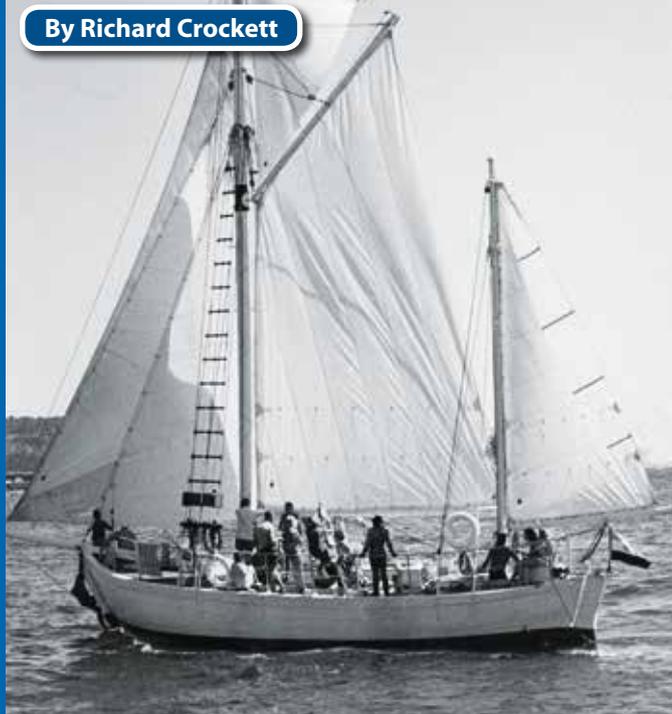


Sandefjord

Her Voyage Around the World

By Richard Crockett



Sandefjord under a full set of brand new sails.

As a prep school kid I was fascinated by *Sandefjord* and her voyage around the world. Why, I am not really sure, but that voyage may well have been the fire that lit my passion for sailing. I remember following her circumnavigation in the newspapers, and when the movie of the circumnavigation was launched, I just had to go and see it. That was in 1967, and the following year I began sailing.

However, this is about *Sandefjord* and it was inspired by a few pics I recently dug up of her when sorting through our SAILING mag archives. I made enquiries and managed to track down Barry Cullen, who while all these years later was understandably reluctant to keep the *Sandefjord* circumnavigation alive, sensed my passion and was very forthcoming with information and pics.

Barry has kept impeccable records of the entire project and within a few days of making contact I had a DVD of the movie they made of their voyage, and other information, including pics. I do treasure the DVD he sent me of their circumnavigation as a video he had given me many years ago went missing after being lent to someone.

History of Sandefjord

She was launched in 1913 in Norway, having been built for the Norwegian Lifeboat Institute. These sturdy wooden sailing craft, designed by the legendary Colin Archer, were built to put to sea at the first sign of a storm and to assist vessels in distress.

Sandefjord's record during her 22 years of service is impressive. Three boats with seven men aboard saved from sure death; 258 vessels with 1,100 people on board piloted through fog and storm. The Institution very cautiously quotes 'saved from sure death' but local seafarers say that 10 percent of the assisted would never have made the shore without her help.

In 1935 she was sold out of the lifeboat service to the famous Norwegian yachtsman Erling Tambs, who sailed her on some notable passages, including three Atlantic crossings and a visit to lonely Tristan da Cunha. During one Atlantic crossing under Tambs, *Sandefjord* was driven too hard in a fierce gale and 'pitchpoled'. The two men at the helm had already complained that they could not hold her when a steep sea lifted her stern, her bow dived deeply, and she turned end over end, losing one

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The crew that left Durban. L-R. Tim Magennis; Mary Clayton; Barry Cullen; Wally Stright; Fanie Louw and Patrick Cullen.

man and the mizzen mast. She righted herself however, and limped into Newport, Rhode Island.

Just prior to the outbreak of World War 2 *Sandefjord* was in Cape Town and Tambs was forced to sell her. She was then owned and carefully cared for by the late Tilly Penso, a well-known Cape Town yachting personality. Sold out of his estate in 1959 she went through a quick succession of owners, the last of whom all but abandoned her as a rotting hulk in Durban.

It was a desperately sad shadow of the once proud and gallant *Sandefjord* that was found half sunk at her moorings by the Durban brothers Barry and Patrick Cullen in 1963. Left untended for so long any vessel will deteriorate and *Sandefjord* had almost reached the point of no return when the brothers bought her for the proverbial song.

Patrick Cullen had her hoisted ashore at 'R' shed in Durban docks and was joined soon after by his brother Barry. *Sandefjord* became a landmark on Durban's Esplanade for many months, receiving an extensive refit. She was taken from the water, stripped of all doubtful planks and timbers and slowly restored to a state of complete



This is how *Sandefjord* looks today - well kept, regularly sailed and in pristine condition.

seaworthiness. The task of refitting her required almost two years of hard work before she was ready for sea.

The Cullen brothers and crew sailed *Sandefjord* out of Durban on 12 February 1965, flying the Royal Natal Yacht Club's burgee. She became the first South African yacht to complete a circumnavigation.

