

JRA Hall of Fame

Sir Henry Pigott

Part I

by Graham Cox

Sir Henry Pigott. 1925 -

There are many fascinating people in the world of ocean voyaging. It is a way of life that attracts strong personalities with vision and talent. Perhaps the most fascinating of all are those who choose to voyage in tiny boats. Sir Henry Pigott left England in 1983, at the age of 58, aboard *Glory II*, his 19ft 6in junk-rigged sloop, and roamed the oceans of the world solo for more than 20 years. Not only did he make his voyages in a boat many would consider too small, he did so at an age when most are considering retiring from ocean sailing. He is regarded with awe, although, until now, little has been known of his exploits. Despite briefly holding the record for the smallest yacht to circumnavigate the world, Henry set sail to fulfil a lifelong ambition, not to chase records, and has quietly gone about his affairs without much publicity or fanfare. The JRA is privileged to have Sir Henry as a life member, and he generously agreed to work with us in producing this series of articles about his voyages.

He started sailing in his twenties, buying a 22 square metre sloop, the original *Glory*, in Sweden in 1948, and sailing it back to England the following year. These inshore racing yachts were never intended for open waters and the passage across the North Sea was extremely wet. Henry jokingly says she was the first sailing submarine to cross the North Sea. Along the way, he was detained by the Russians for a week, after they claimed he'd entered their territorial waters.



Henry Pigott in Horta

In 1954, his 40ft ketch, *Pandoria*, built in the late 1800's in Norway and sailed to England during the Second World War, caught fire off the Orfordness Lighthouse on the Suffolk coast, and Henry had to leap into the water wearing his duffel coat and wellington boots. He swam towards the blinking light, climbed out of the water and knocked on the door. At the time, he was working on the North Sea steam trawlers out of the River Tyne, and planned to sail *Pandoria* around the world with his young wife. The fire, and later domestic responsibilities, put paid to dreams of ocean voyaging for a while.



Henry's photo of Pandoria

In 1973, in his late forties, he completed a solo circuit of the Atlantic Ocean in an 18.9ft Mirror Offshore yacht, *Simba II*. Sailing from England, he made landfall in Paramaribo, in the Republic of Suriname (Surinam), South America. He then cruised through that country's canals, which are no longer used. The canals were overgrown, the bridges no longer opened - necessitating the mast to be dropped - and dead animals floated in the water. He moored up each



Simba II

evening to a tree. The jungle orchestra at night is something out of this world, he remembers - frogs croaking, large animals calling to each other, and a chorus of monkeys at dawn. There were lots of crocodiles too, their red eyes visible in the darkness. He wishes he'd had a way of recording those nights, whose memory remains vivid.

He returned to England via New York and the Azores. These small motorsailers were never intended for extended voyaging, and for much of the trip Henry was cold, wet and tired. In the Gulf Stream, the engine bearers began to break free and Henry had to tear the interior apart to find timber to repair them. The cabin top was only glued to the decks, with the odd rivet here and there, and began to leak copiously. At times, the seas were so large that Henry saw dolphins swimming above mast height in the wave crests. He pumped old engine oil through the toilet in an effort to calm the seas.

By the time he arrived in Horta, he was so dehydrated, exhausted, and covered in salt water boils, that he was hospitalised by the good folk at the *Café Sport*. Lying between

cool, clean sheets, attended to by kindly nuns, he decided there had to be a better way to cross oceans. He thought of *Jester*, with her enclosed control station, where one can stay warm, dry and safe on passage, and her robust, low-stress, low-tech, utterly reliable junk rig. The dream of *Glory* was born.

He had different ideas about how she should be fitted out, however. As impressive as *Jester's* history is, her stripped-out minimalism was not what Henry was looking for. He liked the motorsailer concept of *Simba II*, but wanted long-range fuel capacity this time, and mechanical, electrical and electronic systems capable of sustaining him comfortably, well into his mature years. This was a concept he continued to refine over time. He purchased a 19.5 ft Colvic Watson fibreglass hull and set about constructing *Glory II* in a barn on his farm, a project that took three years, in between farming duties. She was launched in 1979. Her total displacement came to 4.5 tons, with a draught of 3'6", a beam of 8'6" and a sail area of 165 sq. ft. *Glory* is fitted with a raised flush deck, apart from a small doghouse aft. The hull is massively reinforced with bulkheads, stringers, heavy deck beams, solid ply decks and foam stiffening in the topsides. The bows were strengthened with a 7" oak stem-piece and a collision bulkhead. The day was to come, a few years after their circumnavigation, when Henry would be grateful for this reinforcement. There are 2.5 tons of ballast set in resin in the keel.

Henry led all running lines aft, then through turning blocks into the cabin, where he installed a winch on the inner cabin side, to assist him in handling the sail. There is a raised seat in the doghouse from which he can steer, or just keep watch when the Autohelm 2000 tiller-pilot, which is installed below decks and has never failed, is in control. The idea was to sail the vessel entirely from the comfort of the cabin. Henry really did cross oceans in carpet slippers and has the photos to prove it.



All the junk rig control lines are led aft to a set of turning blocks on the stern and then back inside the cabin to the winches.

The junk sail is flat-cut from Dacron (polyester), and the mast is alloy. It was fitted to *Glory* by Robin Blain in his backyard. Henry has had a long association with Robin, being one of the earliest members of the Junk Rig Association. Remembering the canals of Suriname, Henry wanted a mast that could easily be lowered singlehanded. One of Robin's brilliant ideas was to fit the mast with a sleeve and hinge just above the partners. The yard and boom were timber, and the battens were also timber originally. They were later replaced by alloy after some broke in an accidental gybe. The sail is controlled by double sheets. There are the usual yard-hauling and luff-hauling parrels, with moderately-long batten parrels.

Henry fitted a slow-revving 30hp Arona diesel and two large fuel tanks under the bunks amidships, each with a capacity of 50 gallons, plus a 20 gallon header tank above the engine for daily use. This gave him a



The mast could be pivoted back. Its special hinged joint is covered by a long metal sleeve

theoretical motoring range of well over 1000 miles in calm seas, often with the motor just ticking over and only sipping fuel, though when the going became more rugged, fuel consumption increased accordingly. He transferred fuel from the main tanks up to the header tank with a manual pump. This allowed him to use a gravity feed system for the fuel, doing away with a fuel pump. Correctly anticipating the likelihood of dirty fuel in remote regions, he installed three fuel filters between the header tank and the injectors. *Glory* was comprehensively fitted out, with a petrol generator, solar panel, central heating, oversized electronic autopilot with three spares, manual anchor

winch, Watchman radar detector, VHF radio, inverter, television, stereo sound system, refrigerator, and six 100 A/hr batteries.

He also had a Yaesu FT757 HF radio, with an aerial he hoisted up the mast, and operated a mobile station during his voyage, call-sign GOMYL, which attracted a great deal of attention from amateur radio enthusiasts. The time was to come when that aerial played a vital, if unexpected role.

For navigation, he had a plastic sextant and a log, plus, in those pre-GPS days, the earliest satellite position finder, a Walker Sat-Nav, which gave a fix once an hour when close to the equator (if you were lucky), longer if you were more distant. After the circumnavigation, before his next long-distance solo voyage, he further refined these systems.

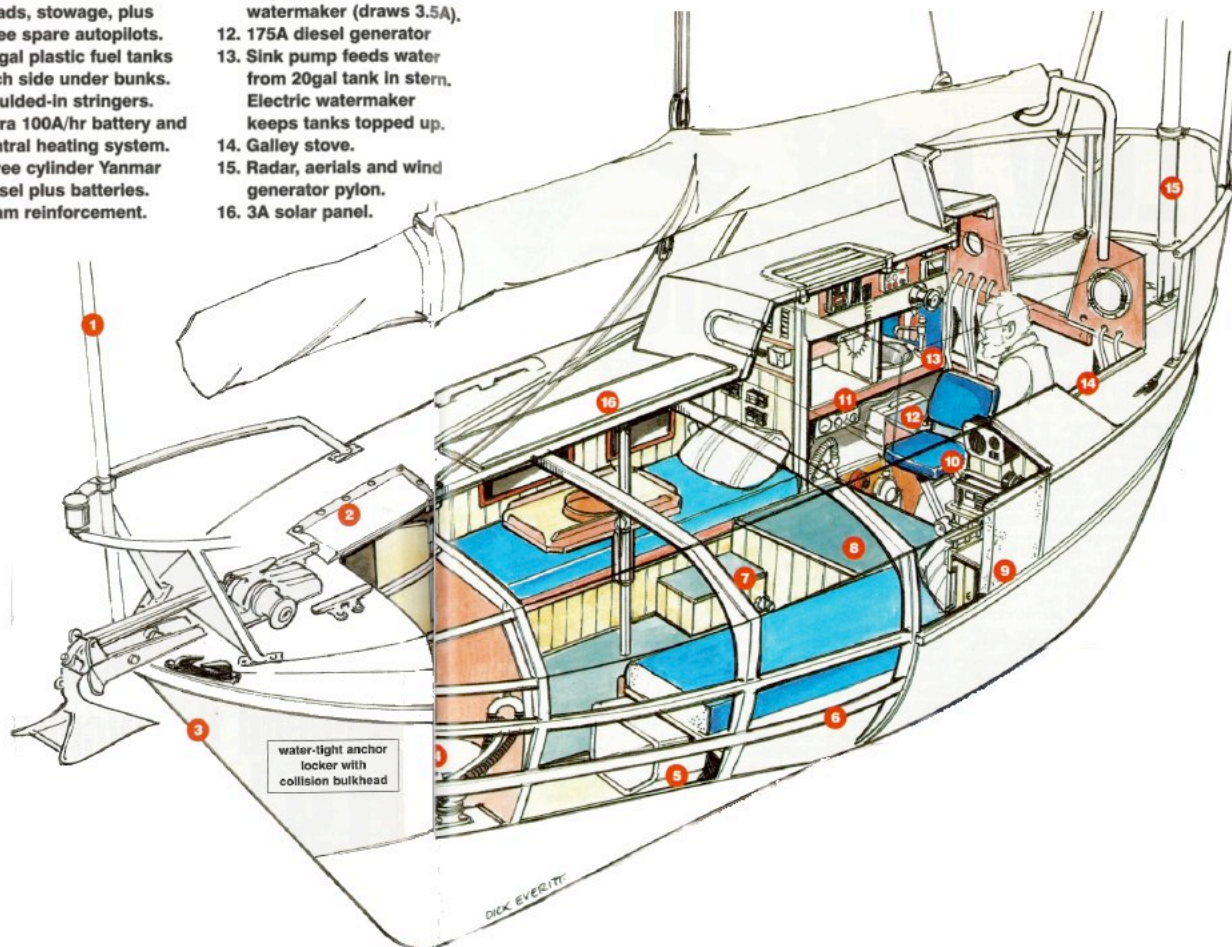
Glory carried a sea anchor which was deployed off the stern in heavy weather, especially if they met strong headwinds. The canoe stern easily parted the waves. Sometimes he was able to deploy this from the comfort and safety of the cabin. The sea anchor had a trip line to aid recovery.

