

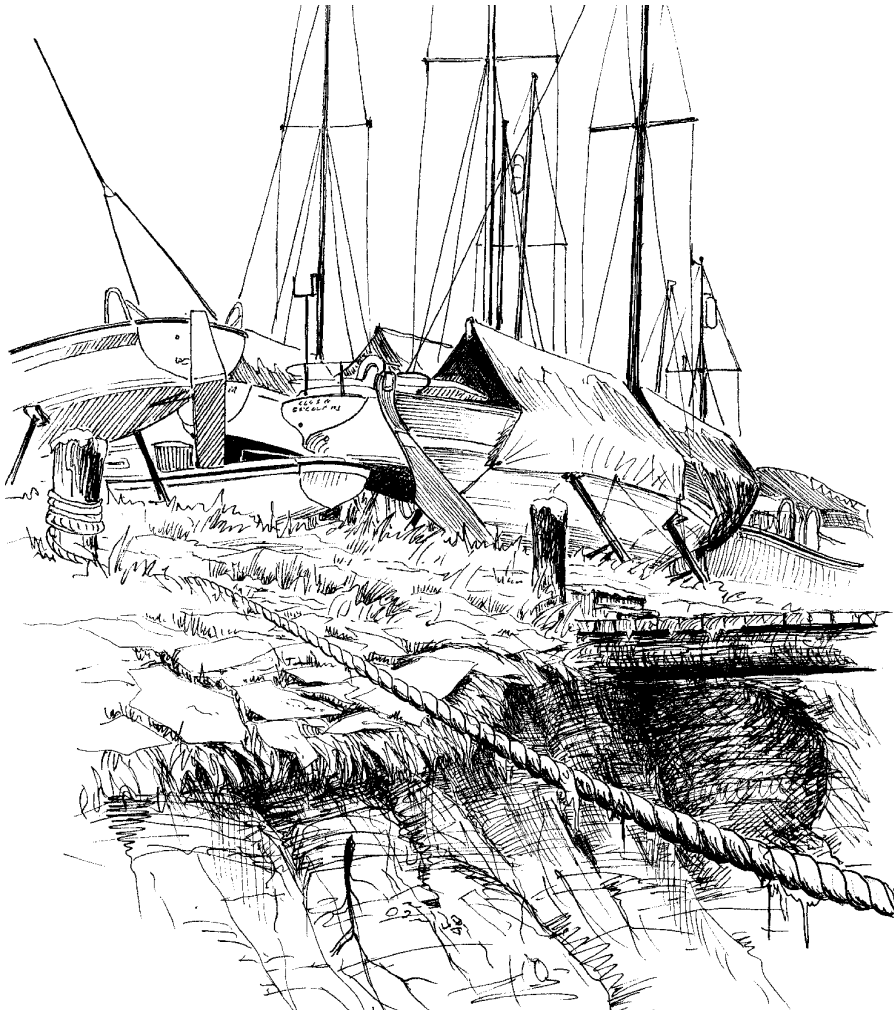


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The Voyage of Gay Lass by G.H.GILL



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RHBOA Newsletter Number 94

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RHBOA Life Members

*John Collard, Pat Gawn, Colin Marsh, Barbara Morren-Wilkins, Anne Wall
see page 24*

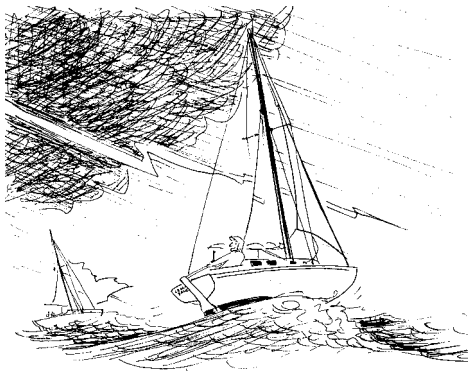
The Voyage of Gay Lass by G.H. Gill

'The Voyage of Gay Lass' was one of those cherished events in my life where I experienced true camaraderie. I am glad to say that the main protagonists, Skipper Ginger Gill, Dick Cooke and I are still ticking over, even if we are not working on all four cylinders. Ginger Gill - I've always known him as such - graduated from dinghies, was a Hastings solicitor, who apart from his enthusiasm for sailing, was a great party man. I well recall the times when Madeleine, my late wife, and I attended them. Taxis were a must when we staggered home! Dick Cooke, who some of us must know, is a Rye farmer. He currently sails his own boat single-handed and is a member of the Rye Harbour Sailing Club. Long may the two of us continue sailing. Ginger, alas, is poorly and has moved away. Gay Lass was sold in Havea, Spain, her last port of call.

Dennis Davies.

I had no ambition to voyage single-handed. Much of my enjoyment of sailing has been the great companionship of shared adventure. I was not out to prove anything and the more of my friends that I could ask to take part compatible with comfort was my aim. My choice for deputy skipper needed no great thought - Dennis Davies, aforementioned skipper of *Great Dane*, companion on other ventures yachtmaster's certificate. "Would you like to come", I said, "all the way Rye to Jávea. Permanent 2nd in Command". "Delighted - When" was his immediate answer.

I first met Dennis at *Newhaven Marina* when we both moored there following the acquisition of our respective boats. Like everything that Dennis takes up he strives to become a perfectionist and his enthusiasm is boundless and although he was a comparatively new boy to sailing his prowess was terrific. In a short space of time he and I were soon to set out on my first adventure across the Channel in *Gay Lass* with Dennis in *Great Dane* to accompany me as on several other voyages; sometimes as crew and sometimes in our respective boats. He was a companion however to beware of as is borne out by the little card I sent him after our first three joint adventures:

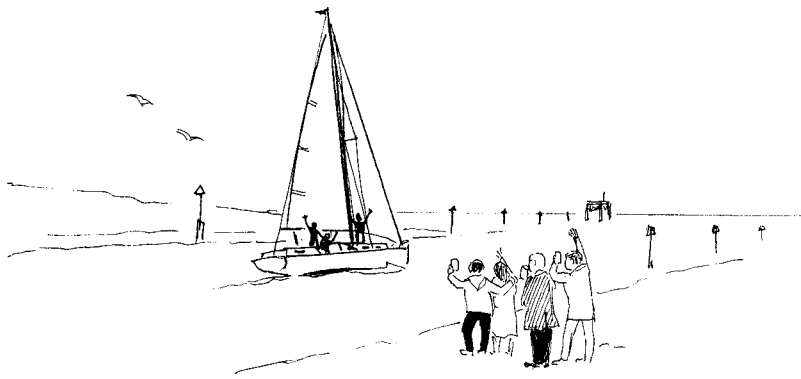


Dennis Davies is afloat
Watch out!
The sea will be not like a moat
Oh no
For the waves will break
and the wind be strong
And the voyage will be wet and long
For Dennis Davies is afloat

The first week of May 1975 was to be 'splash off' and as fate would have it, after months of preparations and provisioning, I developed an ulcer on my

The Voyage of Gay Lass (continued)

right eyeball, which nearly caused the cancellation of the voyage. The specialist advised that the worst thing I could do was to subject it to salt spray or strong sunlight or I might end up with permanent damage to vision in that eye. ‘Splash off’ was postponed a week which produced improvement. The crew cheerfully and sportingly agreed to embark on the voyage with an incapacitated skipper, even with the possibility of having to discontinue at some port along the south coast and return.



