

Pacific disaster

They were towed through the canal to the Pacific and onto Tahiti. Three days after leaving the island they experienced wild weather. At 0300 when Julie was on watch and Nick asleep below, a massive breaking wave rolled their tiny ship. The fixed-in-place lead ballast stayed in place. But so did the boat. In its upside down position. With Nick trapped inside. He forced the hatch open and escaped but there was no sign of Julie. He heard her call, clinging to the other side of the boat. It had been dismasted but they righted the boat to find it was floating with the deck level with the massive waves and had no stability.

Nick could not find the pump and blew up the Redstart dinghy with his mouth. He told Julie to load all their ready prepared survival gear aboard including the sextant and all charts, navigation gear and emergency rations. He told her not to tie it to the boat as he expected it to sink at any minute.

Then the dinghy blew away.

I found this book to be a terrifying experience just to read it in small doses in the comfort of a warm bed. The skill and ingenuity of this young couple in appalling conditions is astonishing and more importantly, their determination to stay alive. I'm sure many would have given up at the enormity of the challenges. For example, the chain plates had been ripped out of the 1/2 inch mahogany hull leaving gaping holes through which the sea was swilling in.

Nick found some odd plywood, sawed it to shape then, with a hand drill, screwdriver and mastic, leaned over the side and made a waterproof repair. All without dropping anything.

They emptied their precious water cans to provide buoyancy as they bailed themselves into exhaustion. But with all their navigation equipment gone, how to reach land? They found their almost reliable watch and a small compass but had to find a destination that was high enough to be visible, yet with no surrounding reefs.

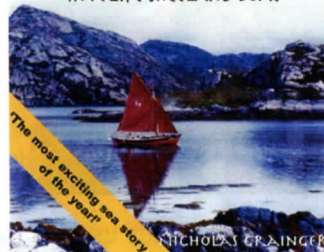
You have to read how they guessed their way for 29 days to make a successful landfall. Incredible self-confidence. They didn't teach navigation to this standard at the TAFE course.

You will be able to buy the book from our friends at Boat Books, or you can contact Nick on <nick@nicholasgrainger.com.au>

Gripping stuff! Enjoy! ⚓

THE VOYAGE OF THE AEGRE

FROM SCOTLAND TO THE SOUTH SEAS
IN A ZIFT SHETLAND BOAT



**John Quirk has been writing about and illustrating the joys of messing about in boats for over half a century. He is the author / illustrator of several books including Foul Bottoms, published by Adlard Coles and his latest work Quirky History both of which are available from Boat Books Australia and from Amazon.*



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