

Scillies and South Cork

Jonathan Virden

Twayblade is 32 ft oa and was built of wood in 1961 to a design of Alan Buchanan. She was much rebuilt in 1982 and is in very good order, considering her age. She was launched very late in 1996 because some keel-bolts needed to be replaced. On 10th July my son Joseph, 15, and I finished commissioning and sailed from Alec Blagdon's pontoon in Plymouth to Cawsand. On 11th July we made our way to Helford, mostly with the assistance of the engine. The genoa went up and down several times and the new Autopilot did its job adequately. The last two hours were spent on a quiet beat up the river to visitor's moorings.

On 12th July we sailed to Penzance, initially with little wind but later with a comfortable reach across Mounts Bay. As we approached the Lizard the fog rolled across and we took rough bearings on the foghorn to check progress. The visibility remained very poor until we were close to Penzance. We went into the dock for the next three nights.

On 15th July I returned from London with Joy, after a special party. I had left Joseph to be with and to entertain his godmother, who had just moved to Porthleven, and to keep watch.

We left the dock at 0.15 on 16th July to find a very lumpy sea and an easterly wind. With genoa only we sailed against the tide round Land's End and passed the Longships at 09.00. The sea became much calmer at this point and we were able to point directly towards Kinsale.

By midday the wind had almost vanished and we motored for a while. The afternoon breeze was enough to keep us sailing gently with the genoa only as the wind was from well aft of the beam. I rarely use the mainsail when the wind is so far aft as we lose very little speed without it, and the mainsail upsets the directional stability. We were fortunate that all our passages were made with this simple rig in 1996.

We used the sextant and the celestial calculator and it proved to give a position line within a mile of the GPS position with amazingly little effort. I had bought this calculator as a reserve against the day when GPS is jammed or its power source fails. It also suggests the name of a principal star or planet if one measures the altitude and direction roughly. That is a good way to learn the stars!

The rest of the passage was uneventful with hazy sunshine and an easy sea. At Kinsale we had some difficulty in securing to the end of a trot at the marina because the tide was running very fast away from the trot and from aft. The next trot was full so we could not get close enough and stop to get a line and crew aboard *Upbeat*. Peter Price eventually came to take the warp and get us under control.

Pleasant days at Kinsale. We had enough visitors on board to make the cockpit drains reverse their usual direction. And there was a superb evening when the Town Council and the Harbour Commissioners gave a delightful welcoming party in the grounds of the Town Hall above the estuary. The Kinsale Yacht Club organised a splendidly noisy supper party where we met Bill Kellett CCA.

On 20th July we sailed to Oysterhaven and took the chance to calibrate the compass of the new autopilot, at least partially.

In the calm water before anchoring it was a very quiet night; the only noise was a strange bird-noise from the wooded shore which I later learned was herons fighting (or so the tale went!).

Next morning we motored to Crosshaven in excellent visibility with much rain astern. Just after we had moored alongside the pontoon it started to drizzle. Later the rain was very heavy, particularly just before the party when a siphon-leak developed over a critical bunk.

During the following morning the rain went away and we just had time to get a load through the laundrette and then set sail to go west. The ebb tide made the entrance to Cork harbour rather rough, but having cleared that we beat in a gradually dying breeze to near the Old Head. From there we motored until we could reach to Broad Sand Bay on the western shore of Courtmacsherry Bay, where we anchored under sail. This is a very sheltered bay with gradually shelving bottom, sand and weed, so that it is not possible to go close to the beach.

After a very quiet night we beat and close-reached to Baltimore with occasional assistance from the engine. We went over one drift net and round several others. We anchored 1 ca. NW of the pier head at Baltimore and had a marvellous dinner engagement on board *Alakush*. From there we adjourned to a very large modern yacht, or so I was told later as I had no recollection of it.

In Baltimore the fleet was wonderful to see, and was just visible from the garden party. We took a walk on Sherkin Island. Jane arrived from strawberry picking in Kent in time to join in the fun.

On 25th July we hove the anchor out of that sticky muddy bottom (good holding there!) and followed most of the fleet out of Baltimore harbour south of Sherkin, en route to round the Fastnet Rock. It would have taken all day to beat all the way, so we motored to the western end of Cape Clear Island and sailed from there. The approach to the lighthouse was made more interesting by fog which came in from the west. The visibility was patchy and when we rounded the rock in the company of many other yachts it had almost cleared. I spotted the inflatable with a photographer just in time so that we passed between him and the lighthouse. We now have a fine reminder of the occasion on the wall of the drawing room at home.

We ran down to Crookhaven and were delighted to be found by Julie and Scott Bayfield who arrived unexpectedly in *Physalian*. They came to a scratch but rather good dinner with us. It was an uncomfortable night with drizzle and a gusty wind from over the hill. In the morning we went for a long walk, almost to Barley Cove, to stretch legs and get a different view of the land.

The short passage to Schull was half dead-run with very little wind and half motoring along the sound north of the islands. We anchored about 1/2 ca. from the west shore and 3 ca. south of the pier. The bottom turned out to be very weedy with grass-weed which was very difficult to remove from the chain when I was finally leaving single-handed some days later. The party was a giant barbecue, well organised and full of people. This was our

last gathering with the fleet of the cruise in company because Joy, Jane and, Joseph all had to return to their various activities in England on 28th July and I was not inclined to go on to Bantry just for myself.

I put the crew ashore, dry at 14.00 on 28th to meet the taxi which was waiting. As I returned to *Twayblade* rain started. During the next three hours a whole inch of rain fell, measured, roughly, in the dinghy. It cleared later, but became very humid for a while with heavy drizzle in the afternoon. I spent the rest of that day in a thorough re-stow of *Twayblade*. After a crew has gone and I am left alone to sail her there is much to check and reorganise for single-handling. Also as there is little spare water in the Scillies (except for Tresco), I filled all the available containers so as to avoid shortage when the crew returned.

In the evening I went ashore to phone home and for the last pint bottle of Guinness which is by far the best form of that brew. It was very still during the night.

It was glassy calm when I left Schull. It took a full half hour to weigh anchor because the weed choked the chain and every inch of it had to be scrubbed. Once free and under way *Twayblade* and I motored clear of the islands and against the tide through Gascanane Sound to open water. There was a slight but free wind which grew gradually all the way to the Scillies, veering slowly from SW to WNW and ending at F5 as we came into New Grimsby sound at 17.00 on the 30th of July. The tides were at big springs, and the rate of the NE going stream as we approached the islands was phenomenal. In spite of sailing at 5 knots, drift was about 40 deg to keep a straight track.

The anchorage was very full with all visitors moorings occupied as soon as they became vacant. We anchored on the Tresco side of the sound opposite Hangman Is. The holding was doubtful (20ft. and sand with much weed) and the next evening we dragged away in a very strong tide combined with a rather gusty wind and some swell. I was lucky to have visitors on board at the time and we continued the party north of Hangman Island. There the holding is rather better and there is more room, but the swell is usually much more uncomfortable than further south in the sound. I went to dinner with John and Liz Langdon and their boys on *Tanis*.

Next day was quiet and I moved down the sound to anchor nearer the landings and later secured to a mooring. I walked over Bryher and most of Tresco during the days while waiting for the crew to arrive at Hughtown on 4th August. These were delightful days with a steady stream of RCC and ICC yachts calling. I had picked up a very large scallop from the middle of Tresco Flats while they were dry at LWS. Annette Ridout cooked it while she, David and I had a leisurely lunch on board their yacht.

Joy, Joseph and Jo's goddaughter Rosie came on the steamer on 4th August and we stayed one night in Hughtown.

On 5th August we returned to New Grimsby and walked on Bryher. It was warm and quiet enough to snooze in the heather. At about midnight the combination of tide, swell and NNW f7 gusting over Bryher dragged our anchor (again!). Having got ourselves mobile with the anchor on deck we circled round the crowded anchorage and went alongside *Dunia Kita* on her mooring. This rapidly proved to be untenable due to the swell. We left to drive up the sound in the dark and bad visibility hoping that we could avoid all of the anchor warps of other yachts which were stretched horizontal across the channel by the conditions. North of Hangman's Island we dropped the big

anchor on plenty of chain and kept watch in quite rough water. When the tide allowed we sailed directly to the complete tranquility of South Cove at St. Agnes. One modification I had been tinkering with the previous days proved extremely useful during these events. With her small rudder quite close to the centre *Twayblade* has a very wide natural turning circle. I had rigged up some lines and blocks between the tiller and the small tiller of the hydrovane self-steering which has a big spade rudder aft of the counter, so that they both moved together. This gives a turning circle of about two lengths, and less with judicious use of the engine. We stayed at St Agnes, a favourite spot, for two nights enjoying the peace. One evening we found Winkie Nixon and his crew in the pub. They portered the inflatable over the bar and came to sample our cider. So also did the crew of *Dunia Kita* who had been so helpful during the night. Thus we were able to thank them.

As we had to be back in Kent by the evening of 10th August we set sail for Plymouth at 06.00 on the 8th August. This passage was remarkable for its sheer speed. All day the wind blew between 18 and 34 knots. With genoa only we reached Barn Pool at Plymouth as darkness fell at 21.10. Taking all into account this was the fastest passage *Twayblade* has made yet. It was rough and very wet which was bad for the crew and the visibility became very poor in the early evening. However, at midday some 9 miles west of the Lizard we were cheered to see a rather strange "fishing boat with curious black blobs aloft" turn to avoid collision course with us and then resolve itself into the Royal Yacht. She looked magnificent on that windy day. She has a most elegant sheer line and flew huge jack and ensign and three royal standards of colossal size. At some risk I dipped our ensign by standing on the aft locker lid clinging to the backstay. She responded, of course.

Twayblade was put on her own mooring at Cargreen and we returned to Kent (and normality through the worst traffic I have ever seen) rather later than we had planned, but on the right day.

Summary			
Date	To	Time (hrs.)	Engine hours
(from Plymouth)			
10 July	Cawsand	00.50	00.50
11 July	Helford	9.10	7.00
12 July	Penzance	6.20	2.45
16 July	Kinsale	35.00	5.30
20 July	Oysterhaven	2.00	0.30
21 July	Crosshaven	2.40	2.40
22 July	Broadsand Bay	9.00	2.40
23 July	Baltimore	9.30	1.25
25 July	Crookhaven	4.30	1.15
26 July	Schull	2.40	1.10
29 July	Tresco	34.15	4.00
4 August	Hughtown	0.40	0.40
5 August	New Grimsby	1.00	1.00
6 August	St Agnes	2.00	0.30
8 August	Plymouth	15.00	0.50
9 August	Cargreen	2.00	2.00
Totals			136.30 33.45

Sailing in the Lofotens

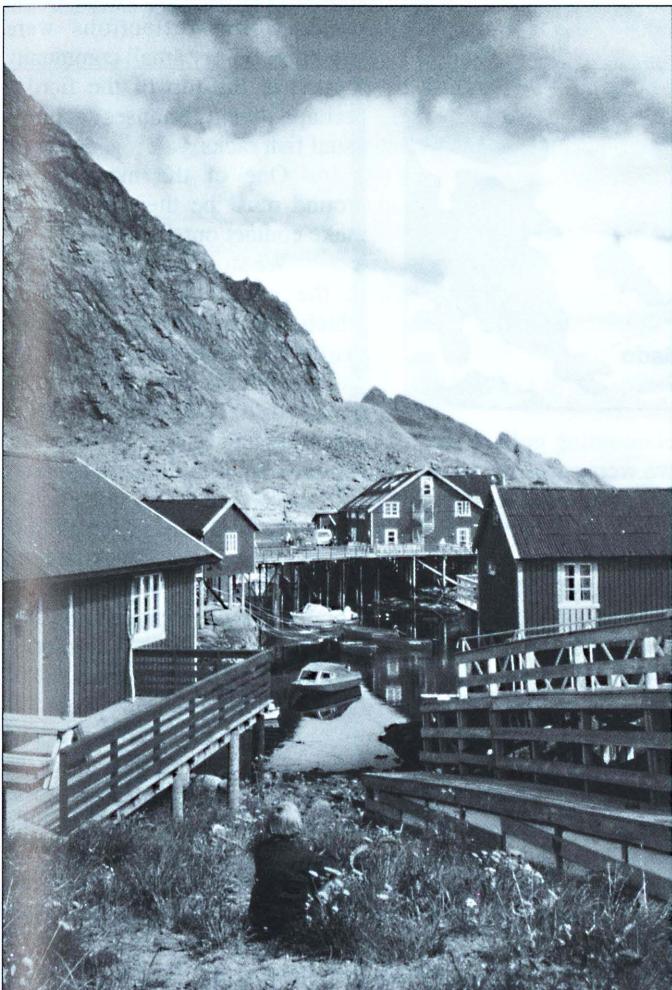
Joan Nicholson

In June '96, Norwegian friends whom we had met in 1992 on the America 500 Rally, invited us to join them on their yacht, *Toorlittle III*, – a Najad 39, to sail in the Lofotens. These are islands forming an archipelago off the north west coast of Norway just north of the arctic circle at the 67th and 68th degree parallels.