Nothing daunted we all presented ourselves at the moorings at *Rye* accompanied by families and friends on Saturday 10th May 1975. Dennis not to be outdone arrived with a small boil upon his nose which no doubt was very painful but he was uncomplaining as always. There were a hundred and one jobs to be done before we cast off - it was all in a flurry; the tide no more waits at *Rye* than it did for King Canute - last kisses and embraces and we slid away from our moorings with no great semblance of cool preparedness. A serious problem immediately presented itself.

As we put on the power to move forward down the river after reversing into the main stream the rudder jammed solid. At the moment of jamming we were heading slightly into the bank. Reverse thrust was immediately applied and the situation investigated. That morning the automatic inflatable life raft had been lashed to the aft part of the deck and one of the lashings had lifted the tiller arm pivot point, which made it foul under the floor. A knife was produced in a flash and that part of the lashing was severed very smartly and all was well except for a job of making good. From then all was put to order and in sunshine and SW Force 3 we made at last a dignified departure down river with all sails set.

The family having leapt into their cars were down on the slipway of the *Rye Harbour Sailing Club*, tankards of beer in hand, to wave the last farewells. I must admit a lump came into my throat as I waved goodbye to Katie - what a pal she had been - helping, encouraging, putting up with all the disruption that this venture entailed and

The Voyage of Gay Lass (continued)

stoically accepting the separation. We had an understanding that come 9.00 p.m. each evening, if we weren't too busy and could remember, we would think of each other and raise a glass, if we had one, for the nine o'clock toast. I must admit that in the weeks that followed, the nine o'clock toast did not fit into my programme with the regularity planned, but it was a happy feature of the cruise.

As soon as we left the river we set course westward and were not surprised to find that our westing against the wind was pathetic. Only with the aid of the engine could we make any effective progress and by the time we were off *Hastings* we had hauled down the jib and were punching into the wind with the main hauled right in as a steadier. It was well into the afternoon before we picked up signals from *West Cliff Bexhill* indicating that the families had followed our progress thus far. We answered on our spot light. By this time we had reefed the main to first batten to cut down drag, as the wind was moderate.

Not until about 2300 hours that night did we clear *Beachy Head* and decided that we would make for *Newhaven* and have some sleep and give the weather a chance to give more favourable winds. Half an hour after midnight we entered *Newhaven*.

Morning brought a gloomy weather forecast but as the day declared itself it seemed very favourable for making progress and local seafaring folk described it as just great for going westwards. So at 1255 hours we cast off, wind N to NW, 2 to 4. Progress was pleasant and encouraging at first but by 1635 the wind was heading and the engine was put on. So we progressed - engine on, engine off, but slowly proceeding west - *St. Catherine's Point, Needles, Anvil Point*.

However, about midday the following day Monday our progress was negated by tide and wind and by 1435 the wind had freshened so much we had to put up the storm jib and reef the main to second batten which was pretty drastic, as I had never been beyond first batten before. Spray was flying, the wind was howling in the rigging. The *Portland Race* was ahead, *The Shambles* inshore of us. We tried a tack out to sea but progress was nil to westward - in fact leeway took us back east.

We agreed to *heave-to* to assess the position as to what we should do. She wouldn't readily *heave-to* for reasons I was not able to assess, because flying spray prevented me coming on deck and the situation did not demand it. We tried to sail again on our original tack. The course we could lay would land us right on the *Portland Bill* and no chance of clearing the race.

Seasickness had begun to take a grip on the crew and the mini-gale that had developed so quickly called for some decision. Seating it out by clawing out into the channel and weathering it out seemed out of the question with a crew wet and sick - why should we? So where should we seek refuge? A conference below with the charts produced *Weymouth* as a possibility. The wind was SSW. Our position by

The Voyage of Gay Lass (continued)

now was not certain. Visibility was getting very poor. The leeway might well mean to make for there would take us over *The Shambles*. We would be closing onto a lee shore at night on totally unfamiliar ground. Whilst it would preserve our westing I thought it not without considerable danger. So I made the decision we must about turn and seek refuge round the *Isle of Wight - Gosport*. We could gradually achieve shelter as we got in the lee of the island without danger. So we bore away and tore down back the way we came.

All except myself were wet, miserable, sick and cold, but all game. Nobody wanted to be below deck because of sickness, but it was vital we picked up *St. Catherine's Point* otherwise we might belt into the SW of the *Isle of Wight* and visibility was down to about two miles.

My radio direction finder was playing tricks due to damp I think, so I asked Dennis if he would operate his *Nova Pal*. Stoically he came below and between vomiting he got a marvellous fix, which confirmed our course would clear *St. Catherine's*. Bless him - this taxed his stomach to the limit and he was at low ebb. I gave him a hot bottle on his stomach and he lay in the leeward corner and recovered. Marcus, stoic as ever, was at the helm for a long time so I ordered him off duty and he came below. I suggested the hot bottle treatment but he would have none of it. "Leave me alone, I just don't want to be bothered".

So there he sat dripping in his oilskins and safety harness in the corner of the cabin and closed his eyes exhausted, until called on for his next stint, sick from time to time in the ever-ready bucket. The most dreadful thing was that I, the only sick-free member, was not available on deck with the spray flying in all directions.

At last by 22.10 hours *St. Catherine's* light was visible on port beam and by 22.40 it bore abeam. Visibility was very poor and although we altered course to *Nab Tower*, it was not until we were about two miles away from it that we picked up its light.



As we rounded *St. Catherine's* and got more and more into the lee of the island, the seas and the wind abated, and I was able to come on deck and take the helm for the

The Voyage of Gay Lass (continued)

next three hours, and give everyone else a rest in the calmer waters.

By 0300 hours the following day, Tuesday 13th May 1975, as we drew close to *Nab Tower* we picked up *Bembridge Light Buoy* and we altered course to *Gosport*. By dawn all was fine and dandy, visibility good and wind light, but we found on starting the engine to speed our progress that it faded out completely. So we were faced with making moorings under sail only.

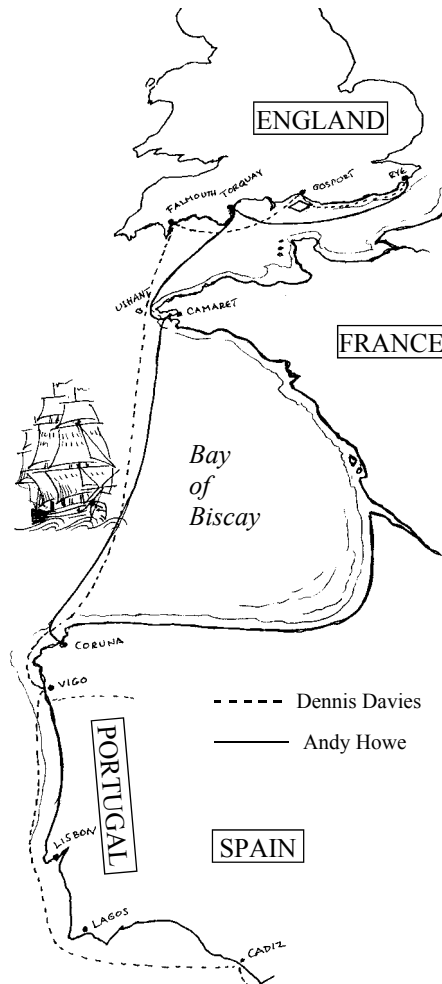
It is terrible to have to admit that this causes one to blanch at the thought, but this was the order of things 50 years ago.

However, nothing daunted, by 0730 we were successfully moored to the fuel service quay at *Gosport* awaiting refuelling whenever it chose to open its pumps. Whereupon we would move on to proper moorings, which were achieved by help of a motor launch who took us on tow after we had refuelled.

