



**Mischief Among the Penguins: Hand (Man)
Wanted for Long Voyage in Small Boat. No Pay,
No Prospects, Not Much Pleasure (Tilman: The
Collected Edition)**

H. W. Tilman

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'Hand (man) wanted for long voyage in small boat. No pay, no prospects, not much pleasure.' So read the crew notice placed in the personal column of The Times by H.W. 'Bill' Tilman in the spring of 1959. This approach to selecting volunteers for a year-long voyage of 20,000 miles brought mixed seafaring experience: 'Osborne had crossed the Atlantic fifty-one times in the Queen Mary, playing double bass in the ship's orchestra'. With unclimbed ice-capped peaks and anchorages that could at best be described as challenging, the Southern Ocean island groups of Crozet and Kerguelen provided obvious destinations for Tilman and his fifty-year-old wooden pilot cutter Mischief. His previous attempt to land in the Crozet Islands had been abandoned when their only means of landing was carried away by a severe storm in the Southern Ocean. Back at Lympington, a survey of the ship uncovered serious Teredo worm damage. Tilman, undeterred, sold his car to fund the rebuilding work and began planning his third sailing expedition to the southern hemisphere. Mischief among the Penguins (1961), Tilman's account of landfalls on these tiny remote volcanic islands, bears testament to the development of his ocean navigation skills and seamanship. The accounts of the island anchorages, their snow-covered heights, geology and in particular the flora and fauna pay tribute to the varied interests and ingenuity of Mischief's crew, not least after several months at sea when food supplies needed to be eked out. Tilman's writing style, rich with informative and entertaining quotations, highlights the lessons learned with typical self-deprecating humour, while playing down the immensity of his achievements.

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