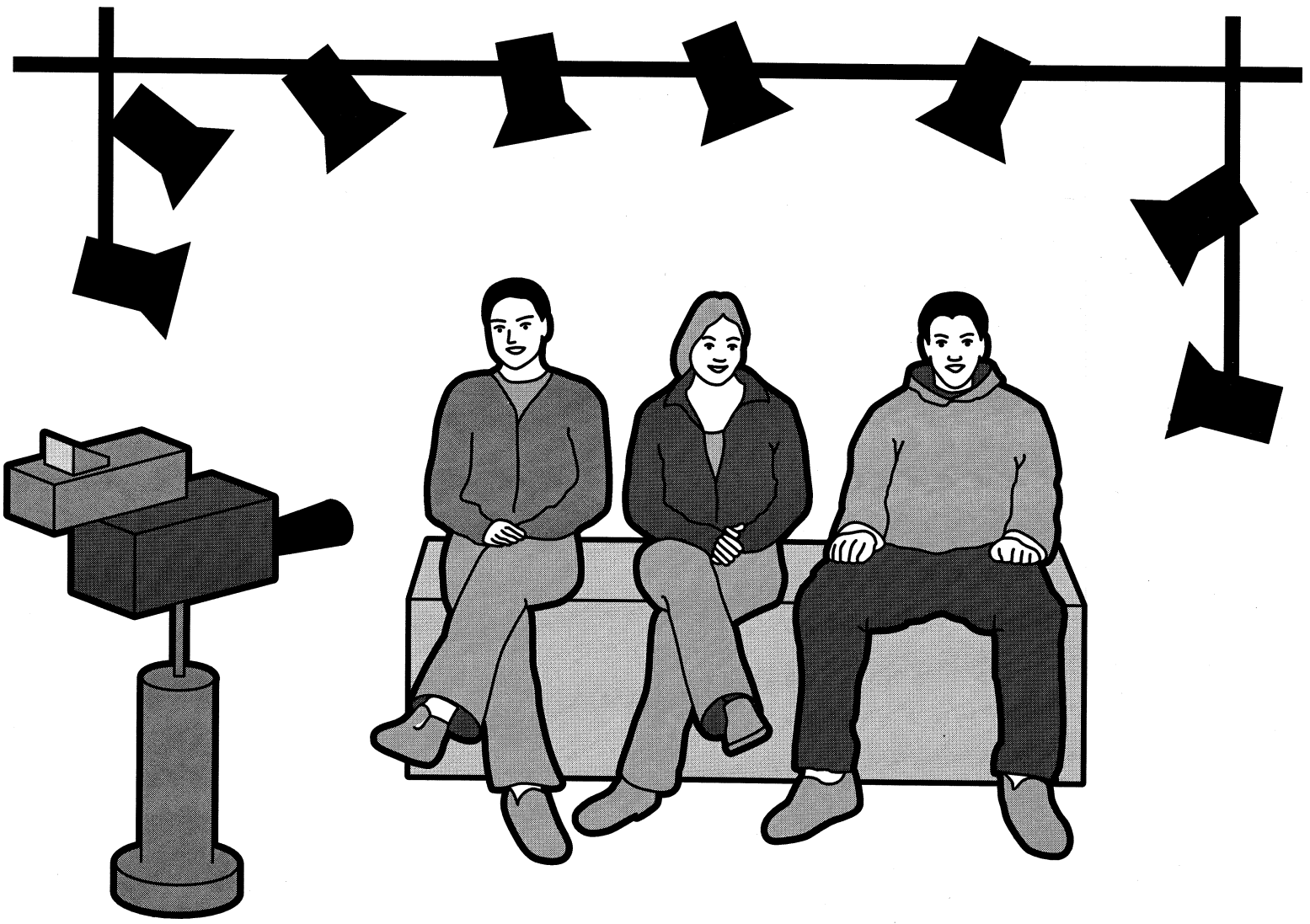
Key Stage 3 2006

ENGLISH

Modified large print
Levels 4-7

Reading booklet

In the spotlight



You have 15 minutes plus your additional reading time to read this booklet. During this time you should not open your answer booklet.