Then followed the customary hanging up of all wet gear - up and around the boat and complete flake out of all concerned. Whether we had made the right decision or not on coming back to *Gosport*, everyone needed a rest and they got it!

Mind you we rather let down the sophisticated appearance of *Gosport* mooring - *Morning Cloud No. 3* not far away just newly commissioned, but we were still afloat and that is more than can be said for the unfortunate *Morning Cloud No. 2*. ■

Gay Lass picked up speed after this and was in the Spanish town of *Vigo* just a few miles north of Portugal by the end of the week after a brief stopover in *Falmouth* on the 16th. Two weeks later on 30th May 1975 they were in *Cadiz* and on 8th June 1975 they moored up in the Mediterranean in *Jávea Harbour*, 1650 nautical miles from *Rye*. For the full story go to the RHBOA website at www.rhboa.co.uk



A Voyage from Rye to the Mediterranean - The Captain's Personal Tale

A continuation of The Voyage of Gay Lass by G.H.Gill that first appeared as a private publication under the above title together with the quote:

“on such a full sea are we now afloat”

The Voyage of Gay Lass (continued)

I did not have much respite - the engine failure had to be rectified. Fuel starvation was the obvious first guess and so it proved to be. Starting from the fuel tank it was found that no fuel came to the first filter. Rust and muck in the tank aggravated by the violent motion in the mini-gale had blocked the outflow. Once rectified and with suitable bleeding, the engine once more ran as 'sweet as a nut' and we were ready to put to sea again.

Thus it was that on Wednesday 14th May we left *Gosport* at 12.00 hours under power to catch the right tidal flow down past the *Needles*. The sun shone, little wind, but what matter with such a tide underneath us. We were literally flushed down the Solent as though someone had pulled the chain. What little wind there was, damnably, against us. So we decided that we would carry the tide and anchor at *Swanage*, which we achieved at 19.55 hours in good daylight. Thus enabled we were in a fair condition to assess where best to anchor. Should we buoy the anchor? Charts indicated anchorage so we cast it over. We kept an anchor watch and all rested until change of tide. This was all too short from a sleep point of view and by 01.20 we were sailing again or shall we say motoring with little or no wind.

By 11.00 o'clock the engine was switched off and believe it or not the wind had veered in our favour and the spinnaker was set. If we had had champagne aboard, but we had not, at this moment it would have been sparkled off. Then followed, for the first time, sailing of gentle pleasurable quality, relaxed progress, a shimmering sea, not the sort that makes 'bar time recounting', but that which I always enjoy.

This was not to last too long to get bored and by early evening we had to take down the spinnaker and apply engine and take our log to pieces because it was seized for lack of lubrication. Dennis dissected it with the precision of a surgeon and applied lubricant which restored its organs to perform the function for which they were designed in little or no time at all.

Whilst we are on the subject of surgeons, there was always the problem of the Captain's eye - 5 times a day ointment had to be applied and this was a ritual which was from time to time entered in the log. It was performed by whoever was available at the five-hour intervals. It was suffered by the crew as a '*sine qua non*' of the continuance of the trip; cheerfully and with a dexterity which surprised them and me in a heaving sea. My specialist, Mr. Strong would have been proud of them all. Suffice it to say that vision improved and optimism of the continuance of the voyage waxed. I must now disclose that we were beset by another sickness i.e. compass deviation. On our progress westward along the *English Channel*, we seemed con-

tinually to be set into shore. At first we ascribed this to the deviation of the helmsman to home to some English port for rest and a 'pinta' but the pattern became irresistible that there was compass deviation.

Captain Chief Navigator Russell later by a series of carefully calculated courses observed this as 5 degrees to subtract from all compass settings which was extraordinary but proven right by subsequent experience. It was dramatically highlighted by our homing on what we thought to be *Start Point*, whereas it was *Berry Head* -, Navigator Russell who was off duty was not impressed by our assessment of identification and read the riot act: "You must not assume that what you expect to see is what you do see". He was quite right. Hold your course and all will be disclosed.

By the time we were off *Start Point* the wind, which had been desultory, sprang up from aft and with the genoa boomed out on the spinnaker pole to starboard, we streaked down wind as evening fell for a course to take us just outside the *Eddeystone Lighthouse*. Speed was around 5 knots. Shortly after midnight the wind had increased to make the carrying of the genoa goose-winged on the verge of being a big strain on the rudder which the Captain had discovered whilst off duty lying in the aft cabin, was working on the top pivot. This movement would impose strain on the lower skin bearing on the hull. The genoa was dropped amongst a flurry of immense power in the wind, which made it so imperative that everyone was tightly secured to his safety harness so that he could not possibly go overboard. The chances of recovering anybody in these conditions were very poor and it just must not be allowed to happen. Under working jib the pressure eased.

Nearing midnight we passed within half a mile of the *Eddeystone Lighthouse*. The sight was so impressive Dennis who was off watch was called to view it. The night was clear. The *Eddeystone Lighthouse* streaked out its light across the water towards us and above it at about 5 minutes past appeared Venus and in a line with this and the *Eddeystone Light* was the crescent moon all within a short distance, standing out stark and clear to the exclusion of all other heavenly bodies. It was a moment which all of us remember so vividly, not without awe. There was a simplicity of nature's adornment of the light safeguarding mariners from the lurking danger.

As dawn came the wind was favourable, the visibility excellent and we had no difficulty in achieving *Falmouth*, which we entered at 06.00 hours, Friday 16th May. It was a lovely sight in the morning light. A week had passed of great adventure and next day was to be Dennis' birthday. We were to celebrate this and rest up whilst the change of crew was effected. We were made so welcome by the *Royal Falmouth Yacht Club* and we even had a motor boat laid on to take us to and from moorings and the *Club House*. They put on an evening meal of delicious steaks, tender and succulent - never seen a freezer, hung to perfection, and cooked to the same standard.

Our anticipatory taking on of bonded stores at *Falmouth* suffered a fatal set back - oh yes our voyage qualified but it took several days (too long for us to delay our next

leg) to get it indented, bespoke or 'what have you' from Truro or the source of origin. For self and crew this, strange though it may seem, did not strike any terror into our hearts. Whilst always eager for a bit of 'bounce', it was not within our contemplation to have much opportunity to booze across the *Bay of Biscay*; much better we remained a 'dry' ship in every sense. Furthermore where we were destined wine and cognac flowed plentifully and cheap. So what seemed to be a crass piece of mismanagement to one whose sights were set differently, was dealt with by a shrug of the shoulder, and we hadn't much room anyway.

And so it was as a dry ship we prepared for the *Atlantic*. Marcus and Peter left us for the comfort of their beds (but not by choice) and Dick Cooke joined us for the 'three men in a boat' leg into the *Mediterranean*. The Captain, with the aid of Dennis purchasing a suitable piece of marine ply, spent most of his spare time in *Falmouth* designing and constructing stability and strength to the rudder upper fulcrum bearing, which would stand up to all that the *Bay of Biscay* and all subsequent oceans would meet out. How lucky we were to discover this weakness on the first part of the voyage.

On Sunday 18th May, two days from arrival at *Falmouth*, rested and eager to continue we took on water at the North quay at 10.00 with Dennis at first a non-starter. He had gone from mooring to *Club House* ostensibly with a view to a shave, s*** and shower, all of which were holding up our start in what was proving to be a most favourable day. So we got a message to the would be 'properly laundered Dennis' that he should join us at the North quay where we had set forth for a full 30 gallons of water. Peter Russell brought him down to join us here in his car to help in ferrying water from the public water tap in the square to fill our tanks. By 10.20 we were away in perfect weather, and at 12.10 *Manacles Buoy* was abeam, the genoa was filling beautifully and the Captain, who had had no time to launder himself stripped off in the cockpit and with the aid of gin clear sea water, detergent and sea soap had a superb, but not without difficult, cleansing. The last chance, so he surmised he might have to do so before making port again.

