yet to see anything like that; also the sea is still quite cool to the touch.

People often ask, "what do you do all day?". Odd though it may seem, there is little time to do all we need to do. Today we discovered that the following were not working: our main bilge pump (quite a serious matter if we got into a gale), our trusty battery charger, we could now not run electric nav lights for more than a few nights, our RDF (which is our sole modern navigational aid; it picks up radio signals from lighthouses up to 50 miles away and is important in pinpointing one's location when approaching land under conditions of poor visibility) and our annaometer (which tells us the wind speed). The first three are, to say the least, essential! So today we spent the time working on the bilge pump. We took it apart. We could see no problem. We then decided the problem was not the pump but all the beer that Keith had stored in the bilge. The cans may, we thought, be holding the pump intake out of the water. I stood on my head, wedged into the narrow and oily bilge, and got most of the cans out of the bilge. But the last few cans were out of

my reach. It took almost an hour juggling with the boathook to retrieve the last four cans. To our satisfaction, the pump then worked. One problem solved! By now it was time to do the morning sight. I worked for an hour on the navigational tables then relaxed with Keith until it was time for the "noon" sight at 1322 GMT (Local noon is when the sun is due south of us; noon GMT is when the sun is due south Greenwich. So we are currently 1 hr. 22 mins. sun time west of Greenwich..)

By 1400 I had worked out our noon position and it had to be wrong! It was 40 miles beyond our DR (dead reckoning) position which didn't make sense. So we must try again tomorrow..

Then came lunch and a snooze. Then I tackled the RDF set. The trouble turned out to be in the fuse box. We still don't understand the real problem, but we can make the set work with two 6 volt batteries set up in sequence. So another problem is—more or less—solved.

Time now to watch the sunset. For the first time since leaving, we felt that we didn't need to stand watch through the night. But we were not hungry, so we skipped supper, lay down and listened to music on Keith's tape deck until 2200. Then I fell asleep. I woke once and checked course and wind at about 0100, but otherwise slept through until 0700.

Position at noon Day 3

Lat. 24° 57' N
Long. 19° 06' W

Distance travelled noon to noon	110m
Average speed over the day	4.7kts
Average speed over the trip	4.6kts

Day 4; Wednesday February 15: I awake at 0700 and watch the dawn with Keith. The wind continues WSW force 4-4½ and we are making steady 4½ - 5 kts We are doing over 100 miles a day every day so far; this is much better that we had expected; at this rate we will be in Barbados in less than the 28 days we had estimated the trip would take.

Today we decided really to work on our navigation. Keith did the morning sight. He double-checked everything. Then I checked him. Then we took a half hour rest and then we did the noon sight (1334 GMT.). By 1430 we had our fix and it agreed with our DR. Clearly I made a mistake yesterday. But we seem to be getting little help for the current which is supposed to run at ½ - 1 kt per hour which would mean 12 - 24 miles per day. (Since our DR comes from our log, which trails behind the boat measuring our distance travelled through the water, the effect of current shows in being away from our DR and, in this case, since the current is with us, we should be ahead of our DR by the amount of the current.)

Today our Tilley (the oil lamp that is our source of light in the cabin) broke. Fortunately we have a spare. But we spent almost two hours trying to repair the lamp.

1910: according to our DR, we have just crossed the tropic. We are no longer in Northern Latitudes; now we are in the tropics! We opened a specially preserved bottle of wine and celebrated.

We are still not feeling hungry at night, so we just snacked and then to bed at 2200.

Today from noon to noon we made 114 miles. It is still quite cool. We forget that it is still winter even in the northern tropics. I haven't worn shorts once and it's sweaters as soon as the sun goes down. Today the moon is one day off full and it is bright enough to read a book outside at night.

Before going to sleep we listened to the first half of *The Third Man.* It was great, but we made an unfortunate discovery: Keith's new tape deck gets four hours per battery set instead of the 33 hours he thought it got. So we will have to be very frugal with our listening.

Position at Noon Day 4

Lat.	23° 46' N
Long.	19° 57' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	114m
Average speed over the day	4.8kts
Average speed over the trip	4.7kts

Day 5; Thursday February 16: When we awoke, we were sure we were in the Trades. Fluffy clouds, a strong east wind, and a moderate swell. But by the end of the day we were not so sure.

There is no North in the wind at all and the clouds quickly disappeared shortly after dawn, and there are no flying fishes! I think that it is so cold that they have all gone south for the winter.

Keith is slowly getting his sea legs but is still only 70% of par. In the morning I turned the eggs, tended the mung beans, did a couple of minor repairs and then it was time to do my morning sun shot.

I'm worried when it comes my day for navigation, since I am unhappy about my sextant work. If you have never tried to do a sun sight from the deck of a small pitching sailing boat, you have no idea of our present problem. Standing on the top part of the cockpit, our eye is 6 ft. above the water line. The swell runs from 10 to 20 ft., and the boat is pitching and rolling all of the time. To get a sight, you need to get the sun in your (heavily shielded) telescope sight, and then turn the screw until the sun is seen as just tangent to the horizon. This requires that you swing the sextant in a regular arc so that you finally see the sun just touching the horizon at the exact bottom of the arc. Of course, the sun's elevation is constantly changing so you must be adjusting the screw to bring the sun on the horizon as time passes. With a bit of practice, all this is easy on land: but at sea it is quite another matter. The boat moves, making any sight difficult, which it would be even if you could stand straight, but standing at all is difficult. The swell makes it hard to see

the horizon. Indeed, most of our early errors were, we think, the result of sighting on a wave in the medium distance and thinking it was the horizon. What you must do is hang on, and move the sextant evenly until the sun is exactly tangent to the horizon; then you shout "now", and your partner records the time (down to the exact second) that you took the sight. Seconds matter, and you do not want to be more than a very few seconds out, but when you are holding yourself down on a pitching deck and trying to find the horizon, you feel that there are minutes between when you can bring the sun on to the horizon and when it seems to go off (above or below it) on a single sighting. Yet you know, that within five seconds, you should see the sun dip below or above the horizon on any fixed sextant angle setting. No wonder that we suffer from acute uncertainly when taking each of our sights, I am indeed amazed at how well our sights have come out so far—of course, whether they will continue to do so in the future remains to be seen.

Then, after my shot, I make several calculation mistakes while working in the cabin and I didn't emerge until noon (GMT)with a completed calculation: "20 miles towards". That seemed rather a big deviation from our DR to me. Time for a snack and a loll in the sun then my noon sight (1330 GMT). This gave us a fix 15 miles to the south and 10 miles behind our DR position. I was dubious about this result but we decided to "split the difference" and altered course slightly as a result. I decide to make an afternoon sight at 1700. (An afternoon sighting is not so easy since the sun is nearly dead ahead and obscured by the sails which are billowing out forward under the influence of the following wind.)

This time I only made one mistake in my calculations, but I had to rework everything three times before I found the error (and that is no small task!). Finally, I was able to calculate a new noon fix and, to my surprise, it was within 2 miles of my earlier fix. Together, three position lines (based on morning, noon and afternoon sightings of the sun) give three intersections, i.e. three pairwise estimates of position. So when I got three estimates of our position all within 2 miles of each other I gained a lot of confidence.

The wind blew force 4-5 all day and we ploughed on with full main and the Genoa jib. At one time we were making 6 kts which is our theoretical top maximum speed.

The evening was cold so we stayed below and listened to the second half of *The Third Man*.

We debated putting up the twin headsails but decided to go through the night with our present rig. The only problem is that we are at the top wind to make these large sails safe.

Today, once again, we had a good lunch but weren't hungry when it came to the evening meal so we just had a cup of Bovril. Breakfast and a late lunch seems to be all that we need right now. We still are sailing parallel to the coast of Africa and have about three more days to go until we reach the magic point which we have now decided to make 120 miles NW of the Cape Verdes after which we turn due West. One can make the turning point anywhere between 150 and 100 miles NW of Cape Verdes. Back in Gran Canaria, Charlie had advised us not to go too far south. He said that at this time of the year the Trades get very strong and we might find ourselves with too much wind if we went too

far down into them. We listened, but we still see no signs that we are in the Trades at all, let alone too far into them, so we are going to plug on south at least until we seem to be settled into the Trades.

