

BOLEH:

ARISING FROM THE ASHES



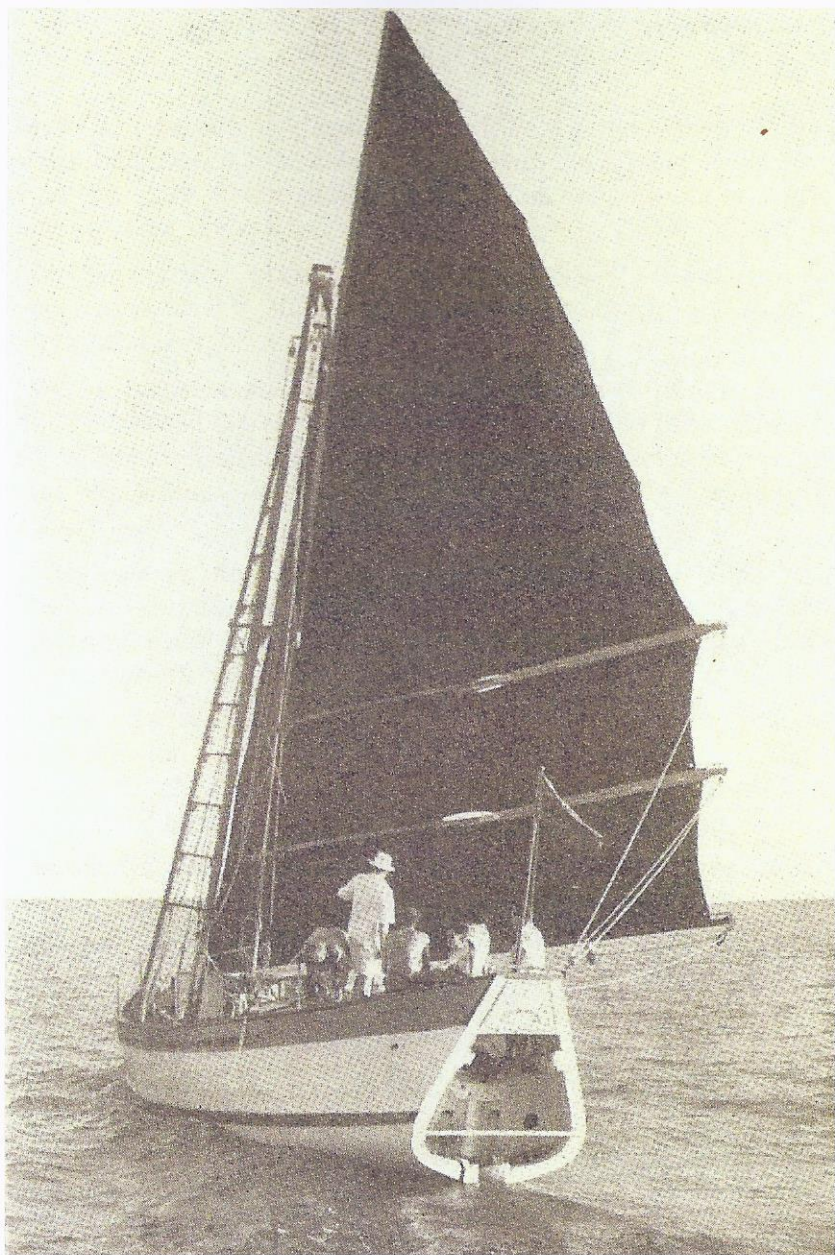
AN AFFAIR BETWEEN
A MAN AND A BOAT

DAVE SULLY



Cover photo

Roger Angel looks at the fire damage, Rye, 1978



SEA TRIALS ~ SINGAPORE 1949
Robin Kilroy and crew
(from 'Boleh' by Cdr. Kilroy)



RESTORED! ~ RYE BAY 1984

INTRODUCTION

Since first becoming involved with Boleh when Roger and Wendy Angel discovered that it had taken over their lives, I threatened to write the story of the restoration and the subsequent sailing of this historic yacht.

With the mythical phoenix in mind, the title was easily decided. It would take almost 30 years to actually get down to putting pen to paper (and then fingers to keyboard)!

When it became apparent that Roger would no longer be able to maintain or sail the yacht it was time to attempt to record the `second life` of Boleh. Fortunately Roger was able to arrange for the yacht to pass into the safe-keeping of the family of the designer and builder, Robin Kilroy.

Unfortunately, most of the records (logbooks etc) which were on Boleh in her latter days in Palma were lost. This account has been put together from the existing photographs, and memory - both a bit suspect where locations and dates are concerned!

Wendy has been the main source of information, my involvement being only for a brief part of the time that she and Roger cruised and lived on Boleh. Also my thanks to Trev Sully, his grasp of IT matters has made it possible to turn the text into this publication.

It is always difficult to know what to include in any recollections of events, and more importantly, what is best left unsaid.

The story outlined here will have limited appeal, to the families of Robin and Roger, to those who had some connection with Boleh, and perhaps to inspire others to the `Can Do` approach to life.

In 1938 Roger Angel was born in Hastings, Sussex. The town was perhaps better known as the place near which William the Conqueror defeated King Harold in 1066.

A decade later an unconventional yacht was built in Singapore. This is the story of how the story of how man and boat met, and stayed together for thirty years.

Boleh - meaning `Can Do` in Malay - was designed and built by Commander Robin Kilroy, who was serving in the Royal Navy in the

Far East. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross whilst flying Swordfish aircraft. Some details of his experiences are to be found in 'War in a Stringbag' by Charles Lamb, published 1977 by Cassell.

The full story of the concept for the unusual design of the yacht and the construction and subsequent voyage to England is related in 'Boleh' by Robin A Kilroy, published 1951 by Hodder & Stoughton.

A simple description of the yacht was a junk/dhow above the waterline, and a classic deep-keel European hull below. Very heavily constructed with ocean sailing in mind, Boleh is sea kindly and sails at her best with the wind on the beam. The use of tropical hardwoods in construction has allowed the yacht to reach 60 years of age without serious deterioration of the hull.

Between 1950, when Boleh arrived in Salcombe, Devon, and 1961 when Robin died, the boat was used by the family and also provided sail-training for Sea Cadets, Island Cruising Club trainees and other groups. The history of Boleh is rather sketchy after it was sold by the relatives of Robin Kilroy - at one stage it may have been in Woodbridge, Suffolk.

In 1966 an advert in the personal columns of the Times was seeking syndicate members for Boleh, then based in Portsmouth.

The yacht was later used by the Junior Leaders Regiment (Royal Engineers) at Dover for adventure training; ownership at the time is unclear. The author had sight of an old log book in the name of Keith Nolloth, but this has since been lost.

In 1971 the yacht was in Rye, Sussex and it would remain based there for another ten years or so. As with many other boats awaiting restoration, including ex-Dunkirk veterans and old sailing workboats, Boleh ended up being used as a houseboat. Many of these boats gradually deteriorated to the point of being beyond repair.

Boleh was saved when it was bought in 1976 by a wealthy German traditional boat enthusiast. Ingo Farmont from Dusseldorf, had business interests in the USA and at one time he was the owner of 'Serengeti', a 75 ft wooden Ketch in the Miami area. He later commissioned the building of trawlers in Turkey.

It was subsequently reported that £15,000 was spent refitting Boleh and a date of January 25 1978 was set for her departure to Germany and then on to the USA. But in the early hours of January 22 a milkman spotted a fire on board.

By the time the fire was extinguished the yacht was severely damaged down to the waterline. The fact that there was still some water in Rock Channel, which dries out at low water, probably saved the hull from complete destruction. The damage was so severe that the Insurance Assessor declared the boat a total wreck. The owner had valued Boleh at £30,000 and eventually received £24,500 from the insurers.

As ever, one man's misfortune is another's opportunity. The ashes had barely cooled before local boatyards were bidding for the wreck. Their interest was in the tools and equipment that had survived without damage, the various brass and bronze fittings, and not least about 5 tons of lead in the keel!

CHAPTER ONE

ROGER TO THE RESCUE!

