



# Tracy Edwards Log Book

**September 5th 1989**

My Birthday! I am 27 years old today.

Slept from 0100 to 0300 in the end. We peeled to the 1.5 spinnaker when I got up; smoothly done. Then Tanja went up the mast to take the halyard over. She worried me sometimes, she doesn't have any fear and she doesn't say what she is doing a lot of the time. I napped on an off from 0500 to 0700. It was a great morning when I got up again – a really vital day. Strong seas, a dark dark blue, with stormy skies and lots of wind and the boat doing what it does best – sailing fast in heavy conditions.

A wave flopped over the deck this morning and everyone looked like drowned rats, all laughing. I think we all feel released, being here. What a wonderful birthday. But at 1000 we got the Argos positions: we have lost 10 miles to Rucanor, gained 10 on L'Esprit, 30 on Schlüssel and 20 on La Poste. Equity & Law are now 80 miles ahead in their own class of one and the maxis (14 in the class) are 180 miles ahead. Hell. So much for winning on handicap.

But the good news is that Equity have run out wind. I hope Rucanor do as well!

Got through to Portishead Radio and called Mum and the Office; they all wished me 'Happy Birthday'. I got a bad cough today – it seems as if everyone is getting Mikki's cold.

Everyone is still sleeping a lot. I managed 1200 to 1400. Changed to the 2.2 Heavy Runner, always a good sign! Nancy and Jeni are like the terrible twins on deck, getting on really well – lots of giggling fits.

We are having great sailing today, as we approach the Spanish Coast – we were 60 miles off at 1500. Dawn got 14 knots out of the boat at one point today – woohoo!







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Kristin has spent the day trying to cook and hide my birthday cake. Jeni sorted out the telex and I read all the bumph to try and use the bloody thing! Dinner was freeze dried curry, not too at all really. The wind was strengthening all this time. Then Michele came down for dinner and that's when it all started...

We did a spectacular broach (the boat goes right over on its side with the spinnaker up) with Tanja at the wheel. Michele and I rushed up on deck; let the sheet out. Tanja steered down and finally got control. I decided to take a reef (make the mainsail smaller). That went very smoothly. The wind kept coming up though, the waves were the real problem – the current and tide fighting with the wind with us caught in the middle.

It's funny how when you are back on land you forget so quickly the fury of the sea.

Well, it all came back with a rush! We were surfing at 14 knots all the time now with the boat shaking, vibrating. A mountain of foam and spray cascading outwards.

The noise of the sea and wind were deafening; it was as if God had switched the lights off, turned the wind up and gone to bed.

I decided to change the spinnaker bare headed (take one down before putting the other up). I got everyone back on deck, but then no-one was getting much sleep anyway. We took it down with not too much trouble.

I thought we should take another reef before we put the spinnaker up. Tanja had to go out along the boom, taking her life in her hands; way out over the boiling sea to put the reef line through. She was really scared. I have never seen her scared of anything. Dawn and I shoved her up. She did it fine and came down smiling; it takes a lot to stop Tanja smiling. Another hurdle cleared.

I made sure everyone had harnesses and was clipped on. I put the radar on, three ships were near us although we could not see them over the mountainous waves. Even with just the main up we were doing 11 – 12 knots and we being laid over regularly.





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'Yeah though I walk through the valley of death' flitted briefly across my mind. Oh well, it certainly shook the cobwebs off! We put the second reef in; it was so difficult to move or do anything – there were 35 knots of wind at this point. Then we hoisted the 2.2 chicken chute. I noticed the running backstay block making a weird noise so Michele looked at it and decided the sheer pin was going.

As the sea was getting worse and we were going all over the place we decided to take the spinnaker down. So, I got everyone back out of their bunks again. Tanya's stayed at the wheel, while Michele shouted instructions. I did the guy. Wonder of wonders the sock (the sleeve which should come down and enclose the spinnaker to control it) didn't work: it got a quarter of the way down and then the sheet shackle broke. The spinnaker went everywhere.

It was an absolute horror show. People were shouting, I was worrying because I couldn't see further than the deck with all the lights on and I knew there was shipping around us.

Eventually we got the guy onto the pole and clew, tripped it and pulled in the spinnaker. We had torn it in two places. God, what a hairy five minutes. We all calmed down; we then put the spinnaker below and tidied up on deck. Some people went to bed. There was slightly manic laughter scattered around the deck. Curiously we felt exhilarated; this dance with danger had woken us all up and sharpened our senses.

We fixed the sheer pin on the running block; got the Reacher on deck and poled it out. We were still doing 10 – 11 knots; Nancy was steering by now. I slept on the sails for two hours at midnight. Totally wiped out. Missed the chat show altogether, while my birthday cake, with its candles, sat dejected on the stove. Happy Birthday and Goodnight!

The Log Book for this day reads; 2200, 35 knots apparent (45 knots true). Rounding Cape Finisterre. 'Horror Show'. 2 reefs, chicken chute then blast Reacher.

That's all.

24 hour run of 164 miles. 5,268 miles to go.