

Donald Begg in *LYDIA*



I sailed from Lymington for the West Indies on the 15th September 2014, and from there westwards on the 9th January 2016; completed my circumnavigation Grenada to Grenada on the 21st March 2019; positioned the boat in the BVI ready for the final transatlantic home in February 2020; was then defeated by the Coronavirus lockdown, had the boat transported to Southampton on a steamer, and arrived back in Lymington on the 25th June 2020.

My wife Nina does not enjoy ocean sailing, so I made my voyage in stages, coming home at regular intervals for family catch-up. On the plus side, Nina joined me for some wonderful holidays in the West Indies, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and the West Indies again.

I participated, with a variety of crews, in the ARC+ 2014 from Las Palmas to St Lucia via Cape Verde, in the World ARC 2016 from St Lucia to Tahiti, and in the World ARC 2018 from Mackay to St Lucia. The three ARCs were great fun and begat lasting friendships.

Most of the passage-making was in the Trades, downwind. I had a second, removeable, forestay fitted, and was able to sail thousands of miles with two yankees, one poled out each side, sheets run through chafe-kindly blocks at the end of each pole. My record under this very stable, if rolly, rig was thirteen days without a sail change and without diversion by more than twenty miles from the great circle route (St Helena to Brazil).

I had a Hydrovane self-steering system as well as an electronic autopilot. A Hydrovane can be (and was) a life-saving backup to the autopilot when sailing long-distance single-handed.

The experience was wonderful, and life-affirming. The high points for me were the many calls at remote islands, from Cape Verde to St Helena, which landsmen will seldom see. The greatest challenge to my seamanship, and the most satisfying in its accomplishment, was the rounding of the “Cape of Storms” between La Reunion and St Helena.

Itinerary

September – November 2014, with crew: Lymington, Brittany, Galicia, Portugal, several Canary Islands, Gran Canaria.

November – December 2014, with crew: ARC+ from Gran Canaria to St Lucia, then Antigua.

January 2015 to January 2016, various family and friends, plus some single-handed: West Indies, most islands between BVI and Grenada, with lay-up in Grenada during the hurricane season.

January to April 2016, with various crew: World ARC from St Lucia to Colombia, San Blas, Panama, Las Perlas, Galapagos, Marquesas.

April to May 2016, various crew: Tuamotus, Tahiti, Moorea, Huahine, lay-up at Raiatea.

October to November 2016, single-handed: Raiatea to Bora Bora, Rarotonga, Tonga, New Zealand.

November 2016 to November 2017, family and friends: mostly in and around Opuia and the Bay of Islands, lay-up for the European Summer at Whangarei, land-cruising with Nina on North and South Islands.

November 2017 to August 2018, single-handed: Opuia to Queensland, lay-up in Bundaberg, land-cruising with Nina in Australia.

August 2018 to April 2019, various crew: re-joined World ARC, Bundaberg to Darwin, Lombok, Christmas Island, Cocos Keeling, Mauritius, La Reunion, Richards Bay SA, Cape Town, St Helena, Salvador and Jacare in Brazil, Ile Royale, Grenada, St Lucia, then lay-up in Grenada.

January to February 2020: friends and family in Grenadines and St Lucia, then single-handed up to Nanny Cay in Tortola, ready for the final transatlantic hop.

March 2020: I flew home for a visit, and couldn't get back. Defeated by Coronavirus!

June 2020: boat shipped home aboard MV Spuigracht. **Total 33,000 miles.**



South Sea Islanders



Trade Wind sailing