



OCEAN

hippie

Official rant of Tom

TRIP SUMMARY

I flew to Gran Canaria on November the 12th. Joined Island KEA II, Steve and Katrin's Taswell 49. Island Kea was booked in on the ARC. The Atlantic Rally for Cruisers, an organised rally of 240 yachts which crosses the Atlantic to Rodney Bay Marina in northern St Lucia. There were four of us aboard for the Atlantic Crossing, Steve, Katrin, me and Caroline. Good posse.

We left Gran Canaria on the 24th, it took us 18 days to make the crossing arriving in St Lucia on the 13th December. I stayed in St Lucia till the 11th of Jan, when I left Island Kea to go to Grenada and Join Jackal.

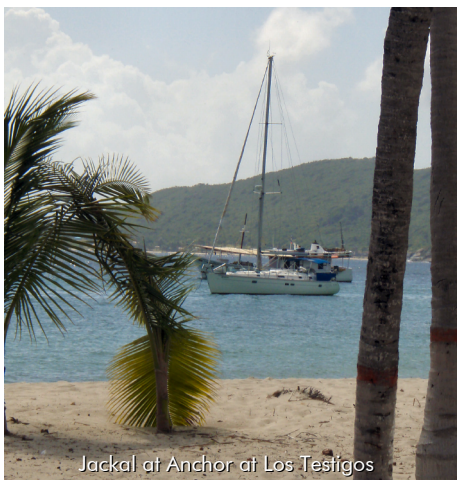


Island Kea II arrives at St Lucia

Jackal is Beneteau Oceanis 411, a 42 foot long. Owned by Alan and Jackie. We left Grenada almost immediately, stopping at Los Testigos "The Witnesses", and clearing into Venezuela at Polimar on Isla Margarita. We hopped along the Caribbean coast of South America, visiting Isla Tortugas, Bonaire, Aruba. Arriving in Colon on January 31st.

"Colon is a dangerous slum, unless you have a pressing reason to come here, do your self a favour and give it a miss". So says the Rough Guide, unfortunately Colon is the Atlantic entrance to the Panama Canal, so we had no choice. Despite carnival we managed to expedite our canal transit relatively swiftly. Though

I did do it twice, helping another yacht "Scratch" go through as well.



Jackal at Anchor at Los Testigos

Jackal entered the Pacific for the first time on February 9th. Jackie, who gets sea sick took one look at the umpteen thousand miles of open ocean and promptly flew to L.A. Much shopping already done in Colon and Bonaire Alan and I departed for the Galapagos Islands on February 16th, under the leaden clouds and fickle winds of the Doldrums.

We crawled into Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Galapagos on our last thimble full of Diesel, with no wind at 4am on the 24th February. Safe in the knowledge that this was our last South American port, god, the devil and everyone else curse their bureaucratic souls. Thanks to confusion, bloody mindedness and a Harbour full of the Blue water rally. We managed to expedite, avoid or ignore our way to a successful port clearance for the Marquesas Islands, French Polynesia, a mere hop at 2995 Nm away.



WTF?

OK...
I've been at sea now for 24 days, with at least 2 more to go, so I thought what else is there to do but write an newsletter so I can inflict the musings of a bored ocean sailor on those of you intelligent enough to *not* read my blog.

WHERE AM I?



Destination: Atuona, Hiva Oa, Polynesia.
Photo: SVÖrnen, on my previous trip.

Technically I'm at:
8°28.04.5' South
134°.04.4' West.

In English that's about 300 Nautical Miles West North West of the Marquesas Group, in French Polynesia.

I've just sailed (for the last 24 day's) from Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos. Some 2700 Nm

Tom

"I'd rather be on the boat with a drink on the rocks than in the drink with the boat on the rocks"



Yotty T-Shirt

"Tampons have Strings on them, tea bags do not. Bloody foreigners"

Tom 2008



"St Lucia is a bit like Brixton"
Steve Skipper of Island Kea II

<http://www.oceanhippie.net>

YET ANOTHER ATLANTIC CROSSING



Island Kea II

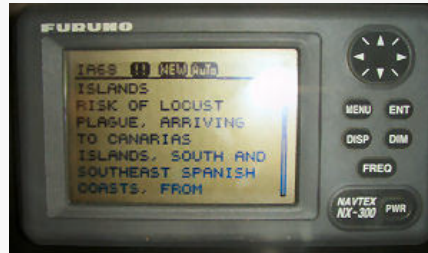
Well it wasn't, this was my 4th crossing, third in this direction. I confidently predicted that "I'd practically worn out that bit of Sed". This, it turned out, was arrogance. It was not just another Atlantic crossing. Initially things preceded along the expected lines. Fixing, shopping etc. Interspersed with some drinking. The Weather in Gran Canaria was more variable than I remembered. This should have been a warning. The last 2 nights before we left, the wind was howling from the North, it was cold actually cold. In the Canaries! We were in the bar in olives. The weather didn't make preparations such as laundry any easier. The ARC weather guru promised us the wind would drop overnight and it would be sunny for the start.

