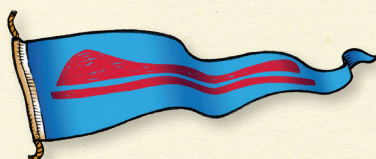


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## MAHURANGI CRUISING CLUB

*Encouraging cruising and the ownership, use and restoration of classic wooden boats*

Special thanks to  
Rod Marler and Fiona Driver  
for making this available

Log of the  
Kauwhiti



*"Rawhiti" under Tasman Rig, the day before leaving Sydney*

AUCKLAND.  
11/1/47.

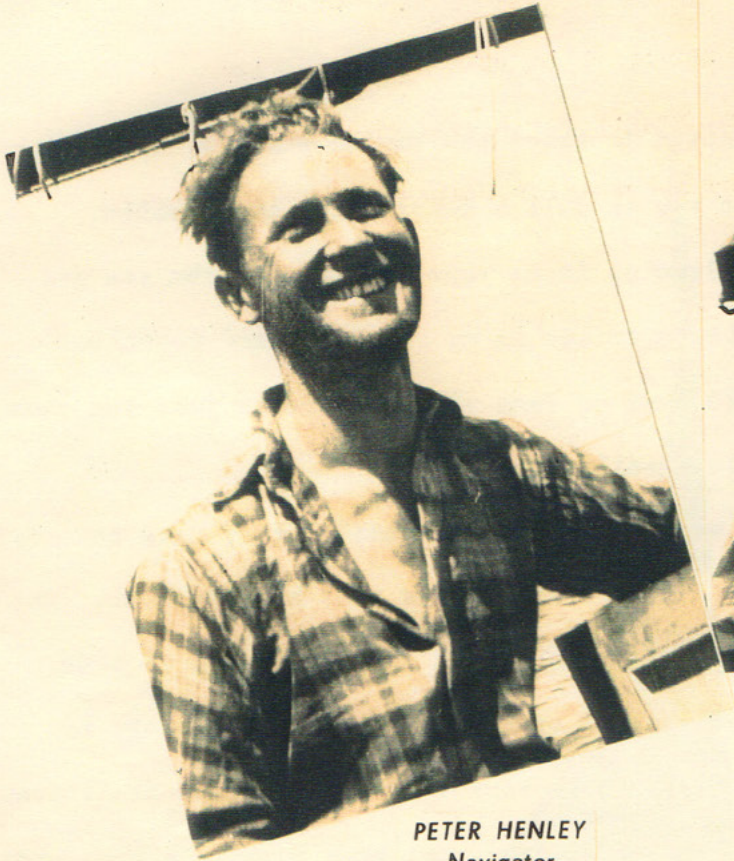
DEAR HANK,

Knowing how much you would have given to share our Tasman passage, the only recompense I can make is to write you as full a description as possible. After all, you did encourage and develop in me your own love of the sea and ships, just as I have developed these things in my own boys, and doubtless for the same reason, the knowledge that no form of sport breeds just the same confidence and self-reliance as does sailing.

From the time that my boys were first able to paddle, they have been fed with models, dinghies, small centre-boarders, and now they have Rawhiti. The old lady will certainly satisfy all their ambitions for some years to come, probably until Anno Domini brings her lack of comfort rather definitely to their attention. By that time, maybe their sons will carry on the tradition.

Port Jackson, the lovely harbour of Sydney, had been Rawhiti's home port for forty one years when, on the evening of Wednesday, December 18th, her stern line was slacked away from the pier in Elizabeth Bay, and as she swung to her anchor, the crew made sail. A lovely evening, one calculated to soothe nerves which may have been a little overstrung at the thought of the unpredictable Tasman Sea lying ahead of the old lady. Sydney's prevailing summer Nor'easter was blowing steadily, and the weather forecasters had predicted that we would carry the Nor'easter for sixty miles off the coast, after which we were to pick up a fine Southerly which would really start us off on the passage.

We worked out to the heads, the breeze gradually dying with the sun, as though reluctant to participate in the act of tearing from Sydney one of her loveliest and most renowned racing yachts. As we slatted about on the long rollers marching lazily between North and South Head, I called the crew together and spoke a little impromptu piece, which seems the right time to introduce my stout little band to you.



PETER HENLEY  
Navigator



ROY JOHNSON  
The Bos'n



BRIAN LANE, Chips



NORMAN VICKERY, Radio and Signaller

First, my Mate and Navigator, Peter Honley, a stout prop to lean upon if ever there was one. Peter was the only one of us with sailing experience in blue water, acquired during a cadet-ship in the Joseph Conrad, that fine little square-rigger immortalised by her skipper, Alan Villiers, in words and beautiful photographs.

The other member of Peter's watch was Brian Lane, better known as Chips, or Chippy, since Brian, by trade a shipwright, automatically became the ship's carpenter, with the usual duty of sounding bilges and making spars, in addition to having a watch to stand. Peter and Brian stood four-hour watches from four to eight in the afternoon, midnight to four a.m., and the morning watch from eight a.m. until noon. This arrangement worked very well, since Peter was on deck for morning sights, noon sight, and afternoon fixes. Navigation by the stars we found impracticable, due to the difficulty of bringing a star to the horizon under the handicap of working from the deck of a very lively little vessel.

My watchmate was Roy Johnson, otherwise the Bos'n. Roy had sailed with me before, and we knew his good points very well. Trained in the eighteen footers, Roy had a special passion for extras of any description, and later you will see how the Skippers watch worked out ingenious methods of using light sails with good results.

Roy and I stood the eight p.m. to midnight, and the noon to four p.m. I was relieved from the four a.m. to eight a.m., and was roused at six to prepare breakfast. During the four a.m. to eight a.m., my watch was stood by the fifth member of the crew ---- Sparks, alias Norman Vickery, signaller and radio operator. Norman had served with the small ships division during the War, and was an expert in his particular activities, though untrained in sail.

I should have mentioned that Roy was the ships surgeon, on the strength of his War service with the Medical Corps, and his fine collection of scalpels and sutures were a source of pride to him, and abject terror to the rest of us.

*A sucker  
for lovely ladies*



*Cherished Sisters  
of the Logan family*



This then, was the band which assembled in Rawhiti's cockpit to hear my homily, delivered with some diffidence. It seemed necessary, in view of the real friendship which had grown up amongst us during the worrying weeks of preparation, to emphasise the necessity for discipline, now we were really at sea. Therefore I asked that Peter and myself, when on watch, should be obeyed instantly and without question. In the absence of both of us from the deck, the helmsman was Watch Officer pro tem, and any order he gave was to be carried out. Watches were to be promptly relieved, and my last instruction was that Norman, due to inexperience of sail, should not go on deck at night.

All hands agreed the wisdom of these orders, and they were faithfully carried out throughout the passage.

By this time, it was dark, and Peter, Brian and Norman turned in, leaving the deck to the Bos'n and myself until midnight. With the Nor'easter just a whisper, we gradually worked Rawhiti out to sea, with South Head light winking away on our starboard beam, and the bright lights of the Manly Ferries crossing and re-crossing between the heads at regular intervals.

Neither of us had much to say. The course was full and by, the sea looked dark and lonely ahead of us, and behind us, the glow of Sydney's lights on the low clouds added to the nostalgia of departure. You know my introspective mind, Hank, and during my first watch at sea, it worked overtime. I found myself reviewing the events leading up to our departure with a sense of amazement that anyone could be as many kinds of a damned fool as I had been.

First of all, the acquisition of Rawhiti, forty two years old, the last fifteen years of them hauled out, a vessel which I had sailed only once before leaving, what a setup with which to face the Tasman.

"Sentiment is your trouble, you ass" I told myself. "You've always been the same. Instead of spending your money on new, modern ships, you've always



been a sucker, for lovely ladies, hallowed by tradition and name, with pedigrees and prize-lists as long as an arm, and bills for re-conditioning twice as long."

The naval architect supervising Rawhiti's refit had told me that no owner would ever build a ship of her type again, and this statement was perfectly true. Fifty-four feet overall, only thirty-nine on the waterline, and with a beam of nine feet eight inches, Rawhiti hasn't the accommodation one would find in a modern cruiser of half her overall length. Her lovely flush decks reduced headroom, so that an upright position could only be attained under the skylight, her exposed cockpit with its low coamings gave only the slightest protection from wind and sea.

And yet, looking forward along her decks, in the faint starlight, she was beautiful with the kind of beauty which brings a lump to your throat. Not the sturdy beauty of your modern short-ender, but the lithe beauty of flowing lines, and long, dangerous overhangs, flowing lines that Logan, her famous designer, seemed to have blended with the sea itself. With the Nor'wester just giving her steerage way, and rigged with only half her normal working spread, Rawhiti slipped along, sifting her way between the swells and working out to windward with hardly a perceptible disturbance of the sea. I liked to feel that the old lady knew that she was going home --- home to the land of her Birth, to the company of her cherished sisters of the Logan family, and that she knew and welcomed the prospect of her new life. Racing once again, driven in the hard westerlies of the gulf, with sloping decks and a roaring surge to leeward, lying in a snug anchorage with other ladies of her age and beauty nodding and whispering beside her, how could she not welcome the change from the fate of gradual decay and dissolution which would have been her lot in Sydney.

And yet I could understand the viewpoint of her late owner, that fine racing owner and skipper, Mr. A. Albert. It seemed to him better that Rawhiti should lie on the slip in honourable retirement, with her racing laurels secure in the annals

of Port Jackson, rather than that the old ship should be sold, possibly pass to questionable hands, her beauty marred, perhaps even reduced to the indignity of carrying "tripper" parties at two and six a head, as has been the fate of a few of Sydney's past beauties.

It was fortunate for me that Mr. Albert was just as much a sentimentalist about Rawhiti as I am, because it was only my plea for her return to her New Zealand, and the obvious sincerity of my intentions for her future, that overcame his extreme reluctance to see the old ship pass from his house-flag.

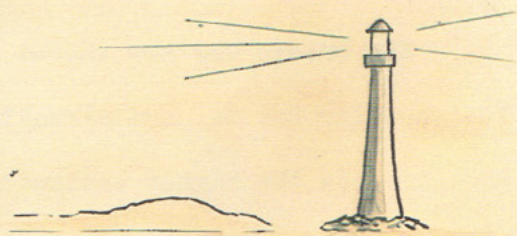
If all this reads like the grossest sentimentality, Hank, put it down to my need for some justification at finding myself working Rawhiti out of Sydney Heads, with months of work and anxiety behind me, and perhaps weeks of discomfort and responsibility ahead of me. Why is it that friends are always so unhelpful on such occasions? Probably from a genuine anxiety. But the number of people who warned me against the undertaking and led me into quiet corners to explain that men with responsibilities, both family and business, such as mine, shouldn't do such things, finally decided me to make the trip. Otherwise, I might have had some professional skipper sail her over, as was the case when she made the west-bound passage in 1906. Having, as you know, a naturally "contrairy" nature, I just had to go against the advice of all my really sincere friends.

