

SWALLOWING THE ANCHOR

Ley and Trevor Liberson ex 'Boon'

Strangely this was not as indigestible as we thought. Maybe this was because we chose to retire from sailing rather than having it thrust upon us. We've talked to friends who left the sea because of ill health or demands from home and they felt a great sense of loss. We'd spent almost a year making the decision and then another year before we sold "Boon". Probably cushioned. Who knows?

We found ourselves back in the UK at the end of November 2001; yes weather-wise that was very bad timing. With no base, we arrived at London Airport with all our worldly possessions in just four bags. These travel weary bags were the sum total of eleven and a half years cruising. It was grey, damp and the trees were fast losing their leaves. Having the free loan of an empty apartment for only two weeks we had to move fast. Indeed we did. In those fourteen days we rented an unfurnished flat, ordered some basic furniture, signed up with the Medics, arranged phones, electricity and all those things we had actually run away from, and then jumped on a coach travelling to the South West to visit our kids.

Two weeks later and back again to our new abode by the sea. This was necessary, as we couldn't cut all our ties with that salty stuff. The town was small and very quaint. The flat was also very small but not so quaint. It was very basic and as time passed we realised just how small it was. I guess when we first viewed it everything looked big after a sailing boat.

We enjoyed Christmas - making friends, discovering the joys of text speak on the mobile phone, having our own Internet facility; the local library, in fact you name it and we enjoyed it. Everyone told us how lucky we were to have such a mild winter. This was a shock to us, as we never felt warm. Summer came, what summer? Yes, the sun shone but we still missed 'real' sunshine.

Trevor and I discovered camping again and had some great hikes around the Kentish countryside. We both took computer courses and I, Ley gave talks to local groups and was actually paid for them. Trevor took an evening class in Human Biology and now waits to see if his exam results are good enough to get him to College for a Bioscience Degree Course. I have a part time job with an Entertainment Company dealing with the latest Chart releases. What do I know about the current music trends; Cold Play, Justin Timberlake or S Club Seven?

Whitstable beach is a delight and as we scrunch our way along the pebbles watching the intrepid small boat sailors, there never seems to be a feeling that we are missing something. Of course we have never felt the urge to

jump into the water, far too cold for our decrepit blood. Having been splashing in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean waters we'll pass on that one.

Do we have any regrets? I don't think so but I do feel that Trevor summed it up when he said that the only thing he really missed, was living out of doors. He's right, we miss eating in the cockpit, watching the stars on night watch and joining friends ashore at any time of the year. But our philosophy is, don't look back always look forward.

By the way I started with the anchor and I'll finish the same way. It is nice to go to sleep at night and not worry about that bloody anchor dragging. And Hurricanes, what are hurricanes?