By 17.30 *England* was no longer visible and as evening closed down all was peaceful and serene with a friendly moon streaking over the water. As the night progressed, gradual transformation occurred, and by dawn we were overpressed and had to reef mainsail and put up No. 2 jib. The wind was NNE 6/7 suspected gale 8 and by 13.00 hours we handed the main being over-pressed. We had done 6 miles during the previous hour, but even without the main during the next four hours we averaged over 6 knots. By 17.00 hours we had taken down No. 2 jib which had shed a piston hank and one also undone (perhaps never fastened) and we put up the small storm jib 48 square feet. Still we thundered down the wind.

By now we had put up the storm protectors to the saloon windows, battened the specially strengthened fore hatch and never doubted for one moment that any of these precautions were unnecessary. Thank goodness we were travelling down wind.

'Gay Lass', bless her and Angus Primrose her designer, seemed in her element. She never failed to forge her way through the turbulent seas. These sizzled past her most time and other times a rough wave would crack up against the cabin sides with a sharp reminder of the might of the ocean.

They say you should never look back - neither did we, more than once. On one such an occasion I saw a coaster who was coming up from the rear. For some reason it was almost heaved to and the amount of roll had enabled me to see its bottom and I realized then what a turbulent sea we were travelling down. Sometimes as one looked into the trough in the sea ahead an anxiety developed that as we descended into it we would not emerge. But it was not so. We seemed to plough and furrow through the lot with no yawing. The power of the wind in the jib carried us straight forward and as night passed the only anxiety was would it get worse, because 'Gay Lass' was well in command of the situation.

Come the dawn the wind abated and the sea developed into a swell as against a turbulence and for the first time we were to experience what is so typical of the *Atlantic* and the *Bay of Biscay* the widely spaced wave formation. One minute you were in the trough and about 100 yards away was the top of the swell, which without any great consciousness you rose up to as this wave formation rolled under you. In these decreased conditions of wind and lovely sunshine, it was a grandiose experience.

The queasy turns of Dennis and Dick subsided with the seas and our attention quickly turned food. Poor Dennis had bought a carton of Devonshire cream in Falmouth but had not been able to fancy it. Meanwhile the skipper had made inroads into it to prevent it going sour. There was just one good portion left for Dennis and he did enjoy it. At this time also Dick's chicken emerged. Bless him, he had bought a cooked chicken in Rye and brought it along with him. I must confess that although it had lain in the cool place under the seat there was no alternative but to throw it to the fish - it had quite 'gone off' and I felt guilty that Dick's kind thought had been wasted. About this time there developed the ritual of Katie's cake. Katie sent one of her delicious and now quite famous fruit cakes with Dick and at the nearest change of watch to tea time this cake was produced almost with reverence, and with a wedge of it in one hand and a cup of tea in the other - bliss. It lasted until *Cadiz*.

Shortly after midday, Tuesday 20th May we were able to bend on the genoa and shake out the reef in the mainsail. By midnight the wind was gone completely and the engine was put on. Then for the next 24 hours it was a series of sails up, spinnaker up, everything down or engine on as the fickle airs played with us in preparation for the next onslaught. A shark cruised alongside us on port beam - estimated length about 8'. He/she might have enjoyed the chicken. We confirmed our DR position in longitude, by taking a 'noon sight' of the sun; our first opportunity.

By midnight on Thursday 22nd May the wind was back again. We had the genoa boomed out, goose-winged and were going like the proverbial clappers and soon it

was no longer sate to carry it, so all were assembled to deal with this major feat of removing the wisker pole and handing the flogging beast. Easy to put up because the wind was not then strong, but to hand when overpressed was not without anxiety, especially at night and it always seemed to be at night when it had to be dealt with. The wind was so strong and freshening that it was straight on to storm jib from boomed out genoa and then reef the mainsail.

During all this performance, involving heaving to, we had fouled up the log line round the rudder, although we were not to know it at the time. It was not until 06.25 with the wind moderated and the exhausted crew began to take stock that it was found that the log was not working. An estimate of 5 knots was allowed, but looking back this was over optimistic. A good deal of one hour was lost in heaving to, reefing, etc. The change to storm jib and reefed main would reduce speed considerably as soon as the wind moderated and by 6 o'clock that morning (Friday, 23rd May) it had blown itself out and we were back to No. 1 jib and full main. We estimated that we were to add 27 miles to our future log readings. But future events proved us wrong. The estimate was based on a 5 knot maintained speed but when, on reflection, we took into account our heaving to, the reduction in speed on storm jib as the wind moderating, 22 to 24 might have been more realistic.

By 14.00 hours that afternoon we were overpressed again and had to reef to first batten. At 15.15 we sighted land much to Dick's surprise. I had the feeling that the 465 miles we had travelled without contact of land had made him feel out of contact. He would not take part in the navigation therefore did not share Dennis' and my confidence that we were on course and that it was what we expected to see. Nevertheless, to me it was a great excitement. *Biscay* had been crossed and *Cabo Villano* (the villainous cape) was negotiated, although we were in that notorious *Cap Finnisterre* area, which by 17.10 bore 090 degrees North. The sea and wind were moderating and we estimated our time of arrival at Vigo as 02.00 on Saturday 24th May. Shortly after midnight we were overpressed again - 6/7 NE and we replaced No. 1 jib with storm jib. At 01.42 we estimated by DR that we should be picking up the red light on the southern tip of the *South Island (Islas Cies)*. Visibility was poor. We could however pick up the strong light of *Silerno* and know that we were on course.

With the wind as is taw abaft on our port beam we could not afford to overrun as we would have a dead beat back. So we decided to drop all sails and reduce our progress down wind, and take stock of the position. When we endeavoured to start the engine there was no joy; the starter motor belt was slipping. In somewhat of a panic because time was precious we had to start it by hand. This involved moving tins of baked beans, rice, puds and what have you to make access for the swing of the handle. Meanwhile we were pitching and rolling all over the place but success. Dick whose eyesight was exceptionally good could vaguely see what appeared to be leading lights. With our estimated DR position we should bring these into line and then proceed into the estuary for *Vigo*. Confirmation was at hand by a fishing boat

appearing to starboard, crossing our bows and proceeding eastwards. We put on full power and endeavoured to follow him - dead into wind. Needless to say in the poor visibility we soon lost contact and suddenly the engine stopped abruptly, as though seized solid. This was my first moment of fear of unfulfillment of our voyage. Engine seized. *Vigo* almost impossible to achieve with the wind as it was.

However first things first - we must get the storm jib up again and reefed main and be under command. We could abandon *Vigo* and proceed down wind - a formidable prospect. We were in need of a break and we would be committed to another week or so. When we came to hoist the storm jib we found the sheet had shaken out its figure of eight knot and slipped through the pulley and had disappeared under the boat. When we found it secure underneath we immediately knew why the engine had suddenly stopped - it had fouled the propeller! With Dennis applying gentle pressure on the sheet, I got down into the engine well and with a spanner as a lever prized the propeller shaft slowly round in the reverse direction and the sheet slowly unwound. How lucky can you be!! The engine started OK. By this time we had drifted down wind and we were all pretty well flogged. To go into a strange port by night in poor visibility was formidable enough, but add to this the very strong winds and our tired state we decided to try and maintain our position until daylight with the aid of the engine. Dick volunteered to stay at the helm and give Dennis and I, the two navigators, the rest, to face what was to come at dawn.