The start was much as I remembered from the previous ARC. Except breezier. Given the breeze most of us started cautiously. As well as the Breeze the swell was big too. We got away cleanly, the radio was thick with those who didn't, we saw one boat with a broken boom before we've even started. Gaviotta of Cowes was towed into the southern end of the island with no rudder and a fouled prop. Pindar, a Volvo 60 was spotted 4 hours in beating north towards Las Palmas under headsail alone.

We carried on south, to stay out of the wind acceleration zone and then the wind shadow of the islands. During the night I had to avoid the same yacht twice, he inconsiderately didn't give way despite being on port tack. Then at midnight gybed and crossed our path again. During the night a racy carbon boat called "Helen Mary Gee" was knocked down. That's carbon racy with a washing machine....

Standard wisdom is: "Sail south until the butter melts and then turn right", well we decided to turn right early. We lost wind a little south of the Canaries, but not as bad as those who cut the corner. Our

first few days were relatively slow as the strong northerly wore off. We had dolphins every evening for 5 days, with some whale blows spotted north of us on the 3rd day out. At this point the Navtex reported: "Risk of Locust plague arriving Canaries" Glad we missed that. The Current and wind at the Canaries both



come from the North East. Sending us a little south. The current and wind both become more easterly as you get further across. The Wind and Current keep the Canaries relatively cool. Snow is not unknown at the top of the Island (1500 meters). The water temperature in the Caribbean is 5 degrees warmer. But it warms up pretty quick as you go across.

The lighter winds didn't give us spectacular progress and the Canarian current doesn't knock the miles off the GPS the way the Equatorial current does. A few days in we started deploying the Parasailor (a weird spinnaker with a hole in it an a kite in the hole) or the Cruising chute during the day, giving us some extra oomph.

We'd had our first problem with the autopilot, fortunately just a loosened bolt, a few days in but on the 10th day the actually ram went, this was a new part instilled at Gibraltar. To get at Island Kea's Autopilot, the cockpit locker has to be emptied, since this is a major store of bikes, gas bottles, diesel and marine junk it takes along time. One must then crawl into the locker, open a hatch and crawl under the aft cockpit. Whilst rolling in the trades. Fortunately we were able to replace the new ram with the old and carry on with an autopilot. I can't stress how important some type of automatic steering is, if you standing watch alone, you can't do anything with more than one hand or more than an arm length from the helm.

As well as autopilot troubles we had to repair the spinnaker pole, the universal joint kept loosing pins all the way across, I don't believe it was engineered with the constant working of an Atlantic passage in mind. Despite the trouble we got the fishing gear out, making a huge tangle. However the following day we caught a lovely dorado.

Weather forecasts indicated a hole developing in the wind ahead we drove the boat south west for a few days as we approached the halfway point, in search of wind.

By this time we'd heard a fair few more troubles coming through on the Radio, Steve our skipper was on of the Group C net controllers. One of the race boats has a burn patient on board, who had to



Island Kea II at Sea

be evacuated. Then 4 days out into the Atlantic, Tulla another yacht and flute encountered a boat load of 48 illegal immigrants, that far out into the Atlantic they were in serious trouble having missed the Canaries by hundreds of miles. Flute's skipper told me they didn't even have a compass. Apparently 2 had already died before they encountered the yachts. We'd been warned about the problem, thousands try and make the journey from Africa to the EU by taking unsuitable boats from the African mainland to the Canaries. I have heard stories of the contrast of western tourists sunbathing on the southern beaches as the police carry body bags of the many immigrants who don't make it up the same beach. The boat encountered by the ARC yachts had fuel left to try and board them. 2 of them succeed in getting on board Tulla. Flute was following them as best they could in case Tulla's crew were thrown off. The 2 boarders were subdued with a flare gun and cable ties. but Flute and the others had an unpleasant night as they boat approached them in the dark. Eventually after some wrangling a fishing boat was diverted to pick up the survivors.

South of us a non ARC yacht was in trouble. They lost a chain plate and were about to loose the rig. Gigi, a swan 48



picked them up from a life raft. Unfortunately the yacht didn't sink. With the Equatorial Current and the wind behind it even under bare poles it was making 50 miles a day. Apparently the crew included a very good cook. Its very hard to see a darkened yacht in heavy seas with no moon. The possibility of the yacht being near us made for some nervous night watches, especially because in this case there's no one on the other boat keeping look out for you. Spinnaker pole went again. Now its held together by, a boat hook, a block of wood, a jubilee clip some string and some gaffer tape. We crossed the halfway point with the pole back up,

bubbly with lunch. This was what it was supposed to be like. Windy sunny and blasting towards St Lucia.

