

Log for distribution 9th December 2005

-----Original Message-----

From: Wotan [<mailto:mfuu8@sailmail.com>]

Sent: 09 December 2005 20:54

To: Bimbi Fawcett

Subject: Wotan's log for distribution

Hi All,

Our day was made on Tuesday evening by being passed by a super yacht called Maricha3. I spoke to the skipper who vouchsafed that he was doing a cool 15 knots towards Antigua on a 143 footer. A lot of questions were asked of the skipper as to why he had not bought a decent yacht, but rather merely a tender to Marcha3. Christine's eyes lit up at the prospect of limitless hot showers and a washing machine, the boys merely wanted to play with their assymetrical kite. I nearly lost all the crew in one go!

In celebration of breaching the 1000 mile mark, we opened up water tank No.1 to find that it was still full and we had not even broached Nos. 2 & 3, so it was hot shower time. For the absent minded reader, we lost our water maker two days out of La Gomera and had been rationing ourselves strictly.

Christine had come up with the idea that we should have a 1.5 litre bottle each to wash in every two days. This had worked well. We had washed up in salt water, used bottled water for drinking and tanked water for tea and cooking where fresh water was required. The prospect of a hot shower did wonders for the crew, who all turned up one after the other looking resplendent in the clean gear with freshly shampooed hair. Christine was even heard to remark that I smelt quite nice!

Simon turned up to lunch wearing his Turkish hat, Chris was incensed that he had not been told to bring his party hat and that he had not been given a formal invitation on a stiffy! For happy hour I sewed some corks onto my hat to make into an Oz hat, Chris turned his baseball hat round, Simon recycled his Turkish number and Christine took our picture. All was happiness again!

I excelled myself over lunch on Wednesday by allowing Chris' freshly baked loaf to roll over the side into the arms of a waiting fish! As a penance I was obliged to bake a loaf myself to make up for my misdeeds. The wind has been between 20 and 25 knots all day and night so we have been speeding along. The seas have got up so it is quite roilly and making bread an interesting activity. We covered 167 miles in the 24 hours to 1100 and by lunch time had broken the 750 miles to Barbados barrier.

I have not gotten around to repairing the carbon fibre spi pole as it is too roilly as I am bound to break whatever drill I use. We have two more poles so I am not too fussed about leaving the repair until Barbados when with any luck we will be still and I may even be able to find a man with a pop rivet gun of a suitable size.

I decided that I needed to take a planet sight to satisfy the requirements of the RYA examiners, so I chose Venus and the Moon. It was not madly successful but the Venus sight came out quite well. The Moon, well it was out to lunch as usual.

Our noon to noon run on Thursday was 180 miles an average of 7.5 knots, a personal best, though I don't think the crew slept very well. Simon to gain his good housekeeping seal of approval has had to bake a loaf of bread. It did not rise and he has been dipped for his Goodhousekeeping Seal of approval. He is devastated.

I decided to take in a reef at dusk. As usual something went wrong and the piston on the Nautor spi pole released the genoa sheet and we had to bring our third and last spi pole into play. We are now running still at 6-8 knots with three reefs in and a well furled genoa poled out. "No one ever uses the third reef on a Swan 411" Jean Michel "eet is bullsheet" Carpentier 2004.

Well we are despite the fact that we are only in 20-30 knots of wind down wind. The good news is we are going just as fast as we were with 1,2 or indeed no reef, but feeling a lot more comfortable. We all got absolutely soaked by a wave which landed in the cockpit in the middle of this reefing evolution.

Chris produced a masterful chicken curry with squash, before braving the elements on the first watch. Christine, who was on second watch broke the 500 miles barrier. Christine called me up at about 2300 to help her avoid a cargo vessel which was passing close by. The officer of the watch on MV Rosie called us to ask our name as he had heard on the SatC, as had we, that there was a yacht overdue on passage from the Canaries to the Caribbean. He said that the skipper had insisted he call all yachts to get their names. I asked him to thanks his Captain for his diligence and wished them a good voyage.

I came on deck at 0000 today Friday and we were still stonking along. At 0200, Simon came on watch and we rolled up some more genoa to make the boat more comfortable. Late in Chris' watch I heard a change in noise and felt a change in motion. Chris had noticed that Noel, the towed generator, was hanging by its safety so he luffed up and backed the genoa to haul the spinner in. We decided that, as we were only 500 miles from Barbados and we had plenty of fuel, Noel had done its bit big time and should be rested for the remainder of the voyage. Our day's run today was a respectable if slightly disappointing 176 miles.

We hope to be in Barbados late on Sunday or early Monday. The NOAA promises
25 knot winds for the next 48 hours.

With best wishes from all aboard Wotan