Five years later, in 1971, Patrick Cullen sailed her in the first Transatlantic Cape to Rio Race, accompanied by his wife and two young sons. The winds during that race were exceptionally light (as those who sailed in it will ruefully recall) and *Sandefjord* took 50 days to complete

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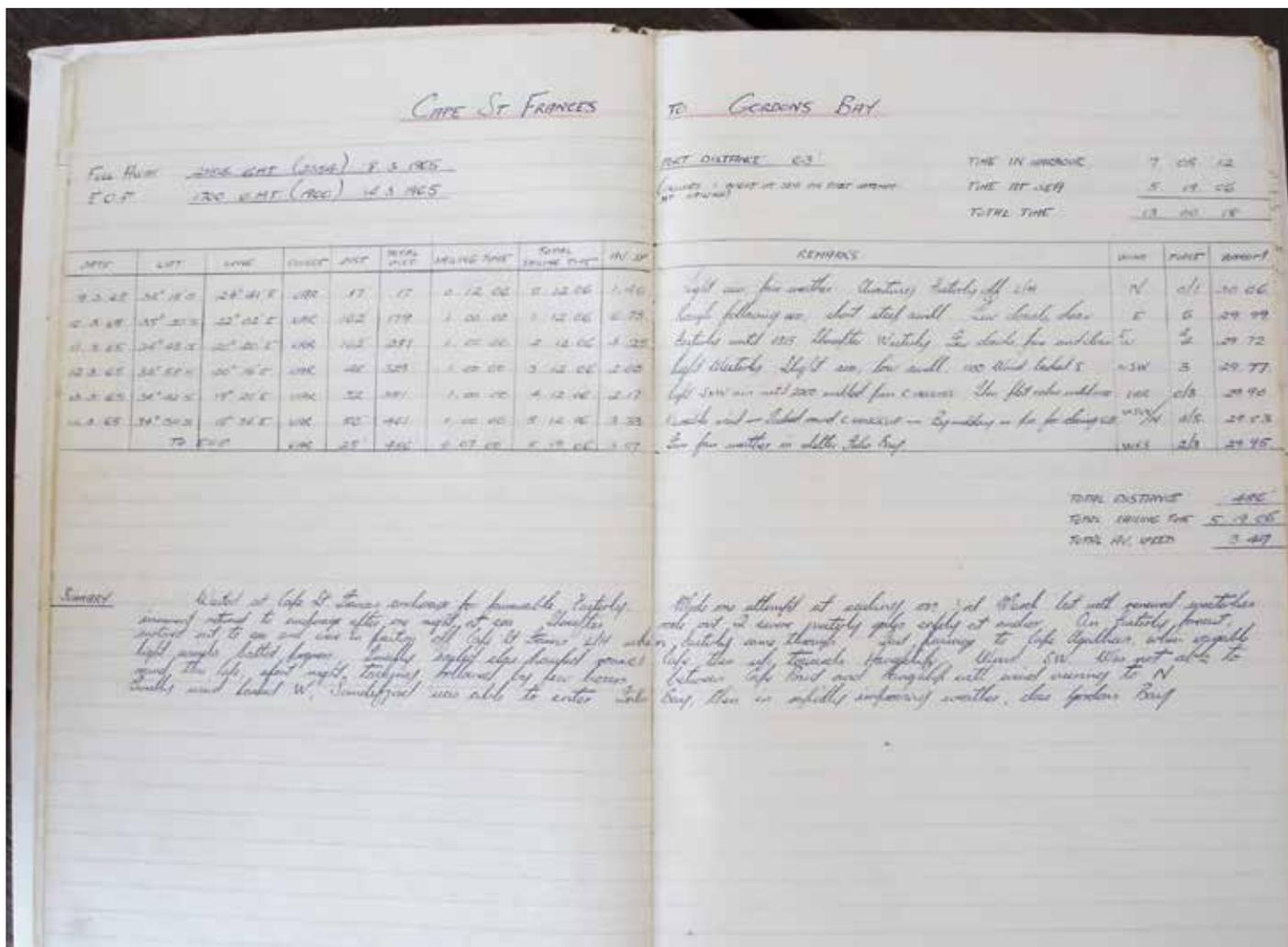
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An extract from the immaculately kept Log Book from Sandefjord's circumnavigation.

the passage. But Barry and Patrick smile because they know that, 'very occasionally, when the breeze pipes up to a gale, and all the yachts in the race are under storm rig or blowing their sails out - "Sande" will leap ahead and win the race still carrying full sail'.

From Rio, the family sailed to the West Indies where they cruised among the Windward Islands for a romantic year. Bound for New York, she encountered a terrible storm in the Bermuda Triangle - 'Hurricane Agnes' kept her hove to in dangerous, wild seas, for over 48 hours. She got a berth in Manhattan at the South Street Seaport Museum, then it was up the East River into Long Island Sound and so to moorings at the idyllic Mystic Seaport, Connecticut. She lay there for many years - a source of continuing worry to the Cullens. Then the ideal solution arrived in the form of Norwegian Erling Brdnborg, a member of the Colin Archer Society, dedicated to preserving the old 'double-enders'.