The following evening a black cloud started creeping up behind me at 2 in the morning. I conscientiously reefed. Not enough, not nearly enough. The true wind meter went to 43 knots (Severe Gale 9). I had to struggle to keep the boat on course, and shout for help to get sails in. This wasn't just a squall - a normal hazard of the Atlantic. It carried on and it rained and it rained and it rained. I finally got to get some kip at 4:30, we were still doing 5 knots under bare poles. The following day it rained and rained. Eventually at sunset a break in the clouds appeared a head. This was unfair as the wind was astern. The wind started to rise again, clearing 35 knots steady and then holding 40 knots or more. The gusts remained in the high 40's (storm 10). This is not what I was expect from the Atlantic. Or what the weather forecast said. A nearby boat e-mailed Cowes and question the 20-25 knots 30 in thunder showers forecast. The reply was along the lines of are you sure its 40kn? Doesn't look like that from my forecasts? *YES WERE SURE*, we were doing 11 knots down a wave on bare



poles! During this period of inclement weather the autopilot fortunately behaved. As well as the rain we had massive seas, imagine 2 bungalows coming from 2 directions and occasionally arriving at once and you'll get the idea. Night was back as soot. The boat was like a sauner, wet oilies and closed hatches. The next day was at least sunny, though we had numerous squalls, often vicious as well. But at least with squalls you can just strip off to your boxers and have a shower till there gone rather than import water bellow in your oilies.

The morning of the 13th day out from Gran Canaria began with a 40 knot squall, 40knots stings when it hits your bare back. After the squall the rain set in again. This was probably our roughest day, the previous days of bad weather kicking up the swell and the rain making roll up smoking nie on impossible. Huddled in the damp sweaty cabin I made fresh bread which didn't help the temperature.

The 14th day dawned clear, we could see the line of bad weather behind us. Which worried us. It was still rough and not in the normal Atlantic rolling waves way either, but it was sunny, 20-25 kn of breeze. Wonderful after 3 days of 35 kn's being a break.

"Spam" a non ARC boat ahead of us lost her rig and was taking on water. Her 3 crew are safe aboard another yacht and I believe she sank. I was later told that 4 non ARC yachts were lost on the crossing this year. As well as Spam, the Skipper of one yacht had an accident, he was evacuated to a cruise ship and taken to hospital in Barbados. He unfortunate died of his injuries.

Our troubles with the autopilot appeared again, this time in the form of a snapped bolt which we were able to replace. But only by switching spares between old and new rams. Our weather troubles were now over, "Georgina" our second autopilot working and we were now able to appreciate how much more ocean was behind us than in front, sit back and enjoy a beer with out too much fear. St Lucia came up fast in those last few days, our ETA went from Friday to Thursday night, then we comfortably rounded Pigeon Island a lunchtime on the Thursday. Despite losing the last remaining functional autopilot combo 24 hours out. We beat into the bay, gave the photographer a wave and crossed the line in 18 days, 108th in the cruising Division of 169 boats. . Rum punch, beer, more beer etc.

This is largely a re-write of a blog post "At Sea" I made as I went long, many of the photos here are available larger in the ARC 2007 gallery on my web site.



I'M NOT AS OLD AS YOU THINK I AM

It was my birthday on the 3rd of January 2008, but I wasn't 33, till the 4th of January.

On the way across the Atlantic we put the clocks back 4 times - the sun just kept setting later and later.

What with the early mooring Christmas texts from the UK waking the boat up 4 hours early, my immanent birthday and the new year it set me thinking.

You go on holiday, Gatwick misery, car park nearer Brighton than the airport, no legroom, terrorists, toothpaste banned, jokes by the Now Show etc. Eventually you fly out and change your watch and get sunburned, ripped off, hungover,

skint etc. Proper holiday. Get on your plane and fly back, change watch back to the time it was before. Nothing lost or gained.

However, I kind of went west, putting my watch back and back. I might not have sailed all the way round the world, but when I flew home I went west again from Thailand. Not back east. Now I'm a bit confused.

Maybe the international date line takes care of this, I just lost my watch in Papette (Tahiti), so have no reliable memory of exactly what happened when I crossed it, but if you assume that every day contains one sunrise and one sunset

I've missed one. I only get to be 33 on the 4th.

I'm doing my nut in here just thinking about it, since ultimately except for relativity time its self doesn't change and, trust me on this, sailing boats do not move at relativistic velocities. However I've still seen one less day than you lot, even if some the days I did see were a bit longer than yours.

Made you think didn't I, and I didn't even get sidereal on your ass?

On no account is this to be discussed with the Varndean College Physics Dept.

