

## FLOTSAM & JETSAM

### • Nautical Charts - down the drain ?

The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has given the modernization of nautical charts a low priority among its many services. They are having a \$20 million budget cut in '95 and charts are at the low end of their priority. There are currently 27,000 chart corrections that need to be made & the backlog is growing. This could spell the end of dozens of small craft charts & leave hundreds of others dangerously outdated.

### • U.S.S. Constellation an endangered species !

This last sailing warship built for the U.S. Navy in 1854 (moored in Baltimore) is badly in need of repairs. Its timbers are rotten and funding is urgently needed to preserve the ship. Electric pumps barely keep it afloat. The masts & rigging have all been removed - in case of a capsizing. Constellation captured slave ships in Africa (1859), delivered food to Ireland during the 1880 famine & was Flagship for the Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet during World War II.

### • Reminder !

The cartoons on the back covers of our newsletters have been through the courtesy of Paul & Melanie Halvachs. "Double Fantasy", #1826. We hope you have been enjoying them.



## From: "Twenty Years of Cruising World"

1977

### MYSTERY MEAT

As she cooked below, the smell on deck was delicious. David and I could hardly wait for the plates to be passed up to the cockpit: liver and onions and Beryl's wonderfully dry fried rice. *Tzu Hang* ghosted along close-hauled in only a breath of wind, toward a dim light that blinked on the coast a few miles ahead.

"That was a wonderful meal," David said later.

"More?" suggested Beryl.

"Yes, please," he said enthusiastically, and I passed my plate to Beryl just as eagerly.

Next day we failed to make another rendezvous on time, and Beryl asked us what we'd like for supper. "I don't suppose

that we could have the same as we had last night?" asked David. "It was delicious."

"Oh, of course," Beryl replied.

Next day we arrived at Musseina'a, and instead of Beryl's cooking we had a meal ashore with the Bedouin Legion under the walls of their fort; a whole sheep, cooked with mounds of rice, and eaten with the fingers round a communal dish. We sailed the following morning and could just make out David, standing by the two Land Rovers, parked below the walls of the Beau Geste fort and waving his red and white checked headcloth in farewell.

It was some days later, when Beryl and I were talking about

our sail with David and how much we enjoyed it, that she said, "I've got to tell you something. That fried liver and onions that you both enjoyed so much. It was cat food."

"It was *what*?"

"It was Whiskas cat food." You know the case of cat food we got in Aden. The label said it was 'best beef liver for cats' and cats are so choosy I thought it *had* to be good."

"How *ghastly*," I cried. "For heaven's sake don't ever give it to me again."

"But it was an emergency. I hadn't been expecting to cook you a meal." And then she turned to the cat. "Isn't he stupid?" she said to him.

MILES SMEETON



Jeff Johnson ("Moondance", #2955) Reports on the IFR in Europe

23 August 1994  
Houston, Texas

Hi Sid,

Here is the first installment of our story about the Vega IFR. (International Friendship Regatta). It was a really special trip. I hoped to get the story to you more quickly, and will send more as soon as I can. Please let me know what you think about trying to get some photos from the event into our newsletter?

Now some news from the VODA business meeting. I was invited to sit as the US representative at their meeting. There were two or three items I would like to bring to your attention.

1. VODA finances: VODA is asking for a small contribution from affiliate clubs to unravel expenses of VODA operation. Currently these are being paid for by individual members; eg, Lars Lemby & Per Wasberg. The amount discussed was in the neighborhood of 50¢ per member. Take it up with Lars if you think we should or could help out.

2. A motion for a common Vega club flag was made. There was quite some discussion on this matter, with no immediate conclusion - As you know, they do have our burgee.

3. There was a question of membership count that I couldn't accurately answer. I think our roster should be sent to VODA & affiliate clubs if not already done so.

The group at the IFR is really a great bunch. It was really like a big family. We should try to promote communication with our European Vega Neighbors & strengthen our friendly ties.

As ever,



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**Do you have access to a computer scanner?**

Photographs do not Xerox well.. They need to be "half toned". This can be done by computer scanning & then printing the output. If you can do this please tell Sid Rosen. Our newsletter would be much more interesting!