To the surprise of the boatyard owners an outsider also made a bid, with the intention of rebuilding Boleh. His offer of £1,250, which turned out to be lower than the combined bid of the boatyards, was accepted. The Insurance Assessor, a wooden boat enthusiast, was challenged on his recommendation by the other bidders. The matter went before a Tribunal in London, who upheld his view that, if possible, such an historic yacht should be restored.

Roger Angel had begun his long association with Boleh. The first time Wendy heard the name of the yacht was when Roger, who was reading the newspapers over breakfast, suddenly jumped up and said he had to get to Rye immediately. He just about explained that there were a couple of lines in the stop press about an historic 'junk' being burnt. He guessed it was Boleh, which he had long admired, and had watched the refit taking place alongside the boatyard where he had been working.

When he arrived at the scene the Fire Service were still damping down the remains of the yacht. Since he was on hand so swiftly and showed such interest the Police asked if had any part in starting the fire!

In April 1978 a 31 year old man, of no fixed address, was convicted at Lewes Crown Court of arson, after pleading guilty to the charge of setting fire to the boat. He declined to give a reason for his actions: 'I was drunk, really drunk - but that is not an excuse'. He went on to tell the Court: 'If I told you my reasons, you would not understand. You will probably decide I'm an activist or something'. He was sentenced to two years, and left a small port such as Rye full of much speculation and gossip about his motives in trying to destroy the boat!

Roger came from an altogether different background than Robin Kilroy. He left school at the age of 15 years and became an apprentice carpenter and joiner. At the end of his apprenticeship he was called for National Service in the Royal Air Force. Anxious to put his skills to work earning 'real wages' at last, he would not sign on for the minimum four years of Regular service which would allow him to follow his trade in the R.A.F.

He was selected to be trained as a teleprinter operator, which may have helped later with Morse Code on the RYA Yachtmaster

Course, but did little else to help keep his skills honed!

Once back in 'Civvie Street' Roger spent the rest of his life working with wood. He could also be very handy with a sledgehammer, when involved in major property alterations! The building boom of the 1960s, when he had a major contract on a large council estate, helped fund the building of his own house. His powers of persuasion soon saw his brothers and other contacts from the building industry involved. Many of these, and new contacts in boatbuilding, would later be found conscripted in the restoration of Boleh.

As the major contracts came to an end Roger fitted kitchens, shuttered up for concreting, and as he said: 'Made replacement windows for half the rotten ones in Hastings and St. Leonards'.



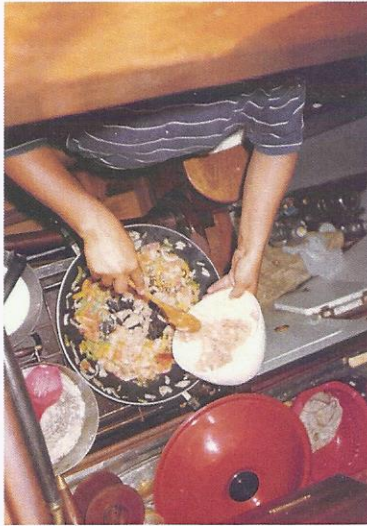
ROGER ANGEL ~ PALMA MALLORCA 1986

As with many who live near the coast Roger had 'messed about in boats', mainly sea-angling off Hastings and Rye Harbour. In the 1970s he bought a Hurley Felicity, a 20 ft. Marine Plywood Sloop, which had run onto rocks and been holed. He repaired the damage to the hull, but was unable to straighten the bent bilge keel. The 'Mary Fifi' thus went to windward better on one tack than the other!

This boat was kept on a mooring in Rye, and it would lead to Roger crossing paths with Boleh, and finding a much bigger challenge in repair work!

The author, at that time married to Roger's sister, had been sailing for some years. Most of his experience had been in dinghy racing whilst serving in the Royal Air Force. A week on board a Nicholson 55 had opened up an interest in ocean sailing. We sailed 'Mary Fifi' together in the Rye Bay area and Roger got to learn the basics of handling a boat under sail.

Wendy Angel is a country girl with, to put it mildly, no particular love of the sea. Her main interests are gardening, which she worked at professionally, and cooking. She and Roger had bought a guesthouse, and accommodated large groups of Italian students and adult leaders who attended local language schools to improve their English. Wendy soon became expert at catering for large numbers, as well as acting as a mother figure to the younger children.



WENDY WORKING WONDERS with WOK ~ PALMA 1986

When questioned recently about the viability of guesthouses, Wendy could only say that she never had time to find out. To finance the purchase and restoration of Boleh the guesthouse was sold and their new home became a caravan in the car park of Lochin Marine. This was just about 20 yards from where the yacht lay in Rock Channel, so there was no longer a 30 mile round trip to get working on the mammoth task of restoration. Wendy continued to work as a gardener to provide some income. She also managed to feed anyone who turned up to help, or hinder, on the project.

CHAPTER TWO

'Give Everything a Good coat of Looking At'

That was Roger's way of approaching any new task, and along with the old advice to 'measure twice and cut once' is a sound way of tackling any work involving wood or metal.

The first task was to clear Boleh of both damaged and serviceable tools and equipment. Since the yacht was fully provisioned, apart from fresh food, this involved a large amount to accommodate on a site with no lock-up facilities. Arrangements were quickly made for storage of everything that was of value.

The major job was that of removing all the charcoal, burnt timber and other debris from the boat. Once this was done the way was clear to start considering how to rebuild with the materials, and not least, what finance was available. Each piece of timber damaged by the fire was removed and laid out on the ground, to act as a pattern. Roger also obtained a copy of Robin Kilroy's book, which gave information on the original design and building. Apart from some changes to the rigging and interior layout, and the fitting of a Mercedes Benz engine, the yacht was as described in the book.

The contrast between building a yacht in a boatyard and restoring it after severe damage in a tidal mud berth is not hard to imagine. With her deep keel Boleh sat fairly upright and was only fully afloat around Spring tides. Much improvisation was needed to work on the outside of the hull, with temporary staging from the mud, and working from dinghies. The 'Mary Fifi' was also used as a working platform (and sometimes a rubbish skip!). Having taken over the smaller yacht from Roger, I was not always amused to have to clear the decks before being able to sail!

Wood such as chengai and teak were not available, but other hardwoods, waterproof plywood and modern adhesives would make a fair and seaworthy substitute. One of the family cars was sold to pay mooring fees and other expenses connected with the purchase, and the VW Campervan went to pay for a baulk of hardwood. This was sawn and left to season fully.

Roger had built a 'temporary' workshop alongside Boleh, and near that was his timber rack, which seemed to have a never-ending supply of wood from various sources. Transit vans with bent roof-racks were often spotted in the vicinity!

Other items needed to complete the restoration came from various sources. The annual outing to the Beaulieu Boat Jumble Sale was a must; it is likely that much of the gear brought back was later not used, but could always be exchanged with other boat-owners.

The Lewmar Self-tailing winches were obtained from a yacht that had run aground on Camber Sands on her first outing after a major refit. The boat took a pounding in heavy seas before it could be rescued and broke up. Various warps and the large fenders came from the same source, at bargain prices.

Wendy and Roger became convinced that Robin Kilroy, and Ali the chief Malay shipwright, were guiding their efforts from afar - each time something was needed it seemed to materialise! It is just as likely that Roger's well tuned powers of persuasion and energy had much to do with getting things moving in the right direction.



New Ribs in Place ~ Rock Channel Rye

With a power supply connected to the workshop it became possible to use the full range of power tools. The pace of progress in the restoration varied, with Roger reluctantly having to take on other work to fund the next stage. At various times he and his previous business partner took on the specialist job of constructing a mansard roof. Genuine tradesmen were becoming rare and to some extent they could afford to chose which jobs to undertake.

He also had the less interesting job of 'shuttering up' for the concrete on a new lock on the River Rother. It did have the advantage of being nearby and well paid!

Later on he constructed the wooden 'plug' which was used to mould the GRP 38 foot 'Arun' Class Lifeboats being built by Lochin Marine for the RNLI.



