

# BOY OVERBOARD!

July 29<sup>th</sup> 1988

By Sharon Hart

In a dramatic series of events last night, a young boy fell overboard from his family's boat into the stormy water of the Coral Sea (off the east coast of Australia).

Michael Finnegan (12 years old today) was enjoying a round-the-world trip with his family when it is believed he lost his footing and fell into the sea.

The Finnegan family set sail from Southampton on September 10<sup>th</sup> 1987 in their small boat, the Peggy Sue. Travelling with Michael were his mother (Sue) and his father (John), as well as the family pet dog, Stella.

So far on their journey, they have visited



Michael on board Peggy Sue

Spain, Cape Verde, Brazil, Cape Town, Perth and Sydney. John, whose idea it was to set off on the trip, said that the journey was the trip of a lifetime and that so far it had been an amazing adventure.

According to the Finnegans, the evening of the incident had been largely uneventful, although Mrs Finnegan had been taken ill with stomach cramps.

John and Sue went to bed at around 10pm on

the night of the incident, leaving Michael steering the boat on deck (the self-steering had broken). It is thought that Stella the dog had been wandering around and possibly playing with Michael's football, because when John awoke in the middle of the night, all three had disappeared.

Speaking to BBC news this morning, Sue said tearfully, "We are so worried about our boy. He's all alone and could be anywhere by now. We need to find him!"

The search for Michael is underway, with police and coastguards scouring the area in the hope of finding him safe and well.