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Why do certain people become famous? There are some people who find themselves in the spotlight for what they have achieved. Others want to be the centre of attention, and so they deliberately look for fame.

But is the reality of being famous as attractive as it appears?

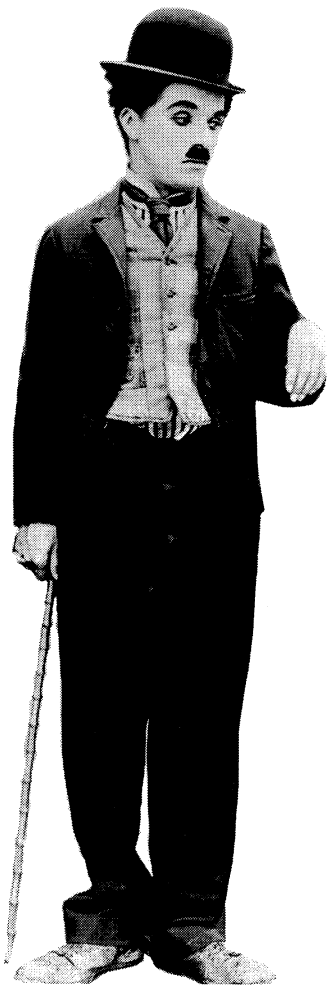
[Fame, stardom, celebrity status – what is the difference? This extract, from a book about fame in the 21st century, analyses how the idea of fame has changed in the last 200 years.]

What is fame?

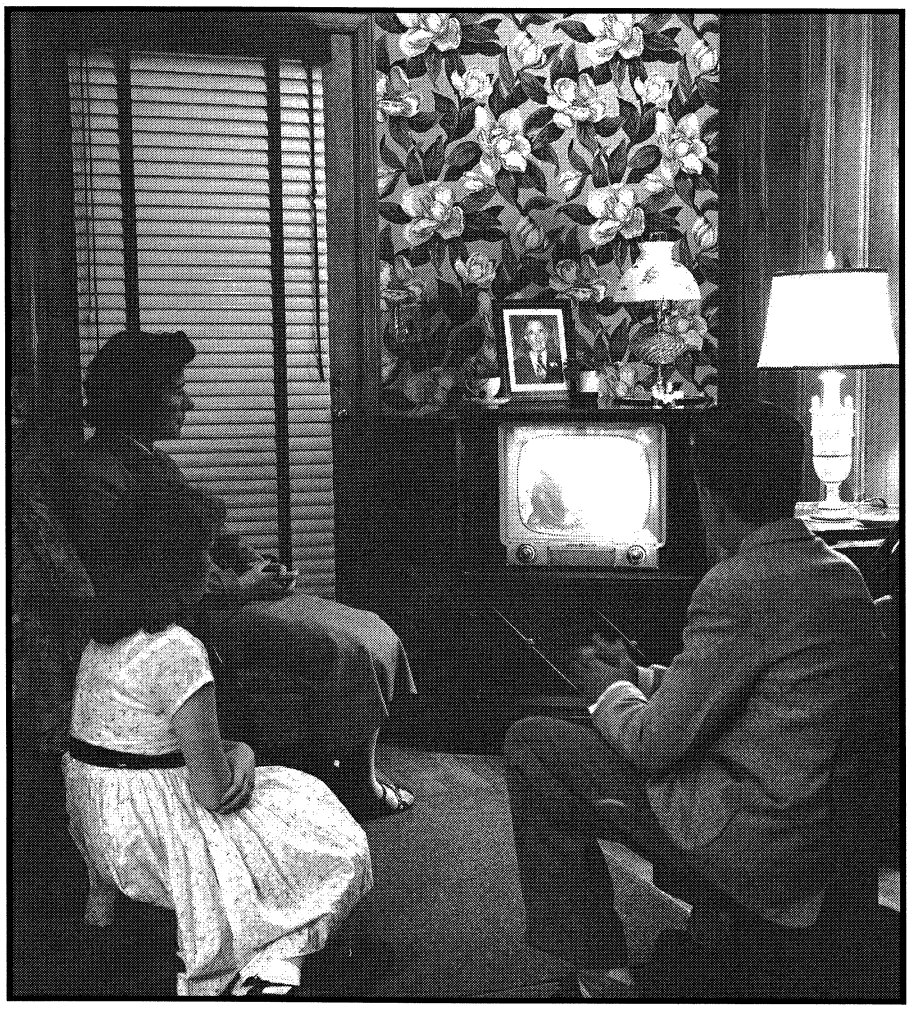
Fame – everyone seems to want it. Of course there are those who try to avoid being in the spotlight. But on the whole, people are keen to be the centre of media attention and are impressed by other people who are in the public eye. Celebrities and celebrity TV programmes, magazines and other products are now a multi-million pound business. So, how did we end up here? What is fame and why do people want it?

