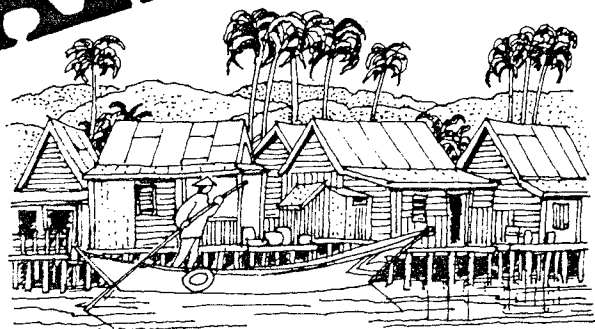
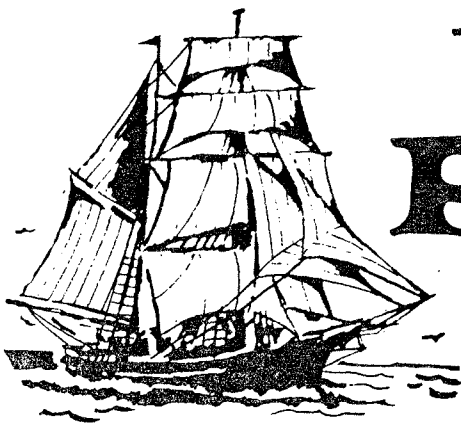


LOG of the ROMANCE



No. 5 - Dec. '76

New Guinea, Borneo, Bali, Java, Singapore, Krakatoa, Cocos Keeling

December is summertime in South Africa, and time (however belatedly you receive this) to wish you the peace and joy of Christmas from afar. Our thoughts wing homeward to families and friends half a world away--and to our second families on Pitcairn, where we spent the last most memorable Christmas. The year between has been a dream blown away on the trade winds far too fast. Of slow meanderings between unheard of islands, improbable adventures among people so very different from us, who nonetheless received us, strangers, with the most touching friendship and hospitality.

In the far western Pacific, Romance had traveled about as far back in time as one can journey in this world. We saw man living a completely natural life, all his needs supplied by growing things around him, and by the sea. The thatch dwelling, sometimes little more than an animal's lair, sometimes surprisingly attractive, became the norm. The versatile palm supplying posts and thatch for shelter, mats for sleeping, clothing, food, water, eating utensils, husks for fuel and oil for light. A few root staples are grown; fish are caught with shell and feather lures. A tree is hollowed for a canoe, and thatch provides a sail. Little do they dream that their brothers in a very different world have walked on the moon.

In New Guinea, we emerged on the other side of Eden, and saw primitive man slowly beginning the climb into the 20th century. The Highland native still lives in mud and wattle huts, but with tea and coffee booming as cash crops, he has adapted what he desires of western civilization. In the cool mountain air, it is common to see wool sweaters and stocking caps worn over a bare bottom and a bunch of green leaves sticking out behind like a turkey tail. The effect is nothing short of sensational! The older generation still favor nose bones and shells, and a cus-cus fur collar, the animal's long golden tail hanging down between bare breasts. From Lae, we flew up the Markham Valley to Goroka and Mt. Hagen, over spectacular mountain ranges. Scattered villages poise on razorback ridges for defense, the round huts resembling a field of button mushrooms from the air. We had been warned that passenger cars are still attacked on the highway, but walked the muddy back roads without fear. The Papua Niuginian is warm, friendly and courteous--perhaps because we came on foot, not in tour busses. Highland sing-sings are always going on in some remote mountain village. Any excuse is an occasion for parading Bird of Paradise head dresses and red face paint. We were invited to a wedding Sing Sing, and brought traditional gifts of salt and tobacco.

