



# Tracy Edwards Log Book

**18th February 1990**

2,927 miles to go

The last two days have been the worst of our lives – the vote is unanimous. Yesterday, early morning, the wind started building with the front coming through but, of course, it was from the wrong direction. We had to close reach, bloody uncomfortable with the waves on the quarter lifting the boat with a lurch.

When the waves came over the deck they did so with a vengeance. The girls were soaked to the skin, hands freezing, feet numb. It was back to the Southern Ocean with surprising swiftness. Did we really complain it was too mild?

I had come too far south; the compasses are stuck again and I spent all of yesterday trying to work out the right course. We ended up steering 5° higher than we should. The moon last night was hidden by cloud, so I had to do seven hours radar watch. The wind would just not come aft; the boat was soaked, the bilges swimming. The generator went off; no heater to dry clothes either as the exhaust is constantly under water.

We have been wondering if there was water in the generator exhaust.

I managed to make some calls. Dawn changed the filter – nothing. The power is very low.

And then this morning Tanja woke me to tell me that Michele has badly injured her back. The wave coming in on the port quarter hit her, threw her backwards bending her back. It has broken the wheel so the force must have been tremendous! The boat is still on its ear with the wind mostly forward; Michele is now laid up for a few days at least.

Claire is not sure how bad it is; I just pray she is ok. Mikki's taking her watch right now. We have had no power all morning (the radar had to be on all night to watch for icebergs) so Dawn and Jeni have been spending all that time trying to get the generator or the engine going.

Angel and Nancy have spent most of their time hand-pumping the bilges after Angela rigged a pump. Water has been pouring down the mast; the sails down below are absolutely saturated. It is freezing and, of course, we have no heater.

Everybody's clothes are soaked through; there are no lights.



# Tracy Edwards Log Book

I am navigating by torchlight. I told L'Esprit on the chat show all that has happened and asked them to pass it on to Race HQ to ask them to call our office, as we can't afford the extra power. He was really helpful.

Schlüssel who are the nearest are standing by on six Megs. Then British Defender called to say that there are good medical facilities on the Falklands. La Poste came in to say not to forget that they are behind us if we needed help. With Integrity offered to turn back to give us their spare batteries.

Everyone is so sweet. Mind you as far as L'Esprit is concerned they are 125 miles ahead so can afford to be – although to be fair they did offer to turn back – sweethearts! The Card called us up and Roger (Nilson, the Skipper and also a Doctor) offered his advice. Dawn and Jeni got up for their watch and Jeni, instead of having the watch off, as she is entitled to, elected to go on deck again so that Dawn could work on the engine again. It is amazing how emergencies bring out the best in everyone.

Dawn, with Nancy's help, got the engine going after bleeding it; great. We should be able to start charging batteries now. We turned everything off.

Nancy and I did the bilges again. Jo kept everyone amused and a steady supply of teas and coffees! But, we have all solemnly agreed that we not be doing this Race ever again! And, that we would remind each other of the last two days if anyone thought seriously that they might be tempted. A dreadful, evil day.

Whilst all this had been going on things were flying all over the place. Doing anything – sleeping, going to the loo, eating, dressing, sitting – involves a fair chance of injury when conditions are this bad. It is an endless hassle. We are staying on an easterly course so we don't end up on the wrong side of the low, even though L'Esprit has gone south and taken miles from us again. Roll on the end of this awful Race, when the only person who has to rely on me – is me! I hate all this responsibility; it's too nerve wracking. Every chat show is like a death sentence.

The batteries were recharged enough for me to make calls and sue the radar. The wind is doing the same thought the waves are better. I had a very silly five minutes with Angela and Claire this evening. We talked about how, out here, men would turn their boats around for you but on shore wouldn't open the door. Stupid conversation but in the end we were weak with laughter; that cheered us up!