We rose from a troubled doze to dawn - all would be revealed so we thought, but it was not so. We could see to North West islands, to South East what appeared to be the mainland. The *Silerno lighthouse* was no longer visible as a light, and could not be identified on the mainland, but a DF fix on it gave us a position line but we could not get another fix. If the islands which we saw were those which we originally intended to bear round their southern extremity then we had to steer a course to the North which was dead into the wind. Under full power we made little headway so we decided that we must tack up. So the storm jib and reefed main were put up and a board was taken first to the NE. After about 15 minutes on this tack the Captain decided that this might well be heading for shoal water and we were just about to take the other tack when a large fishing vessel came across ahead of us towards the area which we had hoped was the estuary to *Vigo*.

As we could lay this course on our present tack and in fact could pay off when we had achieved the fishing boats line we therefore held on, under full power, paying off when we got astern of the fishing boat. From then on we made splendid progress and the course brought us soon into sheltered water and less wind. Our course was now ESE and we were obviously going to the estuary. We soon lost sight of the fishing boat, but we saw another anchored small fishing boat and we hailed them for confirmation as to *Vigo*. Our course was heading straight there and in fact in the far distance we were able to discern large anchored vessels. By 07.30 we were investigating the various anchorages at *Vigo* finally finishing up in a small sheltered harbour and tied up alongside a magnificent German Yacht, which had come from

Hamburg. Our mileage from *Falmouth* was about 520 miles. It had taken five days, 20 hours and our average speed was approximately 87 miles per day.

We were mighty relieved to have made *Vigo* successfully albeit not without anxiety, and we were entitled to and took a good rest. Though the harbour was oily and dirty, it made up for it in its hospitality. The local yacht club, a magnificent place, took charge of all customs formalities, and made no charge for moorings. We were befriended by a local Spanish surgeon who was down at the harbour who having heard my enquiry as to where I could telephone Katie in England invited me back to his house for tea and to use his telephone! He would not let me pay for the call and I was most touched and grateful. It was great to speak to Katie who was overjoyed to hear of our safety. He also insisted we took on board a bottle of Spanish wine to broach on some suitable occasion. That evening on walking into the town we found the locals had little stalls in the street selling oysters which we could not resist. They were small, delicious and fresh. How I wished Katie were with me to enjoy them and the afters!! We were now rested and eager to continue on the voyage. All we needed was diesel in the morning.

Summary of *Biscay* Voyage (Mileages)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Day Mileage</i>	<i>Total Mileage</i>
18/5/75 Sunday	Gentle	49,8	49,8
19/5/75 Monday	Boisterous	103,0	153,0
20/5/75 Tuesday	Less boisterous	84,0	237,0
21/5/75 Wednesday	Moderate	75,0	312,0
22/5/75 Thursday	Freshening	83,0	395,0
23/5/75 Friday	Boisterous	118,0 (approx.5k)	513,0
24/5/75 Saturday	02.00 hours heaved to or what have you waiting from daylight to enter <i>Vigo</i> .		

On Monday, 26th May we set out again in lovely weather in the early hours. We extracted ourselves from a complicated inner position because the posh German yacht had moved from inside us on a day trip around the island and was now on the outside enshrouding 'little us'. The owner was fast asleep and it was the paid crew who appeared to take what action was necessary from our upheaval. *Le Havre* and *Boulogne* experience of such extractions proved invaluable and we left with little disturbance and the German yacht still secure and not cast adrift in the 'I'm alright Jack' fashion by which some yachts extract themselves!

Diesel did not prove so easy. After several 'chug chugs' up and down the harbour vicinity and '¿dónde está gas oil?' we located the spot. A fishing boat was then filling up so we moved alongside and climbed over it to investigate. 'Dos horas' it would take. We were appalled. However, after a lot of manoeuvring between supplier and supplied we got the latter to agree to our modest needs being bypassed off his main supply and we paid him. This meant filling our container and pouring in from there and proved to be a very good humoured exchange which so engrossed those concerned that No. 1 tank of the fishing boat suddenly overflowed and Sr. the supplier

was not immediately at hand to cut off the supply. The result was that about 10 to 15 gallons of diesel -more than our modest requirements was exuded on the decks of the fishing boat and from there into *Vigo* estuary. We cast off into a diesel covered water but with a full tank and everyone seemed to accept it as 'one of those things'.

We now went out of the estuary in the way we had planned to come in. Visibility and weather were perfect and it was all as easy as the approach had been difficult. How true of life. Sometimes it is difficult and stressed and others serene and easy.

As *Silerno* bore 080 degrees at 12.14 hours we altered course to 183 degrees, which was our new course down the Portuguese coast. A new situation was at hand - we could be on a lee shore in a SW gale and we did not really want to seek refuge in *Portugal* in view of its political upheaval, although we had armed ourselves with a Portuguese flag. A very pretty piece of bunting (and now I hope for sale).

The wind was NNW 3, visibility excellent. The coastline was clearly discernable and we were able to plot our course from direct observation and sail with ease. This was not to last long however. We planned to cut in between the mainland and *Berlang Island* and on the evening of our arrival in that area we were beset with a strengthening of the wind, which backed into the WSW. By 18.20 we had to heave to or reef and put up storm jib and sail as close as we could into wind to keep off the mainland and clear the point between the mainland and *Berlang Island*. The wind was force 7 and we made the transit between the point and *Berlang* just before midnight. We were grateful that visibility was good and we were able to pick up all the lights to make the passage.

As we passed through a complete transformation occurred in a short space of time. The wind had disappeared and waves as if we had gone into the shelter of some huge inland sea protected by land on the weather side, but it was not so. We were just as exposed as ever before to the WSW. At first we were not to complain. The hectic hour before the passage between *Berlang* and the accompanying anxiety were past. We could relax. Everywhere were twinkling lights, as we seemed to be in the *Sardine Fishing Fleet*. Full sails were restored, and we slid silently along in ecstatic serenity in the lull following the storm.

As the night ebbed so did the wind and soon all sails were slatting and the engine had to be put on at dawn. Come 10.00 hours we were about to cross the wide estuary heading into *Lisbon*. Whilst they were indulging in their political upheavals we were entertained in beautiful sailing conditions of sunshine and a shimmering sea to a dolphin display - a more friendly sight than that of the *Biscay* shark. We decided that having crossed the Lisbon estuary we should take a straight line down to *Cabo San Vincente* and not hug the coast. Soon we were out of sight of land. With no bearings to check on, dead reckoning, and the wind light to moderate N. West, it was just routine on and off watch.

During the night however we became involved with occasional commercial craft. Indeed on one occasion whilst the Captain took his sleep he woke to a 'kaffuffle'

going on aloft - 'Hold your course, he should give way. You will only confuse the issue by altering course'. By the time the Captain was really thinking he ought to be on deck, the lights of the other vessel were lighting up the cabin. Comments from above indicated a 'near miss' but not in such polite language. Then appeared a signal 'N' from the ramming vessel to which Dennis was about to respond with our signal lamp in some appropriate coded gesture, whereupon I intervened and said - far better not mix it any further. So we continued.

By dawn we seemed to be in a shipping lane and we knew we were closing with *Cabo San Vicente*, which was our next turning point along the south coast of Portugal and into the *Straights of Gibraltar*. We decided, as visibility was good to alter course slightly to east. Two reasons prompted this; first we were oblique to the shipping lanes. It was safer to cross at right angles and get into the coast inside these. Second, to close with the coast slightly before *Cabo San Vicente* and check our dead reckoning. Little was to be lost and so we proceeded.