But back to the cockpit. At 10 p.m., we were sufficiently clear of the heads to take an official departure, and I accordingly streamed the log, and made the necessary entry in the log-book. 2200 hours, Streamed Log. South Head lighthouse bearing S.W. distant four miles, Course made good, S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ S. Wind E. force 2.

The breeze had now veered to East, and freshened slightly. It was a dead muzzler for us, and normally we would have worked out on the starboard tack towards the higher latitudes, where better weather could be expected, but in view of the southerly predicted in our weather forecast, we proceeded on port, so that we would have sheets free when the expected southerly did arrive.



"Rawhiti" showing her gaff rig  
with 2,400 square feet of working sail



Carrying only foresail and mainsail, Rawhiti made five knots closehauled in the light breeze, and at midnight, the log registered exactly ten miles. One hour before the watch ended, the Bos'n discharged his dinner hastily over the lee rail. This was mainly the reaction to a day of excitement and hard work, as the ship was not at all lively, though the motion in a head swell is usually the most disturbing.

At midnight, the starboard watch turned out, and Chips repeated the course "Full and by" after me in good deepsea style. I made the necessary log entries, and turned in, ending the first official page of the log with a day's run of ten miles. As I dozed off, I reflected philosophically that that was at least ten we didn't have to sail.

It is easy enough to see the approach of a southerly change because of the heavy black clouds which work up to windward against the prevailing nor'easter, but when the change comes, it is preceded by a line squall which blows with terrific velocity for a few minutes. In these line squalls in Sydney Harbour, it is no uncommon sight to see a whole group of small centre-boarders blown flat in a few seconds, and the southerly buster is responsible for many torn sails on the bigger craft. Thoroughly awake, I stayed on deck watching the cloud grow to leeward and gradually blot out the stars. Rawhiti was making three and a half knots in the light breeze, and well snugged down to meet whatever came.

Perhaps at this stage, you would like to hear something of our rig and the reasons for it.

When Rawhiti was originally raced, she carried the usual gaff rig of the Logan cutters, with a solid Kauri mast and a very long boom and gaff. As competition developed, and several yachts were built especially to beat her, Albert decided on a much bigger sail plan, and on the advice of one of the local naval architects, he added two tons of lead to her keel, mostly forward, and increased her working sail area to twenty-four hundred square feet, a terrific

## PART TWO

At 0220 hours, Peter roused me, suggesting that we douse the mainsail, as a very heavy black squall was building up to leeward, that is, from South. I turned out, and after a look at the horizon, agreed with his decision, and took the tiller, while Peter and Brian stowed the main. Was surprised to find that Rawhiti held a very good course to windward under her foresail only, which was an excellent quality, rarely found in ships with long overhangs. However, the foresail was a beauty, cut by Ratsey & Lapthorn and all handsewn. It set to perfection which undoubtedly helped. The decision to douse the mainsail was made because of the force of the initial squall which usually heralds a southerly change in these parts.

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sail plan for a vessel with a thirty-nine foot waterline. The new sail plan was designed by Ratsey, and the spars by Fife. To lessen the weight aloft, she was given a hollow gaff, hollow jackyard, and hollow spinnaker boom.

According to the men who sailed in her throughout Alberts ownership, this new rig overpowered Rawhiti, and turned her from a dry ship, easily handled, into a very wet one, carrying heavy weather helm when off the wind.

At a later stage, it was decided to change her to a Bermudian cutter, and Fife built a hollow, pearshaped mast, with two panels, while Ratseys made yet another suit of sails for the new rig. The mast was built from selected Alaskan spruce, and had a new hollow boom with the sail running on tracks both on mast and boom. The sail plan by Ratsey shows the working sails with this rig. The new mast was stepped a foot further aft than the Gaff rig, and a new bowsprit, the one at present carried, brought the headsails inboard to compensate.

This new plan reduced the sail area to sixteen hundred square feet, with one thousand square feet in the mainsail, still plenty of sail for the old lady to swing.

While racing in her first season with the new rig, Rawhiti fouled Morna at a mark, her foretopmast stay being hooked up in a cleat on Morna's main boom. Before anything could be done the strain snapped the new mast off at the second spreaders, twenty feet from the truck, and brought everything down with a run. This would normally have put Rawhiti out of commission until a new mast could be built for her, and Albert immediately cabled Fife for a new mast. In the meantime, however, someone had the bright idea that as the fracture was a clean one, the broken section could be stepped in a funnel clamped round the stump of the mast. This was done, and the topmast spliced to a solid end, as was the new mast. The two were then fitted together with a tongue and slot, and firmly bolted with the galvanized funnel. This arrangement was so successful that when the new mast arrived from Fife, it was left in the case, and when I took Rawhiti over it was



*The rig looked a bit skimpy*

still in the case. I haven't even yet seen the mast, which was shipped over to New Zealand with the other spars.

One of the jobs in Rawhiti's refit was the removal of the two tons of ballast added by Albert. I made this decision for two reasons. One, that it did not seem possible that anyone could improve on a Logan design, and two, that in the opinion of Albert's crew, Rawhiti was a much better ship before the alteration was made.

There seemed no justification for carrying the racing mainsail on the passage to New Zealand, because it was most unlikely that the conditions would allow us to carry a mainsail of a thousand square feet, and to carry the sail constantly reefed would ruin it. Therefore I had the gaff mainsail recut as a trisail, and we rigged the hollow gaff as a mainboom, giving us a boom which was well inboard, and eight feet shorter than the proper mainboom, which was shipped across with the other spars. However, we did plan to carry the full mast, as the head of the trisail came above the funnel, but not far enough above to put much strain on the topmast. On the advice of our naval architect, we installed a brass runner track to take the runner, and a permanent backstay which was possible because of the shortened boom. The runner tracks are used on most of the Sydney yachts, and are certainly very convenient, though as the runners are shackled directly on to the flatiron which runs along the track, they don't seem to me to have much flexibility. However, we did get the mast stepped, and it looked a hell of a size, standing sixty-eight feet above the deck. We had our first sail late on a Sunday afternoon, December 2nd, in a fresh westerly breeze, and tore down the harbour passing power boats in droves. Having reached the heads, I decided to bear up for the anchorage again, as dusk was approaching, and brought the ship on the wind for the beat up the harbour. At once, there was an ominous series of cracking noises, and the bolts which held the runner tracks down to the deck sheared off one by one, while the two-inch brass runner track bent up into a circle before our horrified eyes.



Hastily going about, and jilling along to keep the wind out of the sail, we rigged a preventer tackle, but had an anxious sail back to the moorings in Elizabeth Bay, with the stick assuming some queer shapes in the process. In retrospect, this accident was a blessing, though we cursed it loudly and vehemently at the time. Had we started off with this rig, the runners would undoubtedly have carried away in the heavy weather experienced, and we would certainly have been dismasted and had to struggle back with some kind of jury rig. As it was, we decided to grin and bear the delay, and make three alterations. Firstly, we had the topmast lifted out with a crane, and made a small stump out of a piece of old gaff mast, with a sheave for the main halliard. This was fitted in place of the topmast, reducing the height of the mast by twenty feet. Brian made this stump, and he and Roy fitted it, working from bosun's chairs, a very creditable achievement. The second spreaders were removed, and the trisail recut to reduce the hoist. Secondly, we refastened the runner tracks with steel bolts, monel metal being unprocurable, and to guard against a repetition of the trouble, I replaced the original eyebolts for the runners, which hooked round the stringers, and we rigged good old fashioned falls with a powerful purchase, so that if the tracks again failed we wouldn't lose the mast.

This alteration had the effect of reducing the mast height to about fifty feet, and at first sight the rig looked a bit skimpy, but Rawhiti proved so easy to drive that it didn't limit her speed under ocean conditions while she balanced to perfection under her big foresail, and the new trisail. This rig will be quite clear from the accompanying photograph, taken just before we left.

The various rigs used by Albert had given us a wonderful collection of sails, all but two from Ratsoy's loft, twenty-six sails in all, and we went carefully through those, finally selecting the following. Small leading jib, Big leading Jib, Balloon Foresail, Working Foresail with reef points, small working foresail, small jib, small spinnaker, trisail, second trisail, loose-footed

and small storm-trisail, also loose-footed. We also had a squaresail made, and rigged one of the hollow jackyards as a squaresail yard. This spar, together with the hollow spinnaker boom were carried lashed on deck.

All these sails were in the most perfect condition in spite of their age, and a credit to Ratsey, as we didn't even start a stitch in one of them on the passage.

