



Tracy Edwards Log Book

27th February 1990

We have just discovered the boat is full of water – when we are heeled over its reaching as far as the second tier of bunks. All hell has broken loose, everyone is up trying to discover where it is coming from. We decided we had to get all the sails on deck which was a complete nightmare. Then we had to pull all the boards up so we could check the bilges and the bottom plates.

The bilge pump wasn't working because the generator was full of salt water. So, we formed a human chain, passing buckets up on deck to get the bilges emptied. As someone once said, 'there is not bilge pump like a bucket in the hands of a frightened sailor!' We had to take the headsail down and heaved to with three reefs in the main. Oh god surely this isn't the end of the Race for us? Yesterday I was angry because of our placing and today I don't want to die. Perspective is a strange thing!

In the middle of this Nancy (or Nod as we used to call her!) who had managed to stay asleep through the pandemonium, sat up and asked 'what sails have we got up?' Jeni, in mid-flight with a full bucket, glared at her; 'the bloody mainsail, we're hove to.....'

We got the engine pump on and kept on searching; nothing obvious. Then we had to tack to avoid various islands in the Falklands. Oh this would be just too ridiculous to sink going round Cape Horn for goodness sake!! Tacking with all the sails on deck was very difficult and time consuming – to the point that when we tacked away from the Falklands we could see the whites of the sheep's eyes! There are people all over the place and when we are all up together it always looks like there are 50 of us instead of 12! The watches got totally confused but we just had to stay afloat. The wind was going round and round and we ended up with a terrible tangle in the rigging. Our speed was dreadful; all in all a complete horror show.

Dawn estimates we have about 50 gallons an hour coming to the boat but were the bloody hell is it coming from?! We have checked everywhere and everything we can think of and there is no obvious place where there's a leak. And why so suddenly, we haven't hit anything. You would think we'd be able to see it there is so much water sloshing in. One thing is definite; it is worse when we are heeled over on Port tack. It has to be somewhere on deck as we have checked everything on the waterline.



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We are in contact radio contact with the Race Committee in Punta del Este. They are worried enough to alert Military Command on the Falklands. An RAF Hercules was scrambled and it flew over us today. It was so reassuring to see this hulking big plane flying so low over the ocean and us to check we were ok. Are we ok? I have no idea. Meanwhile HMS Leeds Castle steamed to within 30 miles of us until we were sure we could tack out way to Punta del Este.

Trying to find the leak is causing tremendous strain and after 5 hours hove to, we now know that we have absolutely no hope of winning this leg. All we can do now is try to limit the damage and hang on to our overall lead of 18 hours.