By 09.10 *Cabo San Vicente* bore 090 degrees. We were inside the shipping lanes and we slid round the point in perfect conditions and were able to take photographs. Now we were to make Cadiz to refuel and refresh ourselves. Again rather than hug the coast we took a direct course and soon were out of sight of land. Wind was light and we were engine assisted. Visibility was good and there was sunshine. By early afternoon we sighted a huge oilrig being towed on our starboard quarter; an unexpected sight in these waters. For a time it seemed on a converging course but we soon left it behind.

The wind veered and increased and with boomed out genoa we made good progress through the night but as dawn came it was back to the engine. By 14.00 hours we were due to close with *Cadiz*. Sure enough land appeared - visibility though moderate was not good enough to see much of the coast line until close in and we could not identify *Cadiz*. The question was should be bear to starboard or to port? After some time involved in closing with the shore to identify a positive point we established that *Cadiz* was just round the corner "so to speak" but not visible from our first sighting of land.

When we entered *Cadiz* we had directions to find the yacht mooring but they proved to be misleadingly complicated. Basically all they should have said was "turn to starboard around the first harbour wall; hug it and soon the yacht anchorage will be revealed again to starboard". What we did was turn to starboard around this wall and then proceeded into the middle of the harbour, which was vast. Right up the middle so to speak — nothing was revealed and it came to a dead end. So we retraced our tracks and tried the next harbour, which was the fishermen's. Nothing revealed itself so we tried the next. This was vaster than heretofore and led so we could see from our charts 'up the creek'. A tour of the immediate end of this revealed nothing. So as evening closed upon us we decided that the yacht mooring must be in harbour No 1 and we would go back there. Failing this we would go into the fishing boat harbour and tie up alongside a smelly fishing boat.

However, we toured all round harbour No. 1 and found the yachts tucked back inside the harbour wall and mightily pleased we were once again to find a place to rest up. The moorings were stern to, our first experience. It seemed a scanty type of security from any beam wind that might develop and we seemed exposed from the starboard flank. However the *Club Nautico* attendant seemed to be satisfied with what we had done after much gesticulating. Now for a shower, ring Katie and then a meal in town.

None of these fell into our lap. First the showers were very primitive - converted horse stalls in the adjoining buildings and cold only. Still better than nothing. The *Club* was most welcoming to us and went to no end of trouble to try to get a telephone call to England but without avail. So into town we went. It would have been nice to spend some time in *Cadiz*. Its tall buildings and narrow streets were impressive and unspoilt in the centre. Some time was spent finding a restaurant of our choice but we were looking forward to the meal and we were not prepared to search too long. Our choice was good; more by luck than good management and a splendid meal was had. We were a little set back on the abortive telephoning and decided it would be easy from *Gibraltar* so we would not linger in *Cadiz*. The following morning at 10.30 we left the moorings which we found expensive - nearly £2; not a place to linger!

Summary of <i>Vigo to Cadiz</i>			
<i>Date</i>	<i>Conditions</i>	<i>Day Mileage</i>	<i>Total Mileage</i>
26/5/75 Monday	Perfect	67,4	67,4
27/5/75 Tuesday	Good to begin. Very boisterous		
	by evening Force 7	105,2	172,6
28/5/75 Wednesday	Light winds to star then a good following breeze	96,4	296,4
29/5/75 Thursday	Light winds. Lot of engine required	101,4	310,8
30/5/75 Friday	Part day only. Moored Cadiz 16.30. Fine and sunny. Engine used.	79,2	450,0

Now for the *Straights of Gibraltar*. I was aware these could be tricky and so they proved to be. All was plain sailing until late afternoon. As so often had happened on our voyage, evening brought strong winds and at 19.00 hours we experienced our first rain - a rainsquall. We had plenty of warning so down came the genoa in good time. It was unpleasant while it lasted but was only an hour. At 20.45 we ran into most disturbing overfalls. It was my first experience of such. There was something evil about them. Wind and waves were the common place but to find the sea heaving about in no set pattern tossing the little boat about in a 'higgledy-piggledy' manner was to say the least, alarming. I had the feeling any minute that we were going to

find the seas opening up and that we would be cascaded into a whirlpool. But like most things we were soon clear but glad to see the end of this. We noted that no overfalls were shown on the chart at this point. So we made a vow not to go near any of those, which were shown as they must obviously be more formidable.

By 22.00 hours we were in the narrowing part of the *Straights* and I am pleased to say with the tide in our favour. We hugged the coastline to keep inside the shipping and we seemed to make very rapid progress. As we rounded *Isla de Tarifa* no further lights were visible ahead for some time. All seemed very dark and frequent checks were made on our course and chart to make sure we were not running too close in. Indeed we altered course to stand further out just to make sure; provided we did not go too far out into the shipping this could not be wrong.

In fact it bore fruit because as we progressed we picked up the red sector of a light *Pta. Carnero*, which indicated we were inside the danger area for larger vessels. Soon the lights of *Gibraltar Bay* came gradually into view. As we got nearer I have never seen such a display. On rounding the point and entering into the *Bay* at 22.00 hours the whole bay was ablaze with lights. As we set course for *Gibraltar* a lovely breeze sped us across the bay. '*Gay Lass*' seemed very happy to be cleaving through these waters - everywhere dancing with reflected lights. It was warm and we were at last at the gateway of the *Mediterranean*. We were all exhausted.

Finding our way to moorings at *Gibraltar* presented a problem in the dark. We were held up some time by a huge tanker being turned round by tugs. We then nosed our way into where we thought from our directions were the moorings, but soon realized we were going to a dead end. Fortunately the customs man on a wharf spotted us and gave us directions, which we successfully followed.

By the time we were moored up the *Customs* were aboard - three of them. They were most inquisitive but did not search us - thank goodness; it was about 02.00 hours and we were dog tired. In fact we had just pulled alongside a much larger craft and tied to him for the night rather than all the trouble of laying an anchor and stern to moorings. The owner of this craft, an Australian, was not very pleased. We explained we would moor independently in the morning and with a disapproving grunt he went below. When we woke - not early you can guess we first made to moor stern to and leave our Australian in isolation. He was most surly and the only discourteous experience of our whole voyage. We were glad to become independent of him.

Then it was all go to telephone *England*. We found the telephone bureau in the town hall most efficient. No reply from Katie - guessed she was in *Nottingham* with her daughter as it was this weekend she was due there. So we telephone Peter Russell - not at home. His son answered and we said we would ring in the afternoon at a set time. We told his son we were at *Gibraltar* and could rendezvous with his father and Ian Coutts at *Malaga* just as soon as they could get there.

The arrangement had been that Dick would leave us there as Peter and Ian would join us, driving down in my car from *England* and Dick was to drive my car to Jávea

and put it in my garage at the villa there. The afternoon call brought disappointment. Peter had contacted Ian but he couldn't get away from work to make a rendezvous in *Malaga* for at least 11 days later. As Dick wanted to be back in *England* to meet his son on June 7 it was arranged that we would press on and meet Peter and Ian in *Jávea*, which we estimated we could easily reach by the time they could get there. I was most upset that Ian and Peter would not be participants in the *Mediterranean* part of the voyage as planned, but what could I do? Dick must leave us to keep his rendezvous. Whilst it would have been possible but difficult to stay in *Malaga* letting Dick fly back from there, what about the car? It would mean leaving this at *Jávea* and then Peter and Ian finding transport down to *Malaga* - not easy.