***NEW PLANKING IN PLACE
(the workshop in near background and caravan in front of
Lochin Marine Boatbuilders)***

The owner of Lochin Marine, Frank Nichols, had started the business in the early 1970s to produce 'seaworthy' boats, in contrast to the 'fair weather' models then being manufactured. He had previously been the founder of Elva Racing Cars, which were built locally and had international success in the 1950/60s.

Roger, as well as working at times in the boat builders, also carried out carpentry and building works at Frank Nichol's property. He was able to use the machine-shop and other factory facilities by way of thanks from the owner.



The Coach-Roof and Decking taking shape

With a view to some form of future security, Roger and Wendy bought a dilapidated house in Hastings. With some help from local authority grants they converted it into two flats. They moved into one and rented out the other, but before too long had sold their own. They now moved back to the caravan in the car park, where they stayed until Boleh was at least fitted out with some bunks and stowage lockers.

Anyone who has lived in a caravan or a boat will know how quickly one gets used to the idea of living with the bare minimum of worldly goods - and how important it is to know where they are stowed!

Roger had several digital watches which had alarms set at various times. These gradually got lost in various places on board Boleh and would set off a new search each time they sounded! At least one remained hidden when the battery expired.

Ready For Sea-Trials

By 1980/81 enough had been done to allow thoughts of a tentative trip from the mooring out into Rye Bay. The first task was to actually get Boleh off the mud, where she had sat for two years or so, and into the main channel. Water blasting a passage for the keel had been tried, but in the end it was the crew, who took to the mud with shovels, that won the day.

With a boat of 7ft draught it is only possible to clear the sandbar at Rye Harbour entrance about two hours each side of high tide. The harbour entrance is over a mile down the Rother from Rock Channel, which all but dries at low tide. The tidal flow in the river can run at 6 knots, more than Boleh could make headway against under power. The outward journey went well, no sign of other than a slight amount of water in the bilges as the joints 'took up'.

The return journey to Rock Channel gave a better indication of the handling characteristics of Boleh under engine alone. With an offset propeller and a very high stern end, it can be difficult to convince her to go in the desired direction, unless the wind direction, and where the power to the propeller are deciding to take her, are heeded!

The entrance to Rock Channel from the River Rother is a 90 degree turn and since we were approaching too fast to find the 'slot' to moor, reverse gear was selected, but failed to engage. Now in neutral gear, Boleh carried on with her own momentum as

the crew frantically lifted engine-covers to select reverse by hand. The problem proved to be no more than a control cable not clamped, but in the meantime 22 ton of yacht had mounted the staging alongside a local trawler, which also suffered some damage. So Roger had another repair job; luckily he knew the owner and matters were soon put right.



ALONGSIDE MOORING~ ROCK CHANNEL

Roger, having got the hull basically sound, turned his attention to the rigging. Most of the standing rigging was unaffected by the fire, but the sails were either burnt or smoke damaged. Enough of them remained to act as patterns for a new set to be ordered. These were delivered in a traditional tan colour.

The boom was damaged and a new one made up from spruce, which had been soaked in a local stream for some months to season slowly.

With some sails available, thoughts now turned to trying out Boleh and the crew under sail. One of the early short trips was made to Dover to meet with officers of the Junior Leaders Regiment (JLR) (Royal Engineers). There was now a family link as Roger's son Simon was to be trained there.

Wendy's brother had made a model of Boleh, in the same way that Robin Kilroy had done. This model, which showed the current rig, was left in the safekeeping of JLR to mark the link between the yacht and the Regiment.

The JLR depot at Dover was later closed, and despite many enquiries the model has never been located. An ex-Royal Engineer does recall seeing it on his Commanding Officer's desk when he was marched in on a matter not related to sailing!

Roger had now fitted out below deck, much of the locker-space, navigation area and galley in plywood on a trial basis. There were some bunks finished and the skipper's cabin in the stern was taking shape.

The short distance from Rye to Brighton Marina gave the opportunity to try sailing the yacht and be able to get into a berth overnight. The Harbour Master at Brighton, hearing that Boleb was asking for a mooring personally supervised matters. He decided that an historic yacht was a visitor attraction, and normal fees would not apply.

The author recognized the Harbour Master as an ex-RAF Navigator, who had been the skipper of 'Lord Trenchard', a Nicholson 55 of the Joint Services Sailing Establishment at Gosport, on board of which the interest in something more than 'racing around the buoys' had started to develop. As a professional navigator, he still described establishing a position on a small boat as: 'More of an art than a science'.



BRIGHTON MARINA

CHAPTER 3

OUT OF SIGHT OF LAND!

Modern motorists with satnav systems, being guided down dead-end roads or instructed to turn right at a level crossing and finding themselves on the rail track illustrate the danger of too much reliance on technology.

In preparation for extended cruising Roger and I attended an RYA Ocean Yachtmaster course. The tutor, an ex-Merchant Navy Officer, had a fund of 'salty dog' tales to illustrate various points about seamanship.

He had for some years worked on ships running bananas from the West Indies to Liverpool and claimed to have been on the only ship known to have run aground on a coffee stain! Below the stain on the chart of the area was the only reef for miles, and the course line passed straight over the reef!

The phrase 'radar assisted collisions' was a neat reminder not to place too much reliance on technology and to use the Mk1 Human Eyeball, keeping an old-fashioned lookout. The routine of keeping a dead reckoning position and logbook entries is often a way of avoiding being lost.

The evidence of this simple fact I saw whilst serving on Gan Island in the Maldives. Royal Air Force VC10 transport aircraft flew a regular 'milk run' service with servicemen and families from Brize Norton to Hong Kong. A stop in Cyprus, to refuel etc, was followed by an eight hour flight to Gan, the length of the journey due to the military aircraft avoiding possibly hostile airspace.

The VC10 could always be relied upon to land at Gan within a few minutes of ETA. One flight did not go so smoothly: several electronic navigation systems failed and the aircrew were now over the vast Indian Ocean trying to find an island just one and a half miles long and half a mile wide!

From their altitude the crew would be able to see the island from some distance, given clear skies. However, this was now after midnight. A radio message from the VC10 requested that all available lights on Gan should be turned on. This was done and a relieved voice from the aircraft reported: "OK Gan - we have you on visual, please hold your position!" Were the aircrew keeping any check on their position, or just trusting technology?

Even the smallest fishing boats were now equipped with radar, a useful aid in the poor visibility often encountered in the English Channel. Roger obtained a reconditioned Decca set and this was duly installed. The monitor was fitted above the chart table and since it faced across the yacht, and not fore and aft, it took some time to grasp quickly where the objects on the screen were in relation to Boleh!

This was illustrated when rounding Beachy Head in thick fog. At one time the whole crew were looking at the radar display after the skipper had announced that he had a fix on the Sovereign Light Tower. It was suggested that it might be a good idea for someone to actually be above decks! Graham Jolley ventured out and shouted down the hatch: "If that's the Light Tower, it has just gone across our bow at about 15 knots!" Hopefully the ship, probably going into Newhaven, had spotted Boleh. With much relief, the entrance to Rye Harbour was found in much improved visibility.

To Foreign Parts

"If you own a boat, you had better be rich"

"If you sail in the English Channel, you had better be crazy"

(American Yachtsman- Palma Mallorca)

The Headquarters for planning details of every aspect of the restoration and sailing programme had been firmly established in 'The Wipers' - the 'Ypres Castle Inn' was up a steep flight of steps from Boleh's mooring. From the saloon bar it was possible to see the yacht's mast, and judge the state of the tide. Roger was in favour of etching a line on the window to indicate when the boat was actually afloat!