Famous people in the 19th century were those who gained recognition for what they achieved. These individuals included distinguished engineers such as Brunel, or writers such as Dickens. The public were interested in what they did but not necessarily in their personal lives.





Charlie Chaplin



In the 20th century public interest in the lives of the famous really took off. The popularity of radio alongside the emerging film industry gave rise to a new kind of fame – 'stardom'. People could hear their favourite actors and actresses on the radio and see them in the cinema every week, and so they became familiar voices and faces. Actors like Charlie Chaplin first became well known for appearing in films but then, as their popularity grew, they became 'stars'. In other words, they became almost as famous for being who they were as for doing what they did. The number of people achieving fame increased with the invention of television because the faces of actors were thrust directly into the family home. As a result, stars of the small screen were created too.

Today, in the 21st century, fame has expanded beyond stardom to include the 'celebrity'. Celebrities are famous for . . . being famous. They may have done something initially to get themselves into the public eye, such as appearing on a TV show or marrying a football player, but they are not necessarily talented. Celebrities attract attention because of their glamorous lifestyle; the public are fascinated by what they have and how they live.

The growing number of TV channels, the internet and numerous magazines and newspapers not only promote celebrity culture but also depend on it. There are not enough famous people to go round so the same celebrities appear over and over and over again – making them more well known. Celebrity status is something our society aspires to – and nowadays everyone has the opportunity to achieve it. With so-called reality television programmes, ordinary people have instant fame within their grasp, simply by being themselves.

So, has this obsession with fame gone too far? Certainly we seem to be addicted to celebrity culture: people are practically trampled underfoot in the stampede to be in the spotlight and zillions have flocked to join endless queues to take part in shows like 'Big Brother' – just to appear on TV. Perhaps it has reached the point where fame for doing something worthwhile is less significant than it used to be, because you can be more famous for simply putting yourself in front of a camera.

[Above and below the original extract are strips of pictures from films, including one from a 'Bollywood' movie.]



