

## **ALDEBARAN** **9<sup>th</sup> Report**

### **“THE WEDDING” and FIVE WEEKS with FAMILY and FRIENDS.**

#### **TUESDAY FEBRUARY 15<sup>th</sup> 2000**

Well our family and friends have come and gone since Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> February. Having been on our own since leaving last July, except for the Atlantic crossing, we found that five weeks of socialising and entertaining our family and friends and also having spent the following two days after their departure working on the boat working we were exhausted. The “younger” group with our sons Shane and Fintan had so much energy to burn compared with us old fuddy-duddies and they certainly “burned the candle on both ends”. Dare I say it, but the second group whose ages were somewhat older, were satisfied to burn the candle on one end only.

The first group to arrive on 9<sup>th</sup> January included our sons Shane and Fintan, Fintan’s fiancée Linda, Linda’s brother Jim, Mary, Johnny, Gillian and Gina. Fintan and Linda stayed on ALDEBARAN while the rest were on TORDO a 41ft boat they had chartered.

This was the first direct contact with our family since leaving home and we had been looking forward to it. The highlight of their visit was indeed the double wedding on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> January of Fintan and Linda and friends Johnny and Mary in the magnificent cathedral in Castries, the capital of St. Lucia. The four participants looked lovely, the brides having taken their dresses from Dublin and to add colour to the proceeding Johnny was dressed in his family kilt, complete with spurn and dagger. Needless to say all the locals enjoyed the spectacle. The day concluded with an excellent Oriental meal for the party of twenty in the Rex St Lucian hotel on the famous Reduit Beach, where the couples spent their wedding night.

The six-day compulsory residency prior to the wedding had us cruising down St Lucia to Marigot Bay and Soufriere. At Soufriere we met our friend Sascha a Rastafarian and had a lovely and reasonable meal in the new beach restaurant of Ansa Mitan for whom he works. Hurricane Lenny destroyed 80 shore side houses here on 17<sup>th</sup> November last. The Government has agreed to re-house everybody, but to date only one house has been built.

On Tuesday after the wedding we departed Rodney Bay for Cumberland Bay on St. Vincent a distance of 55 miles. It was an exciting sail with winds on the port quarter ranging from 15 to 25 knots and much higher in the rainsqualls. This was the first time the others experienced the persistent boat boys for which Cumberland and its neighbouring Wallilabou Bay are noted. While I accept that it is there country and that they are very poor I believe their tactics are discouraging yachts from visit. On anchoring they will take your stern line ashore and tie it to a palm tree or some other object for which the normal charge is EC10 or about IR£3. Before you have completed your anchoring others start gathering round the boat selling fruit, souvenirs and local craft etc. They each expect you to buy from them, which is impossible, some become very aggressive but the majority are polite and very good-humoured. A cold beer, soft drink or even a sandwich will satisfy most of them. If they promise to bring you fresh bread or other items the next morning you can be assured they will honour their promise and be there from sunrise with the goods.

Our next anchorage was in Admiralty Bay, Bequia considered by most to be the capital of the Grenadines. With the very odd exception everybody sailing these waters call there. The shore side bar and restaurant of Frangipani is the most popular meeting place. Next door is the Whale Bone bar and restaurant where you enter under an archway of whalebone and the bar stools are also adorned with whale bone. Bequia is the only island in the Caribbean still allowed to catch whales with an annual

quota of two. However, from talking to locals they do not always achieve the quota. We saw a Green Peace ship patrolling the area.

