

## MOSTLY MISCHIEF

---

H. W. TILMAN

Still, I think the immense act has something about it human and excusable; and when I endeavour to analyse the reason of this feeling I find it to lie, not in the fact that the thing was big or bold or successful, but in the fact that the thing was perfectly useless to everybody, including the person who did it.

G. K. CHESTERTON



Surtsey and the new volcanic island, 1965

# MOSTLY MISCHIEF

---

H. W. TILMAN



TILMAN

First published 1966 by Hollis & Carter Ltd  
This edition published 2016 by Tilman Books  
www.tilmanbooks.com  
a joint venture by  
Lodestar Books www.lodestarbooks.com  
and Vertebrate Publishing www.v-publishing.co.uk

Original text copyright © Simon Heyworth Davis 1966  
Additional material copyright © the contributors 2016

Cover design by Jane Beagley  
Vertebrate Graphics Ltd. www.v-graphics.co.uk

Lodestar Books has asserted their right  
to be identified as the Editor of this Work

Series editor Dick Wynne  
Series researcher Bob Comlay

The publisher has made reasonable effort to locate  
the holders of copyright in the illustrations in this book,  
and will be pleased to hear from them regarding  
correct attribution in future editions

All rights reserved

A CIP catalogue record for this book  
is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-909461-28-4

Typeset in Baskerville from Storm Type Foundry  
Printed and bound by Pulsio, Bulgaria  
All papers used by Tilman Books are sourced responsibly

The author gratefully acknowledges permission to quote from the following publications: from Hillaire Belloc's *The Cruise of the Nona*, by courtesy of Messrs. Constable; from *The Arctic Pilot*, Volumes II and III, and from an Admiralty *Notice to Mariners*, by courtesy of H. M. Stationery Office; from *The Pilot of Arctic Canada, 1960*, by courtesy of the Dominion Hydrographer, Marine Sciences Branch, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys; from an *American Pilot Chart*, by courtesy of the U.S. Naval Oceanographic Office; from an article by Dr D.C. Blanchard in *Oceanus*, by courtesy of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution; and from Lecky's *Wrinkles in Practical Navigation*, by courtesy of Messrs. George Philip.

# Contents

	Foreword – <i>Roger D. Taylor</i>	7
	PART ONE: BYLOT ISLAND, BAFFIN BAY	
I	Plans and Preparations	13
II	To Godthaab	21
III	To Upernivik	30
IV	Baffin Bay	42
V	Bylot Island	51
VI	Pond Inlet	64
VII	Homeward Bound	73
	PART TWO: EAST GREENLAND	
VIII	The Objective and the Crew	83
IX	To the Faeroe Islands	90
X	Surtsey and Reykjavik	98
XI	Angmagssalik	108
XII	Homeward Bound	121
	PART THREE: HEARD ISLAND, SOUTHERN OCEAN	
XIII	Fitting Out	133
XIV	To Albany	141
XV	To Kerguelen	150
XVI	Heard Island and Port aux Français	158
XVII	Port Jeanne d'Arc, Heard Island and Sydney	166
	PART FOUR: EAST GREENLAND, RETURN ENGAGEMENT	
XVIII	To Iceland	177
XIX	Reykjavik and Angmagssalik	187
XX	Skjoldungen and Homewards	194
	Afterword:	
	Tilman and Patanela	
	—Outward Bound, 1964 – <i>Philip Temple</i>	207

## Photographs

Surtsey and the new volcanic island, 1965	2
Upernivik Harbour and <i>Mischief</i>	35
Sanderson's Hope	38
Collecting seal from ice-floe	38
Anchorage in Lancaster Sound, off Cape Liverpool	54
Bylot Island, preparing to camp on the glacier	58
Bylot Island, Camp X (4350 ft.)	58
Ejnar Mikkelsen returning to open a lead	110
Sailing in Angmagssalik Fjord	113
On the beach at Angmagssalik undergoing repairs	116
Anchored outside Angmagssalik Harbour	118
Icebergs	127
Rockall	127
<i>Patanela</i> off Sydney Heads	142
Port aux Français, Kerguelen	154
South coast of Heard Island and Big Ben, from Spit Bay	154
Characteristic lenticular cloud over Heard Island	160
Among the fishing boats, Heimaey, Westman Islands	184
Floes and bergs in Sehesteds Fjord	184
Looking up Skjoldungen Fjord	198
Iceberg, 'picturesque' type	198
First anchorage in Sehesteds Fjord	204