"We have not much money, but we wish to return our dear Sandefjord to Norway, there to preserve her!" he said.

The old ship sailed from America in 1976, made an excellent Transatlantic crossing, called at Falmouth, crossed the North Sea in a gale, and was greeted at the entrance to Oslofjord by over a hundred double-enders which escorted her to her berth where a brass band waited on the quayside.

Her current owners are Lena and Ingvald Stolas who have continued to preserve this historic yacht in Haugersund on the west coast of Norway.

Sandefjord is currently 98 years old and still sailing!

Circumnavigation from Durban to Durban

In February 1965, Sandefjord was ready for her circumnavigation and to realise the dreams of the Cullen brothers. She was provisioned for 400 days and with her complement of five young men and a girl, she sailed from Durban on what proved to be their greatest adventure. The people of Durban had taken the character and personality of this Grand Old Lady to their hearts and many hundreds lined the breakwater to wish her

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well. The same people were there 22 months later as she completed her circumnavigation, the vindication of her splendid Scandinavian ancestry.

In 1967 Patrick Cullen wrote the following:

'Crew in order of joining: Patrick Cullen; Barry Cullen; Wally Stright; Tim Magennis; Fanie Louw; Mary Clayton and Jenny de Wet.

'Within hours of sailing from Durban, *Sandefjord* and her crew were put to the test as a strong gale blew up from the south, striking the old ship with relentless fury. She rose to meet the challenge, thrilling the crew with her inherent competence. One gale preceded another in this trying passage to the Cape, but once in the Trade Winds of the Atlantic bad weather was soon forgotten and she rushed ahead in idyllic sailing conditions.

'Through the West Indies, the Panama Canal and on into the mighty Pacific, the greatest expanse of water in the world. *Sandefjord* made her landfalls in the exotic South Seas in much the same way as Cook and other early navigators. Without exception she was well met at all her ports of call. She made friends easily for herself, her crew and the country under whose flag she sailed. She was a lucky ship, her people stayed together through thick and thin, as loyal and devoted a crew as any ship could ever wish to have. The experience they have gained in return will surely be one of the most profound in their lives'.

The crew mix was an interesting one when one looks at who they were, their ages and professions.

Barry Cullen was the South African skipper aged 28 and a former ship's officer in the British Merchant Navy.

Patrick Cullen was 'Mate', aged 25, and a former manufacturer's representative.

Walter B. Stright, an American, was 26. He was a former US Navy Radar Technician and was often described as an 'International Hitchhiker'.

Timothy Magennis (32) was Irish and a journalist and photographer.

Fanie Louw (21) was a South African gold miner from the Transvaal. He was the nephew of the rugby Springbok of the same name.

Mary Clayton (26) was a New Zealander. She was a teacher and the first girl crew member. She sailed from Durban to the Galapagos Islands.

Jenny de Wet (22) a South African nursery school teacher, joined the ship from Sydney to Durban.

Sandefjord passage statistics for that circumnavigation were:

Total Distance	30 279 nm
Total Time at Sea	296 d, 19 h & 48 m
Total Time in Port	330 d, 15 h & 12 m
Total Time	627 d, 11 h
Overall Average Speed	4.18 knots

The Legacy

Barry has advised that the Cullen family feel that the story of *Sandefjord* now needs to be confined to history as it has been so much part of their lives since the project started in 1965. That I fully respect.

Of interest though is the fact that the crew, who travelled from all corners of the globe, met for a reunion in 2006 accompanied by their wives and husbands. From all accounts this was the most wonderful time for the crew who had all gone their own ways as friends, but had not met up again until that reunion. Missing, but not forgotten was Patrick Cullen who had passed away, but was represented by his two sons.

That reunion was something private and very special for the crew and close friends and family who were invited. An extract from something Barry had written after the reunion shows how close the crew still are, and how that circumnavigation all those years ago still touches the crew and their families. That's what is so special about our sport.

'With each new arrival, amazed shouts and cheers of recognition! Yes, we had changed a bit in forty years! Those youthful builds - gone! And perhaps a grey hair or two (well, lots!) but inevitably this did not matter at all as we sailed easily into our reunion. Almost immediately, it was just like old times. The reminiscing and stories of the voyage came fast and furious'.

Later, over coffee, Barry was able to play a CD with original sound recorded some 40 years before while "*Sande*", becalmed one dark night in the Doldrums, a mere speck in the ocean, was home to an uproarious party! Amazing stuff! Here, on my left, was the real Tim talking, while on the right, chirping away with excellent sound quality, was the Tim of 40 years ago! We listened to 'Ilkley Moor Bataat' and other great ballads (Tim accompanying on guitar) and then, finally, Patrick gave his famous rendition of a cabinet minister at a political party rally. This brought the house down; all hands laughing so much that we could hardly breathe; tears flowing down our cheeks.

That first evening of a series of functions during the reunion was a great success.' ↓

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