Tom

THE ALLURE OF A LURE, ON A TRIPLE WORD SCORE



The MK 2 in action

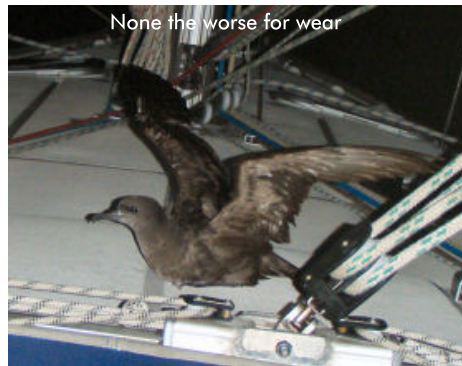
Well I hope that's how you spell it. There are a few minor problems on board, and 2 major ones. The Minor one I'm alluding to is we've run out of fishing lures. The last one went a few days ago and was replaced by Al and my home made contraption. All yachties seem to use the fake plastic squid to catch fish, since we ran out of them we've been making our own out of a weight a hook with a bit of a blue and white striped plastic bag shredded into tentacles all held together with gaffer tape. Given we haven't actually caught a fish in a week on a proper one we weren't entirely hopeful. Al and Christian then modified the mark one lure with some tinfoil.

The mark 2 proved is worth immediately, catching a Dorado within the hour. Fresh fish tastes so good at this point. We wanted more so it went straight back out. Within 5 minutes the line was streaking off the reel again. This time it was big. Seriously big. It jumped out of the water behind us, about 5 or 6 foot long Blue Marlin the kind you see hanging next to photos of Americans by sports fishing boats with moustaches and cheesy grins. Huge fish.

Unfortunately we only have a bit of 50lb line, the rest is 20lb. You've not got a

snowballs chance in hell of landing a fish that size on a 20lb line on a boat doing 5 knots + with the sails rigged for downwind its very hard to stop. It got away, but we built another mark 2 lure and a little later caught a bird. Their bloomin good these plastic bags. The bird was hauled in (pecking viciously) and left to its own devices on the cabin roof. After a break it flew off apparently none the worse for wear.

Yesterday was therefore pretty eventful, additionally there was a bad smell in my



None the worse for wear

cabin. I thought the cans of food on the boat had all been reorganised a week ago. I didn't realise there were any left under my floor. The joy of finding food we didn't know we had was seriously tempered by the rotting maggot infested remains of a tin of Vienna chicken sausages that had burst. The smell was dreadful and the clear up operation seriously unpleasant. So much so we had to wash the experience down with a bottle of wine and some olives. The olives we're an unexpected bonus. We thought we didn't have any, they had to be de-maggoted. Don't think they'll let me have that in scrabble. Yes I've been forced to play scrabble this crossing is that dull. I've even

won twice now. I've never won a game of scrabble before. Even with the maggots it was a good day, we made good progress and ate better than we expected (chicken noodle soup and my home made bread for lunch, fresh breaded dorado with garlic mayo and lime juice for a snack, followed by fried spam, mash potatoes and gravy for dinner. With tinned fruit de-magotted of course to finish off).

The bottle of wine and to a lesser extent scrabble are synonymous with the two major problems we have that I mentioned before. It was the last bottle of wine.

Problem 1: We've no more booze on board.

Problem 2: We've no more booze on board.

I know technically these are the same thing, but its so important I thought I'd mention it twice. Stone cold sober, after three weeks at sea, even I will play scrabble.



Mother, brother, secret lover

DITCH CRAWLING (THE PANAMA CANAL)

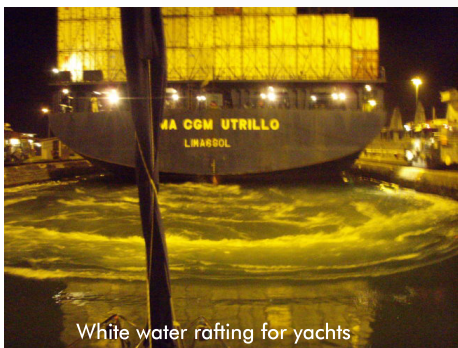
I actually went through twice, once a board Scratch and again on Jackal. Scratch can be described as an intercontinental ballistic cruising boat. This is a small subset of yachts for the impatient cruiser. Think of an open 60, like Kingfisher, Dame Mad Ellen Wench's famous boat. It was fast bit also set up so one person can handle it. Every now and again people build cruisers using some of the same ideas. Scratch is one of these, sixty foot an and very powerful. The rules of the Panama Canal are, you must have a Skipper, 4 line handlers and a Pilot. I was extra help.

Both transits started at night, about 9:00pm. Which is a shame because Gatun Locks are right on the edge of the Caribbean. The front of one lock is the rear of the next. 3 giant steps up to Gatun Lake. If your sharing the lock with a ship then you are put in after it , resulting in a fabulous view back down the Caribbean. At night this is ruined. On the other side your at the back of the locks again so you can't see over the gate and down. Also they're split into 2 sections. So you can't see the Pacific from the Top.