## Maps

1	Bylot Island, Baffin Bay, 1963	12
2	The Crossing of Bylot Island, 25 July–8 August 1963	52
3	East Greenland, 1964 and 1965	82
4	Heard Island, 1964/1965	132
5	East Greenland, 1964 and 1965	176

## Foreword

---

*Roger D. Taylor*

I'VE JUST FINISHED READING H. W. Tilman's eight sailing and mountaineering books for... I don't know... maybe the twentieth time. Reading Tilman is a continuous work-in-progress, rather like painting the Forth Bridge. Finish the last page and you're just about ready to start all over again. Throw in too the seven pure mountaineering books and you have several life-times' worth of undiminished reading pleasure. Tilman's books are the nearest I get to having a permanent bedside companion. They're never far away. Sometimes I read them cover to cover, other times I browse and dip. Tilman is endlessly fascinating, and infuriating too. His adventures serve as both inspiration and warning. He is a guiding light and a hero, yet riddled with flaws and contradictions.

Let's be more specific. Tilman came to sailing late—in his mid-fifties—and it shows. Although he became a good ocean navigator, taking his pilot cutters through dangerous and difficult waters, he didn't, I suspect, ever achieve the fluency and sureness in close-quarter boat handling that only a lifetime of sailing can develop. For sure he was sailing unhandy boats, often with novice crews, but over the years he produced a litany of bumps, scrapes and near misses at moorings and jetties from Angmagssalik to Punta Arenas. To his credit he is brutally honest about this and the first to lampoon his own errors.

The more I read Tilman, the more I am convinced that his attitude to the proximity of land was not as well-honed or cautious as it should have been. His boats were neither the quickest nor the most close-winded, nor were their engines particularly reliable, yet time and again he stands in close, often, it seems, just for the hell of it. He talks of the *Arctic Pilot's* warning of the race off Langanes in north-east Iceland, then sails past it 'a quarter of a mile off'. Time and

again he takes short cuts through dodgy passages. Going aground is a regular pastime.

In one sense much of this was inevitable. Tilman was not just going sailing. He was going sailing in order to go climbing, therefore he had to get in close and find suitable anchorages from which the climbers could strike out. The sailing was only ever a means to an end. Nevertheless, the safety of the ship was still paramount and on that score he had some significant lapses.

The grounding that eventually led to the loss of his first pilot cutter, his beloved *Mischief*, was the result of curiously inattentive seamanship. Becalmed at night, in fog, off the southern tip of Jan Mayen, where he already knew there were off-lying rocks and a strong northerly set, he turned in and left the deck to a complete novice, with no instructions. Fifteen or twenty minutes' motoring due east would probably have been enough to take *Mischief* out of potential danger.

His next pilot cutter, *Sea Breeze*, was lost on the East Greenland coast when a combination of engine failure and lack of wind put the boat completely at the mercy of ice floes, which pushed her onto a rocky islet. The crew was lucky to be able to scramble onto a nearby ledge. Had *Sea Breeze* been equipped with a pair of sweeps, as was his next cutter, the loss may have been averted. Given that Tilman's northern voyages were largely aimed at penetrating ice fields in order to reach remote anchorages, and given the general unreliability of his engines, and his awareness that to be without any motive power when amongst ice floes was extremely dangerous, it is again curious that it took him so long to equip himself with sweeps.

