

Around the World in 80 Days – The Vile Drinking Game

Shôn Ellerton, January 5, 2021

New Year's celebrations for many means party and plenty to drink, but never play this drinking game!



Now that the New Year's celebrations are over, allow me to elaborate on what could be possibly one of the most revolting drinking games I had ever taken part in. At some point in time or another, many of us, particularly those of us in our unwise years of youth have partaken in some silly drinking games, which invariably result in being gruesomely sick for the next two days vowing never to touch alcohol again. One such occasion I can remember all too well—sometime around 1987--when my father, two others and I decided to let loose for a very silly drinking game concocted by my father, a man not well known for being one who takes responsibility seriously. Suffice it to say, that this happened more than three decades ago, around the time I was eighteen or so, when we completed the gruelling renovation of an ocean-going fishing trawler, called *Manitou Enterprise*, which had been converted for passenger use.

The drinking game he came up with had the innocent sounding name of *Around the World in 80 Days*, in which, not unlike Phileas Fogg in his hot air balloon travels around the world, you had to 'travel' around the world by drinking a wide mix of liquors, cocktails and spirits—no beer or wine--associated with each country starting from England going east around the globe eventually to return back to the start. At this point, you are probably getting the gist of the game. It sounded innocent enough.

The occasion took place at a little harbour in a picturesque little village called Port Dinorwic off the coast of North Wales. As we had completed the work on

renovating the fishing trawler, the four of us decided to play *Around the World in 80 Days* at the harbour's yacht club. Let me rephrase that. My *father* decided we ought to play *Around the World in 80 Days* in the local yacht club. One of his passions was boats, until he got bored with them during his later years. Another passion was working very hard and playing very hard. He was not your average hobbyist sailor who potters around the local shorelines in calm waters wearing yellow wellies and sailor's uniforms pretending to be captain but rather one who tackles more adventurous pursuits like crossing the Atlantic Ocean and scouring extensively across the icy North Seas and over the turbulent swells of the Bay of Biscay to get into the Mediterranean Sea. This daredevil combination of adventurer, working hard and playing hard often got him into trouble in situations involving, or most primarily related to, yacht clubs and other drinking establishments. The most noteworthy incident I recall is when he got kicked out of the Cowes Yacht Club for unsustainably bad and raucous behaviour. He was not an alcoholic by any means, let me be clear about that.

The other two members were in their mid-twenties or so. One was called Derek 'aka' Jock who was a burly character who spent much of his time on the dockside telephone pining for his then new girlfriend. The other, Dave, a comical sort of a character who liked nothing better than to talk about working with the big 'hammermag' crushing machines at the stone quarry he used to work at.

Before I jump into the details of the *Around the World in 80 Days* drinking game, it would be remiss of me to omit some of the other nefarious pursuits prior. For weeks on end, without much in the way of breaks or days off, we developed a sort of cabin fever while living on this boat in relatively confined quarters in which the daily schedule of waking up early, working hard all day, eating takeouts and watching, mainly violent or horror, movies from the local video rental shop, followed by cans of Stella Artois beer or cheap wine had turned into a predictable routine.

Moreover, the renovation work proved to test our mettle to the fullest along with many bouts of frustrations and loss of tempers. Dave and I spent days on end stripping old varnish from the wheelhouse using a rather nasty industrial version of Nitromors paint stripper, some of which ended up inside my shoes which caught Dave completely off-guard when I began to shout and hop around like a raving lunatic. Once I applied new varnish, of which several coats needed to be applied, I made the fatal mistake of not getting the mixture right with the

thinners which created an orange-peel sort of effect. This meant, we had to strip the whole damn lot again and start over. As for my father. He completely lost his wits when having just painted the deck of the boat, a torrent of rain—not an uncommon occurrence in Wales—came unexpectedly from the sky. This was not ordinary deck-painting but rather, the slow and tedious application of coating or ‘blobbing’ thick rubber-based paint over mashed up bits of recycled racing car tyres to make a slip-proof decking. The rain washed most of it over the sides and made one hell of a mess. At this point, he jumped up and down from the bow of the boat wildly flailing his arms around, throwing the paint brush down, while shouting every expletive possible to mankind and exclaiming what sick f*&k could possibly live in a climate like Wales without going absolutely potty. Denizens from the neighbouring boats emerged from their cabins, some with glasses of wine to hand, to admire the show.