They departed from Poole Quay, England, on June 6th, 1983, bound around the world. By the time she returned, *Glory* had become the smallest yacht to circumnavigate, although this was not Henry's original intention. He was just doing this voyage for his own pleasure, not to set a record. As a schoolboy, geography had been his favourite subject and he always dreamed of travelling the world. Ever since his father taught him to sail on a lake in Austria when he was seven years old, this had been his dream.

Rather than attempting to set any records, *Glory* was his idea of a manageable, affordable, solo voyaging yacht. Ironically, during his journey, Henry met two yachts half *Glory's* size that were attempting to set a record for the smallest boat to circumnavigate. Leaving the harbour, *Glory* was caught in a NW gust which blew the wooden hatch off, so Henry's first night was spent anchored at the back of Brownsea Island, mending the hatch with longer screws. Then it was off down the English Channel, crossing the shipping lanes, trying to dodge ships and get some rest.

Sailing down the Channel is always a tiring experience. In those days, ships were smaller and slower than they are now but there were far more of them. There was no AIS system, which makes sailing in shipping easier for yachts today. Getting enough sleep to function effectively was a real challenge. Henry was seasick for the first few days, as usual. Later, about half way around the world, he grew out of it. Even after *Glory* had worked her way off the continental shelf into deep water, where one might expect things to be less demanding, Henry found it

1. Short wave radio aerial.
2. Forehatch with cover.
3. 7in oak reinforced stem
4. Heads, stowage, plus three spare autopilots.
5. 48 gal plastic fuel tanks each side under bunks.
6. Moulded-in stringers.
7. Extra 100A/hr battery and central heating system.
8. Three cylinder Yanmar diesel plus batteries.
9. Foam reinforcement.
10. High helming chair.
11. Radios, workbench, engine instruments, watermaker (draws 3.5A).
12. 175A diesel generator
13. Sink pump feeds water from 20gal tank in stern. Electric watermaker keeps tanks topped up.
14. Galley stove.
15. Radar, aerials and wind generator pylon.
16. 3A solar panel.



A view of Glory's interior arrangements

was not initially so. They were surrounded by fishing boats for many days, which was not so bad in daylight, but at night, with their bright deck lights, it was difficult to see which way they were going. Off the coast of Portugal, there was the added problem of sardine fishermen, in small vessels no bigger than rowing boats, some having no lights.

By this time, Henry was trying to get into some sort of sleep pattern. His approach to watchkeeping was somewhat unusual. He had a music cassette which lasted twenty minutes. He played it very loudly above the noise of the engine, and trained himself to wake up when it stopped. This system worked most times. He'd then get up, check the weather, course, shipping activity, etc, and go back to sleep.

Glory was now entering the trade winds, with their steady breezes and favourable, west-setting Equatorial currents, which were to give her significant assistance during her circumnavigation. But the Portuguese trade wind was fresh, as it often is, and Henry had his first experience of running before a developed sea. The swell got up to 5 metres and the boat began riding fast down the face of waves, yawing a little as the autopilot

strained to hold course. The sea anchor would have been too much of a drag, so Henry used a bucket, which helped a lot until the handle broke off. The wind blew strongly until about 60 miles from their landfall on Tenerife. It was nice to have some calmer conditions before arriving, as the boat always got into a bit of mess on passage. This leg to the Canary Islands put 1,569 miles on the log and took 16 days, averaging 98 miles a day at a speed of 4 knots. They motorsailed whenever the winds were fickle or forward of the beam.

From there they sailed to St Vincent in the Cape Verde Islands, a distance of 801 miles, arriving in 7 days, averaging 114 miles a day at a speed of 4.75 knots. There was little wind for the first 80 miles. Then the trades came back but were more easterly in direction. One morning, Henry woke to find the decks covered in sand, blown over from the Sahara. The whitecaps on the waves had a slight orange to red tint from the sand, even though it sank almost immediately. This went on for a few days. The sun was orange too, in a blue sky, creating a weird effect.

After two days, Henry noticed a slight noise coming from the stern. It turned out that the sand had acted like sandpaper and worn the bush of the stern gland to such an extent that it rattled. Luckily he had envisaged this, and had a spare bush aboard, but was not expecting to need it so soon. They couldn't cross the Atlantic like that, so he had to slip the boat in St Vincent. Henry notes how remarkable it is that these poor countries can adapt to anything. The stern gland was soon fixed.



Glory sailing

One day, while trying to land on the beach from his dinghy, the big surf tipped Henry out and he lost his glasses. Half a dozen boys had taken to accompanying him everywhere ashore and they soon dived into the bay to find them. A reward was given. In those days, the Cape Verde Islands were very poor. The bank always had a queue outside its door. However, fresh vegetables were good and he departed with two big cabbages. He found that if he just took one leaf off a day, they would last about two to three weeks. From St Vincent they sailed to Belem, Brazil, a port on the Amazon River just south of the Equator. The first four days provided the best sailing so far, with calm seas, light easterly winds and no swell. Henry notes that it is always nice at the start of an ocean crossing to have a few calm days to stow all your groceries and prepare yourself, as well as to get your sea legs. During those calm days he got his bean sprout production underway, growing them on wet flannel. He sowed seeds every three days to ensure a continuous supply.

It was calm enough to read and even to paint the deck. The engine ran continuously, as the wind remained light, F3-4 during the day, dropping to F2-3 each night. A pilot fish took up station and stayed for the entire crossing, only making brief forays away from the ship. Henry spent hours sitting on the bow watching it. Several turtles also visited. They were at ease with *Glory*, perhaps thinking she was some sort of larger

cousin, but took fright and dived under the boat when Henry leaned over the side to look at them. The stars were spectacular. Away from city lights and smog, they came right down to the horizon and seemed so close that Henry felt he could almost touch them. On the 6th day, the NE Trades returned but brought with them a NW swell. The sea soon got quite rough. *Glory* was rolling heavily and Henry took to sleeping on the cabin sole, wedged securely, as his bunk leeboards were of canvas and didn't stop him moving around. The motor was shut down, except for one hour each night to top up the batteries. He only saw four ships in two weeks, and soon got into a routine. There was a rain squall at almost at the same time every day. Time started to pass very quickly.

The weather became calmer, as they got nearer to Brazil. The coast is very low here, and the first thing he saw was the tops of palm trees, then a sandy beach without a house in sight. The crossing of 2,114 miles had taken 23 days, averaging 91 miles a day at speed of 3.79 knots. He made landfall a few miles south of the Amazon River, so that the north-going current could carry him up to the entrance, but found a counter-current six miles offshore, as is so often the case. He wryly notes that he still had a lot to learn. Rounding the southern entrance, he decided to take a short cut to the main shipping channel, but found himself amongst a dozen local fishing boats casting their nets in the shallows. Having got out of that situation, he was soon in the muddy waters of the river, with its rusty navigation buoys about a mile apart. He had to steer a compass course from buoy to buoy. The river was full of floating debris, including half a tree.

Belem is well off the beaten path for yachts. Henry anchored in the river approaches that first night, only to discover he was right under the flight path of the local airport. He might have been in the Amazon River, but he was back in civilisation.