Position at Noon Day 5

Lat.	21^{o} 20' N
Long.	22^{o} 14' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	121m
Average speed over the day	5.0kts
Average speed over the trip	4.8 kts

Day 6; Friday February 17: Still no Trade Winds! Today we saw a very large turtle swimming along on his own, just under the surface. Amazing!

Keith did the navigation today. It went well, although we were a little short of our DR position. (Given the expected current, we should on average be ahead of our DR position which continues not to be the result we get.) In the afternoon we had a man overboard drill. The main lesson that we learned is that it is very hard to see anything in the water with this enormous swell. Everything was under perfect conditions: Keith knew it was coming at some time. When he was not looking, I shouted "man overboard" and threw in the Dan buoy, which has an 8 ft upright pole topped with a flag. This is vastly more visible than a human head. Yet, by the time he had come about, Keith couldn't spot it: and I, who saw it go overboard and watched it all the time, lost sight of it and had great trouble finding it again. Moral: don't fall overboard, you will probably never be seen again!

As a result, we decide to tow 20 feet of rope with knots for gripping tied every three feet. We reckon that anyone who falls over will fall in off the fore deck and, if he is conscious, will be able to swim to the side of the boat and so catch the rope as it goes by, then if there is a man on deck he won't need to come about: all he needs to do is to luff up and pull the rope in—assuming that the man in the water can hang on long enough at the speed at which he will be being moving through the water. Also attracting attention will be difficult. Fortunately the man not up on the foredeck is usually well aware of what is happening on deck.

We had a noon-time snack of mung beans and a late lunch of new potatoes, carrots and bully beef. A lazy and cool afternoon passed easily. Then we spent a futile hour trying to repair our tilley. No luck so we unpacked our spare. (One always hates to go to spare equipment so early in the trip because there is no back up to the spare!)

In the evening we listen to some music, chat, have a cup of Bovril, and then to bed about 2230.

Position at Noon Day 6

Lat.	20° 50' N
Long.	23° 14' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	134m
Average speed over the day	5.6kts
Average speed over the trip	4.9kts

Day 7; Saturday February 18: Last night the wind slackened and became variable in direction. Poor Keith was up every half hour or so resetting the sails and the self-steering. I awoke two or three times during the night with the sense that all was not well but, every time I did, Keith was already up. At 0600 (we are still on GMT) I got up and told Keith to go to bed. I continually watched the course that the fickle wind was making variable. I saw a beautiful dawn and then breakfasted and did the usual chores. This was my day to navigate and all went well. We are a little west of our DR but almost back on the course we originally set from Gran Canaria to the Cape Verde Islands.

We had a light salad for lunch and then I lounged around while Keith catches up on the sleep he missed last night. *Still no Trade Winds* but at least the wind has picked up from the East, again allowing us to do a steady 4 kts since 1000. Its warmer, but you still need a blanket at night and a sweater as soon as the sun gets low.

In the early evening we turned on the BBC—we have a listening but no sending set— and heard the news, then an hour-long version of *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. Then at dark, I sat up in the cockpit by myself and watched the moon rise. First, it was a dead dark night; then there was a glimmering of light; then I could just see the Eastern horizon; then the moon broke through the cloud layer. It was not far past full and was a brilliant spectacle.

Then I went below and we listened to selections from Jonathan Gem's new musical. Then to bed. The wind was still fitful and I was up at 0130 and 0230 to see that the course was being followed and that the sails were doing their job.

Fortunately, for the first time in several nights, the wind held. So no sail or steering adjustments were needed all night. Indeed we continue to sail with the same set of sails that we set in Puerto Rico eight days ago: a Genoa jib and a full main! The mainsail is vanged out to starboard and the Jenny is boomed out to port. When we turn at the magic point tomorrow we will then be on a broad reach and will have to stay with the same sails—rather than the classic twin foresails—at least until what we understand to be the traditional Trade Winds, but which we have yet to experience, materialise. Nonetheless, we can't complain about what wind we have had since we are doing over 100 miles every day.

Position at Noon Day 7

Lat.	20^o 01' N
Long.	25^o 05' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	110m
Average speed over the day	4.5kts
Average speed over the trip	4.9kts

Day 8; Sunday February 19: Awoke at 0300 to find us with a backed mainsail that was being held by the vange. We were dead in the water! After an hour of fiddling, we concluded that the winds were too light and variable for our wind-driven self-steering to work. So I sat up from 0400 to 0600 in brilliant moonlight to mind the sails. At 0600 the wind picked up; the self-steering could now cope, so our course stopped being erratic. Relieved, I went to bed.

Keith awoke and checked at 0700 and all was well. We both awoke at 0800.(We are still on GMT, so boat time of 0800 is 0600 local time, i.e. about sunrise.) Keith got up to see how things were while I went back to sleep till 0930 (0730 sun time). We both then had breakfast and Keith did the morning sight. While he worked it out, I tried to get the remaining dirt off the decks. At sea you get no dirt. So once you finally get rid of the land dirt, you are clean for the duration of the voyage. After Keith got his position line, a disturbingly long way off our DR, I checked the AZMUTH from the ABC tables and Keith made us an early lunch of omelettes. As I write this, we are lolling in the sun and waiting to take the noon sight (now at 0200 GMT).

For the first time today the sun is hot and the sea is beginning to look tropical blue. But we are still not in the Trades! The wind is NE, which is right; but its force is 2 - 3 instead of 4 - 6 ; there are no puffy clouds; and *no* flying fish. The book says that the northern limit of the trades in winter is latitude 25^o North. We are now between 19^o and 20^o North—i.e. we are over 300 miles South of where the Trades are supposed to start!

This afternoon we will reach the magic point which we have now moved to 100 miles NW of the Cape Verde Islands. Here everyone turns west, but according to the book, they do so well within the Trades. I guess we will also turn west but we wonder if it makes sense to do so; one thing all the books say is "do not turn west too soon; wait, they say, until the Trades are well established". So what should we do? We don't know.

In the midst of these thoughts, I take a picture of Keith asleep in his bunk.

The afternoon went uneventfully. I spent a lot of time on mung bean culture and an hour to prepare the beans for eating--cutting off the leaves and roots. Then we finally face up to the sad state of wood rubbing strake which runs around the boat. It is varnished and needs to be revarnished frequently. Its current state is abysmal and the tropical sun is

clearly going to be hard on it. So we begin a program of scraping and varnishing that is made very difficult by our constant rolling and the spray that we take on board.

It got cold well before sunset so we went below. We listened to a BBC program then made dinner. Then we listened to the first tape of John le Carre's novel *The Little Drummer Girl*. Keith and I both dozed enough to miss the complex story line, which left us a bit mystified by the rest of the very long story.

I am writing this entry three days later and already each day has melded into the other. (I vow not to do that again.) I nearly forgot to record that the key event occurred at 1240 today when we reached, on DR, our magic point NW of the Cape Verdes and we turned West ! Our course is now 262^{o}: just 8^{o} south of due west, and straight for Barbados. (On this course, it is not necessary to make a significant correction for the difference between Mercater and Great Circle navigation--thank goodness because Keith and I have only a shadowy idea of how to do it!) It was a bit warmer on Sunday and we almost feel we are in the tropics. Still, however, the winds tend to fall at night, so we have to spend a lot of time on deck tending sails and making sure we are more or less on course--surely these are not the mighty Trade Winds, the winds that blew the explorers to the New World, and the winds we were advised would be freshening to the point of causing a problem of too much wind by this late date in the season?

Position at Noon Day 8

Lat. 19^{o} 03' N	
Long. 26^{o} 13' W	
Distance travelled noon to noon	94m
Average speed over the day	3.9kts
Average speed over the trip	4.7kts

Day 9; Monday February 20: This was our first full day of straight west sailing. I made a mistake in my navigational calculation writing "30 miles away" when I meant "30 miles towards." (The morning sight tells you how many miles you are away from, or closer to, your DR position along an AZMUTH, which is the line from you to the sun.) We discovered the mistake in mid-afternoon, but we had already committed ourselves to another afternoon sight. When all the calculations were made and earlier mistakes corrected, my three points were only 5 miles apart. Each sight gives you a position line along which you are supposed to be; two position lines intersect to give one "fix"; three positions lines taken in pairs intersect to give three "fixes" which describe a triangle within which you are assumed to be located. The pairs are morning sight-noon sight, morning sight-afternoon sight and noon sight-afternoon sight.