We arrived in Oslo on June 14th and stayed a week in their home. While there we visited two excellent museums – The Viking Ships Museum and the Kontiki Museum, which helped to give us the history of Norwegian sailing and fishing.

Our friends, Truls and Kika, had sailed their boat to Bodo last year and from there we were to begin our trip to the Lofoten Islands.

Bodo is just within the arctic circle and about an hour's flight from Oslo. From the plane there were magnificent views of the islands and of the mountains all covered in snow, including a glacier visible in the east. We were really in the land of the midnight sun now.



Å – Lofoten Islands.

PHOTO: David Nicholson.

Having settled into our cabins on board *Toorlittle III*, we borrowed a car belonging to Kika's niece and at 11.30 p.m. we drove to the top of a hill where the view of the sun would be unrestricted. What a magnificent sight it was!

Bodo is surrounded on three sides by jagged mountains and the sea on the fourth side. The sky was a marvellous orange hue and the sun never went below the horizon. It was cool, but light enough to read. We found it difficult to stay awake for the sunrise at 1.30 a.m.!

While we still had access to the car, we took a trip around the perimeter of Bodo the next day. In parts the land is rounded from glacial action and very lush and in other parts the mountains are very jagged and the ground is very rough and barren. The fields of wild flowers were amazing. Dandelions stood two feet high. The growing season is short and consequently very lush.

Fishing is the main industry here and on the islands. We noticed that everyone is very conscious of temperature – air and water temperatures were measured daily. The water in Oslo was 17°C and swimming was a pleasure. In the Lofotens it registered 6°C and there was certainly no swimming; although the gulf stream makes the Lofotens milder than other places in the same latitude such as Alaska and Greenland.

As we left Bodo harbour it was 20°C and we wore shorts and tee shirts. However, when the wind came off the snow covered mountains there was rush for warmer clothing and we did not use the shorts again.

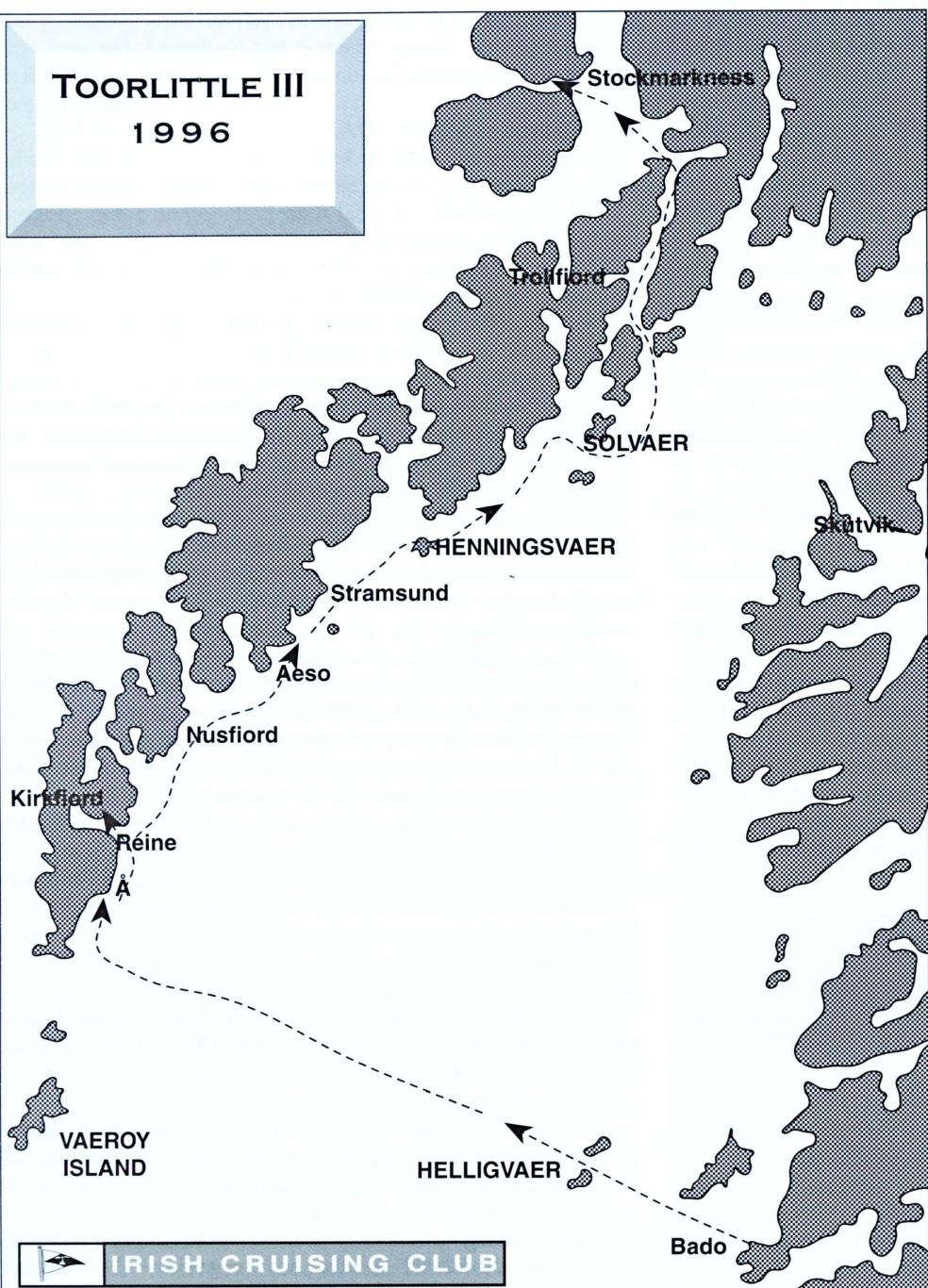
Our first stop was at Helligvaer Island (Population 70), a three hour motor sail from Bodo, where we tied up at a small pier for the night. Once again we had a wonderful views of the midnight sun, as the sky was clear.

Next morning we left early and had breakfast as we motored towards the Lofotens. As the day progressed the weather deteriorated and conditions became very bumpy and uncomfortable. After about six hours we arrived at Lofotodden on the island of Moskenes which is the most westerly point of the Lofotens. Off that point the Maelstrom current runs, and creates an extremely rough and dangerous area, particularly on the western coast of the islands. Fortunately we were travelling along the eastern coasts. The sea was calm close to the shore, so we cut the engines and drifted with the fishing lines out hoping to catch our dinner. Small fish were thrown back and when David landed a 4_kilo sei fish, "cole fish" we call it, the lines were put away and cleaning and filleting began. Fried with onions and potatoes it was a very tasty meal later on. That evening we arrived at a small town that must have the shortest name anywhere. Å (pronounced aho) is a typical fishing town amongst this chain of islands.

All the houses are painted a traditional red and are supported on stilts – to avoid the snow and rough seas. The smell of dried stock fish is overpowering. Stockfish, produced from spawning cod was the staple food in the early days. In April the fish are prepared for drying. Two fish are tied by their tails and then hung on racks to dry in the sun and wind. These racks of fish are a common sight in every community. We were told that 400,000

TOORLITTLE III

1996



square metres of the Lofotens are covered in drying cod in April. The majority of the dried cod is exported to Italy, where it is considered a great delicacy. The cheaper heads are popular in Nigeria.

In Å there is a cannery and a stoke fish museum where we were encouraged to taste this "delicacy". It was not our choice. The very strong taste stayed in the mouth for three days!

Fishing is still the greatest industry in these islands with agriculture coming next and tourism becoming increasingly important. From Å we travelled to Reine sailing with the main only. Once more we stopped to fish – hoping for a cod this time. However it was impossible to pass the sei fish to reach the cod lower down. David caught twenty four sei in half an hour but all were put back and for dinner we finished yesterdays catch, cooked in a different way.

As we approached Reine it became very foggy and damp and extremely cold. By now we were wearing thermal underwear and heavy outer layers, covered finally by storm anoraks and trousers. Sometimes we did resort to gloves – woollen ones inside fisherman heavy duty rubber gloves.

At Reine we tied up at a pontoon and were deafened by the

seagulls all night. They build their nests on small ledges or window sills – maybe six nests on a sill, and there are many chicks. They make a tremendous noise as older family members try to gain access to the nests. As it never gets dark, they do not seem to know when to sleep!

This is a busy fishing village with a fish factory just beside the pontoon. There was plenty of activity as crates of the dried stock fish were sorted, boxed and prepared for export.

The original fisherman's houses are now let as holiday chalets and the village had a big influx of visitors. It is a quaint and pretty place. Right beside the village is the entrance to Kirkefjord, which we visited next day when the weather had improved, giving us a day of bright sun and blue skies (but still low temperatures). It is hard to describe the scenery in this fiord, it is so awesome. The mountains are over 2000ft rising straight out of the sea. Lower down the vegetation is a bright emerald green which is reflected in the water and high above the rough black rock, the snow lies in patches. There was no wind so the reflections were stunning. A very small community existed at the top of the fiord – perhaps twenty houses and the usual fish racks.

One of the many ferries around must be the only way to make contact outside.

We stopped at another fiord in the afternoon at Nusfiord – which has a museum village of protected fishermen's houses dating from the last century. It was deserted except for the usual

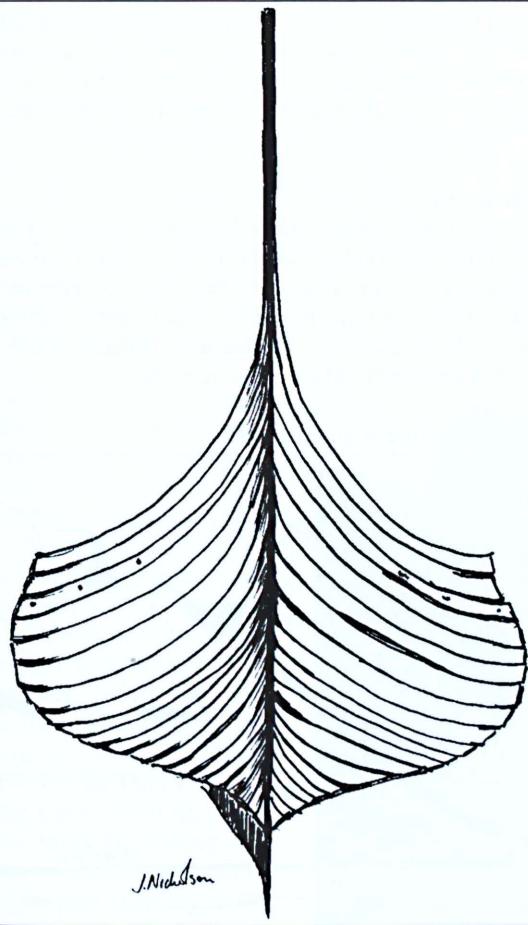
clamouring gulls. Later, while drifting and fishing in the ocean, we were surprised to see three killer whales quite close by. They were not interested in us as they were definitely pursuing fish of their own choice. That day we also saw some ocean eagles – big brown birds with white tails and yellow legs. These are not uncommon at this time of year. Besides those, puffins, guillemots and cormorants abound. We were proceeding in a north westerly direction with head winds, so we had to motor. In the evening we decided to stop in a small narrow bay called Aeso, where there was the remnants of a community close to a tiny beach. The hills were very high around, covered in a kind of growth with lots of wild flowers. Later we climbed to see the wonderful views of islands stretching in every direction. It was dead calm and we anchored fore and aft as there was very little room to set just one anchor. We were settling down to enjoy the complete silence and peace of this bay, when three charter boats followed us in. As we had met the French folk on board at a pub the night before there was much noisy greeting, especially from one French lady to a certain Irish gentleman!

