

All alone, naturally

Paul Biogy, DEX

# Atlantic crossing a dream come true

Aug. 19-85  
MN

By JOHN STEWART  
Staff Reporter

Ronald Mitchell was half an hour from landing in his hometown of Girvan, Scotland, after a solo ocean crossing in his sailboat when he mused in his journal that it was too bad his granddaughter couldn't be present to see him land.

After all, the Mississauga businessman's boat, the *Dawn-Ellen* was named after his granddaughter.

But when Mitchell sailed into the harbor, among the 300 people there to cheer his feat was Dawn-Ellen, as well as his grandson, his son and daughter and his wife.

Mitchell, 48, who owns Transicold of Ontario Limited on Wolfedale Rd. spent 34 days alone on his trip.

The trip was the fulfilment of a longtime dream of Mitchell's. He had wanted to sail by himself, to his hometown, even before he took up sailing eight years ago. The only reason he didn't do it earlier, says the Scottish immigrant who came here in 1954, was because he couldn't afford a boat.

Some of those days "were a little hairy," recalls Mitchell, sitting in an office chair bedecked with the motto "King of the Sea," a tribute from his co-workers.

Following the Gulf Stream, Mitchell ended up about 120 miles north of the Azores; then sailed northeast to make a landing first in Crosshaven, Ireland.

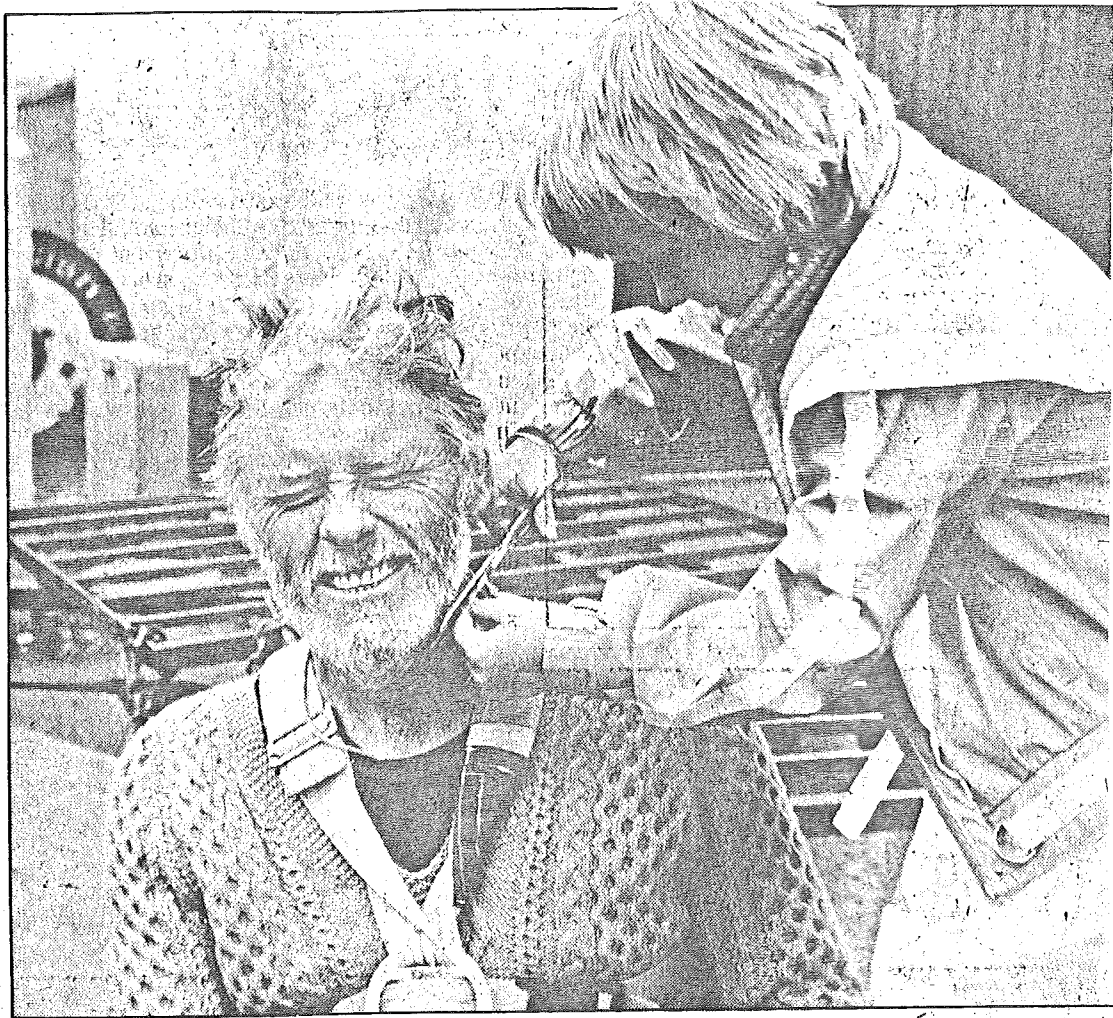
When he thinks about that moment when he sighted land, Mitchell admits he still gets goose bumps.

While at sea, Mitchell slept only three or four hours a day, and ate only once a day. During the heavy weather he experienced a couple of times, Mitchell had fleeting fears for his safety. His sails ripped twice in storms, but he was able to sew them up and continue.

When he landed in Girvan, provost Gibson McDonald presented him with a plaque honoring his achievement and Mitchell reciprocated with his own presentation. He'd previously been made Toronto's ambassador to Girvan by Toronto Mayor Arthur Eggleton.

After a quick drink of champagne, Mitchell and his family retired quickly to a local pub to celebrate with a few beers. Mitchell couldn't eat much because his stomach had shrunk so much during the voyage.

It was a wrenching emotional moment for the Canadian sailor when he had to leave his boat in Girvan to fly home. But he plans to return next summer, with a crew this time, to sail the *Dawn-Ellen* home again.



Ronald Mitchell was on shore in Scotland only a few minutes when the beard he'd grown during his solo crossing of the Atlantic in a sailboat was ordered cut by his wife Ellen. His granddaughter Dawn-Ellen did the honors.

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