

18-4-68

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Durban Yacht Safe After Nightmare Trip Up Coast

SHIPPING REPORTER

NEWS that the 37ft. Durban ketch, Miss Conduct, had reached Lourenco Marques safely after a nightmare trip, was received in Durban yesterday only hours after Durban's Port Captain had put out a call to all shipping between Durban and the Portuguese port to look out for her.

The alert was sent out after a friend of Mr. Ernie Smith, skipper of the yacht, had reported the craft overdue in Lourenco Marques. It had sailed from Durban on April 4.

About midday yesterday Mr. Smith's sister-in-law, Mrs. Liz Hartman, received a letter from her sister, Mrs. Lilian Smith, who is on the yacht with her husband, 16-year-old son Gerald, two South Africans, Sally Webber and a man with the christian name of Roland, and a New Zealander with the first name of Bill.

The letter had been delivered by a friend on the American freighter, African Comet.

LEAKS IN GALE

Mrs. Smith wrote that when they left Durban there was no wind and they had to use their motor. That night they struck an easterly gale which whipped up the seas.

Her son Gerald, as well as the New Zealander, Bill, and South African, Roland, were seasick—Gerald and Roland so badly so that they could not move.

The yacht was being bounced around in the heavy seas, and leaks developed in the bilge pump and oil pressure gauge, and the jib sail was ripped by a winch.

The oil was leaking from the motor profusely and in their efforts to clean it up, 100 yards of mutton cloth and five towels were used.

The bilge pump was finally repaired, and the mess in the yacht cleaned up. All the oil for the motor was finished, however, and they had to rely on

the wind to move them.

They were only about 40 miles from Durban and were heading back to port to have the engine repaired when the easterly wind changed to south-westerly and they had to head for Lourenco Marques again.

Most of the days were spent tacking out to sea in daylight and then coming in close to the shore at night to keep out of the shipping lanes.

KNOCKED OVERBOARD

During a bad storm a couple of nights later the New Zealander, Bill, was knocked overboard by a swinging boom, and was very lucky to be able to grab a railing and be pulled aboard. The yacht was blown out into the shipping-lanes and ships were passing on all sides.

The following morning they sighted the fishing vessel *Marianne* and called for help. As the fishing boat was coming alongside to give them some oil it collided with the yacht, breaking the bowsprit and damaging the port side.

The yacht managed to motor on to Lourenco Marques, but ran out of fuel in the bay, where they lay for two days waiting for a wind.

SWAMPED

The yacht finally got into the yacht basin at Lourenco Marques, but that was not the end of their troubles. The crew went ashore for dinner and on returning to the yacht later that night, found that the tide had gone out and Miss Conduct was lying on her side completely swamped.