Our next destination was Skrova. We had a lovely reaching sail all day, stopping for a quick shop for supplies at Stamsund



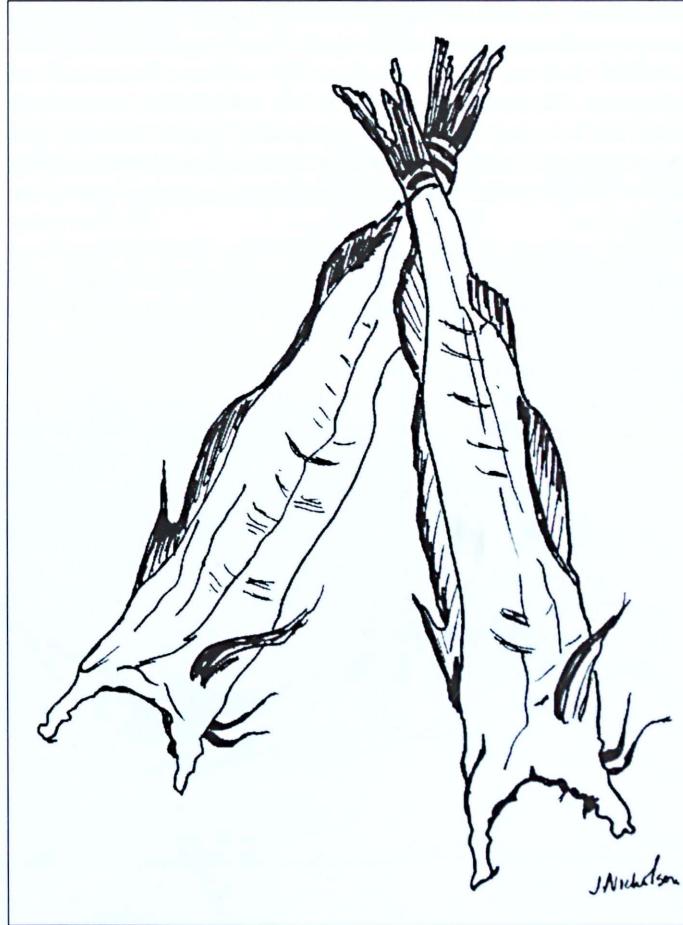
Joan and Truls approaching the Lofoten Islands.

PHOTO: D. Nicholson



J.Nicholson

Norwegian Viking Ship.



J.Nicholson

Lofoten Stockfish.

– a rather run down town, and later a lunch stop at Henningsvaer. The latter originated as a fishing town in 1868. However, ten years ago Henningsvaer was a ghost town when Truls and Kika visited, but now they have turned their attention to tourism and it thrives once more. These islands are becoming increasingly popular for tourists now that bridges have been built to link them all together by road.

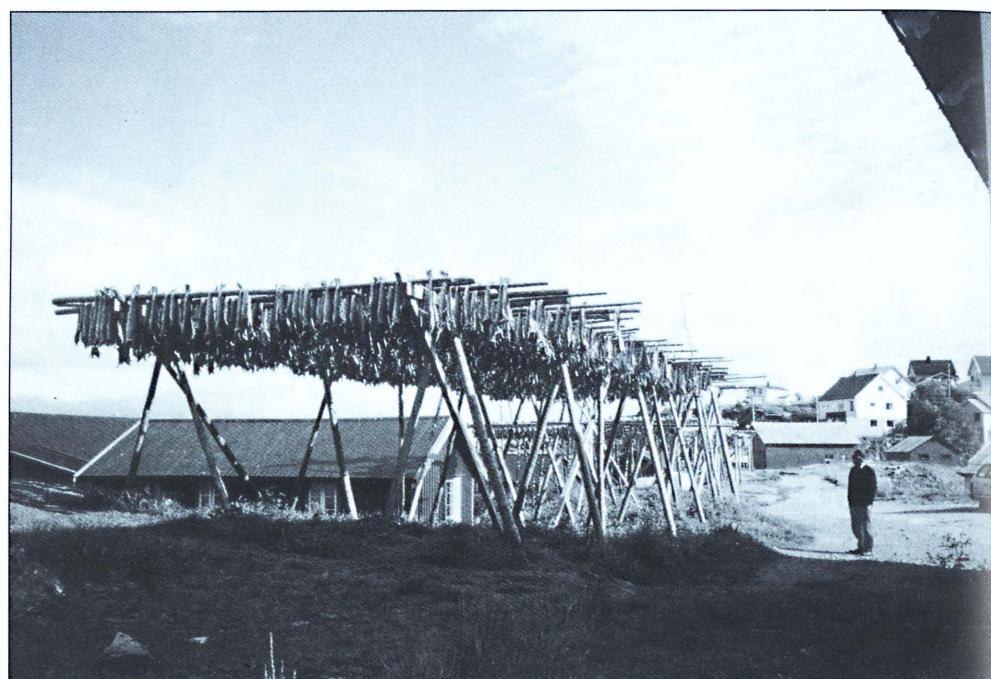
Skrova was a very small village with a ferry port. There are many ferries between the islands and to the mainland and Sweden. They are very skilful at coming alongside to take on passengers and cars.

The semi finals of the European Cup was the motivation to reach a larger town to find a T.V. Svolvaer was an hour's motor away and we filled up with diesel and water before settling into a berth on a pontoon very close to the town centre. By now it was raining hard and would have been miserably cold at sea. *Toorlittle III* has a mega-effective heating system and very soon we were dry and warm – helped by a hot toddy of rum and blackcurrant! It was a day for the bunks with a book. By evening we had located a suitable place for the match and had a good time in the Birgitte Hotel with other enthusiasts.

The following day the weather had completely changed and we hired a car to tour the Lofotens by road in bright fresh conditions. We drove 180 miles in the day, seeing magnificent scenery and many churches and galleries and splendid meadows of wild flowers; also a glassworks, an iron works and an aquarium. We saw all the places it was not possible to reach by boat. We rounded off the day with a meal ashore (the only one in the trip) at a fish restaurant over the bridge. Half the building was a museum of an old style shop and the restaurant was in the store room.

Our holiday was fast coming to an end as the next crew were due to arrive to take the yacht to Tromso, further north. We would have one day all together before David and I would leave for Oslo.

We spent that day sailing in the rain. We were aiming to spend the night in the well known Trollfiord. The cloud was very low and the fiord has a dark and mysterious atmosphere, hence



Stockfish on the drying racks, Lofoten Islands.

PHOTO: Joan. Nicholson

its name. It is a very narrow fiord. We motored to the top and drifted while we fished for two hours. Truls caught a large cod and later we all caught small sei fish but we threw them all back.

A passenger ferry takes a diversion up this fiord for the entertainment of those on board. They were surprised to see the assorted fishermen and women with their hand lines and took our photos.

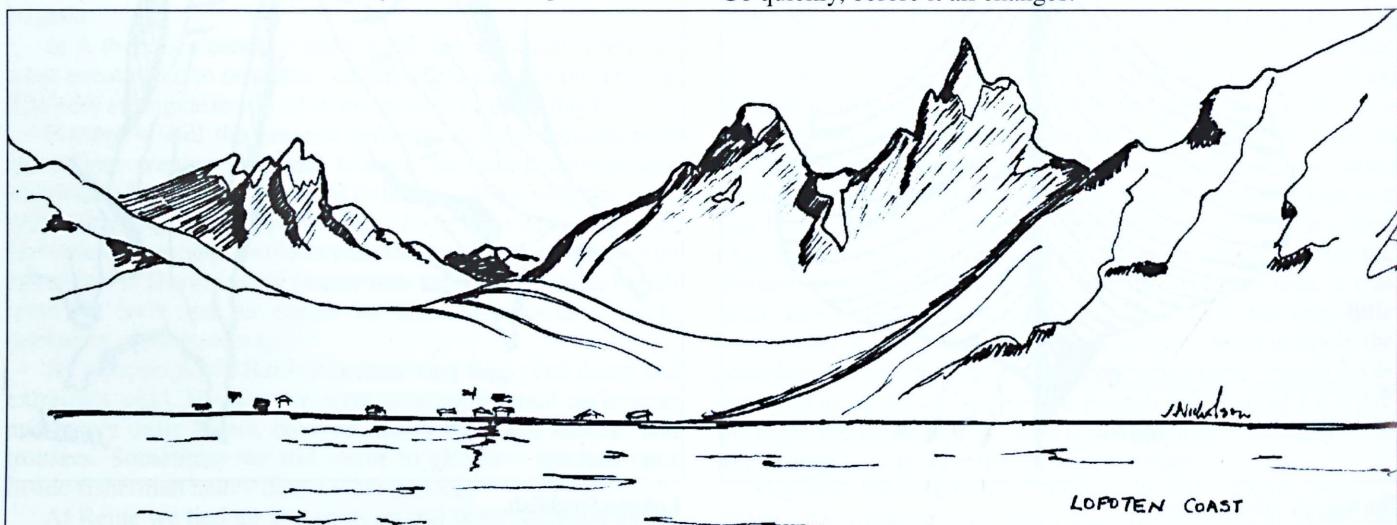
That night dinner was a wonderful dish of cod, served with mushrooms and prawns and washed down with the last of the duty free! Card games took over the rest of the evening.

It just remained for us to get to Stokmarknes next day in time to catch our plane to Bodø and then to Oslo. We started off early in the morning and the wonderful reflections as we motored down the fiord will be a lasting memory of this magnificent coast.

In conclusion;

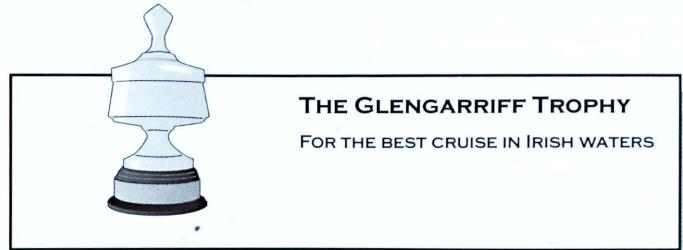
These islands are spectacularly beautiful and as yet unspoiled. We met hardly any other yachts in the ten days we were there, although charters are available. Norway is expensive, but we were able to tie up most nights at semi derelict fishing piers at no cost. Shore facilities included a grocery store, and an occasional restaurant. Marinas do not exist.

Go quickly, before it all changes.



A Star in search of Saints

Maeve Bell



The star is of course *Realta*, our Starlight 35, just starting her fifth summer, owned by my husband Adrian, my brother Chris McKeown and me. The saints included some of Ireland's best known early Christians who had a predilection for lying on stone beds on remote rocky islands off Ireland's western seaboard. This summer we visited several of them in pursuit of Chris's long cherished ambition to circumnavigate Ireland.

Not having seen our bunks until one o'clock, I was sure there was some mistake when I heard the Russell's getting up at 05:00. I didn't remember any discussion about an early start but I was soon to learn that Joan and John like rising early – a disconcerting habit to find among shipmates! We whooshed down Strangford narrows with the first of the ebb and turned right to go south about.

Off St Johns Point the 07.30 forecast promised a fresh North Westerly. A glorious reach across Dundrum Bay and along the County Down coast followed before the wind started to drop. Then a new breeze came in dead ahead from the south – so much for the forecast. Five hours later off Wicklow Head at 20.30 we all felt better having scoffed a large pot of new potatoes as we continued to head south under motor. Finally we entered Arklow in the dark and tied up in the dock.

Next morning was warm and bright; soon the cockpit was filled with drying oilskins. Later we pottered across the Kenmare River to Rossdahan where Adrian and I had stayed ten years earlier when the house and magical gardens belonged to Brenda Branigan's family.

Beating out towards the mouth, there were occasional patches of brown water. We speculated on the cause – could it be 'fresh' which hadn't fully mixed or perhaps an algae bloom? Eventually the wind left us so we motored through the passage between Leaghcarrig Island and Two Headed Island (*Realta* tends to like going inside everything) and then into Derrynane.

Following a warm tranquil evening there was an abrupt change as the night became wet and windy. Next morning everything was shrouded in low cloud. Clearly there was no chance of visiting the Skelligs, a major disappointment. We were away before 08.30 with our course and distance set out to take us from headland to headland in the poor visibility. Soon the wind improved, the engine went off and good progress was made with frequent plots on the Decca. Then an entry in the log at 11.20 says it all. Nets! This time the fishing boat hadn't seen us until the last minute because of the poor visibility and we were less than a boat length away. Chris reckoned his heart didn't stop

pounding for an hour.

