

CHAPTER 6: STORIES FROM THE SEA

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**To read about an unusual crew in a previous race go to
<http://www.jessemartin.net/adventures/lionheart/99-04-20.html>**

Using the personal reflections of the crew members in the articles above, suggest some aspects which crew members may learn about themselves during such an experience.

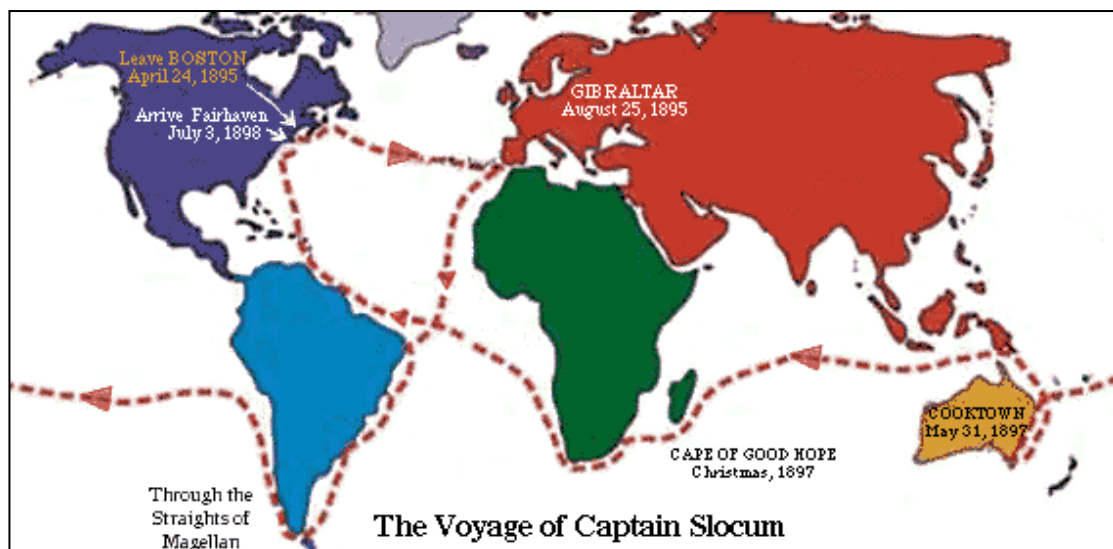
Can you recall a situation you've been in where you have been mentally and physically challenged? It doesn't have to be on the scale of the Melbourne/Osaka yacht race to be a vivid and strong memory. It could be an outdoor activity that really tested you or a competitive game where you gave your all. Describe this situation.

Afterwards we sometimes see such testing situations as a good thing; we may even want to do it again! In the personal situation you described, did it stop you wanting to participate again?

What do we learn from such experiences?

Joshua Slocum

The first person to sail around the world alone, Captain Joshua Slocum, departed Boston, USA, on April 24, 1895. He returned to Newport, Rhode Island, on June 27, 1898, after an incredible journey in his little vessel, *Spray*. This historic achievement made Captain Slocum the patron saint of small-boat voyagers, navigators and adventurers all over the world.



- <http://www.joshuaslocumsocietyintl.org/>

LONELINESS

Throughout the voyage Slocum kept a record of his travels which became the basis of his book "Sailing Alone Around the World" published in 1900.

Of all the troubles and challenges that Slocum faced one of the most common that any solo sailor has to face is loneliness.

Slocum writes, "About midnight the fog shut down again denser than ever before. One could almost 'stand on it'. It continued so for a number of days, the wind increasing to a gale. The waves rose high, but I had a good ship. Still, in the dismal fog, I felt myself drifting into loneliness, an insect on a straw in the midst of the elements."

Go to <http://arthur-ransome.org/ar/literary/slocum2.htm> and scroll down to the fifth paragraph to find out what things brought the loneliness on.

What helped to ease the loneliness?

In the Melbourne to Osaka Cup there will be two crew members. Is it possible that they might still experience loneliness?

Can you feel lonely when there is another person with you?

Discussion: Is loneliness something to be avoided?

When have you experienced the loneliness Slocum felt at sea?

How did you deal with this?

Chichester and the Roaring Forties

Sir Francis Chichester in his yacht, Gipsy Moth IV, made maritime history in 1966-67 when he completed the fastest solo circumnavigation in a small vessel, sailing from Plymouth to Sydney and back via Cape Horn in just 274 days (226 days actual sailing time).

When he set out from Plymouth on 23 August, 1966, Chichester's project was to race against the average time of the Australian wool clippers - 123 days. Chichester hoped to beat the best time of 100 days, but after a knockdown 2,900 miles from Sydney, which damaged his windvane, he jury-rigged his self-steering and limped through Sydney Heads after 14,000 miles and 107 days - still a remarkable passage.

One of the first major challenges he faced was the Roaring Forties. The Roaring Forties are areas between latitudes 40° and 50° north or south, where the prevailing winds blow from the west. Gale force winds and huge waves are caused by weather systems and currents that circle Antarctica unimpeded by land masses. The Antarctic ice sheet produces very cold, dense air that drains towards the coast. Wind speeds of 120km/h are common but they can reach more than 250km/h.

"Wild horses could not drag me down to Cape Horn and that sinister Southern Ocean again in a small boat. There is something nightmarish about deep breaking seas and screaming winds; I had a feeling of helplessness before the power of the waves came rolling down on top of me." (Francis Chichester)

Chichester also experienced loneliness on his voyage:

“My sense of spiritual loneliness continued. This Southern Indian Ocean was like no sea I had met before...I have sailed across the North Atlantic six times, three times alone, and experience winds up to 100 miles per hour there, but looking back it seemed so safe...This Southern Ocean was totally different; the seas were fierce, viscous and frightening. The boat was under big accelerations from the powerful monumental waves.” (p.77)

A few days later he records:

“I was fagged out, and I grew worried by fits of intense depression. Often I could not stand up without hanging on to some support, and I wondered if I had something wrong with my balancing nerves. I felt weak, thin and somehow wasted, and I had a sense of immense space empty of any spiritual – what? I didn’t know. I knew only that it made for intense loneliness, and a feeling of hopelessness, as if faced with imminent doom. On November 5 I held a serious conference with myself about my weakness.” (p.80-81)

What do you think Chichester’s conference might have been about?

Choose another solo sailor (search some of the sites below to find them) and write a one page report that deals with:

- loneliness and how they dealt with it
- the type of yacht they sailed in
- the direction of their voyage
- how long they took to complete the voyage
- where they stopped on the way
- what other adventures they have undertaken

Internet Resources include:

- <http://www.slocumspraysociety.asn.au/> - Australian Joshua Slocum Society
- <http://www.joshuaslocumsocietyintl.org/> - International Joshua Slocum Society
- <http://arthur-ransome.org/ar/literary/slocum2.htm>
- <http://www.gryphonsolo.com/>
- <http://www.boatingoz.com.au/newsframes.htm> - Around the world records by Australians
- <http://www.boatingoz.com.au/newsframes.htm> - News from around the world racing events

Includes excerpts from:

- Gipsy Moth Circles the World, Francis Chichester, 1967
- Sailing Alone Around the World, Joshua Slocum, 1900