

Red Velvet's August Circumnavigation

Paul Butler

Having spent August of last year and Whit this year in France we felt that we had been sufficiently warmed-up for another circumnavigation of our own country. For the entire cruise I was joined by wife, Nóirín, daughter, Clíodhna and Aine Desiun. Julian Halpin joined us as far as Bantry. Eamonn O'Scolláin spent a week with us in Kerry and Don McCarthy (Cork) and Audrey Murphy (Sherkin Island) travelled from Glandore to Dun Laoghaire.

On Thursday, 1st. August we left Dun Laoghaire at 19.30 under full sail in a Southwesterly force 4. By 06.00 the wind had dropped obliging us to furl the genoa and put on the engine and, thus, we passed South Rock LV at 0645 and altered course for Mew Island. The remainder of the passage to very pretty harbour of Carnlough was uneventful with some sailing and we tied up alongside at 16.30.

The north pier at Carnlough was not available to go alongside as two fishing vessels were moored fore and aft just off it. We tied up third in a trot immediately facing the entrance. We touched the ground here at LW (springs) and the German yacht inside us (drawing 6') was unable to leave until 2 hours after LW.

Our leisurely departure at 12.30 on the 3rd. was dictated by the tide which was to carry us to Portrush. Wind was light SW and we were able to sail for all but one hour during our 38 mile passage to Portrush. We tied up alongside the Harbour Master's pontoon at 18.00. As we had pints on the balcony of the Yacht Club, we were entertained by a seemingly endless parade of bands engaged in a competition. At 03.00 Clíodhna showed her seventeen years' experience when she ejected three inebriated and heavily tattooed boarders without disturbing her parents.

Sunday the 4th. was our first rest day which we spend around the town (most shops were open) and filling up with diesel at 13.5p per litre (the cheapest anywhere that I know of).

Because the weather in the North was becoming very autumnal we decided to forego the pleasures of Inishtrahull, Lough Swilly and Tory Island and to press on making the 74 mile passage to Arranmore. On Monday the 5th., Nóirín having made porridge, we departed at 05.30 in a SW 4 under full sail and, as we passed inside Inishtrahull, the wind backed SE and allowed us to continue sailing as far as Bloody Foreland where variable and decreasing wind dictated that we put on the engine and motor for the balance of the passage. In clear weather the scenery on this coastline is a spectacular sight. We dropped our anchor just South of

Calf Island at 18.30. The heavens opened and we finally did not get ashore until 20.30 – too late for dinner! We consoled ourselves in a pub where we were allowed to eat fish and chips bought by the teenagers in a take-away.

On Tuesday the 6th. the sun shone and the crew demanded a rest day on Arranmore.

On the 7th. we had a forecast for SW 3/4, backing S 4/5 and increasing 6 or 7, occasionally 8 overnight. Teelin Harbour seemed the obvious destination and we left Arranmore at 13.30 in a SSW 5 and managed to sail for about 2/5ths. of the 33 mile passage to Teelin Harbour where we arrived at 19.00. We dropped anchor but, because of the promised strong to gale force southerly winds, arranged to tie up against a fishing vessel when it came in about an hour later. We were shortly joined alongside by Ken and Mary Atkinson in the yacht *Dagmara 2* from Bangor who kindly invited us aboard for drinks. They were completing a clockwise circumnavigation having attended the *I.C.C.* rally in the south west. By their account it was a marvellous affair of which I shall undoubtedly learn more from this year's Annual. Sadly, it coincided with one of my (brief) summer periods of work!

On the morning of Thursday the 8th. the forecast was S/SE 6 or 7, veering S/SW 5/6 by early afternoon – perfect for a 33 mile passage to Rosses Point in the afternoon. We left at 14.30 and had a most exhilarating sail in full sun to Rosses Point watching clouds clear their loads on land. Anchoring is difficult because of the number of moorings and strong currents at Rosses point. I also find picking up a mooring unsatisfactory as the current is very limiting on trips ashore, particularly when people want to come and go at different times and guests are expected. So it was that



Lunch – Inishturk.

PHOTO: Noreen Butler.



Castletownshend.

we tied up alongside a fishing vessel at 18.30. Excellent showers in Sligo Yacht Club were followed by dinner in the *Moorings* Restaurant with local friends, Jimmy and Mary Devins and John and Shiela Gannon. This, I have to say, proved to be our first decent meal ashore in a week and we determined to continue to remedy the situation as we headed for the culinary delights of the South West.

On Friday morning Shiela Gannon collected Nóirín to bring her for a session in the steam room and seaweed bath at Eniscrone, followed by lunch and shopping for ships stores (wine was running dangerously low) – what a luxury to have land based friends while cruising! I remained aboard to let the fishing vessel out after which I was brought shopping and to lunch by Mary. The fishing vessel returned in the late afternoon and, having tied up outside again, we were presented with a bucket full of freshly caught crab claws by her generous skipper/owner.

Despite the fact that it was by now blowing force 7, the Devins and the Shiela Gannon were keen to sail with us and we spent two hours sailing in Sligo Bay under genoa only during which we ate the crab. Another excellent dinner, this time in *Austie's Seafood Bar and Restaurant*, followed.

Saturday the 10th. was a sunny day with the wind blowing steadily from the SE. We departed at 10.00 and soon had the spinnaker up and were able to hold it for the 53 miles to Broadhaven, gybing inside the Stags, and carrying it right into Ballyglass where we tied to a fishing vessel at 19.00. Here we were greeted by Whit cruising companion, John Finlay, who was (or had been?) enjoying a family holiday in Mayo. John drove all to Belmullet Golf Club which provided a good dinner and power showers in beautiful surroundings.

On Sunday morning we were joined by John with two of his offspring, Emma and Adam, and set sail in a NW 4. After rounding Erris Head, we sailed inside Eagle Island and other off lying rocks and dropped our anchor at Inishkea South, an island which is no longer inhabited, at 14.00. The brave swam and we had luncheon on board. This was followed by an exploration of the island. We left at 17.00 and had an uneventful passage in light airs to Blacksod Bay, accompanied by the singing of five young people with guitar, where we anchored NW of Blacksod Quay at 18.50. John and children were collected by John's parents and Nóirín and I made an unsuccessful attempt to find a restaurant ashore.

We left Blacksod on Monday the 12th. at 08.00. There was

virtually no wind and we spent five hours motoring amidst some of the most beautiful scenery in Ireland and dropped our anchor at Inishturk at 13.00. Nóirín having made inquiries ashore while the young people swam, we were soon joined alongside by a fisherman in a currach from whom we purchased lobsters (just £4.50 a pound). Although invited aboard, the fisherman insisted on sharing a few drinks and conversation while remaining in his currach. The lobsters were cooked, presented and eaten within the hour! To my subsequent regret, I decided to spend a quiet evening reading on board. The others, on our new friends recommendation, dined ashore in a private guest house run by his wife, Mrs. Concannon. Their accounts of a fish banquet with floury potatoes did nothing for my spirits which were only revived

PHOTO: Paul Butler.

during a full scale rave up on board!

As we left at 08.10 on Tuesday the 13th. there was little or no wind and we motored around the east of Inishbofin where we sighted three groups (collective nouns please!!!) of sharks. By the time we approached Slyne Head we were sailing again and I was catching mackerel. Roundstone had been our intended anchorage but, as we had arranged to collect Eamonn in Fenit the following afternoon, I thought Inishmore would be a better stop as it would considerably shorten the passage. We anchored near the lifeboat in Kilronan at 17.20.

Kilronan is now completely overrun by tourists and day trippers and is a port I have come to try to avoid. It is now even less hospitable to sailors as showers are no longer available to non-residents at the Hostel and nobody provides this facility.

Again, there was no wind as we left Kilronan at 07.15 on Wednesday the 14th., a glorious sunny day, and it was not until we had almost reached Loop Head that we were able to sail in a SW 3/4. In all we made good time and entered Fenit Harbour at 16.30. As it was close to high water we were able to tie up alongside the pontoon provided by Tralee Sailing Club which is located in the harbour. Eamonn greeted us and we had showers in what must be the best scenically located clubhouse in the country. After tying up to a fishing vessel, we had pints in the Club and took a taxi to the *Oyster* for dinner.

We left on the 15th. at 09.00 and it was not until 11.00 that the



Lobster supplier – Inishturk.

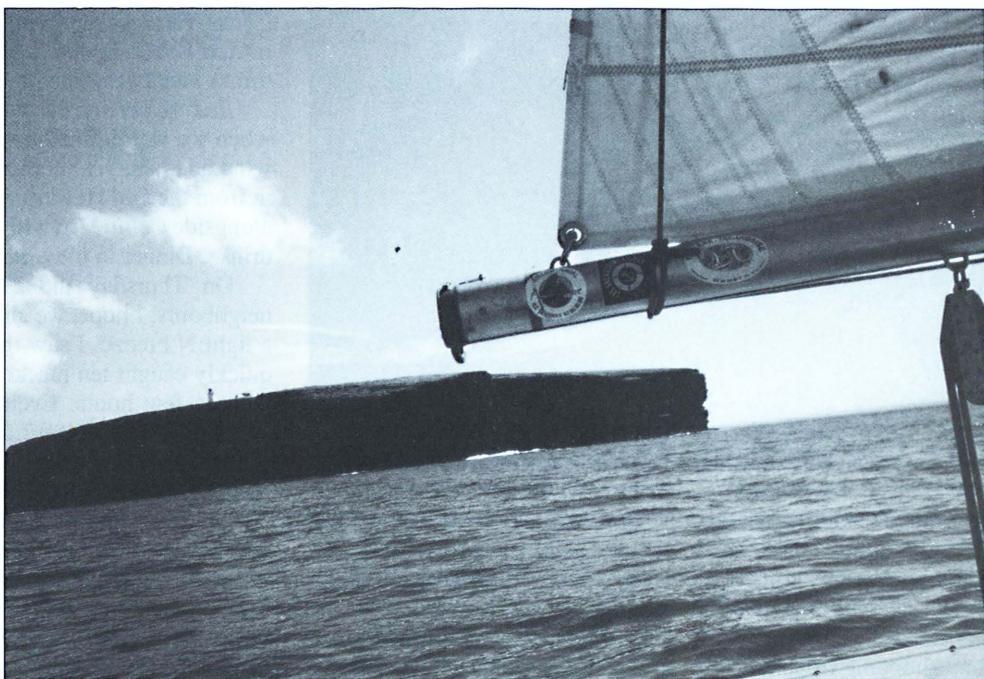
PHOTO: Paul Butler.

wind come up sufficiently from the SW to allow us to sail. We were through the Blasket Sound by 14.30 and were greeted by Tadgh and Elish O'Donoghue as we entered Knightstown Harbour at 16.30. Tadgh provided us with a mooring. Showers and Chablis in the O'Donoghues' was followed by a superb dinner in the Gallery Kitchen with friends, O'Donoghues and O'Rourke.

After breakfast ashore on Friday the 16th. The O'Donoghues and Mary O'Rourke joined us for a sail to Cahersiveen. Fortunately we entered Caher river on a rising tide shortly after LW as I managed to hit the bar and we were stuck for about half an hour. We tied up at the pier at Cahersiveen in time for pints, lunch and shopping. Later we returned to Knightstown (locally known as "the Foot") without difficulty and were entertained until the not-so-small hours of the morning at a barbecue given by Tadgh and Elish.

We spent most of Saturday in the O'Donoghues' motor cruiser and even I was induced to swim. That evening we were driven to Portmagee for dinner.

Late in the afternoon of Sunday the 18th. Tadgh joined us for the short passage over to Dingle where we were greeted on the



Loop Head.

PHOTO: Paul Butler.

marina by Elish who had travelled by car. We had an excellent dinner in the *Beginish* Restaurant.

After shopping, pints in *Flahive's* and lunch, the O'Donoghue's joined us for a visit to Inishvickillan. As we dropped our anchor (with 45 metres of chain) there at 17.00 we were greeted by the owner as he dived off after a swim and invited up to the house. Chat, Pouilly Fume and pints detained us there and it was not until 20.50, as darkness quickly set in, that we weighed anchor. We had a most exhilarating sail back to Dingle in a NW 5/6 and tied up at the marina shortly after midnight. We then had our first dinner on board in about ten days.

On Tuesday the 20th. we left Dingle at 17.00. Tadgh had made an arrangement with the bridge operator at Portmagee to expect us at about 19.30. We were able to beat on a fetch right down Portmagee Sound and, without stopping, continue through the bridge just after it had opened for us. At Portmagee we tied up alongside the *I.C.C.* yacht *Sea Drifter* at 19.45. Four fishing vessels were on their way in but Tadgh, who must know everyone in the area, made arrangements by radio that *Sea Drifter* and ourselves were not to be disturbed. Far from being disturbed, we were duly presented with a tray full of monkfish and sole! Who says that yachties are not well treated by their professional seafaring brethren?! Having bought pints for the bridge operator, we had another memorable dinner ashore followed by fond farewells to Tadgh and Elish with whom we had shared the past five days.

We slipped our moorings on Wednesday the 21st. at 08.30 and set sail for Bantry in a SE 4. After going through Dursey Sound the wind was completely on the nose and we motored the rest of the way to Bantry where we picked up a visitors' mooring at 17.15.

On the 22nd. Julian and Eamonn, having left for Dublin, we motor sailed in a fresh west wind up to Bearhaven where we dropped our anchor at 17.15. As we heard on radio traffic that an arrested Japanese fishing vessel was due in, we spent a leisurely three hours drinking kirs in the cockpit in the evening sun. Our wait was rewarded by the slow arrival of the very large vessel under the command of personnel from our Naval Service. Over pints ashore we were regaled with a blow-by-blow account of the entire operation. We quite forgot to have dinner!

At 10.00 on the 23rd. we left Bearhaven in a moderate SW but encountered a very confused sea just SW of Bear Island. By 12.00 we were having an exhilarating sail in a freshening breeze in



Shadows - Gascanane Sound.

PHOTO: Paul Butler.



With Friends – Knightstown.

PHOTO: Clíodhna Butler.

glorious sunshine and it was thus that we entered Schull, via Long Island Sound, at 15.00. After late lunch aboard, a rest and showers, we had pints in *Kitty Newman's* and caught up with all the local gossip. Dinner in *La Coquille* did not disappoint.

Saturday morning was spent having a late breakfast in *Annie's* and shopping in Schull. We left at 15.00 for the short passage to Sherkin Island and had a great sail under genoa only. At 16.30 we tied up at the marina on Sherkin Island. The marina, which was formerly located at Baltimore, consists of an old barge made watertight and supporting a wooden frame with a few pontoons off. It has both power and water and is located just under the castle ruins north of the ferry boat harbour. Close by is the newly opened *Murphy's Hotel, Bar and Restaurant*. Unfortunately, the restaurant, which we hear is excellent, was fully booked, but we ate very well in the Bar (bacon and goats cheese salad followed by steamed mussels). After dinner we were collected by friend, Matt Murphy, Director of *Sherkin Island Marine Station*. Matt drove us to his home where he provided tea and scones baked for the occasion. Here we met Matt's daughter, Audrey and made an arrangement that she would join us at Glandore.

On Sunday the 25th. we left Sherkin at 13.00 and had a glorious sail, mostly under main and spinnaker, to Castletownsend where we dropped our anchor at 14.30. Because of its proximity to Glandore, I had not been to Castletownsend before – a grave omission! After a stroll around the town, we had a great dinner in *Mary Ann's*.

On Monday morning, we took the punt right up to the head of the navigation and had a lovely walk in the woods operated by *Coillte*. We weighed anchor at 15.30 and motored the short distance around Glandore where we anchored an hour later. Having booked the *Rectory Restaurant* for the following evening, we had an indifferent meal in a pub.

On Tuesday the 27th. Nóirín and I travelled across to Union Hall by punt and had juicy crab and salad sandwiches *Casey's Bar*. In the afternoon we were joined by Don. The *Rectory* is, in my humble (though not inexperienced) opinion simply the best restaurant in Ireland. The surroundings and food are complimented excellently by the friendliness and informality of the of the highly professional staff. Following dinner we went to the Snug in the *Marine Hotel* for

drinks. Here we met Ben Clegg and crew of the British sister ship of *Red Velvet*, *Boomerang*. They joined us aboard for yet further drinks and a very late night.

Red Velvet's crew was completed on Wednesday morning when we were joined by Audrey. We left at 14.00 in a light NE wind and had, yet another, glorious sail to Kinsale motoring just in from the Old Head as the wind headed us. At 18.30 we tied up alongside *Celtic Mist* with whose owner and crew we shared a few drinks. Dinner in the *Blue Haven* followed.

On Thursday the 29th at 06.30, without disturbing our neighbours, I hope, we slipped our lines and were soon sailing in a light N breeze. I saw the gulls diving off Hangman point and quickly caught ten mackerel. We hoisted the spinnaker and held it for a few hours. Eventually, the wind got too light and we motored for some four hours. As we approached Dunmore East, the wind freshened sufficiently to allow us to sail in and we tied up in the harbour at 18.30.

On Friday morning, the 30th. we left Dunmore East at 08.00. There was little or no wind and we motored to Kilmore Quay. The sailing directions were not of great use as the Castle, which was to be taken in line with the head of the Quay, is now obscured by buildings at the crucial point. However, approaching the head of the South pier on a bearing of true N clears all obstacles. Although they were still dredging the rubble which was used to seal the entrance to the new harbour while under construction, entry two hours above LW is easy and the new marina has been completed and is fully in operation with all services. Showers are available in the nearby *Stella Maris Hall*. We were greeted by the Harbour Master, Captain Aidan Kehoe, who made us feel most welcome and shared coffee and doughnuts with us aboard. On his recommendation we booked dinner in *Kehoe's* (no relation) Bar, Restaurant and Museum for 18.00. Dinner proved to be superb and very reasonable. At 19.20 we left and were soon crossing St Patrick's Bridge on our homeward passage. There was little wind at first and when we rounded Carnsore Point it headed us and we motored overnight all the way home.

On Saturday the 31st. we tied up alongside the Royal Irish Yacht Club pontoon, a month and 952 miles after leaving. We were soon joined by friends making a complement of 12 in all for a long breakfast in the Club. As I write (11th. September), I have still not come to grips with returning to real life and look forward to my annual weekend cruise to Port St. Mary and Douglas shortly!

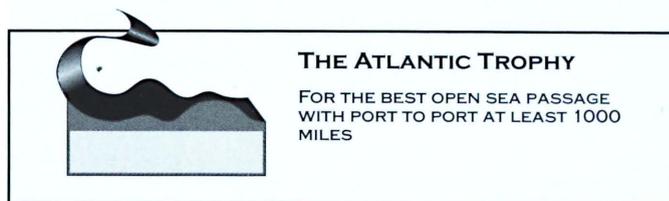


Noreen and Clíodhna – off Bere Island.

PHOTO: Paul Butler.

Atlantic Adventure – Part One

Cormac P McHenry



I had only been sailing for a few years when I read of Admiral Lord Nelson hiding his whole fleet in what has since been named English Harbour, in Antigua. It intrigued me and I thought I would like to sail in there myself. Then, it must have been fifteen or so years ago, I started a file which I grandly called the 'North Atlantic Circuit', with the dream that I might sail it some day. Over the years I accumulated quite a collection of references, advice from those who had done it, details of harbours, radio frequencies, cooking gas supplies and so on, until about five years ago I started talking about it. My wife, Barbara, said she would prefer if I did it in a bigger boat than our 27' *Ring of Kerry*, so the *Kerry* went and was replaced by the Nicholson 31, *Erquy*, (named after a small Breton fishing port where we spent a holiday).

Because of the wind pattern in the north Atlantic, with the hurricane season in the Caribbean from July to October, and gales prevalent in our latitudes from October to April, I eventually decided that if I took my boat down to the Canaries in the summer and left it there until Christmas, then I could sail across in January, cruise the Caribbean for a couple of months, leave in early May to come back via the Azores to be in Ireland again by the end of June. Six months' leave of absence would do the trick, so after prolonged negotiation that was finally agreed. Barbara has warned me that she may be quite a different person at the end of the six months, having had to fend for herself without the support of the man of the house for that time, but she will come out to join me for a few weeks about half way through when I would hope to persuade her that I should be let back in when I do get home!

The price I paid for taking the boat to the Canaries in August during my annual leave was not having enough holiday left to participate in the whole Cruise in Company. Having spent a lot of time (Barbara says all my time) over last winter and right through from launch time in April until early July working on the boat, I was finally satisfied that *Erquy* was prepared for the trip. With Stan Conroy and another friend from the National Yacht Club, Chris Batt, we sailed down to Baltimore so that we could join in the Cruise in Company at the CCA Reception there.

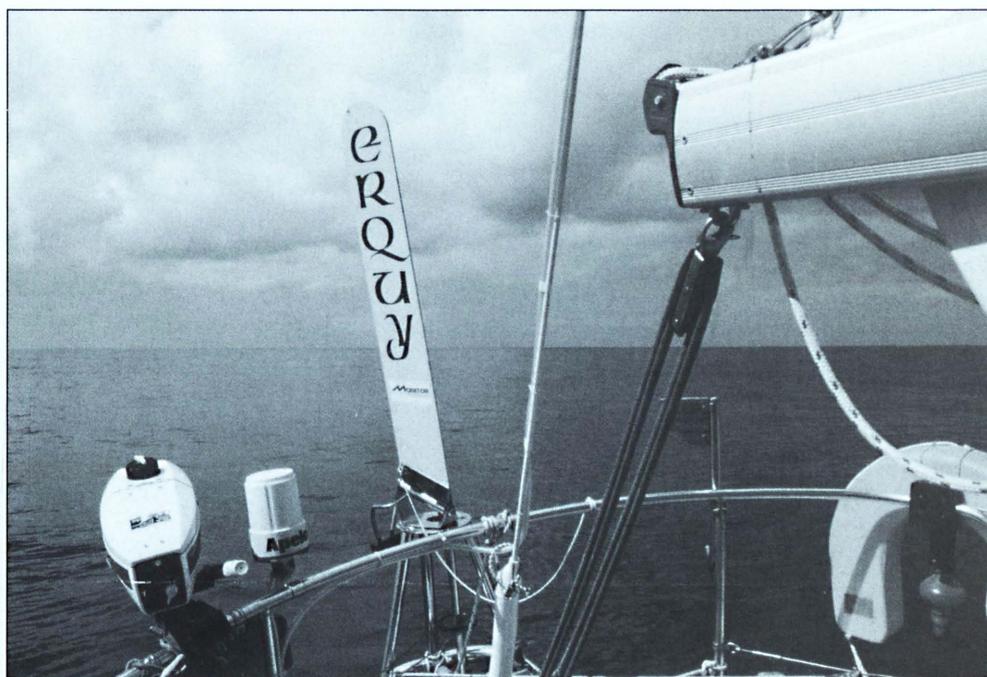
As always, the delivery trip was useful because it reminded me to check that I had charts etc. on board. We sailed from the Old Head of Kinsale into Baltimore without a chart, because it was under the bed at home, and just to keep us on our toes the engine died shortly after Galley Head and we beat the rest of the way in a light SW, in fog, visibility down at times to 200m. At

least with the GPS and positions from the Almanac for the Kowloon Bridge Buoy and Baltimore Light House, with vague memories of the Stags and Kedge Island I was not too unhappy but Stan said he would be reporting me to the ICC for sailing without proper charts, so I decided to get my version in first!

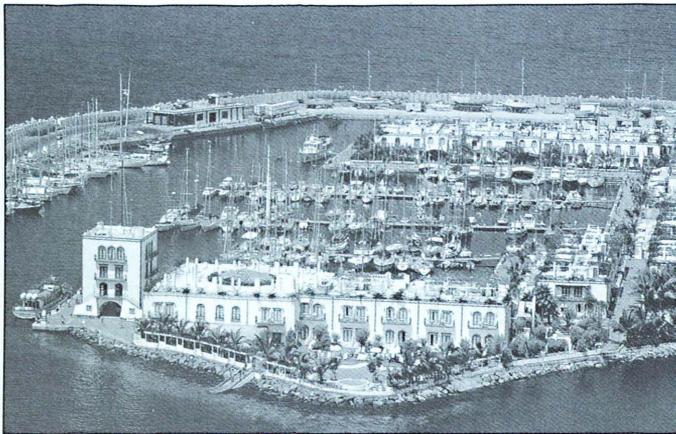
After the Cruise in Company, Barbara and I came back to Baltimore for the August weekend, collecting final stores for the trip most conveniently on the way through in Dunnes at the roundabout in Bishops court just outside Cork. *Erquy* was finally ready, the engine was going and Stan had put me up the mast to fix the deck light before he had gone home. Monday evening, just before Barbara left, Stan told me by phone from Dublin that the four day Met. forecast was for nothing more than 15 knot winds, from the south. I believed them.

4am on Tuesday 6th August was when the alarm sounded for the start of my second attempt at my great adventure. I had moved to a mooring so that I could get away at that unearthly hour with minimum hassle. I motored out of Baltimore but within the hour I was sailing. As usual, it took some time to get the Monitor self-steering set up correctly, but as soon as it was I was not to touch the tiller again for fourteen days. The wind was light, from the NW and I immediately started making to the west towards my objective of getting to 15° west. This I was determined to do at all costs. Even if it meant steering NE, I was not going to allow myself be drawn into the Bay of Biscay. In fact, during the first day I gained a degree and a half of longitude west, in a run of 110 miles.

But then the wind began to back, the barometer dropped from



Monitor Self Steering with Standard Windvane Fitted.



Mogán.

10 20 to 10 16 and, beating, I was gradually pushed SE, so I tacked onto port and sailed W while the wind built to a full gale. At least I was going west, so I stayed on that tack for the next three days.