The next morning he continued upstream. There appeared nowhere suitable to moor initially. He finally rafted up to a tug, whose crew pointed out the 1.5 inch goose barnacles all over the hull, right up to the Plimsoll line. They generously dived in and scrubbed *Glory* clean, so Henry gave them a bottle of whisky. Unfortunately, the tug skipper returned to find his crew rather merry, and Henry was told to clear off! Further upstream, he came across some wooden huts on stilts, whose children excitedly beckoned him to tie up there, but he thought better of it. He then found some voyaging yachts, two Italian and two French, whose crew helped him to anchor fore and aft, due to the fast tides in the river. They later joined *Glory* for an exploration of a few Amazonian creeks that their larger yachts could not navigate.

From Brazil, *Glory* sailed 1,131 miles to Trinidad in the Caribbean, stopping en route for four days at Devil's Island, the old penal colony. The cells and chains still

exist. The cemetery only has wardens' graves, as prisoners who died there were fed to the sharks. The concrete block that the guillotine stood on, is also still there, right at the water's edge, so severed heads would fall into the sea. The main prison is now a hotel.

There was little wind up the coast of Cayenne, but the Equatorial Current gave them a boost. Off the Orinoco River, they were approached by a longboat with a massive outboard motor. There appeared to be two men aboard, but four others suddenly appeared as they drew alongside. Pirates! Henry pretended to talk to people below decks and thought about grabbing his single-bore shotgun, but instead offered them a carton of cigarettes and a bottle of whisky. They went off content. He didn't like the whisky anyway. Otherwise, it was a smooth sail, and the passage took 11 days, averaging 93 miles a day at a speed of 3.8 knots.

From Trinidad, *Glory* sailed to Panama via Dominica. There was some sort of trouble in Dominica, with soldiers everywhere, so Henry quickly moved on. The run to Panama was wild, as is so often the case. Eric Hiscock once noted that he'd spent more time running under bare poles in the western Caribbean than anywhere else in the world. The trades blew F5-6 and Henry kept the sail fully deployed, pushing the rig to breaking point, to give it a thorough test. Better to have it fail here than in the middle of the Pacific, he thought.

The autopilot could not hold *Glory* directly downwind while she was being driven so hard, so Henry steered 15° off of a square run, zig-zagging across the Caribbean. They didn't get pooped once, the canoe stern parting the waves without fuss. They sailed 1,143 miles in 11 days, averaging 103 miles a day at a speed of 4.29 knots.

After waiting eight days at Colon, during which time he exchanged flags, information and paperback books with east-bound yachts, the Panama Canal was transited in one day, as was the practice then (these days yachts stop halfway in the Gatun Lake). The Arona diesel had to run flat out all day, while Henry fed his four crew and Canal Pilot brown bread, sardines and fizzy drinks, hoping that nobody fell off the overcrowded yacht, as he had no lifejackets. They arrived in Balboa just on dusk, where Henry left the yacht anchored and flew home for three weeks. He now wonders how he could have left her in that dubious place.

Upon his return, he found the propeller fouled by an old rope and a plastic bag, so had to jump into the alligator-infested water to clear it. The hull was also covered in barnacles, so *Glory* was scrubbed on a nearby beach, though there was little tidal range. Once



Glory dwarfed by a ship in the Panama Canal

more, Henry had to go into the water, standing on the seabed and scrubbing the hull with a broom.

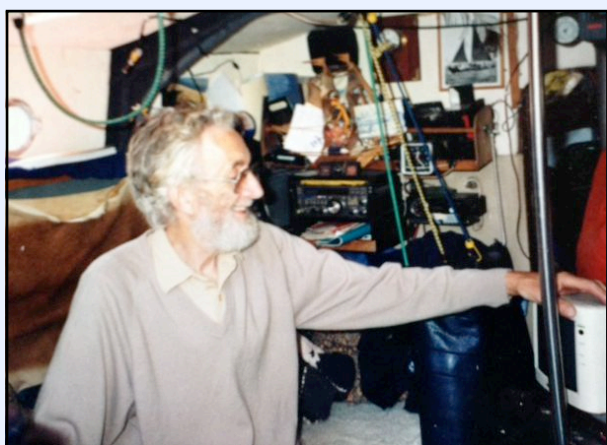
Sailing from Panama to the Galápagos Islands is a notoriously difficult passage, with fickle winds, one that many yachts struggle to complete. *Glory's* long-range motoring capacity paid off handsomely here. The diesel purred away day and night on a calm sea. The Pacific Ocean seemed so much calmer than the Atlantic, with no big swells from the north. Henry didn't keep very good watches now. He saw some smoke on the horizon occasionally but otherwise had the ocean to himself.

As they got further away from land, the distinct aroma of whales became stronger, although Henry only occasionally saw some blow on the horizon. He found black, ink-like stains on the deck, later discovering that these came from baby squid, though he did not find a whole one for some time. He didn't fancy them for breakfast, although he did sometimes fry up flying fish that landed on the poop deck. Most of the time, the fish would land on the flush, whaleback foredeck, and then flap back into the ocean.

One overcast morning, with the sea as flat as a mirror, he was down below when he heard the distinct blow of a whale. Looking out, he saw a huge whale, several times longer than *Glory*, coming straight towards them. It was probably a Blue Whale, migrating south. Moving slowly, with its tail flicking from side to side, it

didn't seem aware of the impending collision. There was no time to disengage the autopilot and take evasive action, but at the last moment the whale slipped astern. Not for the last time, *Glory* proved herself to be a lucky ship.

Conditions stayed calm, with the current giving their daily speed a boost of 0.5 to 1 knot. After nine days, Henry was thrilled to see the mysterious Galápagos Islands rise up out of the sea. All he had to do now was to find his way through the narrow gap in the reef into the anchorage. They had averaged 96 miles a day, at a speed of 4 knots, for the 867 mile passage. Henry's stay in the Galápagos Islands was fully occupied with the wonderful nature of the place, from giant tortoise to iguanas so tame they ate out of his hand. He washed his dishes by getting into the dinghy



Henry in *Glory's* cabin

and letting little, yellow, tropical fish do the work. If you leave the dinghy unattended, he discovered, you will find it occupied by a seal. It may look cute, but they can do a lot of damage. The weather remained fair, with local, onshore breezes. There was no problem maintaining his sea legs, as there was a slight, persistent swell from the SW in the anchorage. Getting fuel was an event. He had to go to the Ecuadorian Naval Base, which was just a few huts and a little jetty, to beg for some diesel, because none was available for purchase. The Captain was very interested in *Glory* and agreed to give Henry 45 gallons. The only means of getting it aboard was to float a rusty old oil drum out to the boat, and then the sailors hand-pumped it into *Glory*.

Yachts were only allowed to stay two weeks in those days, so Henry and *Glory* set off on the longest leg of their circumnavigation; 3,008 miles to the Marquesas Islands, French Polynesia. Luckily, it was an El Niño year, the trade winds were steady, with just enough wind to fill the sails, and the Equatorial current gave them a significant daily boost. There was a low swell from the SW or S, and it was easy, restful sailing. The following year there was a La Niña event, the trade

winds failed, the Equatorial current reversed, and a number of yachts had to turn back to Panama.

The days went by very quickly. Henry had bought some flour and yeast, as other yachts had showed him how to make bread in a tin can on the stove, so bread-making took some time, along with growing bean shoots, and watching the ocean roll by. No whales were sighted, just the occasional turtle. There were plenty of Dorado fish and occasional porpoises, but none stayed long. There was a rain squall around midday most days, lasting just long enough for a shower. Once he got caught out, and had to put the bucket overboard to finish the job.

One day, about halfway across, he was dozing on his bunk with the engine thumping away when all hell broke loose. It sounded like the motor was tearing itself to bits. He jumped up and pulled the stop lever but the noise just got worse. He realised it was coming from outside and leapt up on deck. A small helicopter hovered overhead. Henry was deeply shocked. How could this be, over a thousand miles from land? It didn't stay long. He later discovered that Korean fishing boats send them out to find shoals of fish. As he closed in on Nuka Hiva, in the Marquesas Islands, the moon was full and the waves looked like dancing mermaids, the mountains were silhouetted against the stars, and a gentle offshore breeze carried the rich tropical smell of land. Henry recalls it as the most magical landfall he ever made. After 32 days he dropped anchor in Taiohae Bay. *Glory* had averaged 94 miles a day at a speed of 3.9 knots. Over such a long distance, this is a very respectable performance for a small, heavy yacht.

There were four other yachts anchored in the bay and their crews welcomed Henry warmly, laying on a fine meal with all the trimmings, which he contentedly ate on the poop deck, admiring the view. There was just a slight swell that first night, which rocked him into a deep, restful sleep. At sea, he always had one ear cocked for unusual noises from the rig or engine. There was a shower near the beach which Henry made good use of. He also joined the other sailors on expeditions up the mountain. Being the oldest, he always trailed behind. It also took some time for his legs to get used to walking again.

One day, when they were getting ready for another expedition, a little sail was spotted coming round the headland. Initially it was assumed to be a local boat, but as it got nearer, they could see it was a miniature yacht called *Wind's Will*. Bill Dunlop had already sailed this 9ft 10in sloop across the Atlantic from America to England, and was now attempting a circumnavigation.

Bill made a bee line for *Glory*, the smallest boat in the fleet, and Henry helped him to raft up alongside, which made *Glory* look enormous. The port side of



Bill Dunlop sailing *Wind's Will*, above. *Wind's Will* against the quay and the contents spread out to dry, top right. Bill standing in the companionway of *Wind's Will*, right.