On both occasions we stopped over night in Gatun Lake just inside the locks. Scratch anchored but we were tied to a buoy. In a very odd way.

We were told the Pilot would be there at 6:00am to take us through the rest of the canal. Mind you that's what they told us on Scratch too, and he got there at 7:30, the night pilot said it would probably be actually 7:00

We were woken by the pilot actually tuning up at 6:00am! Fortunately pilot boats are noisy and have hooters. Though not like these hooters



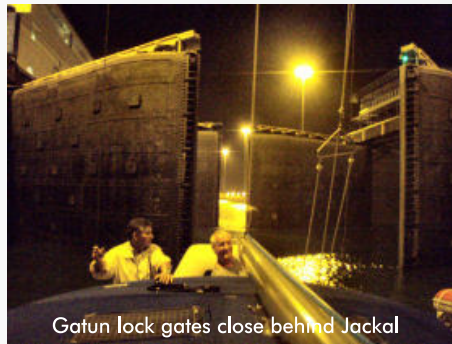
White water rafting for yachts

right, found on a mannequin in Panama City's bus station.

Off we went through the banana boat channel. A shallower narrower channel through Gatun Lake. Before you think "canal" in the English ditch crawling way,

remember Gatun Lake is half the canal, at the time of construction the largest body of man made water in the world. Its huge. Dead trees sprout out of it from the old primary forest.

After the lake is the narrow cut through the continent. This is in the process of being widened at present to accommodate



Gatun lock gates close behind Jackal

bigger ships, bigger locks are being planned too. They'll not be ready any time soon, so the canal will make it to 100 years old before its upgrade, 100 years before a major upgrade is hellish impressive. Actually the French started a Canal, before the current one, but it didn't get far the remains are virtually indistinguishable from Colon harbour.

The cut was busy, on both trips, its narrow, the banks are cluttered with diggers, scoops, barges and dredgers. Tugs are ferrying the spoil barges around and people keep pointing Panamax (Ships built deliberately to the maximum size of the canal's locks) ships at you.



At the largest cutting of the canal is a new bridge. Just beyond it is the first lock down towards the Pacific. Pedro Miguel Locks. There are twin locks throughout the canal, so ships can go up and down

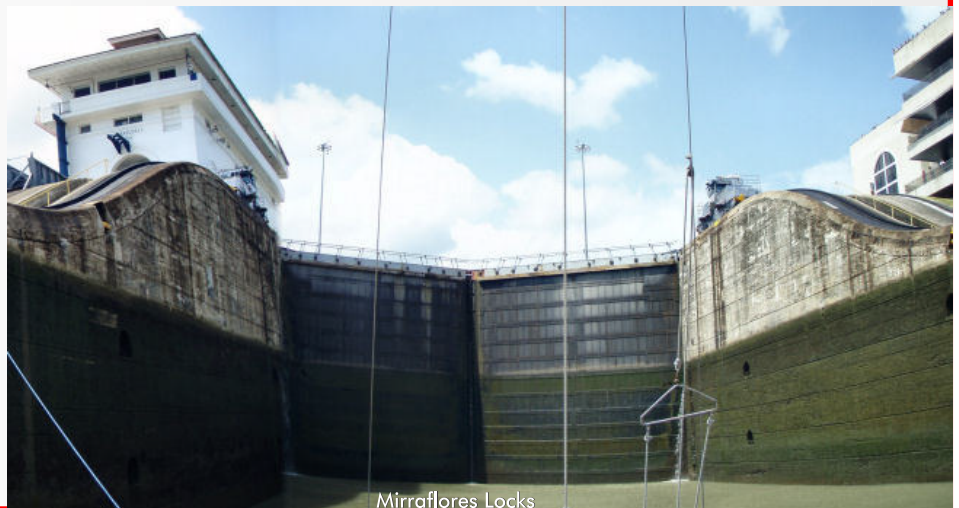
simultaneously. They can be both used in the same direction. A car carrier exited the southern lock Atlantic bound, the container ship the northern, also coming up. We were busy rafting up three yacht (my opinion of the seamanship and manners of the middle one is un publishable). There were 3 other rafts of yachts prepping to go down too. Two boat loads of tourists over took us as all this was going on and a tug rushed by. Scary stuff.

The down locks are relatively straight forward, yachts or yacht rafts lock centre chamber, with 4 lines running out to hold them in place. All you do is ease out slack as the water goes down. Going up is a different story. The water runs in through culverts in the base of the lock chambers. This kicks up turbulence. White water rafting for yachts. If your sharing a lock with a ship its moored to small railway engines at all corners (sometimes 2 to a corner). These run on rails up the lock. Despite this they run their main screws to push them forward. This is like sloshing water in a giant bath, and were talking one big bath, these locks are huge.