Thus the decision had to be made in the space of a long distance telephone call and once made stuck to. Peter and Ian had volunteered very generously that *Jávea* rendezvous seemed the only alternative, bless them. Dick agreed to continue on the voyage up to *Jávea* until his time ran out when we should put him ashore. So having sorted all this out we proceeded to climb up the *Rock* and see if we could see any apes. It was well into the afternoon and we soon got tired. We were very glad that we had taken a route, which quite a distance from the summit declared, that we would go not further "Military Area". "Delighted, lets go back, find a restaurant and have some grub". The *Club Nautica* obliged, putting themselves out somewhat as no one else seemed to be dining that night.

Incidentally it was here in *Gibraltar* that we met Michael Pertwee, *Editor* of the *Costa Blanca News* in *Denia*. He was crew to a *Virtue* sailing back from *Denia* to *England*, having a heap of trouble; garboard strakes leaking, diesel spilt all over their bedding when tanks overfilled. Nice bloke. We hoped to made contact in *Denia* eventually. How glad I was not to be in his shoes. How ghastly to have a sick craft and diesel drenched bedding and clothes.

Mileage *Cadiz* to *Gibraltar* was 62,1 on our log due to tidal help. Actual would be somewhat more.

We left *Gibraltar* at 10.20 hours on Monday 2nd June leaving *Queen Elizabeth II* to port, a magnificent sight. The sun was shining and the wind aft of the beam and very amiable. We made good progress on our easterly course. In the afternoon the wind increased considerably as can be judged by our speed 14.00 to 15.00 hours - 6 knots, next hour 6,7 knots, next hour 7 knots. Considering that the boat's maximum speed for waterline length is 6½ knots it was not surprising that by 7 knots we decided we were somewhat overpressed and we should do something about it.

So we landed the genoa, which was boomed out; a horrifying experience under such conditions, but achieved successfully. We then hove to and reefed the main at No. 1 batten and whilst flogging in the process the batten was torn out of second position of main, tearing through the sail on one side - practically the whole length of the batten. Fortunately the tear was held by the intact other side of the batten pocket or we would have had a useless mainsail from then on. Having reefed the main we put

up No. 1 jib hoping we could carry it. Twenty minutes later we had to exchange this for the storm jib. The *Mediterranean* was getting very rough and the crests of the waves breaking. Here for the first time we were pooped slightly but the breaking wave from the rear cascaded over the side by the aft cabin and little came into the cockpit. Dick was heard to mutter an expression to the deity. We still continued at a speed between 5 and 6 knots but as night fell the wind abated and by 3 o'clock the next morning we were without wind and into engine. By breakfast time it was a lovely clear day, still a heaving but beautiful *Mediterranean* blue sea and the land was clearly visible even to the snow capped mountains of the *Sierra Nevada range/Sierra de Lujan* 6217 feet.

We decided that we would make for *Almeria* as being an attractive port and that afternoon as we were sailing across the bay, which leads into *Almeria* we were again entertained by a school of dolphins. They were everywhere leaping out of the water ahead of us and some doing their leap just ahead of the boat slightly to port or starboard and zooming down under the bows. Dennis tried to get a photograph but they were too quickly out and in again to aim the camera and expose the lens. Early evening we were into *Almeria Harbour* and moored alongside the jetty on the waterfront - most convenient for the visit into town. Log - 124 miles. A quick clean up and we were soon sat in a restaurant having a good tuck in and then for a good night's sleep.

By 08.00 hours the following morning we were leaving the harbour in lovely sunshine but little wind, The dolphins were again out to entertain us but with a much more modest display. What wind there was was almost dead on the nose and progress was slow out of the bay and it was not until midday that we rounded *Cabo de Gata*. We were now able to motor sail and making about 4 knots in a very leisurely fashion in beautiful sunshine. We had to tack occasionally to keep motor sailing using the wind shifts occasioned by the close proximity of the land. It was all delightful sailing but after midnight the wind dropped completely for a time, which proved to be the lull before another blow.

As dawn came the wind was freshening and heading us. It soon became apparent that we should have a long slog to get round *Cabo de Palos*. The weather looked glowering with poor visibility out at the *Cabo*. The sea was heaving badly. We had a conference and decided that we should be able to make it into *Cartagena*. So we tacked into the coastline. By 20.00 hours we had to go down onto storm jib and reef the main to first batten. We closed the coastline down wind of *Cartagena* and we then by a series of short tacks and assistance from the engine we clawed up the coast into the bay leading into *Cartagena*. This harbour is completely hidden from the sea and only reveals itself at the last moment. We had plenty of marks however and good visibility and although the wind was very fresh one had no worries as the sea became more and more settled as we closed. A naval vessel seemed quite interested in our progress. Just after midday we were into the harbour and tied up by the *Club Nautico*.

We heard from them that evening that there was a *Levante* at *Alicante* and we were in the southern fringe of this. It was to *Alicante* that we were making and we had certainly been wise to seek refuge. That afternoon much to the amusement of local residents I sat cross-legged on the deck mending the huge tear in the mainsail. It was Thursday and Dick was due to leave us on Friday or early Saturday morning to be home in *England* for Saturday night to meet his son. It was with anxiety we watched the weather, for set sail we must the following day, as Dick must leave us to achieve his rendezvous.

Friday dawned with doubtful prospects. From smoke from a chimney on the hilltop the wind still seemed fresh and against us. In the sheltered moorings it was difficult to assess wind strength. The *Club Náutico* came up with a forecast, which was encouraging so we set sail at 08.00 hours to have a go. We would know by the time we got to *Cabo de Palos* and we could always turn back later in the day to *Cartagena* if progress was so bad that we should not make *Alicante* in time for Dick.

As the morning progressed the wind moderated and as we came up to *Cabo de Palos* we estimated that once round the point we would find the wind sufficiently in the east to set course for *Alicante*. It was about this time Dick saw a flying fish - that's his story but Dennis and I thought he should 'take more water with it'.

By midday Dick estimated that we could clear the point on the other tack, which we did. As the afternoon progressed we knew that we had not made enough distance to achieve *Alicante* in good enough time for Dick to get to the airport. So we decided to go into *Torre Vieja* from where he could get a taxi to *Alicante* airport. We entered the harbour at 17.10. Dick leapt ashore to contact travel agents before they closed to book a flight but came back very disconsolate. The travel agents had told him it was impossible to get a flight from *Alicante* to *London*; only charter flights. Nonsense we said you can get an internal flight from *Alicante* to *Barcelona* and a scheduled flight from there. Let's go and telephone the airport direct. This revealed that he could take a flight from *Alicante* to *Madrid* at 07.30 hours the next morning and at *Madrid* get a flight to *London* to arrive early afternoon. So all we had to do was find a taxi. No problem. The first man on the taxi rank we approached did not recoil with horror at starting the next day with a 06.30 fare to *Alicante*. In fact he regarded it with apparent enjoyment and even agreed to wake us on the boat if we were not at the taxi rank in time. Next I put in a call to Katie and was overjoyed to speak to her.

We woke in time the following day Saturday to have a good breakfast. Ten minutes before 6.30 the taxi man appeared on the quay full of grins and 'buenos dias' and what have you. When asked if he would like a drink of coffee or something he readily elected for the latter - a cognac. He downed it in one gulp and I suspect would have taken no pressing to repeat the process. I did not invite him - the first was very generous and cognac on an empty stomach might stimulate his driving enthusiasm too much. I wanted Dick to get back safely. So Dick left us and we felt a real loss at his departure - he had been a great companion. We immediately weighed anchor and set sail for *Alicante*.

It was a lovely day and for the first time we were beginning to get the *Mediterranean* warmth. We made progress up the coast. By 09.00 we had rounded the headland and set course straight across the *Santa Pola Bay* losing sight on land. We had decided to pass inside the *Taborca Island Group* using the *Taborca Channel*, which is unbuoyed. However we were back in sight of land and we had to concentrate hard on cross fixes to keep to the channel.