Having made several afternoon sights, motivated by various calculating errors, we concluded that our actual sextant sights are quite reliable. Our only remaining problems are with calculations—which are quite difficult to make sitting in the enclosed cabin with the boat rolling so much that you cannot put a set of log tables, or anything else, down for even a second without it skidding over the deck and ending up in some hard-to-find

niche. We do all our navigation from the basic tables with only a pocket calculator to help with addition and division.

Today we had a new luxury: the usual salt water sponge bath, but this time followed by a fresh water sponge down that removes the damp-creating salt. Each day that we travel, we reduce the time that we will take to drift to the West Indies in case we are dismasted; thus we can begin to consume some of our emergency water in small, but desperately welcome, luxury uses.

In the evening we listen to another side of *The Little Drummer Girl* and then to bed.

Position at Noon Day 9

Lat.	17° 57' N
Long.	27° 18' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	96m
Average speed over the day	4kts
Average speed over the trip	4.6kts

DAY 10; Tuesday February 21: It really is getting warmer now. There is no need for blankets at night any more.

Surprisingly, there are very few signs of life in the great blue sea. We see a few sea birds and this morning we found two baby flying fishes, about 2" long, dead on the deck.

The wind continues NE about force 3, which is much less than we expected. Nonetheless, it pushes us along at a good pace. Now things are beginning to seem a bit more tropical. We are currently spending our time in scraping and varnishing the wood, plus mung bean culture.

Keith is at last over his sea sickness, which is evident because he is constantly looking for more work to do.

On an ordinary short sailing trip, the cockpit and the sea are one's centre of attention. On a long sail such as this one, the cabin becomes one's world. We spend 12 hours a day in it. At night the boat rushes westward, on her own—we lie in bed and feel, and hear, her straining, driving and rushing westward the noises being a part of our normal night. All of this we are aware of after dark as we sit inside, eating our now habitual light evening snack, reading, listening to the radio and to tapes and then sleeping.

Tonight we stayed awake quite late, 2300, listening first to another tape of *The Little Drummer Girl*, then to the radio—isn't the BBC a wonderful institution!—and finally to various tapes.

Position at Noon Day 10

Lat. 17° 43' N
Long. 29° 09' W

Distance travelled noon to noon	107m
Average speed over the day	4.5kts
Average speed over the trip	4.6kts

DAY 11; Wednesday February 22: Today I spent some time over the chart of the North Atlantic and calculated the whole trip to be 2775 nautical miles (this is over 3,000 statute or land miles). We are now well over 1,000 miles out from the Canaries and will reach the halfway mark about Friday night or Saturday morning.

Yesterday Keith made a calculation error in his Navigation so he took an afternoon sight which was all right. Today I didn't like my morning sight so I made an afternoon sight that gave an 8 mile triangle—acceptable, but could be better. We are a little south of our course and wonder why: Is it a current? Are we deviating in the sometimes shifting night time winds? Or is it something else? Anyway, the deviation is not serious and can be easily adjusted for.

Today, I finally filled Keith in on the details of my tax problems. I'd nearly forgotten them and going over the whole story depressed me greatly. After lunch a rest, some mung bean preparation and the afternoon sight. Then watch a beautiful sunset and, wow, finally we saw three full sized flying fish' The sea water is now very warm, and this morning I was up at 0400 to adjust the sails and didn't feel cold at all so I guess we can say that we are now well into tropical weather. Late in the day, some puffy clouds appeared—these clouds are supposed to be characteristic of the Trades. So the signs seem good, but the wind stays stubbornly low at force 3-4. That's quite enough to push us along at over 100 miles a day, but the light force is quite unexpected and makes the experience seem, right now, like a summer Sunday afternoon in the Solent.

Position at Noon Day 11

Lat. 17° 14' N
Long. 31° 20' W

Distance travelled noon to noon	129m
Average speed over the day	5.4kts
Average speed over the trip	4.7kts

DAY 12; Thursday February 23: This is it! In many of the crossings that we have read about, the boat suddenly bursts into the Trades. For us, the transition from the southern sector of the North Atlantic—typical of the Canary Islands—to the Trades—typical of the tropics—happened gradually. But today, 12 days and 1,200 miles out, we

can finally say "we are here": the sea is very warm; the sun is hot; it is warm at night—warm enough not to want any cover at all while sleeping; the sky is full of white, puffy, steam-engine clouds; there are flying fishes everywhere; and a freshening NE wind is pushing us on at a steady 5½ kts, and tossing us with a rising swell. We are in the Trades!

Up at 0630. Watch the dawn, have breakfast, then wash and shave and it is 0900. Just sit and look in awe for an hour. Keith does his morning sun shot. Then I go to get potatoes to prepare for lunch and find that the forehatch has been left partially open and a wave has wet our carrots and onions. The carrots are quite mouldy and the onions are beginning to show mould. Some hasty cleansing, selective surgery, and re-wrapping saves most of them. Where would we have been without onions? Then I make lunch while Keith does his noon sun sight and gets a fix. For once we are satisfied with his fix, so there is no need to do an afternoon sight. For the second day, we have made 129 miles between noon fixes. At this rate the crossing will take much less than 28 days. After a large lunch, Keith is snoozing while I read and write my log.

Later: We are still in the Trades, but the wind having earlier risen to force 4½ now falls back to about force 3. But we are still rushing along at nearly 5 kts. Tonight we listened to side 5 of *The Little Drummer Girl* then had a little supper. The BBC reception was poor for the first time, so we only had the radio on for a short while. As usual, we had earlier sat and watched the sunset before going below for the evening. The stars are very bright (no pollution in the air) but the moon is now just past its last quarter so it doesn't rise until after midnight.

We did 129 miles again today, exactly the same as yesterday. It is really very hard to believe since we get on so effortlessly with little apparent wind. (A following wind always seems less than one that you are beating into.) In the cabin, all we are aware of is the roll, which is incessant, and the impression, as long as you don't look through a port hole at the sea rushing by outside, is one of lying at anchor rolling on the swell.

Position at Noon Day 14

Lat.	17° 03' N
Long.	33° 20' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	129m
Average speed over the day	5.4kts
Average speed over the trip	4.8kts

DAY 13; Friday February 24: Up at 0630. Breakfast and a long chat. Then my morning sight. Then with a refreshing breeze, we decided it was time to raise the twin foresails. (The approved Trade Wind rig is two sails on the forestays and no mainsail.) It took me two hours on the heaving foredeck to rig the two booms and get the sails raised and properly boomed out on either side. As the wind still wasn't too strong, we left the main up as well. At 1300, 1 announced that we were half way—1,388 nautical miles out from Puerto Rico, Gran Canaria and 1,388 miles to go to Barbados. So we opened a

special bottle of wine that we had been keeping for the occasion and had a gala lunch. It is a very surprising rate of progress: 12 days and 4 hours.

After lunch a snooze, after which we decided we had to take the twins down again. We went back to the jenny and mainsail for the night. We also took a reef in the main as the wind was force 4-5. We also have it nearly abeam since we have gone rather down on our course and are trying to avoid being pushed any further south. I had promised myself a fresh water bath and a hair wash at half way point and this now seemed possible as our water is holding out very well. But we were too busy with one thing and another today so there was no time.

Tonight, sitting in the cabin, the motion is very uncomfortable. The boat is having trouble holding its course. So I go up to keep an eye on things for the first half of the night. Keith will do the same for the second half. We are also keeping watch for ships since we are due to cross the New York to Cape Town (and points East) steamer route some time in the early hours before dawn. No supper, just a bowl of granola is all we feel like having. Breakfast and a large midday meal seems to be keeping us quite satisfied at the moment. Although I never get seasick, I think the motion takes away my appetite.

I forgot to mention that this morning we had our first adult flying fish dead on the deck. No one felt like eating fish for breakfast so we threw it back.

Position at Noon Day 13

Lat. 16° 23' N
Long. 35° 19' W

Distance travelled noon to noon	120m
Average speed over the day	5.0kts
Average speed over the trip	4.8kts

DAY 14; Saturday February 25: The wind came up to force 5½ shortly after midnight. By then we were definitely oversailed. The Jenny and reefed main were more than we needed. We left the sails in place anyway and, as a result, we did our theoretical maximum speed of 6 kts and dissipated the rest of the wind's energy in a larger than usual bow wave, buffeting, rolling and other sounds and motions that made it generally uncomfortable below. About 0400 the shock cord on our self-steering broke with the strain and we had a half hour rolling around in the dark cockpit trying, and finally succeeding, in getting a new one in place. After that each of us was up to stick a head out of the hatch every half hour or so, looking for steamers, but we saw nothing—I guess its not a very busy route. Altogether, it was a most restless night.

