



Tracy Edwards Log Book

29th November 1989

'When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you. Your troubles will not overwhelm you.' Isaiah

I haven't been able to write for days. We are now absolutely exhausted. I feel as if we have been walking on a cliff edge in a strong wind for weeks now. My emotions are up and down. One minute I am high as a kite and the next suicidal. The girls are so tired they have to concentrate on not falling asleep the whole time on deck. We eat, sleep, work, eat, sleep, work. As I write this there are 700 miles left. I don't think we could hold out much longer. Everyone has pushed themselves to the limit; there is still not one whimper of complaint.

There are 11 very special women. We all feel about 20 years older – and look it. The trust we now share is immeasurable. You might know someone all your life and not trust them as much as we do each other. I have seen the most extraordinary acts of selfless caring, heroism, courage, will-power, kindness and achievement.

If nothing else we have to win this leg just to vindicate all that. L'Esprit now has to not let up for a minute; they wait for us to break the boat, or just break.

I have been terrified, ecstatic, depressed, confident, unsure, brave and cowardly. I am ashamed I ever doubted we could do this, proud of myself for the first time in my life, not tearing myself apart looking for faults. I have finally found the good bits of me, I knew were there somewhere. I think the girls would say the same about themselves.

And of them, I am so proud I could burst.

Just over three days later Maiden crossed the finish line off the North Mole at Freemantle, first in her division. The next yacht Rucanor came in 30 hours later giving Maiden an overall lead of 16 hours. She was followed closely by Schlüssel and the L'Esprit.

Maiden had won not only the most difficult leg; she had achieved the best result for a British yacht in the Whitbread for 12 years; and she had nailed her critics to the mast, with nothing left to say.

For an early Christmas present it could not have been bettered.

By Tim Madge