Tilman's third and final pilot cutter, *Baroque*, survived, but only just. Whilst off north-east Spitsbergen he sailed her almost inadvertently between two islands, grounding her firmly on the interconnecting reef, a lapse he put down to tiredness. Only heroic and seamanlike action—the throwing overboard of tons of pig-iron ballast, followed by nail-biting fun-and-games laying out anchors and trying to winch her off—saved her. Tilman and his crew re-ballasted her with rocks from a remote beach and successfully sailed her back home. Poor old *Baroque* had to go through the mill once again. Leaving harbour in East Greenland, and wrongly assuming that the steep shore meant he could go in close, Tilman again ran her aground, on the ebb. Despite masthead

lines to the shore she dried out the wrong way and subsequently filled on the incoming tide. He was lucky that help was at hand to pump her out and refloat her, and to fix the engine.

Tilman was always ready with an apposite quote and one of his favourites was from the Prussian General von Moltke: 'Few plans can withstand contact with the enemy'. I often think he may have done well to paraphrase it: 'Few boats can withstand contact with land'.

Tilman's uncompromising ambitions locked him into a kind of vicious circle. The ultimate aim of his voyages was to climb. However his boat had to be looked after while the climbers were away. He therefore needed a biggish crew and a boat large enough to carry them and their equipment and stores. Although a man of some means—his father had been a wealthy Liverpool sugar merchant—he was frugal by nature, and solved the boat problem by using Bristol Channel pilot cutters, craft well past their useful life and relatively cheap to buy.

He was therefore in a position where he was constantly scouring docksides for crew who, once found and shipped aboard, were often unhappy with the spartan conditions and the constant pumping that attended all his voyages. Occasionally his famously terse adverts in *The Times*, typically offering 'no pay, no prospects, not much pleasure', yielded some gems, but most of his voyages were beset by crew problems of one sort or another, some verging on the mutinous. The result of all this was that much of his time and energy at sea was taken up with a monumental struggle to keep his craft afloat and his crew on board. As Tilman often lamented, with the right crew—and he did from time to time hit on an excellent combination—anything was possible, but an unwilling crew usually led to an unsuccessful voyage. He did not exclude himself from blame on this point. As an ex-soldier he was well aware of the military maxim that there are no bad armies, only bad officers.

In a sense his achievements are all the greater for his persistence in the face of constant setbacks: broken spars, blown-out sails, sprung planks, deserting crew and so on. He was no youngster either, when coping with all of this. Perhaps that's one of my favourite aspects of his tales: his indomitable, bloody-minded refusal to give up. But more than that, I come back again and again for the pure quality of his writing—witty, erudite, understated, self-deprecating. There was a

lot more to him than the allegedly misogynistic old curmudgeon of popular portrayal. He was a complex man and a deep thinker. Even in the moments of greatest despair, as everything goes wrong for him, one senses that he is looking at it all with a twinkle in his eye. He was a subaltern in the First World War trenches at the age of seventeen and saw most of his comrades killed. Perhaps that is what led him never to take himself, or his subsequent life, too seriously. Perhaps too that is what gave him his sometimes cavalier approach to his own safety, both in the mountains and at sea. It certainly gave him a kind of detached and often well-camouflaged wisdom which only regular re-reading can fully uncover.