In the morning, its still blowing force 5 plus, so after a quiet breakfast, I go to the bow and refit our twins. We try reefing the main right down and then centring it to make a steadying sail but it keeps on backing so we lower it and lash it. The twins which are very small—after the Jenny they look like handkerchiefs—work very well and the motion is much more comfortable. This is just as well, since the swell is now really quite high. We now drive along comfortably at a steady 5 kts.

Keith does the morning sight and I stare at the sea and sky while he works out our position line. Then I have the welcome luxury of a fresh water sponge bath and a clean pair of shorts. After that I spend an hour preparing a mung bean salad, then get the potatoes and carrots ready for the noon meal. Keith does his noon sight and soon announces from the cabin that we are only 4 miles off our DR position—a good result. But we are still south of our desired track across the Atlantic and we don't want to slip any further that way—or else we will have to take the swell uncomfortably on our beam as we turn North to get back on track.

After lunch and a snooze, I wash some clothes. Then we sit in the cockpit and watch the sunset. Each evening the sunset is different, but each gives quite a spectacular array of colours for about 15 minutes just after the sun goes below the horizon. The sea is very blue and very warm but, since reaching the tropics, masses of flying fish are the only evidence of life that we have seen in it.

Keith was so sure we would have a quiet night with our twins now working so well that he took off his vest and underpants for, I think, the first time on the trip. It was certainly much cooler sleeping with nothing on and just a sheet pulled slightly over myself. So far, thank goodness, it has never been too hot to sleep at night. I suspect the wind will always keep it cool enough to sleep. But no such luck on Keith's prediction of an easy night. The twins continue to be rather unruly. You can set a straight course on the self steerer that lasts for 15 or 20 minutes. Then for no apparent reason she wanders off course until one of the twins backs. The boat then comes to a halt and wallows in the swell. We were both up many times to correct the course and reset one or the other of the foresails. Altogether a very restless night.

Position at Noon Day 14

Lat. 16° 07' N
Long. 37° 10' W

Distance travelled noon to noon	114m
Average speed over the day	4.8kts
Average speed over the trip	4.8kts

DAY 15; Sunday, February 25: Today we have been going for 14 days. We have gone about 1,600 miles for an average of well over 100 miles a day.

Breakfast, and the usual round of wash and shave. I then finished washing three shirts which I had left to soak over night and which our slight water surplus allows me to rinse in fresh water. It is a classic day, blue sky, blue sea, and fleecy clouds. I try to catch it on the camera but fear the camera just isn't up to it; in any case we will see when we get to shore. Did the morning sight without a hitch, and then put in an hour preparing mung beans for a mid-morning snack. Keith prepared lunch, which we had before my "noon" sight, which is now at 1250 boat time. (We have decided to move the clock back every time noon local sun time gets to 1300 on the ship's clock.)

After lunch, we worked on the main bilge pump which has been acting up all the trip and which we will need if we hit heavy weather. (We have an auxiliary pump in the cabin but the helmsman needs to be able to pump from the cockpit while the other sleeps below if we are in a gale or a storm.) Keith had ordered a full set of spares but they didn't arrive before he left London, so we have to make do with what repairs we can make for ourselves.

The noon fix puts us close to our DR but *still* 35 miles south of our desired track. We continue to try to keep edging N to get back on track, but so far without success.

We use any spare time that we have trying to make the boat steer better with the twins up. So far this has defeated us and we are considering handing the twins every night and setting the Jenny. This would be a bit of a nuisance, but nothing more than that.

Later in the day, the wind falls to force 3 and we are definitely undersailed with the twins. So we handed them and put up the Jenny. From then on, we had no trouble with steering. Our speed also returned to 5 kts.

In the evening we had our usual ritual of watching the sunset and drinking our one beer allotted for the evening. Then we went below for the last tape of *The Little Drummer Girl*. John le Carre certainly has no illusions about human nature. Neither are there any romantic ideas about "good guys" and "bad guys"; instead everyone is laid bare and I am left with a taste of bitter dust in my mouth when the story is over. After the story is done, we cook an evening meal for one of the few times on the whole voyage so far. This is followed by a long, uninterrupted and very welcome sleep. The Jenny makes all the difference and the boat needs no attention all night.

Position at Noon Day 15

Lat.	15° 53' N
Long.	39° 22' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	122m
Average speed over the day	5.1kts
Average speed over the trip	4.8kts

DAY 16; Monday February 27: This morning I saw the sun come up out of the eastern sea. This is a fairly rare sight because the horizon is usually obscured by mist and cloud so we don't see the sun until it is well above the horizon. The sun came up hot and has been getting hotter as the morning progresses; the sky is bright blue and full of the little white puff clouds; the wind is force 4½; the swell is moderate. Keith has done his morning sight and is now huddled over the chart table surrounded by navigation tables calculating the position line. At noon he tells us we have not slipped any further south of our course and that is gratifying.

I go below to cook lunch. People who wonder what we do all day on a long cruise have never tried to cook in a Trade Wind swell. With a following wind off the starboard ¾ and swell of 10 to 20 feet in height, the boat is making a constant corkscrew motion. Nothing stays put for a moment—except on the stove which is gimballed. When you take anything

off the stove you must hold onto it constantly. Thus you find yourself cutting up some carrots for a salad with one hand, while one foot is holding onto a pot of potatoes, and the other foot is on the plate of ham while the hand not cutting the carrots is hanging on to the rest of the salad. The incessant swell is *the* psychological hazard of the Trades and it makes cooking not only hazardous but very time consuming.

Now the wind is a full force 5—about the limit for our Jenny, which is a very big sail. But it is not too much for it, and the boat hurries on with an exaggerated sense of purpose, anxious it seems to come closer to the Indies. In the afternoon, I work over our RDF set. Finally I discover the trouble and get it working. Now we will be able to locate the beacon on Barbados from 50 miles out. (Although we can't get a fix from only one beacon, we will be able to hear that it is there, and tell that we are more or less headed for it.)

We watch the sundown and then go below. We listen to the first tape of *The Canterbury Tales* and then have some supper. To bed at 2200 with a very satisfactory sensation of rushing through the water. Put the clocks back one hour.

At 0200 Keith has to get up to adjust the steering. At 0400 our first tropical rain squall hits us. Fortunately it is a fairly mild one but the wind shifts continually and, when it is behind us, it drives rain almost horizontally into the cabin. So we have to close up the hatch which makes it very hot sleeping.

Position at Noon Day 16

Lat.	15^{o} 31' N
Long.	41^{o} 11' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	110m
Average speed over the day	4.6kts
Average speed over the trip	4.8kts

DAY 17; Tuesday February 28: Up early in the aftermath of the squall. Spent a fairly lazy morning with a good wind. I do the morning sight which turns out well but I discover an error in Keith's fix for yesterday. We are 20 miles further south than he had calculated. So our drift south continues! We had already altered course 6^{0} to the north to counteract the drift but, after today, we may have to do something more drastic.

At 1100 we spotted a squall coming up behind us. It came up rapidly but, by 1145, we could see that it was going to pass to the south but it may blot out the sun for the noon sight.

I just managed to get my noon sight before the sun disappeared and then we had a ham omelette for lunch—we have way too many eggs and need to find new ways to use them. It stayed cloudy and cool all afternoon. Also we were taking the sea too much abeam for comfort as a result of trying to get back to our desired track and make good our earlier slippage to the south reasonably quickly.

It doesn't sound like much to say that the wind and swell are "too much abeam" but the incessant rolling motion does get on the nerves and generally makes life difficult. I have already mentioned the cooking; so it is also with the navigation: the boat churns and wallows as you try to work over the nav tables which require a lot of work: looking up and calculating. Doing this at anytime is tough, but doing it below deck, with the boat motion throwing you off your seat and the nav tables rushing out of your hands, if you do not hold onto them all the time, can be very trying indeed.

