

A slightly edited version of Dave's Email in response to mine (follows at bottom).

Hello Chris

Thank you for your kind comments on the book - it took many hours of work to finally get to press, wonderful feeling though to hold it in my hand once printed though.

Feel free to add my details on to your site, I'd be honoured to be a member. There is something very special about Caprices, and their owners! Its a lovely little boat and I had some fantastic memories of Sharky. You would have gathered from reading the book that it was free spirits like Shane Acton who inspired me and gave me the confidence that anything is possible. I remember a picture in his book with him sitting in Shrimpy and I feeling envious...I remember a similar photo of me and its a special moment. I'd love to have met the man over a beer or two, one of those things i should have done but now sadly too late. Probably time I read his book again!

Funny enough someone read my book and thought they saw Sharky in St Lucia, he sent me some photos and without doubt it was Sharky bobbing about in Rodney Bay...I felt a lump in my throat and memories flooded back. I tracked the owner who would be willing to sell her and I can not help but wonder if there is a part two....She would take a lot of renovation looking at the photos he sent me but what a project and what a joy to sail her back to UK. One day

I'm getting all sentimental and rambling on, apology number two!

Best wishes Dave

Dear Mr Clarke

Having just turned the last page of An Ocean Away I'm compelled to write and thank you for the exhilarating ride.

Having the same version of Caprice, I felt I was sharing your epic journey. I'm not an avid reader, but I found myself, at times, completely surrounded by the sounds and power of the sea, such is the intensity of your narrative. The mental images formed of the inside of Sharky were, unsurprisingly, those of the cabin on Trilobite. I must confess that I sometimes look at her and try (and fail) to imagine setting out into the vastness of an ocean. Island hopping off the West Coast of Scotland or idly avoiding mud on the Orwell in Suffolk is about as close as we're ever likely to get!

Particularly moving was your honest account of your feelings throughout the entire adventure.

A couple of years ago, when I bought her, I searched for an owners' association, but the old group had ceased to exist back in the 1980's, so as a start, I've put together a simple website to act as a focal point for Caprice owners. It's a register of boats as much as anything, but there are help pages and a fairly active forum, where members interact to some extent. So far we are up to about 25 known boats, mostly Mk 4's. It's really the boat that is the member, rather than the skipper. However, we do have the last president of the Owners' Association as a contributor, though he now sails something with a bit more space.

May I invite you to become an Honorary Member? There's no obligation to make an after dinner speech at the annual bash, especially as we haven't had one, our members are rather widely scattered about the UK and Europe!!

Who knows the present whereabouts of Sharky might surface.

With your permission I'll add a link to your website and to An Ocean Away.

Again many thanks for the inspirational account, one to be savored again in a while, though definitely while tied up securely to a jetty.

*Regards
Chris Watts*