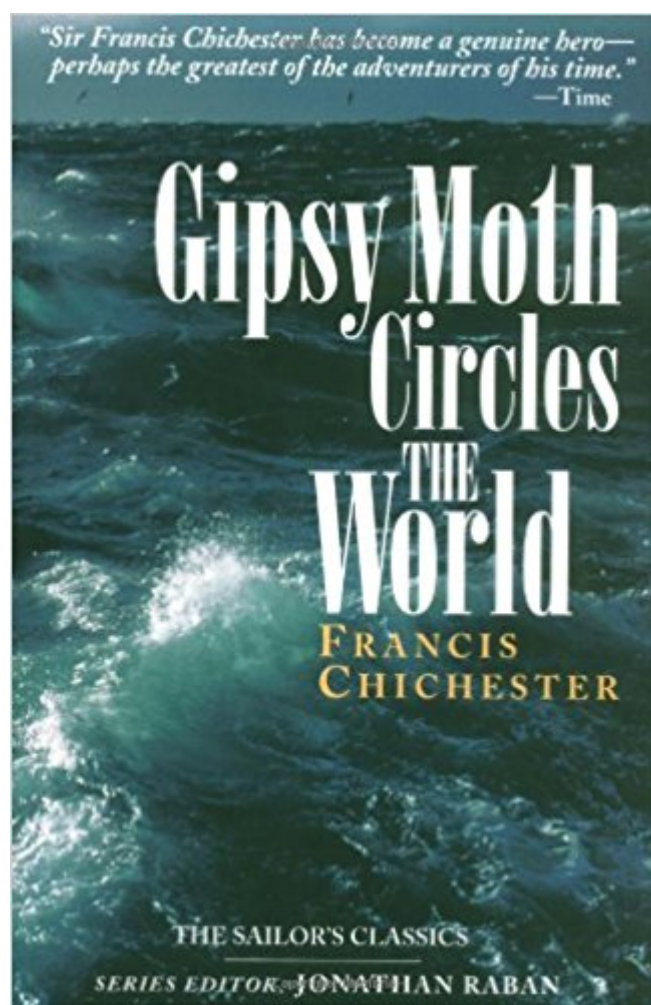


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Gipsy Moth Circles The World



Synopsis

The Sailor's Classics library introduces a new generation of readers to the best books ever written about small boats under sail. When 65-year-old Francis Chichester set sail on his solitary eastward journey around the world in 1966, many believed he wouldn't return alive. But when the old man returned nine months later, he had made history's fastest circumnavigation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I recall the thrill and deep emotion that came over me in 1967 when I saw TV coverage of England welcoming home Francis Chichester (soon to be "Sir Francis") from his "singlehander" circumnavigation of the planet. (I still tear up thinking about it.) I am not especially Anglophilic, but the man and the moment epitomized for this American all that is great and good about England and her people, even if the British Empire ain't what it used to be (which is very likely a good thing). Alas, almost four decades later, I didn't find Chichester's memoir of the voyage an especially engaging read. "British understatement" is an understatement. One can admire the man's restraint in not overdramatizing the more perilous episodes of the voyage -- capsizing off Australia, rounding the Horn, etc. -- but the drama that certainly did accompany this maritime feat is hardly there at all. Nor is there a strong sense of the emotional and physical toll on a 65-year-old man (however fit) of operating a 53-foot sailing vessel 'round the clock, alone, for 226 days, snatching sleep a few hours at a time. Much of the routine is ... well, routine, and it begins to run together after a few chapters. Chichester's mostly matter-of-fact recounting of the voyage is full of details about sails,

masts, booms, navigation and other nautical equipment and tasks, details that are likely going to leave most 'lubbers (such as myself) a bit glassy-eyed. Find yourself a sailor's glossary, because there's none in this account. Although the book contains boat diagrams and a sail plan, keeping track of the genoas, staysails, and jibs becomes stultifying. There is also several pages' discourse on supplies and foodstuffs one would want for a long ocean voyage.

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