



*Maybe I don't
need a shower after all*

In search of the elusive SHOWER!

MAYBE I DON'T NEED
A SHOWER AFTER ALL.....

concludes John Campbell
after sundry adventures in
search of the
elusive ablutions

drawings by Brian Hales

When cruising in a small boat in a hot climate, usually one of the most important undertakings on reaching shore, both from a personal point of view and having consideration for one's companions, is to find somewhere to have a shower. On a long passage there is usually little enough water available, without 'wasting' any on washing. As a result, the need to find a shower on arrival is directly proportional to the length of passage completed, the ambient temperature and the proximity of one's companions. Thus it can be seen

that after a moderate passage, in the tropics, on board a small boat, the need to have a shower soon after arrival in a strange harbour assumes mammoth proportions!

Often a great deal of cunning must be employed if one is to achieve this mighty objective, without stooping to paying or stripping off under a dock-side tap, either of which may be resorted to in the end, and may prove safer in the long run.

If one is short of time or patience, but not money, then many hotels can be persuaded to allow the use of their bathrooms, but a price should always be agreed in advance. Often a bargain price can be agreed if you undertake to use your own towel.

A fairly busy hotel may lend itself to a free shower, if you march in with a cheery wave to the receptionist, and your washing kit heavily disguised as some local produce. If challenged then three courses of action are open. First, you can explain the purpose of your mission, say you were looking for the manager and offer to pay. The more experienced shower seeker will do better than this, adopting courses two and three. He will either say he is visiting Mr Smith in Room 43, or he will feign ignorance of all known languages, apologise in broken Swahili, smile sweetly and carry on to the shower.

Very new hotels are best avoided, because hotel architects do not seem to accept the needs of the wandering yachtspeople. Modern hotels tend to have bathrooms attached to individual bedrooms, which presents added complications. In these cases though, a visit to the staff quarters has been known to succeed.

If the vessel is berthed in a commercial dock, further possibilities become apparent. In most docks there are



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showers for the dock workers. A careful watch at 'knocking-off time' will reveal their whereabouts. Usually the male members of the crew can join in the queue, and again apparent language problems can avoid giving explanations if challenged. It is usually more difficult for female members of the crew to join in like this, but if a quiet watch is kept on the showers, sooner or later they will be left unwatched, unlocked and empty.

The other possibility in a commercial dock is cruise ships. One can easily join in the happy throng of passengers making their way on board for lunch, but instead of going to the dining room, head for 'Cloud Nine' and the tourist class showers. The first class accommodation should be avoided, as the cabins usually have their own showers, with obvious problems.

If there are no communal showers, then do not despair, but reach for the bowels of the ship, ask the youngest steward where you can take a shower, adding a muttered explanation about having been working on the alternator all morning. There is no ship afloat that does not have electrical problems, and often shore-side contractors are employed to sort them out. Credence will be lent to the story if the shower-seeker is wearing old and dirty clothes, but then how many yachtsmen wear otherwise?

An ace-shower-seeker has even been known to get a lift out to a cruise ship anchored off, in one of the ship's launches, have his shower, a free lunch, and then be returned safely ashore in a