Our landfall at Dingle was confirmed by a dive from Funghi and by 1430 we were snugly tied up in the Marina. A mammoth shopping trip followed and the contents of the groaning trolleys were delivered down the pontoon a little later. How civilised. Other aspects were less so. No proper surfacing meant one squelched through a red mud on going ashore and if not very careful tramped it back on the board. And surely sailors need loos and showers every bit as much as pubs and pontoons? Even the tangible buzz generated by the fleah weekend didn't quite reconcile me to the lack of facilities.

A lazy Sunday morning with newspapers gave the clouds time to clear away before setting off for Smerwick. We reached Blasket Sound in perfect conditions and anchored off the beach. With the sky so blue and strand so white and the weather warm enough for shorts, it was hard to envisage what it must have been like in the storm which smashed the Spanish Armada ships onto Stromboli Rock. Likewise the cluster of gaily coloured tents and boat loads of day trippers accompanied by pet pugs did not match my mental picture of the remote literary island whose harsh life led to the remaining 22 islanders being evacuated in 1953.

We sailed north at 1500 to catch the last hour of the tide and met three yachts running towards us in something of a sloop as we beat towards Smerwick. Although we didn't know it at the time, they were almost the last yachts we saw for more than a week. By 1700 hours we were anchored in the NE corner of Smerwick, under the shadow of Mount Brandon, following which the forecast spoke reassuringly of variable north easterly winds force 3 or less going easterly.

The ICC Directions described Smerwick Harbour as ".... just



John and Joan Russell and Maeve Bell at Cromwell's Castle, Inishboffin.

PHOTO: C. McKeown.

an open bay". They are absolutely correct. The first intimation of an uneasy night came on rising to wash up after dinner, a reef had popped up some 100 metres astern of us. It is entirely unmarked on the chart and in the Directions so, if in Smerwick, don't anchor in the NE corner any further inshore than the small harbour on the south shore. We moved north west of where the anchor is shown on the ICC plan gently rolling due to the wave reflection from the shore. Sleep was disturbed by the quite disproportionate thundering of the waves on the rocky shores and the log entry for 0130 reads "Why anchor here at all?"

It was no hardship to rise and motor out before six the next morning. Almost immediately the wind freshened from ahead and we were on the wind (again) with two reefs most of the time. It was a splendid sail; the visibility in the clear northerly airstream was like having 20.20 vision, Mount Brandon loomed impressively behind us for most of the day, and three dolphins played in our bow wave for about 15 minutes. By early evening we were approaching Gregory Sound. As the sun dropped lower in the sky, it illuminated the sheer black cliffs of the Aran Islands rising from the Atlantic with a particularly warm rich light – an unforgettable sight.

By half past nine we were at anchor in Cashla Bay unanimous that, on the way in, the Martello tower to the east of the light on Lion Point was far more conspicuous than anything else but inexplicably was not mentioned in the Directions, although shown on the plan.

On Tuesday morning we received a very friendly reception in the fishing harbour of Rossaveal where we stocked up with water, ice and diesel at the quay and were given a delicious present of black sole and a bag of prawns by a fisherman. Then off in warm slightly hazy sunshine for Portmury on Inishmore and a visit to Dun Aengus. If Great Blasket was busier than expected, Inishmore seemed overrun by visitors. However the giant fort stood almost aloof from the crowds holding its secrets within its triple ring of defensive walls which in turn were guarded by a bristling chevaux

de frisse – the higgeldy, piggeldy array of upright stones angled towards an incoming invader.

We sailed slowly across to Greatman's Bay shellling prawns as we went. The wind dropped and the sea turned to molten gold just as described by H J Hansen in the Cruising Association Handbook (thoughtfully reprinted in McMillan's Almanac).

"The splendour of the mountains, their varying colours, whether in the rising or setting sunlight, by noonday or under the moon, the glory of the sea in fine weather at sundown when it often resembles a lake of molten gold....".

Anchoring off Maumeen Quay a four man racing curragh swooped out to inspect us; they were practising for Roundstone Regatta on the coming Sunday and expected about ten competitors.

RTE in their morning weather forecast announced that it would be 'another high summer's day'. It was. We sailed slowly along the Inner Passage route in benign conditions and then through Macdara's Sound. It looked straightforward enough on the chart but as the echo sounder plummeted towards our magic figure of 1.4, m the only noise came from sharp intakes of breath and terns plopping into the clear water for fish.

We anchored in a sandy bay, guarded by a large grey seal sprawled on a rock in its centre, and went ashore to see the 6th century church, one of the oldest in the country although it has been heavily restored. St Macdara's Island was renowned as a holy island, so much so that the hookers dipped their sails as they went past. Its holy status still continues as, each year on 16 July, mass is celebrated on it; a congregation of between 300 and 700 people (our informants later that day couldn't agree) had come by boat to the island the previous day. After bathing from the beach, lunch was punctuated by some serious birdwatching trying to identify terns. John helpfully recited the ones we might expect to see: 'Rose ate (Roseate) a common little arctic sandwich!' Binoculars in one hand and book in the other, I eventually gave up in total frustration



St. McDara's church.

PHOTO: M. Bell.

but almost convinced myself that I had seen all five.

Motoring gently into Bertraghboy Bay a genuine, if rusty, Clyde puffer 'Pibroch of Glasgow' was towing a fish farm and we half expected Para Handy to pop out of the wheelhouse! With no definite decision as to our destination that night, the challenge of the very narrow channel into the top end of Cashel Bay proved irresistible and we eased our way in, lamenting the lack of cairns and leading lines. Erecting them could be a winter diversion for western members of the ICC we mused later over dinner.

Ashore Willie Boulger's pub had live music and a grand atmosphere while the clock above the bar, the hands of which were firmly stopped at midnight, was inscribed "No Tick". To bed with a debate raging in the cockpit between Chris and John as to the position of Cassiope in the night sky and the faint howl of seals. What a perfect day.

Mindful of the difficulty of finding the channel, we made an early start to be on top of the tide, re-anchoring on the southern side of Bertraghboy Bay for a leisurely breakfast. Perhaps too leisurely as we then reluctantly decided we would be too late for the tide in Joyce's Pass. There was virtually no wind as set our course to lead between the rocks and breakers including the evocatively named Wild Bellows. Two hours later Chris and I convinced each other it would be a pity not to at least look at Joyce's Pass. All the rocks were correctly identified without difficulty, the sea was smooth, the decision to go through was easy indeed almost an anti-climax, until making our turn, we found three pot markers bang slap in the middle of the narrowest part of the passage but Chris steered unflinchingly between them and the shore.

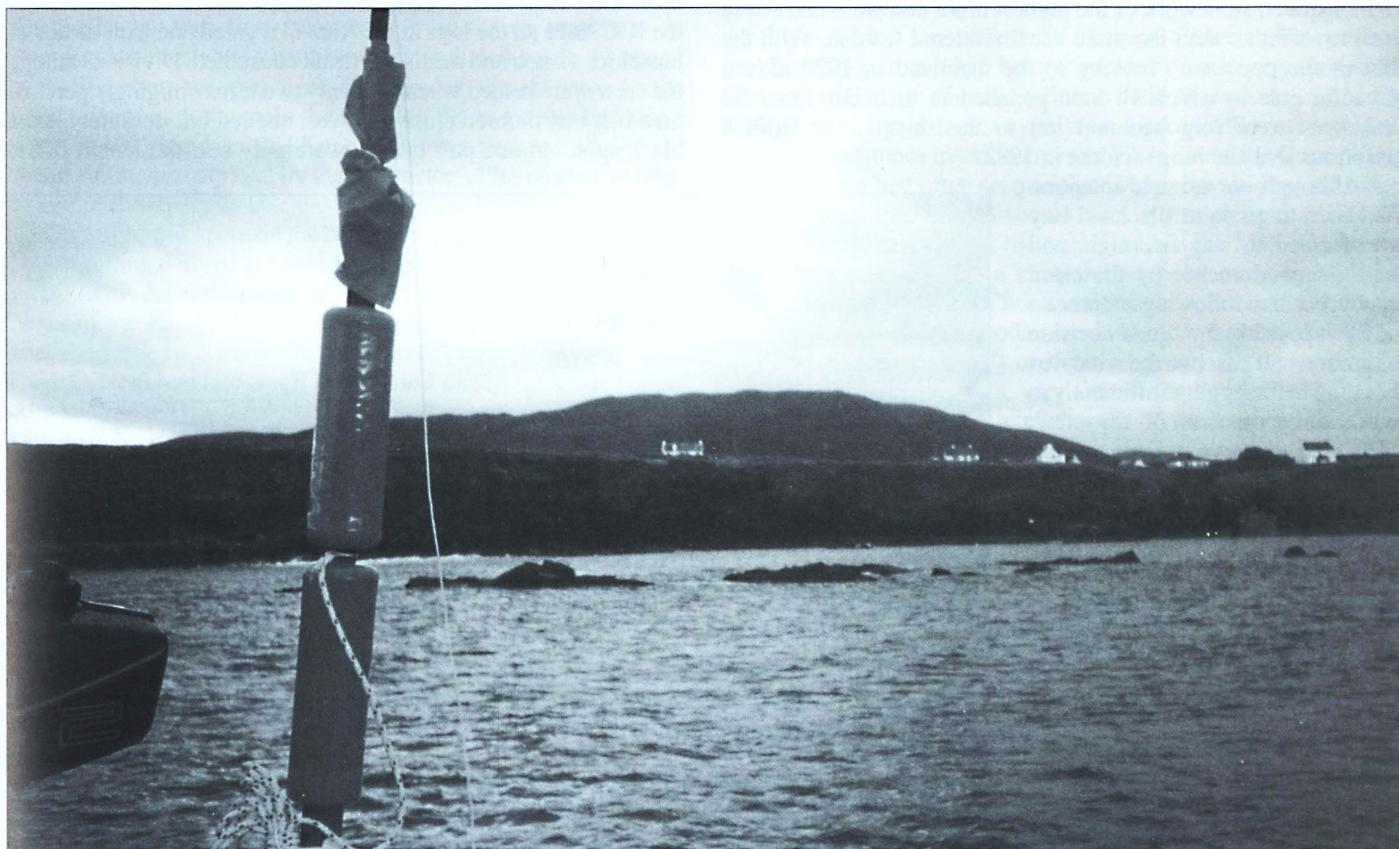
By mid afternoon we were anchored in Inishbofin and dinghied ashore to inspect Cromwell's Castle. Having associated Cromwell's campaign in Ireland only with Drogheda and the Pale, it was fascinating to find such a massive fort on the extreme western seaboard guarding the entrance to the secure island harbour. Records show that its recommended garrison was 100 men following its construction in 1664 for £1,000. Later Chris and John walked over to see St Colman's church and graveyard where, on the site of the original 7th century foundation, there is a 14th

century church and raised graves ie built up with stones presumably because the earth was too rocky to dig a grave of any depth. Colman, a nephew of St Columcille, was Bishop of Lindisfarne but, when the decision about the date of Easter went against him at the Council of Whitby, upped and left (or got thrown out) and returned to Ireland.

By now it was Friday 19 July so we were about to start the third week of our cruise. The original plan had been to spend the final week in Donegal and on the north coast but, almost unbelievably there was yet another fine, settled forecast on the radio, so there was no hesitation in deciding to spend as long as possible in the islands. Besides which, we were all avidly reading Wallace Clark's gem of a book 'Sailing Round Ireland'. In it he describes a cruise (which he explains is actually a compendium of several cruises) made in the early 1970's. It is full of glorious detail, not only about Wild Goose and her adventures, but also about the places and people he met on the way. As a result of his descriptions our destinations for the day were Caher and Clare Islands.

The Directions relating to Caher Island state that there are good boat landings at Port Temple on the East and Portnaclay on the West. Considering the overwhelming caution which this same volume expresses about certain other places, we thought this was a trifle optimistic. We anchored in 9 m on rock lying off the mouth of the tiny indentation at Port Temple and, although it was a calm day, took the precaution of having two of us on board all the time. A quick revision of the island's history courtesy of Wallace Clark and then ashore to see the little church and twelve decorated standing stones. It was magic, if that is not too profane a word to describe a holy place. Everything was just as the book described it some twenty five years ago - the lava stone, the carvings on the stones, the altar slab in front of the tiny east window and, on the altar, money left as an offering in a stone plate. Suddenly it felt really important to leave our offering too and turning out our pockets we managed to find a 1996 penny to join the weathered collection.