Today we had the mid-Atlantic blues. Keith and I get on amazingly well, and you must do so if you are to be cooped up in 26ft of boat for 30 days on end. But today we both, by mutual agreement, just couldn't stand each other. Keith spent the afternoon on the fore deck while I sat astern. For the longest time since we set sail, we did not speak to each other. There were no cross words, just a mutual understanding that we each needed to be alone; maybe even for a little while we couldn't stand the sight of each other.

In the evening, we were on deck for our usual ritual watching of the sunset. Because of the cool, we both had our blankets over our knees. Then an unlucky, and unusual, wave threw a heavy dose of water onto Keith's blanket and clothes. Getting salt water on things is a minor disaster because salt holds the moisture so your things are never again really dry—at least until you can wash them in fresh water, a luxury we couldn't afford for something as large as a blanket. We went below to listen to tapes and another rare wave flung water all over Keith's bunk! Then a squall hit and the following wind drove a veritable flood all over—you guessed it—Keith's bunk. Poor Keith, we had the mid-Atlantic blues all day and these were the last straws.

We had to put all the splash boards over the rear companionway and this caused the boat to get very hot and humid. It also left us feeling uncomfortable because we couldn't get out to tend the sails in a hurry if the squall suddenly worsened. I went to sleep but Keith stayed awake wondering if we would need to shorten sail, and fretting about the continual course changes caused by the varying winds of the squall.

Position at Noon Day 17

Lat. 15^{o} 17' N .
Long. 43^{o} 15' W.

Distance travelled noon to noon	112 m
Average speed over the day	4.7kts
Average speed over the trip	4.8kts

Day 18; Wednesday February 29: Today was beautiful. A large squall passed some miles to the south but we had nothing but sunshine. At noon we found that our fix put us back on our desired track so we were able to change course to follow our rumb line and, by putting the wind more on our stern, we got a better motion. At 1500 we passed the 2,000 mile mark. We are on the home stretch now: less than 800 miles to go to Barbados.

It was quite an ideal day and we mainly just sat back and enjoyed it. Our mid-Atlantic blues have now passed completely.

An evening of Chaucer and *Fawlty Towers* on the tapes. Keith is now feeling a bit sick so I make a small meal for myself.

At 0130 another squall hits us. Rain poured into the cabin before we could get the hatch boards in place. But no need to shorten sails.

Position at Noon Day 18

Lat.	15° 28 N.
Long.	45° 18' W.
Distance travelled Noon to Noon	124m
Average speed over the day	5.2kts
Average speed over the trip	4.8kts

Day 19; Thursday March 1: Another idyllic day: white, puffy clouds and no rain squalls visible anywhere. We spend a lazy morning followed by a good lunch. But there is one worry: my noon fix put us away north of our rumb line! Is the north equatorial current beginning to push us north a bit! (The current swings north to get around the West Indian Islands—at least that's what our wind chart says, and also what we always thought, but a check in *Reid's Nautical Almanac*, which is usually utterly reliable, says this is not the case.) So, in some uncertainly, we alter course to the south to allow for the apparent drift. This put our sails on the wrong side and it is necessary to do some sail shifting. In the course of shifting them over, I discover a large hole in the foot of our Jenny, where it has been chaffing against the deck fittings. Down came the Jenny for repair and up went the No. 2 working jib to "twin" with the No.1 which was already up. It is some time since we have set our two special twins which are really too small for most of the wind conditions we are experiencing. At this point, the shock cord in our self-steering broke again. It is an easy enough repair, but the shock cord should last longer than this one did before wearing out. We have only one more replacement

While Keith stitched and patched the Jenny, which is quite a job, I checked my navigational calculations. I discovered a simple error that led me to take my noon sight at 1240 rather than at 1220 when the sun was actually at its zenith. No wonder we thought we were too far north! I used this noon sight as an ordinary non-noon sighting and calculated a new position line. The new fix put us close to our noon DR, so it was all a false alarm. We still held to our new course, however, as we were a little unsure about all of the day's calculations, and the new course was calculated to put us back on our rumb line at noon tomorrow.

When the Jenny was repaired, we used it to replace the No. 2 working jib. This is rather a lot of sail, but the boat seemed to go well under it. By sundown our work is done and we have a chance to relax in the cockpit for a bit. When we went below, we were too tired to listen to the spoken word so we listened to some Fred Astaire, then a small snack, and then to bed.

Position at Noon Day 19

Lat.	15^{o} 10' N
Long.	47^{o} 11' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	135m
Average speed over the day	5.6kts
Average speed over the trip	4.9kts

Day 20; Friday March 2: We went through the New York-South America shipping route last night. So one or the other of us was up to look out about every half hour. Not a completely satisfactory guard, but it does reduce the chances of a collision greatly. No ships sighted.

Made 5kts all night and, fortunately, no squalls that might have forced us to shorten sail at night. We awake at the crack of dawn, which I can always see out of the hatch while lying in bed. Our course is just so that I can see the sun come up while lying in my bunk. Another lovely day!

The morning's repair job was provided by the Jenny. A larger than usual wave took us off course and back-filled the Jenny. When the self-steering righted things (which it won't always do when a sail is backfilled) the Jenny refilled with wind on the correct side but with a crack like a gun going off. Immediately, the sail began to flap and we thought it had torn itself apart. But instead, the eye that secures the jib sheet to the outer point of the boom had broken with the strain. An hour's work and Keith had lashed a new eye onto the boom end and the Jenny was set once again.

A lazy lunch with lots of chat was followed by a siesta. The only fly in the ointment is Keith's noon fix which puts us too far south. What a seesaw of apparent positions. No doubt our real position moves steadily along in a straight line while our plotted positions wander around it! I check through the last several day's calculations and discover a previously undetected error in Keith's noon calculation of 2 days ago. This put our position too far north. Yesterday I made a similar error but I caught it on my routine recheck at the time. But my attempt to recoup from taking the noon sight at the wrong time was based on a DR position which was in turn based on a DR of 24 hours sailing from Keith's position of the previous day, *which was now seen to be mistaken*—if that sounds confusing to anyone who may later read this diary, it is also very confusing, to say nothing of being upsetting, to us. So that one error of Keith's was compounded into two successive noon fixes that we no longer believe. The belief that we had been pushed north of our rumb line by some unknown current is now in doubt.

Keith made an afternoon sight and confirmed today's fix, at least within 10 miles. So we believe that the previous two day's fixes placed us further north than we actually were. Extreme care is required with navigation from now on. The closer we get to Barbados the more serious is any small navigational error.

We are now sailing straight into the setting sun. (The sun moves quite fast to the north at this time of year and, whereas it was setting well to the south of our heading ten days ago,

it is now setting straight ahead of us.) The air is currently clear enough to see the sun actually sink below the horizon and the sunsets are stupendous. I am looking at one as I write this.

We were a mere 600 miles off Barbados at noon today. That would seem a long way on an ordinary cruise, but, on this trip, it hardly seems any distance at all. This fix makes our current ETA off the coast of Barbados 1530 next Wednesday which would make the trip 24 days altogether!

The sunset has become even more glorious as I have been writing this. The whole western sky is orange, with a halo of pink; the fluffy clouds are lit up pink, purple and grey; the wind is low and the swell is non-existent. The world is full of the grandeur of nature.

On retiring, we assure ourselves that the weather is so gentle that we will surely get an uninterrupted sleep. After a program of taped music, Keith falls asleep. I seem to be slept out, since I lie awake until 2300 which is rare for me.

Position at Noon Day 20

Lat.	14^{o} 24'N
Long.	49^{o} 30' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	107m
Average speed over the day	4.5kts
Average speed over the trip	4.8kts

Day 21; Saturday March 3: At 0100 I awoke realising that rain was coming in on Keith's bunk. I woke Keith who said he had earlier put the hatch boards in against one squall then removed them for air while I slept. So we put the boards in again and decided that the wind was unlikely to freshen enough to cause us to need to shorten sail. We went back to get a bit of sleep before what we assumed would be some other interruption. We were right in that expectation. It was a very restless night. There was a lot of noise and shaking inside as the boat strained ahead in a force 5½ wind. The wind, the water, the creaking of everything as the boat strained through the sea, and the occasional torrential rain shower were our perpetual serenades through the night. Inside also there was the sensation of rolling—as always, but more so this time—and the boat creaked and growled like a living thing. Pots rubbed over each other, cutlery jumped from one slot to another in their drawer, potatoes danced, while tins of meat ground together, water gurgled in the heads and in the galley pumps, while every single joint of the boat creaked.