Bill's deck had been submerged for so long it had seaweed growing on it. Bill soon got accommodation ashore and the next day they moved *Wind's Will* alongside the quay, where he took everything out to dry. He had little or no food left, just several cans of Coca Cola. He said he would rather drink Coca Cola than eat, because it would cure his thirst and satisfy his hunger.

The swell got worse after a few days and *Glory* began to roll. The engine took water into the cylinders through the exhaust, because the exhaust elbow wasn't high enough. Henry later fitted a seacock to the exhaust but was to be plagued with engine problems for the rest of his Pacific crossing, until he rebuilt the engine in Darwin, Australia.

His diesel reserves were very low after such a long passage; he'd even used his two spare cans. He was told there was fuel ashore, stored in drums, but that it was contaminated. Luckily, one of the larger yachts had some to spare, and gave him enough to cover the passage to Tahiti.

Bill left before Henry but they arrived in Tahiti almost together, after a slow sail, choosing to avoid the reef-strewn Tuamotu Archipelago. *Glory* took 8 days to sail 493 miles, averaging 61 miles a day at a speed of 2.56 knots. Along the way, several meals landed on *Glory's* cabin sole after Henry got overconfident and they were tossed off the table by an unexpected lurch.

In Tahiti, Henry didn't moor off the town quay, choosing to anchor further along the foreshore. When Customs found he had a shotgun aboard, he had to leave it at the police station. This entailed going into town on the bus, which was an open-sided truck with bench seats running down each side, and overflowing with laughing Polynesians. It seemed comical to be sitting there among them with a shotgun between his knees.

He helped prepare *Wind's Will* for Bill's next leg to Tonga, but unfortunately Bill never made it. After a brief stop in Aitutaki, in the Cook Islands, he sailed into oblivion. Henry believes a large outboard motor, which was given to Bill in Tahiti, contributed to his demise, as it completely upset the balance of the boat. Although *Glory*, heading for Samoa, passed 100 miles north of Bill's course, she experienced odd sea conditions which Henry believes may have overwhelmed *Wind's Will*. Reports from Aitutaki say that there were 50 knot winds and large seas a couple of days after Bill left there.

After going to the police station to claim his shotgun, which had become a rusty bit of metal, Henry sailed to Bora Bora, a lovely daysail with a gentle wind aft of the beam. This is a very beautiful island, which he thoroughly enjoyed exploring. He found two old cannons in the jungle, facing towards the ocean. There were only two other yachts there, both French. He

found in his travels that the French yachts were more hospitable than others. They really admire intrepid sailors and usually wine and dine Henry handsomely.

In those days you were only allowed to stay for a few months in French Polynesia, so he pushed on to Pago Pago, American Samoa. Finding a good easterly current away from the land, he enjoyed perfect sailing for the first few hundred miles, then the sky clouded over, the wind dropped, and he had to motor in earnest to maintain average speed.

Early one morning he woke to feel *Glory* pitching instead of rolling. Looking out, he found a large swell coming from ahead, despite the lack of wind. The swell was not breaking, but looked more like undulating hills, as if something was dampening it down. The engine was running at 1800 rpm, which is close to maximum output for *Glory's* slow-revving Arona diesel. Then the overheating alarm went off. He discovered that the sea was full of pumice stones, some the size of golf balls, others just like floating sand, which was clogging the engine's saltwater strainer.

These conditions lasted for 3 days, or 300 miles, with Henry regularly having to clean the strainer. He became an expert at listening to the sound of the exhaust, and could tell when to clean the strainer. Like many sailors, he had never heard of this problem, but the SW Pacific frequently has rafts of pumice floating around, due to the number of active underwater volcanoes in the region. In 2006 and 2012, very large rafts, bigger than both islands of New Zealand, were sighted by long-range reconnaissance aircraft. Even cargo ships have reported engine trouble when caught up in this phenomenon.

After leaving the pumice stone area, *Glory* developed another problem. The automatic bilge was activating more frequently than it should have in these calm conditions. To save the battery, he started emptying the bilges with the hand pump, but could not find where the water was coming from. Just by accident, while checking the oil, he saw a small leak behind the saltwater pump's impeller housing. He fitted his spare gasket but this didn't cure the problem. In Samoa, he found that pumice had worn the pump's shaft and had to get a new pump sent from Australia. The pumice had done him a favour, though, by cleaning the hull of barnacles. Unfortunately it did too good a job on the waterline, removing the antifouling paint as well. Despite their problems, they covered the 1100 miles to Pago Pago in 10 days, averaging 100 miles a day at a speed of 4.16 knots. Pago Pago Harbour provided a snug haven, with half a dozen yachts at anchor near a little pier with a water tap. Although the wind blew straight into the anchorage, it usually died down at night. The bay was spoiled, however, by a large, smelly, fish-processing plant on the north side of the

anchorage. When the factory threw its waste into the bay, there were lots of sharks thrashing about. Topping up with diesel fuel was a problem, until he found the captain of a Korean fishing boat who wanted a bit of cash. All went well, except for being nearly knocked over by a couple of pigs roaming the dock. He collected the fuel in containers, letting any muck settle before putting it into the main tank. Getting a regular supply of clean diesel fuel proved to be one of Henry's enduring challenges.

He wasn't sorry to leave Pago Pago, as the weather became more unsettled, with frequent rain showers. There was not much current on this next leg to Port Vila, Vanuatu, but luckily there was plenty of wind. The wind was all over the place in direction but blew a constant F5-6 from aft of the beam. *Glory* sails at her best with this sort of wind, as she is very under-canvassed for her weight. On the plus side, being under-canvassed meant he didn't have to reef too often, though the rain and spray made him wetter than he had ever been to date. The passage of 1093 miles took 12 days, averaging 91 miles a day at a speed of 3.7 knots.

There was a marina at Port Vila, but Henry preferred to anchor in the roadstead. After so long on the ocean, he preferred to be unfettered. He managed to renew most of the antifouling here, though the small tides meant he couldn't do the entire bottom. He was soon spotted by some friends he'd made in Belem, who were now running a local restaurant. He was taken on the back of a motorbike deep into the jungle to see the flying foxes, and was wine and dine so often that he began putting on weight.

The leg to Port Moresby, capital of Papua New Guinea, was one of his slower passages. *Glory* seemed to be losing the trades. Henry developed some sort of tummy bug and soon started to feel poorly. This illness lasted four days and left him feeling weak, so he was not in any hurry to make port. The weather became very calm. A couple of weak lows went through. They were nothing to worry about, just bringing some rain which helped him cool off. It was starting to get hot and steamy.

Port Moresby lies in the approaches to the Torres Strait, one of the world's major shipping channels, and he began to see more ships, plus several large fishing boats. He arrived after 14 days at sea, averaging 88 miles a day at a speed of 3.6 knots for the 1240 mile passage.

Glory had crossed the Pacific Ocean, the largest body of water in the world, sailing 7901 miles in 85 sailing days, at an average speed of 3.7 knots. This is a respectable performance for any small yacht. The efficiency of the junk sail when running downwind, and the ease of handling it in squally weather while

staying warm and dry in the cabin, played a significant role in this achievement.

Port Moresby turned out to be surprisingly civilised, with a friendly yacht club offering modern facilities, though Papua proved to be a country of startling contrasts. Away from the city, modernity had hardly penetrated. Henry was taken into the hills, visiting villages where natives in traditional costume went about their daily business and celebrated a festival, without a camera-toting tourist in sight. The small houses in these villages had iron bars on the windows - to keep out head hunters, Henry presumed!

From Port Moresby, *Glory* sailed to Darwin, Australia, passing through the Torres Strait, with its maze of reefs and fierce tidal currents. This passage was greatly feared by navigators in the days before continuous position updates from the GPS system became available. Lots of vessels came to grief here. If you want to enter the Indian Ocean from the Pacific, however, the alternative routes are much longer and present their own difficulties.

Glory had good sailing weather across to Bramble Cay at the beginning of the Strait. It is necessary for low-powered vessels to work the tides in the Strait to advantage, so Henry anchored behind an island to wait for the tide to turn in his favour. He found several fishing boats resting here. One was mending his nets, and another offered Henry a huge Dorado fish. It was too much, but he didn't like to refuse the gift.

Once he got underway, it was almost like sailing in rapids. There was no turning back. After transiting the Strait and sailing into the Arafura Sea, the strong tides eased, as did the wind. It was so calm that there were long streaks of grass seed floating on the surface of the water, having been blown all the way from Australia. *Glory* motored across the Gulf of Carpentaria to Darwin, covering 1200 miles from Port

Moresby in 11 days, averaging 109 miles a day at a speed of 4.5 knots.

1984 was drawing to a close. The Darwin Yacht Club advised Henry that he should not continue his voyage west until after the cyclone season. He'd arrived during the notorious "build up", just before the Big Wet, or monsoon season, and he found the hot and humid climate difficult.

Every street seemed to have a milk bar, and Henry always stopped for a milkshake. This, he was later advised, was the worst thing he could have done (Darwinians prefer beer), as it overloads the kidneys. He developed a painful kidney stone. Local hospitals wanted 200 dollars a day for treatment, so he flew home to England for 3 months, after finding a sheltered spot in the boatyard for *Glory*.