On Thursday evening, the barometer started dropping again and at this stage I decided I'd better listen to the BBC forecast, which gave a gale warning for Sole, just where I was. Sure enough with the glass down from 1011 to 1005 it blew consistently 25/40 knots from 22.00 on Thursday 8th to 15.00 on Saturday 10th, even though the glass was by then back up to 10 12. That was one four day forecast which was more than slightly out!

I don't pretend that I enjoy those conditions nor am I capable of writing fine prose in my log at such times. I had three reefs in the main and only one panel of the genoa out. At noon on Saturday I noted that 'the wind seems to be dropping at last after another bloody awful night'. I clearly recollect that at the time I was asking myself what sort of an idiot I was to be out there and could I not

have sense and stay on dry land in future. But I did realise that that was an advance on previous gales on previous voyages where I was determined that if I ever got home I was selling the boat!

By Sunday, I was six days out and as it turned out, I had left the bad weather behind. It was misty, but warm, an occasional glimpse of sun and the cabin temperature was up to 20° C. In fact my log entry was that 'I am starting to enjoy this!' I was at 43° N and 013° W, the barometer was up to 1020, with the boat sailing a course of 210° at 4/5 knots in wind speeds of 10/15 knots.

In preparation for this trip I had fitted *Erquy* with a ham radio set. I had had a full amateur radio licence as a school boy and expected that all I had to do was to apply and my licence which I had surrendered over forty years ago would be given back to me. But no, they had all my records all right but insisted that I re-sit a Morse test so I had spent six weeks during the winter dredging the dots and dashes up from the depths of my memory before going in, quaking, to sit my exam again. I got through and was allocated my old call sign, EI2E, so I have one of the oldest Irish call signs, so much so that some of the young Irish hams thought I was a pirate (i.e., operating without an official licence).

The ham set was completely and carefully installed before I left, but as nobody had answered my calls from Dun Laoghaire, I was not sure that it was working. When I heard the Trans Atlantic Net operating on 21,400kc., I called them and was delighted when Trudi, the net controller in Barbados, answered. Next morning I called the UK Maritime Marine Net on 14,303kc. and made contact with them. A day or two later EI5HG, Eugene O'Malley, a ham who sails from Kinsale, broke in and later that day rang Barbara to relay that I was about 250 miles west of Lisbon and thinking of calling in to Madeira.

So I am looking forward to the advantages of having the ham net on the Atlantic crossing. The net controller provides weather forecasts and information from the yachts who are at various

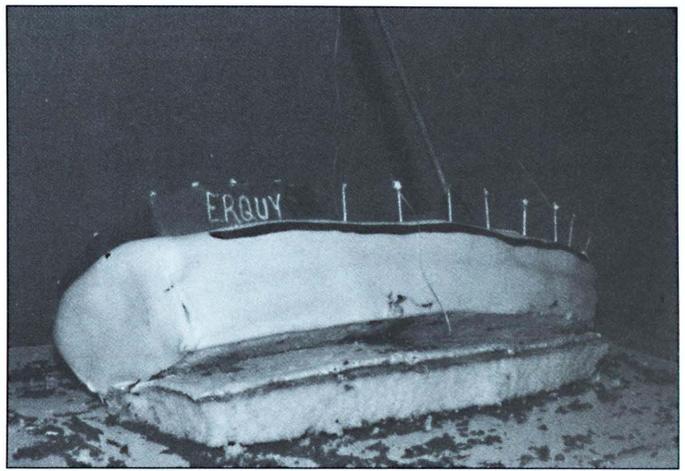


Running Wing and Wing in Very Light Winds.

stages of the crossing, so I would expect, for example, to hear just how far south of the Canaries I will have to go to pick up the trades. Apart from anything else it is a very useful tool in an emergency.

Over each of the next four days, I covered more than 100 miles noon to noon, with a best of 120. I was now west of 15° W so I gybed onto port. The wind dropped away and I changed to the big light weather wind vane on the self steering. The apparent wind was down to 5 knots or less, I was barely making 3 knots on a course around 180°, but the self-steering was holding the course quite well. I spent a couple of hours taking the loo pump to bits to replace the diaphragm which had begun to split, thus using the first of the many spares kits I have on board. The wind was still dropping away, my noon to noon run was only 50 miles. I took down the main, poled out the genoa and put up the second genoa on the spare forestay so that I was running wing and wing. There was a clear blue sky, a calm, deep blue sea, I was just drifting. So what, what's the hurry I said to myself, I could easily get used to this! That evening there was a lovely crescent moon, low in the sky, with a shining white path across the ocean leading to it. Bliss.

Another bright but windless day, not a cloud in the sky. I was about 140 miles from Porto Santo, the island just to the north of Madeira. I started the engine on a slow tick-over and with the Autohelm fixed to the self-steering on a stub windvane set off at about 4 knots. I saw my first turtle. It looked like a piece of flotsam until it turned its head, looked at me and dived away. I don't know whether my cooking is improving or not. I got out my cookbook and grilled sardines in a marinade for lunch. It said preparation time was 5 minutes. I started preparing at 14.00 and sat down to eat at 15.00. Lucky I don't have a crew, they'd all have starved to death by now! And then, 'Land Ho!', Porto Santo fine on the starboard bow, just where the GPS said it should be. Nearly there, and all my resolutions about sun sights – the sextant never came out of its case.



On The Beach– Keel Gone! Rigging Carried Away! A Nightmare!
(Just a cake Barbara had made for my birthday!!)

Monday 19th, my last morning before reaching Madeira. A westerly wind, about 12 knots, so I started sailing again and as the wind rose I put in two reefs to have a gentle sail along the south coast of the island. I hove to for an hour or so for a clean up and just before mid day spotted Funchal and eventually found my way into the marina where I was lucky enough to lie alongside a large steel Swedish yacht on the inside of the breakwater.

I had not planned to visit Madeira, mostly because the marina there is not given a good write-up in the Atlantic Pilot. That proved to be quite accurate. All the pontoon berths are taken up by local boats and all the visiting boats are crowded into trots at the end of the marina breakwater. Several yachts which arrived after I did were told to anchor in the bay outside the harbour. It is quite safe, but I was glad not to be one of them and to have the hassle of a



Land Ho! Island of Porto Santo, with Maderia in Background, 14 Days Out of Baltimore, Co. Cork



Waiting for the Bus Home! Skibbereen July '96 .



With Stan Conroy, July '96 at Baltimore.

dinghy trip every time to get ashore after a fortnight at sea. The facilities of the marina are ok, just, and with the same check-in procedures as the Portuguese insist on everywhere, three separate offices with three separate officials. I was expecting that and just relaxed in a chair at each and every one and waited my turn.

Over the next couple of days I prepared *Erquy* for the final leg. I made one mistake, I forgot to check how much water I had used over the 14 days before I refilled the tank. I had meant to check my water consumption so that I would know how much I would have in hand for the Atlantic crossing, now I'll just have to keep a careful check as I go along. I had lost a sail batten during the gales at the beginning of the voyage, fortunately it was the second one down so it did not spoil the set of the sail too much. I had intended to screw all the battens into their travellers before I left, but that was one of the jobs not crossed off the list, I replaced it and screwed them all in.

I took a coach trip up into the mountains one afternoon. The scenery is truly magnificent, the mountains quite spectacular and green, some with tiny terraces clinging to them. I saw none of the levadas, or artificial watercourses which were constructed in the last century for irrigation purposes for the vineyards. Wine is still a very important export though since the new airport was constructed tourism has grown considerably.

Judging by the winds I had encountered on the approach to Madeira, I anticipated taking at least three full days for the remaining 320 miles to Puerto Mogan, Gran Canaria. After my usual late start from the marina I sailed almost due south with a light westerly wind. After an hour the wind suddenly went through 180° and freshened from the NE and I realised that I was in the NE trades, which stayed with me for the rest of the trip.

That night the wind began to rise and when I attempted to reef the genoa it would not roll in. With the aid of the deck light which had just been fixed in Baltimore before I left (thank you, Stan!) I saw that it was jamming against the second forestay which I had rigged when I was running wing and wing. I put two reefs in the main and waited until daylight to heave to, when I took back the second forestay to its normal 'parked' position beside the shrouds, and then started sailing again. My noon to noon run had been 120 miles and I was 50 miles east of Ilheus Selvagens (the Salvage Islands) whose existence I had never heard of until I looked at the chart. Apparently they are so named because they were a graveyard for ships and even now there is still the wreckage of a French tanker on one of them. Once I was satisfied I was well past I altered course to head directly between Gran Canaria and Tenerife. By Saturday morning I was 18 miles NE of Tenerife, it was cloudy and cool with no land visible and even by 16.00 there was no sign of land on either side. But at 17.30 Gran Canaria came out of the mist, and then the fun started.

The 'acceleration zones', where the trades funnel between the various islands in the Canary Archipelago are clearly marked on the sailing directions, with warnings that the winds can suddenly increase substantially within a couple of hundred metres. Looking at the Directions, I hoped to sneak in between the shore of Gran Canaria and the zone of high wind, but no. Wind built up and up until it was 25/30 gusting 40 knots with a short sharp sea on the port quarter. Because of the gusts the self-steering could not hold the course so I ended up steering the boat for the first time since I had left Baltimore. I had too much sail up but kept expecting the wind to drop and as I also hoped to get into port before daylight faded I did not attempt to shorten sail. For four hours I struggled with the tiller until suddenly, passing a headland even smaller than Bray Head the wind switched off, the sea became as flat as the pond in St. Stephen's Green (Dublin!), another 100 metres and I had a 5 knot wind from the south, on the nose. Thankfully, I dropped the main, rolled up the genoa and motored the 10 miles or so into Puerto Mogan.

I had made it and now I began to feel that the I would really make the crossing. I spent a week in the lovely marina doing various jobs at a snail's pace in the heat, sorting out the administrative details for *Erquy's* stay there and socialising with other yachts who were there before going across in the autumn. I met the crew of *Quarterwave*, a US yacht on its way home from our Cruise in Company, of which they could not speak highly enough. We all felt quite at home in the Marina Bar, owned by Liam and Billy Dennehy from Cork. The marina itself was built in 1988, all of the buildings are two storeys high, with beautiful flowers around them and over the archways between them. It is fully pedestrianised so it is a totally relaxed place to be in. I hosted my first cockpit party the night before I left and the table I had built using the washboards for just such occasions worked very well. I am looking forward to having plenty of use for it over the next year! During the evening the conversation turned to cockroaches and I was advised to put in some traps before I left the boat. Cockroaches, they were things blue water voyagers had to worry about, I must be getting somewhere!

I had a flight home for the evening of Saturday 31st August. I spent the morning tidying ship, putting chafe preventers on the mooring lines, and finally, putting some 'roach hotels' in various places in the galley. Apparently, once the roaches check in, they are supposed never to check out.

In all, I had taken 14 days Baltimore Co. Cork to Madeira, 21/2 days Madeira to Gran Canaria and had run the engine for 44 hours, including battery charging. I plan to go back to Puerto Mogan at the end of December to start the Atlantic crossing.

My Atlantic Adventure is really under way!

Kilpatrick around Ireland

Bill and Hilary Keatinge

Bord Failte could have been proud of us, so often in far flung parts have we extolled the joys of Ireland as a cruising ground; only problem with all our enthusiasm being that we ourselves knew little of it. Well, it's 35 years since we sailed in Irish waters and even then we didn't see much from the scuppers of a damp Firefly. From our base on the Ijsselmeer over the last ten years a cruise to Ireland was just not possible in a short three week holiday. 1996, retired and with time on our hands, it was to be THE year, and the dates for the ICC Cruise-in-company were the key to our circumnavigation.

Kilpatrick, our 37' Oyster Heritage took all the preparations bravely and the water line was still just visible as we prepared for all eventualities.

29th May – 8th June “The Warm-up” – Lymington to Plymouth via Cherbourg, St. Peter Port, Salcombe. First log entry reads – 2 reefs, very uncomfortable seas in Needles Channel, thick fog – what a start! Conditions did improve, we party-ed, met friends from times and places past and with our doctor daughter had some good sailing and caught some great mackerel.

8th – 10th June: “The Crossing” – Plymouth to Dunmore East via Falmouth. We were joined by Mark Deverell and John Spencer, both with strong Irish connections though more used to making landfall with Aer Lingus. They were able to settle in on a gentle 39 mile potter in light WS–Westerlies to Falmouth. Next morning at 02.45, after a very short night, we were feeling our way out in the dark, down the channel from Falmouth Marina. The wind was forecast from the SW but was in fact right on the nose as we motored due south; not until we could put some north in our course round the Lizard were we able to cut the engine. It was a broad reach with the tide to the Longships, we then poled out the jib, set the boom preventer and headed north to Ireland. Our course for the Coningbeg light was 350° T, distance 124 miles. The wind was an obliging SW3 for a couple of hours before it hacked southerly again and increased 5 gusting 6; two reefs in, reduced jib and do I really want to tell you about the poor visibility, heavy rain and the cold??! As night set in there was enough west in the wind to take down the pole which made it much easier for the crew to feel in control in the big seas – though Bill still remembers two which nearly came aboard. We worked 3 hour watches, saw only one ship – too close on a reciprocal course, numerous trawlers and had the company of a couple of porpoises for nearly an hour. By dawn the wind had eased and at 05.00 sitting squat on its low headland, just where the GPS said it should be, was Hook Head light. The passage had taken 26hrs 40mins, average speed 6.9 – we were well pleased as we tied up in a crowded Dunmore East.

11th – 13th June: “Return to Home Waters” – Dunmore to Dun Laoghaire via Waterford, Arklow. There were severe gale warnings all of Monday and we sat tight in Dunmore before going up river to Waterford. It was gusty~ grey and cold and en route we only just missed our first salmon net. We tied alongside an antiquated barge and the sun came out on Waterford. Early next morning we came back down the Suir and were able to hoist

full sail as we came abreast Dunmore for a reach then a run to pass between Coningbeg and Coningmore rocks, up to the Barrels and we could tick off our first corner of Ireland – Carnsore Point, we thought this was a bit disappointing as it is rather insignificant looking. A run north keeping east of the Lucifer and Blackwater banks and the wind came and went and rounded into the NW; as we approached Arklow the racing fleet was lining up for an evening start. We were uncertain where to lie and ended up in the dock alongside a decommissioned almost derelict fishing boat – there was hardly any rise and fall in the neap tide and we were not sure what Arklow had to recommend for itself other than being a safe haven for the night.

There was no wind for the passage to Dun Laoghaire and John had to endure the rest of us reminiscing excitedly as we crossed Brittas Bay, Killiney Bay, through Dalkey Sound. We had been a long time away. The Sailing Directions advised us of the requirement to call Dun Laoghaire harbour office two hours before arrival – no reply, tried again in sight of the piers and a somewhat bemused voice asked us if it was the entrance we were looking for? No, we said, we could see it quite clearly, but could we enter? We got the impression that not many arrivals have read Traffic Regulations N.T.M. no.3 of 1995!

We had time to survey the sunny summer scene from the ‘George’ balcony with a Paddy or two to hand and there was lots of news to catch up on; it was also great to see Susan and Peter Grey who were looking so well on ocean sailing.

16th – 19th June: “Going North” – Dun Laoghaire to Strangford via Howth, Carlingford. A somewhat nervous and inexperienced family crew of sister and nieces made the 12 mile passage round the Bailey for an anchored lunch off Ireland's Eye and then as a brisk, chill wind fought it out with the tide, our anchor trip line tangled itself round the rudder, we cut it free and it was rescued for us by a passing dinghy crew. There was a space for us – but only just, in a bustling Howth Marina; next time we must try and book a berth well in advance. The cousins Gore–Grimes then took us in hand, they dined and wined us very well, the fanatics watched the final round of the US Open, we did a shopping run and were ready by midday Monday for the arrival of our next crew member, Max Browne (one-time Solent sailor, resident of Strangford Lough, official IOR measurer).

We pushed our way out of the marina, it was not yet low water and it was extremely shallow in the back channel; to add to our problems a latecomer had tied his small craft three out from the pontoon. We motor-sailed north into a cold N-Easterly and hoped the wind would give us a sail later, and it did, but after 25 minutes it dropped completely. We came into the narrow entrance to Carlingford with the tide; a passage of 6½ hours and the sun shone in an almost blue sky. We wove our way to Buoy 18 (not easy to pick up) and from there into Carlingford marina, the very narrow entrance round the hulk of a specially sunken ship is not for the faint-hearted! The marina is new and a full range of amenities are not quite in place. Security, however is good, once you get the hang of standing in front of a large stone with your pass and by magic the huge gates swing open. We walked into



Pontoon at Rathmullan, *Kilpatrick* alongside.

town, had a Guinness at PJ's and voted Carlingford a lovely place.

We left early, with the last of the ebb (2.9m on the sill, 2.5 just outside), menacing clouds were creeping down from the heights as a gusty NW wind whistled off the dramatic Mountains of Mourne but we were looking forward to a good sail. However it dropped to Force 2 and it was motor sailing once again. The south-going stream was against us from Dundrum Bay but we stole a march on another northbound yacht by keeping right inshore. Strangford entrance for the uninitiated is exciting – in one of the eddies our SOG registered 13.1 knots. The Imray chart got us to Portaferry but we could not have gone any further without Max to sail us through unseen channels between the Pladdies (gravel banks left by an Ice Age). Admiralty chart 2156 is essential – and we did not have it! In time for a late lunch we picked up a mooring off Max's house on Mahee Island and later he piloted us the half mile or so through an almost unmarked gap to tie alongside the Down Cruising Club Lightship; directions would go something like this: white chimney to third telegraph pole round the stake to end of wall – and best not to look back when the tide drops! The D.C.C. members were very welcoming and in the bowels of that lightship we soon learned the trick of negotiating an unnerving slope up to the bar, or was it more difficult coming back down with a full glass! We viewed heritage sights on Mahee and lunched at the famous Daft Eddies; it has changed ownership recently and regrettably is not so daft any more.

21st – 1st luly: “The Northern Approaches” – Strangford to Killybegs via Bangor, Portrush, Lough Swilly (Port Salon & Rathmullan). Armed with Max's copy of chart 2156 and lots of good advice about timing, we manoeuvred our way down Strangford Lough and were off Portaferry one hour before HW; from there against the weakening flood to the entrance thereby carrying the tide northwards for about 4 hours. The day was overcast, the inshore forecast was for a northerly 4–5 occ. 6 in the North Channel – but we were not that far north – not yet we reasoned. One reef and half jib as we motorsailed into a head wind, bucking our way towards a clearing in the cloud, but as we did so, up came the wind a true 5/6 gusting 30 knots across the deck; it was rough, wet, and cold. South Rock, then Skullmartin Cardinal as we beat northwards, engine on to drive us through the big seas. Short tacking through the narrow Donaghadee Channel against the tide, keeping clear of the lines of fishing floats and we felt really battered as we searched for the entrance lights to Bangor Marina. Once in it is very well organised, has all the necessary and is close to the town. We met some friends who were en route to Scotland and began to feel warm again. Stayed all of Saturday in Bangor, hoping the wind would go down; set the alarm for 00.30 but the wind was whistling 5+ from the E/NE – back to sleep.



Low Water at Carlingford Marina.

We left Bangor at mid day for Portrush and were expecting the worst as we came out into Belfast Lough into a chill NNE wind but surprisingly it was very calm. Clear of the Lough we kept close in to the steep-sided Goblins which were a delight, even in the gloom; frenetic colonies of guillimots on the lower levels, more aloof pairs of gulls high on the cliff face above. This is guillemot territory and we felt bad disturbing the sociable clusters bobbing on the inky sea; when they finally decided we were really getting too close they literally ‘showed a clean pair of heels’ as they dived rather than flew to clear our path. The scenery is just spectacular round the Antrim coast and once round Fair Head it is fantastic, Giant's Causeway and all – sadly the photographer could but fume at the lack of light. Tide was strongly in our favour as we were swept through Rathlin Sound and there was a positive race north of Sheep Island. As we neared Portrush a waving fisherman warned us of his long salmon net, even in the calm you could barely make out the tiny floats. There was still light as we came into the harbour at 21.30 and we moored alongside the small pontoon for the night; there was one other hoat. The Harbour Master was very helpful and next day we fuelled and watered and were allowed to stay on the end of the pontoon, leaving space for the tourist fishing boats and on the promise that we would be away at first light – someone very, very important was expected next day, whisper, whisper (but the story broke later that day, Prince Charles, from his base on the Britannia was coming ashore to visit the Giant's Causeway). Portrush is a one-horse holiday town and on a wet day it lacks for charm, however we did have an excellent lunch at the Ramore Wine Bar.

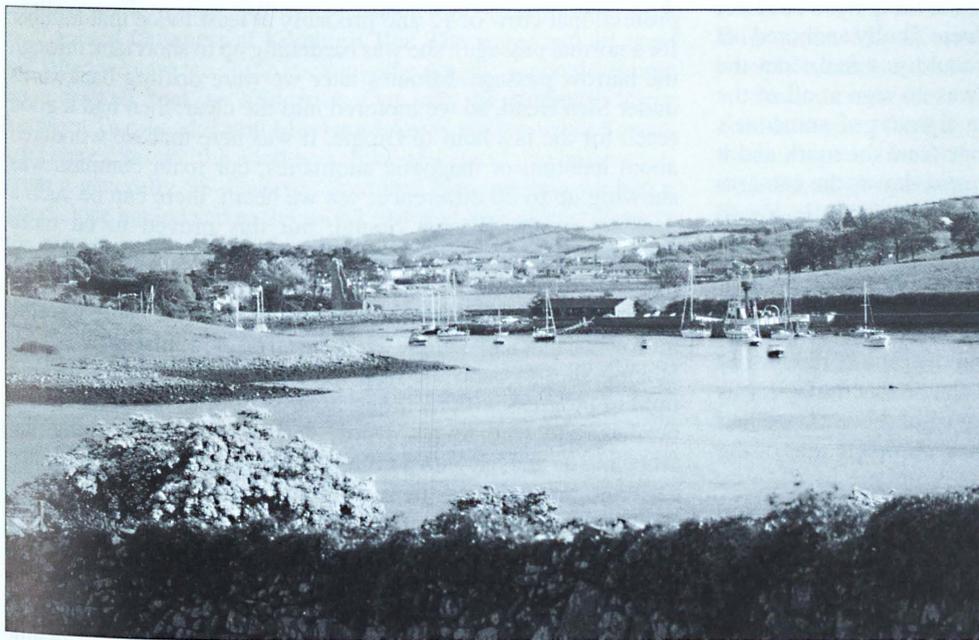
Morning broke, very early, and dogs could be heard on the quayside whining and growling the advance guard had arrived to sniff out the area, we were away before 05.30; it was cold and grey and the wind was from – can you not guess? the north west, later to back into the west! We motorsailed which was just as well for we spent the entire passage dodging salmon nets, 12 in all – some fishermen operated on VHF channel 10, some on 08 and some we are sure should not have been there at all. We became quite practiced: listen on the VHF – though understanding what the very local accent was saying was something else, head for the marker – if we could see it, if not for the fishing boat itself. We got a very close view of the giant Stookaruddan Rock indeed as we rounded south of yet another net! From rock to rock we literally raced through Garvan Sound, from Lackgolan to Rosnabartan and then north west to avoid Blind Rock. At 10.20 we were abeam Malin Head – west of Malin headland itself. We sailed the last 10 miles to Lough Swilly in a light WN–Westerly – with one more-rapid-than-expected tack to avoid one more net as we came round Dunaff Head into Lough Swilly.

We anchored off Port Salon and it was time to pump up the dinghy for the first time on our trip – after ten years of marina sailing we were (note the past tense!) novices to this game but we

have made life easier for ourselves with one of the new generation inflatables which has a pressurized reinforced floor – it is very rigid. The outboard started and we made it ashore for a Guinness at “Rita’s”. Contact was made with the sister of a friend and we went inland for fresh salmon (no comment!) and home-grown potatoes. The anchorage was crowded when we got back, there were three other boats; this was one of the joys of the early stages of our cruise, being almost the only yacht around. The shipping forecast for Thursday was awful a trough approaching rapidly, N–Westerlies 6/7 occasionally 8, rain, poor visibility. We headed for Rathmullen and felt very secure once moored to the new pontoon; coming alongside is somewhat hazardous in the strong tide which runs along it. We made friends with a Scottish couple sailing their 40’ Bowman slowly down to the Canaries to cross the Atlantic later in the year and now anchored north of the rather dilapidated looking pier. The pier was in fact in constant use by Irish fisheries patrol boats and the like. We drank Guinness, chatted to the locals, entertained on board and on Saturday afternoon, having checked that we could replenish water tanks from the tap close by, I had my head upside down in the sink having a hair wash when there was a loud tap, tap on the hull – we thought we were far from all madding crowds but there on this seemingly isolated pontoon was a group of smartly turned out Irish Commissioners led by cousin John G-G and Terry Johnston. We ended a grand day for ourselves with dinner at Rathmullen House.

Away before seven next morning in what we hoped was “a window in the weather” though Ireland was still covered by an unstable west to north–westerly airflow. We had 90 miles to go and we never thought it would be easy; foul weather gear was fully zipped as with harnesses clipped on we came out of Swilly into a NNW 5 plus; there was a large swell and the seas were confused, it was gusting 7 in the showers. The only relief was that the salmon netters seemed to be staying home, maybe that had something to do with the patrol boat lurking in the lough rather than the weather. There were no other craft in sight all day. Tory Island, which we had hoped to visit had to be left in the distance as the swell through the Sound was fairly awesome – 15–20 feet by our reckoning.

Ireland’s NW extremity Bloody Foreland was abeam at 12.40. It was certainly not the weather for exploring Gola Sound and we reached down the coast west of the line of islands with just enough horsepower to ride us through the troughs. We surfed round Rathlin O’Birne island (“worth a visit on a quiet day” ...



Down Sailing Club lightship.

we read... and we read on!) and into Donegal Bay and there was no let up in the swell until we could make the turn into Killybegs near Rotten Island.