Roger D. Taylor

*September 2015*

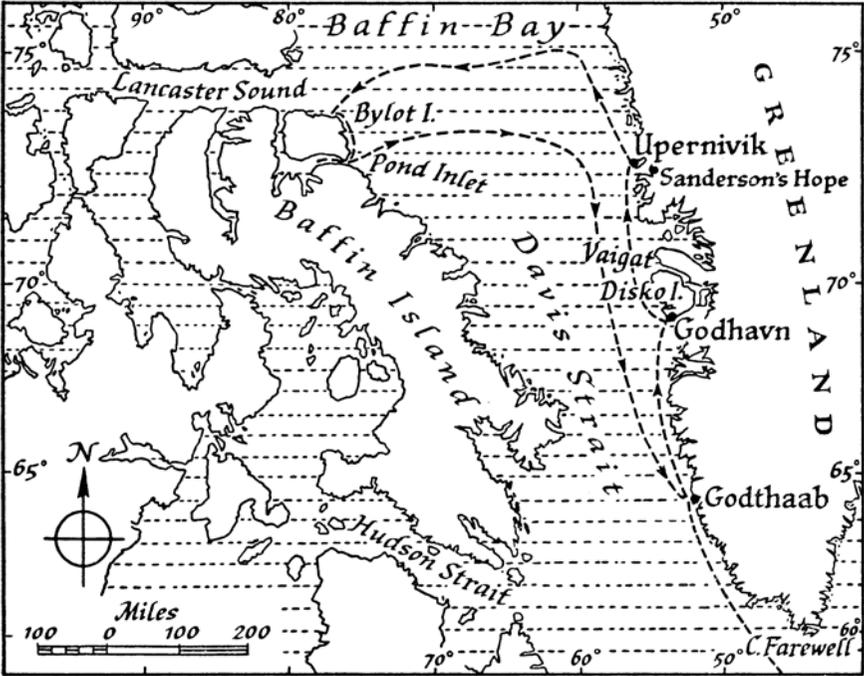
PART ONE

---

Bylot Island, Baffin Bay

*Mischief*

May–September, 1963



Map 1: Bylot Island, Baffin Bay, 1963

## PLANS AND PREPARATIONS

AS THE TEXAN OIL-MAN PUT IT: 'When you strike oil, stop boring.' After two voyages to Davis Strait and the adjacent coasts of West Greenland and Baffin Island I felt that I had also, as it were, struck oil, having found a cruising ground that fulfilled all expectations. In a region to which the voyage is not too long, Arctic waters beat upon coasts that are wild and little frequented and that are studded with unclimbed mountains. Here in summer one enjoys more or less continuous daylight, the pale skies and soft colours of the north, and above all the romance and excitement of icebergs and pack-ice seen at close quarters from the deck of a small boat. When sailing, perhaps, in fog, a little uncertain of one's position, listening to the menacing growl of pack-ice, it is easy to imagine oneself in company with John Davis aboard his 50-ton ship *Mooneshine*, or with any of those hardy spirits, the Elizabethan sailor-explorers in search of a north-west passage. As Belloc wrote of the amateur sailor: 'In venturing in sail upon strange coasts we are seeking those first experiences, and trying to feel as felt the earlier man in a happier time, to see the world as they saw it.'

The west coast of Greenland from Cape Farewell to Cape York (which can be regarded as almost beyond the northernmost limit for a small boat) is 900 miles long, for the most part fronted with uninhabited islands, islets, and skerries, and indented with long, fascinating fjords generously blessed with mountains and glaciers. On the opposite side of Davis Strait the east coast of Baffin Island is not much shorter and has likewise its islands, fjords, and mountains, though these are rather too rounded and lacking in true Alpine character to attract the mountaineer. But from the amateur explorer's point of view this coast has the advantage over Greenland of having no ports or towns, very few Eskimo settlements, and maps that are pleasingly vague. Compared with the Greenland coast it is frighteningly barren and the climate is cooler and cloudier. The cause of these conditions is the cold,

south-going Canadian, or Labrador, current bringing bergs and pack-ice down from Baffin Bay and the great ice-filled sounds leading to it—Smith, Jones, and Lancaster Sounds. On this account, too, except for a brief period in August and September, the Canadian coast is heavily beset with ice. The West Greenland coast, on the other hand, is washed by a north-going current bringing comparatively warm water from the Atlantic, and although the immense Greenland glaciers are the source of nearly all the icebergs met with on either coast, this west coast is in summer more or less free from pack-ice.

In so vast a field, with so many attractive fjords and their attendant mountains asking to be visited, the choice of an objective is difficult; and a voyage in my opinion should have some objective beyond that of crossing an ocean or making a passage. Naturally the amateur sailor derives much satisfaction from hitting off the continent or country at which he is aiming, but nowadays this modest ambition is achieved more often than not and the successful voyager, having bought a few souvenirs to support his claim, has nothing to do but come back:

Nothing to sing but songs,  
 Ah well, alas, and alack,  
 Nowhere to go but out  
 Nowhere to come but back.