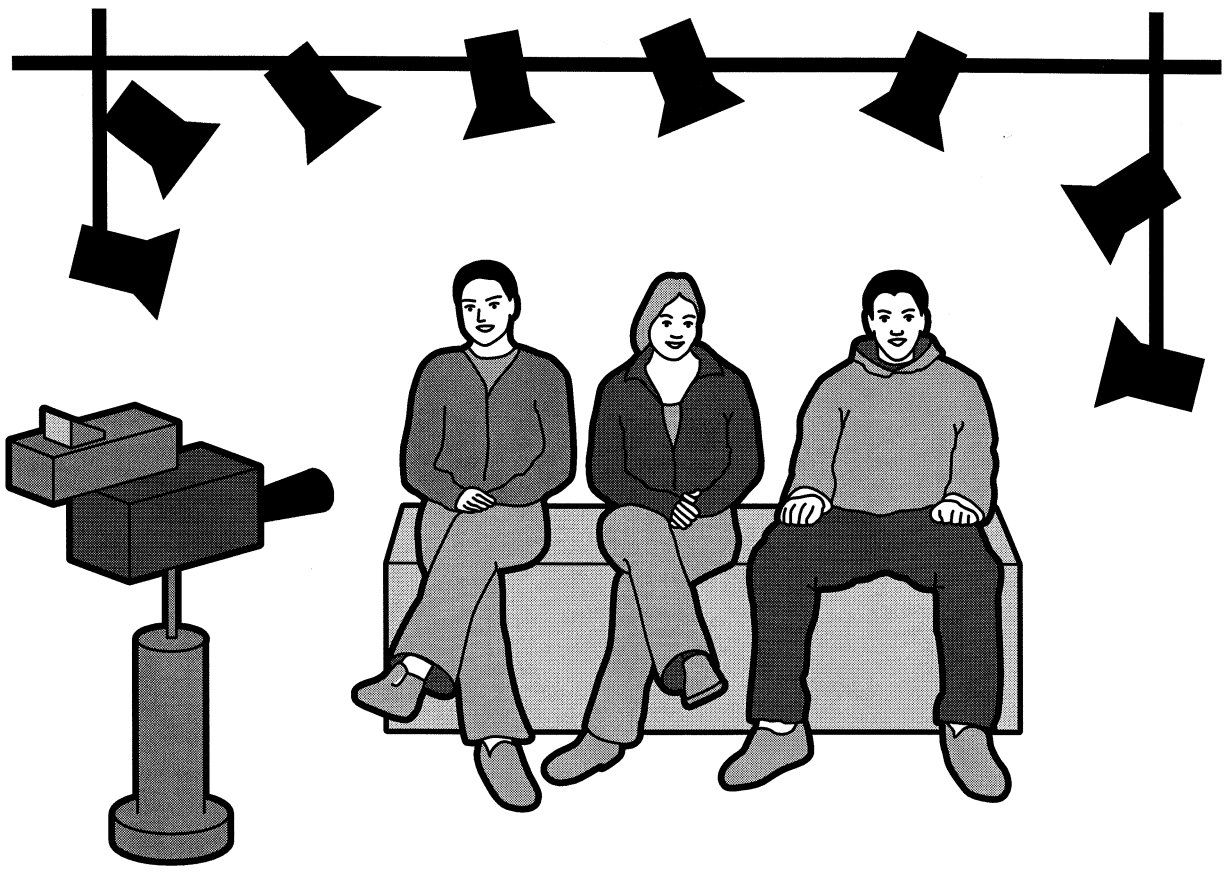
[Fame does not always happen overnight; it is usually the result of talent and hard work. This article from 'The Observer' newspaper describes the Brit School, a unique school for the performing arts.]

Welcome to the Brit School

by David Smith

At first glance, the neighbourhood appears to be a gloomy jungle of grey tower blocks. And from the outside, the school blends into its dull surroundings. Inside, however, there is a sense of youthful energy and the buzz of non-stop activity. Welcome to the Brit School – fast becoming the heart of Britain's music industry.





Teenagers are acting and dancing in a state-of-the-art theatre, experimenting in film and video, broadcasting from their own radio station or making music in a digital studio. One group of 16-year-olds is interrogating members of a successful pop group about how to make it in one of the world's most unpredictable professions.

The Brit School for Performing Arts and Technology is jointly funded by the Government and the British Record Industry Trust, and students pay no fees. It has grown as a centre of excellence, open to those from all backgrounds. Ella-Louise Brown, a student at the school, says: 'I want to improve my singing and songwriting. I didn't come here because I want to be famous; that's not what it's about. There is a very special mood here. At breaktimes people are in the corridors playing guitar and singing together.'

The school's aim is to allow students to build upon their individual talents. Nick Williams, the Headteacher, says: 'Pupils are encouraged to explore different musical styles. In Britain, the public has become unadventurous about music. Record producers are cautious about what will sell and what won't. The music world is becoming just a record factory: we're more than that. We choose students who care about their academic future – we want them to excel on all fronts.'

Each year the school takes in around 450 young people aged 14 to 16. Students study a full range of subjects along with performing arts courses. They are encouraged to gain experience in the industry through workshops, work placements and auditions. They are also taught about the practical side of the music business and are prepared for employment.