Following lunch in the sunshine in the cockpit, interspersed with another frustrating bout of tern identification, the wind



The unmarked reef in Smerwick Harbour.

PHOTO: M. Bell.



Chris McKeown examines a carved stone on Caher. PHOTO: M. Bell.

gathered itself to give a splendid run at 6.5 to 7 knots with the genoa poled out for the remaining 10 miles to Clare Island. Grace O'Malley's Castle, an excellent example of a tower house, guarded the anchorage off the white sandy crescent shaped beach.

By now thoroughly absorbed in the pursuit of saints we set off to walk to the ruined cistercian monastery, the only one in Ireland to be situated on an island. The church was full of scaffolding as it was undergoing some restoration work but we could glimpse the fascinating frescos on the ceiling – again an oddity in Irish ecclesiastical history – and admire an elaborate tomb which strongly reminded Chris and me of St Clements Church in Rodel on the island of Harris in the Outer Hebrides. Finally there was the historic O'Malley plaque 'Terra Maria Potens O'Malley' – O'Malley all powerful on land and sea.

Next morning there was a fairly lazy start sailing off our anchor at 1030 and hardening in the sheets in the light westerly breeze as we headed north past Achill in hazy sunshine. Some 27 miles later the anchor was dropped off the sparkling white strand of Inishkea South and we went ashore to see the ruined village and the remains of a whaling station. The gaunt remnants of the houses demonstrated stonework of the highest order and were laid out in neat rows rather than the more usual scattered fashion. With the last of the population moving to the mainland in 1929 after a dreadful gale in which 10 men perished in their curraghs, the Inishkeas were forgotten and left to the sheep apart from a notorious seal clubbing incident in 1982.

Although our original intention had been to go on to Blacksod Bay we decided to stay overnight and laid a second anchor on the clean sandy bottom following a forecast of SW4 possibly 5. A good decision as around half past two the wind was howling in the rigging sufficiently to wake three quarters of the crew; John didn't believe in letting minor disturbances like that interfere with his sleep. Although *Realta* sheered around to some extent, there was no appreciable swell and the worst of the rain and wind – which we estimated to be about 30 knots – subsided after an hour or so.

The low mist and drizzle the following morning blotted out almost everything and seemed to rule out stopping at Inishglora some 5 miles to the north of the Inishkeas, very disappointing as Wallace Clark had described how it was Brendan's

Island, had interesting remains of the early Christian Church and was much sought after as a burial place because it was so holy. But miracles still happen. As we came abeam a shaft of sunlight broke through, illuminating the approach to the only anchorage. We dropped the hook in 6 m of water on a very rocky bottom and went ashore to pay our respects to the ultimate navigator who apparently made his last voyage at the age of ninety in a curragh. Looking at the slab of rock forming the saint's bed in the tiny ruined church, I thought it was probably the lesser hardship.

A good passage to Broadhaven running inside Eagle Island followed and it was fascinating to find the tide with us although by my calculation it should have been against us. Wallace [Wallace Clark by this time had taken on the combined status of the alternative sailing directions and extra member of the crew] says that in summer it runs NE during daylight hours and compares it to a somewhat similar phenomenon in the Sound of Harris in the Outer Hebrides.

On the way into Broadhaven we overtook a German yacht *Weya* and after much discussion came to the conclusion it was the first we had seen since the Aran Islands. Later when they joined us in the small bay north of Gubaknockan, the owner Deiter Wolf and his crew came on board for drinks. A return visit to his Dehler 34 resulted in a very jolly night.

While the cellar was holding out well, the days in the islands had done for the larder. There was no longer any choice as to dinner; it had to be eggs, bacon and baked beans. Clearly a shop was urgently required so Arranmore and Burtonport seemed the obvious destinations for the following day.

Departing at eight o'clock, we motored past the impressive cliffs at the entrance to Broadhaven and the beautiful Stags rearing up from the sea. Just under 12 hours later we anchored in Arranmore, too late for the shop. Joan and I surveyed the tins and, not having seen the inside of a restaurant or a proper bath since Kinsale, kindly offered the blokes the prospect of a meal on shore. John lapsed into a well practised civil servant's non-committal silence while Chris looked distraught and searched for the phrase to convey that he wished to continue to eat chez nous and unwashed. I fell to wondering whether I would be drummed out of the ICC since all the logs in the Annual regaled one with details of hostilities visited and meals and drink consumed. Divisions among the crew were healed when suddenly two terns obligingly perched on a fish box moored close by – yes, one red bill definitely had a black spot and one pair of legs were only half the length of the



Dun Aengus.

PHOTO: C. McKeown.

other. At last, a positive identification of both a common and an arctic tern!

Next morning we headed for Burtonport with Chris in a state of minor anxiety having read and re-read sailing instructions which made it sound next best thing to Hampton Court maze.

Three hours later, homes had been phoned, water and ice were on board, a salmon bought, and the ice box filled with shopping which the supermarket had kindly put in the car and driven to the pier head. Making our way through Owney Sound, we saluted Owney Island – now famous as the birthplace of Daniel O'Donnell. Cruit proved so pleasant that, after lunching on tortilla a la Witchcraft as described in full unexpurgated detail in last year's Annual, all thought of continuing to Gola was abandoned.

As John and Joan had to be back in Whiterock no later than Thursday afternoon to run a special event for the 75th anniversary of the River class, it was essential to get to Lough Swilly by the following day. Thus a reasonably early start was made followed by some interesting pilotage through Carnboy Channel and past Gola before we set sail in rather sloppy seas and beat towards Bloody Foreland.

By 16.00 *Realta* was off the entrance to Lough Swilly and turned to run up it in bright sunshine and the wonderfully clear light that often comes with a northerly wind. Golden strands, unlike the white ones in the south west, were punctuated by rocky headlands, each one it seemed crowned with a fort or martello tower as part of the legacy of the importance of Lough Swilly as a possible site for an invasion during the Napoleonic wars. Dunree Head on the east bank is now a museum and interpretive centre. Knockalla on the west bank was even more important in Napoleonic times with a battery which included seven 42 pound guns. Together, the two forts commanded the entrance to the Lough. Perhaps fortunately the invasion did not come because a report of 1815 indicates that Knockalla tower was partly collapsed due to "infamous work..... by the contractor". Plus ça change, plus ça meme chose.

The night was spent on the convenient pontoon at Rathmullan. Next morning before Richard McClure joined us and the Russells set off in his car for Strangford Lough, there was time to visit the Flight of the Earls exhibition in the martello tower. A few years after the battle of Kinsale, James I made peace. However, when Hugh O'Neill was told that if he went to London (to where he had been summoned) he would be killed, he went into exile in Europe with 90 of his followers. They set sail from Rathmullan leaving the clans bereft of leadership and bringing to an end the ancient Gaelic order.

Reaching down the Lough, Macamish seemed just the spot for a lunch stop and the anchor was dropped in the little bay underneath yet another martello tower, now a holiday residence.

Portsalon was the next stop where we set off to find the garden at Greenfort having telephoned that morning to make an appointment. The book 'Hidden Gardens of Ireland' suggested the distance was just over a mile but this seemed grossly optimistic and we were very grateful for the offer of a cup of tea after we had walked around admiring a captivating mixture of formal lines, a grecian temple complete with a buddha, informal planting and a highly productive kitchen garden.

Later in the evening phone calls were made from Rosie's Pub – emporium might be a better word – and it was confirmed that



A good landing place ... Caher Island.

PHOTO: C. McKeown.

Richard Bell would join us in Portrush the following night.

The overnight rain had cleared away as we set full sail off Dunaff Head and had a romping sail, one of the best of the cruise, in sunny north westerly conditions. Portrush is at a convenient stopping distance but swell enters the small harbour which is crammed with sea angling vessels and boats on permanent trots. We were fortunate to get alongside the small pontoon. In its favour it must be said that the town is highly convenient for shopping. We roasted a joint and observed the first law of cruising; stomachs on board expand to accommodate the quantity of food available.

Early next morning a start was made for Rathlin with the intention of lying in Church Bay to wait for the tide to Belfast Lough. Three hours later a very large buoy provided a convenient mooring in Church Bay; two of them had been laid for the barges working on the new piers which should revolutionise Rathlin for yachts on passage as well as giving the residents a proper harbour for the first time.

Once ashore we visited St Thomas Church. The present building dates from 1815 but yet another of our early Saints, St Comgall of Bangor, founded a church there towards the end of the sixth century. The little graveyard contained several graves marked by plain headstones inscribed merely "A sailor of the Great War", something we had often seen in Scotland and a chilling reminder of how many lost their lives as convoys negotiated the north western approaches. From the top of the hill the Mull of Kintyre and Ailsa Craig were all in view and the point made by Wallace Clark about how in early Christian times this stretch of water was the connection between Scotland and Ireland rather than a division suddenly seemed startlingly obvious.

Taking advantage of the very first of the flood tide along the Antrim coast, there was a total absence of wind; in fact the calm lasted all the way to Bangor where we were tied up by 2005. Adrian arrived; what should have been a three week cruise for him turned into two dinners afloat while securely fastened to a pontoon.

Half past six in the morning came early and rain was a further shock. Where were the oilskins? I could hardly remember when I'd last had them on. True to form, the wind was ahead once we had cleared Donaghadee Sound; some things about this cruise were remarkably consistent. So, as so often on past trips, we plugged south under engine until at last we could turn for the inside passage and slip up Strangford narrows just before the ebb turned against us. Then on to our mooring at Killyleagh almost in the shadow of the giant statue standing on the hilltop of Saul, St Patrick, the one who converted and inspired the saints we had sought.

St Kilda for the day

Brian Black



THE WYBRANT CUP

FOR THE BEST CRUISE IN SCOTTISH
WATERS

June as usual brought together the crew for the annual trip to St Kilda. This has become something of a feature of the sailing year for us, firstly in the lovely old *Roma*, a thirty five foot Buchanan now replaced with *Cuillin* a high performing, fast passage making UFO34.

The only problem is, we seldom get there. Back in '89 we did get in for a brief visit to this most tantalising little island group stuck out there in the Atlantic nearly two hundred miles north by north west from the Ulster coast. The effect then was profound, those deserted hamlets, the sense of utter isolation, the dramatic and unpredictable weather – and of course the stunning abomination of the military base. It all entered the folk memory of my sailing companions and on the succeeding years we made ready for the voyage only to be cheated time and again by the weather.

This has become so much of a pattern that we plan the trip with a consolation in mind – a live-aboard chef who provisions the boat to the highest standards of haute cuisine. I recall well riding out one Atlantic blow in the lee of a Scottish island. All around the sea was white with spume and spray. Someone was put on anchor watch, transits taken, the chum in place and the kedge anchor deployed. Below however the strains of Beethoven mixed with aromas from the galley as a full scale Indian meal emerged complete with freshly ground herbs, nan bread, a selection of dips and a korma that would have made Ghandi blush. That particular trip became a cruise from hell as one depression followed another forcing us to take refuge in a endless series of quality meals which challenged the constitution of even the most hardened bon viveur. But we survived to make it back to Strangford, bloated but unbowed.