(Continued)

August 22, 1994

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Dear Sid,

Lily and I have recently returned from the VODA's International Friendship Regatta (IFR), held in the Stockholm archipelago. I want to tell you and the Newsletter readers about the fantastic sailing and wonderful people we made friends with in Sweden. In this note, I'll give you the story from the first third of the trip, and then in later correspondence the remainder. I would also like to publish some photographs from the trip, if possible. Let me start with a little background.

Last fall, Lars Lemby, president of the Vega One Design Association (VODA) sent an open invitation to all Vega sailors to attend the IFR in '94. The Newsletter readers no doubt remember the letter from Lars you published last fall. We sent Lars a letter indicating interest in attending, and he found us a Swedish couple to host us for the IFR. So, after some correspondence with our hosts, Borje and Gunilla Isaksson, we packed for a sailing adventure and headed to Sweden on 9 July.

We arrived in Stockholm on 10 July, the day before we were to meet the Isakssons. We settled into a hotel downtown and walked the city to sightsee and get accustomed to the new time. Stockholm has several waterways passing through the city, all originating from the same source, Lake Malaran, which is also the source of the city's water. We were told that, during the season, one can catch salmon from city bridges. Stockholm is also the point where the Malaran flows into the Baltic sea. There is a low dam in the city, and on an adjacent water way, a lock for pleasure boats to pass. Stockholm, the city on the water is very charming, beautiful, and clean.

In the morning on the 11th., we go to our prearranged meeting place: in front of the old city hall, on the north shore of the Malaran. We spot the stars and strips flying from the starboard flag halyard of a Vega; it must be Medisa, the Isaksson's Vega. We exchange greetings, load our gear while Gunilla goes to buy some fresh bread, and then head for the starting place of the IFR, some 30 miles to the tiny island of Skansholmen.

The trip to Skansholmen takes most of the day. We motor at first through the relatively narrow waterways passing through Stockholm and neighboring towns. Later in the day we sail into a brisk southerly.



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We arrive at Skansholmen and joined the raft of 50 Vegas, rafted 5 deep. What a sight, all those Vegas in front of the little rotund fort of Dalaroskans. We are just in time for the opening of the IFR. The flags of all participating countries, 7 in all, are hoisted and general announcements are made. Then a toast of champagne and introductions for some of the special foreign guests. At this point I am surprised, and somewhat embarrassed to tell you, that we are the first Vega sailors from the U.S. to attend an IFR! We finally meet Lars Lemby, and are warmly greeted by him and other enthusiastic and friendly Vega sailors. Several people we met asked about you Sid, not the least of which were Lars Lemby and Diane Webb

After mingling with the participants, we were presented with a buffet dinner of salmon, beef, smoked reindeer, and various salads and breads. As evening approached many people moved to the little tavern that is part of Dalaroskans where someone played piano while others danced.

The next day, 12 July, started the IFR activities, the first of which was a race to the island of Biskopson. There were 3 classes of boats, 6 that raced with spinnakers, 23 that raced in the cruising class (no spinnaker) and the remaining 20 or so that made their own way to the next destination. The race courses were designed by the race committee, and are unique to this archipelago. The turning marks are islands or large rocks. The course from one mark to the next is often not a straight line. There is usually some obstacle that one must decide on how to pass. The race courses here are more demanding, and interesting than the ones most (U.S.) Vega sailors are used to.

The islands of the archipelago are very beautiful and unique. Many of the islands show an exposure of rock smoothed by glacial activity from the last ice age. Some of the islands have pictographs etched on these rocks by the Vikings, and their predecessors. The foliage is often somewhat sparse, the conifer being the most likely tree to inhabit an island. Many of the larger islands have the forest floor covered with blueberry bushes. Parts of the archipelago are a sort of National Park, and as such are protected from various forms of human activity. Most of the islands are uninhabited, and a few have rudimentary facilities for visiting sailors. The facilities may offer outhouses, trash barrels, and local aids to navigation. These facilities are maintained by island caretakers, some of which live on the island year round. The caretakers are, in part, supported by a Foundation that promotes the preservation of the islands.

Sailing in Baltic waters was a pleasant surprise for me. The islands are numerous, but not too lofty, so the water is usually calm and the breezes steady enough. Also, since the Baltic has only a relatively small opening to the North Sea and thence to the other Oceans of the world, it has very little tidal range, and very little salt in its waters. Finally, the magnetic variation here is almost zero, so your compass reads the true cardinal points.