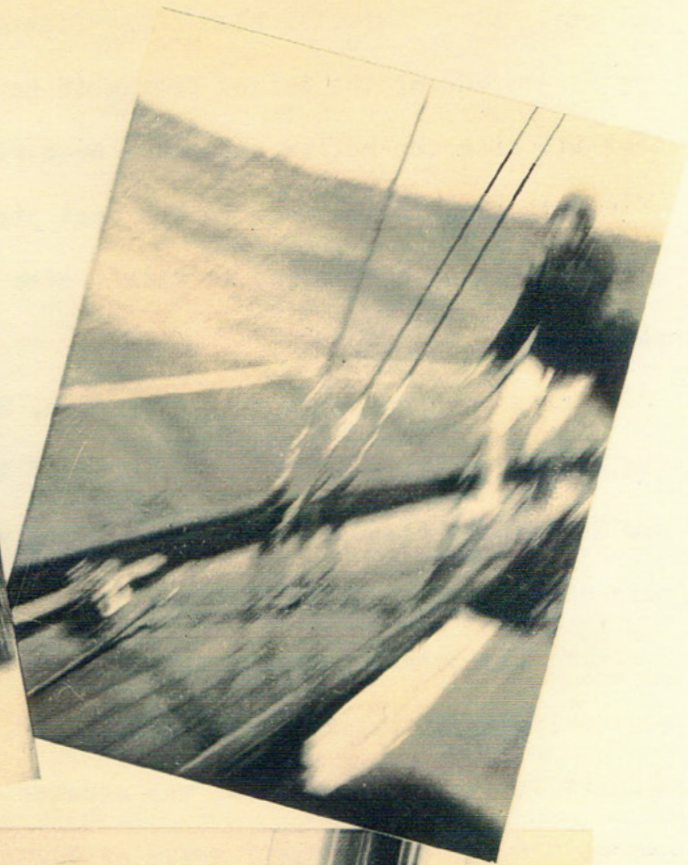
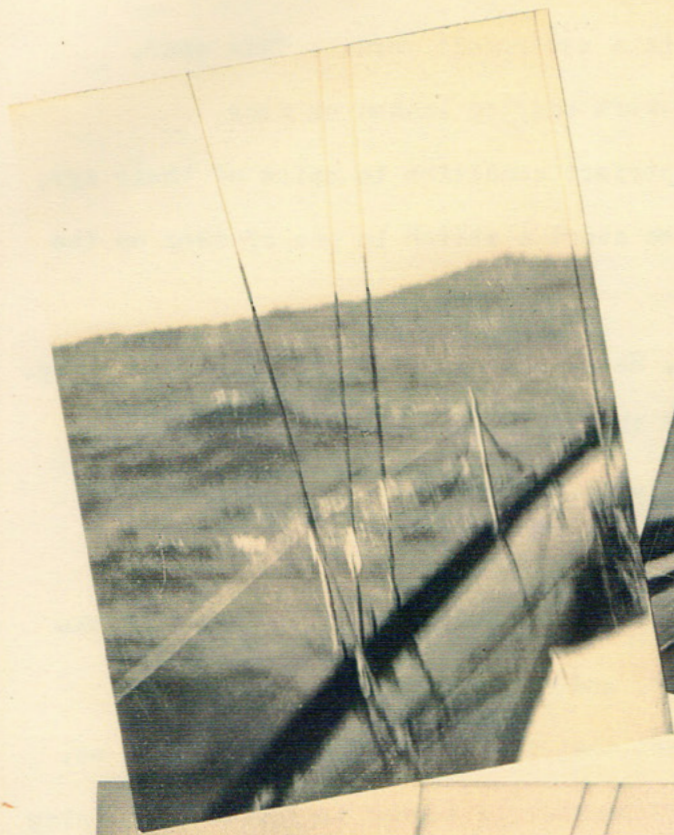
This has been a lengthy diversion, Hank, but necessary to explain our rig. The discarded topmast and the balance of the sails were left for shipment to New Zealand by steamer, as we were heavily loaded without carrying the extra half ton of weight which they would have represented.

To get back to our approaching southerly. The speed of approach of the southerly squall became slower and slower, and finally stopped, and as the Easterly breeze freshened, it was apparent that the change would not reach us, and we hoisted the mainsail again at 0420 hours. I turned in for the remaining two hours of my watch below, and turned out again at six to find the ship plunging heavily into confused seas, and shipping one over the bows every now and again.

By this time, Roy, Brian and Norman were all feeling very seasick, while Peter and myself, though not sick, were uneasy below the hatches, and we ate oranges all day, as none of us were keen to face the galley.

At this stage, defects in the dockyard work began to be apparent, and the skylight, which had been very badly fastened, commenced to let in a lot of the water from the occasional crests we shipped. Before long, the ship was uncomfortably wet below, and at eight p.m., we again stowed the mainsail to ease the heavy pitching, and give our seasick crew a chance to get some rest.

Peter and I stood the night watches and at midnight the log read 117 miles for the day's run, and the total distance run 127 miles. This was a most uncomfortable day, dead to windward, in a confused sea which, had we known it, was the fore-runner of worse to come.



*Hove to.*

*It is hard to get the impression of big seas with a small camera*

Nothing is more depressing than sea-sickness, and the queasy feeling which comes from the doubt as to one's own staying ability isn't much better.

During the eight to twelve watch, I had the tiller for the entire four hours while Peter snatched some sleep, and huddled in the cock-pit in my oilskins with eyes red and sore from the spray and the strain of following the compass, I could see little in the business to justify choosing a passage in sail compared with eight and a half hours in the plane and Christmas dinner at home.

## PART THREE

At four a.m. I turned out again, and Peter and I reefed the main and set it, at the same time dousing the foresail. The object was to try and find out how the ship would sail best without gathering too much way. The wind was now force four, and while normally Rawhiti would not have made any fuss about carrying full sail in this breeze, the bad combination of sea necessitated keeping her down to a moderate speed. The prevailing wind in the Tasman is sou'west to west, and there is usually a heavy swell running from this direction. The wind had now veered to North by East, and the northerly sea, running across the Sou'west swell made a confused jumble into which Rawhiti would bounce her bows very heavily when she caught a sea at the wrong angle. The force of this impact on her long bow overhang caused her bow to whip, and as all her caulking and filling was new and had not had a chance to settle, moderate speed to ease the strain seemed advisable.

At noon, the wind had backed to the North, easing the run of sea, so the small foresail was set, and we logged 32 miles in the next four hours. At 1700 hours, the wind was increasing, and it was obvious that a bad night lay ahead, so the main was again stowed. By 1900 hours it was blowing force 6, and after trying various combinations of sail, we finally hove to with a weather cloth in the life-rail aft, and no sail on the vessel. With wind and sea making steadily, the disadvantages of a vessel of Rawhiti's type for ocean work became apparent.

She refused to bring her head up, no matter how we coaxed her, and lay nearly beam on to the sea, head-reaching at about one knot with the windage in her mast, and drifting to leeward at about the same rate. She rode like a duck, though naturally rolling heavily, but every now and again a breaking sea would thump under that long counter of hers, and shake her like a terrier shaking a rat. This was quite nerve-wracking for the crew below.

She wouldn't have taken such a beating but for the cross sea, and we might have been wiser to have brought her up on the starboard tack, but it would have meant head-reaching back along our track, losing hard-won miles. We filled oil-bags with blue whale-oil and hung one over at the port chainplates and another on the port quarter. The bags needed careful watching throughout the night, as every now and again a wave-top would wash one of them on the deck, and, dazed with lack of sleep, I crawled along the deck to put it over again.

When Peter relieved me at midnight he entered up the log-book. Our taffrail log had been stowed when we hove-to, and the day's run in nineteen hours of sailing was 111 miles and we had logged 238 miles on the passage. When I went below, the scene looked like something from Dante's Inferno, with groaning bodies in the bunks, an indescribable fug from wet woollens, stale air and other unmentionable odours. The ship was rolling heavily and shaking at intervals to a smash under the counter.

I should have told you previously, that we had arranged with one of the Australian Commercial Stations, Station 2GB, to send us a special weather forecast at 2230 hours each night, which was compiled from the reports of the trans-Tasman pilots who were flying across daily in both directions. This service was most welcome, and was provided free by Station 2GB. On this particular night, I had to get Norman Vickery out of his bunk to operate the radio, and precisely at ten-thirty, the cultured voice of the announcer pronounced something like this: "This is a special broadcast for Mr. S.E. Marler and the crew of the Yacht Rawhiti. The forecast is furnished by the courtesy of the State Metereologist, and compiled from the reports of the pilots of Tasman Empire Airways. Here is the forecast. For Longitude 152 to 153. Moderate Northerly winds, Weather Fine, Seas light to moderate.

This sounds like very pleasant sailing weather Mr. Marler, and we trust that you and your crew are thoroughly enjoying this pleasant sailing and moving swiftly and easily towards your destination. Good-night and good sailing." This pleasant and well-meant effusion was greeted with hollow groans from the wracked crew.

Such was my tired state that I slept immediately my head touched the pillow, and knew nothing more until Peter shook me at four a.m, and, pulling my oilskins on over my wet clothes I crawled up the companion, and immediately wished I was still asleep. Dawn had broken, but the big seas to windward were still cold and gray. Boy, they were big! As you know, Hank, I've seen plenty of ocean at various times, but I've never seen such an ugly sea as was running that morning of December 21st. Except for the occasional whack under the counter, Rawhiti was riding well, though her decks were slippery with whale-oil and every now and again, as she dodged away from a steep crest, she rolled her lee deck down to the coamings. The big seas racing down on her were streaked with soapy, wind-driven foam and some of them were truly awe-inspiring, when viewed from the trough in a vessel with two feet of free-board. Peter and I held a conference in the cockpit. The wind had backed to WNW and if we could get away, we should at least be making some easting instead of lying hove-to hour after hour. I think we were both too tired to think very clearly, and we certainly reached a bad decision --- to get her away before it. Before doing so, we refilled the oilbags, and hung one on each quarter, and brought up forty fathoms of heavy coir warp, which we intended to trail in the wake to steady the steering, and prevent any possibility of a broach-to.

The tiller had been lashed hard down, and I cast off the lashing, and waited for a smooth. It came, up went the helm, and slowly Rawhiti's head paid off, and the next sea picked her stern up as she gathered way down its steep face, with bowsprit scoring the water ahead.

Peter paid away warp smartly, and soon the whole length of it was snaking through the following seas, while I faced aft, and squared away before each sea which rolled up astern. The effectiveness of the oil-bags was now practically nil, as even with bare stick we were running at seven or eight knots, and leaving the oil slick too rapidly astern for it to break the crests. Rawhiti ran very steadily, and her speed down the face of the seas was as exhilarating as that famous day when brother Geoffrey talked me into a roller coaster ride at Coney Island. After watching for awhile, Peter went below for some much-needed sleep, leaving me alone on deck. Rawhiti's cockpit was small, and self-draining. Having closed the storm doors of the companion hatch, and taken a turn round my waist with the end of the mainsheet, I felt that our chances were reasonably good, even if we were pooped. Rawhiti left such a clean wake, however, that I felt sure she would lift her counter over even a breaking sea. She appeared to have no tendency to drag a few tons of water down on her stern.

We had been running for half an hour, and my tense nerves were relaxing with the ease of the motion, when we caught it. A huge sea reared up astern, foam-streaked, with hollow crest turning from grey to transparent green. At this precise moment a cross-sea rolled up on the port quarter, and caught in the vortex of the main sea, also reared up into an ugly crest. Since the main sea appeared the more dangerous, I kept dead before it, and sucked in a deep breath as the quartering sea burst on Rawhiti with a roar like a thunderclap. The next few seconds were lost in a maelstrom of white, tortured water, and when it had passed, I found myself lying halfway through the life-rail, with my legs trailing in the sea, and holding like grim death to my mainsheet. As I went over, I suppose the tiller had been torn from my hand, and I struggled frantically to reach it, expecting Rawhiti



to run up into the wind and be swept again. She, fine old lady, was even then lifting her stern to the next sea, and with helm amidships, running as straight and truly as ever.

The storm doors flew open, and Peter's face appeared. "Thank God you're still here" he shouted, and before I could answer he swung himself on deck and raced forward in a crouching, lurching run. For a moment, I thought he was crazy, until I saw that the forward hatch was yawning wide open to the sea. I thought the hatch had been swept away, but to my relief, saw Peter swing himself through the opening and bang the hatch after him. It seems that the hook which held the hatch closed had been unshipped in the heavy rolling, and the force of the sea, rolling over us from the quarter forward, had torn the hatch open, fortunately without parting its stout brass hinges.