From Madang to Wewak, Romance cruised between the snow peaked coast and the outlying volcanic cones of Blip Blip, Blup Blup, Bam and Bagabag. The island of Kadovar was a chance visit, and a good one. Without a chart, we have to and made contact with the first canoes, handsomely carved and decorated with gay pandanus streamers. We inquired after carvings, and hit the jackpot! A flotilla appeared laden to sinking with huge crudely carved figures and heavy wooden masks, winsome, primitive, soot blackened and smelling pleasantly of charcoal fires. We indulged in an orgy of trading, and when we had exhausted ourselves, they continued to press their treasures on us, willing to take almost anything in trade. We saw only a few masks of the Kadovar type in a warehouse of Melanesian art in Wewak, so were especially pleased with our discovery.

Up the dusty Maprik road on a pile of coffee sacks in the back of a bouncing truck. Bamboo, sago palms and tree ferns. Filmy nets stretched high up across an opening in the trees to catch the succulent flying fox, a fruit bat with a 3 foot wingspread. Coastal homes on stilts giving way to thatch-to-the-ground hill villages grouped around spirit houses soaring into the hard blue sky. The famous Haus Tamboran, of thatch-Gothic, graceful as a cathedral.

PROCLAMATION: "As a formally invited Bicentennial ship, it is fitting that Romance celebrate this momentous event in our country's history. Little ships crossing big oceans helped build our nation. The Colonial Navy, the whalers and merchantmen, were little different than this small brigantine. Perhaps we, as few others, can appreciate the lives of our forefathers at sea. One of the surest rewards of travel is an increased appreciation of one's homeland. America the Beautiful--as perfect or imperfect as we her people. Let us pay tribute to our nation. Here between New Guinea and Borneo, July 4th comes 13 hours before the Continental U.S. We shall be among the first to celebrate the Birth of Our Nation." Formal flag raising 1300--a colonial 13 star banner given to the ship by Dan Moreland's father for the occasion.

Calms, head winds and savage squalls made the 2,000 miles between New Guinea and Borneo a trying passage, but Sandakan, Sabah, our first Oriental city, provided ample R & R. Rom-

ance was the 6th visiting yacht in 9 years, and we were a real curiosity. The local Yacht Club, Malaysian Navy and "our Chinese uncles," Chung and Wei, adopted us and entertained us royally. Amidst all this conviviality, Romance celebrated the half way mark in her world voyage, with a "Steamboat" at the Yacht Club.

A Steamboat is a bowl of broth kept bubbling over a hibachi, and surrounded by a delectable array of chicken, beef and pork pieces, butterfly shrimp, eggs, fish, button mushrooms and miniature ears of corn, all cooked in the broth and eaten on a bowl of tender Chinese noodles. A fun way to entertain we'll have to try back home in Black Lick, Gloucester or Way Cross. Sandakan is best known for exporting bird's nests (for soup,) and for its Orang Utan Rehabilitation Center, where unwanted zoo animals and pets are reintroduced to the jungle. "Orang" means "man" in Malay, and "utan," "of the jungle." One little man-of-the-jungle took Sharon Kalen by the hand for a walk, and Pete Damon had to be rescued from an admirer's knee-hug. "He had four hands to my two," Pete complained, "No way could I pry him loose!"

Bali is a magical name among the world's ports 'o call, a small island with much to charm the visitor. The beauty of mountains, lakes and terraced rice paddys, pony carts and gentle water buff, clo; the sky aflutter with a thousand kites. There are temples without number, tiny shrines in every family compound, and countless demon-gods carved in soft grey stone. Temple processions of lovely Balinese and mornings scented with fresh offerings of flower petals and incense. The marvelous Legong dancing of the beautiful young women, the kris dancing of the men, the legendary Ramayana plays and the Barong, with its wonderful monsters and witches, are part of the pagentry of everyday life.

In Bali, cremations are a joyous spectacle honoring the dead. We were fortunate to witness the largest cremation in 10 years, a member of the royal cast. In day long ceremonies, the body is transported atop a glittering 70' tower carried by 150 Balinese, accompanied by a 40' red plush dragon, and the bejeweled sacred bull, in which the honored one is actually reduced to ashes. The color, the excitement of the surging crowd of 5,000 Balinese, the clashing brass gongs of a 100 man marching gamelan orchestra, the final pyre consuming the golden tower, dragon and bull against a backdrop of tall palms and intense Balinese sky, is completely beyond the experience of Western man.