If my description of the sailing in the Stockholm archipelago leads you to believe that it is an ideal sailing area, its true!



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As the race ends, Medisa finishes third in class. We then slowly motor into the snug little inlet at Biskopson, which is almost filled with Vegas. The standard mooring procedure for the archipelago is to deploy an anchor off the stern and tie the bow off to a tree or rock on the shore. Every Vega has a small boarding ladder that hangs off the bow pulpit, which enables you to step to shore with little effort, at the same time stay dry. Once the boat is secured, its time for a little "anchor drink", as they say.

Borje and Gunilla take us for a walk to the other side of the island where there is an island caretaker that sells smoked fish. There being no path known to us, we make our way over high and through low parts of the island. We soon come to a pasture that has approximately ten deer grazing. We then see the buildings where the caretaker lives and works. After buying 2 perch, 2 flounder and chatting with the caretaker awhile, we head back to Medisa for a meal of these very special cold smoked fish, potatoes, salad and wine.

After dinner, we make our way up to a rock hill on the other side of the inlet, where the group is meeting for evening activities. Lars and the event organizers announce race results and present prizes. After this, some sing and drink, while others talk and watch the sun slowly glide beneath the horizon. "What time is it?" I ask, "Its 2340." is the reply. It does not seem possible! The days are so long, the air is so clear, and these is so much to do that time passes quickly. Even though, there is the distinct feeling that one could go on with the party well into the night, into the next day, and the next, and so on.

That's all for now. Keep looking for the story, we have four more days sailing the IFR to tell about....

Until next time

Jeff



**New stern ventilators:**

Someone recently inquired about replacement stern ventilators. They were available from Vega Marin AB two years ago at the prices listed. The cost would be more today.

Aft deck vent: #763 - 70.00 Krone  
Cockpit vent : #765 - 30.00 "

**† Vega Marin AB**

Smithska 8

S421 66V Frolunda  
Sweden

Tel : 011-46-31-2951  
Fax : 4631-29-2449



763

Vega Marin prefers to receive their orders by FAX

## Retirement Cruise in our Vega

by John Sprague. July 26, 1994



Lois and I retired in the summer of 1993 and took off on a cruise on Sept 15th. We left from Lake Ontario, across the Erie Canal in New York State, down the Hudson River, around New Jersey, then the classic Intracoastal route to Florida, across the Okeechobee waterway to St. Petersburg - then the Everglades and the Florida Keys. We managed to poke around for 10 1/2 months and 4700 nautical miles - returning by the same route with different stopping points. Not an unusual or dangerous trip but a great thrill for us. The trip did have its moments of pounding, rolling and heeling. We had storms and wind in Lake Ontario, Delaware & Chesapeake Bays, and the New Jersey shore. We picked our times for mild weather in the Gulf of Mexico, Florida Bay, and the reefs south of the Keys.

Everyone knows that the Vega is a good boat for Cruising and after spending almost a year aboard, we agree. The biggest advantages we found were: (1) it sails well; (2) seaworthy and safe; (3) relatively shallow draft; (4) economical to motor; (5) comfortable to live on; and (6) small by today's standards.

We blessed the 4-foot draft hundreds of times on the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) and Florida Bay. We talked to and traveled with people drawing 6 or 6 1/2 feet and it must have been a nightmare in the shoal parts of the ICW. We watched such a boat from Canada heel over as the tide went out at the place it was aground in S. Carolina. A Danish boat with a 6-foot draft followed us all one day as we scouted depths for them and talked on an open VHF channel that was little used. Yesterday as the Coast Guard warned of a "dangerous thunderstorm" approaching, we sneaked into Sandy Bay off Lake Ontario - a wonderful anchorage with great swimming, and an entrance channel showing 4.2 feet on the depth sounder.

Motoring economy was great because we did a lot of motoring in the channels of the ICW. If we had to motor all day it only cost us \$3 or \$4. It made us feel better about the giant powerboats which have us such nasty wakes, when we thought about the hundreds of dollars needed to fill their tanks.