Twenty seven miles south of Bequia are the Tobago Cays, the jewel of the Caribbean, with its four islands enclosing a secure anchorage surrounded by coral reefs. Our first night there coincided with a full Lunar eclipse from about midnight to 0200 hours. While Olivia and I watched it from ALDEBARAN the rest went ashore on one of the islands and there with some of the local boat boys enjoyed the eclipse. It was indeed a memorable night for everybody beginning with a full moon, then total darkness during the event and finally two hours later back to a full moon, all in a cloudless sky. Four days and nights were spent in this paradise, swimming and snorkelling. In 1997 while chartering the area we met a boat boy called John who had an Irish girlfriend, Cathy, from Wexford. We gave him a company key ring saying if you are ever in Ireland call in. Well, believe it or not, six months later John with Cathy walked into the shop. You can imagine how surprised and delighted we were to see them. We had a very pleasant afternoon with them visiting Howth Yacht Club together with Gerry and Barbara Sargent who had been with us in '97. After anchoring in the Tobago Cays this year, John, who now runs two boats in the Grenadines recognised me on ALDEBARAN and shouted "PAT, SUTTON", I did not recognise him initially in his bigger boat. He came aboard and we had a long chat and of course a beer. Next day he brought Cathy out and she spent the day with us while he went to work. After work, at about four o'clock he brought all nine of us out to the outer reef where we had superb snorkelling. John and Cathy live on Union Island and have invited Olivia and I for a meal when we head south in a few months time.

On our way back to St Lucia we again visited Bequia, Wallilabou on St Vincent and Soufriere where we had another nice meal at the Ansa Mitan restaurant with Sascha, Marigot Bay and finally Rodney Bay. Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> Jan. saw Shane, Fintan and Linda, our new daughter-in-law, and friends leave. I went to the airport with them while Olivia chose to say her farewells in Rodney Bay.

Disembarking from the same plane that our family were returning home on were our next group of friends. The next two weeks saw Michael and Mary Kelly join us aboard ALDEBARAN and six other friends, John, Ruth, Norman, Una, Robert and Fiona board the chartered boat. We again cruised the same waters with the addition of Palm, Union and Mayreau islands.

### **A MAGICAL CURE:**

It was while we were having a beach bar-b-cue on one of the Tobago Cay islands that we discovered from a local their way of relieving arthritic pain. He had noticed that Mary Kelly suffered from arthritis and while not having any of the local magical potion with him he rubbed rum, as an alternative, into her knee. For obvious reasons Mary never told him it was in her hip that ached. He said his sister when going back to England after coming home on holidays always brought cans of this local relieving remedy back with her. While he was telling Mary about this Michael was laying nearby studying the heavenly galaxy of stars. When the man mentioned the name of the product, let's call it for the moment "XYZ", Michael sat up in disbelief repeating "XYZ" to which the local told him "don't laugh man don't laugh man". He explained that it penetrates and eases the joints thus relieving the pain. Maybe we should not name the product until the Irish Medical Council investigates the claim. On the other hand if you promise not to tell anybody I *might* tell you at the end of this report.

We called at the Ansa Mitan restaurant on the way back to Rodney Bay and were treated with two rounds of free drinks and Sascha gave Olivia a bottle of coconut oil he had just extracted from 15 coconuts. On Friday 11<sup>th</sup> February we checked into St Lucia again at Marigot Bay where we stayed the night and had a lovely meal at the Shack restaurant on the waterfront. We left early next morning and sailed to and anchored off Pigeon Island just North of Rodney Bay. Being a very historical

location we visited the museum there and climbed to the summit of the island. Up to about twenty years ago it was an island, but they have since built a causeway to it from the mainland. During the wars between England and France about 200 years ago this whole area changed hands on a regular basis. The small entrance fee of EC\$10, about IR£3, to this National Park is well worth it

Michael and Mary together with our other six friends left on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> Feb. and as mentioned at the beginning their departure was followed by two full days working on the boat catching up with regular maintenance that had been neglected since the beginning of January.

From here we plan to sail north as far as time will allow before returning south to Trinidad. This is a change of plan from that outlined in our last report.

Keep up your e-mails, we love to get even the smallest bit of news or better still "gossip".

Pat and Olivia Murphy,  
S/y ALDEBARAN, West Indies

**Lastly**, the name of the local Tobago Cays arthritic pain relieving remedy as described above as XYZ will have to wait until hopefully the next report. The product is in common use in another context. However, if you contact Michael Kelly he may under duress reveal it's name or perhaps he will not!!!!!!!!!!