After exiting the final set of locks at Mirrafloros, you're into the pacific. The really entrance to the pacific is the bridge of the Americas. This, until the new bridge was built since last time I came through in 99, this was the only connection between North and South America, bar a swing bridge at Gatun, which given the traffic on the canal can't be terribly use full.

Panama is the crossroads of the world, the only connection between North and South America, and the Atlantic an Pacific oceans.

Its a hell of a gate way to the Pacific Ocean.



Mirrafloros Locks

ITS NOT A SUICIDAL GESTURE

RIDING A BUS IN GRENADA

10 things you always wanted to ask about riding busses in Grenada, but were afraid to ask.

Shamelessly stolen from Caribbean compass magazine, in 1999, article by Ray Goodwin, S/V Beauty and the Beast. (Without permission)

1) How do I know a bus from a taxi?

Easy. Taxis have air conditioning and are full of tourists while buses have the windows open and loud music blaring out of them. Buses rely on their speed to for air conditioning while Taxis, with their load of two or maybe 3 very pale tourists, actually have a working air conditioner. Taxis also cost ten to twenty times more.

2)What are the qualifications of a driver?

The driver must be young, may have long dreadlocks, have supreme athletic abilities and knowledge of the roads in order to dodge cars, people, and animals, not to mention the ability to pass and driver on roads built for one car only. He must also have a abiding love of loud reggae music.

3) How many brakes are there on a bus and which is used first?

You probably didn't know this but there are two: one the driver uses his foot to

apply and the other he uses his hand. And of course the hand use of the horn is the first "brake" that any self-respecting driver used first.

4) How fast do these buses go?

Right exactly on the edge of going to fast for the conditions of the road yet fast enough to scare the living daylight out of you the first time you ride one. There are occasions when the driver will slow down: such as when he wants to check out a pretty woman or when the he is communicating with some one with the horn. One sure way that he will drive slow is when he has a pretty girl sitting next to him. He wants to prolong the experience as long as possible.

5) What are the qualifications of the conductor? (you know the guy who takes the money)

Vast mathematical skill for sure but certainly the ability to make change and keep track of who has paid while careening down the highway looking g for more passengers for an already full bus. But the most important qualifications is a very narrow behind. After all, the seat he sits on while hanging out of the window in pursuit of filling the bus, is often taken by someone, and he must merely jump in a squeeze into what ever is left.

6) Will I be able to take my propane bottle to the filling station.

No problem mon!

7) How loud will the music be playing?

the rule of thumb for the driver is to turn the music up until to where it just distorts and then turn it back down just a bit. This will allow to your enjoyment of some very good reggae music to be bouncing around in your brain for a long time after you have gotten off the bus.

8) Do I pay when I get on, or when I get off, or at some other time?

Not to worry. Pay any time you are not holding of for dear life or when the conductor (remember ,he is the one with the smallest butt) is not looking out of the window at some backyard or for more passengers to squeeze onto the bus. So that makes it probable that you will pay when you get off. And don't worry about being over charged. It just doesn't happen (unlike the Taxis -Ed).

9) So how do I let the driver know where or when I want to get off?

That's an easy one. Just rap on any metal part of the roof or side often bus. But remember to knock precisely between the the drumbeat of the reggae music or you will miss your drop.

10) And now for the big question. How many people does a Grenadian bus hold?

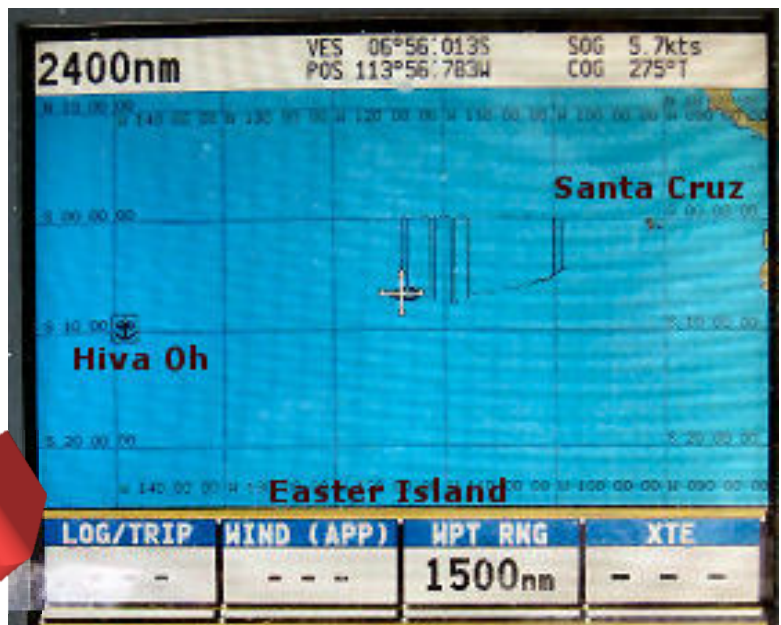
Two More.