From the agitated voices coming from below, I judged that we had sustained some damage, but, closing the storm doors again, I faced the following seas, knowing that what could be done would be done. My confidence was gone, however, as I knew that should the same combination of seas occur again, we would be hove down inevitably, perhaps with fatal consequences. While waiting for Peter to come on deck with his report, I mentally reconstructed the action of the vessel when boarded. It seemed that the breaking quarter sea had hove her down with her mast in the water, and in the second or two that she lay flat, the big sea astern had also rolled over her. Fortunately our decks were absolutely clear, and except for the small skylight, with a stout cover lashed over it, and the small forward hatch, there was nothing to catch the force of the sea. We didn't carry a boat, but there was a five-man rubber raft lashed in the lazarette, and I couldn't help a wry grin as I thought how little use it would be to us under present circumstances.

Presently Peter appeared at my elbow, and in answer to my unspoken query, shouted "No damage except batteries adrift - may be some acid in the bilge." This was a pleasant thought, as the combination of battery acid and salt water produces chlorine gas.

"Better heave her to", I said. "Only a question of time before we catch another."

Peter nodded, and together we waited tensely for a smooth which would allow us to round up. Presently it came, down went the helm, and up she came, losing way just in time to slide out from under a fine large one. With both oil bags on the port side, she again rode well, except for an occasional shudder as a sea caught her under the counter. We had left the warp astern, and now transferred its inboard end to the bollard forward in the hope that the trailing length would help hold her head up to the sea. As she was headreaching slightly however, the warp trailed out at an angle, and did not appear to help.

By this time, the sun was well up, and there wasn't a cloud in the blue sky. Somehow, it seemed completely **incongruous** that in a full gale, with the seas running in foam-streaked hills topped with leaping crests, the sun should be so bright in that peaceful blue sky. Rather like an executioner clad in an angel's robe instead of sombre black.

Then there was nothing to do again but tend the little ship. Peter disappeared below, while I sucked an orange to take the taste of salt out of my mouth, and watched the oilbags. My tired brain became obsessed with the fear that we would run out of oil. We had ten gallons aboard, and had already used two and a half, and I watched the thin slick to windward with a feeling of resentment, as though it was our lifesblood draining away. Then I had the comforting thought that we had four gallons of vegetable oil aboard for cooking, which I thought would work as well as the whale oil,

and felt comforted in the thought that the cooking oil almost doubled our stock. Rawhiti now lay with her decks quite dry, with only an occasional drive of spray, and a rush of white water to leeward as she rolled her rail down. The windward roll didn't go far beyond the perpendicular, because of the force of the gale on the windage of her mast.

The hours dragged by, and I had no means of counting them, as my watch, which I was foolishly wearing, had stopped at 0523 hours, the moment when we were hove down. However, I knew Peter would be on deck for his watch at 0800, and sure enough he appeared, rubbing his eyes, red-rimmed like mine with the combination of salt and lack of sleep. I thought of turning in, but after poking my nose below, and getting a whiff of the truly terrible fog, decided against it, and settled down in the cockpit, where, in spite of my wet clothes, the combination of oilskins and hot sun made me quite warm, and I nodded and dozed while Peter played about with various combinations of weather cloths in an endeavour to bring her head up more, but without success. We were both worried by the pounding the seas were giving our long counter, but we had done everything except put over our large sea-anchor, and neither of us had much confidence in it, nor did we feel up to the effort at this stage.

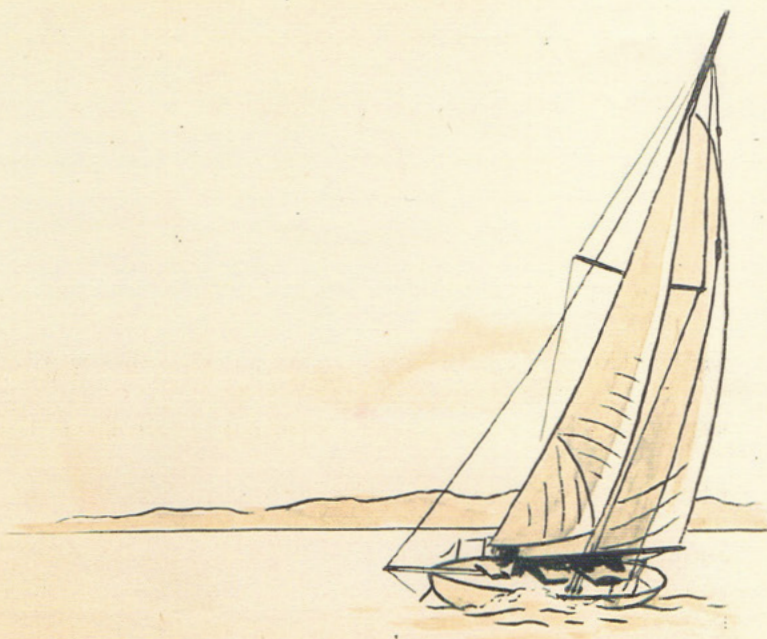
About noon, the gale showed no sign of easing, and Peter dragged the sea-anchor from the lazarette. It had a folding iron ring, five feet in diameter, and as we had had the drag-lines from the mouth replaced with good wire, we felt it would be equal to any demand on its strength. Attaching a light tripline, and shackling the coir hawser to the drag-wires, we got the thing over and waited expectantly for results. These were the reverse of satisfactory.

Instead of bringing her head further up to the sea, the sea-anchor trailed out at an angle on the port quarter, as Rawhiti headreached with the windage of her mast. Then, as she slid to leeward, away from an onrushing sea, the hawser would crack taut, and making sternway, she would bring her stern up. In a vessel with a shorter counter, or no counter, it might have been satisfactory to stream the sea-anchor from aft and bring her stern up, but neither of us could face with equanimity the thought of bringing our already pounded counter up to the sea, so we juggled with the helm, and numerous combinations of weather cloths, none of which had the slightest effect. Finally, really exhausted, we both went below, and I fell into an uneasy doze, jolted out of it from time to time, as the stern rode up and caught a buffet. After a few hours of this, I felt that we must ease her by getting the sea-anchor aboard again, and rousing Peter, we bent to this job. The time was 1600 hours and we worked endlessly heaving in the anchor, with me hauling the tripline round one of the small winches, and Peter taking in the slack of the hawser. Then, he would take a turn with the trip line. With only about ten fathoms to go, the tripline parted, and I was all for cutting the damned useless encumbrance adrift. Peter, with all a good sailor's dislike of waste, pointed out that the sea-anchor was now on such a short warp that it had lost its effect, and that we could get it aboard when we were rested. We both turned in again, and must have slept, because it was dark when I awakened and groped about for a small electric lamp to hand out as a riding light. Getting on deck I found that both wind and sea were moderating fast, and was seized with a great desire to get under way.

With the promise of sailing again, I turned Roy and Brian out to help Peter, and after a struggle, they succeeded in getting the sea-anchor



Big Leader Set



aboard. At 2300 hours we hoisted the foresail and put Rawhiti on her course. At midnight, Brian took over from me, and I turned in and slept, fug and all.

--oOo--



*Jumble Sale after the customers had departed*

## PART FOUR

December 22nd, and at six a.m. after six hours of sound sleep, the welcome sounds of hoisting the mainsail brought me up, to find a cloudy but fine morning, with a light southerly breeze, and Rawhiti tumbling about in a confused sea, but, blessed sight, with dry decks.

The first essential seemed to be some hot food, so to the galley, where I brewed a fine large pot of oatmeal, toast, and coffee. Roy, Norman, and Brian were by no means sure of their tummies, but all partook, while the food put new life into Peter and myself. Brian lost his breakfast very soon and there were another two days of seasickness in front of him, though Roy and Norman never looked back from this point. At 0730 hours the log was again streamed. As the day was too cloudy for sights, we made a position by dead reckoning which gave us a latitude of 36. 02 South, Longitude 156. 03 E. Subsequent sights showed that we had over-estimated our southerly drift, and under-estimated our head-reaching, and that actually we were not as far South as we feared.

The weather looked quite settled, and as our previous evening's weather forecast had been for light southerly to Southeast winds, we felt cheeky enough to set our large leading Jib, though we had to douse it and set our large working foresail two hours later when the wind veered to E. S.E.

We were rather disturbed by a small flow of water which ran over the galley floorboards and into the bilge, and after trying for some time to trace the leak, finally decided that we had sustained some damage on the exposed port side of the counter, and that the water was running down a stringer, and so into the galley. About one hundred strokes of our bilge pump every four hours were sufficient to keep the bilge clear, but we resolved that should it be necessary to again heave to, we would bring



up on the starboard tack, rather than risk an extension of the damage.

In the meantime, the deck looked rather like a jumble sale after the customers had departed. Every reef-point of the mainsail had some garment secured to it and drying in the wind, while the decks were strewn with bedding and mattresses. The watch below dozed on deck, while through the forward hatch a fine breeze revitalised conditions below decks.

For lunch we had tomato soup, and broached a tin of ships biscuits, our bread being more palatable as toast. These ships biscuits were a real joy. Genuine ships stores, hard and flinty, but a meal in every one. Speaking of ships stores, reminds me of our provisioning. We had worked out a scale for five men for one month, as while we didn't expect to be that length of time on the passage, Rawhiti had taken twenty-eight days to make the westward passage, and a good reserve seemed prudent. Our provisioning list was taken from the list supplied in the cruise of the "Tai-mo-Shan" from Hong-Kong to Great Britain, one of the few books which included a stores list. Before leaving, I had taken the precaution of removing the labels from some hundreds of cans, and painting a symbol indicative of the contents on each. This effort was well worth while, since all the tinned food was stored in lockers under the bunks through which plenty of water had washed during our rolling while hove-to, and from the film of rust already forming on the cans, it was evident that the labels would have been a sodden mass in the bilge long before this.

I had also made a stowage chart, and mounted it on a stiff sheet of cardboard. This chart showed the stowage of all food and equipment, even to spare blocks, strops, and such stores in the lazarette, and enabled anyone to pick out whatever item was required, with the minimum of difficulty.