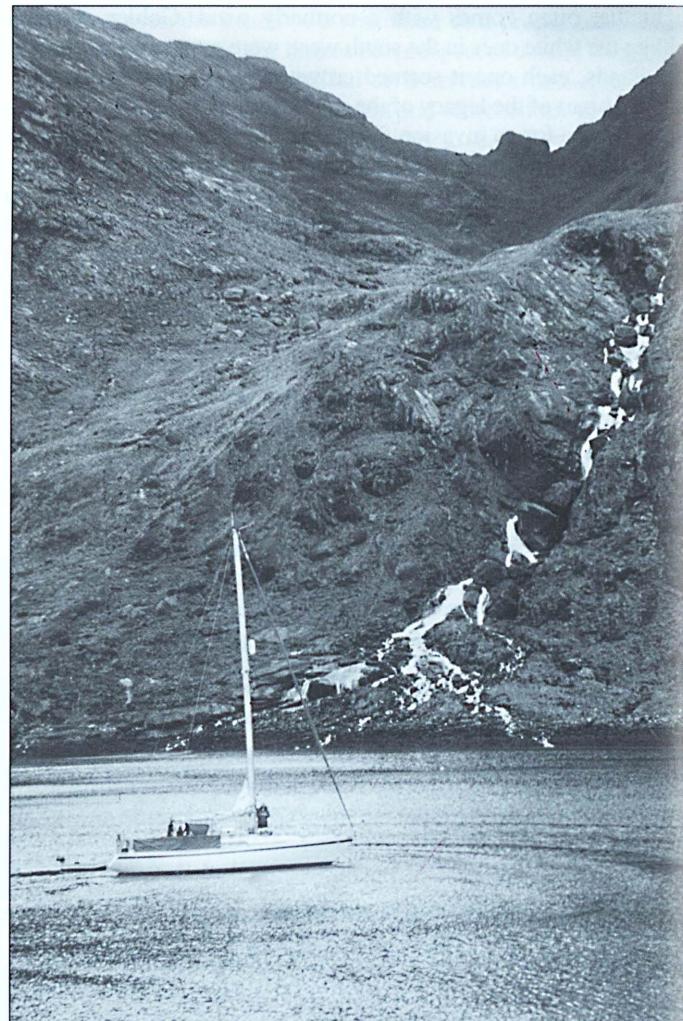
This year was little different. *Cuillin* was prepared against the worst nature could throw at us. Freshly frozen lamb, roasting steak, duckling and even a few kidneys were stored carefully in the forepeak. The plan was to eat our way systematically through the chef's schedule of four square meals a day along with a few snacks to fend off the pangs of hunger in between. Some wine was laid in along with personally selected whiskeys and off we set.

We cleared Barra Head by late afternoon on the second day out, going well into a rising Atlantic swell when tell-tales of cloud appeared in the western sky. The wind began to rise and a nasty sea developed putting in jeopardy the prospects of making St Kilda within the time we had available. A call to the coastguard in Stornoway confirmed our fears that the weather was deteriorating and that the anchorage would be soon untenable. So with only forty miles left to run there was little alternative but to change course, free the sheets and head for the inside of the Outer Hebrides. The problem with Village Bay is that it is either tenable or it's not. Because of their location, the islands of the St Kilda group – Hirta, Stack an Armin, Boreraig, Soay and Stac Lee, tend to lend strength to whatever wind is around – a force six can become an eight in a dramatically short space of time.

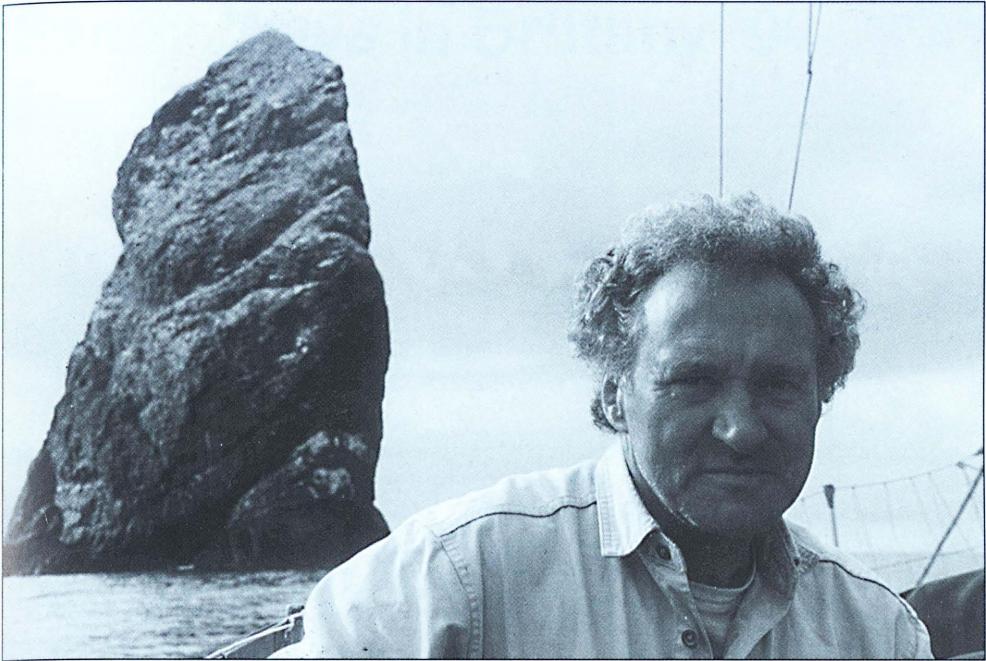
And while the anchorage in Village Bay theoretically gives shelter from the west, a cruel scend can make it an almost impossible lie and when you add this to a wind that accelerates

over the hill – a steady sixty knots was recorded around the time we had decided not to go there – the prudent course of action is to give it a miss if conditions are not right.

In fact we lost little by changing our plans. In breezy conditions but with enough sunshine to show the islands in their best light, we sneaked into wonderful little holes in the rocks such as Wizard Pool in South Uist which we had to ourselves. The Scottish islands are as near to wilderness as you will get in western Europe and if you choose carefully you really can get the feeling that you are alone. The next stop was Loch Scavaig on Skye. We closed with the coast in a thick drizzle that hid the land. But just as we turned the corner and picked our way through the rocks into the anchorage, the cloud broke to reveal the jagged teeth of the Cuillins, great towering peaks of elemental beauty that stifled conversation. And as though that was not enough, a golden eagle glided in and out of the wisps of mist still clinging to the peaks. Experiences like that marked the rest of the trip as we hopped from one island to another – Eigg, Mull, Staffa, Jura and then home. We



Loch Scavaig and the Cuillean Mountain.



Brian Black.

had not made St Kilda this time, but there would always be another occasion.

Work being what it is, the demands of earning a living seemed to occupy a good part of the summer. But then another week became clear and there was a chance to go sailing again. A series of phone calls however established that only one of the usual crew of five would be free to take time out. It was never said but everyone knew that St Kilda was still there and given any breaks in the weather at all, the chances were that *Cuillin* would have another go.

We slipped away from Strangford in a motoring calm but by late that Saturday night a bit of a breeze had filled in, enough to give us six knots through the water. With the help of a favourable tide *Cuillin* was soon close reaching, not to the north west towards St Kilda but away up past Gigha and towards the Sound of Jura. It was the old story, wherever the wind was coming from was precisely where we wanted to go. A watch routine was easy to establish – you were either on or off but people who sail together know their respective strengths and weaknesses and it did not require much effort to ease the boat up to Crinan for the night then on through the Doras Mor, up the Sound of Mull, past Ardnamurchan then a quick flick to port and we were on course for the Sound of Barra.

The pilot book was nothing short of intimidating. It warned of a tortuous passage, of transits, hidden rocks and overfalls – it did everything but say “don’t”. In fact a quick bit of chartwork and a close eye on the depth sounder and we were through and heading due west well before nightfall. So once again St Kilda seemed viable. This was now serious sailing and the more casual routine of the inner waters had been changed to a strict watch keeping system complete with harnesses at all times and sails shortened to make allowances for two people working the boat instead of five.

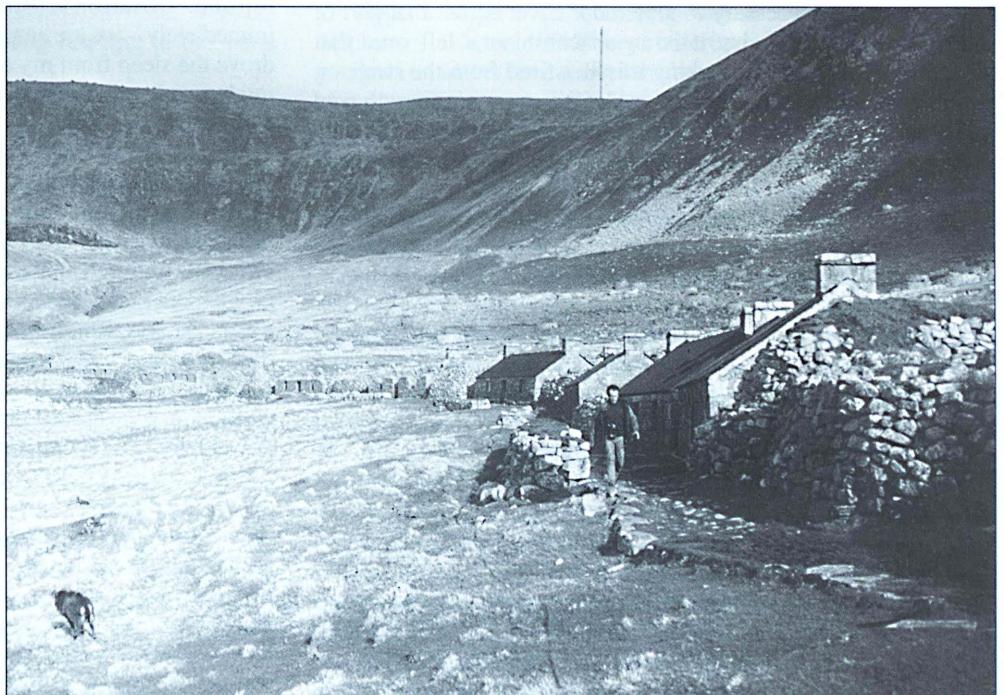
The easy Atlantic roll had given

way to a more pronounced ocean swell complete with an unpleasant cross sea that occasionally kicked up lumpy breaking waves which swept the length of the boat from time to time. It continued like that for the better part of the sixty mile tack that was needed before we could swing north by east and lay a course for St Kilda. We were hard on the wind and while there was no great pressure on the boat, sleep below proved difficult.

There is something about the small hours of the dog-watch that drain one's spirit and as *Cuillin* slammed through the seas, falling into holes from time to time, I was beginning to wonder what this was all about, what possible reason was there to actually volunteer for this sort of punishment. I had just spent the better part of two hours mulling over the concept while trying to

sleep when a call from the deck reminded me I was due back on watch. Over to the chart table first to work up the DR - the Decca had long ago decided to give out garbage - then just as I was about to struggle into my oilies, we hit a big one. Whoosh, it rushed along the deck and, in the way water has of finding the chinks, several gallons of cold Atlantic squirted between the pram-hood and the deck hitting me fair and square and drenching the chart table in the process. "Right, that's it," I said to myself making my way on deck in a foul temper, determined to end this nonsense of a bash to windward just to look at some islands that even the people who lived there decided to abandon sixty years ago. "What day is it?" asked Fred. Choking back the retort I felt most appropriate I told him and asked why. "Because it's my birthday," he answered, unaware of the skipper's change of mind and black thoughts about boats, helmsmen that hit waves and distant lumps of rock.

Wrestling silently with my conscience, I went through something the psychiatrists call self control, squeezed what I could from my fleece jacket and thermal undies and said heroically,



Village Street on Hilda.

"Right then, go about and we should lay St Kilda by dawn – oh, and happy bloody birthday."

With first light, a few wisps of land cloud could just be seen clinging to the highpoint of Hirta, the main island in the tiny archipelago which is less than four miles across at its widest point. It took another three hours to clear the tip of Conachair, at 426 metres its highest point and then round the Dun and into Village Bay where the water was so clear you could see the anchor taking in the sand. The bay itself is deep and it makes sense to go right in towards the jetty but make sure to leave a clear fairway as military vessels come and go all the time. The extraordinary thing about St Kilda is that even when conditions are benign, there is still the feeling that you are only there on sufferance and that the weather gods might turn at any moment.

Breakfast then ashore to feel again the sense of being an intruder as we walked along what had been the old village street. Several of the houses have now been restored by volunteers working with the Scottish National Trust. The cleits are still there, these are the stone igloos the islanders used for drying fish and seabirds while they waited for boats to arrive from the mainland in spring.

In many a hearth was a stone with the family name painted on it along with the dates when relatives made the journey from the Uists or Barra, even Glasgow, where they had settled after the island had been evacuated in the late 1930s. I am well used to lonely places – in Ireland memories of famine times are all too fresh. But here on Hirta there is a real feeling of "presence" as one moves around. Back on *Cuillin* we made ready to tour the off-lying islands, this time in the company of Stuart Murray, the Scottish Natural Heritage warden.

The downside of Hirta is undoubtedly the army base. It really is a breeze-block monstrosity left over from the days of the cold war when it was necessary to give radar cover across that part of the north Atlantic. Today it is an anachronism, left over that justifies its existence by tracking missiles fired from the range on Benbecula. The soldiers themselves, let me stress are friendly and willingly provide access to showers and their pub, the Puffin Inn. But one has to question their role, especially in these environmentally sensitive days.