This tribute is being presented in two parts - the second part will be published in October. Graham Cox has been collaborating with Henry who produced a large volume of material from his amazing voyage aboard Glory. Graham felt that this story deserved to be given the widest possible airing which led to the decision to 'serialise' this Hall of Fame article.

All the pictures were taken in the pre-digital era and scanned for sharing with us. We apologise for the fact that the quality may therefore not be quite as clear as usual.

Ed.



Glory tied up to a pontoon

Henry Pigott's Voyages - Part 2

By Graham Cox

Returning to Darwin in early March, Henry found that *Glory* had taken the weather well. He received a lot of help getting ready for sea, which made up for the fact that someone had stolen some of *Glory's* gear in his absence. The head was taken off the motor and the engine refurbished. The yacht was given a thorough refit.

The masthead light wasn't working, but after launching, *Glory* was moved to the side of the dock, where, due to the enormous tides, the masthead was in line with the top of the dock at low water. It was the easiest masthead repair in history! *Glory* was then shifted to a very dubious-looking mooring, with a rubber tyre for a buoy, up one of the many mangrove creeks. Henry noticed that the crocodiles hung around the yachts with dogs aboard. The crocs didn't worry him, except when he went ashore in the dinghy. They never came close but he could see their eyes following him.

He had a lucky escape one day when he was refuelling the tank on his petrol generator. It was alongside his gas refrigerator and he had forgotten the fridge had a pilot light, which ignited the petrol fumes. Luckily Henry had just put the cap back on the petrol tank and there was only a flash fire that singed the hairs on his arms.



Glory with full sail hoisted



Henry and pooch on Sarah's yacht

Most people in the tropics consider cyclone season to be over by the end of March. The monsoon trough heads back north towards the equator, and clear skies and cooler temperatures return. People in the yacht club told Henry it was safe to depart, so he began preparing *Glory* for sea. He was delayed by mail that had not yet arrived from home.

The official end of the season is 30th April however, and on 12th April, 1985, Darwin had a visit from Cyclone Gretel, with winds Henry estimated at around 40 knots, and heavy rain. All the lights went out in town, so he couldn't get a bearing to see if the mooring was holding. He started the engine to take the strain off the mooring chain. Shining the torch through the porthole, all he could see was rain being driven horizontally. He was glad he wasn't at sea. Several yachts were blown into the mangroves, but as it was all mud, no damage was done.

Glory finally left Darwin on a perfectly still day. The sea was like a mirror - Henry had never seen it so flat. A few days later he came across an amazing sight. The sea was still like a millpond but the surface turned yellow. On getting closer, the ocean began to writhe, and soon he was surrounded by thousands of yellow sea snakes, or *Hydrophiinae*, as they are officially known. Some were just coiled up and floating, others wriggled away as *Glory* approached. These creatures are reptiles, but like mammalian whales, are air-breathing and perfectly adapted to life at sea. Most of them cannot move on land and have difficulty biting, but they are venomous and are related to some of Australia's most deadly snakes. They remained around the boat all day.

In the afternoon, he thought he saw a coil of rope in the water, but closer inspection revealed it to be a long, eel-like creature, greenish in colour, possibly another species of sea snake. It didn't uncoil, but just raised its head, as if to say, "What are you doing here?" There were also a lot of birds around at this time.

The calm weather lasted for about 5 days, and then it clouded over. The next 10 days were wet. There was no sun, and fine rain penetrated everything. It was so wet below decks that he lost several rolls of film. He thought he had a dry boat before this passage. There was not much wind to start with, though it picked up after a few days, thankfully. He was loath to run the engine for too long on this passage, as he had 6,000 miles of Indian Ocean in front of him and was unsure where he might procure diesel fuel.

He got so depressed with the weather that he decided to put into Cocos Keeling Atoll, and altered course accordingly. He had no chart to get through the reef, but the weather had cleared by the time he was making his approaches. That is always the way, once one has made one's mind up, he wryly comments.

He was very close to two islands marking the entrance, and was anxiously looking for the reef pass, when he noticed a large whale swimming under the boat. It was black with a white belly and he took it to be a killer whale. It kept darting ahead and then waiting for *Glory* to catch up, as if to show her the way. It suddenly turned to port, so Henry looked in that direction and there was the gap in the coral. To this day, Henry is sure the whale was showing *Glory* the way in. After sailing 1,987 miles in 23 days, averaging 86 miles a day at a speed of 3.5 knots, he dropped anchor in the lagoon of Cocos Keeling Atoll.

There were just two other boats in the anchorage when he arrived, including one Italian. Later, a couple of French yachts arrived. As usual, the French sailors were very gregarious, and they soon organised evening barbecues on the beach. A trimaran also came in with some damage to its outriggers. The boat seemed to be held together with string, and Henry wryly noted that some people thought *Glory* was unseaworthy!

Cocos Keeling Atoll proved to be a delightful place. *Glory* was anchored snugly behind Direction Island in a few metres of crystal-clear water on a white sandy bottom. Ashore on the island, which once housed a cable-relay station but is now uninhabited and pristine, there was a large water tank and wild chickens roosting in the trees. First job each morning was to hunt for fresh eggs.

He found a nice sandy beach to careen the boat and scrub the bottom. After the wet weather en route, he spent a couple of days drying his gear out, including all his rusty tins of food. The weather station at the airport on West Island, run by the Royal Australian Air

Force, told him the weather had been a tropical storm. Henry says he would not have called it a storm, more like a depression moving west only slightly faster than *Glory*.

Visiting yachts were allowed to shop at the RAAF commissariat, where Henry found lots of fresh vegetables on sale, flown in from Australia. He was also able to top up his fuel tanks with government diesel. It was hard to leave such a magical place, but he had to get to South Africa before the beginning of the next cyclone season, so reluctantly brought home the anchor and headed west.

The Indian Ocean was a sunless place. The E to SE trade wind blew consistently beneath a heavily overcast sky. The wind was never too strong, luckily, as this passage can often be boisterous. However, a continuous cross-swell rolled up from the south, legacy of the deep winter depressions in the Southern Ocean. It struck *Glory* on the beam, making her roll a great deal. Conditions aboard became very uncomfortable. The course is also WSW, bringing the predominant SE swell more on the beam as well. A number of yachts have had problems in this ocean, suffering knockdowns and broken gear. Snug inside his cabin, Henry soldiered on.

When the sky cleared, after many nights without stars, they seem brighter than ever, reflecting in the calm sea. On the horizon, though, was an area without stars, a black mass indicating the position of Rodrigues Island. No lights were visible ashore. On the chart, the approach to Port Mathurin looked tricky; there were no reefs but a lot of mud banks without light buoys, so he decided to heave-to a mile offshore, as the waters were too deep to anchor.



Henry working on the masthead, Port Mathurin, Rodrigues Island, Indian Ocean

He went down below for a nap but a few hours later a bright light shone through the porthole. Jumping up, he found he had drifted with the current much closer to the island than expected. On top of a nearby cliff, a car was flashing its lights at him. The next morning *Glory* sailed into Port Mathurin. The 1,978 mile passage had taken 22 days, averaging 89 miles a day at a speed of 3.7 knots.

After he made port, Henry met the gentleman responsible for alerting him to danger and they became good friends. This Good Samaritan took Henry on several trips in his car round the island. It was a small island and didn't take long to drive around.

Henry had one of his best send-offs when leaving Rodrigues. Half the island must have turned out, most with gifts of cakes, buns and vegetables. *Glory* looked like a floating market stall. Unfortunately, after three days at sea, most of it had to be thrown overboard. There were no seagulls but plenty of colourful fish to help themselves to the feast.

Henry was beginning to see some wear on the batten pockets now, and the stitching was beginning to go. He thought it might be his fault, as he always left the sail up even when motoring into the wind, to make *Glory* more visible to shipping, and it did flog at times. He had heard that Richards Bay in South Africa was the place to have work done on the sails, and hoped they would last for another 2,000 miles. There was little wind at this stage, so he didn't worry too much.

It was only 280 miles to Mauritius and he motored all the way in very calm conditions. On the way, a couple of fishing boats closed in on him. Henry says this was a common experience at sea. He didn't know if they did it intentionally or if it was just coincidence. He wondered if perhaps they were bored with looking at the ocean all the time.

Mauritius was sighted while still a long way out, the high, forested mountains standing out on the horizon. It was getting dark as he closed the north coast of the island, so decided to anchor for the night in a small bay, little realising that he would end up spending two weeks there. They had sailed 283 miles in 3 days, averaging 4 knots for the passage.

Grand Baie was a magical place. While entering the bay and looking for somewhere to anchor, *Glory* was spotted by a friendly bunch of live-aboard sailors on two large, French sailing boats. A motley crew of mixed gender hailed Henry so he went alongside. They soon had *Glory* secure and Henry was invited on board for wine and home-baked cookies. They must have been there some time as their anchor chain was covered with seaweed.

He was royally fed and entertained for a couple of days but then had to move and anchor some distance away, as they had several young children aboard who

ran around screaming most of the day, and the adults partied well into the early hours of the morning, singing lustily and drinking wine. If he had stayed, he would have been a complete wreck for the next leg of his voyage!

