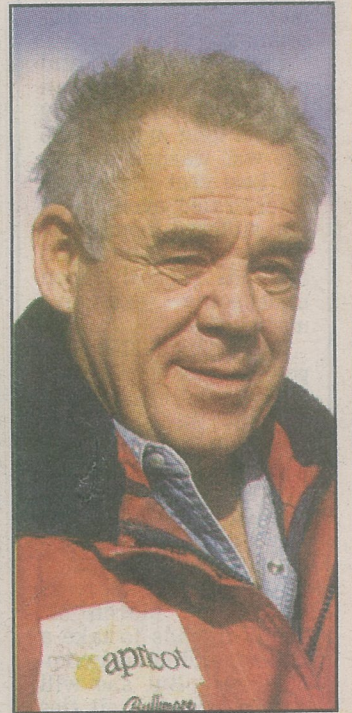


Rescued yachtsman tells of his five-day ordeal at sea

# OUR GREAT SURVIVOR



Survivor - yachtsman Tony Bullimore

**MISSING** round-the-world yachtsman Tony Bullimore, who was plucked from the freezing southern seas this morning, has admitted: "It was a horrific, traumatic experience."

Former Southend schoolboy Mr Bullimore, 57, escaped his incredible ordeal with slight hypothermia, dehydration and a touch of frostbite.

His yacht capsized more than 1,500 miles off the coast off Australia on Sunday, leaving him trapped for nearly five days inside an air pocket in the wrecked hull.

An Australian frigate, Adelaide, sent to the scene to rescue Mr Bullimore arrived late last night. When he met with crew the rescued sailor asked them: "Can I have a cup of tea?"

Speaking from the Adelaide Mr Bullimore, son

**'I was praying and hoping something was happening above water'**  
- Tony Bullimore

of Southend market trader Bill, said: "It was just sheer determination, a lot of water and a lot of chocolate."

"It was pretty horrible. I was praying and hoping there was something happening above the water."

Describing the moment when he heard tapping on the outside of the hull, he said: "It was absolutely astonishing, I felt like I had been brought back to life."

The brave sailor responded by swimming out to greet his rescuers.

Mr Bullimore's sister Diana Hutt, 59, of Blenheim Chase, Leigh, has been sitting by the phone praying

By LINDA CHRISTIE

for his safe return.

She said this morning: "I never gave up hope. My brother is like a cat, but he's got more than nine lives."

At 1am this morning came the news 'he's alive'.

Mrs Hutt said: "When I see him the first thing I want to say is don't you ever, ever do it to me again."

"This is about the fourth time he's been in trouble. One time he hit a whale and smashed the boat up."

"Another time he got stuck under the boat, died and had to be given 100 per cent oxygen."

"And on one occasion the boat caught fire and he was badly burned. I would like to say the latest accident has frightened him, but I know Tony - my husband calls him a British Bulldog."

She added: "We are all very, very proud of him even though he has put us all through hell."

Mr Bullimore has been Yachtsman of the Year and broken several records. He was taking part in what is recognised as the hardest of the races, a single-handed round-the-world trek called the Vendee Globe Challenge, when the accident happened.

He capsized along with French competitor Thierry Dubois who has also been rescued.

Mrs Hutt is now planning a champagne celebration with husband Bob, daughter Michelle Francis and son Michael, while Stephen is expected to fly out to Australia.



Cheers - Diana Hutt celebrates today on hearing the fantastic news that brother Tony is still alive. Picture: NICK ANSELL

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**ALDERS**

OF BASILDON

How miracle sailor survived the cruel sea - page 10

# Evening Echo

The sea shall not have them

**T**HE miraculous survival of yachtsman Tony Bullimore is a tribute not only to his endurance and fortitude but to the dedication and expertise of his rescuers.

Mr Bullimore survived for five days in the upturned hull of his yacht - a credit to the boat's designers.

But without that spark of human determination which sets us apart from other animals Mr Bullimore would no longer be with us.

The whole episode throws into sharp focus the various rescue services we all take for granted.

Rescue at sea is something particularly close to the hearts of those of us in south-east Essex and the saving of Tony Bullimore brings our thoughts to our own rescuers, the dedicated RNLI and rescue boat crews who will be kept busy this summer.

We should be thankful for all our emergency services (including the fire brigade, but that's another story) but we should also remember that we can play our part in making their lives easier.

Tony Bullimore was an experienced yachtsman on a well-built boat. But the sea still beat him.

What chance will little Johnny Smith have this summer when he's swept into the Thames Estuary aboard his rubber ring?

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## CHAMPAGNE GOES ON ICE TO WELCOME HERO TONY ONTO DRY LAND

# Four days living in a capsized sea coffin

BRITISH round-the-world yachtsman and ex-Southend schoolboy Tony Bullimore survived in his upturned yacht in icy waters between Australia and Antarctica after spending four days sheltering in an air pocket amid formidable conditions.

The 56-year-old sailor swam out from underneath his craft after crewmen aboard a Zodiac inflatable vessel from the Australian navy frigate HMAS Adelaide banged on the hull.

