

Freda Haylett and John Andrews in QWYVER



We started 2007 and finished 2013, Lymington to Lymington taking the Trade Wind Route to Aus and returning via South Africa, North Brazil, the Caribbean, Bermuda and the Azores.

Our boat “Qwyver” was a Wauquiez 40 Pilot Saloon, chosen mostly because Freda decreed that “I am not living in the cellar for years. I need windows”. The boat is a big 40 ft with lots of storage and proved to be well built and very seaworthy. In mast furling was wonderful – 30,000 miles downwind does not need a roach and I could reef alone, at night with F10 on the clock. Other

key gear was a DuoGen 2 wind/water generator which we would not part from.

John was skipper for Officialdom and handyman, whilst Freda was most definitely Admiral and cook. Everything else is shared.

Some excitements of course, though we planned carefully to avoid them. The south Indian Ocean is a great sail except for a huge, exhausting beam sea (up to 5 metres) one of which flattened us, bending the bimini and wind-vane 40 degrees but fortunately not people. We hit something very hard one night which had us lifting the floorboards double quick. Close hauled in a gale across the Agulhas current was interesting, look out for “*abnormal waves exceeding 20 metres preceded by a deep trough*”. We avoided those but still had its little sister jump through the hatch, soaking the laptop and me too. Arrival in Durban was met by the friendliest group of yachties imaginable, who took our lines and then took us to the computer shop!

John’s comments: Loved the Pacific and the Atlantic Islands. The islands varied from towering, emerald green mountains to sandy atolls 400 metres wide, 4 metres high *and 40 kilometres* long. Culture ranged from the simplicity of San Blas, where the cheerful local children mobbed us in their dugouts waving mobile phones that needed charging, to the sophistication of Bermuda with warm welcomes everywhere.

I will not forget swimming with a humpback whale and her calf in Tonga.



Living in your own “house” and using the local markets and shops brings you much closer to the people than ever you can from a resort. In a small island in Fiji we were invited to a Sevusevu (kava) ceremony along with the occupants of a 12-person upmarket dive boat. After the main event the divers went home for their Michelin star dinner before moving on; the headman turned to me and said “you will stay on for a few bowls?” We were delighted and talked far into the night setting the world to rights. Kava is an acquired taste, mildly narcotic, firstly your lips go numb and then it works its way up from your toes; interesting.

Half a world later we listened to the Royal Wedding on SSB whilst approaching the intensely British St Helena. Their celebrations included a schoolboy's view - "When I go into the church I will see a long red rosy carpet and on the table will be a big roasted turkey with chips".

From there to Ascension, previously named Conception though no reference to what happens in between. A very different island famed for its communications centre and airbase, largely desert except for a green top on the mountain. It is the staging post between St Helena and the world but it closes on Friday night and re-opens on Monday, so if your plane or ship arrives at the weekend you have quite a problem! Yes the Naffi is open, but to get there you need a hire car.....

When cruising everyone has similar interests and so we floated round the world in loose company with like-minded friends. We often shared cars for sight-seeing, not to mention bars and cafes, and we keep contact with some though thousands of miles apart, whereas other have become firm friends here in the UK.

Freda's highlights. I loved meeting the "ordinary people" living in the lands we visited. Most notable in Vanuatu. Walking in the countryside I met a lady on her way to the market to buy banana leaves in which to cook "Lap Lap" a traditional dish cooked in the ground under hot coals. She invited me back to her "kitchen" a smoky outhouse with a fire in the centre. I spent the next 2 hours chatting and watching her grate coconuts, chop manioc and plantains, add spices and fatty chicken pieces. The whole was wrapped in banana leaves and buried under hot coals to cook for 2 – 3 hours. I could not stay to sample the dish but bought some in the market on my way back to the boat. It was not to our western taste but I am sure the fishes enjoyed it. There were no photos here as conversation flows more easily without a camera getting in the way, though often I could take photos of village life without it seeming intrusive, especially of ordinary folk and their children. Men would find this much harder.



Village in South Pacific

I was determined to have a party when we returned to Lymington, and spent the last leg from Baltimore (Ireland) organising this by email. Clive Sparrow was roped in as Rlym shore organiser, and all our friends contacted. When we sailed in (skipper made it on the dot of noon) the welcome was something special.

Do anything different? Yes, leave 5 years earlier and spend more time enjoying it.



Find your own Galapagos.



Getting ashore, Niue. No shelter here.



Mid Atlantic mending!



Papillon's Devils Island, Isles du Salut.



Sewing a Mola, San Blas



Looking down Jacobs Ladder, St Helena



Return to Lymington, and a party.