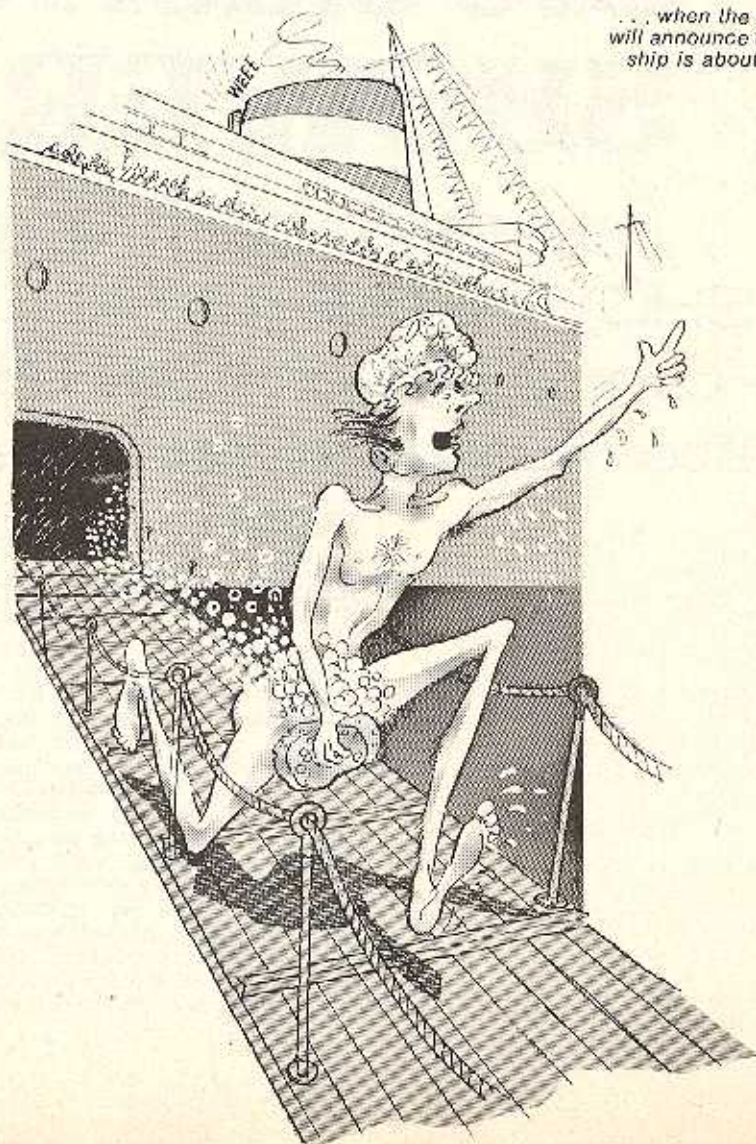
launch by a smiling crew. Such achievements are rare, and are only successful after years of practice!

Yet another opportunity presented itself recently, while berthed alongside in Curacao. The shoreside facilities did not lend themselves to getting a shower, and what cruise ships were in, were berthed far away, and appeared to be extraordinarily well guarded, or flying flag 'P', which signifies that the ship is making ready for sea. These latter ships are to be avoided at all costs, because as sure as eggs are eggs, you will just be worked up with a nice lather when the Tannoy will announce that the ship is about to sail. The choice is then between a premature return to Blighty or running naked and frothing from the ship.

We were pondering our dilemma, when suddenly, like manna from Heaven, a huge great motor yacht roared in to berth astern of us. Such an enormous vessel (she had a speed boat, a launch and two cabin cruisers on deck!) must be chock full of showers. This could be the answer to our prayers. All that remained now was to plan our approach.

We were still planning, when what appeared to be the owner and entourage came past us, headed for dinner in town. Mr and Mrs Millionaire paused to examine our boat and seemed incredulous that such a little boat (only

... when the Tannoy will announce that the ship is about to sail!



48 feet long) could sail from England. As they headed off for town, the stage was set.

After we had had our dinner, I went off to spy out the land (or should I say yacht?). I wanted to get our millionaire talking about his boat, so I could be invited aboard, then the rest would be easy. A discreetly said 'I bet you even have showers on board, that's what we could do with' and a shower would be as good as ours.

Unfortunately I was still spying when Mr M. returned, a little the worse for wear after his meal, which must have been mostly liquid. He spotted me and

insisted that I came on board for champagne. I agreed to go on board, but as I was clad only in swimming trunks, I suggested I went and got dressed first. He would not hear of it and I was hustled on board—this was too easy, although Mrs M. was surprised at my clothes!

I told Mr M. that he had a fine yacht, all part of the softening up process, upon which he told me that he had only chartered the yacht, but as it had cost him a hundred thousand dollars to charter, then he probably owned part of it.

At this point we walked into the big-

gest saloon I have ever seen on a yacht, and the biggest family row I have ever heard. Everybody sat around in embarrassed silence while Mr and Mrs M. had a heated argument which seemed to revolve around Mr M.'s secretary, who it seemed, was on board the yacht, and was not very popular with Mrs M.