As we weighed anchor, a minke whale sounded and blew off the port side – the smell of fish pervaded the air. While we marvelled at this sight, a second whale appeared off to starboard. On our way across to Stac Lee a strange creature broke the surface. This turned out to be a leatherback turtle slowly and without concern flopping its way northward. Then close to Stac Lee itself, the spectacle of the biggest gannetry in the world, all sixty thousand pairs of these magnificent birds wheeling and tumbling, diving and generally filling the air around us. On Boreray, Stuart counted nearly four hundred Soay sheep, a species that came to this part of the world with neolithic man four thousand years ago and has remained genetically unchanged ever since.

Looking up at the towering cliffs and overhangs that gave Stac Lee and Stac an Armin their formidable character it was hard to believe the St Kildans used to climb along the rocky ledges gathering sea-birds at night when the gannets and puffins and guillemots would be unsuspectingly at rest. One story has it that in the eighteenth century a group of three men and a boy were



Cleits.

stranded on one of these rocks when their boatman took ill and could not return to pick them up. That was in September – somehow they survived until a boat managed to reach them the following spring.

Time caught up with us all too quickly and by 0600 next day we were under way, heading south for home. The last good fix I managed to get was the Skerryvore light around 2200. Thanks to the trusted Walker log that has travelled many a sea mile with me, I had a good idea of our latitude, longitude was uncertain. Then around 0400 the lights of what I assumed to be a fishing trawler bobbed up and down as *Cuillin* crested the waves that had formed in the 15-20 knots of wind giving us an easy reach.

Tiredness made me careless so I did not pay much attention to the three green lights which had become clearer as we closed with the vessel. "Fishing trawler, this is the yacht off your starboard beam," I said thinking that we could be seen and heard with the intention of asking for a position.

Silence. I repeated the call and suddenly a very proper voice replied. "Station calling Warship Colliton, alter course immediately – we are engaged in a mine sweeping exercise." That drove the sleep from my eyes, put new life into the crew as well I might say. In any event, a new course restored communication and Colliton gave us a fix.

Dawn saw us caught in the tidal race off the Rhinns of Islay. We no sooner cleared that than a few miles further south the race off the Mull of Oa gave us a right thrashing. I had calculated, wrongly, that a fair tide and favourable wind would sweep us through these notorious rips without too much of a problem. In fact it was breaking white all around with big standing waves in the Rhinns and cauliflower seas in the Oa – large triangular jobs with cascading tops that seemed to simply fall on top of the boat. It was demanding while it lasted but we got through all right. In retrospect, if those were benign conditions I would hate to be there at the wrong time.

The rest of the trip was uneventful, nothing untoward that is except the reaction from the three pals who had not been with us. As we disembarked at Quoile Yacht Club in Strangford Lough the polite "Where did you get to?" changed to "You went where?" in a manner which made it clear that a force eight in the tide races off Islay was little more than we deserved. Just for the record however, we covered 530 miles in seven days and finished off what was left of the cuisine cookie had stowed away on the previous trip. Thanks chaps, it was lovely.

Sandy Ways in Brittany '96

Tom Cooke

Where to this year?, was the question in Spring '96. "The Faroes" suggested Bernard Corbally, "Scotland" Frank McCrea. "West coast of Ireland" ventured Johnnie Hourihane – God rest him. However as the time got closer France, in particular Brittany and the promise of better sunshine, good food and wine became more and more attractive. Sure, we had been there many times before and knew the road.

Finally on Friday July 5th at 17.30 with myself as skipper, and crew John Maree, Philip Hourihane, Edward Simons, and Edwin Minihan we departed Dun Laoghaire turning right to go south on the ebbing tide with a light north westerly wind.

The U. S. S. *John F Kennedy* Aircraft carrier was anchored in Dublin Bay and we went to take a look at her before setting our course for Wicklow Head.

Passing Dalkey Island the Skipper ran through the routine check list with the crew.

Had they brought: Wet weather gear, warm clothes, sleeping bags, passports, foreign currency, tickets home, personal items, etc. A meek voice whispered "I don't think I've got my passport."

Following a quick call to Edwin Minihan's dad Eoin in New Ross, he agreed to bring the errant passport to Wicklow where we tied up and collected it at 22.00. The tide was now foul so we were forced to spend some time in a local hostelry, taking on liquid sustenance.

We caught the tide again at 02.30 and headed south. The wind was Westerly F3/4 and once we were clear of the harbour the engine was switched off, all sail put up, Aquair generator on to keep the batteries charged and set a course of 190 degrees for Round Island in the Isles of Scilly.

South of Tuskar rock we met *Skarunga*. She was an approximately 40 ft long Viking longship heading in the same direction as ourselves.

Between Tuskar and the Scillies there were three encounters with dolphins. One group was very large with some of them jumping well clear of the water. Tail walking ?.

It was a beautiful clear day, flat sea, broad reaching at 7 knots.

On arrival at the Scillies we reached down east of St Marys and entered Hughtown Harbour, where there are now numerous new visitors mooring buoys on the east side.

However the wind was quite gusty, with a choppy sea which would have made it an uncomfortable spot, and possibly made the wine slop out of our glasses. So we moved to Port Cressa where we anchored at 12.30 on Sunday. While preparing to go ashore Eddie Simons put a line over the side and in no time had landed four pollock. He planned to produce a fish stew but when they got "high" they were returned to the sea. Following showers in the Harbour Hotel and a good walk ashore we had dinner and Thinner's real Ale at the Bishop and Wolf Pub.

After dinner we noted that it was a nice clear mild night with a NW wind – why waste it in our bunks ?

So, up anchor at 20.30 and set a course for Ushant on a calm sea at 6. 5 knots.

The crossing was uneventful. Traffic in the shipping lanes was light. The skipper reported our position and course to Ushant

traffic control at midday on Monday. They had us on radar and wished us bon voyage et bon vacances.

While making for Camaret we saw a submarine being escorted by other naval vessels in to the submarine base in Brest.

On arrival in Camaret at 19.00 a French yacht refused to let us tie alongside so we moved alongside a new English registered Nauticat whose crew made us most welcome. They keep her at Port la Foret and commute to her via the Channel Tunnel !

We walked up the quay past the fine Vauban fortified tower into town. The Champagne corks popped, followed by an excellent seafood dinner in a small quayside restaurant.

Returning after dinner we spotted Donegans Irish Pub. The only Irish flavour there that night was a couple of Irish posters and us!

As we arrived back at *Sandy Ways*, *Skarunga* rounded the mole carrying about 14 people. When we saw her in the Irish Sea we must have only seen the day crew.

An early departure next morning with fuzzy heads, but not too early to be caught for harbour dues.

Poor visibility, fine drizzle, light SW wind – on the nose. Through the Chanel du Toulinguet with the Rochers du Toulinguet to starboard setting a course for the Raz du Seine. Having got our timing right it was a very comfortable passage through this infamous stretch of water. What an anticlimax for the crew who had heard so much about the reputation of the Raz.

Our course changed south easterly and with a broad reach we were making 7 knots for Pte de Penmarche. The sun had come out to play and many boats both large and small passed us in the opposite direction heading for Brest for the Classic Boat Festival.

Approaching Pte de Penmarche we met a very large school of dolphins – about 100. They entertained us for some time gambolling and diving around the boat and making high leaps out of the water.

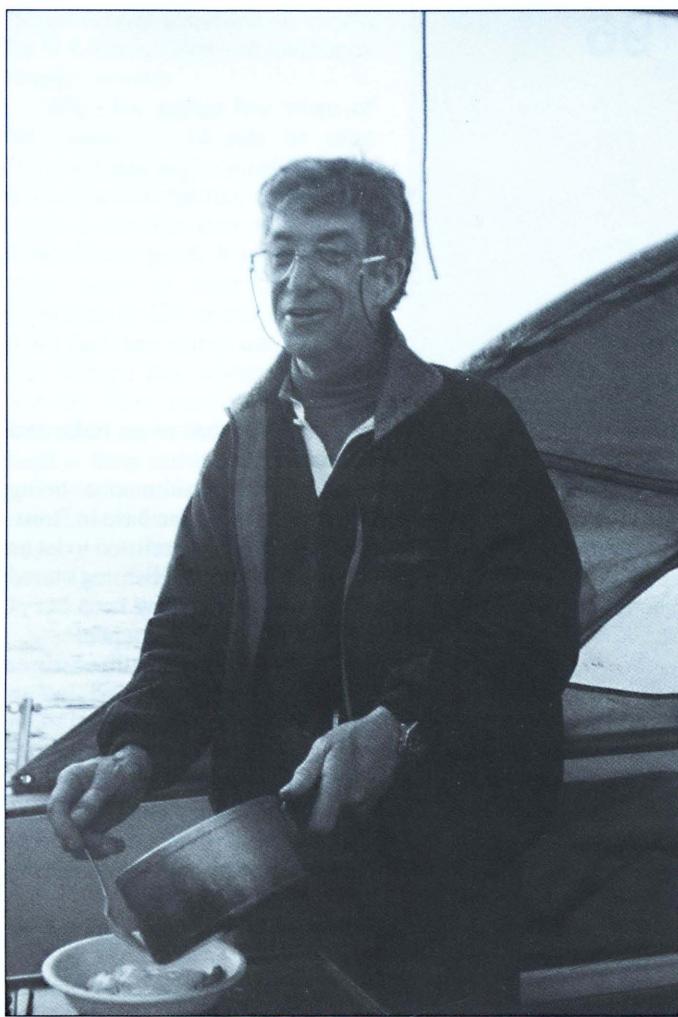
That evening we had dinner in Restaurant Belem in Concarneau. It lived up to expectations serving us a superb seafood meal.

In the rear dining room there was a large table with about 14 people, obviously sailors, in very good form. We discovered that they were from two Howth yachts, *Sarah Mercedes* and *Koala*. The crews of both yachts were surprised to hear that there were flights from Quimper to both Dublin and Cork as they were using the TGV and flying from Paris.

John and Edward departed for the airport by taxi. My wife Stephanie, and Edwin's parents Teresa and Eoin Minihan arrived. We all set off to explore the city and the "Ville Close". This is the original walled, fortified, harbourside town designed by Vauban.

Thursday 11th July. After breakfast we set sail for Isle de Groix. It was a beautiful bright sunny morning with a North West wind F 2/3 and a fairly flat sea. It was a very pleasant run downwind and we were waved in to the inner basin in Port Tudy at 15.00.

This was our fourth visit to Isle de Groix and we always enjoy it. There are narrow roads, like boreens in the west of Ireland, with little traffic. They meander through the fields and villages with



Tom Cooke Serving Apple Pie and Custard.

butterflies on the wing and the sound of bees buzzing in the fields. We walked up the steep hill to the town of Le Bourg and explored the shops and old church on the square.

The following morning on rented bicycles off we all went on a short tour of the island. Out to Les Grande Sables and Loc Maria. It was all very relaxing. The man we rented the bikes from was married to an Irish girl and had lived near Fermoy for a while. We had to get back to Port Tudy to lock out over the sill at 14.30 as the tide was falling.

It was a fine sunny day with a light NW wind. Our course was SE to take us down the west side of the Quiberon peninsula past miles of sandy beach to the Passage de Teignouse, which we raced through with a following tide and wind. Two young mademoiselles in a rib came out to guide us in to a berth in the huge marina at La Trinite.

Sat 13th. At 12 noon we departed La Trinite on another fine day with the same calm sea and light NW wind as the previous day.

By 13.00 we were off Port Navalo and entering the inland sea, the Morbihan. It is essential to get the tides right here as they are very strong with fierce eddys. We flew up to Vannes with the marks being ticked off as we flashed by, arriving early at the lifting bridge, finally tying up in the marina in the heart of the city of Vannes at 19.30.

That evening there was a large celebration of the anniversary of the siege of Vannes. There was a very colourful procession through the streets of this medieval walled city. Nobles in carriages and on horseback, carts drawn by oxen, musicians, beggars, acrobats, all expertly made up and acted. In all excellent street theatre.

We had a wonderful evening prior to the departure of Edwin

and Philip the following morning on Bastille day.

The following day we locked out of Vannes at 09.00. Port Navalo and Port de Crousty were left to port as we set a course for the mouth of the Vilaine river. Sailing across the sandbar at the entrance, with the tide, and on up river to Arzal where we had to wait for an hour for the lock to open.