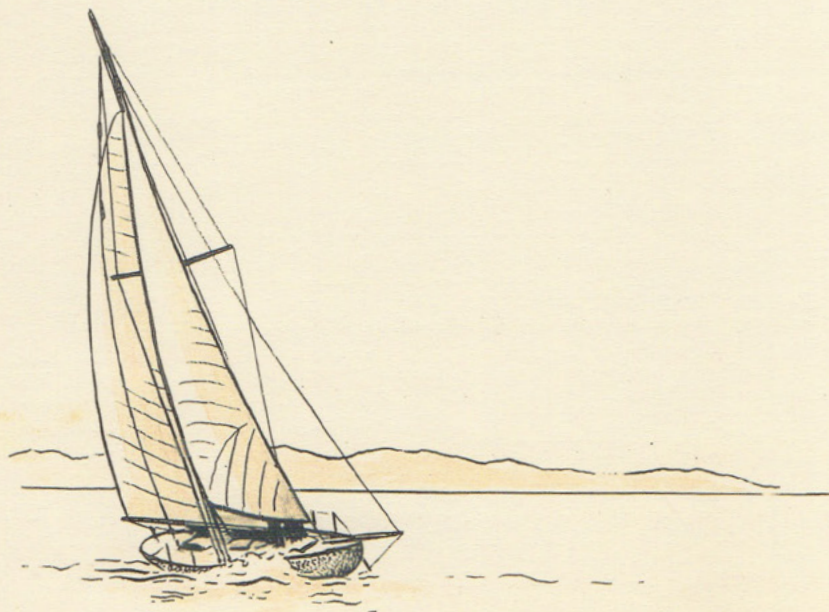
For dinner, we had a large curry, comprising three tins of beef, potatoes, onions, rice, raisins and bans, followed by tinned peaches, and a pot of cocoa to be re-heated for the night watch. With the prospect of a calm night, spirits were reasonably high, and the ukelele was produced while all hands proceeded to hold a session of close harmony, continued by Roy and myself when we took over at 20.00 hours. Though neither of our voices would have provoked anything but raucous laughter from a critical audience, we were very pleased with ourselves, and all the old-timers had a thrashing which probably caused the souls of their composers to writhe in agony.

The light breeze was just sufficient to keep our sails quiet in the heavy southerly swell, and as the night was overcast and cold, we were well bundled up. The weather broadcast at 22.30 hours promised a continuation of these conditions, which coincided with our own observations, and a high and steady glass, so we celebrated by heating up the cocoa and greeting the starboard watch with a steaming mug each when they turned out at midnight.

By dead reckoning, the days run was 108 miles, which in the light breeze, and with five hours spent in jogging along under foresail, wasn't so bad. Roy and I turned in to sleep like logs.



*Noon Sight*



## PART FIVE

Monday, December 23rd. To-day has been calm with light E.S.E. winds which have kept us full and by all day on the starboard tack without quite being able to lay our course. With the exception of two hours yesterday with slightly eased sheets, we have been on the wind in all our sailing so far, which has rather a comical side to it. Shortly before we left Sydney, the auxiliary ketch Ilex, also a Logan built ship, arrived from Wellington to participate in the annual race from Sydney to Tasmania. We boarded Ilex in Rose Bay, and through the courtesy of her skipper and navigator, were able to study her track and the weather conditions experienced. Ilex had encountered a succession of South-Westerly winds, and, with the exception of a few hours hove-to in a strong Northerly, had been hard on the wind all the way, with conditions wet and uncomfortable. Her people were most optimistic about our weather prospects, and pictured us rolling along with the same Sou'wester on our starboard quarter. Up to now, we had experienced nothing but headwinds, which gives an indication of the variable conditions for which the Tasman is noted in the summer.

Looking at the Hydrographic chart, the wind roses for our latitude showed arrows of almost identical length in every direction, so evidently, at this time of the year, we were likely to draw almost any ticket from Acolus's lottery.

Close-hauled, and under her deep-sea rig, Rawhiti showed very consistent speed, and on this day, with head winds varying from force two to force four, her log showed the following runs. One to four a.m.  $25\frac{1}{2}$  knots; four to eight a.m.  $29\frac{1}{2}$ ; eight a.m. to noon 25; noon to four p.m. 26; four p.m. to eight p.m. 26; eight p.m. to midnight 27. - a total run

by the log of one hundred and fifty-nine nautical miles.

This day, we also had our first sights when the sun peeped through occasional breaks in the overcast. Fortunately, we had a break at noon, and were able to correct our latitude. This showed us to be further north than we had assumed. In our dead reckoning we had allowed greater due to a margin for leeway while hove-to than had actually occurred. Our sights placed us in latitude 34.08 South, and Longitude 157.16E., which, on a direct line from Sydney showed us to be three hundred and thirty miles East of that port. As our log reading to midnight showed a total for the cruise of 484 nautical miles, plus an allowance of seventy miles while the log was stowed, we had actually sailed approximately five hundred and fifty miles to make good three hundred and thirty.

While Peter was the mainstay of the navigational department, I was able to take a hand also, and as we used different tables, the result was an interesting check, which, at a later stage was to prove quite valuable. We carried two sextants, both old types, and both of German extraction. We found both to be quite satisfactory, and though harder to use than the later models, perhaps better able to withstand the rigours of navigation in a small vessel. We did not carry a chronometer, considering the cost of nearly one hundred pounds to be excessive for such a short passage. Instead, we rated a fine silver hunter belonging to Norman, and a 25/- Westclox hack watch. These watches, coupled with our ability to receive radio time checks at frequent intervals, worked out very well. Peter had recourse to the British Nautical Almanac, and Norrie's tables, while I used the American Nautical Almanac and a set of Air and Sea Navigation tables by F.G. Brown. These tables used an assumed latitude and longitude, and being quick and easy to use, suited my rather elementary navigational experience.

I found the navigation most interesting, and particularly enjoyed taking sights from our lively deck. It is a sensation rather like pheasant-shooting, and I found that a snap sight, under our conditions, was usually better than a conscientious effort to follow the prescribed method of moving the sextant in a half-circle.

Working out sights was not the most comfortable pastime. We used a large sheet of plywood as a rest for our plotting sheets, but balancing this on one's knees, already tilted to quite an angle, while groping about for dividers, parallel rules and pencils, called for quite some degree of dexterity and patience. For anyone troubled with a weak stomach, the dizzy motion in our cabin would have been quite impossible, but fortunately this was the least of our worries. Entering the noon position on our chart of the South Pacific was always a thrill, as the pencil line moved steadily east from Sydney towards the top of the North Island of New Zealand.

All day our decks have again been strewn with bedding and clothes aft of the skylight. We slap spray across the foredeck from time to time.

Now that Norman is feeling more like Mrs. Vickery's little boy Norman again, I have sold him the idea of acting as Cook's Peggy, and for a man who has been as thoroughly spoiled by his wife as Norman appears to be, he is doing very well. I sketch out the menu and Norman thereupon forages out all the ingredients, opens cans, lights up the stove, and leaves me only the actual cooking.

After the meal, Norman clears away, washes and dries the dishes, sometimes assisted by one of the watch below.

We all feel that Mrs. Vickery will have cause to bless this cruise, because Norman confesses that up to this time, he and any form of culinary effort have been total strangers. Alas, I fear that his wife will be so glad of his return, that this brief spasm of domesticity will again give place. to the comfort of slippers on the hearth, what time he listens to the cheerful clink of dishes in the domestic galley.

Evidence of returning health is noticeable in the increased food consumption. There are two tins of biscuits open, one fancy, and one of ships biscuits, and there are fairly frequent invasions of both, while in the ready to use locker, supplies of jam, cheese, peanut butter and marmite stand ready to the marauding hand. Also the cockpit houses a stock of oranges, a tin of prunes, and supplies of dried fruit.

At breakfast this morning, there was an incipient mutiny because the morning porridge was not followed by bacon and eggs. It is necessary to take a strong line with this sort of frivolity, as I haven't the slightest intention of spending more time in the galley than is necessary to sustain life in reasonable gastronomic comfort. All offers to share the cooking have fallen on deaf ears, except in the case of Norman, and he is already doing a fair whack of the work in the galley. Nevertheless, it is a good sign. Only Brian is still unhappy. He eats nobly, but has difficulty in retaining food. More credit to him for eating at all under the circumstances.

Tuesday, 24th. With sheets hard aboard, the old lady has been tramping along to windward all day, and leaving the miles behind in good style. The wind has been steady at Southeast all day, and we have been making E by N which is to the north of the course we want.

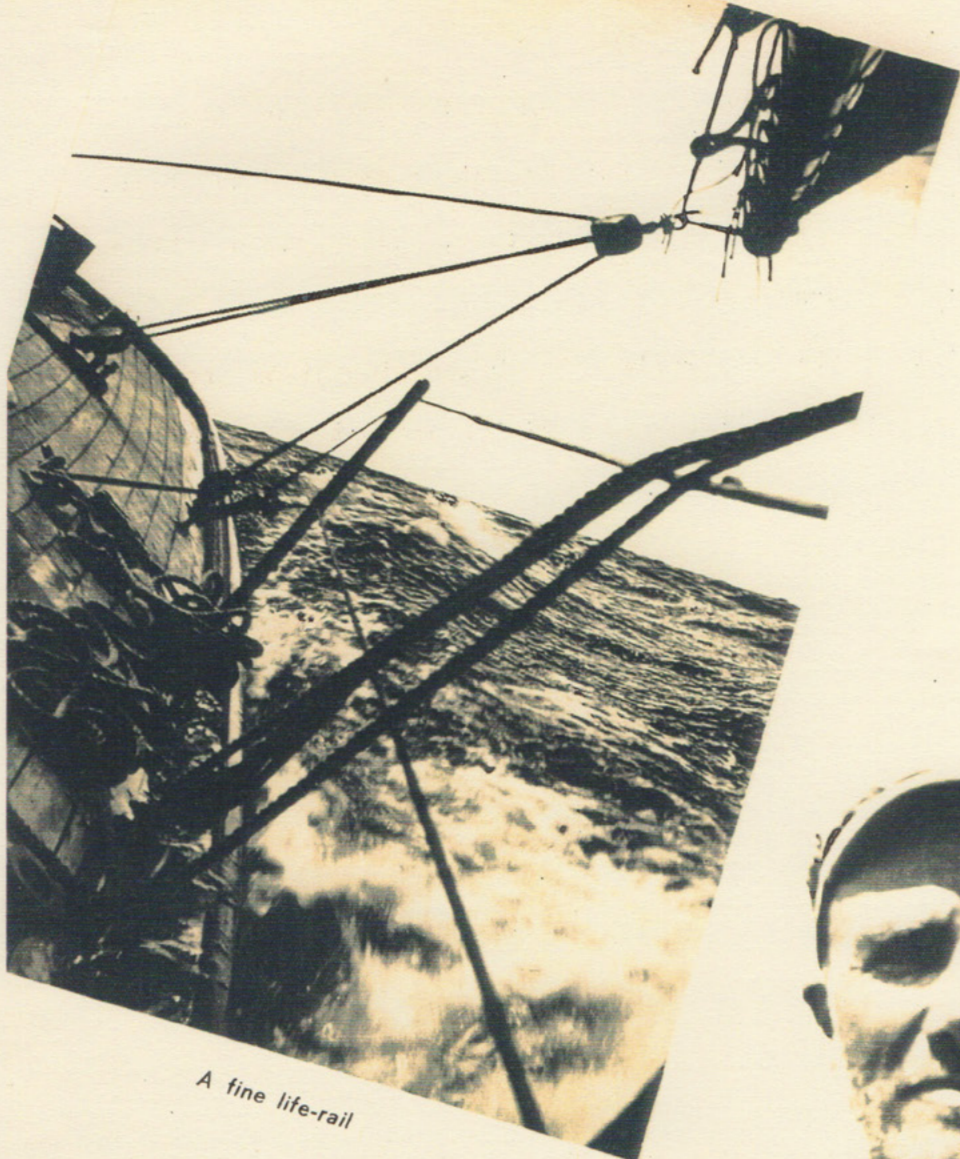
This fact doesn't worry me, as the weather seems settled, and any shift of wind from here is almost certain to be to the South, as we have had a very heavy swell from that quarter all day. A few points more South in the breeze, and we shall lay our course very comfortably.

