

David and Annette Ridout in *NORDLYS*



0830hrs Richards Bay after escaping SW 70 knots wind *against Agulhas current threat.*

Departed Lymington end of September 2000. Actually left with friends waving a week before but at entrance of the river found stern gland was leaking. Left quietly a week later!

Returned RlymYC on 21st June at 0900hrs 2009.

Distance 55800nm

Yacht. Swan 47. built 1980 Nautor. designed S&S. We spent 5 years sailing Nordlys and getting her ready. Things were kept simple but with lots of back up, eg many ways of making electricity. Spare anchor windlass. Many halyards. For us Olin Stephens as a designer and his brother Rod as the engineer were probably the greatest combination the yachting design world has seen. We never had a chaffed halyard or sail. We had very few breakdowns and nothing without a back up. We also had managed to make this ex-Admirals Cup design easy to sail by two people. Preparation makes for a much happier time as we noticed amongst our fellow cruisers who had done so.

So Lagos, Canaries, Cape Verdes and Bequia for our Antilles arrival. The following summer spent cruising up to Canada and back to the Antilles. Maine and the Chesapeake were a joy. 9/11 meant we could not sail by Manhattan to my sorrow after visiting so often at work.

We had not left home to circumnavigate but after much discussion we pointed the bows west in December 2002. After French Polynesia we left the usual track and went north-west to Penrhyn, the most northerly Cook Island. In the visitors' book we were only two pages after a friend who suggested it having visited in 1995. After the Catholic services of the French islands the harsh singing of the protestant Polynesian churches was a little startling. Suwarow, an uninhabited atoll and Nuie followed. 24 hours south of Tonga en route to NZ the weather man warned us of an unusual bullet low coming out of Fiji. Get south quickly we were advised. With 20 knots of true wind and 45 degrees apparent we managed runs of 195, 193 and 197 miles. We were out of danger. A friend who could not do this got hammered. Hence our love of the speed ability.

A lovely summer in NZ. A lot of driving around this glorious country was followed by a winter of Tonga, Samoa, Wallis, Fiji, Vanuatu and a one week thousand mile beat back to NZ. Another summer in NZ and then Fiji, Vanuatu, almost every island in this fascinating Melanesian island chain. Fantastic diving, lovely non demanding people. The last white man to be eaten here was in 1905!

After Sydney we went off the beaten track. After much discussion with the late Mike Pocock, one of this club's greatest sailors, we decided to go south about Australia. In the roaring 40s with albatross wheeling around us we had an easy run to the large inlet on SW Tasmania known as Port Davey. This 20 mile inlet is spectacular. Walks, exploring and then a few days of being trapped by 60 knot winds followed. We escaped this lovely uninhabited world with a reasonable forecast. Alas when just off the NW corner of Tasmania the wind went from E to NE and up to a full gale. Two very lonely people did not want to run off into the Southern Ocean and with the steering locked as our vane had broken our darling boat sailed herself to windward at a steady 7 knots for twenty hours.

As dawn rose on the 8th March Middle Island in the Recherche group of islands south of Esperance was where it was supposed to be. The latest charts saying this area is only partially surveyed. it was my 60th birthday. I will never forget it.

A year of no miles for Nordlys followed with much fun in Perth/Australia and over 40,000 miles in our old commercial Toyota Landcruiser followed. Truly one of the happiest years of our lives With heavy hearts we left Freemantle. Christmas Island, Cocos Keeling, Chagos and Seychelles, NW Madagascar cruising and landfall in South Africa at Richards Bay. Driving trips to Lesotho and game parks then off to Durban. We survived an hour of 80 knots plus in Durban harbour. The Royal Natal YC lost most of its marina. Much damage to buildings and ships. 120 knots recorded at the airport. A fast trouble free run to Simons Town. Two months off during which we drove to Namibia and back.

A slowish run to St Helena and on to Ascension Island. I had landed a B747 there some years before but I scaled Green Mountain again and we had a very enjoyable visit.

A slow frustrating passage to Tobago, a La Nina year we learnt.



A final fabulous winter in the Antilles with Annette's 60th birthday being a highlight. Many friends had chartered two catamarans. Thirty of us enjoyed a great day at the Plantation Hotel.

Bermuda, the Azores, La Corunna and back to Dartmouth after a night of thick un-forecast fog in the channel saw us back in UK waters. 9 years had slipped gloriously by.

David. We regarded ourselves as nautical tourists and our land journeys added a lot to the experience. Vanuatu and Australia stand out but few places were a disappointment. Never knowing what a day would bring adds a lot to life. It is what I miss most about being back on land. My steepest learning curve was anchoring. We nearly lost our lovely lady twice. All at anchor never at sea. A well-prepared boat and a loving very able and supportive wife were the icing on the cake.

Annette

Lovely experiences meeting many different people some of whom have remained good friends. Lucky to have had a husband who took the initiative and had the ability and confidence to set off on what was an amazing 9 years.



Church dress, Penrhyn, Cook Islands



Shopping for kava, Fiji



Haircut, anyone?



Vanuatu feast



Deal Island, Bass Strait