There was a thin drizzle as we circled the harbour looking for somewhere to lie; the Gallagher Brothers’ berth mentioned in the Sailing Directions does not seem a possibility any more; we finally settled for a berth outside a couple of boats under repair. Fuelling was arranged for us though they are more used to supplying it by the 100,000 litres, not 96! So while Killybegs may not have much for the yachtsman, as a fishing port it is fascinating. We saw sand eels being hoovered out from the depths of one hold straight into open trucks, there were huge catches of everything else being unloaded and the star of the Irish fleet, *Veronica* (£125million – storage for 3000 tons of frozen fish) came home for a fishing exhibition. We waited three days for the wind to drop, the Pier Bar became our local, we walked and talked, no lack of characters there; Killybegs is an all action very cosmopolitan town.

5th – 15th July: “The West Coast” – Killybegs to Dingle via Blacksod Bay, Killary Harbour, Inishbofin, Clifden, Roundstone, Kilonan – Aran, Fenit. The BBC gave us “NW5/6 decreasing 5 –” but the RTE prediction was for “5/6 and gusty” (there is something very special about the way the Irish forecasters pronounce this word!) outlook more of the same but a High was edging nearer. After days in port we preferred to believe the BBC, slipped our lines early, put in one reef, rolled out half jib and nosed out into a WNW4 for the long WSW–erly haul across Donegal Bay. The wind came and went; sometimes, but never for very long a more kindly N–Westerly, and for nearly 15 hours we sailed some.. motored some.. round wind shifts and numerous salmon nets. The sun made an effort and the Stags were visible from 16 miles. We came down outside the line of rocks and islands off the barren Mullet peninsula with the mountains of Mayo in the distance. Finally into the featureless but well protected Blacksod Bay and we dropped anchor in a deserted looking Elly Harbour. It was not to be a completely peaceful night as the summer camp had a high volume heavy metal session well into the small hours and our anchor alarm went off at 03.30: this harbour shoals out for quite some distance, but as we did not touch, we did not move!

The scenery as we sailed to Achill Head was breathtaking, there were no salmon nets and we had been promised a weak ridge of High Pressure. However as we rounded the headland at 14.00 we were on a dead run and were dealing with a big awkward swell and an unexpected adverse tide. The wind dropped and we had a deadline as we were due to meet Bill’s brother in Killary at 18.00. We sailed as far as the aptly named “Bill’s Rocks” then motorsailed passed Clare Island and wove our way inside Inishturk, round Blood Slate and Carrickgaddy rocks, gave a wide berth to the O’Malley breaker to head for the distinctive heacons on what looked like a sheer rock face – the entrance to Killary Bay (we were relieved to be making this convoluted passage in a dead calm!). Killary is long and narrow and on the northern shore Mweelrea mountain seems to drop right down into the water beside you, the wind funnels down the 7 mile inlet and we were suddenly nosing into a strong head wind. We picked up Killary Lodges’ white

mooring buoy (this was the only one suitable for a boat of our size) and were only minutes late for our rendez-vous. We had a pleasant dinner at the Lodge which was full of long-distance walkers speaking foreign tongues and even more importantly, we were able to come ashore next morning for hot showers. We waved our visitors goodbye and slipped the mooring after lunch. There was a very stiff-head wind (and, we were going the other way this time!), we put in a reef in preparation for the worst, but once clear of the inlet the wind moderated and we had a pleasant sail through the rocky passage to the entrance to Inishbofin. Here we took a really deep breath as we came close in under Cromwell's Fort to avoid the then invisible Bishop's Rock. We anchored in the shelter of Port Island. Now began several days of: "drizzle, mist and fog, with a chance of rain later" – any one of those would have been bad enough, but all four! We settled down to enjoying Inishbofin, became frequent visitors to Day's Bar, and generally walked and talked and tried not to look at the drizzle, mist and fog.

It was doing it all again on Wednesday morning as we left the shelter of the harbour for Clifden; we could just make out High Island, a white blur confirmed the breaking waves off Carrigrana rocks and a steady course of 080° T brought us north of Doolick Rock into Fishing Point.

We anchored (on 4th attempt) off the Clifden Boat Club, where Damian was very helpful and gave us a lift into town – even with the dinghy we would not have had the tide to get there and back with the shopping. The town was crowded with rainy day tourists and we did not stay long. Drinks on a chartered Sigma anchored close by and Irish coffees later on board *Kilpatrick* helped to dispel the gloom.

Our passage next day was SW to Slyne Head, it was raining, there was very poor visibility and.... wait for it....the wind was SWS. We motorsailed for 2 hours in big uncomfortable seas but once round the almost invisible headland we had a broad reach in the direction of Roundstone; without the GPS we would not have even tried. What a relief when we were finally anchored off the Roundstone harbour wall, and we could just make out the sign over O'Dowd's pub. So far there was no sign at all of the famous Twelve Bens, were they just a figment of someone's imagination? Eventually they did emerge from the murk and it was altogether a more cheerful outlook next day as the cameras were dusted off and we up-anchored for the 21 mile leg to Kilronan. But first we had another near brush with a salmon net – right across the channel out of Roundstone. The wind was SSW which was less than helpful, but later on we had a good sail as we reached close in along the Aran island shore. We oohed and ahed with the rest of the trippers looking over the cliff edge out at the vast Dun Aengus fort, it was just a shame that the light was so poor, but it is an amazing place and we got a bonus, we had not realized that our minibus fare gave us a complete tour of the other interest spots.

14th July, Bastille Day, irrelevant I know, but the day was special, an anti-cyclone was building to the south-west and we left Kilronan without putting on our oilskins. In spite of the swell it was delightful going through Gregory Sound, there were dramatic looking rain clouds but they were for someone else. The wind was from the NW but no more than Force 1 or 2 and by



Bill and Tuffet Webb – *Kilpatrick* at anchor, Dunbay.

mid-day there was absolutely none at all~Still, it was a sparkling day. We chugged along the flat Clare coast, quite a contrast to the sheer heights of Loop Head at the entrance to the Shannon. Another 11 miles to go to Tralee Bay and Fenit Harbour which we decided would be more sheltered than Brandon Bay. Having rounded Little Samphire and Samphire Island there is not much space for safe anchoring in Fenit, however a launch came out from the club to advise. In the clubhouse they were busy with supper and prizes at the end of a fishing tournament so we just stayed long enough for the inevitable and chips.

15th July – scenery, sun and sail – a first! but not for long as by mid morning the fluky wind had dropped to Force 2. It was engine on, engine off, but we had plenty of time to admire the really fantastic coastline. We had thought to go into Smerwick Harbour for lunch and wait for the tide to take us through Blasket Sound, but as it was so light we decided to press on regardless. So round dramatic Sybil Head and into the sound with the wind right behind us, the adverse tide race was choppy but quite manageable. As we cleared the sound conditions were quite different, smooth sea and pleasant N-Easterly, a broad reach and then we were treated to another memorable sight – The *Mariette* a 100+ foot topsail schooner (later we heard that she has a professional crew of 12 and probably at least twice that number for a normal passage), she was hardening up to short tack through the narrow passage. Minutes later we were drifting backwards under Sleah Head, so we motored into the clear, then had a good reach for the last hour to Dingle. It was here that we wondered about mention of magnetic anomalies, our main compass was showing up to 20 difference; yes we heard, there can be such a problem in the Blasket Sound, but this proved to be more fundamental, our compass was now sticking when we were heeled.

Fungie the dolphin was duly glimpsed as we came into the narrow channel to Dingle Harbour. The new marina was still lacking showers and the like, but the Harbour Master making light of progress with facilities, assured us of as much fuel as we needed, and true to his word, with his assistant doing the wheeling he arrived with a trolley neatly packed with four 20 litre cans and he syphoned the fuel into our tank (quite a contrast to fuelling in Killybegs!) – it was also very reasonably priced.

16th – 21st July: "Moving On" – Dingle to Crosshaven via Darrynane, Crookhaven, Kinsale, Oyster Haven. The wind was stop, start as we crossed Dingle Bay with the S-Easterly anything between calm and Force 3 and then up to 5 as we closed Valentia



The Mariette – 100ft. Topsail Schooner, Blasket Sound.

Island and conditions were much rougher as we rounded the majestic Bray Head, a gravity defying building seemingly perched on the cliff edge. Then Puffin Island – it is hard to explain our excitement at the antics of the dense bird population of this stretch of water – great gatherings of gannets circling high on a thermal then one would dive bomb from a great height onto some poor unsuspecting fish; sheerwaters and guillemots gliding over the tops of the waves, guillemots in clusters and the puffins themselves, poor silly things, they are just hopeless at taking off – little red legs splayed out behind and I suspect their eyesight isn't that good~as they seemed to leave it to the very last moment to get out of our way.

On the horizon the craggy Skelligs stood sentinel on the Western approaches and along the coast we ticked off Ducalla then Bolus headland and finally with pilot nervously to hand we were lining up the transits for the entrance to Derrynane Harbour – it is quite scary, especially first time round. The harbour, which does not have that much deep water, was quite full and we dropped the anchor a couple of times before we were confident we were safely “in”. We exchanged notes with a Royal Lymington yacht next morning and then went ashore for a hot summer walk to visit Daniel O'Connell's house, followed by a well earned Guinness at Keating's Bar. The water had all gone out when we came to climb back into the dinghy, we could almost have walked back to *Kilpatrick*. Out into the Kenmare River between Two-headed and Moylaun Islands and we headed south for Dursey Sound; the wind was fluky and could you believe it – from a generally SS–Easterly direction! Nevertheless we had a good close hauled sail to the sound and we were sluiced through the narrow passage with the tide, under Ireland's only cable car lines (clearance is 21 meters). A different world awaited us at the other side – we were to head SE for Mizen Head across Bantry and Dunmanus; a brisk SE Force 5+ pushing against the tide whipped up a nasty chop. Oilskins and harnesses on for an unpleasant afternoon, we put in a second reef under Three Castle Head in anticipation of worse to come as we rounded Ireland's SW corner. We were not disappointed and as it was not to be our day, the wind backed into the east. However once round Brow Head we could ease the sheets for the last couple of miles to Crookhaven. We anchored in the deepest water we could find in the northern corner.

It is 53 miles from Crookhaven to Kinsale and we made an early start. The wind was a light easterly and we motored into it,

north of Clear Island, south of the Kedges, north of the Stags, close into Galley Head, the Seven Heads and finally the Old Head of Kinsale thermals, oilskins and ski gloves were the order of the day until we were safely inside Kinsale harbour where some special micro-climate had installed summer.

18th July – 17th August. *These four weeks were intensely social, we moved from party to party with the Cruise in Company which took us westwards again to Bantry, then we explored Kenmare, revisited Derrynane, discovered Dunboy and its historic past, ate well in Crookhaven, survived a storm in Schull, looked for our youth on Sherkin, enjoyed summer in Castlehaven and stocked up in Kinsale.*

17th – 26th August: “Return to the Solent” – Crosshaven to Lymington via Helford River,

Plymouth, Dartmouth, Dittisham, Weymouth. Time however was running out and our passage crew – son Richard and veteran board sailor Martin Moorehead, flew into Cork on Friday evening 16th. The weather forecasts for our passage south were eagerly followed – it could have been worse I suppose, but... S3/4 becoming 4/5 later, drizzle, perhaps fog patches. As we cleared Roche's Point at 08.15 we were motor-sailing into an increasingly lumpy sea and conditions became worse as the wind came up. The 13.55 forecast was little better, so we decided to cut the engine, bear away sufficiently to put us on a close starboard tack. The boat was easier through the seas but we were heading towards Wales not south Cornwall. We clocked up another six hours then as evening was closing in and our VMG (velocity made good) was down to a depressing -3 we rolled in some jib and motorsailed. The wind was a steady SSE Force 4 until the early hours when it went more into the south and then dropped as the 06.00 watch logged the hour. We came in on the Longships in poor visibility, probably about 3 miles; we were abeam at 12.40 and had logged 162 miles during the 28½ hours from Roche's Point. There had been some fun moments as when a school of porpoises circled us for a bit, and in the dark of the long night Martin and I were treated to the spectacular phosphorescent wake of another pair; we also spotted a whale.

Once we were clear of the Runnel Stone we shook out the reef and had a great fetch for a couple of hours; then once again the wind dropped, it was now from the ESE – ie. on the nose; the mist closed in and we rounded the Lizard with the tide and the engine. Two hours later we were anchored in the Helford River. Log total 202 and on this passage we made in an average of 5.1 knots.

Richard left from Helford, Martin from Plymouth and we spent the next week working our way steadily, and somewhat reluctantly eastward towards our base in The Solent via Dartmouth and Weymouth.

Monday 26th August. “Mission accomplished” *Kilpatrick* had done us proud; not only had we re-established many friendships but made many new ones too. And the weather, well we did it in spite of the weather, just sad that we never had any real spells of settled summer, especially during June and July when we really needed it. Next time we plan to go south about and to spend more time in the west – Puffin Island calls – and the north west – we will make it to Tory Island one day.

Saint Patrick in the Baltic

Paddy Barry

For two years now *Saint Patrick* had hardly been out of the country. Where To? Kevin Cronin and myself pondered over an Autumn pint. Maybe the Med. or why not the Baltic? Indeed. Never had we so many charts abroad as, on Saint Johns Day, Friday June 21st we left Dun Laoghaire. It blew a north-easterly f. 4, due to moderate. Newcomer Barra O'Conail from Cork, Austin Duke and myself took first watch, followed by Jarlath and Sean, then Kevin and Pat Colleran. The plan for Stage One was to get to Copenhagen in a fortnight, by way of Caledonia. Pat would be with us until east Scotland.

Rockabill flashed abeam as we motored, with the Mourne in sight, but no bonfire for us on this longest day. A fresh and sunny morning welcomed us to County Down, still blowing from the north. With the north going ebb, we went inside the old South Rock light, Pat busy in the galley 'seasoning' our new 'wok'. Culinary expectations ran high.

After sitting out the worst of the south going ebb for a few hours in Donaghadee that Saturday evening we scraped into Carnlough at low water with 0.3 metres to spare below our keel. As the tide ebbed towards the north next morning still the waves carried white tops and we were glad to get into Craighouse by 13.30 – alongside the jetty in our 'usual' spot. This time we carried two bikes, ideal for the quiet Jura roads with the day still before us.

The log omits mention of our touching bottom, as we departed Craighouse inside and too close to Eilean nan Gabhar, the southern of the Small Isles. At least it was in the dark, 02.00 hours, so only ourselves knew. Good tides and an inauspicious day brought us to Fortwilliam twelve hours later. We tied alongside the sheetpile wall at the car park. There is a berth there, just room for one boat, with a convenient ladder. Also convenient, too much so, was this busking bag-piper. We lunched on the fore deck, that being furthest from the piper! The pubs in Fortwilliam were awful.

Next day Sean, Pat and myself stretched our legs on Ben Nevis, the hills clear to be seen from Glencoe in the south to Torridan away to the north. Wondrous beauty abounded and the eyes to take it in, such was the benefit of last nights forced drought. Jarlath, Brian and Kevin locked in at Corpach. Later all reached Fort Augustus, the boat via Loch Lomond and us by local bus.

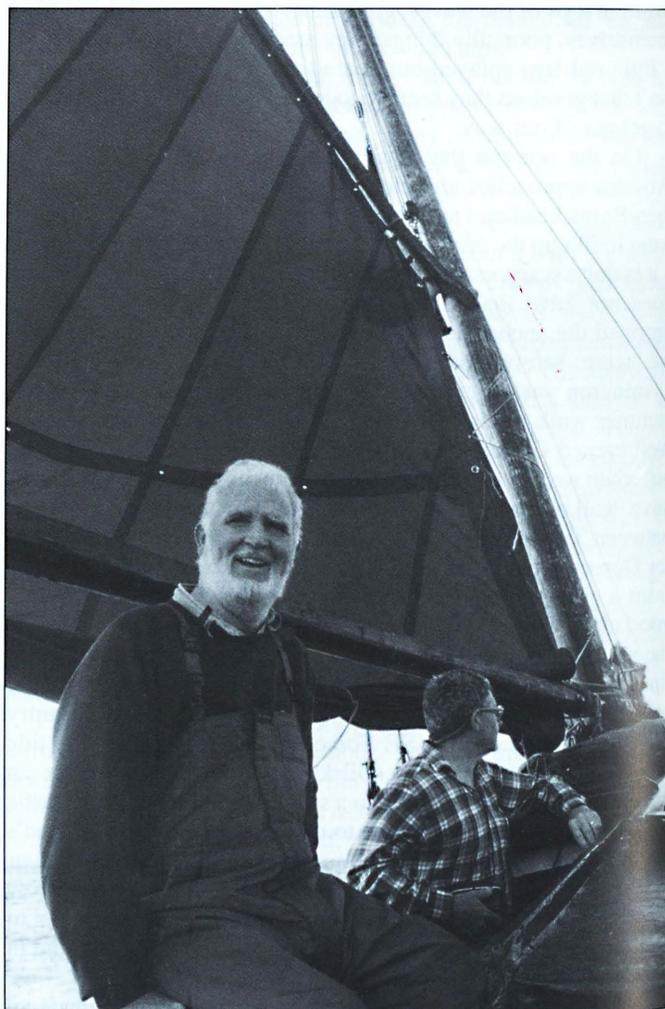
In Loch Ness we got sail up, for the tourists mostly, there being little useful wind. Muirtown Basin outside of Inverness seemed a drab and empty place after the wild beauty of the Great Glen. Scotland beat England that night in the World Cup, that is if you were in the Gunsmith Bar. The small matter of the victors playing in German colours seemed irrelevant.

Next day Pat left us and the wind blew gently from astern. The strong ebb combined to waft us under high Kessock Bridge, round Fort George and into Moray Firth. This was nice, our first pleasant sail in almost a week. The huge McDermott oil platform construction base stood still, its mammoth cranes unmoving and quiet. We touched bottom and returned our attention to where it belonged.

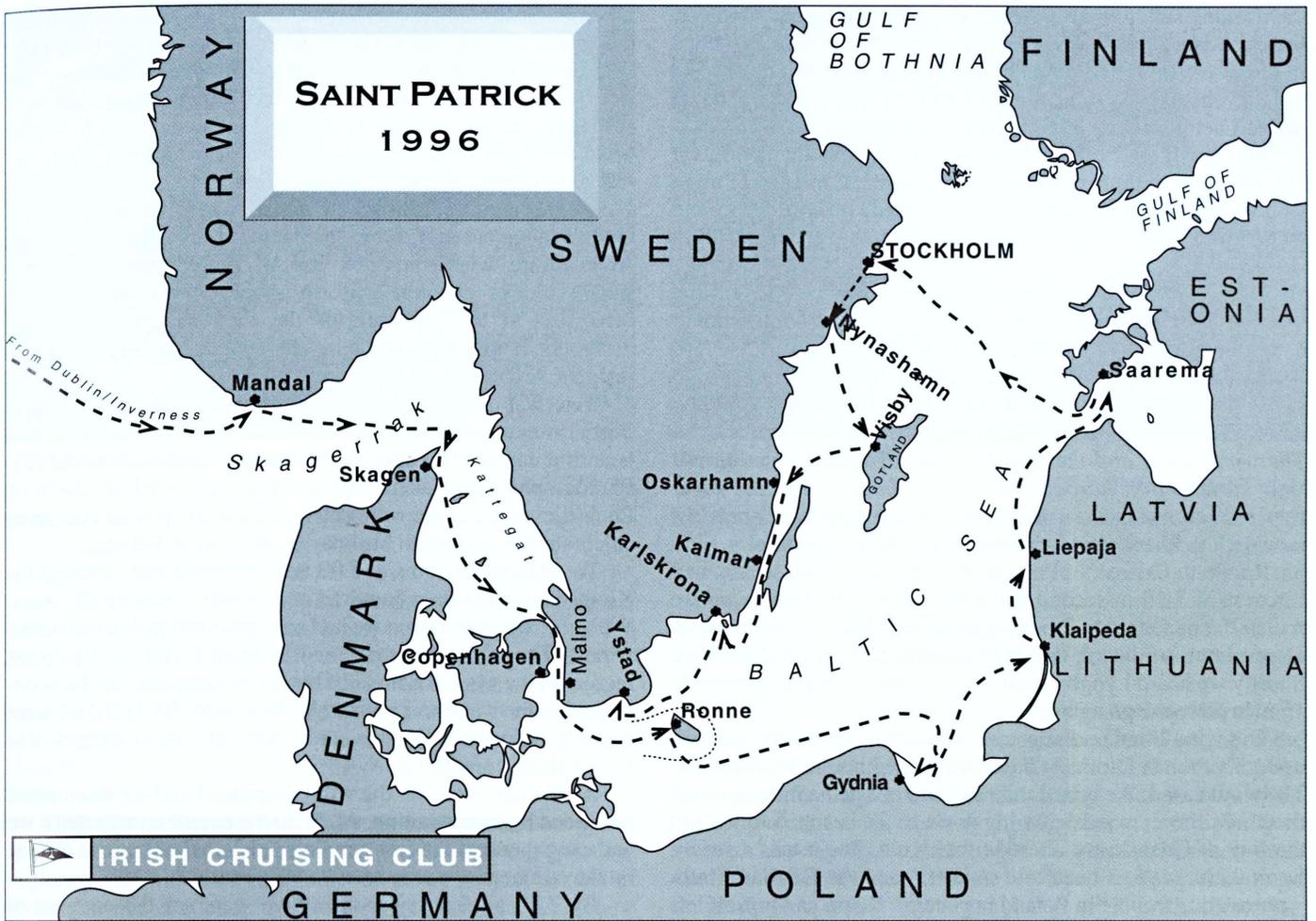
Lindesnes was 356 miles, a low to the north-west of us augured continuing fair winds. Life was good. In the event the next three days across the North Sea were very mixed, indeed generally poor, with lumpy seas, rain, some fog and occasional motoring. We didn't eat much. The cabin stove, lit from time to time, dried us out. both the GPS and Decca misbehaved, though not together. We streamed a Walker log, a reminder of old days, though in truth not so long ago at all. Our first use of a Decca had been in 1987. A wonder it had seemed then. Our landfall approach was noted in the log "plot position every hour on chart 2182, then Norwegian chart 11. Unless you can see the coast stay 2 miles off. Note rocks to the west of Lindesnes light".

11.00 hours Sunday, 3 days out from Inverness we entered Mandal, raining still.

Mandal was a 'bikeable' town, organised, orderly and clean, no potholes or 'bangers' to be seen. 12,000 people lived here, all dressed in bright clothes, just bought it seemed, and they all had



Jarlath Cunnane. He had left his own fine yacht in Clew Bay for this.
PHOTO: Kevin Cronin.



boats. Yes, there were boats everywhere. This was to be our experience in Denmark and Sweden too.

The 105 miles to the Skaw at the north of Denmark was sailed running under foresail with white breaking seas all round and occasionally into the cockpit. This was hard, hungry and not at all nice. Though only a f. 7 or so these shallow water waves were unpleasant and indeed potentially dangerous.

A big sailing ship passed that night going north westward, her sails gleaming silver in the light of a full moon. At 08.30

hours, 21 hours out, we entered the harbour of Skagen 5 miles south of the Skaw.

We lay weather bound for two days in that pleasant town of yellow buildings, us and the boat population of Gothenburg and Denmark it seemed. Gregers Blichfeld, a Danish Navy friend from Greenland in '93, shipped aboard and we sailed south through the Kattegat for the island of Anholt. another poor day with bad visibility and headwinds, though improving later before closing in again by evening. At least the wind was with

us. We pulled down all reefs and kept going through the night. In the fresh morning light we sailed past Helsingor, with its Castle and ferries to Helsingborg on the Swedish side, down Oresund, past the Mermaid (so tiny) and, happy indeed, lowered sail outside Nyhavn and went right into the centre of Copenhagen, two weeks out of Dun Laoghaire.

For the next couple of days we strolled on Stroget, bicycled all about, met sailors and passers-by both. Austin, Brian and Jarlath left. Pat Redmond, Fionan De Barra, Paddy O'Brien, Ruairc and Darrach Ó Tuairisg joined. We sailed out to Flakfort Island. Some 'bowsie' stole my bike.

On Sunday afternoon, July 7th, we left on our second stage bound for Estonia. First stop Bornholm 90 miles on. We engine'd 20 miles south to Falsterbo, the low south-west point of Sweden and then, in



Paddy, Kevin Cronin & Sean Mullan – the core trio. Sean was the only one on board for the full six weeks.

the evening sun, close reached eastward to a pleasant southerly breeze. What a lovely night we had. The lights of Sweden shone to our north, a big red moon rose in the east, the wind rose and fell, we chatted and stood watches without oilskins. I had never noticed before that in Summer the moon stays low in the sky.

As I lay in my bunk next morning, I remembered the bike. I had moved it to outside a different place, the Greenland Pub in Copenhagen! In Bornholm, when we landed I posted the key and instructions back to Copenhagen, hoping the postman didn't need a bike!

There in Ronne, the main town of Bornholm, we had our first meeting with officialdom. No official in Norway or Denmark had shown the slightest interest in us before now. The VHF forecast in English gave north-east 20 metres/sec, that's 40 knots. "A Gael Warning", Fionan cracked. So an enforced lay-day followed, in out of wind and rain. I wrote in the log.

The wind howls and the rain blows horizontally. Even in our snug corner of the harbour we bounce about, so that the eager rent collector was thwarted from coming aboard. Ferrys not moving. Deckhead drips abound. Keep the fire lighting.

Ronne to Gdansk in Poland was 160 miles. We set out in a forecast of 5-10 m/second westerly. Four or five hours on we met half a dozen rusty Russians anchored. Many of them are so clapped out, we heard, that they operate only in good weather. Shortly we heard Lyngby Radio give a forecast for westerly gale 15 m/s. Here we go again.