Dave Gray, an official with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, said: "It's a euphoric situation. This has got to be one of the greatest all-time survival and rescue efforts ever. It's like an Houdini act."

"It was the greatest all time survival effort"

Tony Bullimore is an intrepid sailor whose love of adventure has taken him to the four corners of the globe.

The former Fairfax secondary school pupil from Rochford has broken the record in the Round Island Race, the Round Britain and Ireland Race and all eight legs in the 1985 Europe Race.

He has also crossed the Atlantic 27 times and sailed more than 250,000 miles. His love of the ocean was born from rambles along the beaches and quays of Southend.

Friends say he would often watch the day tripper passenger boats and fishing boats ply their trade.

Australian officials said the yachtsman's ordeal came to an end when HMAS Adelaide put down its rubber inflatable and knocked on the hull.

Mike Calway, a senior official at the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, said: "He heard the bangs on the hull, but at first shouted that he could not get out. They were about to cut a hole when he swam out."

**MONDAY:** A full-scale search was triggered after Tony Bullimore, 56, made a distress call from the Southern Ocean 900 miles off Antarctica. Rescue aircraft searching for Mr Bullimore and rival French yachtsman Thierry Dubois found their capsized boats but only one survivor: The former Southend man's

## Yachtsmen rescued off coast of Antarctica

Two sailors whose yachts capsized during the Vendee Globe round-the-world yacht race have been rescued - one after being battered in the hull of his boat by stormy Antarctic seas for four days. Tony Bullimore of England and Thierry Dubois of France had activated emergency satellite beacons to guide rescuers

**1. Thursday: HMAS Adelaide sends helicopter to pluck Dubois from life raft**

**2. Thursday: Rescuers reach Bullimore's boat**

**Wednesday: Explosive charges dropped into water alert Bullimore that rescue is continuing**

**Tuesday: signal from Bullimore's distress beacon changes, indicating he is alive**

**Sunday: yachts capsize**

**Amnesty International**  
Skipper: Thierry Dubois, age 29

**Exide Challenger**  
Skipper: Tony Bullimore, age 56

**Broken keel**

**Twin rudders**

**Water-tight bulkheads**

**Bullimore survives in air pocket**

**Length of boat: 18.28m**  
**Sea temp: 2°C**

**Sonar buoy picks up tapping from within boat**

Source: Associated Press © GRAPHIC NEWS

Adelaide which then went to rescue Mr Bullimore.

The two men had been competing in the Vendee Globe round-the-world race, one of the world's most dangerous sporting events, when disaster struck.

Earlier rescue officials feared for Mr Bullimore's safety because they believed the emergency beacon attached to him had become separated from the upturned hull of his yacht.

Australian air force planes found the upturned hull of his yacht about 1,400 miles south-west of Perth, Australia on Monday, but could not find any signs he was still alive.

Hopes that he could be inside the hull alive were raised on Tuesday when his beacon was switched from distress mode to alarm mode, an operation that can be done only manually.

Australian authorities are today trying to arrange a

"The sparks will be flying - it will be wonderful"

phone link with Mr Bullimore's jubilant wife Lalel, who is celebrating in Bristol with 20 other ecstatic family members.

She said: "We opened a bottle of champagne, we're dancing around the room shouting and screaming."

"Can you imagine, it's all electric isn't it? The sparks will be flying - it will be wonderful."

It is believed family members will fly to Australia to greet Mr Bullimore when he touches down on dry land later this week.

The Foreign Office praised the Australian rescue services.

A spokesman said: "We are in close contact with the Australian authorities, via the British Consul General, and we are most grateful to them for bringing about this rescue"

Mr Bullimore is being treated by a doctor on board the Adelaide for a series of medical problems.

They included hypothermia, a fractured tooth, abrasions to his

hands, frostbite on his forehead and finger tips and dehydration.

His yacht, the Global Exid Challenger, was one of two vessels which capsized in wild seas about 900 miles

from Antarctica and 1,400 miles from the Australian coast.

The skipper of the second yacht, Frenchman Thierry Dubois, 29, was winched to safety last night by the

Adelaide raced to his rescue.

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT:** Rescue officials said sophisticated microphones had picked up a tapping sound from his capsized yacht. They said the sounds from the upturned hull gave new hope Tony Bullimore was alive.

**TODAY:** Mr Bullimore

was rescued from his boat by HMAS Adelaide. Astonished crewmen were ecstatic to find the tough former Royal Marine had survived his terrifying five-day ordeal. The intrepid sailor's euphoric family celebrated with champagne after being told he was safe and well.

## Countdown to sailor's miraculous survival

chances of surviving looked bleak as the region was hit by storms, huge seas and sub-zero temperatures.

**TUESDAY:** Hopes for Mr Bullimore's safety were boosted when rescuers noticed a change in the signal from a manually-operated distress beacon believed to be aboard his

yacht. Hopes faded again when Australian rescue services said it would be two days before they knew if Mr Bullimore was alive.

**WEDNESDAY:** Fears for Mr Bullimore increased as authorities said they believed he was floating in the freezing ocean, away from his capsized yacht. Australian warship HMAS