The Southeast wind seems invariably to fall light after dark, and spoil the day's run. To-day we have made good one hundred and sixty eight nautical miles, position to position, our noon latitude being 33,22S Longitude 160,28E.

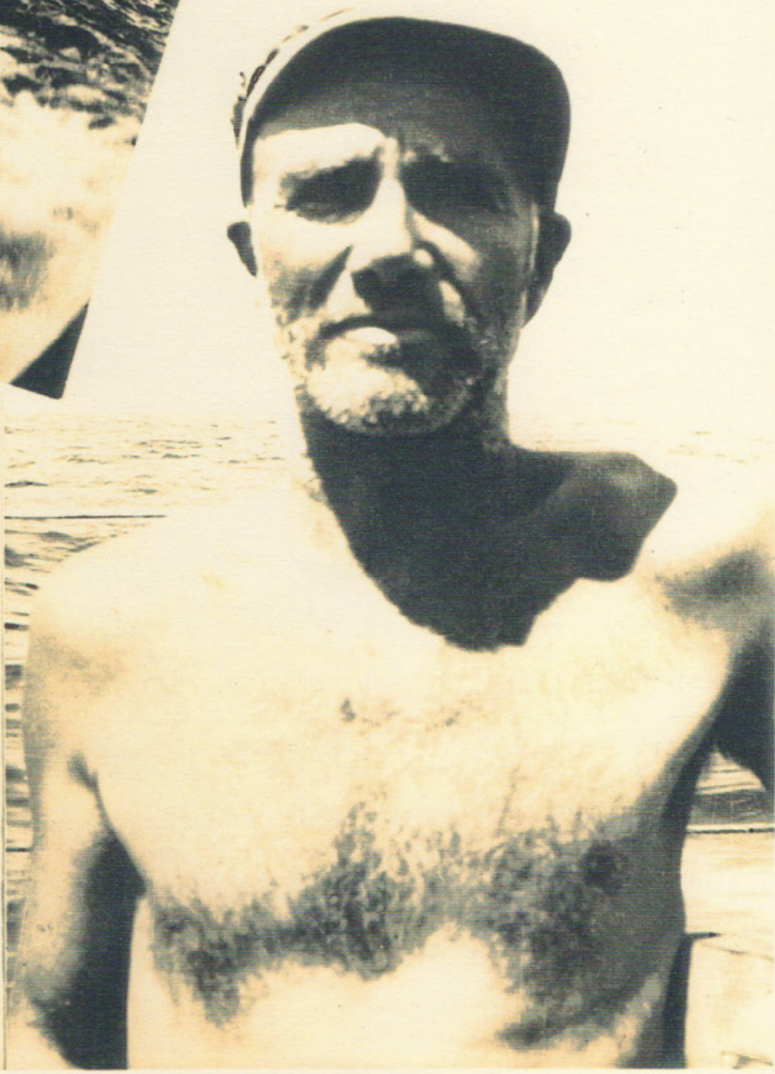
The boys are becoming decidedly chirpy, and there was a concerted move to-day in favour of easing sheets and running North to Lord Howe Island. Peter visited the Island in the Conrad and was greatly impressed. The crew, except for Brian and myself, are seeing visions of coral reefs, waving palm trees, and the other enticements usually associated with tropical islands. Brian, however, is chiefly preoccupied with the problem of his tummy, while I am far too conscious of my responsibilities to waste a day of this favourable sailing weather, let alone a week.

The skipper's job on a passage like this is no sinecure, at least, not for one of my temperament. I worry over my little crew like a broody hen, and my imagination is my worst enemy. Every time there is work proceeding forward at night, I picture someone overboard, and mentally go through the routine of jibing round and peering through the darkness trying to sight a head. Picking up a man from a ship of our size under ocean conditions would not be an easy job. Even in fine weather such as to-day, the surface of the sea is broken by innumerable small seas, to say nothing of the fifteen foot swell which comes rolling up at regular intervals. Rawhiti is so close to the surface of the water that a floating object twenty feet away would only be visible when on a crest. Before leaving Sydney, we bought a set of Mae





*A fine life-rail*



*Some fine beards  
are beginning to sprout.  
Sparks*

Wests, and a good whistle for everyone, supposed to be worn round the neck on a lanyard and blown furiously to guide rescuers to a man overboard at night. The Mae Wests are still in their cartons, and no one has blown a whistle, even in fun, or worn one.

Fortunately we have a fine liferail. The brass stanchions are three feet high, and joined by two good wires, as a matter of fact the topping lifts from the old gaff rig. This was a rather costly installation, but one which will be useful in cruising, or in ocean racing at any time. It is only an hour's work to ship the rail. This good rail is a relief to me, and I wouldn't care to sail with a makeshift affair strung from the shrouds, as many ocean cruisers seem to do. The rail is quite a problem for chafe, and we are constantly changing the position of sheets and falls to avoid excessive chafe in one place.

By now, some fine beards are beginning to sprout, particularly that of the Bos'n, which is black and fierce. This beard caused some fun this morning. Roy felt that his health demanded some fruit salts before breakfast, so he took a glass from the rack and filled it with water. The glass was one of a set of unbreakable ones we purchased in Sydney. They look exactly like glass, and had served in the flat for some weeks before our departure. When the proud possessor of unbreakable glasses, it is difficult to restrain the impulse for fun, and on numerous occasions, the glasses had been offered to some victim, and, just as his fingers were about to close, dropped by the passer. The victim either shuts his eyes and awaits the crash, or makes a frantic dive after the falling vessel, inevitably far too late. Then the glass bounces heavily from carpet or floor, and the owner explains its virtues to his guest, who is so mad that he promptly goes out and buys a set of unbreakable glasses so that he can do the same thing. Thus the makers of unbreakable

glasses prosper.

To return to Roy. Filling a spoon with fruit salts, the Bos'n deposited the salts in the glass of water, with a neat flick of the wrist, and prepared to stir. A split second later, all he had was the spoon. The glass disintegrated into a million tiny fragments, and he received the fruit salts on his stomach, but outside instead of inside, *while his beard was filled with tiny fragments of unbreakable glass.* Some chemical in the salts had exploded the glass into its constituent fragments. Hours later, Roy still had a dazed look on his face, and thereafter drank only beer for the good of his health. What a lovely practical joke this would be, if only it didn't cost an unbreakable glass each time.

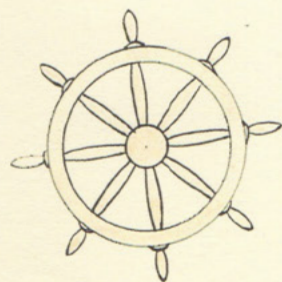
This passage is particularly interesting because we are constantly finding new points to admire in our fine old ship. Our two short runs in Sydney Harbour had not given much indication of how the ship would behave when at sea. Our experience amply vindicated the contention that a vessel with fast lines, designed to sail, will perform well under ocean conditions. On this day, we have run 168 miles, hard on the wind, and travelling very comfortably and, for the sail carried, very fast. Our small mainsail has just over four hundred square feet of area. Our racing mainsail has 1000 square feet. Because the setting of a jib would pull Rawhiti's head off, we are compelled to work to windward with our foresail, the total sail area being about seven hundred and fifty square feet, against a normal working area of sixteen hundred. In spite of this handicap, Rawhiti thrilled us by her ability to sail. Under our conditions to-day, the average type of ocean cruiser, with heavy bows and generous beam, would have been stopped by every head sea, and would have found difficulty in making three knots in the comparatively

light breeze. Our old lady sifted her way along with minimum disturbance of the water and no matter how light the breeze, she never stopped. We found that those fine powerful quarters we had admired on the slip were a profound factor in Rawhiti's ability to sail. She heeled quite easily to the rail, but having reached it, a really heavy puff was needed to overcome the resistance of her quarters. The result was that she made the most of her waterline length but without burying herself. The most charming of her good points, however, was the ability to sail without a hand on the tiller and the perfect balance which made this possible. Even hard on the wind, it was possible to let go the tiller for some minutes, and the old ship would sail along, luffing slightly in the puffs and bearing away when the breeze lightened. By this, I don't mean that we used a tiller rope and made it fast - just walked away and left the tiller to take care of itself. In the weather we have experienced so far, I firmly believe we could have sailed the Tasman without a rudder. This statement about balance may provoke some derisive shouts from yachtsmen with far more experience than I can claim, but, apart from the safety factor for a single-hander, in having a ship which will fly up into the wind with her tiller unattended, I can't see why one should continually have to use weather helm to sail a vessel on the wind. Surely perfection of balance is the ideal, and how it adds to the comfort of sailing. In a fresh breeze, it is a fine thing to sit in the cockpit, quite at ease, using the minimum of helm movement, and that used with the pressure of a little finger. I used to have a feeling that if we all fell overboard in a body, Rawhiti would just sail herself along and would one day arrive in Auckland to present the astounded population with a modern Marie Celeste mystery,

Our weather forecast to-night is for a continuance of present conditions.



Christmas Carols



To-morrow will be Christman Day, and also, if the wind holds, we shall have passed the half-way mileage between Sydney and Cape Maria Van Dieman.