Dawn was angry. We saw a long squall but it was, we thought, heading a bit south of us. We got no serious wind or rain from it, but it did obscure our sunshine as we came under the fringe of its cloud.

My morning sight, taken at 0900, was difficult because of the cloud. Checking against the previous day's calculations, as we now always do, I found my angle almost the same as Keith's for yesterday. Mine should, however, be less by the sum of the angles caused by our slight southerly movement (our course is just south of west) and the northward

movement of the sun's declination since yesterday (which is considerable at this time of year). So once again something is wrong. Discouraged—today I was going to get it all to come out right—I took another set of sights at 1000. These made too small an angle to give me a reliable fix but, taken together, they would provide me with a check on my morning position line.

So, long after the morning's navigational work is usually over, I am still below, working out my two morning position lines. Suddenly I hear "Dick" very loudly, then a pause, then "A whale!". "Large or small I ask scrambling on deck." "Small" says Keith (and I heave a secret sigh of relief). "Look for him about ¼ mile ahead" says Keith. He then stoops to get his camera ready and so does not see what I see: a young whale, 25 - 30 feet long, jumps clear of the water, except for his tail, only about 200 - 300 yards ahead. I can clearly see him, including his strainer mouth, indicating that he is a baleen not a toothed whale: he looks a grey blue and I wonder if he is a baby blue whale—that is probably just romancing but it describes his general appearance nonetheless. For a while nothing happens. Then we see him blowing ½ a mile ahead. Originally he was travelling north across our bows: now he has swung west and is going away from us exactly on our course. I catch several more glimpses of him blowing, but each time he is further away—he is certainly showing us a clean pair of heels in spite of our 5 plus knots. I catch one final glimpse of the flukes of his tail right out of the water a long way ahead and then he is gone. We wonder how many others have passed us unnoticed.

I cannot take a noon sight because of heavy cloud. So there is nothing for it but to take an afternoon sight with another full position line calculation. (The noon sight requires only 2 quick calculations to get our latitude as a position line; any other sight requires anything from ½ to 1 hour's work to calculate a position line.)

We have a pleasant lunch and watch the clouds slowly clear away. By 1430 I have a clear view of the sun and so I do an early sight. Then I go below for the Calculations. Oh sob: I discover that I forgot to cross out March 2nd in the Almanac tables when we finished with them and, for the morning sights, I used the March 2 tables instead of March 3 data, for the GHA and the declination. So I must now calculate the afternoon position and recalculate the two morning position lines. The boat rolls mercilessly and my temper wears thin. But I persevere and, by 1800, I emerge saying that our position is very close to our DR, and that the 0900 and the 1000 sights agree with the afternoon sights in showing almost the same position: so I believe that the 0900 sight was not in error. Therefore, Keith must have made some new, and wholly undetected error yesterday! One day we will get it right! In the meantime, we do know where we are: just a few miles south of our rumb line, and 590 miles east of Barbados.

As a result of these experiences, my confidence in my own navigation rises greatly. I would now feel happy taking a boat anywhere with only a sextant and the necessary navigational tables—only I would do all the navigation, leaving Keith to do what he does best, sailing the boat.

Our new ETA is 1730 on Wed., March 7. This will be too late for an entry into the harbour which requires a long run along the line of reefs on the western side of the island for which we would like sunlight. As yet, we are undecided on how we will kill time until dawn on the 8th. Should we shorten sail now or heave to once we sight Barbados? Keith, with his usual good sense, argues that anything could happen to change our ETA so we should press on and not adjust our speed until the last moment. We have sardines and a glass of wine left over from lunch for an evening snack while watching the sunset. Then we listen to a chapter of *Emma* and some Glen Miller on tapes. Then to bed.

By 1600 this afternoon there was not one cloud—not even a puffy, steam engine cloud—in the Eastern sky and the previous night's disturbance, that caused us so much trouble, could be seen disappearing over the Western horizon. So we had a beautiful evening and once again expectations of a quiet night. Maybe this time we will get an uninterrupted sleep.

Position at Noon Day 21

Lat.	14^{o} 8' N
Long	51^{o} 12' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	95m
Average speed over the day	4.0kts
Average speed over the trip	4.8kts

Day 22; Sunday March 4: We made it: gentle winds and no rain squalls all night! So we had a real sleep, and with all the hatches open. The morning is beautiful, although billowing clouds are coming up over the NE horizon—but as yet they are still well astern.

The usual breakfast, wash, shave, diary and log writing. Now Keith is just getting ready for his morning sight at 0910. Will put my notes down and write more later.

The morning sight went well, but by 1100 the wind had fallen to about force 2-3 and our speed wasn't much more than 2 kts. (It is a long time since we had wind so slack for any period of time.) "What the heck" we said "after all its Sunday, a day of rest," So we used 5 litres of water for showers and hair washes for the two of us and settled down to enjoy a leisurely day of chat and other socialising. Keith's noon sight was good (taken under perfect conditions) and, for the second day in a row, our course-made-good was the same as our course-steered (i.e., we went in exactly the same direction as we planned to go!).

About noon 20 or 30 porpoises came up to us. We both got out our cameras and waited for the good shot which always materialises when many porpoises are at play. But they evidently had something else on their minds and had just come over for a quick look at us. Within 5 minutes they were gone without trace, leaving us still with our unused cameras poised for the dramatic shots that never came.

About noon, the wind shifted to the north and we handed the weather staysail and raised the mainsail. What a welcome change in motion! Immediately *Scalza* stopped

her incessant rolling. Wallowing in a following sea with no mainsail to steady things produces a very large, and persistent, roll. Yesterday, during my long stint of navigational calculations, the roll began, at last, to get on my nerves, and today, when the roll stopped, we realised what a strain it had been. The relief was bliss.

By 1600 the wind was so low that we were urging on the squalls that we could see to the north and east of us. Finally, we picked up a bit of wind from the nearest squall, and we began to sail at a respectable speed. But the wind veered and backed, and then veered and backed again. It oscillated between North and West so that the sails required constant attention. We kept fooling ourselves that the wind had settled, but it never did. As a result, our evening tape listening, this time of *Emma*, was interrupted six times as Keith went on deck to put things right. After *Emma*, Keith stayed on deck while I put my head down. We now have no problem with our arrival time. If we return to our average trip speed tomorrow, we will arrive at Barbados early Thursday morning, which is just right.

Late today, we thought the wind was strong enough to go back to a twin rig. Keith put up the second staysail while I took down the main.

Position at Noon Day 22

Lat. 13° 56' N
Long. 52° 50' W

Distance travelled noon to noon	81m
Average speed over the day	3.4kts
Average speed over the trip	4.7kts

Day 23; Monday March 5: My day began at 0130 with Keith waking me as he struggled to keep sails full and cabin dry in the face of what he reported was the third squall since I went to sleep. He was trying to fool himself that the wind had settled enough to set the self steering and come inside; but it hadn't. So I took over command. Almost immediately after Keith went below, I saw the light of the first ship we had seen in three weeks. I guessed it was a seagoing fishing boat out from Barbados. (Later Keith wondered if it was a ship in the steamer channel we had by then identified, and he was justifiably cross with me for not taking proper sights with the bearing compass to see what its real behaviour was.)

After a bit of feeble wind, we were finally completely becalmed about 0300. I sat at the tiller and held her on her compass course. This was rather futile since we were not moving forward.

About 0400 the wind came up dead astern at force 2-3. We set off due West and, after watching for 15 minutes, I decided that *Scalza* had settled down, so I went below and almost immediately fell asleep. Very soon, however, I awoke and struggled out to look at the compass. We were 90 degrees off course! The Jenny had backed yet again. (In this variable wind it had done so countless times that are not recorded in this diary.) I decided that constant watching was needed so I stayed on deck until 0430 when Keith relieved me. Very quickly I fell asleep. I awoke at 0600 with Keith asking me to help him. I held

the boat on course while he got the Jenny attached once again to the outer end on the boom from which it had again become unattached when the pulley, through which the sheet passed, carried away.

When I finished helping Keith, I noticed that it was blowing quite hard and the sky was full of dark clouds. Altogether it was a grey northern November morning!

Keith and I stayed up after that. I made breakfast while he steered (self-steering was impossible in the variable winds we were experiencing). Then, at 0800, I took over the helm while he caught a bit of sleep. By 0900 a clearing of the sky was evident. By 1000 we were in only 4/10th cloud.