A casual visitor is struck by the students' attitude towards their work; they are dedicated to music and focused on developing their careers. Tony Castro, the director of music, says: 'All the students are here because they want to be. We are not about producing cloned singers or overnight celebrities. We want all our students to find the thing that makes them different. We inspire them, give them a hard time and don't settle for anything less than excellence.'



Please turn page

Castro adds: 'Students have got to be multi-talented if they're going to have anything more than a five-minute career. We want to find kids with talent wherever they are and the variety here is staggering. It's culturally, socially and emotionally diverse. There isn't a "Brit School type", and that is the key.'

[In the original extract there is a further picture of a female performer who is accompanied by a male guitarist.]

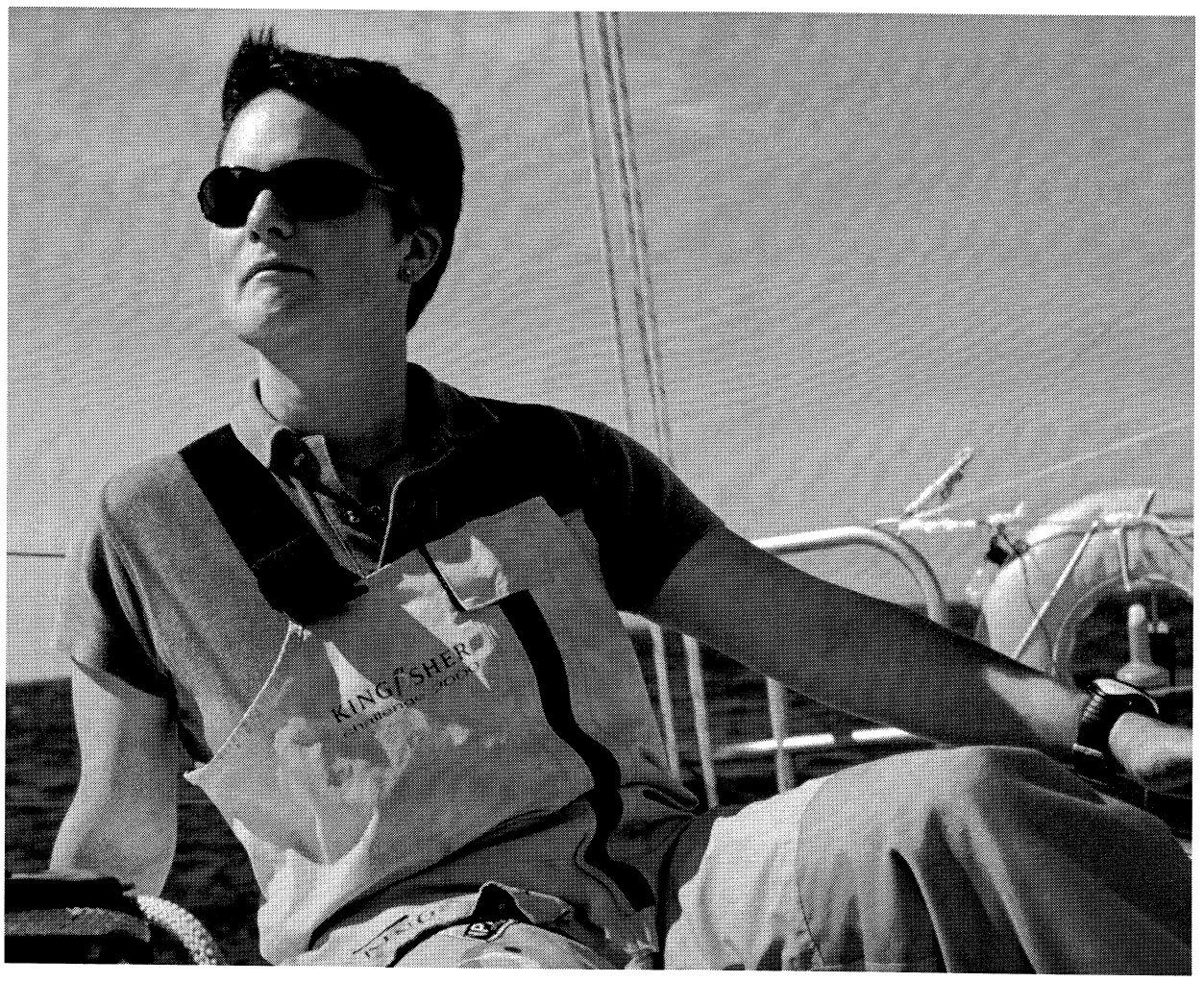


[This text is from the autobiography of Ellen MacArthur. From December 2000 to February 2001 she was alone at sea, sailing her boat, 'Kingfisher', in a race around the world. Ellen achieved second place and was the youngest person ever to complete the course. Here she describes what happened at the finish line in France.]

The whole world must be watching

All I could see through the denseness of the fog were a few square metres of dull grey water. I looked at the chart to check 'Kingfisher's' distance from the coastline; we were heading right for the shore. As the seconds passed, the fog began to lift and I could