The Molucca Sea, the Celebes and Sulu Seas, the Macassar, Java and South China Seas were a litany of wonderous names to conjur visions of racing tea clippers, junks, opium smugglers and piracy. The shallow pea-green Java sea is perhaps the last great stronghold of sail. It a singular feeling in today's computerized world to slip quietly along on a dark night knowing that every single vessel out there is an engineless sailing craft. The dark shape of a stately Makassar ketch, big as Romance, suddenly looming up without lights. A fleet of gaily painted fishing craft with striped lateen sails, like a flight of butterflies across the dawn sky. Trim turtle cutters and big, Biblical cargo craft with dhow rigs. The most interesting are the Makassar ketches, with their tripod masts, tall gaff tops'ls, trim hulls, and massive double steering oars pushed around by helmsmen on boxy outboard platforms, so strange to Western eyes. We saw them by the hundreds, at sea and in Surabaya and Djakarta, loading cargos from picturesque ox carts.

We weren't quite prepared for Singapore. It rose above the mists one morning a glittering concrete and glass Manhattan, with seemingly half the world's fleet of steamers, super tankers and coasters anchored in a 4 mile wide swatch before the city. We crept in gingerly, feeling like an ant among giants, and anchored between a mammoth yellow crane and an aging Mississippi River showboat. Singapore is: skyscrapers and parks and intercontinental hotels and narrow back streets; dark swirling rivers full of blackened barges, junks and lighters; tri-shaws and food stalls, where you can lunch on Mei Goering (fried noodles,) fresh fruit and sugarcane juice for a dollar. Singapore is: Tiger Balm Gardens, the old Victoria Theater and Raffles Hotel.

While a lucky few flew off to Bangkok, the rest of us were caught up in an unwanted drama. A derelict steamer swung into Romance during a sudden 3 AM squall, hooked a t'gallant backstay and snapped the mast. What followed was a week to be proud of. Skipper, Mate Dan Moreland, Jim Brink, and the entire remaining crew, worked like demons to send down sails, rigging, yards and the broken t'gallant mast--and rerig everything again ready for sailing--ON TIME!!!

Romance was now sailing in company with VLCCs, the famous (or infamous) Very Large Crude Carriers--Superships--and oil rigs made a blazing inferno of the night sky. In the Bangka Straits, we came upon a disabled wooden steamer, trying to make a sail from an old hatch cover. Her young Indonesian crew had been without food for 3 days. We wondered how they fared on our peanutbutter, Spam and beans. The sight of Krakatoa rising from the sea thrilled us--this volcano which erupted in 1883 in history's largest explosion, far greater than any atom bomb. An explosion heard 3,000 miles away in Australia, destroying 4 cubic miles of the island, and raising a tidal wave 100 feet high, which drowned 36,000 in Java and Sumatra. A plume of cloud streaming from the pale blue cone gave an illusion of steam as we hurried by.

Soon after, Romance left the Sunda Straits and plunged into mountainous grey green Indian Ocean swells, beginning a wild, wet, boisterous slug to windward towards Cocos Keeling. Six mornings later, we were surfing down wild blue rolling seas, tufts of palms rising and falling ahead on the swell. An hour later, we hardened up on the wind and went tearing in past the scary browns and greens of the reefs off Direction Island, into a pool of brightest turquoise, rounded up and let go the heavy anchor in 5 fathoms. Cocos Keeling is the private kingdom of 6 generations of the John Clunes Ross family, and their Malay plantation workers. Like his predecessors, the present JCR quite rightly insists on the complete privacy of Home Island, but allows yachtsmen the run of Direction Island. After the busy Orient, it was good to dig our toes in the sand again, and snorkle in the warm lagoon, while the wind heaped huge combers on the reef. And there on that lonely island, we shall have to leave you castaway until the next Log, while Romance races on across the Indian Ocean.