Our depth meter was not working properly and the chart looked pretty festooned with pecked circles and depths, but I was bolstered by the confidence of Dennis, master of the shallows until he kept altering my course as if we were on the *Atlantic convoy* during the war. I have only been aground once I remembered and that was following Dennis in '*Great Dane*' onto *Ryde sands*. I also remembered that he had a traumatic experience aground in *Boulogne Harbour*. My confidence began to ebb somewhat and I began to imagine that all around was broken water. But I should not have doubted, we passed through safely and set course for *Alicante*.

The afternoon was beautifully warm and sunny and with a gentle breeze we bore across *Alicante Bay* in ideal conditions of relaxation and beauty. We entered the harbour at 15.30 and made a tour to see if we could find a diesel pump but without success. By 15.50 we were moored stern to on the famous tiled promenade. Dennis entered in the log after the day's sail "Captain appreciably improving in health and good spirits". And so it was - all urgency had gone from the voyage. The weather was beautiful and we were getting proper sleep.

On Sunday, 8th June at 07.48 hours we weighed anchor for the last time. The weather was again perfect. As we left the harbour the bay was busy with returning and leaving fishing craft. By midday we were approaching *Benidorm Island*, which we went inside. At 13.30 believe or not we had the traditional Sunday hot dinner. By 15.00 hours we were by the famous *Ifach* promontory at *Calpe*, shortly after which we were able to set the spinnaker. It was hot and we were down to just swimming trunks. The breeze was perfect for the spinnaker and it was great to travel along this last bit of coast in such style and serenity.

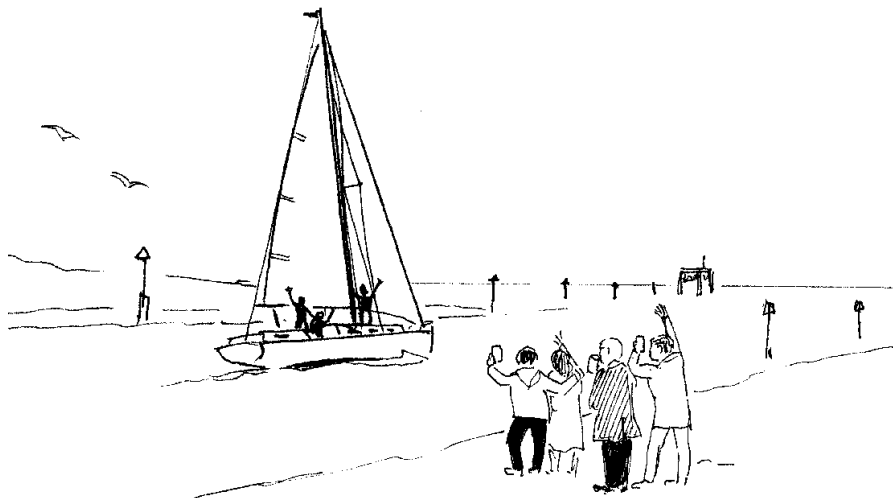
We passed close to the beautiful little cove *Grenadella* where we have often spent the day swimming and lazing on the beach. Soon we would be rounding *La Nao*. Often I have stood on this promontory thinking how marvellous it would be when I would sail past in '*Gay Lass*' and here I was doing it and in the most perfect conditions. A flying fish skimmed out of the water on our port side. Both of us saw it, so there were no cracks about taking more water with it this time. These promontories often engender their own bit of weather and as we came up with it the wind freshened and in a flurry of flying nylon the spinnaker was handed and the No. 1 jib had to be set. As soon as we rounded the point the famous windmills of *Jávea* appeared on the sky line and the silhouette of *Montago* stood out prominently to the west of these. The wind was now just free on the final run into *Jávea* and we sped across the bay, past the bathing beach I knew so well.

We entered *Jávea Harbour* with mainsail lowered under jib at 18.00. We rounded up opposite to where I had thought in the previous year would be an ideal mooring and dropped anchor. A studied scan of the spaces in the moorings revealed an ideal space. So we started the motor, took up the anchor and lowered it opposite to the space and reversed into it. As we did so a broad Scotch voice hailed us from the quayside, which could belong to no other than Jock of whom I had heard so much but had never met.

The gist of his hailing was to the effect that we would need a lot more anchor warp to hold secure. I accepted his advice without question, as I knew he was a sailor of great experience and knew *Jávea Harbour* as well as his porridge. I asked him to take a stern warp so that he could pull us back again. We then pulled up our anchor, motored further into the harbour and cast in at a distance out approved by Jock.

We had never had such a length of anchor warp out and it snagged up for a moment and the wind drifted the stern over the anchor warp of the adjoining boat. This was somewhat ignominious but it was soon cleared as we pushed it down under the rudder and keel with the broom. Jock then hauled us in the final boat's length into the space and all was made fast.

Warm though the champagne was, it simply had to be opened.



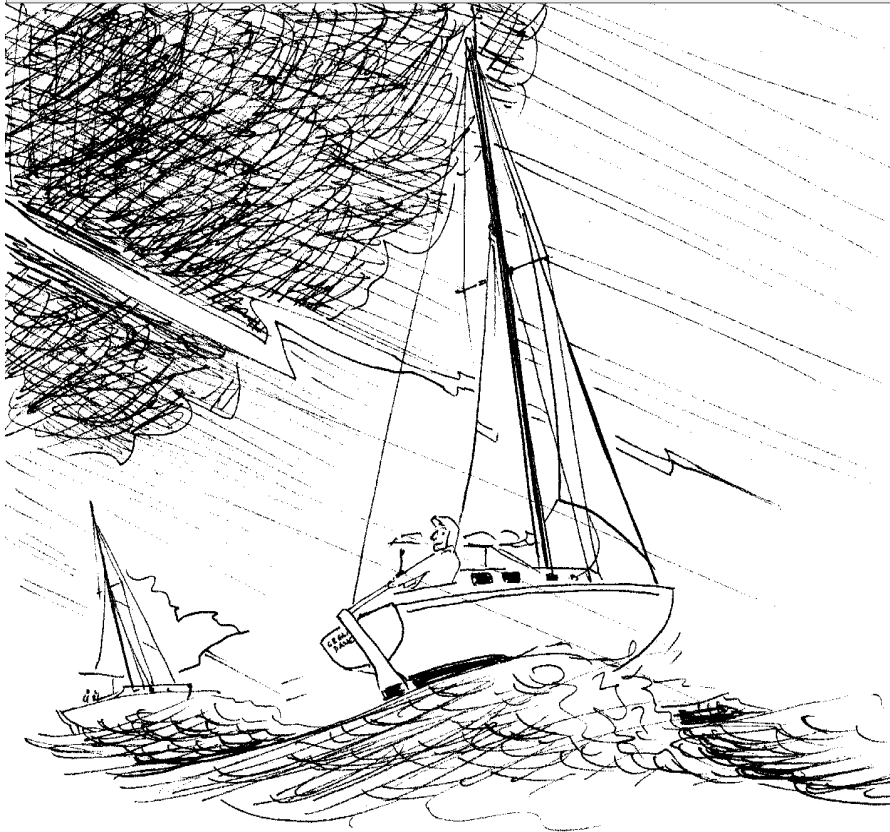
Here we were about 1648 nautical miles from leaving *Rye* - safely in what I hoped to be my new home port - after a most adventurous voyage. We could not fail to agree that that Champagne, luke warm though it was, tasted good.

The End of The Voyage of Gay Lass

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