It was only a half-hour bus ride into Port Louis. The Port Louis market was something he had never come across before, selling everything from frog legs to alligator steaks, with the odd monkey steak thrown in. Henry says it was lucky he didn't have a fridge in those days so he wasn't tempted. There was also a yacht club at Grand Baie where he was made very welcome. Several members took him on tours into the mountains and to some delightful places to eat.

Due to poor quality diesel fuel, a perennial problem, *Glory* had fuel-starvation problems all the way across the Indian Ocean, requiring the fuel filters to be constantly cleaned. Henry decided to add another CAV filter with glass bowl while he was in Mauritius. Now he had three filters in line. The glass bowl was a godsend, he notes, as he could drain it before the filter clogged up.

When it came time to leave, several yachts escorted *Glory* out of the bay. Henry says that he loves the yachting fraternity - nowhere else does one get this comradeship. *Glory* then had one of her fastest and most pleasant sails, with a fair wind from the NE at 12 knots and a calm sea, covering the 100 miles to Le Port on Réunion Island in one day. He still had a lot of food left over from Mauritius but couldn't resist going ashore at Réunion. He wanted to get some of the lovely French bread and cream cakes that are a highlight of stopovers in French territories. Like many sailors in small boats, Henry almost hallucinates about such delicacies.

It was just a short stop, one night alongside the wall, and then he was off on the long haul to Richards Bay in South Africa. This was a slow passage. As he got closer to the vast continent of Africa, the wind seemed to die down at night. Sometimes he got a complete reversal of wind direction. Currents were variable, but a south-going current mostly prevailed and he had to aim a few points north of his destination. He began to see a few ships as he approached the coast, so watches of twenty minutes had to be reinstated. It came hard after having the ocean to himself for so long.

There were a few thunderstorms, mostly around midday but sometimes in the distance at night, which kept him on his toes. He had heard many tales of yachts been struck by lightning and all their electrics going upon smoke. He was advised to wrap a chain round the mast and trail the other end in the sea. He never had to test this method but did have a few claps of thunder that really shook *Glory*.

After 12 days at sea, bird life became more prolific and odd bits of rubbish floated by. Henry joked that he

didn't need a GPS, he just had to look out of the porthole. On this passage he was taking sights with his plastic sextant to pass the time, and found a sixty mile discrepancy between his sights and GPS positions. He put this down to the sextant having suffered from the heat, causing distortion of the plastic.

On the 15th day of the passage, he could tell he was getting close to Africa as the cloud formation was changing. He was getting low on food by this time because he had not expected the passage to take so long. He was pleased when he sighted Richards Bay on the horizon, 1,396 miles from Réunion. The passage took 16 days in total, averaging 88 miles a day at a speed of 3.6 knots.

Richards Bay was a delightful stop, apart from the coal dust which covered *Glory's* decks when the wind blew fresh, and there were many friendly sailors at the yacht club who helped Henry repair his sail and made him welcome. The yacht club is up a creek near some woods, which were inhabited by playful monkeys which would steal anything left on the club lawns. It was early summer by now and hot, but Henry was advised not to swim in the river, because, like many rivers in this region, it is infested with the Bilharzia parasite.

Glory's bottom needed a scrub but Henry was advised to do this in Durban where there were some piles he could dry out against, so he motor-sailed there in very light winds, with the motor just ticking over and the south-setting Agulhas Current giving him a steady 3 knots over the ground. *Glory* was well inshore of the shipping and Henry had a relaxing day, watching the spectacular coastline slip by, including some white cliffs that reminded him of the Dover coast in the UK.

It was on days like this that he missed company and wished he had someone aboard to share the experience with. He sometimes wished he had a larger yacht so he could take crew. Besides the fact that he did not

really have room for crew, most enquirers took one look at *Glory* and changed their minds!

In Durban he tied up to the famous International Dock in the heart of town, where so many voyagers, both legendary and unknown, have moored, alongside the hospitable Point Yacht Club. He met an American couple, Roy and Tee Jennings, from the 36ft sloop, *Foxglove*, who were to become lifelong friends. (He later sailed from England to San Francisco to visit them.) They toured the Kruger National Park, which included a rare sighting of a leopard, plus the usual elephants, lions and hippopotamuses.

Upon his return to Durban Henry got stuck into refitting *Glory*. He had so many willing hands that careening and painting the bottom was completed in one tide. It was then a matter of watching the weather and waiting for a suitable window to make it at least as far as the next harbour, East London. After six days, he was advised that he could make it to Port Elizabeth, so off he went. Later, over the radio, he heard that the weather forecast had changed. It now looked like he could make it around Cape Agulhas without stopping.

He anchored briefly off East London to change his engine oil, and then made a short stop at Port Elizabeth to get a weather update, since he had a loose wire in his VHF radio, causing intermittent reception. The forecast remained favourable so he continued south, staying about 15-20 miles offshore, where he found the favourable current at its strongest, giving him a boost of at least one knot.

Henry had expected this passage to be rough, but it was flat calm rounding Cape Agulhas. The biggest problem was trying to avoid the hundreds of seals lying on their backs sunning themselves. They didn't dive away until the very last moment and the herd stretched to the horizon. Henry then altered course to the NW and *Glory* ran up past the spectacular Cape Peninsular towards Table Mountain and Cape Town.

Just outside the harbour, they were struck by a fierce South Easter, a common hazard in these waters. This gale-force wind was blowing straight off Table Mountain, picking the sea up into a fine mist about two feet high. Henry had to look over the top of the mist to see where he was going. There was an oil rig anchored in the approaches to the harbour, and planks, bits of rope, and all sorts of rubbish were flying off the rig into the sea ahead of *Glory*. Henry was anxious that something would catch in the prop. *Glory* was doing about half a knot against the wind, with the engine at max revs. He later heard that it was an exceptionally strong wind; it blew out several plate glass windows in town. He often found the last few miles were the most challenging when one had had a good passage.

This 831 mile passage around the southern tip of Africa took 7 days, averaging 4.9 knots, the fastest passage



Glory alongside No 1 International Jetty, Durban

time of the entire trip, thanks to the strong, south-setting Agulhas Current and good weather.

In Cape Town, Henry met Commander D.H. "Nobby" Clarke, author of *The Blue Water Game* and Guinness Book of Records official. Nobby was very interested in Henry's voyage. After inspecting the vessel and her log, he advised Henry that *Glory* would be recognised as the smallest yacht to circumnavigate upon crossing her outward track. Henry felt a bit embarrassed with all the attention.

Also in Cape Town at that time was Serge Testa, an Australian who was circumnavigating aboard an 11ft 6in yacht, *Acrohc Australis*. Serge later wrote, in his book, *500 Days*, that he felt bad he would take the record from Henry. Henry, according to Serge, just laughed and said he'd be happy to hold it for a while. For Henry, it was never about the record. He sailed for the sheer joy of it. A few years later, Henry and Serge met up again in Mexico. Henry was still sailing *Glory*, but Serge now had a 60ft steel yacht he'd built in California.

Henry did not see as much of Cape Town as he would have liked, as the harbour was a long way from the city. He did manage to get a lift there occasionally on a club member's motorcycle but never got to climb Table Mountain. He wanted to take advantage of the regular SE winds that blow in late summer, so was soon on his way to Saint Helena Island in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean.

While at the yacht club in Cape Town, Henry heard a lot of talk about containers falling off ships. There was a tug on standby in the port to retrieve or sink containers when their positions were reported. They can be a hazard to ships, let alone yachts. Henry listened to these stories but thought it was unlikely that *Glory* would run into one.

Two days out of Cape Town, *Glory* was running easily before a F4-5 SE wind, making 4 knots. Henry was motor-sailing with the engine just ticking over, to improve the autopilot's control of the rudder and to minimise the zigzagging course that otherwise occurred. The skies were blue and the seas fairly calm. He was having his early morning cuppa, sitting in the hatch, when he noticed a lot of seabird activity dead ahead. This is unusual so far from land, and Henry wondered if it might be a dead whale or a log. *Glory* was heading straight for the birds so he didn't have to alter course to go and investigate.

Getting closer, very little was visible, but he could see that the waves were breaking over something solid. Then he saw that it was a container. Just one end of it was above water, covered in seaweed. He could see the triangular legs on each corner. They looked rather like gigantic tin openers which would have made a nasty gash in *Glory's* hull. Henry had to alter course at the last moment, noticing a turtle hovering around the

container as he slid past, the first one he had seen at close quarters, though he was hardly in a mood to appreciate it.

The next twelve days to St Helena passed nervously. He was deeply shaken by this experience; he couldn't relax or get the memory of the container out his head. Luckily, the weather continued perfect, day after day with clear skies and F4-5 trade-winds. This ocean passage has a well-deserved reputation as the kindest body of water on the planet. On the 15th day, St Helena appeared on the horizon. The weather was so clear that the island was visible from 25 miles away. Henry had never been so glad to see land and reach an anchorage where he could relax. *Glory* averaged 106 miles a day for the 1,693 miles to St Helena, at the excellent speed of 4.43 knots.