The wind lifted and seas too. All day we ran under foresail, doing five to six knots. At dawn we picked up the Polish coast. The wind eased. We raised mainsail and coasted a mile or so off the sandy shore, woods growing down to the beach. Sailing into the Bay of Gdansk, we altered for Gdynia. There was a secure basin there, we had been told on VHF, and the Russian Mafia were causing trouble in Poland in general. Kevin and myself left the boat in Gdynia to join wives Suzanne and Mary in Warsaw for ten days 'tourist-trailing' it to Estonia overland. Pat Redmond took charge of the boat and takes up the log:

When the customs left with their three copies of our crew list, Paddy and Kevin were off, running up the quay on their way to the railway station. The Harbour Master wanted us to tie-up stern in: we prevailed on him to allow us tie along side because our bowsprit and overhanging boom made the former inconvenient.

When one enters Gdynia one does not go into the main

harbour, but a small Yacht Harbour with its entrance to the north of the main breakwater. The sailing instructions advise you to first tie along side the Harbour Masters office situated on the left, just inside the harbour entrance. With the preliminaries behind us, the bicycle was broken out and assembled. Sean, the Mate and chief cook was off in search of fresh food, while the rest of us sought showers and local currency.

We accidentally chose the most expensive restaurant in Gdynia to eat out in; that said the meal was excellent. The local Architecture was unimpressive. All buildings were similar square blocks of drab uniform shapes which we came to recognise as the hallmark of the then occupying Russian designers. It goes without saying that Fionan, the ships artist and resident Architect was not impressed.

This was to change however when we visited Gdansk, a thirty minute commuter train journey away. Friday was a beautiful day and was spent sight-seeing in the exquisite old city. Photographs were taken outside That Ship Yard in search of Lech-trician. Later we were entertained at an open air concert to celebrate the seventieth birthday of the Port of Gdynia.

We cleared customs at 8.00 next morning and departed for Kleipeda, Lithuania, a hundred and twenty miles up the coast. With one reef in the main we had a magnificent sail in increasing winds. The sea was short and confused and as the wind increased we were in danger of breaking something as the boom dipped in the waves on every roll of the boat. By 16.30 we were running before a SW gale under foresail. *Saint Patrick* was loving these conditions.

As the day wore on the wind decreased and we maintained our speed by motor sailing. At 20.30 the engine overheated: we had caught one of the few remaining fish in the Baltic in our sea intake strainer.

By 7.30 on Sunday morning we were off the entrance to Kleipeda with a westerly F6 blowing which resulted in steep seas at the entrance to the harbour. It is an impressive port to enter with bigger and bigger ships tied up, serviced by a forest of cranes. As advised we avoided the Yacht Club on the southern shore and entered the first basin on the left, tying up at 10.30 am.

After the simplest customs clearance Paddy O'Brien our newly appointed ships engineer and Ruairc were given a lift up-town by one of the local officials. They returned with reports of a town in decay. In contrast to the hustle and bustle observed in

Poland with its car jammed streets, Lithuania appears to have been wilfully neglected. The local housing was in a dreadful condition. The inhabitants were by and large poorly dressed in drab coloured clothes. We visited a local market to buy fresh vegetables and met lovely people selling tiny quantities of produce.

We discovered a lough in the Town Centre where one can berth. We decided to stay where we were and spent an entertaining evening in the company of the crew of the Russian boat tied-up next to us.

The next day was Monday the 15th. and we departed at 7.00 saluted by our Russian friends as their ship sounded her horn in a final farewell to *St. Patrick*. The wind blew SW 6-7 (as forecast) and we pounded out of the harbour and set the foresail about two miles off, after altering course to the



Barra O'Conaill & Austin Duke in the Caledonian Canal approaching Inverness. PHOTO: Kevin Cronin.



Paddy, Fionan, Paddy O'Brien, Ruairc and Pat. 12.30pm.

PHOTO: Kevin Cronin.

north.

The sea conditions were unchanged making for a roly poly passage to Lypajia (Latvia) our next port of call, 60 miles to the north. The harbour approach and entrance is straight forward with three openings in the outer breakwater to choose from. We rounded up inside to lower sail and promptly ran aground.

From the moment of our landing the Latvians were very friendly and polite. The port had been closed to civilian traffic before independence in '92/'93. The departing Russians scuttled about thirty Cruisers and Submarines in the Naval section of the harbour, rendering it unusable.

A lay-day on Tuesday was spent sight seeing and shopping as well as the usual boat maintenance. Our bicycle was great for exploring and was pressed into action as we took it in turn to investigate our surroundings. Some of their basic infrastructure did not work. There was no running water or street lighting at night. From the local architecture this was evidently once a beautiful wooden town. The design and details on the buildings told of better days. Peering into the doors and hallways one was horrified by the decay and lack of any basic maintenance.

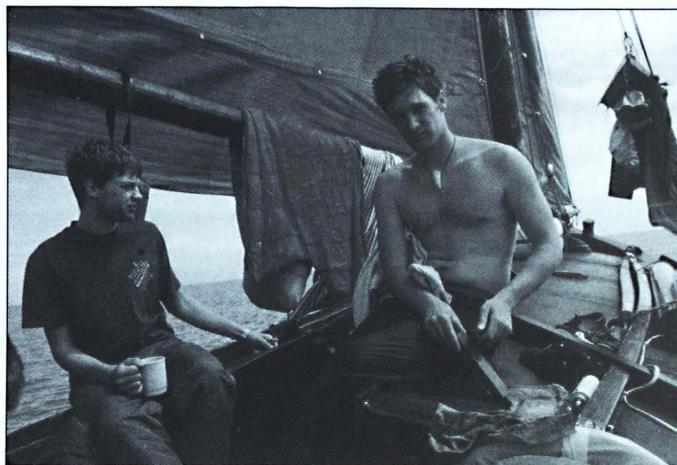
Armed with a chart of Ventspils, compliments of the Skipper of the local Tug, we departed on Wednesday morning. With Darach (the man who can sleep anywhere, anytime) at the helm I searched the boat for our Walker Log as our reliable GPS had gone down and Decca does not work in this portion of the Baltic. The forecast was N F5 and so we had to beat our way up the coast until we rounded the headland 30 miles to the north. The sea was much calmer and we put it down to the change in wind direction. At 14.00 the log reads 'Full sail, cloud filling from the NW, flat sea. at last., all happy, tea, soup, sandwich making, even a beer on deck'. By 20.45 we had slack winds and were motoring in a flat sea.

With the weather set fair we decided to continue through the night to our rendezvous. For a weather forecast we called up Ventspils Radio and four ships moored five miles off, to no avail. Motoring through a magically clear night that never got dark, we encountered a steady stream of ships going south, we presumed from Parnu or Riga. At 04.30 we altered course for the last time and headed for Nasva on the Estonian Island of Saaremaa. The entrance to this flat wooded Island is through a series of transits. It was 11.00 and the Y.C. having first arranged for customs, flew a large tri-colour to mark our arrival.

Here Pat Redmond, Paddy O'Brien, Ruairc and Darrach left ship, to fly home from Helsinki.

Paddy Barry takes up again:

Sunday July 21st. We left Nasva this morning bound for Stockholm. Aboard were the core trio of Sean, Kevin and myself, now joined by Donncha O'hEallathe and Ruadhri Ó Tuairisg from Connemara and Raphael McIlhone from



Darrach and Ruairc Ó Tuairisg.

PHOTO: Kevin Cronin.

Killyleagh. We had picked on Nasva as a changeover place, with a pin as it were, by reason of a postal contact with Eero Lapp, an Estonian yachtsman who has produced detailed charts of the intricate Estonian islands and channels. Eero turned out to be the jackpot for us. Special minibus tours, house visits, Soviet occupation history, local hospitality. We got it all for the couple of days in Nasva.

We went south about Saarema over the shallow 'Sorve Rif' and laid off the 125 miles for Revenggrundet a big light on the outside of the archipeligo fronting Stockholm. The wind blew from ahead. We engined until next morning when the wind blew fair for pleasant close reaching. I pulled out the multiplicity of Swedish Archipeligo charts with concern. I needn't have worried. After the first couple of hours among the island channels one sort of gets the hang of it with increasing confidence and a feel for the scale of charts and channels. We lay that night in Sandhamn Marina, the Cowes of Sweden they called it.

The next day was magic. Up sail by the pontoon in the freshness of a light early morning breeze. All day we sailed the 35 miles through wooded rock bound channels, broad and narrow. We anchored for lunch, swam, wine and continued, to end the day alongside Stockholms Nyebroken Quay wall. That evening six balloons floated across the evening sky, a Swede brought us out to the park where they landed. Pleasant helpful people all round it seemed. And it really was. The Swedes have it all — in summer at any rate. The *Vasa* made the hair on my neck stand, so awe inspiring was this huge living ship from so long ago. She had been raised from her capsized, sunken berth and was now housed in a cathedral-like purpose built building. We enjoyed flute music in cobbled courtyards, Medieval Stockholm Museum, Skansen Outdoor Museum, no high rise buildings. In fact there is no building, everything is complete, perfect is seems. We had drinks on board from 6-8 before dinner, the Tilley lamp later swinging over the cockpit. We lived a most civilised couple of days.

Then we took the inside route to the south, bound for Gotland Island via the inland Sodertalje channel, about sixty miles before clearing for sea again. With us we had Kurt, a Swede whose son lives in Gotland, who came with us for the trip. The sixty open sea miles to Gotland was a pleasant mixture of sail and occasional engine, taking us to Hanseatic walled town a day later, Saturday. The eider ducks in the harbour reminded Raphael of Strangford, he said.

Weatherbound, we lay there another day in the sun. That night Kevin and myself came across a dance. Yes, an old fashioned dance, where a man would ask a woman up, dance two tunes, escorted the lady back and say 'thank you'. There were no refusals. These were pleasant, confident people, aged



Donncha Ó hEallarthé, Sean, Raphael McIlhone and Ruairc Ó Tuairisg in Stockholm.

PHOTO: Kevin Cronin.

over 21, enjoying themselves. Some, indeed most, were even our age! On Monday at midday we left Visby going south west to the 'bottom' of Oland. The wind blew on the nose, so we altered westward to the north of Oland instead and reached the village of Byxelkrok that evening. This was a quiet holiday village, with a good man-made harbour, as everywhere in Scandanavia. Next day in flat water we close hauled down the sound the 46 miles or so in mist and showers. I finished C.S. Foresters Baltic Hornblower book, set in 1812. The sense of history in these Baltic places was all pervasive. Less recent than the terrible carnage of the countries bounding its southern shores, none the less it is real and tangeable. Our log for Kalmar speaks not of its impressive castle or of Molly Malones Pub, which we eschewed, but of our Polish host who wrote 'Please send Irish Music Tapes'. I must do that.

The following day I wrote in the log:

I was back in the boat about 10.30 p.m., about to bunk-in with a

book and a whiskey, when Raphael returned with news – music and dancing in the town. Off we went to find another adults 'country' dance, just like Visby. Back in the boat a couple of hours later we found Raphael drinking vodka with the visiting skipper of this Polish 15 metre.

The Poles are great, such vitality. The Swedes have a lot, but not that. We transferred to the Polish boat until 04.00. At 08.00 in the stillness of a sunny morning we sailed quietly from the harbour wall. That day we rounded Utangan, Swedens south eastern low headland and had a fine sail to reach Karlskrona by evening. As we touched the marina, the bacon and cabbage was ready. Good man Donnacha! Next morning, Thursday, August 1st, we set the bell for 04.00 and away before dawn.

During my watch I wrote:

Last night I was jaded. I didn't even walk up the town. Showered and to bunk by ten. Others came back shortly after. I'm feeling the better of it now and will get a grand bunk in at eight.

A fair proportion of good sailing was had that Thursday taking us to Ystad. On Friday we had another 04.00 bell with the sky still dark and a big moon. We motored until eleven then got sail up for the rest of the day, sunny and flying along with one reef. Approaching Copenhagen in the afternoon, reluctant to finish, we anchored for a couple of hours, then sailed on, past that mermaid again and dropped sail off Nyhavn. Deja vu.

Next day we handed over ship to our replacement crew, skippered by Jimmy Conlon. We scattered through the city for Cristiania and elsewhere. We were visitors on our own boat now.

Epilogue.

Jimmy and his pals, including my son Cathal, sailed *Saint Patrick* back to Dublin.

Around Ireland in no time at all, at all

Michael McKee



THE ROUND IRELAND NAVIGATION CUP

FOR THE BEST CIRCUMNAVIGATION
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON
NAVIGATIONAL AND PILOTAGE CONTENT

On Thursday, 11th July, 1996, thirty years dreaming and 12 months planning ended and we pushed off the pontoons in Bangor Marina to sail round Ireland the slow way. For the first part of the trip we meant *Isobel*, myself and two long time friends, Terry Devlin & Jack Gault. As *Isobel* was the youngest of the four of us we had agreed.... no heroics! Today there was no problem, Bar. 1020, wind negligible, rain soft and wet. We arrived at the new Marina at Phennick Cove, Ardglass at 21.00. Good pontoons, if a little narrow after Bangor, and a lovely new Marina building, but with almost 100 berths why only two showers and one loo in the Mens' Room?

Friday, 12th July (of Pious, Glorious & Immortal Memory), a dull but dry and pleasant morning with a N.W. wind F 2/3, Bar. 1017. After a good breakfast and the obligatory run ashore we left at 09.00. Hoisted all plain sail and then noticed I had forgotten to reeve the topsail sheet and the Ensign halliard. The crew's union quickly vetoed my suggestion that we drop the mainsail to reeve the sheet & the halliard. It's not like the old days being a skipper nowadays!

We were off Carlingford about 12.30 and from then on the wind was about F 1 or 2. Coming down to Howth inside Ireland's Eye and Lambay we wondered how you would find the approach buoy to Malahide in the dark. We never saw it on a lovely afternoon. We also noticed that the bottom comes up near the top inside Lambay, however with no trouble we moored up on the outside of Howth Marina at 20.00 hours.

In Howth we got our top light fixed, met friends Jack Wolfe and Jimmy & Jean Mackey, Liam McGonagle & Des Turvey. In Wicklow the berths alongside the outer pier looked a bit rolly so we tied up outside 2 yachts along the south pier in the river. Arrival drinks were very welcome, then followed by boiled bacon, beans, peas & potatoes. We went up to the Sailing Club for a few drinks and met Alan Rountree, the new owner of *Stravaiger* (ex Billy Oliver), whom we were to meet again several times on the west coast.

Sunday. Lay in till 0815 and after breakfast and a bit of a tidy up played with the Wykeham Martin for a bit. I'm beginning to become annoyed with this piece of gear. Some times it works perfectly but more often it rolls too tightly at the bottom and not fully further up. When this happens it has to be lowered, brought in on the traveller, tied down and left to be sorted later. We left Wicklow at 11.40, Bar. 1018 and tied up in the inner basin at Arklow at 14.00. There was one fishing boat with no one alongside so we made for it, but there is always a reason, it had just been painted and was still wet!

Monday, a lovely morning, left at 0800 in company with *Carna* (John Currie) bound for Kilmore Quay. Set all plain sail and thought about topsail and then thought again. Thought about going down inside the Rusk and the North & South Shear and thought again. There's nothing worse with a heavy boom and gaff than running dead before a fresh breeze and it did freshen. We held on to *Carna* pretty well all day. They took a reef down before the Tusker and we should have but didn't. We did lower the staysail and jib as dead down wind they don't do a lot. This

took the foredeck crew quite a while and not being a Captain Bligh I hadn't the heart to ask them to take down a reef as well. We followed *Carna* round the Barrels and through Saltee Sound and once in the lee of the Island we started the engine, took down the main and motored up into Kilmore Quay. This has been a long hard sail with a very fresh breeze for the last three hours and even following another boat up into Kilmore Quay in very shallow water was not pleasant. However Kilmore Quay is very pleasant. The locals are welcoming, the showers at the Seamens Mission are good and the seafood at the Silver Fox must be on a par with the best in Ireland.

Obtained 281bs. ice from the fish Co-Operative. They laughed when I offered to pay. Wednesday, another lovely morning, Bar. 1020. We left at 0800 in company with Mike & Alison Balmforth on *Quarterwave*.. Any wind there was, dead astern so again it was motoring.

This has to be the summer, everyone is applying sun cream all day. Entered Youghal by the East bar and anchored off the town at 18.00, in 2 knots of tide and in 13' of water. Unfortunately the ancient Seagull outboard which I acquired as a present is still in eighty six pieces in my garage so there was no way we could go ashore by rowing the Avon. Later on there was almost two hours of slack water but by that time being fed and watered the notion of going ashore was off us and we were content to sit in the cockpit with a nightcap, watch the birds and discuss the architecture of the town.

Thursday. The summer is holding up well, the Baro. still high and steady, so after breakfast left, this time by the West bar, and once clear of Blackball Ledge and the Black Rocks, hoisted the sails and thoroughly enjoyed a day long sail with light to moderate quartering breeze, passing Capel Island and Ballycotton and eventually between Pollock Rock and Power Head running into the Eastern fleet of Cork Week As there were easily 150 to 200 boats in this fleet we decided to start the engine and indeed at one stage we had to take avoiding action to keep out of their way. We motored into Cork harbour and over to the west we could see another fleet of 100 or so competing yachts. God help the Race Officers with fleets as big as these! As we headed across the harbour towards East Ferry we were greeted by George & Sheila McCann on *Deucalion* who were also going to East Ferry. In the excitement of meeting us George forgot about his draught but came to before running aground fortunately. We tied along-side Michael Colemans *Stella Maris*. What I hadn't realised at that time was that George Radley had told Michael Coleman that I was a rabid Unionist and George then told me that Michael was a rabid Nationalist. Despite these evil machinations Michael and I got on well together and George had better look out ! This was the end of the first part of the Cruise and Terry and Jack left the next day and Anne arrived with Dick & Joyce Brown who were going to stay for the Cruise in Company. It was great fun, wonderfully organised, we were very fortunate with the weather and I don't really believe that this sort of highly organised cruise is actually an Irish Cruising Club function . In the course of it we visited or revisited East

Ferry, Crosshaven, Kinsale, Castle Townshend, Baltimore, the Fastnet, North Harbour, Cape Clear, Schull, Castletown Berehaven, Bantry and Dunbooy.

Tuesday, 30th July. Anne and I cleaned ship, filled with water, went into Bantry and provisioned the ship & found out that John Longridge would be likely to arrive on the evening bus around about 19.00, which indeed he did.

Wednesday, 31st July, Anne left for Baltimore in the late morning, John Longridge had joined ship.

Thursday, off bright and early, but after a good breakfast, a couple of showers but fairing and a nice wee air. Started the motor to go through Dursey and it was necessary. We didn't lose the breeze but the seas were huge and terribly confused. We were both glad when the Sound was half a mile astern and we could stop the engine and sail again. We wondered about going up to Sneem but the picture of Derrynane on the cover of the Sailing Directions looked so inviting that we had to go and see for ourselves. It really is a lovely spot but the approach, following the Sailing Directions, is unbelievable and John and I nearly fell out before we were safely in and then we couldn't get the anchor to hold. After three attempts it did hold but by this time I wasn't too happy about going ashore.

Friday, a fine morning again and leaving Derrynane isn't half as scary as getting in. There was a fairly big sea running so it didn't seem worth while to go out to the Skelligs, although there were two or three yachts sailing round the islands. We carried on for Valentia, thinking about Knightstown for the evening but eventually deciding to carry on over to Dingle. This was a lovely day and a lovely reaching sail, arriving in Dingle and tying up to the Marina just in time for an arrival drink about 18.00. The big deal in Dingle is to get away from the front. The back of the town is lovely with interesting architecture, good shops and very good restaurants.

Saturday, another lovely day. We filled up with water again. Why do we use so much water? We never seem to drink any. The diesel arrived and we did a little more provisioning. During the course of all this feverish activity we ran into Sandy & Christine Taggart who had been sailing on Twiga with Mungo Park and who were about to leave for the airport at 13.00. It would have been churlish not to join them for a farewell drink, so we did. After seeing them into the taxi we returned on board for a light lunch and then set off for Smerwick or Fenit or somewhere. The forecast appeared to suggest that for another twelve hours it would remain southerly but would then go into the north so after some discussion and a bit of chartwork it was agreed that we should push on past the Shannon and make for the Aran islands. This was to be our only night passage and very pleasant and peaceful it was and after sailing and motor sailing as the breeze came and went we sailed through Gregory Sound and anchored in Kilronan, Aran, at 05.45 on Sunday. We had intended to spend the day on Inishmore but between 11.00 when we woke up and 14.00 by which time we had cooked, eaten and cleared up brunch eleven ferries had arrived from Galway and disgorged around one thousand people. We decided not to make it one thousand and two and left for Rinville. We had a good brisk sail up Galway Bay with some sunny spells and some fairly heavy showers. As we sailed across in front of the Club Peter Fernie saw us through the window and David Fitzgerald came down the beach and directed us on to his mooring. As soon as we had tidied ship we rowed ashore and were made very welcome with both drinks and food ... and so to bed!

Monday, 5th August, a dull wet morning. After a leisurely breakfast and a proper clean up of the inside of the ship we rowed ashore for a well deserved and much needed shower. David picked us up at 12.30 and whisked us off on a tour of the south side of Galway Bay, starting with lunch at Moran's of the Weir and ending up with afternoon tea at his home in Kinvara. In the dock in Galway theoretically I was now on my own for a

couple of days until Ronan Beirne arrived. However I had reckoned without the Galway Mafia in the shape of Paddy Walshe, Donal Morrissey and a couple of friends of Paddy's. For two days I was wined and dined, given conducted tours of all the licensed premises around the city centre, given a conducted tour of the Cathedral (Protestant of course) introduced to the Mayor of Galway, who quietly explained to me why he is not the Lord Mayor and quite importantly through Paddy's good offices replenished the cool box with ice, and filled up with water and diesel.

Saturday. Bar. 1010. A glorious day and we picked up a mooring off Sruthan Pier, Cashla at 20.00. Cashla Bay is a beautiful spot and that evening it was at its best.

Sunday, 11th August. Bar. 1010. A lovely morning. To be sure of the tide at Slyne Head we left at 07.00 and as we passed outside St. Macdara's island we bemoaned the fact that Roundstone was so close to Cashla.. Studied the chart for a considerable time and eventually opted to give Joyce's Pass a miss and go round Slyne Head. Anchored in Inishboffin between the two piers in about fifteen feet of water at 17.00. We rowed ashore for a walk, a drink and a meal. The local pub provided good, plain food but it was a bit disappointing to find only one person in the bar who actually came from Inishboffin. The girl serving behind the bar was American!

Monday, A peaceful, quiet but mizzly morning and another day of motor sailing. It's on a day like this that Paul Henry's colours become believable and as we slowly sailed up between Inishturk and Caher and looked over towards the high ground behind Killary the scenery and the colour were most impressive. We anchored off Clare Island just to the North of Granuaile's castle and the ferry pier in clear clear water about 13.30. Ronan took the 15.45 ferry to Roonagh Quay. He also took a large bag of garbage as we couldn't see a bin about the pier. As I was now on my own again for a day or two I decided to lower a chum and angel down the anchor chain. This sounds very Claud Worth but it is actually a 28lb. potato weight on a large galvanised shackle and mechanically it worked well. A beautiful warm sunny morning so after breakfast everything on deck, sleeping bags, cushions, mattresses, towels and a couple of boiled tea towels. Well pleased with the day's work it looked well and smelt well so rowed over to the beach and had a swim. The tourist brochure would say it was invigorating. The best shop on the Island is about two or three miles away besides the old Abbey. So off with my shopping bag. Noticed quite a few planning applications just off the road and there is a fair bit of building going on. The old church was most interesting, although a lot of it was roped off as the Office of Public Works is doing a restoration job on it. In fact the graveyard was as interesting as the Abbey. About 70% of the recent graves were of Islanders who had died in America or Australia and had been brought home to this small cemetery. The graveyard was very well tended and many of the graves had fresh flowers on them. Peter Bunting and Anne McKee arrived off the ferry about 17.45 and I rowed in and brought them off together with a mountain of gear and a new gas cylinder. Definitely time for an arrival drink and plenty of chat and then ashore to the hotel for dinner and afterwards more ear bending from the Belfast man.

Thursday. Up early and after breakfast put Anne on board the ferry for Roonagh Quay, back on board and off round the north of Clare and out towards Achill Head. As we closed the western tip of Achill visibility was poor enough at times and at others was very good. As we came north of Achill Head a good reaching breeze set in, but with heavy showers, so we headed across for Blacksod Bay and anchored in Elly Bay, having had a go at putting the ship aground first, at 18.20. This was the first day for over a fortnight that we hadn't had to use the engine for some part of the day.

A factory with chimney turns out to be a Gaelic speaking

Youth residential sports centre and very busy too. After a short walk we arrived at the pub. The barman was the owner's son, home on holiday from Boston, USA, his sister came in with two infants and she was from Chicago and then another sister arrived and she was from Manchester. Another customer came in and he was a local except that he had married a Glasgow girl forty years ago and was only over here on holidays.

Saturday, 17th and Sunday, 18th August. Baro. 1014. It now blew so hard for two days that we couldn't row ashore and we discovered that the chum and angel, apart from sliding up and down the chain easily also served its purpose efficiently. There was no one of our acquaintance left with a shred of reputation after these two days. There was not a book unread and the drink took a bit of a hammering, but it all filled the time in.