Keith awoke in time to help me with my morning sight which went well. Not much else was done until lunch: omelettes for me most of the time. Keith says he has motion sickness, but whatever it is, it is a shame because, although it doesn't spoil things completely for him, I am sure it reduces his enjoyment of most things by at least 30%.

After lunch, Keith is sleeping while I am sitting on deck basking in what has become a truly glorious day. Above us is clear blue sky and a burning tropical sun. Below is a warm blue sea and, on every horizon, are enormous billowy cumulus clouds. I set up the tape recorder and listen to Brahms's first piano concerto. For each passage I select a set of clouds to view: some are peaceful, some are grand and explosive, some are vast, some are contained and restricted, some are vibrant and some are quite slight. It is my concerto of the clouds. I match the cloud I watch to the music, and I'm sure that, for the rest of my life, Brahms's First Piano Concerto will evoke those clouds above the tropical seas.

Once the squalls had passed, about 1000 this morning, the wind fell back to about force 2-3. As a result of this low wind and what Keith believes is a heavy new growth of weed on our bottom, we are going very slowly, (In Gran Canaria we had intended to scrub the bottom and paint it with anti-fouling paint but getting it out of the water proved difficult, so we settled for a scuba diver's scrubbing off without the anti-fouling paint.) Our average speed over the whole voyage so far is 113 miles per day. During the last two days, however, we have made no more than 80 - 90 miles per day. If we hold to that new, lower speed, we won't be in until Friday morning. It is all very odd. Everything we read said that the Trades get stronger the further West you go. But for us, they have been weakening as we get closer to the Indies. For now we seem condemned to a speed of 3 - 3 ½ kts, which, after the 5 - 5 ½ kts of the earlier part of the trip, seems very slow indeed.

Funny, I am writing this next bit of my log at 1430 on Tuesday, and already Monday is a haze merging with all of the other days of sunshine, water and squalls. My main recollection is that our pace through the water was slow.

Anyway the big event on Monday afternoon was a steamer which crossed our bows about 2 miles away, heading SE. (Was it going around the bulge of Brazil?) We watched it for a long time. The sunset was the most brilliant we have yet seen; salmon pink, turquoise, orange, and tomato red (we don't speak of blood red out here!) bespattered the whole western sky.

After sunset, we went below. We finished off *Emma*, not we felt, one of Jane Austin's best. Then we listened to another episode of *Fawlty Towers*. Then bed for me and first watch for Keith. We saw a second steamer after dark tonight and concluded that we must be in a steamer channel (probably from the southern US around the bulge of Brazil to points in South America)—this would be the third ship if the boat I saw the other night, and thought was a fishing boat, was really a steamer. So we decided we should keep a continuous watch.

Keith woke me about 0100. By then the Trades had finally recovered and were blowing about force 5½ . We were having trouble making the twin foresails hold the wind so we handed the special twin (a difficult task, as I soon found, on a pitching deck on a black night with a force 5 wind and a very heavy swell). We then proceeded on the Jenny alone which had been our second "twin". Soon after coming on watch, I sighted the lights of a steamer going NW on the same track as the others we had recently seen. I stood watch until 0430 when Keith relieved me.

Position at Noon Day 23

Lat. 13° 49' N
Long. 54° 14' W.

Distance travelled noon to noon	87m
Average speed over the day	3.6kts
Average speed over the trip	4.7kts

Day 24; Tuesday March 6: Keith came below at dawn saying that any steamer could see us now, so a continuos watch was unnecessary. On that note we both went to sleep. I awoke at 0700. It was blowing a very satisfactory force 4 - 5 and I sat on watch for a while. Keith took the morning sight early because clouds were threatening to obscure the sun—which, in the end, they didn't. Then we decided to raise the second staysail (our No. 1 working jib) and stop going on just the Jenny. But, in doing so, we ripped the sail badly on the pulpit. So I handed that sail and raised one of the special 'Twins". We proceeded in a force 4½ wind on the Jenny and a "twin".

Keith spent the rest of the morning repairing the jib while I tackled the oil navigation light which, in spite of great expense in England, stubbornly refuses to stay alight in any strong breeze. We really would like to have navigation lights these next few nights because there is shipping around, and we are led to expect deep sea fishing boats as far out from Barbados as 400 miles. But we can't really spare the electricity for the mast lights unless we are very close to something.

No more ships are seen this morning but we do get a good rollicking Trade Wind that is expressing us closer to Barbados every hour. We now estimate Barbados to be in sight around midnight Thursday. Will this give us time to get into Bridgetown before dark on Friday?

In the afternoon, we listen to Sibelius on deck. We then have one more try at repairing the main bilge pump. This time we really seem to have got it fixed in spite of the lack of proper parts. Then, once again, we have a go at the oil navigation light, but we are forced to write it off as unrepairable. This is a shame. The nav light had been sent back to the maker in England for a complete overhaul and was delivered to Keith the morning he left for Gran Canaria, so he did not have time to check it out, but since he had every faith in the makers, he believed it would work. Now, as we close on Barbados, we have no full-time navigation light. We can switch on the electric nav lights when we get close to a boat but to leave them on all night would quickly flatten our battery. So we sleep and trust in this law of averages!

This afternoon's excitement occurs when we are lolling in the cockpit together and I look idly astern and low and behold, there, a mere mile or so away, is a destroyer. It has no flag so we are unsure of its nationality but, judging from its appearance, we decide it is either American or Russian. It is moving very slowly towards us. Then less than a mile away, it veers off and increases speed. Before too long, it disappears over the horizon. After so long away from the realities of international politics, we are taken a back by this encounter with the "real world".

Tonight we rig up the anchor light above the cockpit. This is an oil lantern designed to be raised on the mast when the boat is at anchor, but it should make us visible to a fisherman for a mile or two away, which is better than nothing. Tonight it really blew, force 6 . Keith was up most of the night coping with course changes, backed sails, etc. We would have been better to lower the twin headsails and just go on the Jenny, but we were hoping to make landfall early enough to get into Bridgetown before dark on Thursday. So we bashed on with two staysails in a force 5 2½ wind.

Position at Noon Day 24

Lat. 13° 35' N	
Long. 55° 42' W.	
Distance travelled noon to noon	113m
Average speed over the day	4.7 kts
Average speed over the trip	4.7 kts

Day 25; Wednesday March 7: The sad news is that we really are being slowed up by something—and Keith's guess of a major growth of weed on our bottom is the best we can think of. On our DR, which is from the log, we are making a mere 4½ kts in the strong winds, and only 3½ kts in the lighter winds—which is much poorer than we were doing on the other side of the Atlantic. So we are making about 1kt less than we should be under all equivalent wind conditions. So it now looks as though we won't make landfall early enough on Thursday to get in before dark.

My morning sight seemed OK, although we are now suffering from "landfallitis": we check each other's nav work everywhere and I am proposing to make a third sight this

afternoon to get the increased accuracy of three intercepts, and get an average fix from them.

The weather is good. The wind is now force 4 but the swells are building up. The chart says it is too deep, at 4,000 meters, for the shelving of the bottom to be the cause of the swell. So right now, the increased swell must be the effect of the wind. By tomorrow, however, the bottom will be shelving enough for it to cause an increase in the swell. The noon sight gave us our fix as an encouraging 15 miles further than our DR. Hopefully this is the effect of a benign equatorial current which, when it does flow, is good for 12 - 24 extra miles a day. Keith cooked a fine lunch and we both feel in a celebrative mood: the noon fix puts a us mere 100 miles east of Barbados! So the final countdown is underway. This is the last 100 miles in a 2,800 mile trip.

If the wind holds, we may make landfall early enough tomorrow to get into Bridgetown before dark. In an effort to squeeze a bit more speed out of dear old *Scalza*, we hand the "twin" and raise the No.1 working jib as our second staysail. This gives us the maximum amount of canvas that the boat will carry with the twin staysail rig. We are just ripping through the water.