After studying the *Arctic Pilot* I picked upon Bylot Island as a likely objective for 1963. It lies off the north-east corner of Baffin Island separated from it by the ten-mile wide Pond Inlet. It is in Lat. 73° N., further north than *Mischief* had been before and as far north as she is likely to get in those regions. To find ice-free water further north than this one would have to go to Spitsbergen where in favourable seasons one might reach Lat. 78° N. without even seeing ice. Thus even the reaching of Bylot Island was a challenge. There was no certainty that it could be reached, that the ice would have cleared away or be sufficiently open for a small, unstrengthened vessel like *Mischief* to navigate. According to the ice-charts there seemed little doubt that by the end of August and throughout September the sea up there would be navigable. So if the worst came to the worst we could wait. But that would mean a late homeward voyage across the Atlantic in October which the prudent yachtsman would wish

to avoid. In the Atlantic in October the percentage of gales shows a marked increase.

The island is named after Robert Bylot who acted as mate to Hudson on his fourth voyage in *Discovery* in 1610. This was the ill-fated voyage when, as the result of a mutiny, Hudson himself, his son John, and seven seamen were turned adrift in an open boat 'without food, drink, fire, clothing, or other necessaries' in the great unexplored Bay to fend for themselves, or in other words to die. Bylot himself took no leading part in the mutiny but the fact that he escaped being put over the side seems to show that he was no very ardent supporter of his captain, Henry Hudson. Perhaps the mutineers had need of his skill, for he was then put in charge of the ship. Before they had won clear of Hudson's Strait four of the leading mutineers had been killed by Eskimos and *Discovery* finally struggled into Bantry Bay on September 6th, 1611, with only nine survivors, all in a state of starvation. The survivors were in a position to give their account of events without fear of contradiction, and although an enquiry was held nothing came of it and no one was brought to book. Bylot's services were evidently of value for he went on to make two more voyages both in the same ship, *Discovery*, of only fifty-five tons. The first was with Baffin in 1615 when they again explored Hudson Bay, when Baffin gave it as his considered opinion that no north-west passage would be found in that direction and that Davis Strait offered the only hope. Consequently in 1616 they sailed again, with Bylot as master and Baffin as pilot, when *Discovery* reached Lat.  $77^{\circ} 45' N$ . On this outstanding voyage Baffin Bay, and Smith, Jones, and Lancaster Sounds were discovered and named. No advance of importance towards the discovery of a north-west passage was to be made for the next two hundred years.

In my view, distorted though it may be, Bylot Island had much in its favour, being difficult to reach, little known, uninhabited, and mountainous. In 1939 P.D. Baird, a well known Arctic traveller, had made a single-handed sledge journey with dogs inland from the Pond Inlet coast. Owing to soft snow on the north-flowing glaciers he did not get through to the north coast. In May 1954 a party of American scientists landed by air on the ice in Pond Inlet and spent a month on the island at a base on the south coast. They had climbed two mountains close inland from there, the 5800-foot Mt Thule, and another of

about 6000 feet. A general account of this appears in a book called *Spring on an Arctic Island* by Katharine Scherman, the wife of one of the scientists.

With so little background knowledge I had doubts as to whether the mountains would be of much interest. It seemed probable that they would be like those at the tip of the Cumberland Peninsula which we had climbed the previous year and their description in the *Arctic Pilot*—a 1947 edition—confirmed this: ‘Bylot Island is formed of crystalline rocks and in physical character closely resembles the adjacent north-east part of Baffin Island. The general elevation of the interior ranges from 2000 feet to 3000 feet and the coastal highlands are covered with an ice cap which extends 10 to 15 miles inland, the interior, according to the Eskimos, being free of snow during summer. The ice-rim feeds numerous glaciers, some of which discharge bergs.’

