

20140217 Talisker Whisky Twee dames in een boot na ruim 76 dagen

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ATLANTIC CHALLENGE

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DAY 75: INSPIRATIONAL FRIENDS LATEST BLOG

Day 75 on the Atlantic and Inspirational Friends are facing Easterly winds today at 15-25 knots, the waves are pushing South-West at 3-5 meters in height. From Thursday the waves will push West-South-West and drop to 2-3 meters, from Friday the wind will be from...

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Messages of support continue to stream in for Hannah and Lauren, the latest from [James Glasson of The Atlantic Polo Team](#). He says: "Hannah/Lauren, Bet you didn't think Atlantic polo team would become the most organised, slick operation!!! Not really! We made it and at least I can pre warn you of what lies ahead when you hit Antigua. Sun, Rum, cheeseburgers, chilli sauce, pina coladas, massages, family+ friends, locals, partying, super yachts, air con, calm blue seas, loads of press! You will be heroes for some time!! It is the most amazing place! Keep going you are over half way I know you guys have been through the mill with equipment failing. We did 48 days and were ready to come off so what you are doing is amazing!! You will be the true heroes of the race you are not missing anything in the UK. The weather is so shit with floods everywhere. Stay strong, look forward to what's ahead you will be amazed by the reception you will get in Antigua and at home. If I could transport myself onto your boat I would do a shift each for you now my ass has healed. Thinking of you, James xx"

Today we also share with you [the girls latest blog, titled 'Last but not least'](#) and written on the 11th of February. As positive and determined as ever Lauren writes about milestones and celebrations in their "epic rowing (slash surviving) challenge".

The girls are currently pressure steering as they await the arrival of Support Yacht who is on the way to deliver them a new rudder. Lauren titles the day their old rudder snapped off as the "second saddest day of my life." She goes on to detail the events of the rudder breaking and what happened next: "It happened in the early hours of the morning, a loud crack and then complete silence. This is unusual as normally the rudder is making either a knocking or a banging sound. As I leant off the back cabin hatch, torch in mouth, trying to detect just how dire the situation was, all I could see was our rudder case split in half and trailing in the swell. Hmmm, not great. All I kept thinking was 'Really?...did this honestly have to happen'. We had only just recovered from our fire incident just three days prior and learning to deal with the shock of rationing battery life and no ipod music. Hannah was in a similar state, silent, with the occasional 'I just can't believe it.' How unfortunate then, that the saddest day of my life would follow just 24 hours later, by which, in a last ditch attempt to fix the rudder sleeve, Hannah had made a cable tie fix that would allow the metal rod to slot through the sleeve and act as a pivot point. HOORAH!!!....That would be until I lost grip of it, hanging out of the cabin window and watched dumbfounded as it plummeted into the deep depths of the ocean. I don't really know how it happened, one minute I had hold of it, the next, it had gone, but what I do know is that I've never seriously contemplated

suicide until that point in my life. When all hope flashed before my eyes, and Hannah was waiting eagerly for me to give her the thumbs up, it took all of my strength not to chuck myself out of that aft hatch and see what animal wanted me for an afternoon snack.

I still can't believe it even now, but thankfully we are both able to laugh about it, and I will forever live with the nickname of 'Butterfingers.' At the time, I sobbed my eyes out for about 5 minutes, unable to see how I was going to face Hannah knowing both the disappointment and frustration she would have rightly felt towards me. So, I stopped crying, because that never helps any situation, and if you know Hannah Lawton, then you'll also know how well me crying would have gone down. So I 'manned up', went to the front of the boat and told Hannah how sorry I was. There was little more to be said, and 15 minutes later back in the cabin she said she wasn't angry at me and we shared a packet of raw salted peanuts and well like I said, life goes on and we sit waiting for a new rudder sleeve and thanks to me, a new metal rod.

Perhaps then it was Karma playing a trick or too when just 4 days after the rod incident the boat capsized a full 360 roll and I split my head open on the same back cabin metal frame. One minute we are both snoozing, daydreaming of clean bed sheets and hot showers, the next minute I felt a massive whack on my head, opened my eyes and I'm looking at water through the cabin window (this is odd..) and then in one simultaneous movement I am slammed onto my back again and I return to staring back at the sky. I can remember propping myself up by my elbow and seeing our kit, and equipment everywhere, our mattress cushions bunched up and Hannah lying in the most awkward position humanly possible. I called see if she was ok, and we both started to giggle, what a way to wake up! It was probably at that point that I could feel a warm sensation pouring down my face, and before I know it, I'm wiping my eyes but I'm unable to see anything because there is so much blood pooling into my eyes. Ermmm Hannah I think I've cut my head. Hannah was busy sorting herself out and so hadn't looked up at me yet, but when she did, I knew it probably wasn't just a scratch. "Oh,ok, erm buddy, erm yer you've cut your head.", ahahhah Hannah is so so squeamish and cannot stand the sight of blood, so apologising, she quickly escaped outside to stop herself from vomiting. So I stopped the bleeding and poured surgical spirit into the cut, which truly is an unpleasant feeling. I could feel it was probably quite large, but it's at the top of my head in my hairline and so I was unable to see in the mirror. Turns out, it's about 6-7cm in length and pretty deep. After many calls to the Duty Officers and the Sea medic, poor Hannah had the envious task of skin gluing my scalp back together. Dr Lawton indeed did a marvellous job, only leaving the cabin twice to stop the vomit! And so we continue again our epic story of survival and I will undoubtedly have the scars to prove it, a nice memento. At least it wasn't smack across my forehead-every cloud really does have a silver lining.