St Helena is full of history, from forts to Napoleon's house. The town is full of rustic charm. Dot's Cafe looked after the yachts and a nearby plaque commemorates the visit of Joshua Slocum in 1898. The history of this island is entwined with the history of ocean voyaging. The only way to reach this place is via the sea. [Note: an airport was finally built on St Helena on 2016 at the cost of billions of dollars, but the engineers put it on top of the cliffs on the SE side of the island, where turbulence from reinforced trade-winds has made it unsafe to use.]

Not much has changed since Slocum's time, except that the production of flax, once a vital industry, is no longer in demand. Henry climbed Jacobs Ladder, a steep staircase with more than two hundred steps, but it was well worth the view from the top of the cliff. The ceilings of Napoleon's house were so low that Henry wondered how tall he was. Then there was Jonathan, the giant tortoise who lives at Government House, who was hatched in 1832, and is the oldest reptile on the planet.

There were only two other yachts in the anchorage, one of which was Serge Testa's tiny *Acrohc*. Serge came on board several times, and many yarns were exchanged. Serge gave Henry a cassette on which he had recorded, through the hull of his boat, whales calling to each other. This was quite an eye-opener to Henry. Despite many whale sightings, he had never heard whale song, because he had the engine running most of the time.

Getting ashore at St Helena is a bit of a challenge. You have to row into the steps at the dock, leap out of the dinghy on the crest of a swell, and drag the dinghy up the steps behind you. When the swell gets too big, as it regularly does, getting ashore becomes impossible. Luckily, there were always some local lads to assist landing the dinghy, although it was not so easy to leave with the stores one had bought. Henry found it a relaxing stay, but physically very tiring. He notes that it is surprising how quickly one gets out of shape after just two weeks at sea. His legs felt like jelly.



Serge Testa's 11'6" Acrohc - the smallest yacht ever to circumnavigate

Time was running out to get through the Caribbean before the hurricane season began, so Henry did not linger. Getting fuel on the island was rather like asking for gold bars - it was the most expensive fuel he ever bought, but he needed it to get through the Doldrums. Leaving St Helena, he noticed that it is much easier to set off on a voyage after having been in a rolly anchorage. Everything is already tied down or stored away before you leave, so there is not much to do except to watch the island disappear over the horizon.

For some time after leaving, a gentle, steady trade wind wafted *Glory* across a smooth ocean, but as he got nearer to the Equator, the wind got lighter. The sea, however, got rougher. With little wind to fill the sail, *Glory* was lurching along with odd waves invading the deck. Henry was motor-sailing with just three panels up, to stop the rig slamming too much, when the yard came crashing down onto the deck. The pin had come out of the halyard shackle.

Glory was being thrown around quite a lot, still motoring along under autopilot. Henry never wore a harness at sea. He knew that if he went overboard he would never be able to haul himself back on board. Also, *Glory* had no stanchions or lifelines, so it was a matter of going on all fours up to the base of the mast, then standing up, holding on with one hand, and trying to put a new pin into a swaying shackle.

It was difficult concentrating on that task and he wasn't looking at the sea state. The boat suddenly pitched forward and then lurched back, throwing him against the mast and knocking the wind out of him. He heard a crack as his ribs took the full force.

He felt quite faint and just wanted to get below. Abandoning the unattached halyard, which was swinging above his head, he crawled back into the cabin and lay on his bunk. He did manage to contact Roy and Tee, his American friends on *Foxglove*, on the SSB radio. They were a few hundred miles ahead and

offered to turn around but Henry told them not to. His head cleared and he was able to wrap his upper body with Elastoplast. Then he just lay on his bunk, leaving *Glory* to motor westwards. Without a sail hoisted, the boat rolled heavily and every movement was agony. A good supply of pain killers soon diminished the pain.

It was three days before he felt strong enough to try and retrieve the halyard again, but by this time it had disappeared half way up the mast. He had visions of having to backtrack to Ascension Island, which lies 700 miles north of St Helena, and now well to the east of *Glory's* position. He had been told it was no place for a small boat, though, with very deep water and not much shelter.

Luckily, as he got nearer to the equator, the seas calmed down. He strapped the boathook to an oar from the dinghy and was just able to reach the shackle on the end of the halyard. However, because it didn't have the pin in, he couldn't hook it. Anyway, the halyard had wrapped itself around the mast several times and was well and truly snagged.

He did not have a spare halyard rigged, but his SSB radio had an antenna that was hoisted up the mast with a light rope passing through a block at the masthead, allowing him to slack the antenna when lowering the hinged mast. It was standard antennae wire, with a copper shield surrounded by a plastic sheath and an insulated copper wire in the middle. Cutting the wire, he attached it to the yard and used this to haul up three panels of the sail.

He also climbed up onto the reefed bundle, from where he could reach the yard, which he lashed to the mast, relieving some of the load from the antennae wire. There did not appear to be much strain on the wire once he had done this. Lashing the yard was a bit risky if he needed to lower the sail in a hurry, but he felt he was unlikely to have a gale in this region.

This worked well, except that the antennae wire chafed where it passed through the shackle on the yard. He had to continually cut it shorter, which required climbing up on the bundle and unlashng the yard, then lowering the sail. The sail came down easily, but unlashng the yard, and then re-lashing it after hoisting the sail was hard work, with *Glory* rolling around and his ribs still feeling very sore.

Eventually the jury rig failed. *Glory* was losing the trade winds at this stage and the wind was all over the place. The sea became very confused, with a swell coming down from the north, opposing the regular one from the SE. Henry was forced to rely on his Arona diesel engine for the rest of the passage. He decided to stop at Fernando de Noronha to see if he could repair the rig and hopefully buy more diesel fuel. By the time he reached the island, he was down to his emergency 25 litre can stored on the poop deck.

He was rather on edge, being completely dependent on the engine. Every slight variation in engine revs brought him out of his bunk at full speed, thinking the worst, but the trusty diesel kept chugging away. He reminded himself that Ben Carlin had crossed the North Atlantic aboard a petrol-driven amphibious jeep, *Half Safe*, and this gave him some reassurance. He mothered the engine at all times, and even made an oil change, despite the wild motion of the boat, using the brass sump pump to fill up with new oil, as pouring it proved impossible.

Without a sail to dampen the rolling, the motion was extremely violent. He soon got used to it but had to vacate his bunk, as the only way he could sleep in the bunk was to hold onto an open cubby hole, waking with a stiff, frozen hand that took ages to regain blood circulation. He ended up sleeping across the engine box.

Henry was glad he had a rope cutter fitted to the prop, as he was passing a lot of Sargasso weed, plastic bottles and other debris, which he feared might foul the prop. The firm that supplied it had an advert running that stated: *Glory has a stripper on board*. In such ways are reputations made.

This was the longest stretch of the voyage under power alone, and Henry was very glad to make landfall on Fernando de Noronha. Visions of a nice calm anchorage were very inviting and the island looked beautiful. However, when *Glory* approached the only anchorage, the size of the breakers on the beach filled him with doubt he would find the shelter he needed.

The customs boat came out before he had the anchor down. There were four other yachts in the anchorage, two French, one from Brazil, and a South African ketch. Lots of help to retrieve his halyard, Henry was thinking, but before he had time to talk to them, the customs officers had organised a recovery team and the shackle was soon secured to the yard. Henry made sure it would not happen again by securing the shackle pin with seizing wire.

The anchorage at St Helena had been uncomfortable, as it so often is, but it was nothing compared to this place, with a lively northerly swell rolling in. Two of the other yachts had a kedgie out, which kept them head to the swell, but Henry was reluctant to set one in case he started dragging.

By the look of the breakers, there was no way he could go ashore by dinghy. The kindly customs officer offered to take him ashore but he declined, as he didn't feel it was safe to leave *Glory* unattended. The customs officer took two of *Glory's* fuel cans ashore and filled them up with what Henry assumed was government fuel, in exchange for a fistful of dollars.

The anchor seemed to be sliding across rock or coral, and the noise, added to the motion, made sleeping

difficult, especially when the local night breezes put *Glory* broadside on the swell. *Foxglove* came in the second evening and Henry was well looked after, but a couple of days later he was off to Cayenne.

He didn't have enough fuel on board to motor-sail, so taught himself to sail again. The engine was only used at night, so he could keep the lights on and run the autopilot while sleeping. He would sit in the hatch and steer with his feet during the day. He tried several ways to get *Glory* to sail herself without the autopilot, using bungy cord etc, but without success. Because *Glory* is so short on the waterline, even a moderate wave would make her go off course. The longest time she would hold course was about four minutes. This was no problem, because, standing by the cooker, he could reach the helm with one hand and make a cup of tea with the other.

How nice it was not to have the engine running, to hear the waves again, and to hear flying fish landing on deck. Twice, he was quick enough to catch one for his dinner. Usually, because *Glory* has no scuppers, they just fell back into the sea. Henry had long since given up fishing, because the Dorados were so big they broke the line. He didn't like the idea of the poor fish swimming around with a hook in its mouth, and, anyway, had he caught one, three quarters of it would have to be thrown back. It was nicer just to watch them swimming around the boat.

The weather was mostly kind, though there were often northerly squalls in the middle of the day, giving him a headwind. However the wind soon boxed the compass and he usually managed several hours sailing with the wind abaft the beam. There wasn't much current in the early stages of this passage, and the going was slow, but he hoped to get into the north-setting current off the coast of Brazil, to help him on his way to Trinidad.