PARTY INVITE

The party is on Jackal Position, 6°56'N 113°56'W. Car parking can be found at Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz, Galapagos Equador, 1500Nm West North West of the Party or at Atuona, Hiva Oh, Marquasas, Polynesia Francais 1500Nm West South West of the Party. There are no public transport links, but at a pinch you could land the Space Shuttle at Easter Island a mere 1200Nm South of the Party. Bring a bottle cos we're running out. Party starts at the 1500Nm to go mark.

Food will be monkey nuts, marine pizza (tortias for a base), fresh bread and whatever tins we have. We've no eggs left for making a cake, sorry.

HANDY PARTY MAP



All this and more can be found on:

<http://www.oceanhippie.net>

but with better pictures.

What next? Well French Polynesia, Nuie, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Australia.

Then ? I dunno? Some dry land would be good.....

KNOW YOUR ENEMY A GUIDE TO OCEAN SAILORS

BLUE WATER CRUISER

The blue water cruisers have raymarine integrated-gps-chartplotter-radar-teasmaid and every other gadget under the sun. These like all marine items break, since the BWCs have more of them they spend most of the time either waiting for spares or getting professionals to fix them. Most of these gadgets take electricity, all of them carry a washing machine. So they have a generator and watermaker too. So even more to go wrong. These gadgets free them from marinas, but if they actually used them they'd run out of fuel in 2 days so they use the marina anyway, the lights all dim throughout the island when they plug in.

Cruising Grounds: Anywhere with a fully equipped marina, a good chandeliers and a raymarine agent.

Treasured Possession: The Jupyter Moon Cook Book (5 star recipes for yachts)

Yacht Types: Oyster, Halberg Rassy, Swan > 50ft
Spotting Tips: Stand outside any chandlery for an hour, the person who comes in twice in that time is a BWC.

YANKEE (OR APPALACHIAN AMERICAN)

These can be found in groups around any harbor in the Caribbean, with the obligatory radio net. This set favour the long keel, the double ender and the clipper bow. They are perpetually looking for a "weather window". A weather window is less than 15 knots for the entire planned passage. Since their favoured boat has a top speed in this wind of 0.1 of a knot, and a weather forecast that low for that long never happens, they never actually go anywhere. It is, I suppose, possible that they are actually on passage, but dinghy ashore for a beer whilst their boat is plodding along. The yankee will always know a great deal about the harbour and country they're in. Despite this they always use an agent anyway and rarely leave the marina.

Cruising Grounds: < 1000Nm from the USA.

Treasured Possession:: An in date Visa.

Yacht Types: Island Packets, long keelers and double enders, no spinnaker.

Spotting Tips: Come back a year later, the faces you recognize will be yankee's, or just turn the VHF on, they'll have a radio net.

BUDGET MARINE

It is said that after a nuclear war the only survivors will be the cockroaches. I doubt nuclear war would stop a budget cruiser. This

brand are the pinnacle of sailing evolution. Sailing is what they do. They can survive on less rice than a Viet Cong insurgent, don't work, are frequently single handed. They never enter marinas, their annual diesel supply can be carried in a single gerry can. They know absolutely everything and can fix any item on their boat for less than 50p.

Cruising Grounds: Anywhere from pole to pole on any and all navigable bodies of water and some duck ponds.

Treasured Possession:: Wind Vane steering gear
yacht Types: Steel, Ferrocement or < 35 ft
Spotting Tips: Go to any spot offering free beer. Every yotty goes to happy hour, but the table with the biggest hoard at the end will be the budget marine table.

IT-SEEMED-LIKE-A-GOOD-IDEA-AT-THE-TIME

In pubs, bars, sailing clubs and other alcohol serving establishments throughout the world, as you are reading this, normal well balanced nine to fivers are staring into a glass and thinking "I want to sail to...". These are not people who've been planning their life around crossing oceans. Many will be attempting to rent out houses, deal with banks, children, out of date car tax and other lubberly concerns from whatever odd corner of the globe they find themselves in.

Cruising Grounds: This depends on their start point and destination. They can be found only on a line drawn between the two.

Treasured Possession:: This varies, but it will be of no use what so ever on a boat, will be bulky and be in the way, having be brought along in error. e.g, a karaoke machine.

Yacht Types: Any production cruiser < 50ft

Spotting Tips: People with frowns in Internet Cafes and telephone boxes holding important looking bills or paperwork. Look for the boat without a yellow or courtesy flag.