Today we discovered that our log line had become tangled with our lifeline during one of our night-time backing of sails. I should have taken up the line for inspection, since I was on deck at the time. I didn't, so our dead reckoning caused us to go through a lot of unnecessary worry about slowing up. But our astro navigation tells us that we are still going at a crackerjack speed of well over 100 miles a day. For good measure, and at last, this the classic Trade Wind day that Keith and I saw in our imaginations before we set out. The sky is bright blue; there are a few puffy, white clouds; the sea is dark blue interrupted only by the plumes of the white horses; the wind is fresh at force 4 - 5; the swell is about 15 feet in height. As we rise on a crest of a swell, we are raised around the surrounding "countryside" and can see the seas uninterrupted for miles in every direction. As we fall into a trough, we are surrounded by water as one is by rock in the crater of a volcano. Particularly big waves pick the whole boat up and thrust it forward then we surf on a crest of white foam that swirls and churns as we rush on, until the wave deserts us and we fall into another trough.

As I am writing this, Keith is sleeping off the effects of a hard night in the cockpit and a bout of the sea sickness that he has never quite managed to throw off. I am basking in the cockpit full of joy for the world and luxuriating in the sounds and colours of what will probably be our last full day out of sight of land. (I hope we will make other trips, and some of these will doubtless be much more perilous than this gentle crossing, but never again will I feel the exhilaration of what I feel now: I have done it; I have realised a life-time ambition; I have faced a mighty ocean and I have come through!—that may sound trite, but that is how I feel.)

My afternoon fix confirms that we are a mere 85 miles from Barbados. It's hard to imagine what that statistic does to us; we haven't seen land for weeks; we only have some points on a chart fixed by a sextant—which we hardly believe—to display our progress; and now there we are; or are we really where we think we are?

So it looks touch and go; will we make our landfall tomorrow before dawn when the lighthouses are still on so we can pinpoint our location, or will we arrive after dawn when it is hard to see where we are on a featureless coast. Indeed, will we see the island at all? Will we not sail straight past it? Finding Madeira last September was one thing; we were only 6 days out of Portugal, and the island is so high that we could see it from 90 miles away. But now we are 24 days out of sight of land and we are looking for a little blob of an island all on its own and possessing only one 1,000-foot hill. All we have to go on is the blind trust that our sextant has been telling us our position each day. But what if it hasn't been telling the truth? What if it has had a constant error? What if this small error has taken us 5 miles off our course each day? That is not enough to show up as a conflict with our DR positions, but after 24 days, that's 120 miles off course. That is more than enough to miss Barbados completely.

Now its evening. We are listening to the *Merchant of Venice*, at the end of which Keith falls asleep. I am sitting here listening to the boat rushing, pushing, plowing towards land. It's a steady five kts and, if the wind holds, we may see the lighthouse on Barbados before dawn. In the meantime, we rush straight into the track of the moon on a flawless night without a cloud. If our weather earlier today was Atlantic sea weather, tonight is tropical paradise weather. Long may it continue and please may we get through this last night without a squall!

Just before Keith turned in, we decided to shorten sail. At the cost of ½ kt of speed, we buy a more restful night. I had an exhilarating 15 minutes up on the tossing bow handing the No.1 jib and raising the starboard twin. So we are in what has become our trade wind rig; the jenny to port and the twin to starboard.

I stayed up till midnight while Keith slept. Then I turned in. At 0030 the sails backed, and the very strong wind ripped the shackle out of the end of the starboard boom. Keith rouses me to steer a straight course while he got the sheet once again secured to the starboard boom—its a bit tricky in the dark with the boat pitching and rolling in the growing swell. (The ocean bottom is now shelving rapidly, and this makes the waves much fiercer.)

While Keith was working on the foredeck, I spotted dead ahead, between the twin foresails, a faint glow on the western horizon. As Keith worked, the glow grew. When Keith was finished and came back to the cockpit, he said: "Do you see what I see?" "Yes"' said I "that has to be Barbados dead ahead!" It must be at least 40 miles away, if our navigational fixes are even approximately correct, but there really can be no doubt, the glow of it's lights give it away.

Satisfied we went to bed!

Position at Noon Day 25

Lat.	13° 11' N.
Long.	57° 14' W
Distance travelled noon to noon	124m
Average speed over the day	5.2kts
Average speed over the day	4.7kts

Day 26; Thursday March 8: Keith woke me at 0500 and, totally exhausted, he went to bed. What we have been seeing since last night is the glow from houses lights on the 1,000 ft, hill just north of the middle of the island. As the night wore on, the lights resolved themselves into individual pinpoints. But by dawn, 0600, we still haven't identified the lighthouse. This means that we must be more than 20 miles out—which the chart says is the limit of visibility of the lighthouse. It is now 0700 and a pleasant day has dawned. We are making our way at 4½ kts towards an ever-growing land mass. We can see the whole length and contour of the Island. We have to sail down the east coast and then around what they call South Point and then up to Bridgetown. I guess we should arrive some time in the early afternoon.

By 0745 the lighthouse on Ragged Point is clearly visible, fine on the port bow. It seems that after 24 days and an estimated 2,770 miles, we will have missed our landfall by about 3/4 of a mile!

We came within three miles of the coast where we could plainly see the surf pounding on the coral reef which, by then, was only a mile ahead! One mistake and we would be on that reef and the boat would be pulp within 30 seconds. Keith went on deck to take down the twins, switch the Jenny onto the correct port tack and get up a reefed mainsail. First, he stowed the twin booms. This took off our trade wind tackle and put us back to ordinary sailing. In doing this, he ripped a large hole in the Jenny. But we used it anyway as we were drifting what seemed to me to be disturbingly close to the great breakers on the reef. We must do something about the pulpit fitting for oil navigation light which is what is tearing our sails. It has now torn three sails on our trip!

Finally Keith gets the sails rigged—not a moment too soon for me, since the surf can be seen pounding on the reef only ½ mile away. Just one mistake at this point and we would be pounded to death on the reef. Now we have the Jenny set and a reefed mainsail. Next we stowed the twin booms—the last sign of Trade Wind tackle.

Now we set a safe course, just outside the reef, and sail down the SE coast, round South Point and come into Bridgetown Bay. We drop hook at 1215, exactly 26 days and 3 hours after leaving Puerto Rico, Gran Canaria.

Anchored Roadtown Barbados 1215

Distance travelled 1200 wed. - 1215 Thurs.	105m
Average speed over the day	4.3 kts
Average speed over the trip	4.69 kts

Half an hour later, when we were still getting things shipshape, a dingy rowed up. Out of it came Charlie, our friend from Gran Canaria. He had arrived, single handed, four days before us. He passed up from his dingy three bottles of beer and one of wine. We sat and drank in the cockpit and traded experiences. He had taken two days less than us in a somewhat larger boat, which he always sailed to the maximum efficiency because continually changing sails gave him something to do. (This is the way to come in to a new harbour if you can: welcomed by someone who knows what you have just done.)

Charlie told us to go to the deep water harbour for customs and immigration clearance—which was not what the book (now apparently out of date) had said. We motored there in the afternoon flying a "Q" flag. When we docked, Keith discovered that he had lost our supply of £100 worth of Barbadian money. So we were without local money. Anyway, the local officers were very nice about it (not at all officious as the book said they would be). They cleared us in, but we must return with the money to pay for the landing charges tomorrow. Having cleared we sailed back to the bay without our "Q" flag, and dropped hook near Charlie and two other foreign boats. Now we had officially arrived.

Later we went ashore but, since Keith could not find our Barbadian money, we had to satisfy ourselves with wandering around without a drink or any other celebrative gesture. Later, we got the idea of going to the Holiday Inn, which was dimly visible at the far end of the bay. When we had walked there, we discovered that, as we had expected, they took credit cards, so at last we had our long—awaited celebrative Pina Colada plus a rather indifferent meal. But it was a good celebration. We walked home at 2300 hours and slept soundly. For the first time in weeks there was no roll and no sails to attend to throughout the night. We really had truly arrived!

All my life I have wanted to do this. Now I have done it: and we did it as did the sailors of 200 years ago: our only navigational equipment was the sextant; we did have an RDF, which would have picked up Barbados 50 miles out, but we never used it; we had no battery charger and no radio sending equipment, only a simple battery powered receiver. When we were out of sight of land, we were as isolated navigationally as was Christopher Columbus—except we had sextant navigation, which he did not.

I hope I will do it again but even if I don't, it doesn't matter. I am a taller person for having done it For the rest of my life, every time I see a map of the Atlantic Ocean, I shall look at it with awe, with some disbelief, and I will say to myself: "I was there."

END OF MANUSCRIPT