

Cruising Log

edited by Elaine Bunting



Recently I overheard someone who had admitted to owning a 42ft boat being asked in the very next question if he had sailed round the world. Does such a huge undertaking really seem so easy? Only 50 years ago Humphrey Barton was a hero for crossing the Atlantic.

In the years between, the idea has formed that being able to sign a cheque large enough for an ocean-going boat is the same as having the experience to sail 26,000 miles or more in safety.

But I think I can now beat this exchange. Having been asked in the same sort of round of pleasantries about the ocean sailing I've done, the exchange took a very strange turn. "I suppose you've sailed across the Southern Ocean?" This, by the way, was a rhetorical question.

I won't pretend that I haven't had the chance. But really, do I look like a woman who would spend her holidays in the Southern Ocean? I'm no hero.

What's wrong with a flotilla in Greece?

Seriously, things are bad when even the hardest conditions imaginable seem easily conquerable, and voyages once considered crazy appear commonplace. Raise your expectations to this degree and how do you begin to assess the risk?

Without wishing to spoil the surprise, we'll be looking more closely at the Southern Ocean this winter: what makes it what it is and some of the heroes of the south.

I will be looking at it myself, but metaphorically. Someone's got to stay here and do the hard work.

Elaine Bunting

Expeditions

Arctic explorer returns from climb in Greenland

A yachtsman who can rightly claim to be a modern successor to Bill Tilman is Rev Bob Shepton, who has returned from a sailing and climbing expedition to Greenland this summer. He sailed his 33ft Westery Discus *Dodo's Delight* from the UK to Uummannaq, on the west coast of Greenland, in late June and swapped his sailing crew for a team of experienced climbers to carry out an extraordinary ascent of a previously unlimbed cliff.

Rev Shepton, 65, a retired school chaplain, took the climbers to a cliff named Sanderson's Hope. It was so named in 1587 by John Davis, who used it as an offing while sailing from Greenland to Baffin Island on his attempt to find the North West Passage.

"It's a very serious, big climb," he explains. "Sanderson's Hope is 3,200ft, a sweeping, compact granite wall. It's very specialised, very technical, with some free climbing and some aid climbing."

Landing the climbers on the cliff entailed nudging the boat right up to the rock to allow them to get to a ledge above. This was weather dependent and not possible every day. "Sometimes we would have to wait two or three days for good weather or for dry rock," says Rev Shepton.

The climbers were landed on every possible day to climb as far as they could, while Rev Shepton anchored in a cove three miles away. At the end of the day, they abseiled back down to the boat. Landing



Rev Bob Shepton on a peak climbed on the way



A dram in the Davis Strait - with lumps of brash ice

the team was made easier by drilling bolts in the rock face and suspending pallets just above the water, he says, "but eventually spring tides and swell destroyed them and we had to use a dinghy."

Although the ascent of Sanderson's Hope was a six-day climb, the process took 16 days.

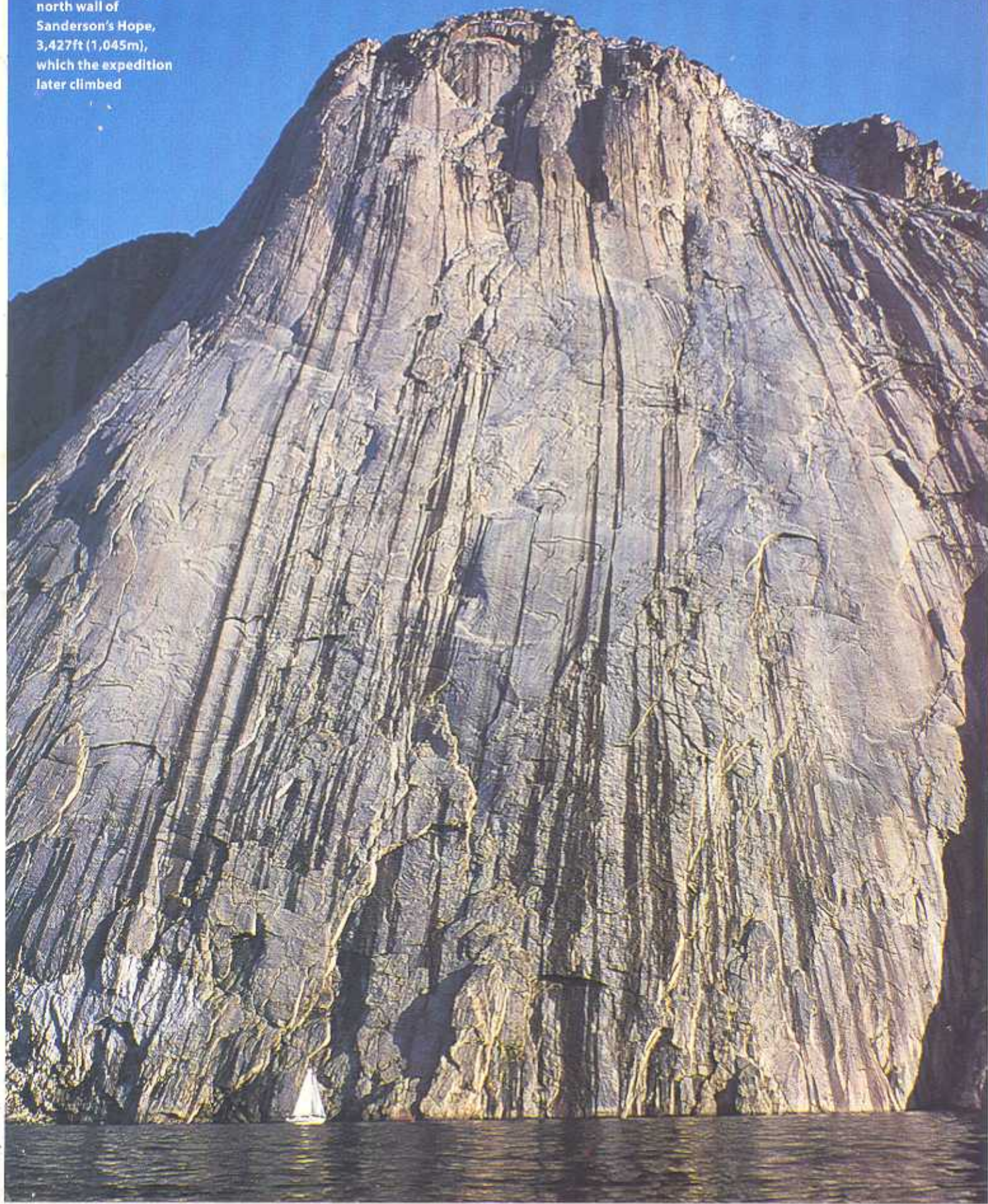
Rev Shepton is wintering *Dodo's Delight* in Greenland and plans to make Baffin Island next year.