The passage up towards the equator was largely uneventful, with light E to SE winds, just enough to fill the sail. Steering by day made him sleep better at night, with the familiar thump of the diesel lulling him to sleep. As he approached the Brazilian coast, there was an increased chance of meeting ships, but he had a Lokata beacon to warn him if a ship's radar was in the vicinity. Depending on the size of the ship, it usually gave him a seven mile warning. It had a built-in compass, so he could get a bearing on the ship. As long as the bearing changed, he knew he was in the clear.

The position of the doldrums can shift by 3 or 4 degrees of latitude, and this year they were 120 miles north of the equator, giving him an extended period of SE trade-winds. However, as he got closer to the mainland, conditions became more variable, with heavy rain showers which were nice to cool off in. As he had discovered on previous passages, the coast south of the Amazon is very low, the first thing you

see are the tops of the palm trees. After making landfall, he turned north. He was now in the north-setting current, which gave *Glory* a nice boost.

Where the muddy waters of the Amazon River meet the blue ocean is an amazing sight, one Henry says he will never forget. On one side of *Glory* the sea was a clear blue, and on the other side it was muddy brown. A lot of rubbish comes out of the Amazon, logs of all sizes, dead animals, and other debris. The mouth of the river is so wide you cannot see both sides at once. The outflow from the river flows north, giving an extra boost to the ocean current, and *Glory* sped on her way. She had now passed her outward track and completed her circumnavigation of the world.

He had planned to pay a visit to Cayenne, but heard on the SSB radio that his daughter, Sarah, wanted to meet him in St Thomas for a sail up the inland waterway to Chesapeake Bay, so he kept going. He made landfall in



Glory sailing off the coast of Cayenne near the end of her circumnavigation

Trinidad 18 days out of St Helena, averaging 94 miles a day for the 1,702 mile passage, at an average speed of 3.91 knots.

Despite his problems en route, *Glory* had made a respectable passage and now held the record for the smallest yacht to circumnavigate the world. Serge Testa, on the 11ft 5in *Acrohc*, took the record off him a year or so later, but *Glory* remains the smallest junk-rigged yacht to circumnavigate.

Henry moored *Glory* on the rarely-visited east coast of Trinidad, at the San Fernando Yacht Club, which had a charming little wooden pier and a thatched roof. It only had cold showers, but that was no hardship in the

intense tropical heat. There were no other yachts in the bay, just local motor-boats, as the eastern side of Trinidad is very shallow for some distance off. This was Henry's third visit to the yacht club, having called there in *Simba* and on *Glory's* outward voyage.

His old friend, Doctor George, welcomed him warmly and entertained him in his lovely house overlooking the bay. George was a member of the local Rotary Club and roped Henry into giving a talk of his sailing exploits. He was advised not to go out after dark for fear of being robbed, but he was not troubled on board. There was a squatters' camp, consisting mainly of tin shacks, nearby, from which local music drifted over after dark. Henry enjoyed sitting on deck listening to it. The only uninvited boarders were hordes of mosquitos.

He left Trinidad with a heavy heart, thinking he would never be back. It was one of the friendliest islands he had ever visited. Making his way out through Dragon's Pass, he didn't want to look back. His thoughts were rudely drowned out by a visit from the island's only police helicopter, carrying Trinidad Customs officers. All they wanted was a friendly wave.

From Trinidad, he sailed 482 miles to St Thomas, in the American Virgin Islands, in 5 days, hardly enough time to adjust to life at sea and to get fit again after all the good living ashore at Trinidad. One problem he encountered on this passage was crossing paths with numerous cruise ships at night. He could see the loom of their lights long before the vessels hove into view, but when they did, it was hard to pick out their navigation lights, or to work out if they were anchored or underway. *Glory's* motion, as she bounced from one wave to the next, made taking bearings difficult.

St Thomas had a pleasant, sheltered anchorage, where he enjoyed relaxing while he waited for Sarah to join him. She was working at the time in a hospital in Palm Beach, Florida. In the mornings, he watched the locals swimming their horses around the bay. When Sarah arrived, they sailed together to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, covering 911 miles in 9 days. Then they cruised up the Intracoastal Waterway to Cape May, New Jersey, via Chesapeake Bay, covering 1,346 miles in 52 days.

Alone once more, Henry pointed *Glory's* bows homewards, east across the North Atlantic. Departing from Cape May, landfall was made in Horta, some 2,196 miles and 23 days later, a remarkable passage, averaging 95 miles a day at a speed of 4 knots. Henry had been here before, in *Simba II*, whose sign was still painted on the harbour wall. *Glory's* was duly added, and then they set sail on the last leg to Poole, England, covering 1,341 miles in 16 days, coming up the cold, gloomy English Channel, with a logbook full of exotic memories, to complete their voyage in Poole on 10th July, 1986.



Glory sailing in Chesapeake Bay

Glory had sailed a total of 32,334 miles in 327 days at sea, averaging 94 miles a day at a speed of 3.9 knots. It was a superb vindication of Henry's vision and abilities. He had completed a circumnavigation in the smallest yacht to date, at the age of 61, with consummate ease and comfort, staying warm and dry in his cabin, and without a single serious incident to mar the achievement.

He was not, however, about to hang up his carpet slippers. He was soon off cruising again, exploring the canals of France among other places. A couple of years after his world trip, sailing in the English Channel, *Glory* was approached by a French Customs vessel. Unable to hear what the customs officers were saying, Henry went below to communicate on his VHF radio. This seems to have provoked the French skipper, who was perhaps still smarting from the British naval blockade of France during the Napoleonic Wars. He placed his vessel across *Glory's* bows and was consequently rammed.

In the ensuing fluster, Henry abandoned *Glory*, presuming her to be mortally wounded. It soon became clear that she had only suffered minor damage, with a badly mangled bow roller and the pulpit wrenched off the deck. The customs boat, however, had a large hole in it, so Henry jumped back on board *Glory*. He was arrested, taken into port and detained by the French authorities for two weeks. An inquiry exonerated him of all blame. *Glory's* strengthened bows and generally bullet-proof construction had proved itself at last.

In 1993, at the age of 68, Henry sailed back across the Atlantic, revisiting many favourite haunts. He passed through the Panama Canal again and sailed up to San Francisco to spend time with his old friends, Roy and Tee Jennings of the yacht *Foxglove*, first met in Durban. They had crossed the South Atlantic together and later *Foxglove* spent a season in England. Roy has since died but Henry is still in touch with Tee.

By this time, *Glory* had been fitted with radar, GPS, chartplotter, watermaker, wind generator, spare diesel generator and electric anchor winch. The winch could be operated from below, and it used to amuse other sailors to see *Glory* set and raise her anchor with nobody on deck. He also fitted an electric winch in the cabin, opposite the manual one, for handling the sail when he was tired.

He fitted a large aerial on the bow for the HF radio. His good friend, the late David Jolly, monitored his progress to San Francisco and back. *Glory*, at this point, must surely have qualified as the smallest fully-fledged expedition vessel in the world, a real little ship.

He says that the passage from Panama up the west coast of North America was tougher than his entire circumnavigation. He spent some time at the Los Angeles Maritime Museum, which houses the United Radio Amateur Club, 6KAA, who received him warmly. He then set sail for the Galapagos Islands and Chile, via Mexico, but a case of Salmonella poisoning forced him to divert to Panama for medical treatment, after getting advice via radio from a Californian hospital. It was then too late to continue on towards Patagonia, so he returned to England through the Panama Canal.

Since then, he has crossed the Atlantic Ocean a further 4 times. *Glory* has also crossed the Bay of Biscay 14 times, and sailed around Britain 12 times, visiting his niece in the Shetland Islands. It is a remarkable record for such a small boat. Henry is now 91 years old, and has *Glory* floating in a pond on his property, where he can wander down the garden and sit aboard her, chilling out, in his words, remembering their glorious days of freedom.

That he was able to continue cruising for so long, to make ambitious, extended ocean passages well into his 80s, owes something to the unique vision he brought to creating *Glory*, with her unrivalled strength, comfort and ease of handling, marrying a sophisticated system of mechanical, electrical and electronic equipment with the *Jester* concept of operating a simple, reliable, low-stress junk rig from an enclosed central control point. To this one has to add a good dose of courage, technical skills and determination.

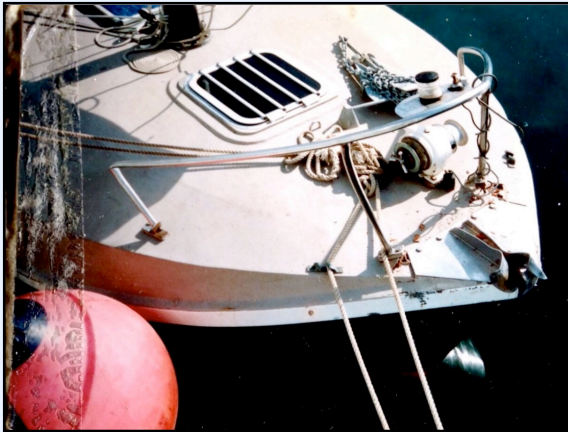




Glory under arrest in France



Damage to the French Customs vessel



Damage to Glory after colliding with the French Customs vessel

Don't mess with *Glory*!



Map of Glory's circumnavigation