



Tracy Edwards Log Book

13th November 1989

I will remember this day for as long as I live. I kept watch on the radio all night. At 0100 Claire spoke to them again and the guys seems to be stable. Claire took over from me at 0400; she is so amazing, cool and professional and comforting to John and the crew. I think she has saved Bart van den Dwey's life. I slept until 0745 – first sleep in 17 hours. I was completely knackered. When I got up there was an iceberg on the horizon and I got it on the radar which was a huge relief.

We put the generator on; it went on and off all day which worryingly has used up our emergency ration but we need it on for the radio usage. Our radio is top of the range and better than most of the others in our class.

John then read out a telex for me to send to the Race Office as they cannot get through.

The telex read;

'At 0332 on Sunday 12th November the yacht gybed heavily running before a westerly gale. The weather runner broke and the yacht gybed again breaking two grinder pedestals. The main was taken down and lee runner was rapidly being set up when we were hit by large seas – at 0345.

The yacht broached and the second sea and our poled out Yankee was set aback breaking the spinnaker pole. Two men, Bart van den Dwey and Anthony Phillips, were swept overboard. Both men were equipped with life-jackets, flares and personal EPIRBs. Two life rings were sent in after them.

The headsails were dropped and the yacht motored back on a VHF/DF bearing. The first man was located with the aid of parachute flares at 0415. Bart van den Dwey was recovered and resuscitated.

At 0432 Tony was recovered and resuscitation began and continued until 0717 without success. Bart's life-jacket was inflated when he was recovered. Tony Phillip's was not. We think that Tony hit a stanchion as he went overboard and it is thought unlikely he was conscious when he hit the water.

The two EPIRBs were recovered but the two life-buoys were not. Two crew members went into the sea to assist with the recovery. Barry Mercer and Julian Morris went in three times. The sea temperature was 7' and there were heavy seas running. Both actions were in my mind heroic, Julian's in particular.



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John then asked me to pass on a message to Tony's parents asking permission to bury him at sea (but he must have known they would have to). He did not want the rest of the fleet to know yet so asked me just to reply in the affirmative or negative.

As John read the message, Claire wrote it down and as he was getting to the point, Claire and I both realised what had happened. Nancy and Jo were in the passage listening. We all just gaped at each other in silence as the voice on the radio told us they had in fact lost two men and one had died.

Claire just looked numb as she said 'I copy that loud and clear'. No-one said a word. I went hot and cold and started to shiver. My God.

Claire got it all down and then I spoke to Andrew (the navigator). It was him that added 'what do the parents want us to do with his body?' I felt the tears sting; I had a vision of someone asking the same question about one of us. I said we would do our best to get an answer. I sent the crew our deepest sympathy. The words seem stupidly inadequate.

They told us they would be standing by on six megs and would call if Bart got worse.

At the chat show I told the other boats I didn't know what was going on as that is what Creightons wanted. But the gossip had already started.

I spent all day trying to get the telex through. Tried Cape Town, Portishead; the lot. I thought I would go mad. I couldn't get any weather maps because of the telex and all the while we were having horrendous problems with the wind and where we were trying to go. The wind kept coming up with a heavy sky and ominous seas as we started to get the gale that had caused Creightons such tragedy. The sun disappeared and finally it looked like the Southern Ocean.

Creightons called a couple of times; Claire spoke to them. Bart seemed to be a lot better. I finally grabbed a couple of hours sleep. Jo kept radar watch. I got up to find another iceberg really close, very impressive. I took positions to get the girls' minds off the day's events. They are very subdued. It gives us something else to think about. We are all terrified of icebergs! It is something we feel between us rather than talk about. It is like driving through a minefield with a blindfold on, sailing at night. The ice is so far north this year.



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I finally got the telex through at 1600. I sent another one to Cougars Marine to tell Howard to quietly tell our parents that we are alright. They telexed back that they already knew. I am sure that Creightons didn't realise that. I finally got a message back from Race HQ. Tony's parents want him to be buried at sea. Meanwhile Jo was cooking, watches kept coming and going. Claire was on and off the radio to Creightons and the boat was bowling down 15 foot seas at 15 knots.

Creightons called us later; they had managed to get through to Portishead Radio. Andrew sounded a lot better, more positive, a good sign. Bart now wants to eat and Claire had to explain how to inject him to stop him puking everything back up. We talked again later and Creightons asked us to relay a message about what had happened to the rest of the fleet. At the chat show I read it out. Very sad. I then relayed it to NCBI. Balls just said 'yes I copy' he sounded shattered. The Card heard and as they are duty boat for the Maxis, they relayed it to the rest. Roger sounded pretty distraught.