

REPORT ON VISIT TO THE SCHOONER GOLDFIELD
BY CAPT. PAUL HURLSTONE AND HEBER ARCH.

On Sunday 11th December 1983 we arrived at the Zihuatanejo Yacht Club at about 11:00 a.m. after driving from Acapulco with H.E. Ross, Robert Millan and his son, Robert.

Robert Millan was invited to make the trip by Heber Arch and Robert decided that he would carry his seventeen year old son with him. Robert Millan is a mechanical engineer and being a Mexican, assisted in organising our journey to the ship.

The Goldfield was anchored in the harbour and we were taken to her by a "Taxi". Upon arrival we were met by the mate, Bill Cadey, who introduced us to the other members of the crew. He informed us that Brad Johnson was on shore organising for the filming in which the Goldfield was playing a part. Bill gave us a thorough tour of the ship and we then met in the Captain's cabin for discussion. Although Ross was on board he did not take part in the discussion. However, he assisted in providing information when we requested it. Bill appeared to be frank and undoubtedly was very knowledgeable and helpful. He willingly provided whatever information we requested and we noted the confidence he had in his crew and in Capt. Johnson. After talking to him we had discussions with the remaining members of the crew and they all appeared to be very frank with us, as well.

Brad Johnson arrived at about 12:30 and we then had a lengthy discussion with him and after inviting the crew for lunch on shore we returned to the ship and left for the airport at about 7:30 p.m.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The hull of the ship appeared to be satisfactory. The only leaking visible was through the stuffing box. The top mast of the main mast is cracked and should be replaced. The freezer was not working and requires repairs.

The main engine was thoroughly examined by Millan and it is definitely in a serious condition and must be repaired prior to the ship continuing on its voyage. There are also minor repairs required to small pumps etc., all of which should be put in proper running order while the main engine is being worked on.

We were very impressed with the crew both during conversation and when we watched them dock the ship. They have achieved a high level of team work and are also very loyal to each other and their Captain. They all indicated that they would not sail without Brad. Although Brad likes to party when in port, they all respected his ability at sea and stressed both his and their strong affection for the Goldfield. She is really very dear to them and they will feel very proud to anchor her in the George Town harbour.

We feel that Brad Johnson is not a capable navigator and the ship should have a capable navigator on board before sailing from Acapulco. However, we feel that without him and his crew it would be almost an impossible task to sail the "Old Lady" home. The crew is used to sailing the ship, are very experienced sailors and have already made the most dangerous half of the voyage. We strongly recommend that they continue to Cayman.

The multi band radio must be properly installed, all required charts, current standard navigational reference books and a sextant must be placed on board prior to sailing.

It is our conclusion that the ship's delay in Acapulco has been due mainly to a lack of funds and the inability of the Captain to get the necessary assistance to repair and stock the ship for sea. As a result, we recommend that the Foundation appoint a reputable ship's agent in each port of entry of the ship, commencing with Acapulco, to ensure that all necessary funds are available to keep the ship moving on and, indeed, to minimise the time spent in port.

Fuel is very cheap in Mexico and we recommend that drums be purchased and as much fuel as can be carried be taken on board there.

Many hours were spent talking to H.E. Ross prior to visiting the ship. We feel that he is very dedicated to returning the ship home and is presently making shirts as a means of fund raising. We feel that once an agent is appointed Mr. Ross would not be required as a purser and could return home. (Unless he decided to sail as crew and would accept Brad Johnson as Captain and, therefore, his boss).

The rehearsals for the pirates film, some scenes of which will be aboard the Goldfield, commenced while we were there. Capt. Johnson confirmed to us that in desperation he had signed a contract to include the Goldfield in filming for approximately 10 days and that the proceeds would go towards the ship and would be about US\$2000.00. The ship would be returned to Acapulco after filming and would be there not later than 21st December 1983. Brad confirmed that the contract included for adequate insurance coverage of the vessel. We, however, decided that Ross should take a copy of the contract to Acapulco to have a Lawyer confirm that everything was satisfactory.

In preparing this report we have endeavoured to be unbiased and at all times presenting the facts as we have found them and recommending what we feel is best for the safe voyage of the ship to Grand Cayman. It must be noted, however, that our information was compiled in a short period of time and our knowledge of the crew limited to short discussions held with them.

We wish the Goldfield a safe passage home and for the Foundation we hope that your task may be lightened by the receipt of many generous donations.

Please let us know if we can answer any questions or assist in any other manner.

Capt. Paul Johnson,
Heber G. Arch.

~~P.S. The Goldfield is getting very good publicity in many of Mexico's biggest papers.~~