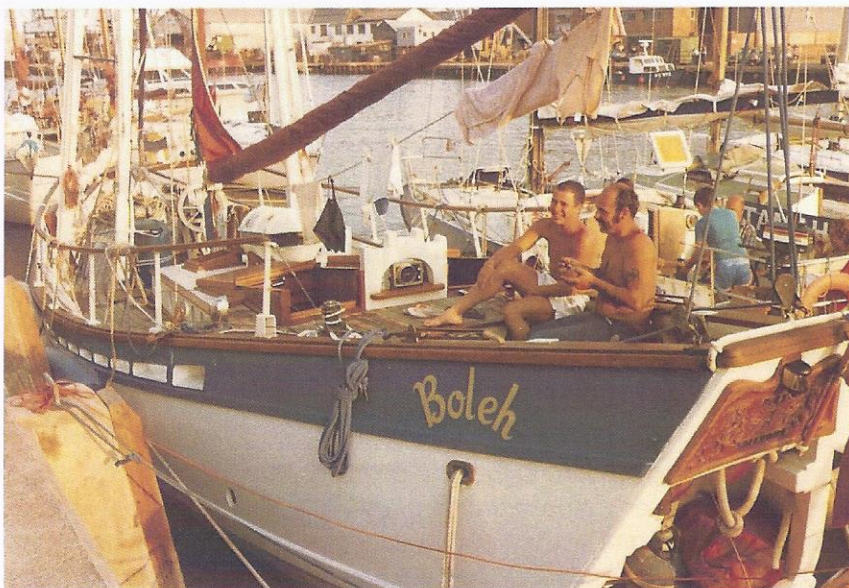
Since all sailings had to take place around Spring tides, this dictated a departure time of around midday or midnight. The night departures would often have the added hazard of spending a few hours in bar after all preparations were complete, and it was just a case of waiting for there being "enough water in the ditch".

The channel crossing to Boulogne was one such journey. It made sense to arrive at the destination for the first time in daylight. Once clear of the harbour entrance Roger and the author set about hoisting some sail. 'Kilroy,' the newly fitted autohelm was left in charge of steering the yacht. Wendy, without the benefit of a

navigation course, pointed out that we seemed to be heading for Pontins Holiday Camp at Camber Sands rather than the coast of France!

Back on manual steering, and a mug of strong coffee later, it was found that the VHF loudspeaker was too near to the autopilot compass and causing interference. Another lesson learnt, and the rest of trip passed pleasantly enough, as far as the memory serves - although there may have been the odd breach of the Entente Cordiale!

More excursions were made along the South Coast, in preparation for finally leaving on a more extended voyage. The initial visit to Poole Harbour highlighted the difficulty of entering a port at night for the first time. The skipper decided not to anchor in 'The Bag' at the harbour entrance and await daylight. Shortly afterwards Boleh was aground on a sandbank, known locally as 'Aunt Betty'. The grounding did not last long as the tide rose, but since the yacht had heeled over, the scene below deck was a reminder that everything needs to be stowed carefully!



***ADRIAN SULLY (left) and GRAHAM JOLLEY
~ POOLE HARBOUR 1984***

Having been sent to act as lookout for channel markers through salt sprayed spectacles, I was dubbed 'Blind Pugh' in later accounts of the incident. It may be that in hindsight Roger realised it would have been wiser to have waited for daylight, but the experience gained did not last as far as Gibraltar!

The 'Lord Nelson' pub in Poole shares its name with many others around England, one of which is in the 'Old Town' area of Hastings. This part of Hastings is the traditional fishing area and is the base for the RNLI Lifeboat.

By chance, both pubs had rugby teams, so one outcome of Boleh being alongside the quay was that a fixture was arranged. Two of the players in the Hastings team, Graham Jolley and Adrian Sully had worked on Boleh and been crew on some of the early trips. With Roger, Wendy and myself they would take the yacht to La Coruna on the first leg of the journey to Mallorca. Both had experience of boat handling and were a useful addition to the crew, allowing a watch keeping system to be used.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DREAM

An ITV film crew did a short news item on board Boleh. Roger talked about the history of the yacht and the restoration, he finished up by saying words to the effect that you need to have a dream in life, and not to let it die.

Unfortunately the tape recording of this item, along with most of the written detail of this phase in the yacht's history has been lost.

We do remember that as a part of his dream of sailing around the world, he would have loved to sail into New Orleans with a Jazz Band on deck!



ROGER and WENDY ANGEL 1984

In July 1984 he decided that the time was right to begin the adventure. Wendy, myself, Graham and Adrian made arrangements with various family commitments to be available!

In Poole Harbour, this time in daylight and managing to avoid sandbanks, Boleh was moored at the town quay. Since it was mid-summer and very busy, boats of various sizes were having to moor alongside each other. Unfortunately one of the inner yachts, alongside the wall, started being crushed by the movement of larger boats caused by the surge of tide and passing vessels. The

lady on board started to panic, releasing lines from other boats. Graham, with a few choice words and an impressive display of seamanship and strength soon had order restored! Further stops were made at Dartmouth and, of course, Salcombe was a must, being Boleh's 'home port'.

Falmouth has long been a traditional departure point for sailing vessels leaving England, and this was where Boleh called to make final preparations for leaving for La Coruna in northern Spain.

A few days were spent up the River Fal, where a charming lady met the crew - Lesley Brown had a connection with Boleh. Her late husband, 'Buster Brown' had sailed with Robin Kilroy on Boleh in the time the yacht was becoming well-known around West Country ports.

Back in Falmouth all stores, including the essential duty free supplies, were stowed. On the advice of HM Coastguard extra fuel was loaded. The weather was forecast to be calm and it was probable that much of the journey would be under engine power. This proved to be the case with the wind falling to almost zero after leaving Falmouth.

The Bay of Biscay is known for the storms and big seas that occur when strong winds blow from the Atlantic Ocean. The most uncomfortable thing encountered by the crew on this crossing was the rolling of Boleh under the influence of the huge swell. To counteract this, the mainsail was hoisted, but there was rarely enough wind to fill it. What little breeze there was always seemed to blow exhaust fumes into the cockpit, which added to the discomfort.

After a few days of motoring it was discovered that the engine had worked loose on the mountings. As usual this sort of thing happens at night! With much sweating and no little swearing the engine was hoisted, the mountings were then tightened and locked. Without enough wind to sail for most of the time, the main object of interest became the dolphins playing in the bow-waves.

The description of navigation being more of an art than a science was to prove correct as Boleh wallowed her way across Biscay. The compass, Walker trailing log, and faith in what course the helmsman claimed to have steered, had to be balanced against the flow of tides and currents.

Both Roger and the author had completed the RYA Ocean Yachtmaster course, but sextant readings need much experience to be able to find a position - they also need the observer to actually see the sky! Both things were missing.

The Decca radar did help pick out the shape of Ushant Island, and later on the armada of Spanish trawlers fishing in the bay. The glare of their working lights blocked out any navigation lights, and since they often trawl in pairs perhaps half a mile apart, it becomes a matter of chance which is the best way to avoid their fishing gear!

The hand-held RDF set was of little use in establishing a position. Falmouth coastguard's was identified across most of the bay, but no other reliable signals could be detected. At about the mid-point of the crossing several merchant vessels were called on VHF. The only one to reply, a ship from USSR, gave a position which was within 10 miles of the estimated position on board Boleh. The crew were more than happy and continued to work by Dead Reckoning.

The weather started to deteriorate as the coast of Spain was seen on radar, and the art of guessing which side to pass fishing boats overtook the need to find where La Coruna actually was! Once inside the breakwater of the harbour and a big sigh of relief, after picking up a mooring buoy Rog and Wendy went ashore to attend to the formalities of arrival.

The crew retired below and opened up the bonded store. Just about midway into their second celebration of a safe arrival, it was noticed that various boats seemed to be passing through the moorings at an unseemly speed, as viewed through the portholes. The penny dropped - it was Boleh dragging the mooring toward the breakwater! A line-squall had come through and pandemonium broke loose, with boats of all shapes and sizes trying to avoid being run aground.

Onshore, the skipper and Wendy could only look on and hope that the crew would cope with the situation. Graham and Adrian rushed onto deck while the author started the engine, which seemed to take an age to come to life, always needing 2-3 minutes of 'pre-heat'. Somehow Graham managed to get hold of a substantial mooring buoy as Boleh was being swept past it. How he and the boat-hook held out until a line could be secured was the subject of much discussion later!

Adrian meanwhile had taken a line from a frantic lady on a German yacht being swept towards the breakwater. The whole episode

lasted no more than fifteen minutes, and all was calm again. It certainly proved to be the most strenuous part of the journey from Falmouth.

