

24th March 1990 - 21' 37" S 38' 51" W

I should have tacked. I got up at 0600 after a couple of hours sleep and we were in a really bad position. But that was the least of our problems as it turned out.

The Kevlar Main had flogged so badly that the luff had shredded away from the slides at the head. We took a reef and the Spectra Main up on deck whilst Jo started filming. Thank God we took the spare main. The girls put the battens in the Spectra. Meanwhile our mysterious leak is back when we are on the port tack and heeled over to starboard. Nancy went below and started pumping bilges.

Another great weekend coming up. There were heavy seas and a good wind but in the wrong direction. Anyway, I steered whilst the girls got the main down and put the No. 1 up instead of the No. 3. They packed the main and put it below.

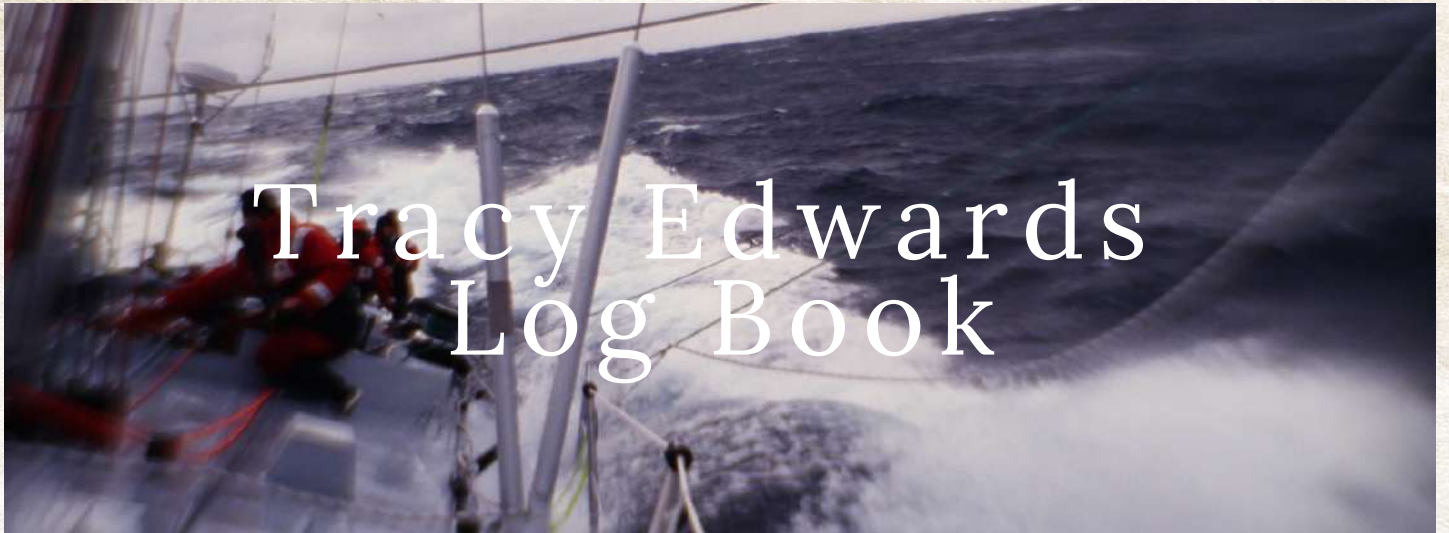
The next problem was that four of the slides had got stuck in the mainsail track.

Tanja had to go up the rig in very heavy conditions, twice, to get a strap round them. She got so tired and battered that Mandi went up the third time to complete the job.

The wind swung round drastically and we tacked while Tanja was up the rig. We ended up doing course. BLOODY HELL! I gave the wheel to Dawn and rushed down to do the Char Show. We weren't doing as badly as I thought – but it was bad enough. Juan called me to say he was sorry to hear about the Main. He gave me his you can catch up speech and wished us courage.

Schlussel and La Poste must have had a bad night as well, from what I could tell. Back on deck I took the wheel again for Dawn. They finally got the slides down, amidst much cheering and clapping. Tanja and Mandi were bashed, battered, bruised and tired. WE got the Spectra Main up and slowly but surely – hey presto – we were doing course at 7 knots!

It was a great wind; we stuck the No. 3 up with a reef in the main. I dropped into my bunk at 1000 and got up again at 1200 – the wind had gone forward.....
ARRRGGGHHHHHH!!! Are we going to beat for the rest of our lives??



The compasses are definitely slightly out; even taking into account tide, wind, current and all other variants we are still not doing the course we are steering. We will need to swing the compasses (again!) in Miami. The wind was still forward anyway, and we couldn't do course.

It has also been wet and the water is extremely salty; everyone and everything is encrusted with it. The watches on deck left the others to sleep a bit longer and then we all changed together at 1400 when Angela did the lunch. Poor Michele's Walkman has drowned in the bilges. Everyone de-salted in a row before eating – a very funny sight. Music on full blast – off we go!!