Monday. A good morning with no trace of the previous days nastiness. The wind still south but very light. P.J.B. hoisted the chum & angel and then the chain and anchor, tidied up the foredeck and on his return to the cockpit declared 'I would dearly love a smoke of the pipe'. I could only assume there had been a fair bit of exertion up there! With a little misgiving we passed through the channel between Duvillaun Beg and Gaghta Island and as so often happens we were through and clear before we knew it. We wanted to stop at Inishkea North, having read W.M.N.'s piece on it, but it was too early for lunch or a swim so on we went. The pilotage was interesting but I wouldn't want to try it on a bad day. Up past Frenchport, inside Eagle Island, round Erris Head & into Broadhaven where we anchored at Ballyglass just off the pier and close to the RNLi boat at about 15.30. Ashore for the bright lights, phoned for a taxi and while we waited inspected the new lifeboat house and the commemorative plaque which told us that Clayton Love had opened it.

Tuesday. Dull, misty & damp. Today we were heading for Killybegs, a fairly long day sail so we left at 07.15 with the wind NNE 3 to 4. Even in Broadhaven the sea was lumpy but out off the Stags it was worse. This was a proving day. It proved that even the best oilskins won't keep out driving rain and it proved that motor sailing in a gaff yacht is the way to get to windward. We took turns at the tiller of an hour each and after a while it was long enough as it was truly a miserable day. Fortunately in the early evening it cleared up and the last hour up to St. John's point was quite pleasant, with just a glimpse of sun and the wind dying away. Of course you can't have it all good and as we entered the channel for Killybegs darkness fell.

Wednesday. I spent the morning drying the ship. Peter spent the morning repairing the Whale bilge pump. The next morning we selected a pub with tables on the street so that we would see Anne when she arrived. Peter took Jillie and Andrew out to *Isobel* in the Avon and came back with his dunnage. Anne took him off to Bangor and I returned on board to show Jillie and Andrew where to stow their gear and a tour of the inside of the boat.

Thursday. A dry morning but threatening and by the time we raised the anchor at 09.00 the threat was realised. The rain was now what they call in the West soft, but as we filled up with diesel it cleared up a bit and by 11.15 when we cast off it was dry. As round Rathlin O' Birne was a bit far for a day sail and as I had an introduction from Donal Morrissey to Jack Gallagher at Teelin this was to be our first stop. Unfortunately the clearance was over and it poured down for the rest of the morning and most of the afternoon.

Friday 23rd August. Baro. 1003. A better morning. The forecast was for light variable winds, showers with sunny periods. The cliffs of Slieve League were most impressive. It's a surprise to me that they are not more widely known. This was the first time I had seen Rathlin O' Birne in the daylight but on this occasion we sailed north inside between it and Malin Beg head. We intended to go to Church Pool but at lunchtime the

forecast started to give fresh north to north-west winds for that night so we changed our minds and headed for Aran Island. I had been advised not to go through the South Sound, but with a northerly forecast we decided to try for Chapel Bay or Rossillion Bay. South Sound itself is not a great problem in good weather but the bridge at Inishkeeragh is very shallow, so out with the tide tables. After working it out using Galway and again using Dover it seemed that if we could arrive there before 17.00 there would still be two hours before dead low water. We did arrive in time and met a fisherman who assured us there was 'plenty of water'. We very slowly edged across and for a moment had less than 1 metre under the keel. I suppose on the East coast of England that would be a lot but I don't like it. Chapel Bay looked small so we headed over to Rossillion and anchored just outside the local half deckers and off a beautiful beach and under a pub.

Saturday. A lovely sunny morning and there was more water over the Inishkeeragh bridge this morning but in Aran Sound we had less under our keel for a short moment than we had yesterday. We anchored, as per the Sailing Directions, N.E. of the Obelisk and S. of Calf Island, just inside some local fishing boats about 13.00 afternoon to stretch the legs, do a bit of shopping and see if we could eat ashore that evening. All but the eating ashore was successful although the young girl in the shop balked at taking a Eurocheque for £70 punts, fortunately not so her dad. So back to the boat for dinner, cards, chat and a nightcap.

Sunday, 25th August. Blowing hard all day Thank goodness for potato weights. Will have to work on the outboard this winter, no way we could have rowed ashore today.

Monday. The early morning forecast still giving fresh northerlies and the day was poor looking. However by 0930 the day had started to improve and the wind had started to decrease so off we went for Bloody Foreland and parts eastwards. Once again we realised how much we were missing as we sailed past Gola and then Cruit and later on Inishsirr as we came up to and round Bloody Foreland and on into Sheephaven and down to Downings where we anchored off the pier at 18.00. Ashore again for drinks, a meal and phone calls.

Tuesday. A grey morning but dry and the wind N. 3 to 4. The wind was fine but the seas were awful. However after we cleared Sheephaven, although they were still big, they were easier to handle. We were going into Mulroy with the tide and it is some tide. Fortunately despite some nail biting we avoided all the dangers and enjoyed the tranquil approach up to Fanny Bay where we dropped anchor about 17.30

Wednesday. Barometer well up but a cold grey morning with thick mist. Not the sort of day to go exploring the upper reaches of Mulroy, so declared a lay day. Ashore at the boatyard there is a government backed project to teach young people the skills of wooden boat building. Off to Carrigart in a taxi and now its raining. Found the bank, found the supermarket, found a pub and then to the hotel for lunch. Not a bad way to spend a wet day at Mulroy.

Thursday. A lovely day to explore Mulroy but we are off for Lough Swilly. On the way out saw the Sessiagh Rocks which we had not seen on the way in and realised that we had sailed in between the Low Bar Rock and the High Bar Rock on the way in...a very careless piece of pilotage. This turned out to be a great days sailing and we tied up to Rathmullan pier at 13.30 to be met by Terry Devlin who had volunteered to bring Anne up plus the next crew, Gerry Magowan and John Stevenson. Jillie and Andrew left with Terry and left Port Salon.

Friday. Woke up for the 0555 forecast and there was such an awful roll coming into the bay we decided to get up and go. We left at 07.45. There was a good breeze but by now an awful sea and even John (an O.Y.C. watch leader) asked if he could stay on the tiller as it made him feel better. As we approached Inishtrahull Sound the Decca seemed to have lost it's marbles, it

told us we were doing eight and nine knots over the ground but one mile to the east of the Sound it was registering eleven knots over the ground. At this stage it was back to the tide tables. This was the biggest spring tide of the summer and we had the tide and the wind. What a ride!

We tied up to the pontoon at the inner end of the pier in Portrush at 15.00 and that must have been the best sail of the trip.

Saturday, 31st August. A poor morning with little breeze but huge seas. We were advised against Rathlin Sound today with the big spring tides and the Harbourmaster agreed. So Saturday became a lay day but with entertainment. As it transpired the Royal Black Preceptory were marching through the town in the afternoon. Lunch aboard and then some shopping.

Sunday, 1st September. A dull morning with a light southerly breeze. We left Portrush at 09.45 and took the passage inside the Skerries. This gave us a smooth start to the day but once through the Sound there was an uncomfortable swell. However the breeze was right and the east going tide was very strong. We tied

up inside the harbour at Church Bay, Rathlin at 13.00. There is a lot of work going on, including dredging the bay between the breakwaters and the harbour and Rathlin will certainly become much more accessible and much more useful to yachts from next summer. That evening a tug arrived with a barge full of 5 ton boulders from Troon and we were treated to a wonderful display of seamanship as the barge was manoeuvred up to the site of the new Ro-Ro ramp and inside four hours the boulders were unloaded and the tug and the barge were away. (N.B. this on a Sunday evening).

Monday, 2nd September. A grey morning but calm, wind West 1/2. We left for Bangor at 09.00 to take as much advantage from the tide as possible. This worked and we tied up in *Isobel's* berth at Bangor Marina in the early afternoon after seven weeks and two days away.

This cruise showed me that you could spend seven weeks on the South coast, seven weeks on the West coast and seven weeks on the North coast and still not see it all.

CETACEAN SURVEY

James Fennelly who is one of a group of people undertaking a Cetacean Survey in or around Irish Waters has asked that the following note be included with the Annual, in the hope that members might assist the survey group in collecting information about whales, dolphins and porpoises.

The Survey is anxious to build up records from observations of Cetaceans in order to enlarge mans knowledge of a group of mammals that is particularly vulnerable to increased pressure upon marine environment. The aims of the Survey are:

1. To collect information on the status and distribution, migration routes and breeding areas as well as aspects of the biology of whales dolphins and porpoises in the North Atlantic.
2. To collect field descriptions, photographs of Cetacea around the coasts of Britain and Ireland with a view to publishing a field guide to the Cetaceans of the North Atlantic.
3. To co-relate records of strandings from the National History Museum with sightings by yachtsmen, weatherships, lighthouses, observatories.
4. By collecting such information, and with greater participation by people as a result of the publication of a field guide; it is hoped that suggestions as to conservation measures may emerge for many species within the group that are rapidly becoming threatened.

If you would be prepared to help the Survey please contact the Cetacean Survey c/o Keeper of Natural History, National Museum, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

The Survey team will issue interested parties with a short whale identification guide and standardised recording form.

Oleander of Howth in Northern Greece

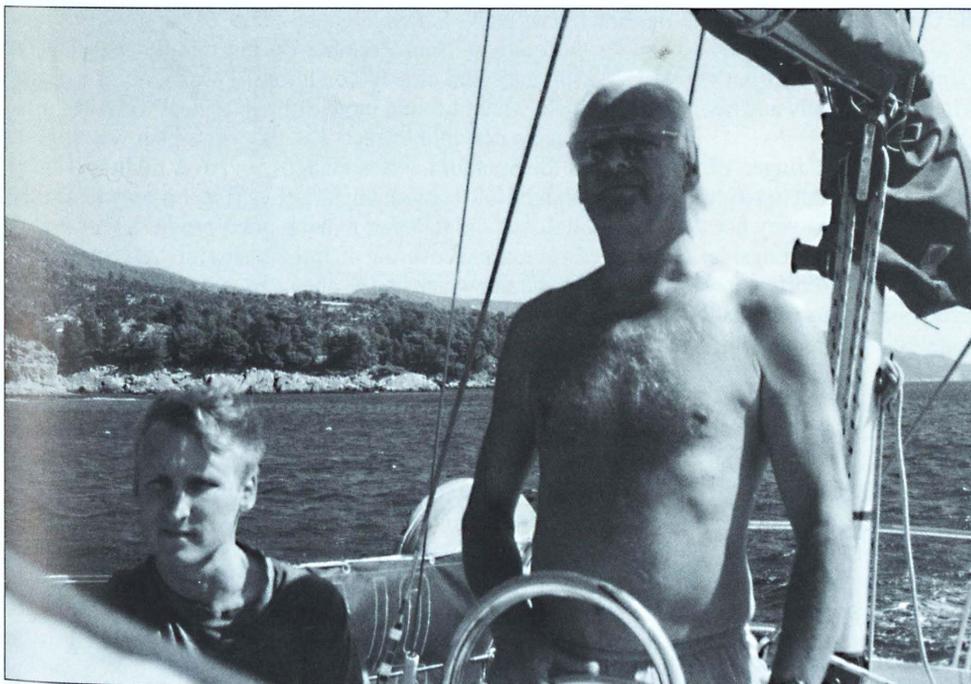
Betty Hegarty

We left *Oleander* in Setur Marina in Antalya, S. Turkey last summer and Brian had lots of engine trouble when he arrived back there in early April with our friend and I.C.C. member the amazing Bud Bryce. Communications, difficult at the best of times and exacerbated by language and cultural differences produced a set of circumstances which caused a 2½ week delay in starting this year's summer cruising. Eventually an almost totally re-built engine was working well and on May 20th *Oleander* started her northerly journey. Bud and two other retired pilots Ken MacKenzie and Nial Handcock left Brian in Samos where Rob D'Alton joined and when at last they got to Lemnos on the 31st May the Skipper was greatly relieved to be back on schedule. Rob had been cruising with us each year since 1990 and it was a sad shock to us and particularly to Brian who had a really good fortnight with him this year to hear of his death in August. He was a delight to have on board had a wizardly touch on the helm and a finely tuned sense of humour. We will miss him.

As planned, Ross Courtney, Romaine Cagney, John Malcolm and I arrived in Lemnos very early in the morning, pale and tired after our journey and we were delighted with the Skipper's breakfast of bacon and eggs. We rested in the little harbour at Myrina that day, had our first swim and our first Greek meal in the evening. Next morning we moved on to Moudros Bay, broad and sheltered which was the base for the Gallipoli Naval Campaign in World War I. The island is quiet and untouched by the tourist boom. During the Bronze Age it was the logical step between Europe and Asia Minor and myth has it that it was from here Troy was founded but for me it hadn't the charm of Samothraki which

was our next port. The harbour here is safe and attractive and the Chora well worth a visit. We went up there for lunch and a short scout round and were charmed by the roof-scape of old tiles firmly held down with stones - evidence of strong Aegian winds. From the little town we got a taxi to the Ancient Temple City of the Kaheiri, who were a pre-Greek people who worshipped the Great Earth Mother. The Sanctuary of the Gods is a magical place and we were the only people there. What pleasure to wander through easily identifiable temples, market places, initiation areas and soak up the atmosphere of a very mysterious place. Even Ross, who doesn't usually succumb to such charms was affected and we all returned to *Oleander* well pleased with our day. Next morning found us under way early and bound for our 'windward mark' Alexandropolis on the mainland, close to Turkey. We found it hot, and inhospitable, with difficult Port Police. We were glad to leave next day for Lagos along the coast. Here we were fascinated by the bird-life on the well wooded spit but when we went off looking for a place to swim we found only a swampy beach where I went down to my oxters in mud and lost my plastic shoes. Our next island was Thassos where we went stern-to the quay, and John, Romaine and I climbed the hill behind the village to see the remains of the Ancient City of Thassos. I had a contretemps with the keeper and the theatre was closed but the views were spectacular and to our delight the ship had been bunkered when we returned. We moved round to the SW of the island to a small harbour Limenaria which was our departure point for the Mt. Athos Peninsula where we intended to view the famous Orthodox monasteries from the sea. This area is one of the most fascinating in all Greece. Mt. Athos,

the Holy Mountain, is 2,033 metres high and on it's peninsula are 24 monasteries which have been inhabited and self-governing since about 961 a.d. Princes and Emperors down through the centuries have left secular life given all their money to the Church and joined the religious orders. The Byzantine Empire supported the development and one of their decrees forbid any 'woman, beardless person or female domestic animal except hens on the peninsula'. Nowadays it is no longer a requirement to be beardless but the nearest a woman can get is 500 metres off-shore. Building continued until 1400 when there were 40 monasteries. Now there are just 24. As we motored along at the required distance it was an amazing sight. The buildings are huge and seem to grow out of the cliffs. In fact the whole experience provided such chat that evening where we ate in a



Brian and Robin in West Sporadis.



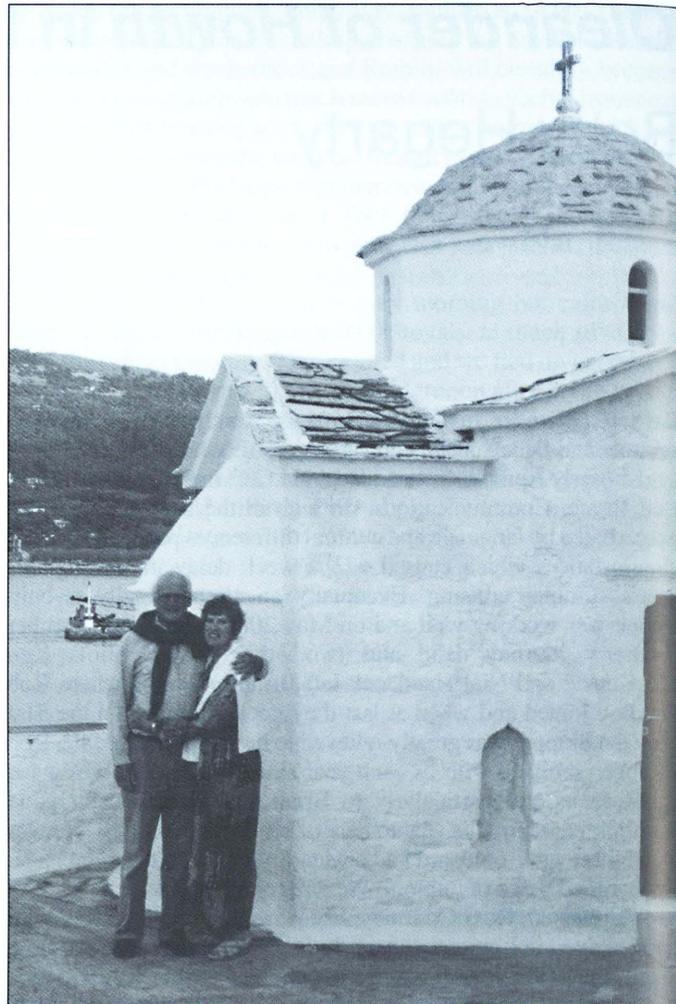
John Malcolm and Romaine Cagney on Thassos.

good taverna on Amouliana, an island off the landward end of the Akti peninsula.

We lunched next day in a little cove on the west of Amouliani, and the Skippers entry in the log reads- "Lovely, golden beach backed by trees and greenery. Water temp. 23 degrees C., swims and lunch. Rather upset a naked couple in a small motor boat - a case of 'coitus interruptus'. Our night stop was Porto Koufo where the Skipper cooked one of his tasty Shepherd's pies. Since his time with Peter Bunting on *Gulkarna* and his training as "cook for 24 hours", as they went Round the World with *Europa '92*, Brian's interest and skill in cooking and food has increased greatly and his repertoire is growing all the time. Hoorah!!

The canal that cuts through Kassandra, the 3rd finger of Halkidiki, was our next stop and the day was calm enough to swim en route which was a great relief to our bodies as it was very hot. The canal proved an interesting experience as we went alongside a fishing boat whose crew gave us delicious Greek coffee and Ouzos and went off to sea as we eat dinner on board. *Oleander* had to leave unexpectedly at about 03.45 as boats began to return from their night's fishing and so we set off for Thessalonica about 40n. miles away. The wind came against us and we sailed and motor-sailed some 73 miles before getting into the harbour.

John Malcolm left us here and Romaine and I went to the Archaeological Museum where there was a stunning collection of gold and silver objects from the tomb of Philip 2nd of Macedonia which had been discovered in 1976. We found a little Ouzerie on our way back to the boat and when we said we were Irish the three local men greeted us warmly saying they had never met anyone from Ireland before and asking would we be drinking a lot with our lunch or fighting afterwards. Oh the power of the stereotype. When Romaine and I assured them that at this stage in our lives we didn't

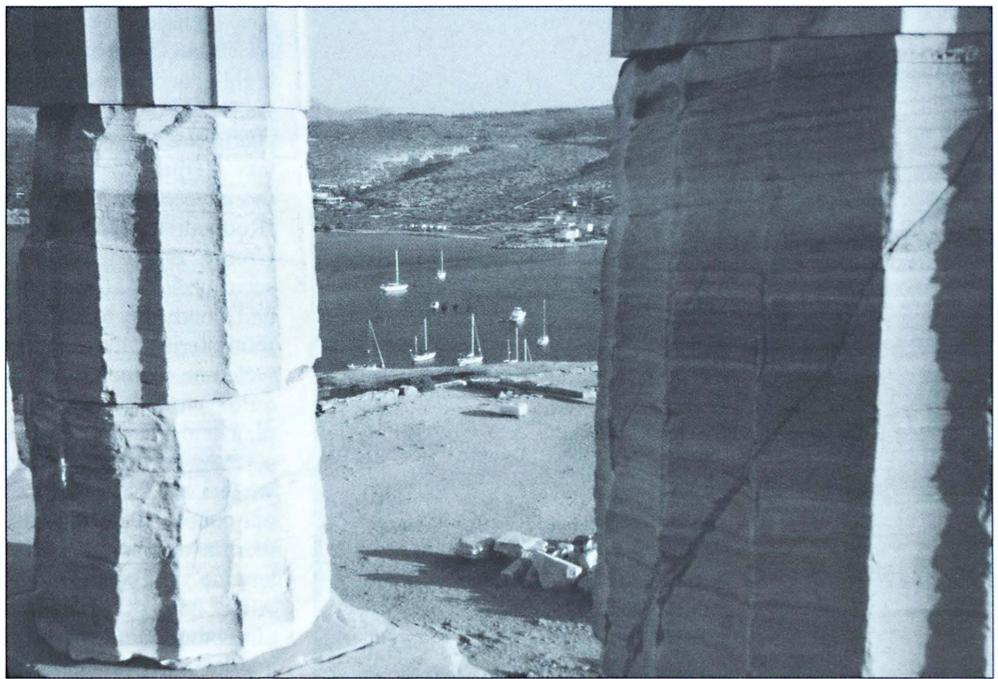


Brian and Betty at Skopelos.

drink much and had almost stopped fighting they were visibly disappointed.

R. and R. left us next morning and Peter Bunting and Elaine Thompson joined - Elaine for 1 week Peter for 2. We kept our fingers crossed that the N-westerly which had been against us would not have gone perversely to the S-east as we retraced our steps - it did but only force 2 and we got back to the canal playing the first of our many Scrabble games. That evening we anchored bow-to the quay at Nea Marmara on the middle finger of the Halkidiki in cool and cloudy conditions. I was glad of a respite from the heat which I found more difficult to deal with than usual this year - anno domini I expect. The Skipper's plan was to get to the first of the Sporades, Nisos Pelagos, and over night in a lonely bay in which he had passed a night last year on his way to Turkey. Sure enough, we did just that making good progress with engine and No. 2 Genoa and covering 48 miles pleasantly protected by the bimini from the sun which had re-appeared. Ormos Planitis, for that is its name, is a delightful spot - no-one in the anchorage but lots of goats ashore. On the tiny outside island of Yioura, the Ibex herd roams and is culled by the locals each year but even with our binoculars we didn't spot one. It was great to be in the Sporades - Brian had been most impressed last year and we had decided to allow about a month to explore them thoroughly. I was looking forward to a leisurely few weeks with lots of time to enjoy all the joys of Mediterranean cruising - and I wasn't disappointed. The book of this part of the cruise was 'The Gates of the Wind' by Michael Carrol, whose father came from Cobh. It is a great insight into the islands of the 1960's, easy to read and of course some of the families mentioned are still around. As we adopted our usual routine of swim and lunch and siesta in a nice bay and anchoring stern or bow-to each evening we had a new addition to the day -

our evening game of Scrabble. It is a marvellous game at every level. Brian and I are beginners and at this stage of the summer we were amazed at the skill Peter and Elaine demonstrated as we racked our brains to dredge up words beginning X and ending with Z. I find it challenges me on lots of issues. I have had to become a good loser (the Skipper beats me most of the time) a keen competitor (haven't been 'into' competition since school days), learn to concentrate (I'm a bit of a dreamer) and develop my memory (I look up the Scrabble dictionary and try unsuccessfully to remember lots of two letter words which don't mean anything to me). Good fun. But I digress - back to Alonissos, the next island which is long and green and unspoilt yet bustling in the little ports. Patitiri where we anchored bow-to is the capital with the distinctive blue and yellow of the hydrofoil ferries much in evidence. They come in usually most discreetly leaving little turbulence in their wake shed and board passengers at an amazing rate and with great regularity all round the islands. We watched all the activity on the quay serenely from our cockpit. Next morning having disentangled our stern anchor from some local boats we moved along to a little cove near Ak Telio lighthouse for lunch and on to the next island of Skopelos for the night. Another busy place it has a delightful old



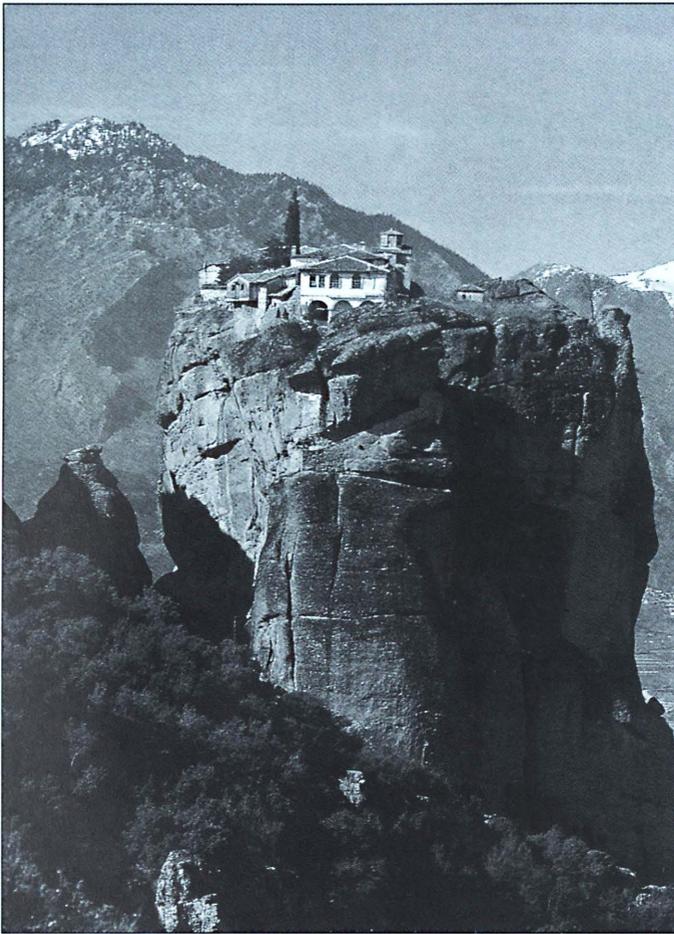
Anchorage at Cape Rounion from the Temple of Posidon.

town around it with a typical Greek church overlooking the harbour from a height. We ate ashore in one of the many tavernas and I remember a delicious supper of liver bacon and chips which was a tasty change from the ubiquitous souvlaki. We left next morning for Skiathos, the main island, stopped for our swim at a little bay N.W. of Agnonda and got to the quay in time for a berth. Elaine was to leave us here, and the Skipper wanted us to sample the food at a posh restaurant called 'The Windmill, which he, Sean,

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Oleander Anchored off Nisis Trikeri in the Gulf of Volos.