His other expeditions include a previous voyage to Greenland and to Antarctica with a crew of schoolboys, both in *Dodo's Delight*.



Anchored in Uummannaq harbour, on Greenland's west coast

Dodo's Delight by the
north wall of
Sanderson's Hope,
3,427ft (1,045m),
which the expedition
later climbed





Dibden Bay, site of the proposed port

UK waters

Container port plans for Southampton Water

Plans to develop a new container port terminal on Southampton Water have been submitted by Associated British Ports (ABP). The proposals are for Dibden Bay, on the opposite side of Southampton Water to Southampton Docks.

Hampshire County Council wants to 'know more about the environmental and community benefits' and questions whether more use could be made of the existing container port in Southampton. It is also concerned about the disruption of the planned seven-year construction.

ABP argue that there is 'a dire national need' for greater container capacity. They say that throughput at the Southampton terminal has doubled in the last five years and even if they increase its capacity and efficiency by 50 per cent in the next five years, as intended, they still will not meet demand. Their plans for Dibden Bay include six deep-water berths, a berth for roll-on, roll-off and aggregate traffic.

If ABP get the go-ahead following the public inquiry next spring, the first phase of development will begin in 2004, for completion in 2011. But according to Southampton harbour master Captain Jimmy Chestnutt: "Shipping movements in the Solent are going to increase whether Dibden Bay is built or not." There are currently over 150 shipping movements a day in the Solent.



UK waters

Controversy over Cowes pier

A plan to build a new pier in Cowes is meeting strong local opposition. Cowes Harbour Commissioners have proposed a 70m long floating pontoon and pierhead at the Parade to be built in time for next year's Skandia Life Cowes Week and America's Cup jubilee and will be able to build this without approval under their permitted development powers.

Contention has arisen over accompanying proposals to develop land ashore which is in public ownership, however. The Isle of Wight and Cowes Town councils are said to be keen to improve facilities on shore, and their development plans would provide cross-funding for the new pier. "But that doesn't have public favour at the moment," says Cowes harbour master Stuart McIntosh.

Funds for the pier, which could accommodate vessels of up to 200ft, have been promised by Skandia Life and the America's Cup jubilee organisers. "Skandia Life has agreed a sum over a number of years to improve the infrastructure in Cowes, and the America's Cup jubilee event would like to leave a legacy for the town," says McIntosh.

With the two contributions included, Cowes Harbour Commissioners have already raised over 50 per cent of the money needed for the pier.



Turkey

Turkish visa rules change

Regulations for visas issued to yachtsmen visiting Turkey have been changed to remove some of the previous restrictions. The Turkish minister for interior affairs, a keen sailor himself, has recently announced that it is now possible for partners who are not married to obtain a long-term visa which relates to the term of the mooring contract period of their boat.

Nor is it necessary to go to district centres to obtain residence permits. Applications can be made directly to the local police department at the town where the marina is situated.

'It may be appropriate', writes correspondent Jill Carter, 'to encourage the Greek authorities to look again at their restrictive new regulations. If Turkey can change for the better by relaxing some of the awkward rules for sailors, can Greece do the same?'