distinctly see lights for the first time. Then there were thousands of lights around me – I suddenly felt as though I had dropped into a Hollywood film set. Boats of all sizes were heading towards me, and there were helicopters above, their searchlights sweeping over me as if looking for an escaped prisoner. My little world had evaporated. I took a few deep and calming breaths to take in the situation. It was incredible.

Ellen MacArthur



The water shifted as the boats moved towards us, a choppy, fidgety motion which I hadn't felt in ages. I could hear voices on the radio, some in English, some in French, some of strangers, some of people I knew. My parents were near, I could sense it, but I was blinded by the blazing searchlights. All I could see were the silhouettes of people waving and cameras flashing.

Things began to happen more quickly. For a brief moment there was complete silence – we were nearly there. Then there was a deafening crack … the gun had fired: we had crossed the finish line. Adrenalin surged through me. The boat with my support team pulled alongside us, its passengers jumping aboard like a raiding party. Voices screamed, and I felt arms wrap themselves around me – my first human contact for over three months. Strangely, there were no tears, just the most incredible feeling of relief.

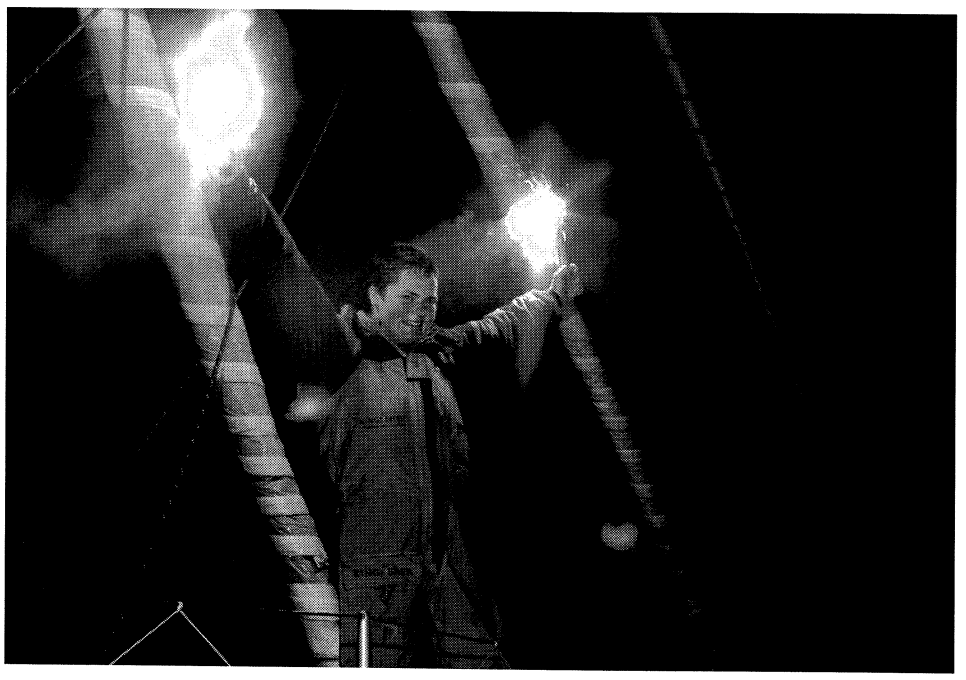
As we approached the entrance to the harbour channel, more and more boats closed in. You could have walked from one side of the harbour to the other across the boats. It was chaos; the mood was hysterical.