Eventually Mrs M. dismissed the steward, who was hovering in embarrassed silence over a case of champagne, saying that their young, strong friend would pour the drinks, looking at me in my swimming trunks, standing ankle deep in white Axminster. She then added that I was obviously young and certainly looked strong. I should have heard the alarm bells then, but the prize of a lovely cold shower seemed within my grasp, so the sound of bells was drowned by the gurgle of water!

Their 'young, strong friend' poured the drinks and after a suitable number of bottles had been consumed, made the next move towards the ultimate goal. Mrs M., it seemed, was working along similar lines, because when I asked if I could look over the yacht (so I could say 'Oooh, even showers, etc') she almost dropped her drink in her hurry to escort me. The thought of the shower drove me blindly on.

About half way round the yacht she showed me her cabin, with bathroom attached. The 'Oooh, even a shower' died in my throat when I realized she had shut the cabin door and was nearly out of her dress. This time the alarm bells rang loud and clear, and the gurgle of water died to a trickle. My thoughts went to Mr M. in the saloon, who had been talking of shooting any difficult officials he might meet, as I fled, muttering 'maybe I don't need a shower after all!'

We sailed for Aruba at 4 am the following morning. I wonder if we can get a shower somewhere in Aruba?

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In the Offing

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accusation in the correspondence columns are awry. J. C. Millett lashes out at 'fins, bustles, trim tabs, spade rudders, freak sail plans' and for good measure light displacement! 'something must be wrong', he says. Now bustles have brought nothing but good, with better balanced yachts and in larger vessels a whole new volume for accommodation aft (in the Swan 44 for instance). Trim tabs are so heavily penalized that they are now very rare. Separate rudders including spade rudders (though designs vary greatly) undoubtedly have eased steering problems and given lighter helms in recent years. Light displacement is a comparative term, but in relation to the I.O.R. it is heavy displacement which gets a bonus. Some people complain this encourages expensive yachts and say that light displacement should be more encouraged! Mr Millett's most fascinating statement is that mainsails used to be too big, but now they are too small. So when were they just right? Seriously I would like to know the year of the Millett mainsail. C. J. Butler says you cannot go cruising in the Stephens designed D.30: this is

one of the heaviest boats for her length ever designed! For some reason he is against the sound, seaworthy little yacht that won the 1972 Quarter Ton cup, because 'she was as much a racing machine as is the Flying Dutchman'. I am afraid this will not do. The French have developed a whole range of wonderful little offshore boats, which they—and now us—sail at sea in all sorts of weather. They should not be compared with specialist Olympic inshore boats of limited appeal.

It is because the rule is working well, that the exceptional case of *Cascade*. Jerry Milgram's cat rigged ketch, has become something of an obsession in the U.S.A., though only a curiosity in Europe. During April the O.R.C. will, I hope, have found a fair rating for this sort of rig, which has proved the first major loophole of the I.O.R. *Cascade* is already a complex matter about which thousands of words have been written and spoken. Basically Milgram has not come up with an improved yacht. By finding a loophole in the rule, he has got a rating so low that the yacht can almost sail up to it to windward and can sail well above it off the wind; thus she has won a number of races. But the yacht is slow for her 'size'. The O.R.C. has been accused and Olin Stephens in

particular for throwing away its principles and panicking at *Cascade*, by slapping on the now famous (or infamous to most of the American press, *New York Times* included) ten per cent penalty. But the I.O.R. says in its preamble "... the Council shall interpret this rule so as not to discourage developments tending to increase the speed of yachts, but to minimize the incorporation of features tending by unusual methods to reduce the rating". *Cascade* clearly fits into this latter category. When the powerful voice of John J. McNamara Jr warns that 'the rerating of *Cascade* will take on the aspects of a maritime Dreyfus Affair with too many vested industry interests serving on the drumhead court martial' the thing has to me become silly. This quote is part of a 1500 word exhortation sent to this magazine and elsewhere and addressed primarily to Olin Stephens, which concludes "The time is at hand for the O.R.C. to rethink what has been wrought and to set down in clear terms a rule with a healthy and desirable philosophy and then to see to it that the printed word of the Rule is kept". I say let us come back to earth, deal with this one loophole as fairly as we humanly can and then regard the matter as closed.