Boleh remained in La Coruna for a week while preparations were made to continue down the coast of Spain and Portugal. Roger and Wendy hoped some of the crew would be able to stay and sail further legs of the journey. All had various commitments in the UK, and although 'fed and watered' while on board, had to earn a living. Roger was aware of this, being in the same position throughout his time with Boleh.

The crew returned to Calais by rail, which proved to be a straightforward journey. Once in Dover they found there was no train to Hastings until the following morning, the last leg of the journey being made by taxi.

CHAPTER FIVE TO THE ALGARVE

Roger and Wendy had heard from other sailing friends that Bayona was a lovely place to visit and set off on their first trip without any crew. It was exactly as they had been told, a natural safe harbour with what Wendy described as 'a Colonial-type Yacht Club with great big ceiling fans and comfortable armchairs and Chesterfields. Most of all really nice people'.

They met a charming German couple sailing a Cornish Crabber and spent an evening in the town. After a nightcap in the Yacht Club they went back to their boats. They were woken at some unearthly hour by what appeared to be gunfire, accompanied by drum beating and the blowing of whistles. Bleary eyed they emerged from below to see what appeared to be the whole population of the town evacuating to the mountains beyond. Welcome to the world of Saints' Days and Fiestas!

Since there was no chance of getting any more sleep they decided the best plan was to go ashore and join the celebrations. The hospitality of the locals was overwhelming. Wendy said after that they had never drunk so much wine or eaten so many sardines!

The following day Boleh followed the Cornish Crabber out of the harbour to continue down the coast. At the harbour entrance the crew of local fishing boats shook their heads and made it clear by hand-signals that a big swell was running in the Atlantic. Wendy thought it might be wise to turn back, but Roger was convinced that if a Crabber could handle the conditions so could the much larger Boleh.

The Crabber hoisted full sail and was soon on the horizon. Roger and Wendy also got some sail up and despite the swell made progress. After an hour or two of sailing there was a loud bang and the boat was enveloped in mainsail. The top-mast had broken and the spinnaker sail was dragging under the keel. Since they were 'motor-sailing' at the time there was a danger of the sail fouling the propeller.

Fortunately the spinnaker was retrieved without damage. Roger now had the job of climbing the mast to free the track and remaining piece of top-mast. This was no easy task as the yacht was rolling heavily. Wendy was relieved to be able to persuade him to wear a safety harness for once. The thought of being left to

handle the boat alone only just behind concern for his safety no doubt!

On another occasion Wendy woke up to find herself apparently alone on the boat, in the middle of the night. She eventually found Roger right up in the bow, hidden by the sails. He was just looking at the moon and stars, and generally 'being at peace with the world'.

With some sort of order restored they set course for Sebutal, with the sea now becoming calmer. Once inside the harbour they found further bother when a length of rope became wound around the propeller. With some effort and to the amusement of locals they got alongside a quay. Roger got into the water, equipped with the 'best bread knife', while Wendy in the dinghy had the task of keeping the stern end from crushing the skipper as the surge from passing merchant ships hit them. Finally, to an enormous cheer from the crowd, Roger emerged with the offending piece of rope.

Amongst the new friends they made in Sebutal was the Commodore of the Yacht Club, who arranged a berth for Boleh in the Marina. In exchange for some joinery work on Club boats this mooring was free of charge, so Roger was able to continue working his way towards the Mediterranean. Meanwhile Wendy was sent to Lisbon on the bus, armed with instructions written in Portuguese, to find the glue and other items needed to repair the spar. The taxi driver taking her from the bus station to the chandlers was keen to practice his English and was so helpful and honest with his fare.

After 3 weeks in Sebutal, Boleh was ready, and set off for Vilamoura which was reached without any further mishap. Once in the Marina it was not surprising that they met up with some of the previous yachts they had seen. The Algarve was starting to become popular with 'sun-seekers' as well as sailors, and development of all sorts was taking place. Portugal was not then in the EU and still retained some of its old charm and a sense of not being actually part of Europe! This was perhaps best illustrated by the Guarda Fiscal (a sort of HM Customs with fire-arms) having a barracks in the Marina! They watched for any item being taken off a boat which may be sold on, or anyone working without documents. This proved to be a good training for Roger when he arrived in Mallorca and as a matter of principle regularly dodged the Guarda Civil trying to find those working on boats without work-permits. In his opinion he was barely legal in the UK, and had no

intention of setting a precedent in foreign parts! Whenever there was a check on the paperwork of non-berth holders going into a Marina, Roger would load his Inflatable with tools and approach from seaward!

The bureaucratic nature of Portugal at the time meant that a boat and crew could only remain there for six months. Fortunately the border with Spain was only about 50 miles away, defined by the Rio Guadiana. The boat could be sailed outside of Portuguese waters and the crew enter Spain at Ayamonte. The return journey to Vilamoura then allowed them and the boat to stay for a further six months! I took one such trip on Boleh, and for the two days that we were anchored in the river a solitary member of the Guarda sat beneath an umbrella and watched our every move! He was fortunate in that a truck would turn up with a meal every so often.

Before long Roger found work to finance the next stage of the voyage, and was to do so for the nearly two years spent in the Marina. Much of the work was a major refit on a 60ft alloy yacht 'Blanchon', owned by a "charming French surgeon" (Wendy's description). She did not mention the incident with the thermometer when she had a throat infection. After she had removed the thermometer from her mouth he observed that fortunately it was a new one. We then explained the different ways in which the English and French use the instrument!

Roger and Wendy also found plenty of time to enjoy the social life around the Marina, and would meet up later with many of the other boat owners that passed through this ever more popular cruising area. It was also a good place for family and friends from the UK to visit, with cheap flights to Faro Airport available.

CHAPTER SIX

GIBRALTAR and THE MEDITERRANEAN

In 1986 Roger decided it was time to move on and I joined them for the next leg of their journey, to Gibraltar.

The only hazards encountered, apart from the familiar Spanish fishing boats, were the large areas of floating plastic sheeting that had blown away from the 'Tunnels' used to grow huge quantities of tomatoes and other crops along this coast, and when we rounded Cape Trafalgar, fog. There was enough wind to enable Boleh to sail on a reach beyond the Cape and we were soon off Tarifa, at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea.

Since the earliest days of sailing, passing through the narrow channel between the Atlantic Ocean and the land-locked Mediterranean Sea has been a challenge. The effects of wind and tidal flow are magnified by the closeness of the mass of Europe on one side, and Africa on the other. At the narrowest point, less than 15 miles separate the two.

At night it is an amazing sight to see the lights of Tangiers in Morocco as clearly as those of Algeciras in Spain. The recent wreck of a huge merchant ship lay on the rocks off Tarifa. It was poorly lit, and only identified on the radar by our recalling a recent news item. Some hasty decisions were made about which was the safest place to pass the wreck and salvage vessels in attendance.

The westerly wind increased, and it was time to shorten sail - we were now looking likely to carry on towards Mallorca rather than put into Gibraltar! With thoughts of entering Poole Harbour at night time, I suggested that it might be a good idea to enter Algeciras Bay and then await daylight to find the customs jetty at Gibraltar. The skipper was confident that he could locate the jetty and once again asked me to stand in the bows and identify the various lights. I realized just in time that we were heading for oyster beds near the shore at La Linea!

The following day, sitting in a bar in Main Street, I noticed that the navigation chart under a plastic cover on our table was more recent than the chart on Boleh (by several years). A new jetty had been constructed, which did not appear on our chart, and the characteristics of many of the navigation lights had been altered. Out-of-date charts are fine for navigational exercises or general route planning, otherwise are best treated with caution!



'THE ROCK' 1986

Boleh was anchored not far from the end of the airport runway - not the most peaceful place. The airfield is used by both military and civil aircraft, so can be very busy. At the time, the long-running dispute over the future of Gibraltar meant that military aircraft avoided Spanish airspace. This led to some interesting tight turns on landing and take-off.

As it was one of the periods when the border with Spain was open we took the opportunity to join the queue, show our passports and enter into the spirit of yet another fiesta. This mainly involved walking around with a ceramic mug on a cord around the neck. The mug was filled at regular intervals at the bars and stalls which were doing a lively trade. The eating of various tapas, only some of which we could identify, also seemed to be mandatory!

