

Log for distribution 12th June 2006

From: Wotan [<mailto:mfuu8@sailmail.com>]
Sent: 12 June 2006 11:37
To: Bimbi Fawcett
Subject: Wotan's log for distribution

Hi All,

We are now in the old HM Dockyard in Hamilton Bermuda, surrounded by beautiful Georgian/Victorian dockyard buildings on a scale much larger than Nelson's Dockyard, Antigua. Robert Gayner left us on Friday to go to a wedding in Wiltshire and Roz Bowen and Patrick Piper are due to leave for LGW this evening. Bim is flying in today at 1820.

Robert and I flew out on the same BA flight to Antigua and then by LIAT on to Tortola on 30th May. I met Mike Burnford on the plane flying out to join Richard Broadhead on Oceanjoy and to sail up to Maine. We hired a car at the airport and drove to Soper's Hole where we found Wotan lying at the dockside waiting for us, with her newly painted bottom. Ginna Gayner went to the opera with Marianne Broadhead while we were sailing. The world is very small!

Robert and I had a spectacularly long to do list, which lengthened when we found that the log had gone on the blink and showed is doing 7 knots while tied up along side! The GPS had a hissy fit and also went on the blink, but it kindly started working again later that evening. The Miss Caribbean World contestants turned up at Pusser's for lunch, which raised the morale of the team! Robert raced off to buy a disposable camera not to miss the photo opportunity!

One of our main jobs was to take an inventory of all the food and drink on the boat. We made a dirty dash into Road Town where we bought indecent quantities of drink in the local cash and carry. We had to offload these stores in order to get Patrick into the car. As result we found a somewhat disgruntled Patrick, who had been waiting 45 minutes for us at the airport! We never dreamed that a LIAT flight would be early! A few rum punches in the Loose Mongoose later, Patrick was a much happier chappie!

Thursday was the provisioning day. Robert and Patrick made a hit on the RiteWay supermarket and came out with trolley loads of food, while I collected the spinnaker and sorted out the paperwork on the liferaft. Robert did a brilliant job working out the provisioning. Roz' flight was very late, so we had to make a strategic detour to the Loose Mongoose. Once Roz arrived, we repaired to Fat Hog Bob's for a well earned dinner.

I had made an abortive attempt to clear out on Thursday, which had been felled by a Big Pantie Immigration Lady (yet another!), so we could not leave before the Customs office at Soper's Hole opened at 8 am. In the event

we slipped out of Frenchman's Cay Marina at 1030 on Friday 2nd June. We soon found that the NKE autopilot was not working. The crew kindly took the view that hand steering was preferable to going back into Soper's Hole and the uncertain prospect of getting it repaired quickly. We sailed out south of Joss van Dyke so everyone could see the islands and in particular Geen and Sandy Cays, the perfect desert islands. We had two very hot days with a good NE-E wind so that by noon on 3rd June we were 674 miles from Bermuda, the distance to Bermuda from Soper's Hole was 837 miles. By Saturday evening the wind had begun to fall away and we found ourselves motoring. The good news was that Glen the watermaker was working very well so showers were available 24/7.

Come Sunday 4th June, it was time to put up the new spinnaker. Patrick and I thought we had not done a bad job hoisting it, but Roz who claimed previous foredeck experience, felt that we had really made rather trousers of it. When the wind got up to 15 knots across the deck we decided that it was time to bring it down. The snuffing line got caught round the radar reflector and we had to bring the spinnaker down the conventional way. Patrick very nobly helped me to sort out the snuffer, re-reeve the control line and then shove the spinnaker back in its sock. This took an age and by the time we finished, we were exhausted. Robert, who was cooking, very nobly put up with spinnaker cloth all over the galley.

On Monday 5th June we caught Roz in possession of stocks of undeclared Toblerone, which she had been quietly munching on her own. A kangaroo court was convened, the Toblerone confiscated and put in the fridge for safe keeping! On Tuesday the sky began to cloud over, but by now the wind had gone round to the SE-S and we were sailing with the genoa poled out to windward. Roz was on watch as the wind increased so that by 0200 on Wednesday we had 30 knots across the decks. Roz had not called for help but Patrick, on relieving Roz on watch, decided that enough was enough and summoned the watch below to come and reef. We rolled up the genoa and stuck three reefs in the main, which proved quite exciting. Come morning we were able to pole out the genoa again.

At noon on Wednesday we were 157 miles from Bermuda and soon after the carbon fibre spinnaker pole did its usual trick of breaking. No matter we had two more poles to go! One of the aluminium poles was soon fitted and we were on our way again. I was able to get a sight of the sun in the afternoon which confirmed our GPS E/W position, which was very important if we were to avoid the reefs around Bermuda. During the night we saw two cargo vessels and spotted a yacht up ahead. In the morning we sighted a second yacht, both of which were heading for Bermuda. I reported in to Bermuda harbour radio when we were 30 miles out. They were highly efficient. They asked for all manner of information about the yacht including the Hex number of the EPIRB. They asked us to call again when we reached the Spit buoy for permission to enter St George's. At noon on Thursday we were 25 miles off Bermuda and soon after, we could pick up the island on the radar, which was rather exciting after 6 days. By 1400 Bermuda was clearly visible on the port bow. By 1700 we were tied up alongside the Customs Dock at Ordinance Island and were clearing Customs and Immigration, who could not have been more helpful, even to the extent of calling to marinas to see if they had berths for us. We berthed stern-to at the St George's Dinghy & Sports Club, where we were made very welcome.

Robin, behind the bar, advised us to go to Blackbeard Restaurant beside Fort St Catherine, where we had a delicious dinner.

Robert left us on Friday afternoon to fly back to a wedding in Wiltshire. I had the spinnaker pole repaired yet again, it is getting shorter and shorter, but I still think it is the best pole I have ever used as it is solight. Friday/Saturday night proved to be interesting. We had been warned that the wind would get up and it did. By midnight the tide had gone out and our stern was getting perilously close to the dock wall. Patrick and I got up in the driving rain to tighten our anchor and to put some more lines ashore, kindly aided by the skipper of the adjacent yacht. On Saturday we motored off to the western end of the archipelago in the hope of finding Craig of Marine Communications, who was to repair the autopilot. He was not there and was not expected to return until Tuesday after the Queen's Birthday Bank Holiday. We took the ferry into Hamilton and had a drink at the RBYC. Hamilton is an immaculate town with all its buildings painted and its roofs cemented against hurricanes. It clearly reeks of money! We spent Sunday afternoon at anchor off Hinson island in Hamilton Harbour before returning to Dockyard Marina for the night.

There will be a further installment later probably when we reach the US.

Best wishes to you all!

Ant