People were cheering, waving and calling my name. I could see whole families sitting on the harbour walls or standing along the water's edge and, in the distance, thousands of people hanging over their balconies. I'd never seen so many people smiling at one time. I could only smile back, from ear to ear; I tried to smile for every single face in the crowd. I wanted to jump high in the air to say thank you but the contrast between being completely alone and being suddenly surrounded by thousands of people was almost too much to bear.

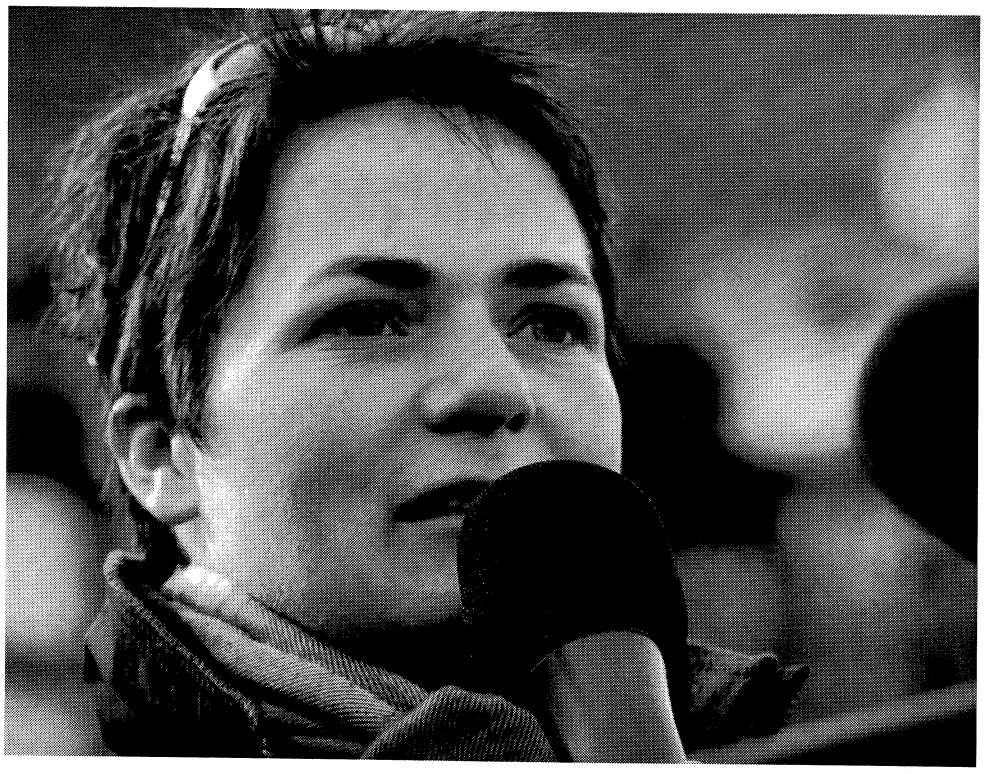
As 'Kingfisher' finally approached the dock, I felt like a child awaiting an exam. All I could see in front of me were the hundreds of journalists, their lenses and microphones pointing directly at me. When we touched dock moments later, I felt that I was standing completely alone. How could it be me who was talking to these people? Questions were asked and I remember saying that it all felt 'too much'. I was passed an enormous bottle of champagne and

stood there with my knees shaking. The whole world must be watching . . . I shook the bottle and the cork exploded out above the heads of the crowd. As champagne sprayed into the air, it sank in: 'Kingfisher' and I had done it. We'd finished second in one of the most demanding sailing races in the world.