Gibraltar was a fascinating place to visit: a relic of colonial days, but in Europe. The many military buildings and the amazing tunnel systems beneath the Rock give a sense of how important this was as a naval and military base.

Leaving Roger and Wendy to continue on to Mallorca I returned to the UK. This allowed me to have the new experience, after 22 years Royal Air Force service, of being allowed on the flight deck of an

aircraft for landing. Having told the Captain of my interest in navigation he invited me to stay. It was amazing to be told that at one time the aircraft was just 10 feet below the planned height at that position! The whole return trip had been programmed into the computers before leaving Gatwick. Just as with the automatic landing, the aircrew really earned their salary if a quick decision had to be made to return to manual control.

After several weeks in Gibraltar, where spare parts for nearly everything on board were obtained, Roger and Wendy set off with a good stiff westerly wind. Their hopes of at least reaching Malaga in daylight faded with the wind, and off Estapona they were becalmed and dropped anchor. No sooner had they spruced up to go ashore and eat than the wind picked up with a vengeance, and they realized that the anchor was not holding.

Roger started the engine as Wendy frantically got the anchor on board, waves breaking over her as she did so. With their clothes now soaked they motored into the marina, where they were allocated a berth and told, with some glee, they had just experienced the Sirocco, the hot winds blowing up from north Africa. So much for the balmy Mediterranean pictured in the travel magazines!

Two nights in the expensive marina were enough, and as soon as the weather settled they coast-hopped, dropping anchor in isolated bays. The local villages were all in full 'fiesta mode', and very little friendly persuasion was needed to get them to join in the celebrations. The unusual sight of Boleh was a magnet. Children would swim out and ask to come aboard. The more adventurous would climb the mast and dive off - this was a popular activity with kids of all ages!

Anchored in the harbour at Ibiza, Roger and Wendy were returning from ashore when they were met by the sight of another junk close to Boleh. The yachts were facing in opposite directions in the wind and tide, and looked to be bowing to each other as they moved in the swell. Invited on board, they found that the young German owner was returning to Europe from Malaysia, where the boat 'Nagar Palengi' had been built. He knew of Boleh and told them that the son of one of the Malay shipwrights who worked on Boleh had built his junk. It seemed that the family tradition of boat building was still strong on Terengganu Island.

After a few days anchored near Formentera Island, popular for its nudist beaches, the weather became very unsettled. Massive storm-clouds built up and frequent thunder-storms lit up the night sky.

Wendy was uneasy and convinced Roger to head for a marina. They moored in the newly built Santa Eulalia marina, bows on to the quay. Within hours the wind rose, accompanied by torrential rain. There was no rest for the crews as they worked to stop boats from ramming each other and the quay. Roger and others took to dinghies to lay stern anchors to hold boats in the ever increasing gale. The massive fenders which Boleh carried proved invaluable.

The same storm caused extensive (and expensive!) damage to boats and marinas in Mallorca, particularly in Palma Bay. Roger was advised to make his way there as soon as possible; there would be work for everyone with boat building skills!

CHAPTER SEVEN

PALMA MALLORCA

Boleh took up a mooring on the public quay, which had the advantage of being inexpensive and close to shops, markets, cafes and bars. The facilities were minimal, but many sailors had lived on board here for years, unable or unwilling to pay the high mooring fees in marinas. Showers were available in the nearby marina, but it was always a matter of luck if they were open at the advertised times! As in the rest of Spain, the toilets in bars and cafes were available to all, whether customers or not.

The paseo (promenade) ran alongside the quay and alongside that a four lane highway. This road attracted every 'boy racer' from miles around most nights, so the sound of roaring engines and smell of burning rubber was commonplace. The numerous police forces that existed were notable for their tolerance of this activity, but beware working as an alien without documentation!

The unusual design of Boleh would always attract attention, not only from those with some interest in boats. Curious holidaymakers would always need to know why the mast was so different. The standard explanation in the end became that it was to allow easy access to the radar scanner! Many of those who did show an interest in the yacht either knew of her, or were impressed by the restoration that Roger had undertaken. This soon led to him being asked to carry out work on all types of boats. These ranged from classic yachts to 'super yachts', in reality small ships, such as 'Nabila' which was once owned by Adnan Khashoggi and modestly renamed 'Trump Princess' by its new American owner, Donald, the property magnate.

In the traditional Mediterranean way most boats were moored stern-on to the quay, but because of the high stern Boleh was bows-on. Roger carried out much of his preparatory work on the foredeck and this would be the signal for a small crowd to gather and watch him at work. It was a source of wonder that such fine work could be produced on a constantly moving boat, even more so since Roger had always had a distinct hand tremor when working. Equally amazing was the fact that all his fingers were complete, something of a rarity with those working with wood-working machinery!

To provide power for electrical tools a 4 kw generator, driven by an air-cooled single cylinder diesel, had been installed forward of the cabin. The starting of the engine was the signal for anyone below deck to

evacuate to a quieter place!

One of the visits I made to stay on Boleh was just after the severe storm which had caused damage to many boats in Palma Bay. Those left unattended by owners were torn from their moorings and either driven into each other, or onto the quay or breakwaters, many being total wrecks.

Roger asked if I would like to look at a 30ft yacht, which had been submerged for a week. The owner, an American cruising on a tight budget, had been fortunate in that part of the US Navy Mediterranean Fleet were in Palma. Divers and airbags were used to recover the yacht, which was now in the fishing port. The owner wanted basic electrics restored so that he could carry on cruising.

I made my way to the yacht at about 09.00 hrs the following day, and soon learnt that is far too early to expect to start work on a boat in Spain! Northern Europeans take some while to adjust to the 'time slots' that are available to actually fit any work in between recovery from late night celebrations, siesta and getting prepared for another late night.

Knocking on the hatch eventually produced a reply through a small opening, which gave out a distinct sweet aroma of smoke. "Come on below, we will make some coffee as soon as we get ourselves together". Knowing that the 40-odd-year-old skipper had a young female 'crew', I said I would just sit in the cockpit and 'have a fag'. "You Brits..... a fag for breakfast - what will you think of next ?!" As Winston Churchill observed: 'Two nations divided by a common language'!

After getting basic navigation and interior lights working I checked the instruments. All of them worked after being submerged for a week, only the damaged wind vane on the mast needing replacement. I was impressed enough to contact Brookes and Gatehouse, who provided a new one free of charge.

Roger introduced me to Richard and Jean Flower who owned Palma Yachts. The front of their premises housed the brokerage part of the business, with a workshop at the rear. Richard is an electrical engineer and also specialized in refrigeration and air conditioning. His services were much in demand in Mallorca, and sometimes on mainland Spain. Jean ran the office and organized the purchase of spare parts etc. - no mean task when much of it needed to be done in Spanish! Having lived all over the world when Richard worked in the

oil industry, they were fortunately multilingual. Richard said he could find work for me, so I moved to Palma and lived aboard Boleh for much of the year I spent there.

Mallorca, like other Spanish resorts was seeing a massive expansion in tourism, mostly in the package holiday end of the market. At times one would pretend not to be British when seeing the antics of some of the holidaymakers. The bars were frequented by some 'interesting' characters, many with more pressing reason to be abroad than just enjoy the sun and sangria! Peter Wright, the ex MI 5 officer, whose book 'Spycatcher' was banned from publication in Britain, but published in Australia, held court for some time in a bar not far from Boleh's mooring.

Apart from the normal socializing between boats, one highlight of the week was 'The Muppet Club' which took place on Sunday afternoons. A local nightclub gave the use of its facilities over to charity concerts. These were hosted by 'Leapy Lee', who had a hit single 'Little Arrows' in the 1960s. Most of those performing were of this era or before, but all provided entertainment in their own way. The audience always left with smiles on their faces and the knowledge that at least some of the money they passed over the bar went to help maintain the tradition of music hall and assist local good causes.