So am I painting a grim enough picture for you? Trust me it's not pretty. Our poor bodies must be in complete shock. Life off the boat normally consists of daily showering, hair products, makeup, perfumes..yer, you get it..pretty girly stuff. So just imagine what not showering or washing our clothes for 70+ days must look/smell like. In all fairness, our bodies are cleaned daily in a baby wipe wash routine, but it's our hair and clothes that are a sight to see. More so Hannah than me, I brush my hair and coat it in Moroccan hair oil quite regularly, it's pretty oily, whereas Hannah ahahhahhh I'm laughing whilst writing this, literally looks like Hornblower. No comb or brush has touched her head for 70 days, so truthfully it's now a matted nest of dead hair that just sits on top of her head. We laugh so hard at it, and it provides us with daily entertainment on board the boat. Hannah however remains forever hopeful that she will get the dreadlocks out when back on dry land, and has a heavy duty detangling session planned for her mum when we arrive in Antigua. I remain a tad more sceptical, but whatever happens I'm going along to film it.

So, when waiting for the Support yacht what does life involve, truthfully on the days when we can't pressure steer, it gets very boring. I often venture outside to try and attract the wildlife and capture the fish on film, I remain unsuccessful to date. I think they are perhaps camera shy, because guarantee as soon as the camera is back inside, safely locked away, or out of charge, a pod of dolphins appear.

I have nicknamed Hannah 'chief snoozer' as she has a profound ability to sleep at any given point in the day. But we have both discovered a joint talent..80's karaoke, such sweet beautiful singing voices we both have. We play party anthem roulette on itunes, and have quite possibly got the best rendition to Dolly Parton's 9-5, its spectacular.

As the days stretch out we begin to run out of snack packs, and now with just a handful of snacks left on board we face the rest of our journey surviving on freeze dried meals only. DUH DUH DUUUUUUUUUUUUUH, yes please feel our pain. Whilst I appreciate this will make 'real food' taste all the sweeter, I'm not sure how much longer we can both stomach porridge with sultanas or 'Tasty' Beef Stroganoff. Can you believe it's called 'Tasty Beef Stroganoff', it actually says that on the packet, it's the definition of false advertising! It should read ' Red cat sick, with chewy mince and undercooked rice', and whilst I appreciate it might not sell, it is at least the truth.

My heart goes out to Hannah, who on the 4th of February woke up to spend her 25th birthday with me (butterfingers) in a rather wet and mouldy cabin. I'm pretty sure there are better ways to spend a birthday, but we tried to make the most of it regardless. I sporadically sang Stevie Wonders 'Happy Birthday' chart hit, bursting into song whenever I felt she needed it, we ate some delicious Thornton's vanilla fudge and I gave Hannah a hand massage with some of the body creams I had bought her as a present. I did offer a foot massage, but she hates feet and can't stand anyone touching them, so opted for a hand massage instead. I did a good job and now have earned myself a dual nickname of 'Masseuse Morton'..along with butterfingers. It wasn't the worst birthday imaginable, but I can't wait to give her the celebration she deserves back on dry land. SO HAPPY BIRTHDAY HANNAH!!

I'm guessing by now that we are indeed the last ones out here, and so we want to congratulate all the teams in this year's race, wow what an achievement guys. Whilst we are both incredibly jealous that you're tucking into Bacon sandwiches and Sunday lunches, we couldn't be happier or prouder for what you have overcome. I have no doubt that every team faced their own challenges and hurdles, but to overcome them and to finish, no one can ever take that away from you. I think the Atlantic Challenge is very special in that sense, we feel the same joy and happiness for those that succeed but equally have felt despair for the teams that were forced to retire. But whatever happens we cannot wait to catch up with everyone back on dry land, swap tales and give everyone a massive hug!

I'm not sure how much longer we will be out here, or even when the rudder arrives whether the boat will hold a bearing or whether we will have to hand steer our skinny, smelly rotting selves over to Antigua. What we do know, is that together we made the decision not to give in, and as the days stretch out we only grow in determination to finish. Perspective has given us everything we need to push on and continue. Quite early on we received an email from a mutual friend of Elle's and it read 'I can remember when just climbing the stairs to bed would cause Elle so much pain.' That line rings so loud in our heads whenever we doubt ourselves or our ability to continue, and so we push on and live for the day we can proudly step foot in Antigua."

Hannah and Lauren's courage, determination, and positivity never fails to impress us, the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge fleet and their supporters. We are with them every oar stroke of their epic journey.

Today is also question time for the girls, if you have a question you would like them to answer [post it on their Facebook page](#) below today's post and keep an eye out for their response.

The girls have also been featured on ITV who also give testament to the girls determination in refusing to give up their attempt to row the Atlantic. [View the article and video here.](#)

May the wind and the current be with you our Queens of the Atlantic!