The night is cloudy and calm, with not a star to be seen. The wind, as usual, has fallen away, and in the first four hours of Christmas Day, we have made only eleven and a half miles, and not very comfortably. On nights like this, the mailsail is a curse. The light breeze isn't sufficient to keep the boom quiet against the windward roll, so the boom smashes to windward, bringing the sail with it. We combat this by rigging a boom tackle, but while this keeps the boom steady, there is still sufficient weight in the sail for the heavy windward roll to swing all the wind out of it. Consequently, with the lee roll, the sail fills again with a loud, emphatic Smack! which shakes the whole ship and is hard on the nerves. If we douse the main, then we don't make much progress as the course is full and by, so choosing the lesser of the two evils we slat our way along, while the watch sings "Silent Night" and such other Christmas Carols as we can remember. There are very many gaps in the words of the carols, filled with "tum - tum - tum's", and if we were carol-singing in the city, we should undoubtedly be arrested for disturbing the peace, without our good intentions being even recognised. Nevertheless Christmas is in the air. It can be felt even out here. The night helps. It is one of those unrealistic nights when only the pinpoint of light in the binnacle keeps the senses oriented. The sea is dark. The sky is dark. There is not the smallest object for recognition - not even a gleam of phosphorous in the quiet sea. But for the sturdy commonsense of the compass, the sea might be some vast Stygian river, swinging us in the slow circles of its whirlpools, slowly and irresistably towards the edge of the world.

Christmas Day broke cloudy and calm, and after breakfast, there were some small parcels for distribution, and Norman was able to produce a

parcel which his wife had given him before sailing with instructions not to open before Christmas Day. By a strange chance, none of us had brought a mirror, nor did the ship carry one, so, when Norman's Christmas present stood revealed as a leather toilet case, complete with mirror, there was great jubilation, as we were able to see ourselves in the true light, and assess the beauty of our growing beards.

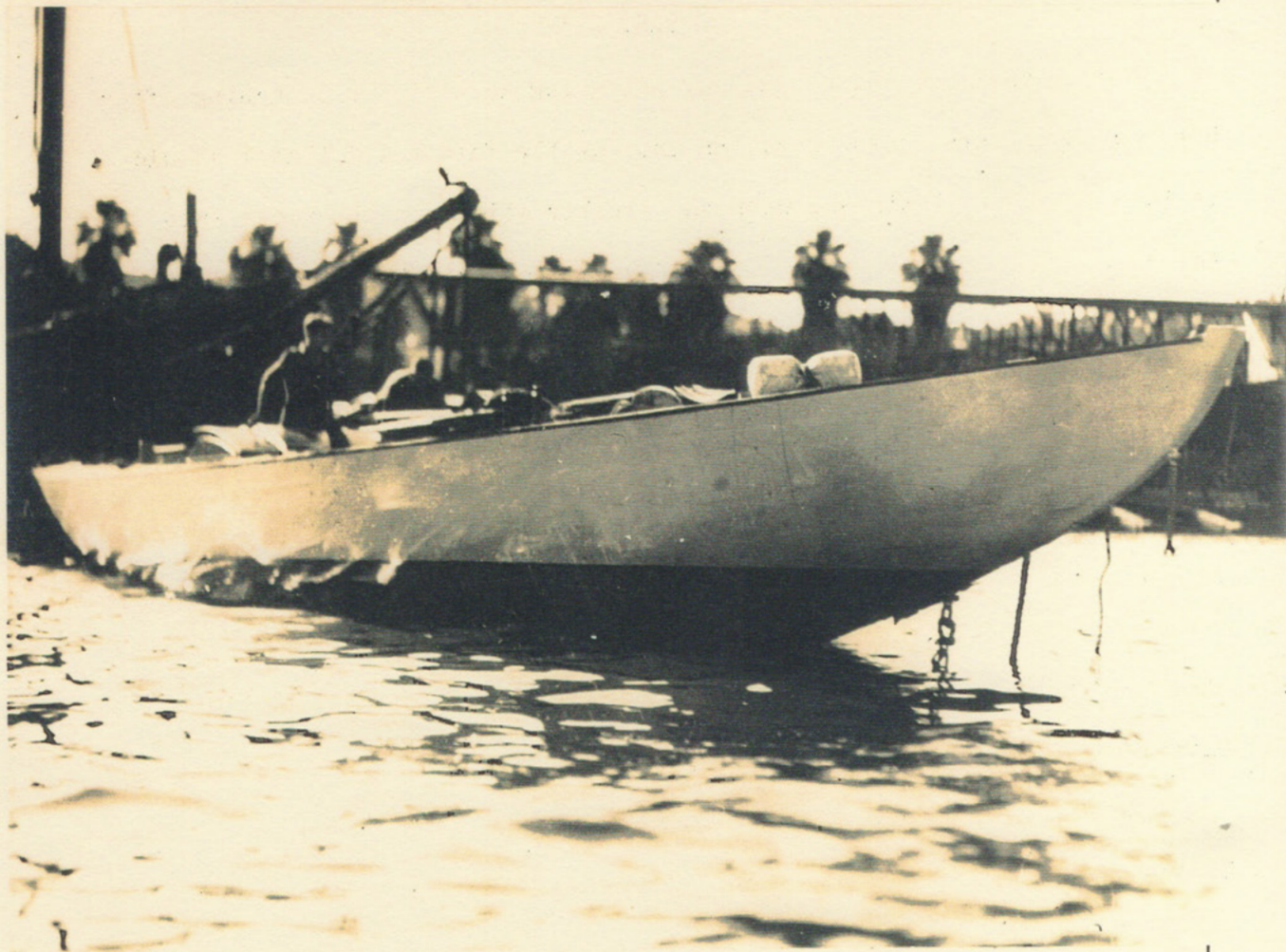
At 8 a.m. we had Christmas breakfast, consisting of porridge, followed by scrambled eggs and bacon, with toast, and lashings of hot cocoa, and, no sooner had the dishes been cleared away, than the light breeze swung into the south west, and commenced to freshen. This was our first really free breeze of the passage, and we lost no time in setting a small leading jib. This was a beautiful little sail, cut by Ratsey, and having only a moderate hoist, we were able to shackle a three foot strop to the tack, and hoist the sail well clear of the seas to leeward. This is an excellent feature in designing a leader for ocean work. With sheets slightly eased and our leader pulling like a horse, Rawhiti logged  $33\frac{1}{2}$  knots in the noon to four watch, and  $35\frac{1}{2}$  in the four to eight watch, or just under nine knots.

Everyone was very happy but the cook. The job of preparing Christmas dinner with the galley at an angle of forty-five degrees, and swopping about like the roller-coaster at Coney Island, detracted from the cook's final enjoyment of the meal ---- a fine curry, with almost every ingredient offered by the larder, followed by the traditional plum pudding and coffee. As darkness fell, I had to decide whether to continue carrying the leader or to shorten down for the night. While I was reluctant to lose a mile of this fine sailing, the final decision had to be governed by the safety of my crew. The sea was heavy and confused, the night would be overcast and black, and dousing the leader under such conditions would be attended

by risk, so with the last light, I took over the tiller, running Rawhiti dead off the wind, blanketing our leader, so that it came down like a lamb in the lee of the mainsail.

Christmas Day had been enjoyable in every way. All our thoughts had been of home, and the fair wind seemed a good omen of our early arrival.





*After her fourteen years on the hard.  
"Rawhiti" after launching*



## PART SIX

After the work and anxiety of preparing Rawhiti for launching after her fourteen years on the hard, an inscrutable fate ruled that I should be in Brisbane on business, when she finally slid down the rails into the water of Careening Cove. Scarcely had the ship been launched, than I had a long-distance call from the Sydney Sunday Sun. Someone had tipped the reporters that a story was in the making, and I had to explain Rawhiti's history over the telephone, and hope it would not be too much distorted.

Rawhiti was launched on a Thursday, and the following day I flew down from Brisbane, arriving at Mascot about eight p.m. By the time I had had some dinner and reached the flat, the hour was ten o'clock, but sleep was out of the question until I had seen my old lady in her native element.

An impatient journey across the bridge, and there she lay, illumined by the street lights around the bay, and more beautiful than I had imagined in my wildest dreams. Without any spars or gear, Rawhiti sat lightly on the dark water, poised, vibrant with life. Her every slight movement betokened impatience to be gone, away from the flotsam and into the clean blue water, responsive and spirited as an Arab mare. In that moment, all the trials and tribulations of the past few months disappeared, and I sat and smoked, and feasted my eyes until midnight.

The weeks which followed the launching were full of frustrations and troubles. At any time, fitting out a vessel for an ocean passage is fairly harassing, but the normal difficulties were multiplied by the scarcity of everything, and the disinclination of suppliers to tackle any work out of the ordinary. Thus, we passed, like souls in torment, from one difficulty to another. There wasn't enough timber to finish the

new decks. We combed Sydney for the hundred and fifty feet of beech we needed, but without success. Finally, through the courtesy of one of the Ferry Companies with a small reserve in stock, the deck was finished. Our water-tanks had been ordered months before, and should have been installed before the decks were laid, but actually, the installation was finished by the crew two days before sailing. Even then, we took the maker's word that the tanks had been tested under pressure for leaks, installed them, filled them, and then had to take one laboriously out again --- it leaked.

Advertisements in the week-end papers were scanned for needed items of equipment, government disposal sales attended, and gradually our flat in Elizabeth Bay began to fill with a weird assortment of marine bric-a-brac, anchors, lengths of chain, coils of rope, hundreds of tins of food, charts, sails, medical stores, to mention just a few items.

Then came the final blow. The ship carrying two of our indispensables which were being sent from America was delayed by the West Coast shipping strike. This meant that we were without our rubber lifeboat, and without compasses. After frantic search, the first was supplied by a very good friend of mine, on loan, and the second substituted for by two Admiralty Boat compasses, seventy or eighty years old. These compasses were in wonderful condition, mounted in brass boxes, and with oil lamps. We quickly substituted electric leads, and mounted one on the cockpit floor, and the other, for taking bearings, just aft of the skylight.

At long last, we were able to check through our lists, and agree that any items not accounted for would have to be left out as completely unprocurable.

By this time, Rawhiti was moored in Elizabeth Bay, right under our windows, with the final work in process. Word soon spread that she was off to New Zealand in a few days, and the little jetty in the bay was never without a

few people watching our movements, while on Saturdays and Sundays, there were crowds, and some of the comments were distinctly amusing. Rawhiti was pointed out by the knowledgeable ones, as everything from an oil-barge sprouting ventilators moored in the Bay to the poor old Heartsease, another old-time New Zealander, now alas, rotting at her moorings a cable's length from us.