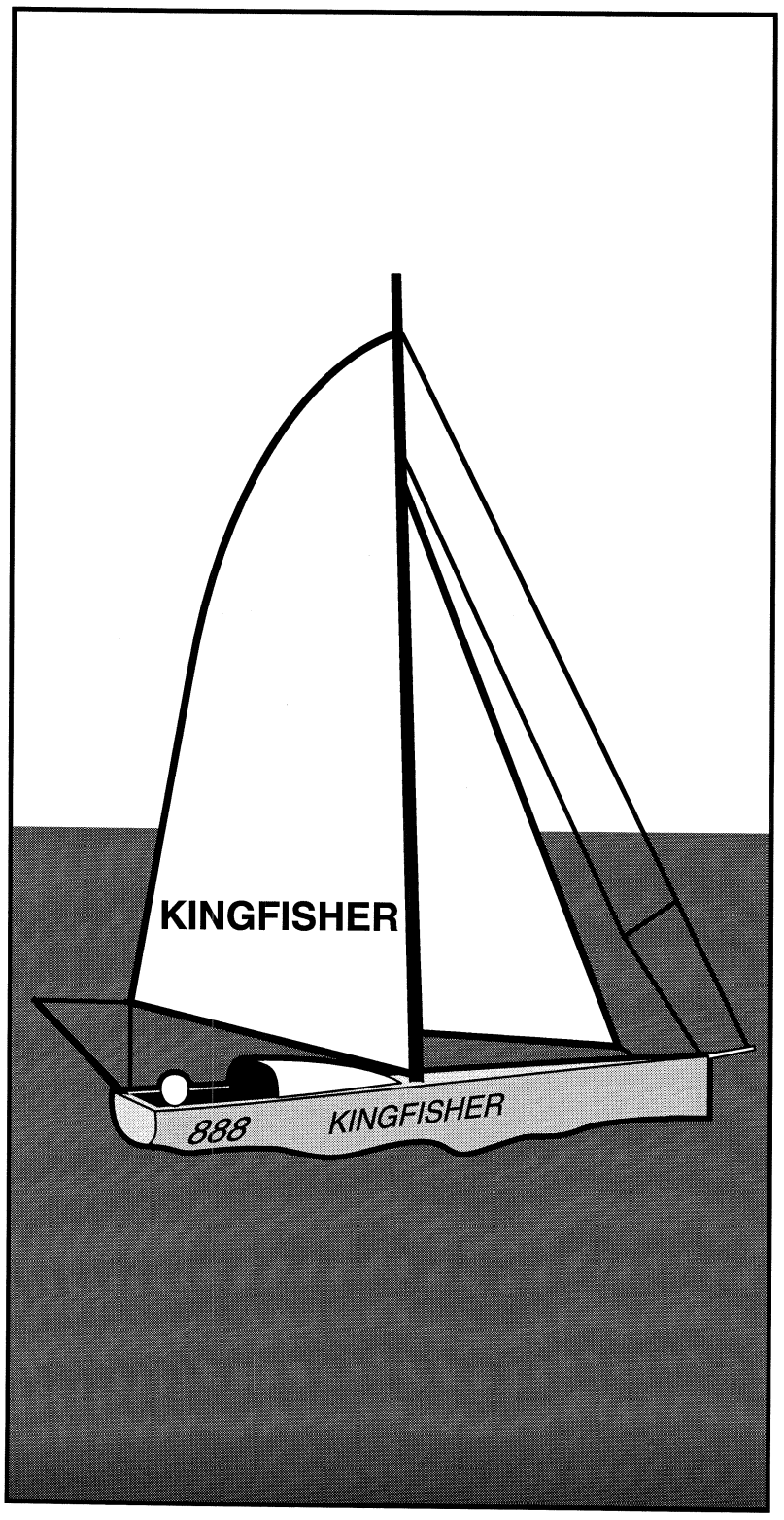
Now it was time to leave 'Kingfisher'. I felt a knot in my stomach; I wanted to turn back time and be out at sea again. Until this moment the finish had felt like a dream, the thousands of people, the noise from the crowds, and the bright lights continuously shining. But now I had to accept that the race was over.



Ellen smiling at the crowds



Ellen speaking to the journalists



'Kingfisher' during the race

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Key Stage 3 2006

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