Monastery of the Holy Trinity – Meteora, North Greece.

Bud and Harry had enjoyed last year. This we did, and ate very well indeed - high on the hill overlooking the big bay, an idyllic moonlit setting.

With Peter, having visited Agnonda on Skopelos, we went to Skyros, the most southerly of the Sporades, and rather cut off from them. I went up to the Chora looking for an 'Alternative Centre' which had disappointingly become a gym, but I had a wonderful, if rather exhausting morning, climbing to the top where there is a quiet monastery. On the way through the tiny, white streets I met a beautiful old woman who brought me into her little house. First she gave me sliced cucumber to eat, then she told me her life story amidst laughter, and tears and dancing. I understood her sufficiently to feel close and empathetic. We finished off with delicious coffee brewed on her miniscule stove, she gave me a bunch of mixed flowers and herbs, and sent me on my way feeling very happy and privileged. The harbour at Skyros is busy, the taverna good, and we left again next morning for Agnonda and a lovely crayfish meal. This was followed by an anxious night as the wind blew into the little harbour, and *Oleander* almost jumped out on to the quay. I was scared stiff. We were now returning to Skiathos, via Glossa on Skopelos, which was mostly a ferry port so we ate on board. Next morning the wind was on the nose, but we covered the 6 miles comfortably, and Peter left the following morning after another good meal at the 'Windmill'.

We had a quiet maintenance week in Skopelos, and then Robin our eldest son joined us, to our great delight. He had had pneumonia in May and still felt tired. We took him around all the lovely anchorages, including Panormos where Michael Carrol built his dream house in the '60's. The bay is delightful - wooded, sheltered and near a long, classic beach where we swam after shopping. We enjoyed Rob's company, and sent him home brown and rested to his busy life.

Now it was time to leave the Sporades, and after a night at the most westerly anchorage on Skiathos, a golden sandy beach called

Korkounaries, we set off for the mainland and the little island of N. Palaio Trikeri in the Gulf of Volos. Definitely one of the highlights of the summer, the tiny village was welcoming, and as we looked at it from the cockpit, ate ashore and absorbed it's quiet charm, we counted our many blessings. I wanted to go to Volos and take a bus ride to the Meteora - an amazing collection of monasteries on high, rocky towers which I had read about in 'Roumeli' by Patrick Leigh-Fermor, a most fascinating book on N. Greece. Brian had trouble with his back, and was worried about security, so he stayed on the boat while I had a miraculously cool and cloudy day to walk and explore the area. Unlike the Mt. Athos monasteries, these enormous buildings and their custodians welcome women, and from what I saw, are developing as a big tourist attraction. The 3¹/₂ hour bus journey revealed a high fertile plain and a bumper crop of cotton. On the way back to Volos I met a young woman who was almost qualified as a lawyer, and we whiled away the hours exchanging ideas and information about our countries. Apparently the Greeks are a very litigious race, and there is lots of work for the legal profession. But if you don't 'know anyone', and particularly if you are female, it is hard to get started. About 80% of Europe's shipping industry is based in Greece, so our young friend intends to aim in that direction. She came and had a drink on *Oleander*, and after our conversation with her, we understood better the fear and hatred the Greeks (10 million) have for their historic oppressors and neighbours, the Turks (70 million).

We left next morning, and sailing under No. 2. Genoa and Bimini, had an excellent journey to Orei on Evia. A simple holiday fishing port, it is very popular with Greeks, and we ate delicious pork Donner and drank cold local Retsina. The next milestone was the bridge at Chalkis connecting Evia with the mainland. We found a small harbour Nea Artaki, just a mile away, where we spent a comfortable night, and the following day spent an uncomfortable time alongside at Chalkis in a strong breeze while we waited for the bridge to open. Such a fuss to get through. Eventually we succeeded at 02.00, and had a quiet night anchored in a bay to the south. It was great sailing next day, through the narrows and down inside Evia with a nice breeze for a while, and getting to Aliverion, another quiet Greek resort. Voufalo was next, and it lived up to it's reputation as a beautiful anchorage. Tucked away amid towering mountains, it is a quaint, peaceful little place. There is a fish farm nearby, but it doesn't spoil the bay. We loved it and moved on reluctantly to Porto Rafti ;which has a good, airconditioned supermarket, but is not an attractive place.

There was a fickle wind as we left for Sounion, but we motored happily all the way, and anchored under the pale marble columns of the Temple of Posidon. We climbed the hill early next morning, and gazed over the Saronic Gulf which awaited us in the hazy, blue, mist. We were back in familiar waters, very well pleased with our explorations of the past two months. Go there, if you can - go soon'.

During the next two months Brian, and I brought the boat slowly through the Saronic Gulf, the Corinth Canal and onwards to the Ionian Islands. Michael O'Farrell (I.C.C) and Jack O'Hare, our friend from Newry joined us in Zakynthos for two weeks, and more family came for the first two weeks in September when the weather broke, and we had a series of amazing thunderstorms. Michael and Annie McKee (I.C.C.) flew out to Corfu to very changeable weather, and cruised to Sibari in S. Italy with us. There *Oleander* was hauled out, and sits comfortably in her cradle till next Spring. During the last month, she proved once more what a sound and safe yacht she is - sturdy and sea-friendly. She brought us about 2,000 miles this summer, and we are happy to have her back in the yard in Sihari where we are greeted warmly and given every care and attention.

Now, remembering and planning next year's cruising will keep her very much in our minds and hearts as we settle in to enjoy and luxuriate in the winter in Ireland.

Copenhagen to Dublin

Jimmy Conlon



THE PERRY GREER BOWL
FOR THE BEST FIRST ICC LOG

Copenhagen - Inverness.

The minibus taxi dropped 6 of us with gear at the lifting bridge in Nyhavn. *Saint Patrick* was here in the heart of Copenhagen. David O'Donnell, the seventh member of the crew for the homeward trip was there on deck to greet us, along with the departing crew. A better spot couldn't have been chosen as a base for seeing the city. Nyhavn Canal was dug 300 years ago to allow traders bring their wares to the city centre. Today, the banks are lined with trendy pavement cafes and bars. Tonight (Saturday Night) it is crowded with people out to enjoy the weekend. Copenhagen is certainly alive.

The first few hours were spent chatting, and hearing some of the stories of the outward leg, and Baltic tour. The (older) boys had sussed out a good bar "The Dubliner" on their stop here, 4 weeks earlier. It is on Stroget, the world's longest pedestrian street. Once the sun had set, this is where we headed.

There was a good mix of personalities and talents amongst us. Cathal De Barra, James O'Donnell and Fionán Breathnach were in school together. David is James' brother. Graham (Grazer) Farrell is a Waterford based solicitor. With 5 lawyers on board, we had a strong legal team. Alan O'Driscoll (Chief Engineer) and I both work in Cork, but were in college together in Dublin. Plans for this voyage had begun last October. Enthusiasm and interest in the trip was high, as the memory of a fantastic sailing weekend in Galway Bay last August was still fresh in the mind. Europe was the obvious next step. Most of the others had coastal sailing experience, some on *Saint Patrick*.

The Dubliner turned out to be a lively spot. It's not just Irish tourists who drink here. The Clientèle were a truly International bunch. Cathal was auditioned as Bodhrán player with the Scottish Band that was playing - and the crowd seemed to love it! Graham led the way on the dance floor with a few fast jigs, and a set was danced before the band finished.

Sunday got off to a slow start, but there was some lunch time dancing on the boat with a few local dancers, and big crowd gathered to watch. I had intended to visit the Carlsberg Brewery and Tivoli Gardens, but ended up going to Christiania instead. This is a self-governing community of about 1000 people who have settled and started their own businesses. They live in "peace and harmony". 'Alternative' is the best way to describe the lifestyle.

As the bridge lifted at 9am on Monday morning, we slipped our lines, said good-bye and headed for the sea. Our passage northwards through 'Oresund' - the Sound separating Denmark and Sweden - was completed in daylight. The rough plan was to go directly to Gothenburg on Sweden's west coast, which was a 24 hour run, and from there another overnight trip to South Norway.

Starting out with sunshine, on a broad reach with all sails set was a great boost. The wind was SE'ly, 10 Knots. (This was reported in metres/second on the Stockholm forecast, so a quick conversion was required). Watches were set, 3 hours on, six off, with 2 people on at a time. We sailed through the night, arriving in Gothenburg Fjord by mid afternoon. Cathal, who had his t-shirt off at the slightest chance of seeing the sun, was named "Bronze Man".

Marstraand, just outside Gothenburg is where we tied up. This small holiday island was quiet, as the Swedes had returned to work a week earlier. Fionán and Graham cooked the first Barbbque of the trip - wild salmon. Wine and beer was drawn from the cooler over the side of the boat. On Wednesday, we took a bus trip into the city for a (very) quick walkabout.

At 11.30 pm, we set out for Norway. Daylight was fading fast, but with numerous sectorised guiding lights, and a flat sea, we were able to get out through the multitude of small islands, and into the northern Kattegat. It was a team navigation effort,



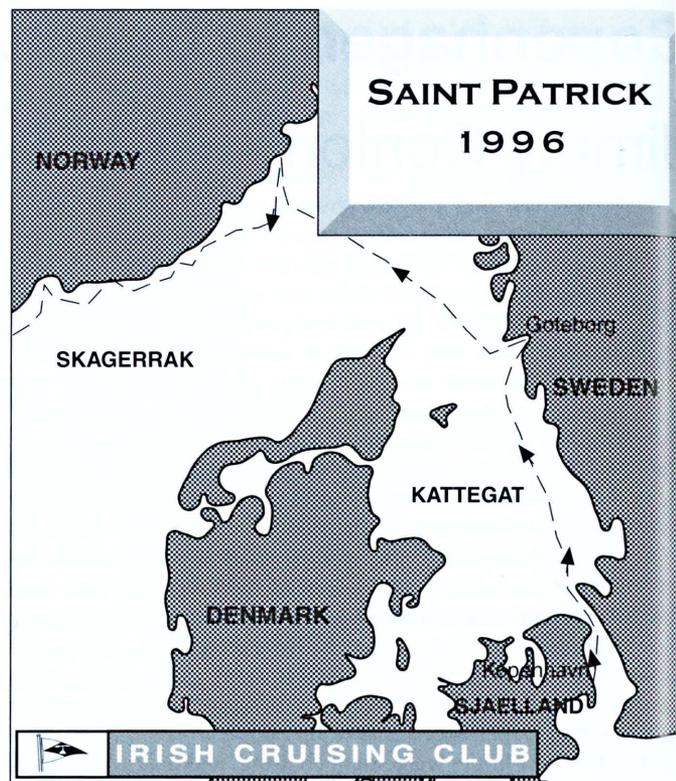
Lyngor, Norway: Cathal, Alan, Fionán, James O'Donnell, Jimmy, Graham.



Early Morning: Fort William.

PHOTO: Cathal De Barra

with David and Alan doing a lot of the work. The SE'ly breeze returned during the night and had freshened by morning as we approached Lyngor, on the southern Norwegian Coast. This village was highly recommended by the skipper of a Swedish sail training ship. It was, as they say, a "good call" and a worthy winner of "Europe's best kept town" in 1992. It is set on several adjacent islands, with narrow channels dividing them. The villagers get around in 12 foot dinghies with outboard.



Norwegians are very proud, and without exception, the National Flag flew from every house. Risør, about 10 miles to the east, was hosting its Trebatfestival (traditional boat festival) this particular weekend. It was a pure coincidence that *Saint Patrick* was in the vicinity. Both boat and crew were made very welcome. There was a great buzz about the place - singers, strollers and of course sailors all enjoying themselves. As the only Irish boat there, (and possibly the only non Colin Archer), the black boat drew plenty of interest. A Norwegian sea-shanty singing group sang traditional English fishing songs, with perfect Northern English accents. This excellent bunch intend to come to Ireland next year on a singing holiday. Visitors to our party included Ralph (a helicopter pilot), his wife Sarah and son - Raider. Aevin, from the boat next door joined us too. Fionán really drew a crowd when he played and sang with guitar. With a quick scan of the crowd, everyone at the party was male, so we went up to the pub to redress this gender imbalance. Beer in Norway is tasty - just as well, as it is 40 NoK (£4) a pint.

At noon on Saturday, we reversed out of the crowded harbour, and began making ground westwards, calling into Lillesand, Kristiansand and finally Farsund in SW Norway each night. We covered 50 miles a day comfortably, sometimes going by the scenic inner passages to shelter from strong winds.

The forecast for the North sea looked favourable, mainly SE'ly and NE'ly F3-5. Once all the jobs were done - boat dieselled up and engine checked, we set sail for Scotland. I gave a short pep talk on safety, and wearing harnesses etc. The course was due west. A reefed main and jib were set. Fionán and Graham continued to excel with the cooking. Oil rigs were numerous. A note in the log reads :

15/8/05.00. Bright clear dawn. Bright oil rigs all round. Maureen oil field astern. Forties and Balmorral fields abeam.

At 13.00 on Friday 16/8, tied up at Clachnaharry Sea Lock, just outside Inverness, at the entrance to the Caledonian Canal (370 miles in 72 hours). A very enjoyable crossing.

Inverness - Dublin

Log reads: "Welcome aboard Feargal, Eanna, James, Adrian. Both crews meet at local hostelry, with hen party and much singing and dancing. Gaelic was spoken with Angus from South



Ireland's Eye, Nearly Home: Éanna, Jimmy, Adrian, James Kelly, Alan, Feargal. PHOTO: Cathal De Barra.

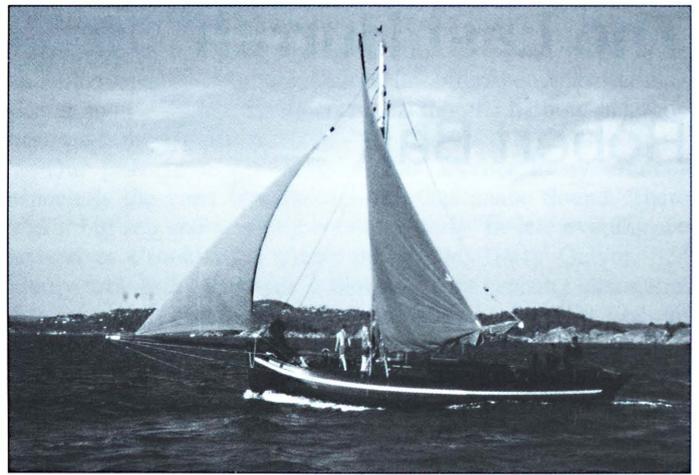
Uist and all agreed that similarities between Scottish and Irish Gaelic were plain to 'sea'. After a fine night, the crews returned to the well laden *Saint Patrick*. A certain Joy from the next boat made us chicken soup and fed the late night revellers whiskey galore..."

The new crew for the one week trip from Inverness to Dublin were James Kelly, Adrian Burke, Feargal Twomey and Eanna O Bradaigh. Sadly, we said good-bye to Fionán, James and Graham.

Sun 18/8, we departed Inverness for Fort Augustus. The canal is 60 miles long, passing through several deep lakes including Loch Ness. It started well. However problems started to develop with the engine. Alan replaced a worn fan belt, and this fixed the overheating problem in the cooling water loop. Luckily, the problem was spotted quickly, before any damage was done to the engine. This delay meant that we were late heading out into Loch Ness, but would still make it in daylight to Fort Augustus, 20 miles to the south-west. We managed to swing close enough to Urquhart Castle on the shore of the Loch for a photo opportunity. An hour later, the real trouble started. With steam coming out of the exhaust, it was quickly diagnosed that the sea water side of the cooling system had stopped flowing. Extensive checks on the pump, intake etc. showed nothing amiss, so the engine was restarted. The cooling was now ok, but the engine wouldn't go into gear. It was discovered that the splined collar coupling between the prop shaft and the gearbox had fractured. Alan reckoned that it would be difficult to jury rig a repair. It was 5 miles to Fort Augustus. There was not a breath of wind and at 200 metres it was too deep to anchor.



North Sea: Cathal, Jimmy, Fionán. PHOTO: James O'Donnell.



Inner Passage, Near Kristiansan, South Norway. PHOTO: Ralph Andersen.

Loch Ness is 20 miles long and a 700 metres wide. Provided the wind didn't get up and funnel down the deep valley, we were ok. If it did, it would be difficult in total darkness to sail, not being able to see the shore too well. Until dawn we drifted in complete darkness, apart from the light of a small campsite ashore. There was nobody contactable on VHF. A party went ashore to try to organise a tow from Fort Augustus, but the town was asleep. They did manage to get a mechanic, Ian Ross out to the boat, but it without the right part, he was unable to help. Feargal cooked his now famous chicken dish "Ra-ta Twomey". At dawn the wind rose, and we tacked into Fort Augustus. I was glad to be in. Everyone proved their worth during this episode. Sightings of Nessie didn't even deter them from carrying out the necessary duties.

Two days were spent there waiting for a replacement part, and installing it. Alan worked with Ian Ross - a local mechanic who really went out of his way to help us. While they worked on the engine, the rest of the crew walked the boat through the set of four locks, in order not to lose another day. The weather was misty and wet, not great for hiking either. Ian Ross joined us in the Lock Inn for a pint:

Log reads : *Again out-singing the official pub entertainment. Cathal and Feargal singing to the delight of all. Barmaid of all our dreams.*

By Wednesday night we were in Fort William. Ben Nevis would have to wait for another time.

Craighouse on the Island of Jura was our last stop. With a warm sun and cloudless sky, this place was made for *Saint Patrick*. Lots of good hiking available, but it was Friday afternoon and we needed to be back by Sunday. Timber and whiskey seem to be the islands main exports. On the quay wall there was lumber piled high, waiting to be shipped. Jura distillery is nearby, but was closed for maintenance shutdown. Apparently Jura is third now in the Scottish Malts, and they have extended capacity in the plant by moving to 24 hour operations. Anyway there was Malt available in the friendly Jura Hotel that night.

Lines away at 7am Saturday, and we motored southwards in a light southerly wind, into the North Channel and the Irish Sea. At 4pm Sunday 25/8, we were tied up in Dún Laoghaire, 3 weeks out of Copenhagen..

This was a most enjoyable cruise of 1,000 miles in 3 weeks with a very large proportion of sailing in the first two weeks. The crew were super all round. I don't think I have laughed so much in a long time. I hope we'll go sailing again soon.

The Last Hurrah

Robert Barr

Pen Men, a Sparkman and Stephens 30, is now-a-days devoted entirely to cruising. I am fortunate in being able to manage two each season and a few week-ends at Carlingford thrown in. (As to the latter – the slightly zany kindness of Pedro and Jane’s marina; the delights of those two culinary gems, Magee’s bistro and Jordan’s restaurant; and farewell oysters at P. J. O’Hare’s have combined to create a weekend oasis for Dublin yachtsmen which has added a new dimension to the joys of the season). In May/June we had another cheerful odyssey to Western France. And so the time came for *Pen Men* final cruise. She has given me enormous pleasure and the parting will be tearful, but your scribe has crossed the rubicon into the realm of free travel; and the exigencies of life as a creaking corporation sole are becoming tiresome. A new hip or two and a more sylphe-like figure probably would extend the tenure, but I have no plans in that regard – especially the latter – a whippet-like existence at this late stage would, I am sure, fly in the face of the Almighty’s eternal plan.

It seemed to me that a social cruise to visit old friends and favourite haunts would be appropriate. And so it was on 1st August we set off on the first leg of a South-West of Ireland experience. In the end the cruise offered everything – spectacular sailing; the joys of friendship; glorious weather and the delights of familiar tables. Peter Fagan, that most admirable of cruising companions, who has sailed with me all over the place for many years, joined my nephew, Mark Barr, for the first few days and he also returned for the last lap from Crosshaven. The weather was kindly and the wind, an ideal 15-20 kts. westerly, gave us a fast passage to Tuskar Rock, followed by a brisk beat to Dunmore East.

Things have changed since I was in Dunmore two years ago. There are now fewer trawlers – probably due to the new harbour facilities at Kilmore Quay – and one trot from the floating platform near the sailing club has been positively reserved for yachts. We were tied up outside five others and later on two or three joined us. One of the joys of Dunmore is The Ship – a fish restaurant worthy of the port. We put it to good use.

Next morning we woke to find that tropical conditions had set in and so it remained for days – a relentless blue sky with a warm sun and a gentle 6-15 kts SW. It was too early for the club, but we found that showers are available in the harbour master’s office block. We cast off for Youghal on the tide. In late afternoon we made fast to a mooring organised by my friend, John Fitzgibbon of Ahernes. Soon afterwards a fisherman arrived to assure us that it was the right one and to assure himself that ours was the right yacht.

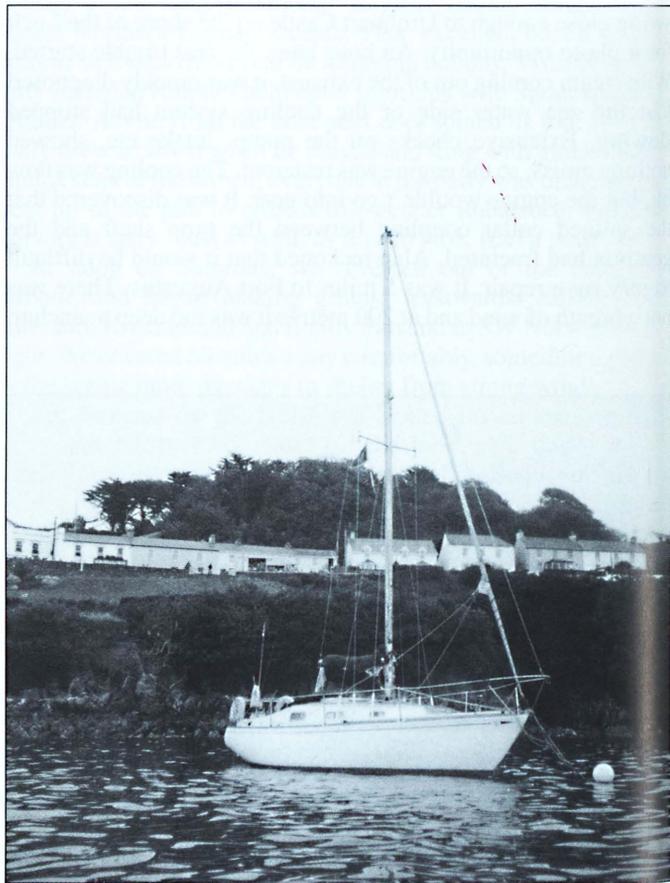
Youghal was in the throes of excitement having a buskers’ festival and a visit from Bosco. Dinner at Ahernes was, as always, very special. After years and years of devoted (I was going to write “selfless” but that would not be true) research I have not found a better maritime fish restaurant anywhere.

The night ended with an exciting surprise. I have anchored or moored many times at Youghal without any problem. I knew that there was a spring ebb tide which would have to be allowed for

when rowing the rubber dinghy back to *Pen Men*. We did that without difficulty, but the problem was “catching” the yacht as we swept past and then climbing aboard. The tide stimulated by the river was running at about 4 kts. However, all was well and a glass of punch soothed us.

The passage to Kinsale next day was the sort of cruising one dreams about. A SW 15-18 kts. wind in an oriental blue sky and flat sea gave us an average speed of 6 kts. In late afternoon we tied up at the Kinsale YC marina in the midst of the Town Regatta. There was yacht racing; swimming; greasy pole; bands; fireworks and a splendid atmosphere of joi-de-vie. It was a great time to be in Kinsale

That night the skipper took over the culinary reins. Delicious steaks were served which were grilled in a remarkable Portuguese implement called a Harney. (Dermod Ryan introduced it to Ireland). It is made of iron and consists of two identical square, ribbed containers with long handles. Both parts are hinged together and fold over one on top of the other. Each side is heated on a gas ring for about five minutes a side. The steaks are inserted; the top side is closed on the bottom which is placed over the gas ring. After four or five minutes the Harney is turned over so that the other side is on the ring for a similar



Pen Men at Glandore.

period. Then it is opened and the steaks with their juices retained will be found to be reminiscent of the Dolphin in its greatest days. (younger members and those from remote parts will need to be told that the Dolphin Grill was the greatest steak-house in the history of Dublin). No cruising boat should be without a Harney.

Peter discovered a bottle of VAT 69 at a special price of £9.99. He bought it to add to the ship's bodega as he had learned that it is the favourite tippie of the Queen Mother. Some believe that it accounts for her remarkable longevity and tranquil disposition. Undoubtedly there is no difficulty in forcing it down.

Monday was a rest day. Mark and I enjoyed the benefits of the Acton Hotel Health and Leisure Centre. There are many attractions for £5, including an excellent swimming pool, gym and sauna. My brother, Ed, who was replacing Peter and Mark, arrived from Dublin and, as the yacht club was full, we had lunch in the Trident bar-cafe which was good value. and then a brisk monsoon set in which lasted for most of the night with an NW gale gusting 40 kts.. Next day there was still plenty of wind from the north-west but the rain had cleared. We had a lively sail to Glandore where we picked up a mooring thoughtfully provided by the Glandore Inn for yachting patrons. I understand that the Marine Hotel also provides moorings, but none of them are marked. A local yachtsman told us about this welcome service. The gargantuan hot-pot which Ed's wife had provided was attacked with gusto and found to be a credit to its creator. The night was tranquil, but next day a southerly gale was forecast and, as we had time in hand, we decided to have a Rest Day in Glandore. That night Ed was in charge of the Harney and no one in Glandore ate better. In the early hours the wind got up and up and up. It reached a crescendo of 40 kts and the monsoon was back again. But by morning reasonable tranquillity and a hot sun had returned. The wind moderated to 18-25 kts SW when we cast off from Glandore. We motored across the bay to Union Hall where a major fishing port has been built recently. It is now the

third largest in the rep ublic and is impressively state-of-the-art. There were several yachts lying outside a trawler at the new pier and others nearby at anchor. Union Hall offers better shelter than Glandore nearby, but the down side is that the harbour is a mile or more from the village.