On our last Sunday, I was busily engaged in trucking stores from the flat to the jetty, while Rawhiti lay alongside, with the crew loading my truckloads. I was using an ordinary watersiders' hand-truck, and as the crowd was pretty thick I had to roar "Gangway" in a professional manner to avoid crushing toes. I must have looked the part, because one chap asked me if I didn't think the crew were crazy, while two middle aged ladies, leaning on the rail, were even more amusing.

"Isn't it terrible", said one, "to think of that tiny thing going across the ocean."

"Terrible", agreed the other. "And to think that if those poor boys could only afford the £30, they could fly over."

We had many volunteers, some of whom were undoubtedly genuine, but many whose dark and desperate looks betokened the apparent need for some sensational news to break to an unyielding inamorata, or else the urgency of escaping a swarm of creditors.

Thursday, December 26th. We have run one hundred and sixty four miles to-day, in spite of six hours with the mainsail doused due to the lack of wind to fill it. We have carried our southerly wind all day, and have laid our course very nicely, with leader set from eight a.m. until eight p.m. Our noon position gave us latitude 34.06 South, longitude 166.28 East, and our total logged mileage on this day read seven hundred and twenty.



*Decks covered by contented and recumbent bodies*



*Flat Calm*



*A dreadful-looking sail*

Friday, December 27th. To complete our weather cycle we needed a day of calms, and this was the day. Dawn showed a glassy sea, with the surface unbroken by the tiniest ruffle of wind, Rewhiti ghosted along with the flap of her sails, and at 11 a.m. the wind came from the West, though little more than a sephyr, and we hoisted a queer collection of sails. First, we broke out our squaresail, and used it for the one and only time on the passage. It was a dreadful-looking sail, and I can't think that it would have been worth much in a strong breeze when running, as I think that the motion of the ship would have continually spilt the wind from it. We next flanked the squaresail on the starboard side with the spinnaker, and on the port side with the big leader, boomed out with some awning stanchions lashed together. Though we didn't do much sailing, this was a most enjoyable day, as the hot sun and light breeze dried the last trace of dampness from our gear, and the decks were covered by contented and recumbent bodies.

At 7 p.m., the wind backed to South, so the mainsail was again hoisted, and our light-weather collection stowed, but the breeze again fell very light, and at the change of watch, we doused the mainsail, which was slatting about very badly, and hoisted our big leader, with the sheet leading through a block at the end of the mainboom. The boom was then guyed out at an angle, and the sail drew very well, enabling us to hold a good course without the slatting of the gear which was so nerve-wracking with the mainsail set. Our day's run had been only eighty-five miles, but every mile was a pleasant one.

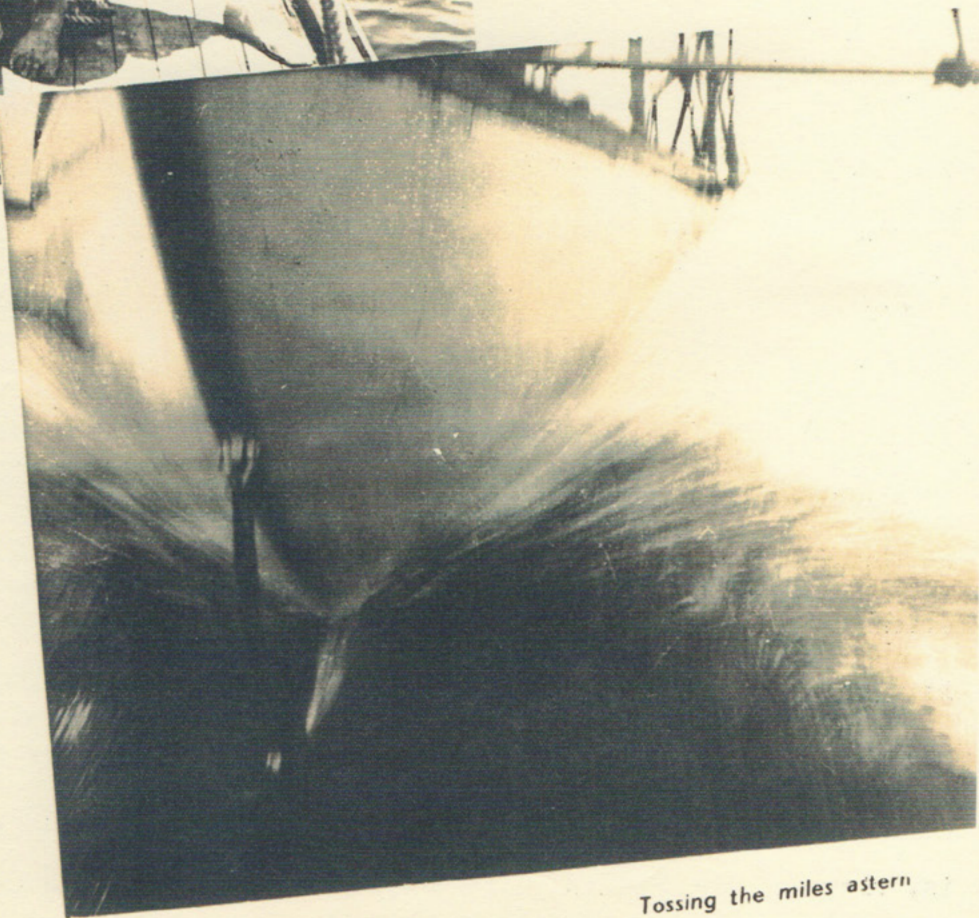
Saturday, December 28th. On this day, if the wind held, we should make our landfall, and when a hail aroused me at 1.40 a.m., I had a sudden thought that we might be lucky enough to check our position with a passing vessel. All hands were soon on deck, and there, broad on the port bow, winked the port and masthead light of a steamer. She was a long way off, her lights

visible only when the long southerly swell heaved us up. Rawhiti was still carrying her big leader sheeted to the mainboom, but in the meantime, the breeze had freshened, and we were sailing at six to seven knots, trailing a long, phosphorescent streak from our lee rail. Just for such an encounter as this we had included a navy Aldis lamp in our equipment, and Nerman hastened to connect up his leads, while we watched the steamer's lights draw abeam. Suddenly, our contact with the steamer seemed the most important thing in my life. For nine days we had lived in a world bounded only by the horizon, and an occasional porpoise, whale, or sailfish.

To have Rawhiti reported by radio would reassure our families and let them know that we were close to our destination. In a few minutes our Aldis was flashing its powerful beam in the call sign. The minutes ticked by without response, when suddenly the bright wink of the acknowledgement flickered in the darkness. We asked the steamer to report us all well, and after asking for a repeat of our name twice, she finally acknowledged the message. Then, as we were due to make our landfall, we asked for a check on our position. The steamer signalled the word "Wait". During the minutes which followed, both vessels were rapidly drawing away from each other. We were reeling off our seven knots, and soon we could no longer see the steamer's port light. As we were quite confident that our position was correct, we didn't feel the need to heave to, and kept on sailing. Presently, we were amazed to see both the port and starboard lights of our friend. She had reversed her course and was following us to make sure of being close enough for her signal to be read. What a kindly action, and how characteristic of the brotherhood of the sea. More minutes passed, and the steamer appeared to be just as far away as ever. I realised that she was evidently a vessel of only moderate power, and that we were sailing almost as fast as she was



A Good Navigator



Tossing the miles astern



steaming. Her signal light winked again. "Come about on the other tack and I will give you my position." She also had realised that she was not gaining on us. We reluctantly hauled down our leader, hoisted foresail and mainsail, and tacked. Another few minutes, and the winking signal gave us a position. Latitude 34.15 South, Longitude 169.35 East. Then her name "Samstrae". Then she signalled "Good luck and Good Morning". We replied "Thank You" and both vessels swung away on their respective courses.

Just at this time, the first faint streaks of dawn coloured the sky, and showed the departing Samstrae as a liberty ship, which made her speed quite understandable.

A projection of our course and log reading to the time of Samstrae's position, put our own position identical with that given us, and Peter came in for some well-merited commendation.

Then began a day of really great sailing. If we were to make a landfall before dark, we should have to keep moving smartly all day, so we hoisted our big leader, and under this sail, plus our foresail and mainsail, commenced tossing the miles astern in grand style. Rawhiti seemed just as anxious to see her native land as we were, and she flashed along with the quartering seas piling up and shouldering her brusquely ahead.

Chips was busy on the counter shaping a staff for our Blue Ensign, so that when we finally came to anchor, no detail should be wanting. All day we thrust ahead, but in the afternoon, the eastern horizon commenced to cloud extensively, and at 1700 hours it was apparent that if we were to sight land it must be soon, otherwise visibility would be too limited. So up went the Bos'n in a chair to the lower spreaders. A tense moment while he balanced and focussed his eyes on that cloudy horizon -- then a shout -- "There she is, right ahead." This was the Great King, one of the three lonely outposts, north of the New Zealand coast.



*Through their sunlit curves, North Cape showed ahead*

The Pilot Book reports heavy tide rips between the Three Kings and North Cape, and advises sailing vessels to keep outside the Kings. The night promised to be fine, as the preceding one had been, and to save distance, Peter and I decided to keep the Kings to port and steer for the light on Cape Maria Van Dieman. This was a bad decision, and resulted in a most uncomfortable night.

At 20,00 hours we sighted the loom of the Cape Maria light, and simultaneously entered an area of tide-rips which were a positive nightmare. For the first time on the passage, Rawhiti became almost unmanageable, and the twenty-second flash of the light would pop up first on one bow, then on the other, and occasionally broad on the beam. Under these conditions, we should have doused the mainsail, as there was a considerable risk of a jibe, but, with the Three Kings somewhere under our lee in the blackness, we had to keep moving. In the inky darkness, the breaking seas growled all about us, in confused, angry rips, and it seemed remarkable that we didn't take some heavy water on deck. However, during the whole night, we only lopped a few crests aboard. I turned in just before dawn, when we seemed to be through the worst of it, and awakened to find a lovely day, clean looking, with blue sky, and the lightest of westerly winds, with Cape Maria Van Dieman abeam. In no time, we had our large and small leaders set, goose-winged, and through their sunlit curves, North Cape showed ahead.

Our run down the coast was heart-warming. The country had never looked greener or more beautiful. Rawhiti spent the night becalmed off the Cavallis, but at 0700 hours, a light breeze enabled us to make the historic Port of Russell, down went the hook, and Rawhiti was home.

From Sydney to North Cape, she had sailed twelve hundred miles in ten and a half days, including twenty eight hours hove-to, with the log stowed.

PHOTOGRAPHIC

APPENDIX



At Anchor  
in Russell



At Anchor  
in Leigh



*Coming up the Auckland Harbour after forty-one years*

*Rubber Lifeboat. Bruce and Peter Marler with friend*