The "small" size is great, we feel more strongly about that after being aboard for almost a year. We only saw 11 or 12 sailboats making long cruises, that were as small as our Vega or smaller. The Vega is easy to handle, rig, anchor, etc. And since we stayed in Marinas a lot (rather to our surprise) the charge of about \$1.00 for each of the 27 feet was tolerable. Paying for, say a 37-foot boat would certainly have upset us.

### Modifications for cruising

Our Vega served us well for summer-holiday cruising for over 12 years, but we added four important things: (1) A Dinghy-Tow; (2) bimini; (3) storage; and (4) bikes.

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"Dinghy Tow" is commercially available (see ads in back of "Cruising World"). It is an arrangement of two arms on the stern of the boat that lift the stern of the dinghy and tow it backwards. This is a tremendous system for inflatable dinghies. I never have to lift the outboard motor on or off. The dinghy can be launched in 30 seconds. We have towed through all kinds of rough water and never a problem. With this system you just forget about the dinghy. Before we had this rig, I once lost a hard dinghy which swamped in big waves while being towed. After that I went through the agony of rolling up the inflatable and tying it on deck for each day of travel.

Some sort of sun-shade is essential for the cockpit in the southern sun. Several Vega members offered plans for sunshades a couple of years ago. We adapted Norman Meissner's bimini idea. When we met him in Florida he took us to his secret source of inexpensive biminis. Norman mounts his behind the backstay. We put ours ahead of the backstay with the mainsheet removed and the boom tied to the backstay. So, to sail with the mainsail, we have to fold back the bimini and lose the shade. However, a lot of our travel on the ICW was motorsailing with the genoa. The bimini was a necessity for Lois since the hot sun is devastating for her.

For storage, we took out the Vee-berth bunks. A second chain-locker was added astern of the original one. That gave us two anchors rigged to go on two bow rollers. Astern of the added locker are some bins for water jugs, laundry, and other junk. The rest of the port side is now hanging locker - finally enough space in addition to the original "toy" hanging locker. The starboard side has a storage bin for sensitive stuff, then a bin for boots, hoses and cables. On the top of the wall we have a cabin heater. A rack for long items is above the cupboard.

Folding bicycles are scarcely a boat modification but they made an incredible difference in our mode of exploring on land and for shopping. We carried them on deck in bags by the shrouds.

These things made cruising a lot more pleasant. However, the increased space meant no bunks for our children when they visited during the winter. (one brave daughter slept in the cockpit or on the cabin floor.) Another comforting addition was a GPS which was very useful a few times: crossing Florida Bay with shoals and tidal current; fog off New Jersey and in a South Carolina sound with 1 1/2 knots of tidal current. We also followed other Vega members by making seats for the top of the cockpit coaming - much easier on the behind during long trips.

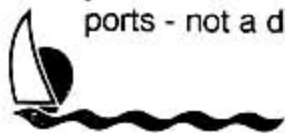
#### Random impressions on a Southern Cruise -

- Biggest benefits: (a) Fun! (b) No time to fret about being newly retired. (c) Physical well being - I lost 38 excess pounds and increased my jogging distance from 3 to 5 kilometers.
- Most exotic anchorage: Little Shark River in the Everglades. Only us, the mangroves, the water birds, and dolphins in the morning splashing along the shores. Put on nine nautical miles at anchor from the tidal current.



