

# Solo sailor found on deserted island after storm

DURBAN. — Lone yachtsman Anthony Steward, missing for the past 10 days in his attempt to be the first to circumnavigate the globe in an open boat, has been found alive and well on a deserted atoll about 200 miles north of Madagascar.

The circumnavigator telephoned his fiancée Port Elizabeth yesterday,

saying his boat **NCS Challenger** had been wrecked.

He said he was caught in a severe storm on July 13, and the Challenger was knocked flat and her mast and sails ripped off. Everything on board, including his radio and electronic navigation system, was destroyed.

The yachtsman said the storm raged for five days, with gale-force winds of between 30 and 40 knots.

## Washed up

He drifted helplessly, not knowing where he was, until the battered Challenger was washed ashore on a deserted sand

atoll about 200 miles north of Madagascar.

He told his fiancée, Sue Middleton, the boat was "a terrible sight". Its rudder had been smashed, and its keel damaged.

"It was a terrible sight seeing the boat being wrecked. It had carried me three-quarters of the way around the world and was incredibly tough," Mr Steward said.

There was no fresh water on the island but the yachtsman was able to collect coconuts and eat and drink from them.

He spent eight days on the atoll, awaiting rescue which arrived in the form of a Seychellois fishing boat. It was from this boat he telephoned his fiancée in Port Elizabeth.

## Delighted

Mr Steward will be taken to Farquar Island from where he will be flown to the Seychelles by light aircraft, probably today.

Mr Steward left Cape Town in February last year and has since sailed the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The Indian Ocean, however, beat him in his attempt to become the first person to circumnavigate the globe in a boat without a cabin.

His father Ron said in Durban: "We are naturally upset his dream has been shattered, but we are delighted he is safe."

Mr Steward is to marry Sue on August 29 in Port Elizabeth. — Sapa.