



The thoughts of South African yachtsmen are with *Mischief*, now on her second bid to explore the Crozet Islands, deep in the Roaring Forties. Even if all goes well it will be many weeks before the story of high endeavour far in the Southern Ocean can be told. Here is the crew, photographed in the Royal Cape basin: l. to r.: Jan Garnier, engineer; Bill Procter, second-in-command; Roger Tuft; Major H. W. Tilman, skipper; J. Lyons; James Osborne. Photo: C. Breytenbach.

Charlie, with the most experience, bore the major burden of navigation. He had proved in the past that he was capable; moreover, that he could juggle a sun line or a round of stars into something intelligible when our results would be otherwise incredible.

We each had a bag of tricks for resolving the complexities of taking accurate sights in a heavy roll, or making adequate compensation for human error and unknown current and leeway.

But leave it to a single man, accepting his methods uncritically. Even his bias, when consistent, is preferable to the results of three plots several times daily (we had seven watch periods) by three persons in various states of wakefulness and harbouring various opinions. Multiply by three sextant techniques and different degrees of arithmetic facility, and the answer is confusion in the middle of a very large ocean.

Again, there was a reciprocal proposition: the navigator held the responsibility for informing the crew of daily position, 24-hour run, and course and distance to destination. This noon recital was the real stuff of each day, for which we waited and figured privately until the "official" result blasted or confirmed our suspicions.

There was just one operational standard for the cook: leave a clean galley.

Fortunately, all three of us like to cook, and are more interested in gourmet productions than a simple, serviceable stew. But this would impose an enormous demand on one man for any length of time; hence we moved in rotation, one cook each day. The only limit on the meals he provided was the limit of his imagination, for *Tenba's* diesel stove and oven were adequate to the requirements of the best of amateur chefs.

Never, out of port, did the cook face at breakfast a sinkful of dirty dishes. In an almost tangible sense, every day was a clean slate from which the errors of the past were erased. For in a heavy seaway, there are bound to be occasions when disaster decorates the oven with a pastry or casserole. Two days of recuperation and a fresh start in a spotless galley cleansed the memory of such bitterness.

Maintenance was an aspect of daily life not liable to routine. It depended both on what the weather permitted us to do, and on what needed doing—and how badly. Generally, we looked to periods in port as days of furious maintenance, hoping to reduce the possibility of the unexpected at sea.

However, one fact stood firm. The helmsman, whether by accident or design, examines every aspect of the rig visible from the cockpit 25 to 100 times during a watch. He has formed, by the time his relief appears, a good idea of the chafe or strain that may be occurring. The rule in this case was: coming off watch, make the necessary repairs or alterations immediately. On the night watches, of course, such action might have been impossible. But we fell into the habit of mentioning the suspected area, thus establishing the right and duty of a first try in the morning.

As regards the deterioration of paint, varnish, wood and metal which plagues the operation of any ship, we preferred a thorough job in port to a hasty one at sea—unless there was a danger of breakage or loss. Human nature being what it is, a jury repair tends to be a permanent fixture.

It must be added with honesty that our observation of these rules was frequently honoured more in the breach. But the passage stands as our happiest, and most successful, to date. We sailed into the Trades, eager and ignorant, learnt a little of their fickleness, the creeping, wind-deadening squalls and shifting cloud patterns of the anti-trades.

Two weeks in the hot, bright lagoon at Cocos, anchored over glistening sand, had been spent strengthening the clews, guys and hoisting arrangement of our tradewind jibs, varnishing, tuning the engine; and enjoying the warm evenings ashore on Direction Island, moistened with cool quarts of Australian beer.

Sixteen days later, we dropped anchor in the harbour of Port Louis, Mauritius, having averaged 150 miles a day with no perceptible help from the feeble equatorial current.

The last day at sea, we left no navigational detail to chance. Two morning lines of position, a noon sight, afternoon sun line, evening stars and night latitudes as the stars made their transit across the meridian, gave Charlie a beam bearing on Flat Island light at 9 a.m., the hour of his prediction.

Brown and bursting with health, our faces stiff with sun and salt—and itchy with neglected beards—we sensed that ocean sailing had been translated to a new and more acute level of perception. The greater demand permits a greater reward, and this awareness, binding ship and crew, was ours.



SPLENDID VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD

GERRY TROBRIDGE, of Johannesburg, sailed his 15-ton 36 ft. ketch, *White Seal*, back into Durban Bay on November 25 to end round-the-world Odyssey that began from the same port in February, 1953. Additions to his crew were his wife, Marie Hickey, whom he met on skiing holiday in Canada, and daughter Tracy Lynn Trobridge, aged one year, born in Brisbane, Australia.



BOUND OUT

White Seal's log records 262 ports visited in 50,000 miles of sailing. Gerry and his wife are now back in Johannesburg. She may write a book; he will plan and work for the next voyage.

At her moorings in the Durban yacht basin, *White Seal* is in the charge of a 22-year-old Californian, David Benedict, who joined her at Tahiti.

Our pictures show three stages of the memorable voyage: *White Seal* sailing out of Durban harbour in 1953; Trobridge on deck at Detroit in 1957; and *White Seal* at peaceful moorings in the Durban yacht basin.

The whole voyage is particularly praiseworthy because Trobridge built the hard-chine boat himself from welded steel in the garden of a Johannesburg home—just as five other Rand folk are doing right now. (See Susan's Column, Page 49.) It is interesting how often people who have gone through the hardships of boat-building most often carry through successfully that dream voyage.

Anyway, all South African yachtsmen are proud of the Union's third circumnavigation since the War, carried out with good seamanship and independence of spirit.

Another arrival at Durban, two days after *White Seal*, was the Norwegian ketch *Rundo* of 19 tons, carrying Carl Petersen and Erling Brunborg. Their mainsail blew out on the passage from Mauritius and the leg to Cape Town ended, after a rough trip, early in January. The two Norwegians voted Durban "the friendliest port of all" and a splendid base for Christmas.

Rundo, 19 tons and an ex-North Sea Pilot boat, was used for a wartime escape to England, where she passed into Royal Navy service. She was in bad shape when she returned to Norwegian ownership. Petersen and Brunborg bought her for the proverbial song, and spent many months rebuilding her.

(More cruising, page 35)

SAFELY BACK