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- Worst night: in Cattle Pen Creek (honest!) in the marshes of Georgia. That day we killed 135 deerflies while traveling. At dusk the mosquitoes came and we had to close off with the netting. It was hot as a furnace and not a breath of breeze into the cabin. Then 30,000 no-see-ums came through the screens and bit us all night even though we mopped them off the ceiling by hundreds.
- Best sails: Fifty miles on one broad reach, halfway along the Florida Keys from Key Largo to Marathon - usually in six feet of water (sometimes 5 to 7 feet). Other good t sails were wing-on- wing across Albermarle Sound, surfing in the Chesapeake and a spinnaker run down the Indian River in Florida.
- Biggest sailing boo-boo: Cutting in front of an incoming freighter as we crossed the Savannah River. We knew we had lots of room, so why did they give us five whistle blasts, come outside the bridge and shake their fists at us, and offer a (polite lecture on VHF)
- Biggest paper tiger: Running aground. We are accustomed to sailing Georgian Bay, Lake Huron. When you go aground on one of the Thirty thousand islands or the equally numerous shoals, you lose a chunk of boat on the pink granite. Eventually we learned about east coast and southern mud, and became casual about running aground as a method of exploring an anchorage.
- Most mind-expanding: Visits to fascinating and impressive U.S. towns and cities along the east coast that we previously knew nothing about. Also, the wonder of barrier islands stretching along five states, and cruising day after day of cord-grass marsh in the Carolinas and Georgia.
- Most enlightening: The friendliness and helpfulness of people all along the way. Offers to wait while we used their snorkel gear, offers of drives to grocery stores, etc. (As far as we remember, the only rude person in the U.s.A. owns a marina on Sanibel Island.)
- Biggest surprise: New Yorkers are thoughtful and helpful! During a week there, we often stared in confusion at our subway maps or guidebooks and usually somebody stopped and asked if they could help.
- Warmest feelings: Meeting some other members of the Vega Association , whom we had written to in earlier years. Bill & Janet Etheridge in Virginia and Norman \* Charlotte Meissner in Florida - a picnic, lunch, dinner & sail. We reached Sid Rosen's territory at the wrong time when he was on holiday. We wanted to contact others, but often by the time we comprehended geographic location and people, we had passed.,.
- Nicest town to visit as a tourist: Probably Charleston, South Carolina - with its history, old buildings, interesting plantations and swamp-walks. Or maybe St.. Augustine, Florida for the same reasons, despite all the tourist shops.
- Astonishing absence of bureaucracy: The U.S.A. allowed us to enter with a phone call - no inspection of documents or boat contents. We got a cruising permit for one year. We were required to check in by phone with U.S. Customs as we reached major ports - not a difficult task. We thought this was very open and generous.

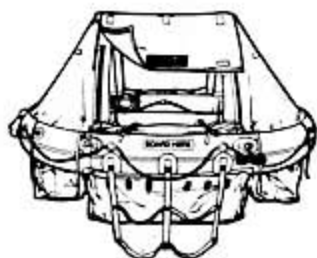


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*Send us your news !*



- Saddest sights on land: (a) Abandoned old mills and factories in upstate New York. The towns died a little when the mills did. (b) The downtown decay in some cities.
- Encouraging sight on land: The wonderful rebuilding in Baltimore around the inner harbour.
- Dirtiest harbour tie-up: Judging by the ring around the hull, it was Annapolis, Maryland.
- Noisiest tie-up: Many places had noisy "music" blasting from waterfront bars. But the inner harbour at Annapolis ("Ego Alley") takes first prize due to booming exhausts of "muscle" boats at 1 a.m., loud-talking dock walkers, etc.
- Most startling floating object: We saw a lot of strange boats but the most stunning one was when we were cruising out the channel of Cumberland Sound at the top of Florida. Cruising in the channel was a nuclear submarine, black & mean looking with a mighty wake. We gave it the right-of-way.
- Saddest floating object: In a hippie-type bay in Key West, a Vega which looked permanently tied up and probably aground in mud. It was being used as a place to live, with assorted paraphernalia piled around the deck.
- Worst spoken English: The gentleman reading weather forecasts on NOAA VHF. They must receive careful training on how to garble words together. [In Canada, the alternate technique used by the Coast Guard radio is to carefully select people with broad Scottish accents, newly arrived immigrants from Bulgaria, etc.]
- Reassuring environmental sign: Pump outs available for our holding tank, all the way to the Florida Keys. We had been told that they were almost non-existent in the south, but the opposite was true. Sometimes the pump out was free!
- Most depressing environmental sign: Gigantic problems of ecological change in the Everglades because humans have drained and diverted water. Even Florida Bay suffers from increased salinity, death of sea-grasses and creatures that depend on the grass.
- Top birding site: The Everglades in general are still amazing for birds. The single best site was an evaporated pond for treated wastewater at the settlement of Flamingo, which had everything from a scissor-tailed flycatcher to a scarlet ibis. We saw 218 species of birds on the trip, 68 of which I had never seen before.
- Dolphin surprises: Sometimes they swam at our bow as is common. But on three separate occasions they somehow "leaned" on our rudder for 4 or 5 seconds and we wondered what was wrong with the steering. After one such event, the dolphin leaped up beside the stern of the boat and looked us over. I have never heard of this before. Lois talked with trainers at various dolphinariums and a possible explanation is that male dolphins will try out all sorts of submerged objects for mating purposes. Does anyone have an explanation?



