

BACK TO SHEEP FARMING AFTER ROUND-THE-WORLD VOYAGE ENDS

Patterdale family had exciting three years

AFTER batterings by storms and close brushes with whales, the yacht "Mystico" and her Patterdale crew sailed placidly up the Solway on Friday evening to a tremendous reception at the end of her three-year round-the-world voyage.

With a host of Sinbad-style adventures behind them, Tony and Mary Brown wondered this week if they can ever settle down to farming again:

Inspired by seafarers like Joshua Slocum, the first round-the-world yachtsman, the Browns left Maryport in June, 1973.

When they returned unscathed on Friday, their sons went out to meet them in a fishing boat and the waiting crowds cheered as they docked in Maryport harbour.

Talking to a "Herald" reporter, this week in their picturesque, 300-year-old farmhouse, Despoils Hall, lying at the foot of the falls between Ullswater and Brotherswater, Tony Brown took a breather from the pling time and recalled that they would never have made the trip had it not been for an elderly Irish couple.

The Browns met them in their novice sailing days and were shamed into following them across a mist-covered Mull of Galloway in a force five wind, simply by the fact that if a couple in their seventies could do it, they could.

TRIP TO ICELAND

It led to them venturing further afield and, after Mr. Brown had passed the test and studied navigation, they embarked on a 2,000-mile trip to Iceland in preparation for their world voyage.

With their eldest son, Christopher, left in charge of the farm, they sailed off accompanied by their then twelve-year-old son, John. They called at Spain and the Canary Islands before crossing the Atlantic.

Christmas was spent at Rio de Janeiro and, sailing down the coast, they thrilled at the sight of the vicarage sea lions of Mar del Plata and shuddered at the thought of far inland the wastelands of the Patagonian desert.

Then came the highspot of their voyage—the passage through the notorious Strait of Magellan.

HURRICANES OFF CAPE HORN

The "Mystico" rode out winds of hurricane force twice to enter the Strait and twice she was blown back. With everything securely lashed on deck and wearing safety harness, the Browns made a third attempt and after nine exhausting days became only the fourth yacht crew to sail through the Strait in two years.

Mrs. Brown admitted that at first she was very fright-

ened, but fear lasts only a limited time before being replaced by the will to survive. Once inside the bottle-neck entrance it was calmer and they were able to find anchorages on their one-hundred-mile passage.

Trouble awaited them further up the Chilean coast when their anchor seized but they put in at the naval base at Talcahuano for repairs and the Chilean Navy made them their guests.

"The Chileans were marvellous," they repaired the engine, fed us and housed us," said Mr. Brown.

Sailing up the Peruvian coastline, the Browns visited the University of Antofagasta which has an extensive geology collection, and were delighted to find a piece of Lakeland haematite!

ACROSS THE PACIFIC

Ahead of them lay thousands of miles of open water as the Browns crossed the South Pacific bound for New Zealand. A nagging worry was having to negotiate the Tuamotu Archipelago where dangerous currents have swept many a yacht on to jagged, deadly reefs. But they passed by at night on star-ast-night and dead reckoning and did not see the islands until they were behind them in the morning.

Cook Island was the first English-speaking place they had visited since Gibraltar and then, with a 25-knot wind on the beam, they had a rough ride to Auckland.

Here the Browns found their land-lies again and bought an old car for £80.

They toured both the North and South Islands, and on the latter visited Patterdale Women's Institute's link Institute in New Zealand, Motueka, which is near Nelson.

They made many good friends in that country including one who looked after their yacht and went out in an old punt in a hurricane to save the "Mystico" after it dragged its moorings for thirty days.

PAST THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

The Tasman Sea lived up to its unfriendly reputation and the "Mystico" fought her way through high seas and strong currents before sailing along the beautiful Great Barrier Reef and past Brisbane.



Mr. and Mrs. Brown are re-united with his old farm dog, Roy.

They crossed the Indian Ocean to Durban and here John flew home and his place was taken by his older sister, Carolyn, before the crew reluctantly set sail for the Cape of Good Hope, once named the Cape of Storms.

But the rounding of the Cape, though unpleasant, was not as bad as it might have been and the Browns visited Capetown before setting sail for Ascension Island.

They spent a happy time there and their progress was reported in its local paper, "The Islander."

Mr. Brown helped to gather in sheep, but found it a very different proposal from that on a Lakeland fell farm. The lava would cut a dog's paws to ribbons, so men have to "lalt" the sheep and Mr. Brown's performance earned him the respect of the sheepsman, who told him they had had many agriculturists on the island, but not a farmer before!

The "Mystico" then made a double crossing of the Atlantic to the West Indies to give Carolyn the chance to see the beautiful holiday islands of Barbados, Martinique, Antigua, etc., before sailing Northwards to Bermuda, and on home.

FAR-AWAY PLACES

They have many memories of romantic far-away places,

and also of some unusual incidents. There was the time when Carolyn was at the wheel about two days out from the Azores and a whale some sixty feet in length surfaced and blew only ten feet in front of the yacht before sinking in the blue depths again!

On another occasion they watched two whales frolic off the Chilean coast, fascinated as the giant creatures leapt into the air and flicked their massive tails in unison.

At another time forty porpoise mothers and babies playfully followed the boat for an hour in the Indian Ocean and on other occasions an odd porpoise snaked an eerie but beautiful phosphorescent trail across the quiet oceans at evening-tide.

They will always recall the thrill of watching a turtle lay its eggs in the sand on Ascension Island and the time they hauled aboard a glass float to find a behv turtle contentedly munching the barnacles on it!

CROSSING THE LINE

They celebrated "crossing the line" by throwing buckets of water over poor John and feasting on chocolate and wine.

Each time they took to the sea after a stay on land, it took about three days to adjust to the routine of watch-keeping—three hours on and three hours off. A

pressure cooker made the task in the galley much easier and they had plenty of fresh vegetables, fruit and cheese.

The B.B.C.'s world radio service kept them in touch with life for most of their voyage and several passing ships hoisted their horns and hoisted their flags in greeting.

RESPECT FOR THE SEA

Arguments between the couple were few and quickly made up, said Mrs. Brown, for there is no room on a 33 ft yacht for talking. They lived a day at a time and maintained a healthy respect for the sea.

They had come a long way from their first timorous adventures "messing about in boats" on Ullswater and although they have not yet made plans for the future, it will certainly include more voyages in "Mystico"—"for there is a lot of the world still to see," said Mr. Brown.

Their voyage was all they hoped it would be—and more. And he recalled that when they left Arklow in Wicklow on the outward voyage, an Irish friend told them: "You'll come back very philosophical."

"And we have," they say.