Although Mallorca was one of the expensive areas of Spain, the cost of living was low by UK standards. 'El Cheapos' was an eating place favoured by many of the less well-off yachties. A set two-course menu, with wine or a beer, cost £2. Local Gin was cheaper by volume than tonic water. I well remember Roger asking guests on Boleh to help themselves to another G and T, 'but go easy on the expensive stuff!'.

Anyone with the skills needed on boats of all types could find work at good rates of pay. After several years on the public quay, finances allowed Boleh to be moved to the Club De Mar, with better facilities and security.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BOLEH IN THE REGATTA

'TROFEO ALMIRANTE CONDE DE BARCELONA' - This trophy was presented by the father of the present king of Spain to be competed for by wooden yachts of at least 35 years old. The Spanish Royal Family have a long association with sailing, and the event was often held in Palma to coincide with their stay at the palace there.

Yachts from around the Mediterranean attend what is a cross between Cowes Week and a mini Tall Ships Race. Boleh was invited to enter the Regatta, and did so for a number of years. The idea of actually racing against classic yachts would require a great deal of help from the handicap committee, but just taking part gave Roger and Wendy some happy memories. Lesley Brown had related to them of the time that she and her husband had crewed for Robin Kilroy in a regatta and *'very nearly came in 5th out of 6 boats'*!

The Prize Presentation and Dinner was held at the end of the regatta, attended by the Royal Family. On the occasion that I was able to crew, I came back to Boleh from work to find a note telling me where to go should I wish to attend. Having made myself respectable I turned up at the venue, somewhat late. The Guardia Civil gave me quite a security check over before accepting that I had been invited!

To coincide with an Expo in Seville the event started from Barcelona one year, calling into various ports and ending in Seville. This provided a good opportunity for Roger and Wendy to visit some of the places they had missed on their way to Palma. Being unable to keep up with most of the fleet they always got a rousing welcome when they did arrive at the next stopping place. The following is the account that Wendy gave of the leg from Valencia to Cartagena:

"We all set off on time and headed out to sea, soon the rest of the fleet were out of sight. A fire-tender charged around like a big orange sheep-dog trying to keep its flock together. It was a lovely sunny day, and with the light wind on the beam we were moving along nicely.

Later on the wind shifted onto the nose and was increasing by the minute. Soon it was blowing a good Force 6. We were frequently stopped in our tracks and taking a lot of water over the bows. We had no choice but to alter course and head towards Africa! The rest of the fleet and the orange fire-tender were nowhere in sight, having made a run for shelter.

As our charts were 'a little out of date' we were unsure which marinas or bays were safe to enter at night, so settled for a long, rough night at sea. During the night a tanker came close enough to hail us and see if we were in any difficulty. Roger and his business partner 'PJ', who was crewing, assured them all was well. The ensign had detached and was flapping across the stern-light, which may have looked like a distress signal!

After tacking about all night, we crept into Cartagena in daylight to the sounding of horns from the rest of the fleet. The only boat to stay out, a square rigger, had tacked almost to the coast of North Africa overnight. Some of the women off other boats came and gave me a cuddle and said how brave I was to stay out all night in that weather. Where did they expect me to go?!"

The passage to Seville passed without further incident and the fleet gathered at the mouth of the Rio Guadalquivir to await the tide to take them up river the 50 miles to the ancient city. The fleet was provided with a week of free marina mooring and were able to enjoy the sights, as well as the many social events.

Wendy, not surprisingly, particularly remembers the 'Horse Fair': "The fancy carriages, with 3, 4 or even 5 in-hand. The costumes were like something out of a film-set". With a country background and daughters involved with horses from an early age, it is not difficult to imagine why this would be more to her liking than being wet, cold and generally uncomfortable on a boat!

Leaving on the outgoing tide, Boleh made good progress down river and then anchored up near the riverbank overnight. The yacht 'Mingony' came alongside and asked to 'raft-up', and both crews were enjoying a 'sundowner' when a sudden lurch was accompanied by water pouring in through the open port-holes. Rushing onto deck they saw a tanker charging downstream, the wash from which had now pushed both yachts aground on mudbanks.

After separating the yachts, attempts were made to manoeuvre Boleh into a more favourable position, without success. The yacht was still more or less upright, with the keel in the mud, but without supporting legs always likely to heel over. The crew spent some hours gingerly crawling around until the yacht re-floated on the incoming tide, and they could carry on downstream. The passage to Cadiz passed without further incident.

After leaving Cadiz the wind strengthened and by the time that

Gibraltar was in sight had turned into a full `Levante` gale. Unable to make headway into the Straits of Gibraltar, there was no option but to return to Cadiz. After nearly a week of waiting, the conditions improved and Boleh was able to make Gibraltar, where duty free stores were replenished, after the various celebrations of the regatta. Boleh then returned to Palma.

When the Count of Barcelona died there was some doubt if the event would take place that year. King Juan Carlos decided that it would do so in memory of his father. Roger and Wendy had a whole host of family visiting, staying on board and in various apartments. All were on board for the `Sail Past` which marked the end of the Regatta, which was to take place with the Spanish Royal Family on board a destroyer taking the salute.

All the yachts were polished to perfection and `Dressed Overall`. Boleh hoisted every flag and ensign it could muster, including `The Jolly Roger`. Wendy felt that this caused a few raised eyebrows amongst the more traditional crews, who all managed to sail past and salute in the correct order. Roger, Wendy and `PJ` started to attempt a salute as they passed the destroyer, but then decided that a wave would be more in order. Everyone on deck and below joined in, with children's arms appearing through the portholes, and from the hatches.

All on board Boleh were elated to see first Queen Sophia and then Juan Carlos, `grinning like Cheshire Cats` waving back. Soon all on board were waving and taking photographs. Is there some record of this day in the Spanish Royals` photo album?!



BOWS DOWN and RACING! ~ PALMA BAY

CHAPTER NINE

'THE ITALIAN JOB'

Paula, Wendy's daughter, had long been involved in horse racing, at first as a stable girl then a jockey. Eventually she had moved to Italy with the son of a well known trainer and they were to be married there in 1991. The family of the groom wanted the wedding to take place in the marina at Livorno, where an uncle was the manager.

In July Roger and Wendy moved Boleh to Porto Colom in the north of Mallorca and set a course for Sardinia. Wendy described the passage: "*On a flat, calm sea we did not see another ship, aeroplane or bird, just wall-to-wall sea and sky*". 'Kilroy', the autopilot, guided them to a small port near Cagliari on the southern tip of Corsica, where they moored alongside the quay.

Asked to move, to make space for a ship coming alongside, they tied up outside of a Turkish freighter, with help from the friendly crew. Roger was checking the engine oil level when Boleh was rocked violently by the wash of the newly arrived ship. At that moment he had the oil level dipstick partly withdrawn and as he stumbled the end broke off and fell into the crankcase. The hope was that until the engine could be dismantled the offending piece of metal would lay in the sump, and not be caught up in the moving parts of the engine. To this end, the engine was run as little as possible in rough conditions - possibly when it might be most needed!

After coast hopping the length of Sardinia, stops to re-fuel were made in Corsica and all went smoothly until Elba was being approached. The engine suddenly stopped, and a rather concerned looking Roger asked Wendy if she had heard any untoward noises, or had the motor just 'died'? Assured that no mechanical damage seemed to have occurred, Roger guessed it was a fuel problem. Frantic hand-priming of the fuel-lift pump enabled the engine to be started, only for it to stop as they entered the harbour.

With high speed ferries entering and leaving, this is not a good place to be 'out of control', and Wendy was told to steer for the furthest point away from the ferry terminal. Roger managed to start the engine once again by pumping manually. The arrival of this unusual yacht had by now attracted pleasure craft of all shapes and sizes trying to get as close as possible. When the engine died again it was time to drop the anchor without delay! A soothing 'G&T' was poured.

Unable to obtain a replacement fuel pump, Roger serviced the existing one with a spare part kit carried onboard - and hoped this would hold out until they reached the Italian mainland, where a new pump might be available. The Mercedes engine had fuel injection equipment made under license in Spain, and it was only when Boleh returned to Mallorca that a replacement was found.