Our passage to Crookhaven was another lively affair – especially the dead beat through the Gascanane Sound. There was a big sea and a strong south-westerly. In late evening we arrived at Crookhaven where my friend, Barry Galvin, had kindly arranged to provide a mooring. His cruising catamaran was awaiting company with fenders laid out. We tied up alongside (I was already aware that the mooring is strong enough for half a dozen yachts). There was no one aboard, but his rubber dinghy was ready for our use. Beside its painter was a rope into the sea at the end of which was a bag of two dozen scollops, all snapping and snarling. At this point a crucial decision had to be made – were they intended for us or not? I gave us the benefit of whatever doubt there may have been and had nine of them for supper. The Galvin generosity knows no bounds.

Our next passage was to Castletownberehaven. There was an SE gusting 35 kts. outside Crookhaven in a big, turbulent sea. We stood well off Mizen Head to avoid the overfalls. By then the wind had freshened to 40 kts. "Pen Men" with no foresail and a fully reefed main, revelled in it all and charged along at 7-9 kts. Castletown harbour was full of sheltering trawlers when we arrived. There were nine yachts – all at anchor between the town pier and the "Spanish" pier on Dinish Island. We dropped anchor and twenty fathoms of chain in mud near the other yachts and found that we were holding well despite the gale. I contemplated laying a kedge also, but decided to wait for a while to see how things developed. In the event, a few hours later the wind moderated and there was no need for the kedge.

That night it lashed rain but next morning the sun was restored to its proper place. The first problem was getting up the



Youghal.

anchor. It transpired that it was stuck fast in 8 ft. of mud. It was then that Ed and I remembered that we clocked up more than 130 years between us and we were long past the "sell by" date for deck-apes. However, it is marvellous what can be done when needs must, and eventually with assistance from the engine and self-steering gear, we got the anchor up and set sail for Glengarriff.

Fergus McKinley, that other ideal cruising companion who has sailed with me so often, was at the end of the pier to welcome us. He and his wife, Joan, have a lovely house high in the hills overlooking the bay. They have created a garden out of a virgin forest which rivals Garnish Island below. Conor Treacy and Pat O'Dwyer, very welcome real deck-apes, also joined us at Glengarriff and replaced Ed, who had performed admirably above and beyond the call of duty. But first we all dined together at the Sea View Hotel, Ballylickey, which to quote the Guide Michelin, is worth a detour. Next morning we picked up Fergus and said good-bye to Ed at Glengarriff pier.

We were now embarking on the social climax of the odyssey. I have a very old friend (we started life at school together) who is also a colleague on the Bench, Dermot Kinlen. He is remarkable by any reckoning. If there was an Olympiad for characters, Dermot would be a Michelle Smith. He is known throughout the length and breadth of Kerry and presides at his compound of houses at Bunnaw harbour, near Sneem. He is a bachelor whose greatest joy is entertaining his friends and the more the merrier. I don't know anyone else who has ten bunk beds and all mod con in a carpeted garage and also room for his car. I have another very old friend and judicial colleague, Mella Carroll, who has a house at Waterville. Her hospitality also is a byword. Added to that duo is Rene and Olive Cusack, a charming, kindly couple from Limerick who have a delightful house at West Cove which is also steeped in hospitality. Everything was set fair for a memorable "State Visit" – and so it emerged.

We had a good, lively passage to Derrynane – particularly through the Dursey Sound where there was too much wind for

the cable-car. The entrance to Derrynane is very narrow and looks formidable on the chart. However, the ICC directions are excellent and if followed carefully there is no difficulty. The anchorage is delightful and provides good shelter. Dinner at Cusack's got us off to a splendid start.

Next day the wind abated and tropical conditions were restored. Mella joined us for the passage to Oysterhaven in Sneem harbour where we had the benefit of a floating pontoon kindly provided by Brendan Gilmore and Paddy Hayes.

Before leaving Derrynane we met a French family – father, mother, four lovely daughters and a son (twin daughters were left at home!). They were cruising from France in another S and S 30 which I inspected with much interest. She has been in their family since she was built in 1970 and has given them great service and pleasure. It was a strange coincidence to have two S and S 30's in such a small remote place. I understand that only thirty of them in all were built between 1967 and 1970.

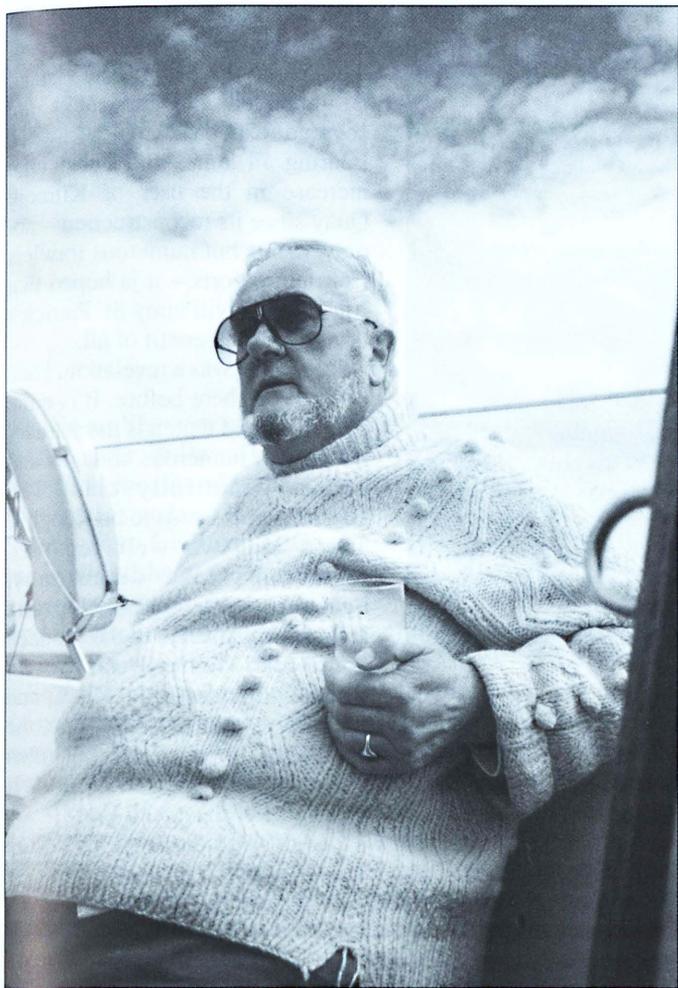
The banquet in the Kinlen compound at Bunnaw harbour was extraordinary even for him. The twenty two guests comprised six nationalities with chameleon talents and backgrounds – all orchestrated by mine host in his favourite role of culinary tose annini. It was a tour de force. We all stayed the night. On account of my seniority, I was not required to sleep with the motor car. Next day it was our turn to entertain. We brought our hosts and some others on an excursion in Kenmare River which included the delightful Kilmacalogue harbour. The conditions were perfect and a memorable day emerged. In culinary terms we held our own. The plum pudding and Jameson butter kept us in the race.

That night in the Carroll house at Waterville, Mella, her brother, Milo, and niece, Christine, entertained us to another memorable feast and provided us with a home for the night. At this stage I was getting concerned about how I was going to get the crew back under the lash.

The Carroll house is one of a terrace of substantial family homes which were built near the turn of the century by the American company which set up the cable station at Waterville.



Kilmore Quay Marina and new trawler quay. Note black poles which mark entrance to marina.



Job satisfaction.

About eighteen houses were built for staff and the station commenced operation in 1904. A cable comprising many meshed copper wires had been laid across the Atlantic for the electronic transmission of messages to North America. A similar facility was built by a rival company at Valentia Island using a second transoceanic cable. For over fifty years the only means available in Europe for contacting the New World, other than by surface mail, was through one or other of the two cable stations in the remote south-west of Ireland. Each were capable of transmitting many messages simultaneously using a binary code, invented by an Irish mathematician, which is still the basis of contemporary computerised international telecommunications. The stations at Waterville and Valentia were technologically far in advance of their time and spearheaded the development of modern international communications. Unfortunately when the Waterville station closed down in 1961, having been overtaken by wireless telegraphy, none of the equipment was retained and the formidable granite transmission station is now a youth hostel. Perhaps even at this late stage it may be possible to install in part of the building some of the equipment, or a facsimile thereof, in its original layout. It would recreate a major chapter in the history of international electronic communication and underline the pivotal role which Ireland played in its early development.

After three days of lotus eating, I succeeded, with difficulty, in prising the crew out of the Kenmare river. Our return passage through Dursley Sound was a tranquil affair in a calm sea and tropical warmth. In early evening we tied up at the town pier in Castletownberehaven. There were very few trawlers in port. For several days we had had an RT transmission problem. Conor identified two faults in the mike and he repaired one, but the other required some solder. An electrician was found (Mr. O'Sullivan opposite the butcher in the main street) who solved our difficulty in a minute or two and we were restored fully to the

outside world. Capt. Jones, the harbour master, and his wife came on board to have a sundowner. He told us that there are now sixty five trawlers based at Castletown and the port is doing a good business. I remember forty years ago when there were only five or six small trawlers; grass in the main street and the curse of emigration was palpable. Now the town is flourishing; excellent trawler facilities have been built and many emigrants are home again. It is most encouraging to see the metamorphosis which has taken place.

Mrs. Jones is a remarkable lady – a formidable Brazilian of German/Polish extraction. She had just finished her working day as master of a dredger which is used for excavating coral sand. She told us that when dry it is processed and converted into a wide variety of products ranging from fertiliser to pharmaceuticals, including hormone enhancers which she assured us were good for procreation and matters of that sort.

The boys kindly invited Fergus and I to dinner. On the harbourmaster's advice Nico's on the main street was selected. It transpired to be a wise choice. We had an excellent meal in agreeable surroundings.

Early next morning (August 15th) Fergus left us to catch the 07.30 bus to Glengarriff. It was great to have had him on board. I checked the fuel tank and found that we had used only seven gallons of diesel since leaving Dunlaoghaire fifteen days earlier.

When Fergus departed we cast off for Castletownsend. The sea was calm; there was little wind and it was very warm. Rounding the Mizen was the antithesis of what Ed and I had contended with a week earlier. In late afternoon we dropped anchor at Castletownsend. This delightful little town was looking gloriously tranquil in the evening sun. Fergus and Joan arrived by car to collect Pat who was returning home – a most agreeable deck-ape. He is a nephew of my old friend, Joe Dunn, who would have crewed with us but for his sudden death in July which had



Feeding time at Glandore.



Serious racing at Kinsale town Regatta.

shocked us all. Pat was a worthy successor. We all climbed the hill to the lovely C. of I. church which dominates the harbour and we saw the organ which American admirers of Edith Somerville (of Somerville and Ross fame) presented to the church a few years ago in her memory. She had been organist there for over sixty years.

When the others had left, Conor, and I repaired to Mary Anne's for dinner.

Next morning was once again totally tranquil and sunny. We asked ourselves where has the wind gone from the south of Ireland – we had had little or none for five days. We set off for the Royal Cork YC marina at Crosshaven where we arrived in late afternoon. Soon afterwards Fagan was restored to the fold and there were appropriate celebrations.

I had worked out that with an early start Kilmore Quay at sixty five miles is a viable day's sail from Crosshaven. We set off at 06.25 and were delighted to find that there was an SSE 10-15 kts. wind to welcome us outside Cork harbour. It was good to be back to pure sailing. In the afternoon the wind speed gradually increased to 20 kts. which gave us an average boat speed of 6 kts. "Pen Men" loves a tuck of wind. As we approached Kilmore Quay we were following Jack Flanagan's "Rockabill". Both yachts strayed a little to the east of the dogleg entrance to the harbour close to St. Patrick's rocks which are unmarked and not to be seen at high water. This caused the harbour master (Lt. Comm. Aidan Keogh) and the marina master, John Synott, some excitement. But we did not stray too far and all was well.

The revitalised harbour is excellent. It now accommodates a substantial fleet of trawlers. The new marina has accommodation for about fifty yachts and its construction is state of the art. Water and electricity is laid on. There is plenty of dredged depth and total shelter is provided. We were charged £10 for the night and got a great welcome from the harbourmaster and Mr. Synott. Although it had been opened for only six weeks, the marina was already well filled. It is beside the village which itself is attractive and worth a detour. I have no doubt that yachtsmen will find it a valuable acquisition as a stop-over going north or south. Coming from the west it is important to stand off about half a mile from Crossfarnogue Point and Forlorn Rock. There is also a tricky cross tide which needs watching. There are now good leading marks for the harbour entrance i.e. two high candelabra lamp standards on the east quay to be lined up in transit with the village church on high ground behind them.

The only real problem with Kilmore presently is that St

Patrick's bridge i.e. the narrow gap in the rocks which run from east of the quay to the Little Saltee island is unbuoyed and the rocks are covered except near low water. Bearing in mind the substantial increase in the user of Kilmore Quay since its reconstruction – not only yachts but numerous trawlers from other ports – it is hoped that Irish lights will buoy St. Patrick's bridge for the benefit of all.

The village was a revelation. I had never been there before. It is quite unspoiled and that is the primary motif with numerous cottages and houses beautifully clad. The favourite pub seems to be Keogh's. There are two well regarded restaurants. We dined most agreeably in the Neptune Deckhouse attached to the wooden house Bar. We met Denis Woods, vice-commadore of the RIYC, and

his wife, Margaret, there. They told us that the other one, the Silver Fox close to the harbour, is also very good but often booked out. We were well pleased with all we saw at Kilmore. It is an admirable addition to the delights of the south-east.

At 08.00 next morning we cast off for home and, following Mr. Synott's navigational advice, sailed out from the harbour for 1.2 miles along the transit already described. He had also given us the Lat. (52.09.20N) at which to make the turn for St. Patrick's bridge. The sea is turbulent in that area and could be particularly so in heavy weather or strong wind over tide. Should either occur, I would counsel playing it safe by making a detour around both Saltees. The channel between the islands is also unmarked and there are numerous rocks. We averaged 5.2 kts. from the Tuskar to Dun Laoghaire under full main only. At midnight we tied up at the RIYC pontoon. It was a splendid Last Hurrah.

SUMMARY				
PORTS AND ANCHORAGES	N. MILES	HOURS	SAILING	MOTOR SAILING
From Dunlaoghaire				
to Dunmore East	115	22	17	5
to Youghal	38	9	6	3
to Kinsale	36	7	7	—
to Glandore	31	6	4	2
to Union Hall	3	1	—	1
to Crookhaven	36	6	6	—
to Castletown	28	4	4	—
to Glengarriff	20	3	3	—
to Derrynane	46	8	8	—
to Sneem harbour	15	3	—	3
to Castltown	29	6	—	6
to Castletownsend	46	9	4	5
to Crosshaven	51	9	3	6
to Kilmore Quay	75	13	13	—
to Dun Laoghaire	84	16	16	—
Total	613	124	91	33

Caribbean Dream

Peter and Susan Gray

We laid up *Waxwing* on the hard in Power Boats excellent yard in Chagauramas Bay, Trinidad on 27th June to draw to a close over eight months of wandering over the ocean and round the windward islands of the Caribbean. We had set out on the 7th October from the Royal St George to the sound of cheers from our well wishers on the balcony but with the somewhat inauspicious prospect (for the start of what we dream will be a world encircling cruise) of a beat southwards against a foul tide, a strong wind and gale forecasts. We made it to Arklow but had to lie there for two days until the omens improved. Kinsale was the next stop for provisioning and because we judged it – I think correctly – to be the best jumping off point for the very westerly course to Porta Santo we proposed to take to keep us well out of the Bay of Biscay It took us nearly a week to escape the hospitality (John & Elizabeth Petch and Keith & Poppy Hunt were the main culprits). By then the weather had improved and the pundits reckoned on four or five days of moderate north westerers. They were right and we reached the latitude of Cape Finnesterre about 250 miles out in great comfort. There we had a photo call with *Sheila* whom we had met in Kinsale and on which Ian and Kay Ferguson were starting their 25th or so Atlantic crossing. We kept radio company with them all the way to Porta Santo and welcomed the twice daily chat and their expert advice – always tactfully given. Six days out from Kinsale we met a series of three southerly gales during which we tried variously bashing on to weather and heaving too. The latter tactic is now our favourite (although *Waxwing* seems quite capable of bashing through most seas) and we feel the sleep and relaxation one can get is an important aid to safety. Tiredness is always a problem for the shorthanded and the odd gale is almost worth it for the opportunity it offers to catch up on sleep.

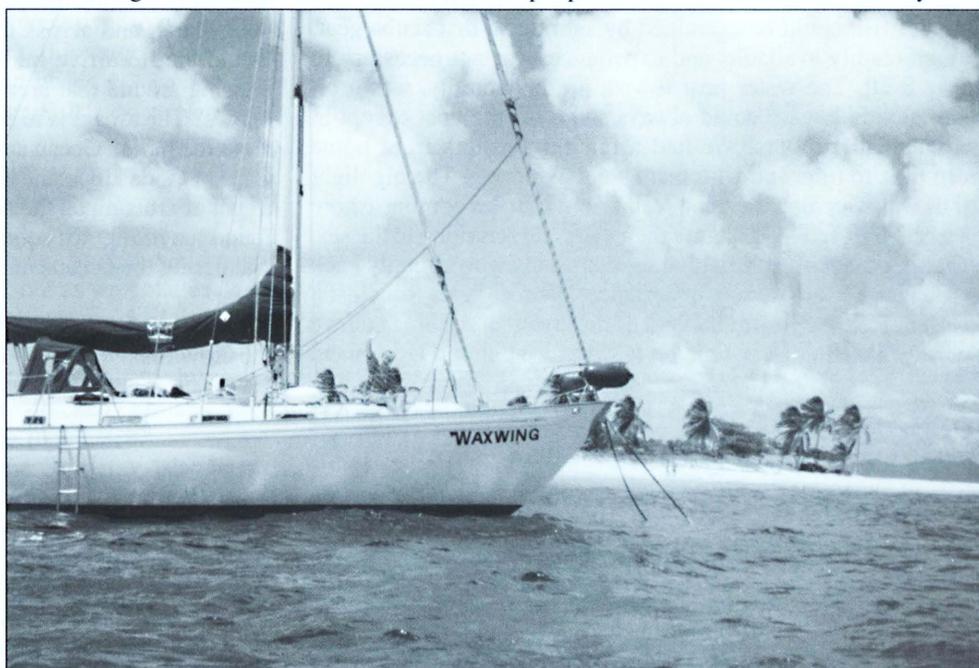
We reached Porta Santo in 13 days – rather slow-and spent a few days on that delightful island as opposed to the usually more popular Maderia. Then on in lovely weather to La Palma – the most westerly of the Canary Islands,for a few days before we sailed and motored over to Los Palmas for the start of the ARC on 19th November. The Atlantic crossing was uneventful – well almost – with rolling seas and trade winds ranging from zero to 25 knots. We ran most of it “wing on wing” with small light weight yankees boomed out each side and set on the twin grooves of our head-stay foil. They furlled neatly on it when required to do so and I think the lighter cloth helped with this. We were also able to set them

free of the booms both on the same side (sort of laminated together) when the wind, as it occasionally did, went on the beam for a while. We caught no fish and saw precious little bird life until we got near to St Lucia and our only real excitements were disentangling a fishing net from our prop mid-ocean and climbing the mast for which I got a severe bruising for my pains.

We reached Rodney Bay in St Lucia on 12th December after a twenty two day passage at an average speed of just over 5 knots – well within the time frame set by ARC – but not particularly fast. We used the engine to assist us on the way (as opposed to using it to charge the battery banks) about 20% of the time which is perhaps an indication of the relative incidence of light winds. We found the wind charger was not very effective down wind and we are adding solar panels to our battery charging methods. Joining the ARC was a good thing for us and I would strongly recommend it to anyone else planning an Atlantic crossing – especially the first one. You do not get value unless you have SSB radio and then the comfort and entertainment offered by the daily roll call and the inter-yacht chat makes it well worth while.

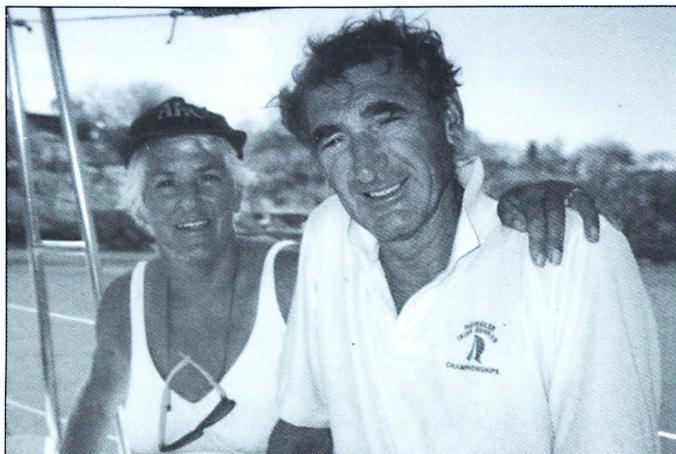
From December to June we cruised the Windward Islands between St Lucia and Trinidad and became regular callers to Marigot Bay, the Piton anchorage, St Vincent, Bequi, the small Grenadine islands and Grenada. Apart from Tobago Cays, Palm Island and Sandy Island (all in the Grenadines) the setting was not as one would expect from holiday brochures and pictures. Rugged mountains, steep, rough-seas between the islands and strong winds were the norm. But its still a lovely and exciting area to cruise with an abundance of facilities ashore and afloat and a wide choice of charter fleets.

We found the people on all the islands friendly and



Waxwing anchored off Sandy Island in the Grenadines.

PHOTO: Susan Gray



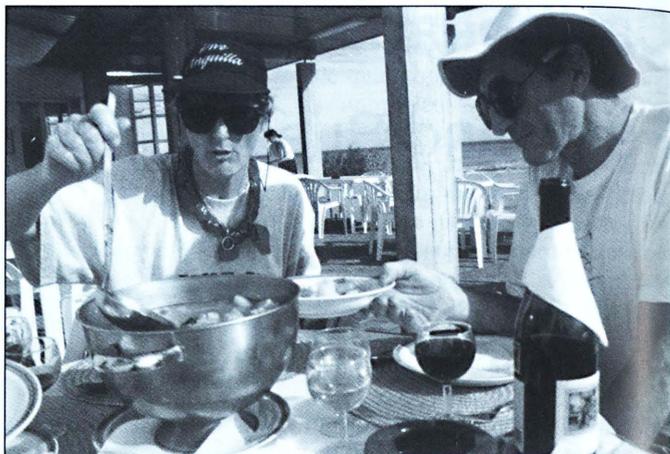
The happy pair – at anchor in Grenada.

welcoming and even the immigration and customs officers, while sticking to the bureaucratic rules they are obliged to apply rigidly, had a smile and a word of welcome to their islands. Admittedly the procedure was a bit wearisome for “clearing in” and “clearing out” and almost every island had its individual paperwork but it was acceptable if one did not get impatient and treated the officers with respect. Swimming in the clear waters of places like the Tobago Cays was a wonder. Warm water (30°



Hairdressing salon – Hog Island, Grenada.

– 32° C – much the same as the air), beautiful and exotic coral and reef fish could be examined by snorkle so that scuba gear, though readily available, and experience, was not necessary to enjoy it all. The water near towns, not unnaturally, was a bit more cloudy but we could always swim off the boat except in commercial harbours. We had a fair few visitors from home from time to time and with them went exploring. The highlight for us was watching the giant leather-back turtles coming ashore on a beach in Trinidad, laying their eggs and returning to the sea. Watching them dive through the rollers and swim strongly back to sea was a heart-stirring experience. We met Peter Ronaldson (ICC) in Rodney Bay at the end of his cruise in the area and we also saw a charter boat with the ICC burgee put into Hog Island



It's not all hard work. Lunch with Sheila in Porto Santo.

Bay in Grenada. Susan was ashore in the dinghy so I was unable to get across to them and they, in turn, obviously did not recognise *Waxwing* or see our burgee.

Quite a disappointment for us as it would have been great to meet up with people from home. I think they may have been from Howth Y. C. By the time Susan got back from her shore shopping expedition, the yacht had upanchored and moved on.

We now move on to cruise the north coast of Venezuela and



Jack Craig in our cumfy spot.

PHOTO: Aileen Craig.

its islands with the intention of going through the Panama canal next March and across the Pacific to New Zealand where we would aim to arrive mid late November 1997 with a view to cruising around that area during their summer. After that, who knows? The dream is to continue on to Australia, pass it to port, cross the Indian Ocean and come home in three or four years via Cape of Good Hope, the Caribbean and the Azores. Perhaps then a spot of cruising on the south-west coast of Ireland. We haven't found anything to equal it yet, lovely, exotic, exciting as wandering the oceans and seas of the world has proved to be – so far!

According to our GPS we are 3,663 miles from home – as the crow flies!

Rionnag to the Faroes

Bernard Corbally

With Ann Woulfe Flanagan, Terence Moran, Enda Cullinan and Aidan Maguire as crew, we dropped the Royal St. George mooring of our Hallberg Rassy 39 on Sunday 14th July and headed north with the sun shining and a nice bit of breeze. By doing quite a bit of motor sailing, we managed to catch a favourable tide past Rathlin Island at about mid-day on Monday. The weather was still holding good but the wind was persistently NNW. On Tuesday, we got the Spinnaker up at 13.30 to enjoy 3 1/2 hours of delightful sunshine sailing until we were quite close to St. Kilda. At this point, the mesmerizing sight of a huge abundance of bird life, both in the sky and on the water, began to monopolise our attention. After three attempts, we anchored in Village Bay opposite the pier. The water was so clean that we could clearly see our anchor in sand 5 1/2 m. under the keel. At this stage there was only one other yacht and a converted fishing boat *Cuma Mallaig*, used for charter excursions, in the bay. Four more yachts arrived later. We registered our presence with the warden ashore. We then returned on board to enjoy our environment and be entertained by the birds as we refreshed ourselves in the cockpit. Brian and Pat Duchart from the Yacht *Heckler* joined us for drinks. They recalled having met up with Paddy Barry in Greenland! Later on, we spent a very enjoyable evening in the Puff Inn.

