

Julia Jones reviews the latest maritime reading

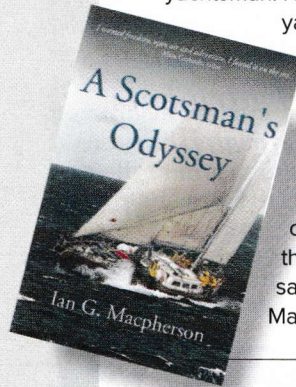
A SCOTSMAN'S ODYSSEY

£9.99

Ian G Macpherson, Conrad Press

Ian Macpherson's love of water began in the Perth swimming baths and developed through the Tay Canoe Club. He joined the RNVR, qualified as a teacher, married, built and sailed dinghies then spent 30 years as a cruising yachtsman. He explored the Scottish islands on charter yachts and gave years of service to the

Ocean Youth Club. In 1996 Macpherson took early retirement as a headteacher to join OYC *John Laing* on the Great Barrier Reef leg of their world voyage. He oversaw the commissioning of the training ship *Alba Venturer*. Three charter cruises to Croatia with friends conclude this chronicle of quiet competence. I felt in safe hands and would certainly choose Macpherson as skipper over Odysseus.



how fast I could travel and discover what would happen at the bottom.

It was a private moment that passed unnoticed by the rest of the crew. The wave decided to let us off as it rolled under the boat and carried its immense energy off into the infinity of the Southern Ocean, searching for something else on which to vent itself.

I watched its back retreat into the oblivion of wind, rain and spray and returned to the job in hand.

Thinking about that glimpse, that moment of truth which had re-emphasised my commitment to do a single-handed, round the world race. I knew that it could no longer be put to one side. I might as well face up to it again, stop kidding myself and get on with the project.

I would never be satisfied until it was done. It was like an itch that comes and goes but never disappears completely.

I was in the very arena in which such a race would be fought and could picture the kind of boat, skills and attitude that would be needed.

The yacht would have to be very fast and light on the tiller and have the grace to outrun the crushing energy of those great waves, even under autopilot and with me asleep below. It also needed to be reliable, easy to sail, and capable of looking after me should I be ill or injured.

I was well aware of the harsh reality of these ocean races: the 1992-93 Vendée Globe, the second in the series, had started just before we reached Cape Horn and I had been following its progress as closely as possible.

Considered by many to be the world's toughest yacht race, the Vendée – a non-stop, single-handed circumnavigation – attracts only the hardest of skippers.

I had paid particular attention to Nigel Burgess and Alan Wynne Thomas, who were both flying the flag for Britain. The day after they started we received the sobering news that Nigel had lost his life in a vicious storm in the Bay of Biscay.

I had met Nigel and had had the pleasure of getting to know him as a fellow competitor in the 1988 Transat. He was both a gentleman and a kindred spirit. My heart went out to his wife and young family.

CHURCHILL'S ADMIRAL

£25

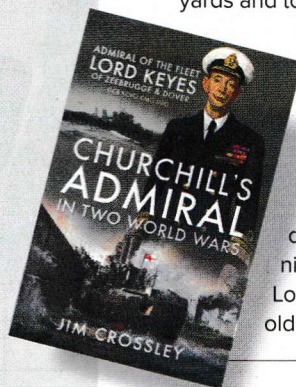
Jim Crossley, Pen and Sword £25

Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Keyes was a close friend of Sir Winston Churchill and served, like him, through both world wars. Keyes was trained in the days of sail.

In 1887, aged 15, his first posting was to the iron frigate *HMS Raleigh* where he was expected to work on the yards and topmasts and be ready to wield a cutlass.

When off duty he loved to sail the ship's cutter. Jim Crossley, a keen sailor, shows how this experience stood Keyes in good stead when navigating the currents and shallows of the Peiho River to Tientsin.

Conversely Keyes's belief in personal dash and courage could make him a nightmare in his dealings with later Lords of the Admiralty – including his old friend Churchill.



RAF SEARCH AND RESCUE

£25

Paul E Eden, Adlard Coles

The iconic yellow helicopters of RAF Search and Rescue will be imprinted in the hearts of yachtsmen. Astonishing rescues have taken place from private yachts as well as from downed aircraft, oil rigs, mountain sides and flooded villages. The story of RAF SAR began in February 1941 as a response to the deaths of airmen ditching in the

North Sea. There were no helicopters in those days but fast motor launches, Walrus seaplanes and Uffa

Fox-designed airborne lifeboats. This history is an enthusiast's guide to 75 years of equipment, squadrons, locations with a selection of the most memorable rescues. Some tiny type is needed to cram in such a wealth of detail but this is sure to be a popular Christmas gift.