This 1947 account is evidently largely guesswork and wrong in several respects; the general elevation is from 3000 feet to 6000 feet and the ice cap covers most of the elevated interior which in summer is by no means free from snow. The 1960 edition of the Canadian publication *Pilot of Arctic Canada*, up to date and more accurate, made the mountains, too, sound quite impressive: ‘The second largest ice-field (second to the Penny ice cap on Baffin Island) occupies the greater part of Bylot Island and is only slightly lower than the Penny ice cap, mountain peaks rising through it to attain altitudes of over 6000 feet ... On the south coast the Castle Gables, an Alpine-like mountain rising to 4850 feet with serrated ridges and three major, jagged crests, is a prominent summit between Kaparoqtaalik and Sermilik glaciers. Mt Thule, about 5800 feet high, stands about five miles north-westward of Sermilik glacier.’ This sounded like the real thing but on some air photographs, which I received from a friend in the Canadian Survey, Castle Gables appeared as a ridge of rotten rock devoid of ice or snow, and Mt Thule a rounded summit little higher than the surrounding snow-field.

No mountains are to be despised. At my time of life, especially, one’s attitude towards any mountain can hardly be too humble. I had, however, to consider the young, ardent climber whom, I hoped, might be persuaded to accompany me. I could hardly ask him to suffer a four-month voyage for the sake of climbing mountains like Castle

Gables or Thule. A more worthwhile challenge would be a crossing of the island. It is about sixty miles from north to south, for the most part glaciers and snow-fields. The whole island, by the way, covers some 4000 square miles—small enough compared with the 200,000 square miles of Baffin Island which is roughly two-and-one-half times the size of the British Isles. If we succeeded it would be the first complete crossing. Much virtue in being the first. To a mountaineer a first ascent is the great prize. In the nature of things there are nowadays, in the more accessible mountainous regions, few first ascents left to be made. Aspirants for mountaineering fame are thus driven to making first ascents by all the remaining possible and impossible routes on an ascending scale of difficulty and danger, first ascents in winter, first ascents by moonlight or by no light at all, and so on, some spurred by dedication to the craft, some perhaps seeking the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth.

*Mischief* has been fully described before. She is a Bristol Channel pilot cutter built at Cardiff in 1906 of 29 tons T.M., 45 feet long, 13 feet beam, drawing 7 feet 6 inches aft. Apart from a 40-h.p. Perkins diesel auxiliary engine, winches for the staysail sheets and the main halyard, and a wire guard-rail, she is not much changed from when she was a working boat—the same heavy gear and rigging, heavy canvas sails, and accommodation below that might be described as simple. The winches and the guard-rail make her easier and safer to handle, the engine allows for some indifferent seamanship on the part of the skipper and is in any case essential among ice floes and in the windless Greenland fjords if one wants to cover any ground. Moreover, instead of the two men or man and boy who used to work her in and out of the Bristol Channel, the crew now generally comprises five or six so that they are, comparatively speaking, in clover. On the other hand in her working days she did not cross oceans or spend weeks or months at sea.

The crew began to assemble at Lymington about May 13th, allowing a full week to get the spars and running rigging set up, the sails bent, and stores stowed. This was as well because the weather proved wet and unfavourable for work and at the last moment we found signs of rot in the knightheads, the vertical stem timbers either side of the bowsprit. These had to be replaced together with a new breast-hook,

the timber which holds together the bows. In an old boat rot or soft spots in the timbers is endemic and generally to be found if persistently sought. It is a case of the more you stir the more it stinks. One cannot afford to be too fussy. A boat must be ripe indeed if without any cautionary hints and warnings she opens up like a basket. Apart from when she is occasionally called on to shunt ice *Mischief* is handled with the tender care due to one of her age. We avoid, if possible, prolonged bashing into head seas. If she begins to tremble with excitement, as she sometimes does when doing over six knots, I take it as a hint to reduce sail. In the open sea one can steer a point or even two points off the required course if it will make the motion easier, and since the average helmsman is likely to be that much off course anyway it makes no difference in the long run. Or one can heave to for the sake of peace and quiet, especially if the cook is having trouble in the galley and the evening meal is in jeopardy.