Approaching Livorno under sail, Roger and Wendy were almost deafened by the horn of a ferry bearing down on them at high speed, clearly letting them know that he had no intention of altering course for someone out enjoying themselves when he had work to do. Roger could be, to put it mildly, a touch stubborn at times and decided to hold his course on the grounds that 'steam gives way to sail'. A few choice words from Wendy persuaded him that discretion might be the better part of valour, especially where Italian drivers are concerned! After altering course, it did not improve Roger's humour to be given a rude gesture by way of thanks from the bridge of the ferry.

The uncle of the bridegroom was the manager of the marina where the wedding was to take place, and after directing them to their berth, he explained to the still furious Roger that the rules of the sea had to be modified in the narrow channels of a port entrance. Customary Italian hospitality soon soothed ruffled feathers and Roger and Wendy were able to enjoy a wedding and reception done with all the style and gusto that is so typical of those from the warmer parts of Europe.

It was late September when they decided that they should leave to return to Palma if they were to avoid the usual late autumn gales to be expected in the Mediterranean. Although the weather had turned blustery, sailing in the lee of Corsica provided protection and after spending a couple of nights in the natural harbour at Santa Maria, a course was set between the islands of Corsica and Sardinia.

The wind started to increase as Boleh approached Mallorca and waves could be seen breaking on the cliffs near Porto Colom, throwing plumes of spray over the lighthouse. Roger started the engine, but kept some sail up, which was just as well when the engine died once more! Wendy went below and closed the sea cocks, Roger having decided to make a run into the shelter of the harbour under sail, rather than attempt to re-start the engine so close to the shore.

With some relief they made it to the relative calm of the lee of the breakwater and prepared to drop anchor. The VHF radio burst into

life with messages from friends welcoming them. In no time two or three tenders had been launched and shepherded them to a substantial mooring buoy. Declining the kind offers of dinner ashore, they downed a few 'nightcaps' and turned in early - it had been a long day!

It was over a week before the weather improved, at which time they made their way to Can Pastilla where Boleh was hauled out and new anti-foul paint applied. The opportunity was also taken to dismantle the engine and remove the broken piece of the dipstick. A new fuel pump was fitted, which ensured that future use of the motor was less stressful!

Boleh was by now a familiar sight in Palma, and when finances allowed her to take a berth in the Real Club Nautico, the jetty on which she was moored was named Shanghai Quay. The yacht was to remain in Palma for the next 15 years, and sailing was to take place around the immediate area. Roger still had ambitions to carry out some ocean cruising. As ever, the need to earn a living and maintain and equip the boat for prolonged cruising meant putting the dreams on 'hold'. Roger and his partner continued to work on boats, but also turned to property conversions as a source of income.

A Canadian entrepreneur, who was also a sailor, became a close friend. Roger went to Amsterdam each winter for several years to work on one of his projects, the major renovation of an apartment block. Wendy also worked alongside him on a number of occasions, and can still give details of how she invested the cash she earned in the house in Kent where she now lives. This was the family home and she started to spend more time here, close to family and friends in the village.

CHAPTER TEN

FULL CIRCLE

Roger's daughter, Gail, had for many years been receiving treatment for cancer. It became clear that she was once again very ill. Her brother, Simon, was also not in good health; as a result of his service in the Army, he was now partly disabled. Roger returned to the UK in order to be closer to his family and to receive treatment himself. He had also been diagnosed as suffering from cancer and despite prolonged treatment was also very ill.

Simon had, during his Army service, gained sailing experience which included an Atlantic crossing. He had also completed an RYA Yachtmaster course and no doubt would have wished to eventually take over Boleh from his father. It became clear that neither was fit enough to maintain or sail the yacht and Boleh was offered for sale.

By chance, George and Henry Middleton, who are nephews of Robin Kilroy, had been seeking by various means to locate the yacht. They eventually were able to contact Roger, and agreement was reached for the transfer of ownership. Arrangements were made to transport Boleh back to the UK.

Roger died in August 2008, a few months after the death of his daughter Gail. Although extremely weak, in July he made the journey to Portsmouth to see Boleh's return. This was to be the last time he would see the yacht which had been such a large part of his life for so many years. Those who were with him on that day knew he had seen enough when an angle grinder was produced to cut the handrail stanchions so that Boleh would fit into the workshop for restoration work!

With the yacht now back in the care of the family of the original designer and owner, plans were made for the future. The Middleton brothers wished to see Boleh once again used as a youth sail training boat and formed the Project Boleh to further this aim. They had teamed up with the Meridian Sailing and Training Trust, which had the organization and expertise to see Project Boleh to a successful conclusion.

The Meridian Trust, based in Portsmouth, had worked for many years in conjunction with city and county councils to provide training in both the technical and manual skills involved in boatbuilding and sailing for disadvantaged young people. Each year up to 1,500 sail training places were provided, at low cost, to secondary school pupils on the

various yachts in the fleet operated by the Trust.

Training was provided, in the workshops, in all aspects of boat-building. Project Boleh would provide a unique opportunity for teaching such skills on an historic wooden boat. Work was started on the restoration, which was estimated to take about 18 months to complete and cost £150,000. When the work is completed there will be accommodation for six trainees and two professional crew. It was hoped to have Boleh sailing once again in the Solent by 2010.



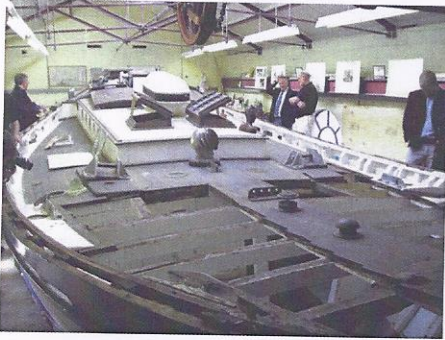
***BOLEH ARRIVES AT THE MERIDIAN TRUST
PORTSMOUTH, JULY 2008***

The arrival of Boleh was certainly noticed in the area around the Meridian Trust's premises at the Eastney Beam Engine House. In addition to the local press being there to record the event, the traffic was delayed for some while as the driver of the low-loader gave a 'masterclass' in reversing into the workshop yard!



Richard Uttley, the project shipwright, attacks the handrail stanchions to allow Boleh to be taken into the workshop. At this point Roger had seen enough and wanted to leave. This was to be his last sight of Boleh. (Simon Angel left of picture)

In October 2008 Project Boleh was officially launched. Work had already started on stripping the decking and interior when the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth attended the event to lend his support.



Just as with Robin Kilroy and Roger Angel, the need to finance work on the yacht is an ever present concern, and it is hoped that some of those who were present at the event may be able to help in securing funding for the Project.



THE ORIGINAL MODEL OF BOLEH ON DISPLAY

Unfortunately the Meridian Sailing and Training Trust suddenly ceased trading in July 2009. This left Project Boleh without its main Charity Funding Partner, which also held the lease on The Old Pump House where Boleh was being restored.

Determined that the Project would continue, the Middleton family formed The Boleh Trust, which has been granted Charity status. A lease on the building was obtained from Portsmouth City Council and the restoration able to proceed, if somewhat delayed.

Full details of the Trust and current news of the restoration can be found at www.projectboleh.com



DISPLAY BOARD SHOWING ROGER ANGEL'S RESTORATION

The transom name board was actually carved by a craftsman from Dover, who had also done work at the home of Winston Churchill, Chartwell

The Author

Dave Sully was born in Hastings in 1936. By coincidence he was living in Singapore at the time 'Boleh' was built. His father was serving at the Royal Air Force Base at Changi, not far from where Robin Kilroy was engaged in the task of designing and building 'Boleh'

He left school at the age of 15 years and became an apprentice engineer, completing his training in the Royal Air Force, which he joined two years later.

During service abroad he took up dinghy sailing, and in the UK, qualified as an RYA Senior Dayboat Instructor. This allowed him time off from duties as an Engineer Instructor for the RAF to assist on RYA/Sports Council Sailing Courses for schoolchildren.

Since retiring from the Royal Air Force he has found employment in varied areas, ranging from sports club manager to 'The Little Man' who sorts out old ladies' gardens.

For his sins, he now lives in Bexhill-on Sea.