CAT SAILOR

Will have a boat name in some way cat related, e.g. "cat man do" or "top cat", "felix" at a pinch. The sails pitch at the boat show included the spacious roll proof saloon, but failed to mention that cats go downwind at a snails pace in say... the trade winds. If you invite one to your yacht he or she will look nervous (claustrophobia) and refuse food (sea sick in the anchorage). They suffer spit personality distorter, they want to go into the marina but don't want to pay the cat supplement.

Cruising Grounds: Anywhere without finger pontoons

Treasured Possession: Torn remains of a ParaSailor™.

Yacht Types: Any thing with 2 or more hulls. Secretly they'd like 4.

*Spotting Tips: Anchored 5ft from the beach (B*****s!) you can't miss 'em.*

REGATTA

Every race boat owner dreams of some exotic location. No not the Isle of White, somewhere warm. Antigua week or the Kings cup in Thailand. Either that or they just figure that a flight to Antigua to sail every weekend is now cheaper than a Solent marina. So off they go, say good bye to their yacht club and toddle off to racing pastures new. They probably think they'll do better there too. they'll be carrying a minimum of 3 set of sails and a maximum of one gas bottle. Anchoring is archived by tying the spinnaker sheets together and attaching a fish hook to the end.

Cruising Grounds: In between the UK and Antigua

Treasured Possession: Kevlar sails that chafe really quickly on swept back spreaders.

Yacht Types: Sidneys, X-Yachts, J boats - things with 3 or more spreaders and running back stays.

Spotting Tips: Look for large groups of matching polo shirts with an aggressive boat name embroidered on them.

INTER CONTINENTAL BALLISTIC CRUISER

An open sixty can be raced round the world by a single person, albeit an insane one. Very fast. Every now and then some manufacture takes the ideas used to design these and incorporates them in a cruiser. Hunters HC50 is the latest attempt. Its not out selling Oysters just yet. But there are a certain brand of cruisers who want to get there fast. Are prepared to buy an uncomfortable boat for a high price. Impatient people.(I want one.)

Cruising Grounds: Marinas and harbours with more the 3.5 meters draft

Treasured Possession: Code zero and or water ballast.

Yacht Types: One offs (or prototypes never put into production).

Spotting Tips: Leave a harbour, pop your kite and fly it all night. The sarcastic bloke still in the bar when you left , now waiting on dock when you get in and asking "what kept you" is an ICBC.

ARE THESE THE SOUTH EAST TRADES.

Many of you may have heard the term "Trade Winds", other words like "Azores High" sometimes appear. I'm hoping we've found the south east trades that will drive to the Marquesas.

I'll try and explain, I'll start with the Atlantic, because I know it best. Around the Equator (in all oceans) lies the Inter tropical Convergence Zone aka the doldrums, abbreviated to I.T.C on the diagram. This is as mentioned an area of hot fickle weather, with thundery showers and erratic winds. Above and below it should be the trade winds. North east trades blow in the Northern Hemisphere north of the doldrums. Over simplifying they're driven by the Azores High, an area of high pressure that usually sits over the Azores, off the coast of Portugal. Wind spirals out of a high pressure in the Northern hemisphere in a clockwise direction due to the coriolis effect. In the southern hemisphere it spirals out anti clockwise. It's this high that generates a steady flow of wind from the north east at the Canaries that Yachts use to cross to the Caribbean. This is the North East Trades. The Northern Atlantic North Easterlies are some of the best examples of trade winds in the world.

South of the Equator (and the I.T.C) the rules are reversed, coriolis spins the wind the other way generating South East Trades.

This occurs in the Pacific too. Where mountain ranges and Land impose they get overridden by local effects, but out in the open ocean you should get them. We've been in the Doldrums since Panama City, the Pacific Doldrums are slightly north of the Atlantic ones. We've been sailing south west out of the Galapagos in the hope of getting out of the light, hot sticky and variable weather and into the Trades. Wind is light, but steady from the South East. Woot!. I'm

(and I suspect I'm not the only one) praying that this is the trades and we'll get some steady wind.

This phenomenon also explains why England is so wet, and Cape Horn is so miserable. The UK is north of the Azores High. So it's tending to get warm Caribbean air that's come North of the Azores High, generating the Warm Wet weather we all know and love.



STEALTH

We found a movie on board. Called "Stealth". Now I've seen some complete tosh in my time, and, when your being rained on "like Manchester" to quote Al, have been at sea for a week and have 2 more at least, probably three to go anything that will pass the time is good.

This movie was still appalling. How this even went straight to video I cannot imagine. Imagine a movie where Mark Hamill's acting might actually improve it. Though having ones feet burnt off by the Spanish Inquisition while watching it might actually improve it.

There are three pilots, and Eddie the UAV. Rather like Eddie the shipboard computer from the HHG2G. Only worse. The computer is however the best actor in it. One of the pilots is a girl one white male and one black male. Guess which one gets killed.

To quote South Park "we need one Black person to come along in case someone has to sacrifice them selves to save the mission"