The crews for *Mischief's* nine voyages have all been more or less inexperienced. Most sailing men either have their own boats to sail or are engaged to crew for friends, while the few who have the opportunity to make a long cruise prefer to go in search of sun and warmth. In 1963 I had what was probably the least experienced crew of any. With one exception I doubt if any of them had been to sea before in a small boat. However the exception had enough experience to make up the deficiency of the rest. Ed Mikeska was a professional seaman who had sailed in all kinds of ships from large yachts to ice-breakers. In fact his last spell at sea had been in a Canadian ice-breaker in the Canadian Arctic. He was a Pole, in his 'teens when the Germans invaded Poland, who had got away to England and served in the war at sea with the Free Poles. I had corresponded with him off and on for some time and he had been on the point of coming with me on an earlier voyage to the Southern Ocean but had thought better of it. This time, since his mind seemed fully made up, I took him on and felt I was lucky to have on board such a thorough seaman. By the time one has got clear of the English Channel and its perilous shipping lanes even a green crew should have shaken down, got over their seasickness, and be on the way to becoming useful, but those first two or three days in the Channel can be very wearing for the skipper unless backed by an experienced hand like Ed Mikeska. Though it may have been for the good of

their souls his hazing of the crew was perhaps too much like that of a bucko mate.

Ed took the keenest interest in boats and in all aspects of the sea and was knowledgeable about most of them. On joining he had some disparaging remarks to make about *Mischief*, in fact in his view she seemed scarcely seaworthy—the cockpit was big enough to constitute a death-trap, the companionway facing aft would merely conduct half the ocean into the cabin, and the skylight was another vulnerable point that endangered the ship. The rigging of her, too, could in several ways be improved. A man's most cherished possession be it a woman or a ship, a horse or a favourite dog, is seldom without blemishes, and though the man himself may be aware of them he does not really enjoy having them brought to his notice. I had to remind Ed of the remark of the skipper of a coasting brig to his newly-joined mate: 'What I want from you Mr Mate is silence, and not too much of that.'

Then there was Mike Taylor, young and strong, so reluctant to settle down in the Channel Islands as an estate agent in his father's office that he had been working as a labourer in the Berthon Boatyard. I'm afraid the voyage unsettled him still more; I had a brief meeting with him recently in Sydney where he had just arrived.

Bruce Reid, also young, had left St Andrews University (with which I have a sort of back-door relationship), unfortunately without a degree, his climbing activities having precluded his devoting much time to the study of history. He had since settled for the R.A.F. but would not be needed until October. Stephen Pitt, the youngest of all, after leaving school at Malvern had worked in a London office in the timber business without acquiring any great love for it. His parents were a little concerned at his wanting to go to sea in *Mischief* and since they lived within easy reach of Lymington I soon learnt how they thought about it. Unable to be like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears I soon began to feel all the guilt and none of the pleasure of a successful seducer of youth.

All these had been enlisted voluntarily and almost painlessly without any advertising or having to scratch around and solicit. None of them, however, had shown any willingness to take on the job of cook, the most important in the ship. My last victim, Bob Sargent, who lived in Edinburgh, I got hold of in a more devious way. My friend Dr David

Lewis, in search of crew for a maiden voyage to northern waters in his catamaran Rehu Moana, had by no means eschewed publicity and had, in consequence, received a host of applicants. Among those rejects whom he passed on to me was young Bob Sargent. Luckily I had occasion to go north to St Andrews and we arranged to meet for breakfast at Princes Street station in Edinburgh. He was then studying in a business college of the House of Fraser, found it singularly unrefreshing, and was hell-bent on going on some expedition, no matter where. He had never been to sea and had no other useful experience or skills to offer but he said he could cook. Cooking for oneself on a gas or electric stove in a house that seldom rocks is quite different to cooking for six men on a Primus stove at sea in *Mischief's* galley, a galley, by the way, which is sited forward of the mast in the most lively part of the ship. After I had explained and even stressed all these differences to Bob his confidence remained unshaken. So I agreed to take him as cook, a gamble that happened to come off.