Therefore, to break up the routine and the frustrations, we decided to host the *Manitou Olympics* which comprised of two main events: rope-traversing and egg throwing, using a large consignment of eggs which we somehow discovered in the boats pantry, well past their sell-by dates. The activity of rope traversing was restricted to me, Dave and Jock, as my father has one leg. This involved traversing the rope like a sloth from the boat to the dockside during low tide. It was no mean feat considering the substantial tidal differences in this location of the world, meaning that the height and drop from the boat to the dockside can vary by a good few metres. Only Jock succeeded while Dave and I unceremoniously landed in the murky dockside water during several attempts. As for egg-throwing, the object was to throw eggs at the very expensive prestige ‘cigarette’ racing boats which, for some unsubstantiated reason or another, my father had a problem with those who owned them. We started to pelt rotten raw eggs, but I limited myself to one when I heard one splat against the side of one of the boats. At that point, a wave of guilt flooded through me like that scene in the *Return of the Jedi* when the Emperor was zapping Luke Skywalker with energy bolts and Vader, feeling remorse, then proceeds to pick up the Emperor tossing him down one of the cores of the Death Star.

But the bad behaviour did not end up there either because at the time, we came across a rather nasty individual by the name of Peter Clowes who defrauded millions of pounds out of investors through his Barlow Clowes investment firm, one of which was a good friend of ours by the name of Eric Llewellyn. Clowes, who had been hiding out in the area and frequenting the yacht club on occasion,

spurred my father to develop this curiously twisted idea of kidnapping him from the yacht club, with the aid of Jock and Dave, taking him out to international waters and demanding a ransom in vengeance in swindling Eric out of his funds. Dave and Jock were all into it and said they would happily accept a short term in prison in return for x amount of money, presumably a lot of x ! I was getting increasingly more uncomfortable with this darkening turn of events but was saved by the bell when the instigator, my father, opened his mouth at the yacht club and scared Peter away as if in a flash. Dave and Jock were not pleased, however.

Once we completed what work we had to do, and after being thoroughly jaded and fed-up, we then made ourselves across the dockside to the yacht club to commence with *Around the World in 80 Days*.

Apart from the first rule, the rules of this horrid drinking game are simple.

1) England is the first country and one proceeds east progressing around 10 degrees of longitude in which, whatever, country can then be selected is next. For example, Germany, would be a good example of being the next country. There are 360 degrees of longitude which means around 36 rounds of drinks but because some of these lines of longitude pass through nothing but ocean, we had to make up with adding additional ones on those lines of longitudes with more than one country. The person who ordered the last round chooses the next country. The yacht club had a convenient map on the wall.

2) Everyone takes turns at selecting an appropriate drink pertaining to the chosen country. For example, schnapps for Germany, cognac for France, vodka for Russia, tequila for Mexico, bourbon for the United States, and so on. On following this rule, considering the limitations of what the yacht club held in the way of international spirits and liquors, choosing what drink suited best for countries like those in the Far East or other obscure countries proved difficult often resulting in horrible-tasting cocktails, some with cream and others with ghastly liqueurs like Crème de Cassis, Galliano or Midori.

3) If the consensus of the group decides that the drink is unpalatable, the one who ordered it must drink another.

4) No one is to go unescorted to the bathroom because, and this is where it gets decidedly awful, vomiting is not allowed.

5) The game ends when the last 'survivor' remains who has a) either not vomited, b) given up or c) collapsed.

I have a vague memory of Dave winning and that we did not go any further east than Japan. I do have a strong memory of not feeling particularly well and after we had pronounced who the winner was and stumbling out of the yacht club, Dave picks an opportune moment to decorate the bonnet of my brown Mini Clubman car with the innards of his stomach while the remaining three of us lied stomachs down over the edge of the dock feeling incredibly sick and doing the same. However, it was dark, low tide, and being quite a drop to the water, we expected the sound of a splash. Rather, we heard the unmistakable sound of splatter against a hard-resonating surface like a guitar. As our eyes became accustomed to the darkness, we realised that the target far below was one of those very expensive prestige 'cigarette' racing speedboats!

Waking up the next day, eyeing the carnage in full daylight, dawned the realisation that bad drinking games are simply not a good idea!