## Tony Skidmore Sails to Hawaii

29th June 1994

Sid Rosen  
10615 Whitman Circle  
Orlando, Florida 32821

Dear Sid:

It is been a long time since I made a contribution to our newsletter, however I am now officially retired and making use of the boat. Hopefully you will hear more from me! I retired at the end of April, moved on board May 7th, & have been underway ever since. For the last eleven years I have sailed locally in the Pacific Northwest; with no constraints on time, however I decided to head south to warmer waters.

After a hauling for bottom paint in Sidney, loading stores & taking care of all the endless details I sailed from Pecher bay on 25th May & made a 32 day crossing to Honolulu. Because of skirting the north Pacific high the distance sailed was 3300 miles. The weather was conventional for this time of the year. The trip was uneventful & utterly delightful!

As usual when cruising there were times of abject misery - but always balanced with times of pure joy! Day after day running before the North East trades; the routine of being at sea on an extended passage; scheming up ambitious meals; reading; listening to music - total solitude probably the biggest joy of all!

The boat coped effortlessly with whatever was asked of it and as ever impresses one with its toughness. We had several days of strong headwinds south of Cape Flattery, but reefed down, the boat just kept hammering along. As always, the limiting factor is how much the crew can take. Where the Vega really excels of course is in downwind sailing. The Northeast trade winds varied from gentle days when it never blew harder than 10 knots to boisterous days with a steady 25 knots and sea to match. Without pushing the best days run was 130 miles; with more aggressive sailing there is no doubt that we could have covered 150 miles.

"Lorna Doone" has been much modified in the eleven years that I have owned her. Modifications relative to sailing offshore are as follows:

- Mast support : The section modules of the simply supported beam carrying the mast compression has been doubled.
- Windows : The standard windows have been replaced with Lexan secured by stainless steel sheet metal frames.



"Lorna Doone"  
Ala Wai, Honolulu



(Continued)

- Standing rigging : A removable inner forestay & running backstays have been added. The storm jib remains hanked on permanently to the inner forestay at sea & allows for quick reduction of sail area when line squalls come through.

- Engine : A Yanmar 1GM replaces the original Volvo

- Vane gear : A NAVIK servo pendulum vane gear seems more than adequate.

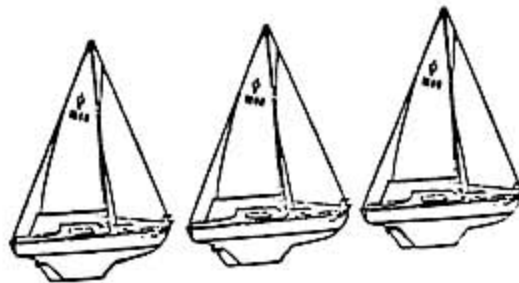
Having spent my working life in the marine industry, I was particularly interested to see how a basic, production glass sailboat coped with the stresses of 24 hour offshore sailing. When pushed hard the boat pounds - up below the V berth when close hauled, aft under the galley when reaching. Because of its relative narrowness & limited depth the boat lacks torsional rigidity. When pushed hard the hull is subjected to racking stresses which manifest themselves in the form of tortured groans from the plywood joinery - disturbing as you lay thoughtfully in the leeward bunk; but all within what are obviously acceptable limits. It would be interesting to install strain gauges & analyse just what happens. When sitting in the forward corners of the cockpit you can feel the racking. If you put your finger tips at the structural hard spot where the bunk faces (bottom girders connect into the main bulkhead you can feel the stress concentration. Possibly the "tortured groans" could be alleviated if the interfaces of all the fiberglass bolting flanges & plywood joinery panels were bedded with Sikaflex or some similar compound.

Future plans are entirely flexible Sid - one of the joys of being retired - However the basic intent is to keep moving South and West. I Will keep you posted.

Kind regards !

Tony Sidmore

What will be Tony's next port-of-call?



### Freebies (while they last)

- 3 club burgees - Imperfects. The "V" is out of proportion but otherwise perfect - save yourself \$8.00
- 1 tube of stuffing box grease - We only ask that you report on its performance after using it a while!