Wednesday 17th July.

After a memorable sunshine cockpit breakfast in this lovely place, we walked up the Oiseval Hill to enjoy superb views over the bay. On the north side of the saddle between the hills on the way up, the cliff drops vertically down to the ocean. We spent a fascinating half hour lying down with our heads over the edge getting a bird's eye view of nests of young chicks being fed by their parents. When Terence and Enda went over to get a better view of Stac a'Langa, they were attacked by a great skua that dived straight at them, missing their heads by inches, and forcing them to lie flat on the ground. It was a terrifying experience!

The sun was shining and the sea calm as we left St. Kilda at 14.45, which were the ideal conditions for a really close up view of the crowded bird life on Stac Lee off Borderoy Island. The stack was sparkling white in the sunshine. At first, we thought that it was totally covered with guano, but as we got closer, we realised that every little nook and cranny was packed tight with moving birds, mostly gannets. It was a fascinating sight as we motored slowly past. We were also entertained by some spectacular aerial battles as skuas attacked gannets in a determined effort to force them to drop their catch.

After dallying so delightfully at the Borderay Islands, we now applied ourselves to some more serious sailing by hoisting our spinnaker. Soon we were bowling along at a comfortable 5 1/2 k. in a S.F3 and the sun-tan lotion was being passed around. The wind dropped completely at 17.00 and we reluctantly started the engine. A multi coloured sunset panorama provided a magnificent setting as we dined in the cockpit.

Thursday started as a sultry grey windless day that found us all resorting to the ship's library. It was great to be able to get the

spinnaker back up again at 13.20 and to be able to leave it there for the rest of the day. A school of porpoises accompanied us for a while as we surged along at 7 1/2 k.

Friday morning was cold with a lightly overcast sky as we approached Suderoy Island. A fog bank hid the Munken Rocks as we passed them about 5M. to port, keeping well away from the tidal race between them and the main island, which is reputed to reach 11k. We heard the horn at Akraberg Light House. But, it was not until we were about 2M. off land approaching the Vaag Fjord that we got our first sight of the Faroes. At the same time the wind suddenly increased from F.3 to F.7, white horses appeared all around us and we were hit by a series of vicious rain squalls. A few minutes later, we got a tantalising view of blue sky and calm water ahead. We soon discovered that imminent calmer conditions were a delusion as



Rionnag on Kuno Pier, Kunog Island. PHOTO: Ann Woulfe-Flanagan.

gusts of over 27k. continued to speed us up the fjord. The fog over the land lifted for a brief period to reveal villagers making hay. We even caught a glimpse of the sun before we had to go back on radar to edge our way round the huge stone breakwater into the harbour area. Another slight lifting of the fog allowed us to find the tiny, very well protected Vagur Harbour and to moor alongside the east wall before it closed in again. We had been properly introduced to Faroe Island weather!

Within minutes of our arrival, a procession of cars came down the wharf to pass slowly by our yacht. Every body spoke perfect English and gave us an enthusiastic welcome to their islands. A young lady, Nina Magussen, joined us for lunch as she waited for the ferry to Copenhagen. She was a veritable mine of information about the islands and about what we should see and do. Somebody else kindly telephoned the Customs Officer, who got to us within about half an hour and swiftly took care of the formalities that would cover us for the rest of our stay in the islands. Aidan wandered off to chat to some local fishermen and came back with two fine cod which had been presented to him. Magnus Joensen, with his captivating 4 1/2 year old daughter Heidi, came aboard to invite us to take tea with his family at their house. His wife, Margaret was from the Shetland Islands and was most interested to hear about our cruise round those islands in *L'Exocet* in 1992.

Saturday 20th July.

Magnus arranged with his brother in law to bring his Diesel Road Truck down to the wharf to fill up our tanks at 12.00. We then moved over to the main wharf to top up with water before heading out into the fog. We kept about 1M. off shore as we potted along the coast towards the Trangisva Fjord using the genoa only, with just an occasional glimpse of land to stir the imagination as we wrote our post cards.

The fog began to clear as we entered the fjord allowing us our first clear view of the beautiful Faroe Island scenery. A panoramic of green sloped mountains opened up before us, with a few tiny clusters of multi coloured houses glistening in the sunshine by the water front. The mountain tops were lost in filmy white cloud. Suddenly, we were laid right over by a powerful gust of wind which really speeded us up the fjord. This was definitely the way to enjoy the Faroes!

Arriving at Tvoroyi, we entered the first harbour on the north side and tied up alongside the main wharf. The next harbour up the fjord was for small boats only. Tvoroyi is a larger, more wealthy looking village than Vagur. There are a lot more shops and we saw an impressive modern all weather foot-ball ground just out of town. Our exploratory walk brought us past the imposing local church in perfect time to witness a wedding party emerge. The beautiful bride was a local rowing celebrity and the groom a popular footballer. Many of the guests were in colourful local costume.

The Tvoroyi Hotel was directly up the road from our berth They provided us with hot showers and a liberal supply of the very drinkable local Foroya Bier. A French yacht *Langan Bleu* had joined us in the harbour.

Sunday 21st July.

It was a dull day with an almost continuous light mist that cut visibility down to about 1/2 M. We did our homework in the

absolutely essential local tidal atlas, *The Red Scare Book*, derives its name from the horrific illustrations, in red, of the tidal races about the islands. The local name for the book is "Streymkort Fyri Foroyar". Consequently, we departed on our passage for Sandoy Island at 15.30. We passed very close to Little.Dimun, impressed by the high cliffs as they appeared out of the mist a couple of cables ahead of us. As we rounded the huge stone harbour breakwater, we turned into the small harbour of Sandur, We were really delighted to be so safely tucked away in such a well protected harbour as the weather was beginning to become extremely unpleasant and quite stormy. There is an attractive grass roofed church in the small village. The bay also boasts the only decent beach in the islands, which seemed to us to be a stretch of unexciting black sand. But, we were seeing it under pretty poor conditions!

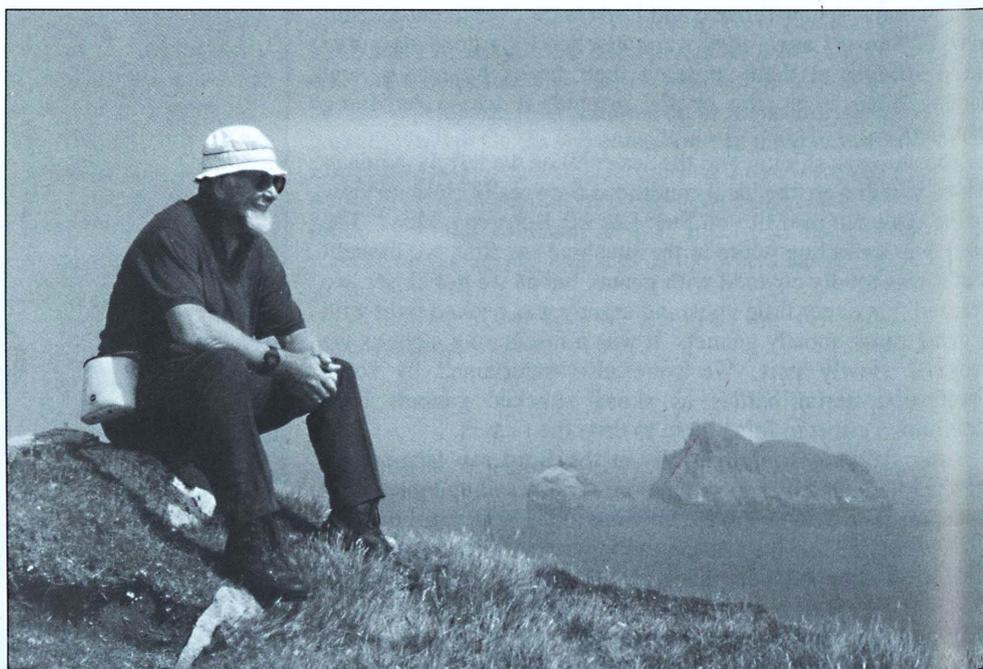
As we settled into another of Enda's excellent dinners and the wine was flowing nicely, we were becoming quite philosophical about the weather, when somebody crashed into our port side. We scrambled out onto the deck and, after the skipper had shouted a spontaneous harsh word or two, helped the rather amateur crew of a HR 382 *Smiling Swiss* to secure themselves alongside us. It was a club that was used by a rotation of skippers and crews throughout the season.

Monday 22nd July.

Very reluctantly we headed out into dense fog to find our way to Miovagur on Vagoy Island. There was a very lumpy sea as we rounded Salthovet Point, but a favourable tide and a SW. F.5 soon had us sailing at over 6k. with a reefed main and jib in anticipation of some of those sudden gusts. We saw nothing at all of the reputable fabulous island scenery until we sighted an impressive waterfall on the North side of Miovaag Bay. At this stage, roller coaster waves were providing some exciting rides as we motored towards the stone breakwater that protects Miovagur Harbour. We were delighted when a friendly motorist offered to dispose of our gash on this occasion.

We walked up to see Pall Joensen at the "Oilwind" factory to arrange for the purchase of a hand operated fishing reel, complete with line, hooks and weight etc. The skipper was given a demonstration and lesson on how to set it all up for action. We were then driven back to *Rionnag* for a late lunch.

Visibility was quite good when we left Miovaag at 18.00 to motor down the coastline with the tide but into a WSW. F.4 and a lumpy sea. The cliff scenery was impressive with massive



Skipper in contemplative mood, St. Kilda. Background Boderay Islands. PHOTO: Ann Woulfe-Flanagan.



Skipper and Aidan Maguire resting in Frodba near Tvoroyi, Suduroy Island. Predates Tvoroyi by several centuries as original Suduroy settlement!
 PHOTO: Ann Woulfe-Flanagan.

fissures cutting deep into the rock face and plenty of caves and off lying stacks. Above all this the green faced mountains, with lots of horizontal layers of rock outcrop, disappeared into the clouds. There were also quite a few photogenic high waterfalls. We enjoyed all of this at our leisure as we potted along slowly so as not to arrive at the Mykines Fjord before slack water. We had been warned that this can be one of the most vicious tidal races in the Faroes.

The sun came out and the world became a beautiful place as we sailed up the really lovely Sorvaag Fjord. Tiny hamlets were tucked away in discrete creeks, colourful villages nestled in beside glittering waterfalls, majestic mountains reached up to the sky to the north of us and sheep grazed on almost vertical green hills on the south side, which was also liberally endowed with islets and off shore stacks. Crew morale soared as we happily gazed around us.

Sorvaag village is not particularly attractive, but it is beautifully located at the head of the fjord. Two sizeable rivers cascade noisily down through the centre of it and there is quite a lot of commercial quay on the south side. There is also a small fishing boat harbour, which was packed with boats, and a small boat marina. We moored alongside the wharf just before the small harbour. A local helicopter pilot drove down to welcome us. He told us that there were no local hotels or restaurants where we could get a meal. Later on, he came back to tell us that he had found a Chipper open, but that we would have to hurry!

Tuesday 23rd July.

We had planned to take the local ferry out to see the famous bird colonies on Mykines Island. However, the skipper failed to marshal the crew in time to join the queue of tourists and we were left behind! We made our own leisurely trip around the island. The sun was shining and it was all very pleasant and interesting, but we did not think that the density of bird life was anything like what we had seen on Stac Lee. We saw sheep grazing in what looked like impossible places on the cliff faces and wondered how they coped when the wind suddenly gusted up.

There were four small boats fishing off the north coast of Vagoy Island. So, we decided to try out our new equipment, while drifting across Vic Bay. As soon as we dropped our hooks, there was a 2 kg. cod on the line. we dropped again and immediately caught a 4 kg. cod. The whole operation took just over five minutes before we were on our way again! It is no wonder that there are so many small fishing boats throughout the islands. We were told that it is not unusual for one man in a boat to catch and gut one ton of fish in a day using several reels.

The weather was closing in fast as we hurried down Vestmanna Sound on a favourable tide. However, we were



Matilda Hansen, Hannig Sorensen, Katrina Hansen and Vincent Dillon singing the Faroes National Anthem.

PHOTO: Ann Woulfe-Flanagan.

happily tied up in front of the harbour office building in Vestmanna Harbour at 17.00 before it became considerably more unpleasant. Later on, the weather cleared up and we could see that we were in an attractive village with a beautiful outlook. Twilight night-caps in the cockpit at 23.30 completed a full and memorable happy day.

Wednesday 24th July.

After a full sunshine breakfast in the cockpit, we replenished our stores in the well stocked mini supermarket beside the restaurant and then cast off immediately to head back up the Vestmanna Fjord on a 3 1/2 k. tide. The cliff and mountain scenery was magnificent as we motored up the coast to the next fjord, Sundini, where we called in at the beautiful Eidi village. There was a small boat marina to starboard as we entered the harbour, but we opted to tie up alongside the more convenient west side pier by the fuel depot, where we topped up our fuel and water. After a late lunch, we went for a delightful walk back along the north side of the fjord to enjoy some fantastic views up the Sundini. Unfortunately there is a bridge across the narrows with only 52 ft. clearance at the centre and a very fast swirling current, which ruled it out for us as a short cut to Torshavn. In the tiny shore side fields, villagers were hand cutting hay and hanging it on multilayered fence type racks to dry. The village church was absolutely delightful, simply but beautifully decorated with ship models hanging from the ceiling. This was definitely the most captivating place that we had yet visited and we were extremely tempted to stay the night. There was even a De Luxe looking hotel up the hill where we could probably have got an excellent dinner! However, we had a crew change schedule to meet and so, very reluctantly we cast off at 19.00.

Rounding Risen Point, we continued under genoa only so that we could enjoy spectacular views of the huge rock stacks known as The Giant & The Witch. There were also lots of smaller stacks and caves to make the rest of the passage interesting. Sudden gusts of wind, registering over 25k., kept us alert. Not having a detailed chart of the area, we gave Rivtange Point a good offing to avoid the submerged rock as we made our way into the Djupini Sound. A heavily overcast sky made it pretty dusk as we motored up to Fundingsbotn at the head of Funnings Fjord. Both sides of this narrow fjord are lined with hills and mountains ranging up to the 801m. Svartbakstindua. It was an extremely dramatic and awesome passage in the semi darkness! We reckoned that this whole area must be a hill walker's paradise.

There were spaces for two boats at the end of the small stone jetty at the head of the fjord. A round fish tank was moored to one of them and we just managed to squeeze round it into the other at 22.00. We had ended up for the night in a spectacular but extremely remote place. We were quite sure that we could

see patches of blue sky as we took a midnight stroll through the tiny village and up the remarkably high quality mountain road behind it.

Thursday 25th July.

After a very blustery night we were woken up by the noise of the fish farm people processing salmon through what looked like a large washing machine. It was raining as we slipped out of our berth at 07.30 and motored down through the Lervig Fjord and round to Island for lunch. It then cleared up to be quite a pleasant afternoon as we motored the 3M. across the Nolsoy Fjord to arrive in Torshavn at 15.30. We berthed alongside a Belgian yacht *Kittywake* on the quay to the east of the small boat marina, opposite the three storey cream coloured "Samvinnufelagad" building.

Torshavn (Popn. 15,000) has lots of picturesque charm, particularly around Tinganes at the head of a small peninsular where the town originated about 1000 years ago. The residential areas are colourfully painted and there is even a nicely appointed public park and a university. The Cozey Restaurant was packed with smartly dressed people when we arrived for dinner at 20.00. We reckoned that if we had not prebooked our table we might not have been let in! The meal was excellent and also interesting for those who tried "Breast of Puffin" (it was a bit like fish flavoured liver).

Friday 26th July.

Terence and Aidan departed on the same ferry that brought our replacement crew Vincent Dillon and Mark Jordan from Aberdeen. The day was wet and miserable, which gave us an excuse to relax and be lazy. It was the mid summer festival week-end in Torshavn, which is always associated with St. Olav's Feast Day on 29th July. Thousands of people come in from all the islands to join in the festivities and quite a lot of heavy drinking took place. The younger members went out on the town after dinner on board. Mark brought his whistle to try a bit of busking and, although they did not collect much money, it did get them into conversation with the young locals, who seemed to be completely unfamiliar with this type of street entertainment. A loud live band played on well into the early hours.

Saturday started off bright and sunny but reverted back to rain in the late morning. After another lazy day, we enjoyed an excellent dinner in the Hotel Hafnia.

After a lie in on Sunday morning some of us went up to the Marion church where part of the sermon was given in English for our benefit. Christopher Thornhill then invited us on board *Sai See* for drinks before it was time to

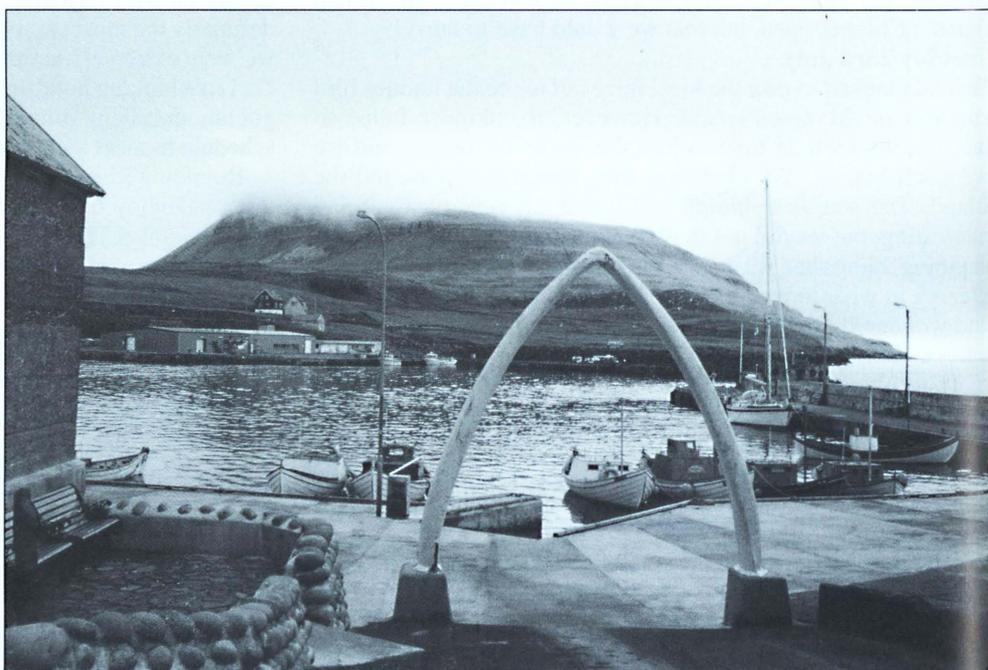


Drangamir Stacks (East of Trindholmur). Eysturtindur Mountain (715m) Sorvags Fjord in background. Vagar Island.

PHOTO: *Enda Cullinan*

head up to view the great procession to the Parliament Building. The rowing teams from all the participating villages, each in their own distinctive colour scheme, marched through the streets to the main gathering where speeches were made. The supporting crowd was liberally sprinkled with men and women in national costume. There were quite a few colourful variations in the women's' dresses, which were very attractively designed and are generally passed on from generation to generation. The sun shone brilliantly making the whole scene a most joyful family occasion which we felt privileged to be part of. After the ceremony, everybody went down to the waterfront in the harbour to watch the rowing races. Rowing their traditional heavy sea boats is a popular sport throughout the islands, which means that there is tremendous competition to make it through the qualifying rounds to compete at the festival – certainly, their level of competence and fitness was very impressive.

We slipped away after the races at 17.00, in order to catch the



Rionnag alongside at Nolsoy.

PHOTO: *Ann Woulfe-Flanagan.*



Anchorage & Pier, Village Bay, St. Kilda. *Rionnag* closest yacht to pier..

PHOTO: Bernard Corbally.

last of the flood tide around into Kaldbak Fjord. Despite a rather murky sky and low cloud over the mountains, we were able to appreciate some lovely scenery as we tacked up the fjord, passing close to a Danish Frigate on a wharf opposite Kaldbak village. Close to the head of the fjord, we secured ourselves alongside a very decrepit looking fishing boat, that was moored at the end of a tiny stone pier on the north side. We were

apprehensive about our fenders pushing through the side of it! Although it was a pretty desolate place, we had a fine view as we sipped our G & Ts.

We started back out of the Kaldbak Fjord at 20.00 and motored across to the Skala Fjord where we found a berth in Runavig for the night. The caretaker of a fleet of huge Cuban Trawlers very kindly drove back to his house to collect water hose adapters which would allow us to fill up from the 3" supply hidden under metal plates in the pier. The mountain and fjord outlook from this very industrial harbour was quite spectacular.

From Monday July 29th to Thursday August 1st we visited Lervig and Fugle, Kuno, Hvannesund, Viovig, Svinoy, Klaksvig, Hestar and Skopun.

Friday 2nd August.

We left Skopun for the passage home. We were glad to get away at 10.00 to use the tide as far as the south of Sandoy. Despite the fact that it was misty with very little wind and poor visibility, we did manage to enjoy a bit of sailing, with the result that we just missed the slack tide across to Stora Dimun. Never-the-less, we had great fun trying to beat across a powerful tide to pass north of the



Miniature Viking Boats racing Torshavn Festival.

PHOTO: Bernard Corbally.

island. We had the company of an old sailing ketch *Fortuna* (features in the film "Barbara") that appeared to have the same objective. We both failed, but we did reach the slack water triangle to the east of the island, which allowed us to creep round the south of the island to find a more favourable south running stream. At this stage, the weather cleared up and we had a pleasant passage down to Vagur, including the delightful experience of sailing up the beautiful Vaag Fjord in sunshine.

John Bunyan was there to welcome us back to Vagur. He directed us into a good berth and then invited us for a conducted tour of the renovated 1884 fishing smack *Johanna* (TG 326), which is now used as a sail training vessel. Himself, the chief engineer and another then joined us for refreshments on *Rionnag*. Later, our friends Margaret and Magnus Joensen and family joined us for a farewell tea party.

Saturday 3rd August.

Heavy mist made visibility very poor as we eased out of Vagur at 07.30. The Barometer was falling and the Torshavn Coast Radio Station was issuing a local gale warning on the VHF. An excellent breakfast, cooked by Vincent, was the last meal that anybody wanted for a long time. Soon, we were motor sailing into a S. F.7 through a very uncomfortable sea. The approaching weather pattern indicated gales all over the place. By continuing to push on as hard as we could, we managed to escape with nothing more than 35 k., which was unpleasant enough.

At 10.00 on Sunday, conditions had significantly improved. The sun was shining, the wind had eased off to about 25k. and the ocean rollers had taken on a much more comfortable pattern. We tacked across to round the north side of Rona Island at 20.30 and were impressed by the forbidding starkness of the place under a heavy threatening sky. We had considered the possibility of sheltering under its lee had the weather seriously deteriorated.

Soon after mid-night on Monday, the wind freed a bit and we were able to bowl along at about 6 k. under sail. We were treated to a magnificent red ball sunrise. However, by mid-day we were back to dull gusty weather with poor visibility which persisted until we eased our way into Stornoway by radar at 16.00. We found a vacant visitors berth on one of the recently installed pontoons at the head of the harbour. Access to the pontoons is controlled by a card key obtainable from the harbour office for a fee of £8 per day. It was a ravenous crew that booked in for

dinner at the highly recommended upstairs bar in the Crown Hotel.

Tuesday 6th August.

Vincent had to fly home for a business meeting. The rest of us replenished our fuel tanks and got away at 10.00. With a N.E.3 - F.4, we soon had the spinnaker up give us 7k. overground. The wind strength varied throughout the day necessitating some motoring to keep to our tidal schedule. But, with the sun shining and a relatively calm sea, we were all a happy bunch of sailors as we made our way down the Little Minch.

It was pitch black night as we took a short cut through the narrow Gunna Sound on a 3 k. tide at 01.40 on Wednesday morning. It was easy to sight both the flashing buoys, which also showed up well on the radar. A fabulous sunrise into a clear blue sky was a great start to the day. We only had to tolerate a little bit of adverse tide before we were able to catch the full flood tide down past Rathlin Island and on as far as Mew Light House. With the wind back in the south, we had to motor the rest of the way to the Baily and then ended our cruise with a glorious sunshine sail into Dun Laoghaire Harbour to pick up our mooring at 15.00 on Thursday 8th August.

Despite somewhat inclement weather at times, we all had a fantastic memorable holiday. The island and mountain scenery everywhere throughout the Faroe Islands provided magnificent panorama views, even when some of it was hidden in fog. The villages were lovely. The local people were naturally welcoming and helpful. There were very secure harbours protected by immense breakwaters almost everywhere we went. Berthing was free everywhere and we never had the least problem about finding space. Apart from the initial Customs Clearance at Vagur, we encountered no more officialdom until we had to find the Harbour Office at Stornoway. With fresh fish available at the drop of a hook, the absence of restaurants in many of the 21 locations that we visited did not pose a problem. As sun phobia becomes more prevalent maybe a lot more sailors will begin to appreciate that the Faroes are a lot closer to most of us than La Coruna, they have much to offer and are certainly likely to provide much more exciting and indeed challenging sailing. We only managed to visit 11 out of the 18 islands and we saw quite a lot of five others. We passed close to the other two islands Skuvoy and Koltur without a sighting due to poor visibility. So, we have a mission to return and complete our survey.