Eoin Minihan took advantage of this stop by inspecting the lock and barrage with a professional eye.

We motored the rest of the way up to La Roche Bernard and tied up in the old port whose entrance is guarded by an enormous rock, which I presume gives the place its name.

After breakfast on board we took a sailing trip up the Vilaine river under the high overhead bridge. It was a beautiful sunny day with quite a fresh breeze and sailing on the river was an enjoyable change. It was very tranquil passing between the woodland and the fields with river birds along the banks. Lunch was had at anchor with a nice salad and a bottle of wine, and we had a fast broad reach back to La Roche Bernard in plenty of time to have a wander around the town.

Friends of Eoin and Teresa's, Mark and Ruth Walsh drove up from La Baule, where they were holidaying, and joined us for the sail down river. On a rapidly falling tide we made our way down river and scraped across the sandbar.

It was a beautiful sunny day yet again as we made for Isle Dumet. Here we anchored in a cove on the western side for lunch and swims. It is quite a popular spot and there were a number of French yachts also at anchor there.

With the wind on our port quarter we set sail for Pornichet arriving at 20.00. Ruth and family drove over and we had a nice evening at a restaurant in the marina.

Pornichet marina is a very large recently built marina with 1,300 berths. We were visited by the Douane for the first time. He informed us that since it was built more people have been buying boats and it is already too small. They are now planning to build another. When will we see ONE in Dunlaoghaire.

The following day after Stephanie and Teresa had explored the shops we set sail for the harbour of Le Palais on Belle Ile and picked up a visitors mooring buoy in the outer harbour. During the winter the harbour wall had been completely breached in a storm with a large portion of it washed away. However only about 6 months later it had been beautifully rebuilt.

At HW 08.00 the following morning we locked in to the inner basin. While manoeuvring there the engine failed. We managed to get alongside and the skipper came to the conclusion that the prop was fouled. What about the new rope cutters fitted during the winter? Later in the day Mike from an adjacent yacht (she was returning to the UK after 15 years in the Med) donned snorkel mask and fins and went down to investigate. To our amazement he informed us that there was a large tyre around the prop which



Teresa, Philip and Edwin.

with some difficulty he cut free with a large divers knife. The tyre was similar to ones used as fenders on the quay wall on the commercial side of the basin. When the harbour master was informed he apologised and said that *Sandy Ways* was his guest and that no fees would be payable for the duration of our stay.

While having morning coffee on deck a very nice French gentleman came over to say hello. His name was Jean Claude Vache. "You are Irish ? I know the flag and have been to Ireland many times." It transpired that he had worked with Aer Lingus in Paris for 35 years and had retired the previous year.

The morning of Sat 20th we left Le Palais at 11.00 on a very hot, cloudless, still day. We motored around the northwest tip of the island to a delightful inlet, Port du Vieux Chateau, where we anchored with a stern warp ashore, for lunch and swims in the beautiful, clear, aquamarine water.

Overnighting is not recommended there in the Pilot so at 15.00 we departed on a broad reach in a light easterly breeze for Etel.

There is a sand bar at the entrance to Etel and one has to contact the semaphore station on VHF when entering. Later that evening three Irish yachts from Howth arrived in the marina. *Chardonnay*, *Black Pepper* (I.C.C.) with Peter Killen and family, and *Bagpuss* with Pat and Robert Barker. I noted that Peter Killen took his family's advice and turned right when departing Howth this trip. Etel was a charming little place, the people very friendly, and the marina being quite new, the staff appeared to be delighted to have a number of visiting foreign yachts.

Another fine day dawned with a light F 2 easterly wind. We left Etel at 10.30 and under mizzen, main, and spinnaker sailed west for the mouth of the Aven river which we entered in mid afternoon. The river was so crowded with boats that we headed for Concarneau where we overnighted in the marina.

On Monday 22nd we filled up the diesel tanks, the first diesel since leaving Dun Laoghaire, and set sail for Benodet. With a SE wind F 3 the spinnaker was soon up and carried us into Benodet at 6 Kn where we tied up to the visitors pontoon at the new marina in Penfoul.

That evening we took a taxi into Quimper where a Celtic music festival was on. It is really a beautiful old city and we did not have time to do it justice. The following morning we moved *Sandy Ways* to a buoy where she was to remain for three weeks. For the return voyage I now pass you over to the pen of Dan McCarthy.



Simon Mannion.

Voyage in Sandy Ways from Benodet, Brittany to Kinsale 9-18 August 1996.

Tom Cooke as Skipper, and crew: Dan McCarthy, Frank McCrea, and Simon Mannion.

Sat 10th August We arrived at Quimper at about 12.15 in beautiful sunshine – magic! A taxi brought us to Benodet in about thirty minutes and we brought *Sandy Ways* alongside and installed ourselves-Frank and Simon forward, Tom and I aft.

Sun 11th. We left Benodet at about 09.00 in bright sunshine and Frank softly singing *Fagail Arainn*, but with a force 5-6 westerly which later turned north-west; we either beat or motored into the teeth of it in waves about ten feet high and I have never been so seasick. We saw porpoises, gannets, petrels, and gulls – none going our way, they and all other craft evidently manned by gentlemen who don't go to windward. I fell briefly into a delerious sleep and awoke, improving, about 45 minutes before we reached Audierne at about 17.30. We picked up a buoy off a lovely beach and the other three went ashore while I stretched out and went to sleep till 20.00, when I was awoken by lads wishing to talk to le capitaine; I said il est dans la ville and they replied "sorry" and departed. The lads returned about 23.30 after evidently a not very satisfactory meal, however a good night's rest ensued.

Mon 12th. We set off with a fresh headwind for Point du Raz and, perhaps due to two strong Stugeron, all was well. We ran the

Raz du Seine with the tide but through immensely disturbed water. You run halfway through, past a lighthouse, La Plate, and then make a 90 degree turn into the bay of Douarnenez, leaving the Tevennec light to port. There is a dramatic sense of turning around one of the most extreme westerly points on the mainland of Europe, quite apart from the drama of the place itself. We sailed across this vast bay in improving conditions, as the wind dropped and sky cleared, into the beautiful Baie de Penhir guarded at its entrance by the Tad de Pois, a most spectacular series of sea stacks. Up anchor and leaving the bay we sail between the last two of the Tad de Pois – like passing between dragon's teeth – and so around the headland to reach Camaret, with a substantial marina nestling below a late mediaeval octagonal tower, Tour Vauban

Tues 23th. We set off in fair and



Mike with Tyre Retrieved From Prop and Tom Cooke.

light conditions in the late morning to take an indirect route to Ushant via the Chanel de la Helle and the Passage de Fromveur. The first of these provided spectacular overfalls of large sheets of smooth water followed by fierce turbulence, with islands and rocks on each side of us. In the latter, the tide was slacker and we arrived at the bay of Lampaul on Ushant at about 16.00 - a beautiful bay with an old stone harbour resembling Bulloch harbour in some respects. We went ashore and explored a while; a concert was to be held in the church, a surprisingly large building in pristine condition and featuring John-Paul prominently in the nave - clearly Rome rules OK here. We had by far the best meal thus far in a large restaurant with the first real friendly atmosphere we encountered. A party nearby was singing songs in French.

Wed 14th. Went for a swim before breakfast in beautiful water and conditions. After breakfast we all went ashore and rented bicycles, *les classiques*, and headed off like schoolboys mitching. Back aboard we set sail for the Scillies at about 16.00 in superb conditions except that the light wind was dead ahead, so it was all engine. As we cleared Ushant a menacing grey *Duane* roared down on us out of nowhere and hung malevolently off our stern while a voice interviewed Tom, who characteristically was able to cite the date and number of his original report on arrival, so with that they roared off to interview another sailing craft, evidently satisfied that their institution had been accorded proper respect. As the sun set we watched a huge structure on tow by a tug, hardly making two knots. Tom arranged the watches. All went well except that Tom was on French time and the rest of us on Irish time! On the morning watch, when it was still very dark, I was joined by a group of accompanying gulls - it is as though all living things are drawn together in the loneliness of the ocean.

Thu 15th. The morning dawned bright and clear and we sighted the Scillies at about 11.00 and dropped anchor onto white sand in a beautiful deep bay known as the "Cove" between St Agnes and Gough; we went ashore and rambled about St Agnes on the only road, which was made of concrete, and the only traffic was tractors. The "Turks Head" did not serve food after 14.30, so we had lunch in a little restaurant in great heat with extremely tame sparrows and song thrushes. At a bulb shop nearby I bought a bulb for B - Amaryllis Belladonna. We returned aboard and Tom and I went snorkelling over the side in about 15 feet of beautiful clear water. We motored over to Hughtown on St Marys and picked up one of the new mooring buoys. Went ashore for a ramble and attempted telephone calls and had a pub meal - a local flatfish called "megrin" accompanied by a pint of excellent ale called "Hicks"; the pub full of predatory females. Eventually got through to Buncrana - the lines were all overloaded on account of the release of the Leaving Cert results. Went aboard having again rescued the dried out dingy.

Fri 16th. Queued up for diesel, to be offered "Guinness" by a waggish harbourmaster. Ashore we went different ways - Frank to "mainline coffee", Tom and Simon to inspect a German bubble sextant they had seen in an "antique" shop window the previous evening, while I rambled up to the "Star Fort". This is a 1592 construction in order "to break the line between Corunna and Dublin" according to the historical account in the magazine, and which also suggested that the design of the fort was



Eoin and Teresa Minihan at Play – Port Du Vieux Chateau.

archaic even when it was built. I explored about half of the granite battlements which nearly encircle the headland, which itself is part covered by a forest of blasted lodgepole pines, all but destroyed by some ferocious storm. We set sail about 15.00 going east about the islands in a flat calm. In the clear calm water we could observe millions of plankton scintillating in the sunlit water and intermittently, on the meandering streaks of smooth water, we encountered what Frank identified as "red tide" - a reddish surface scum evidently associated with an algal bloom. On this the calmest of seas, it seemed strongly evident that we were traversing a sphere rather than a plane. There was excitement when we were enjoying our dinner on deck when we saw the dorsal fins of two small sharks. I saw one very clearly - the front fin about 5" long with a grey-black margin and a pale creamy centre and with the smaller tail fin 3" high about three feet behind. They appeared to be just laying on the surface of the water, perhaps they were young basking sharks? Conditions for the night watch were very pleasant with a light south-westerly putting us on a broad reach at 6-7 knots in very mild conditions. We kept the same watches as before, except this time our watches were all synchronised. At about 22.00 when I was at the helm and Simon was on deck we both heard and felt two close, but distinct, booms and thumps from what we took to be Concorde's supersonic wake. The sea was so calm and the sky so clear that we were able to see the reflection of the milky way in the water, a thing I never saw before, and later on the 05.00 - 07.00 watch I had a clear view of a brilliant Venus rising as the morning star.

Sat 17th. The day dawned grey in a lumpy sea with the wind now astern so that the genoa, main and mizzen were all dropped and we bowled along at over 6 knots just on the spinnaker, enticed to Kinsale by a large black pint emblazoned on the sail, like the proverbial carrot enticing the donkey. The number of birds increased very noticeably as we approached the coast, with shearwaters and skuas appearing for the first time - we had remarked on several occasions in Brittany the relative dearth of shore birds. Due to deepening mist land was only five miles off when we sighted the Old Head of Kinsale and at about 16.30 we entered the Bandon river and Tom showed us a beautiful cove, Sandy Cove - a handy refuge. We came alongside the marina in Kinsale shortly after 17.00, alas to receive the sad news that Simon's brother had been involved in a fatal accident. It was a sad blow for us all and the only discordant event in the entire week.

A Voyage to Seven Islands

Wallace Clark

We slipped from Coleraine for Brest at 06.30 on the 31st of August. There is a huge swell and a light nor west wind. By 07.35 we were over the bar and had set all plain sail to head eastward for Rathlin and Brest.

It was late for such a start for a voyage we had planned to make in May but the stepping of a new alloy stick with in-mast reefing, a whole new masthead rig in fact, and sorting the details of a major change in accomodation, had taken much longer than expected and we decided to have a trip to Scotland in June and July, so Brittany had to wait. Now we were off and it was late in the year and the new rig still untried in bad weather.

Mike Tinne and I were both elderly for long passages but we were re-inforced by the youthful Stephen Clark, my cousin. Overall I felt much more doubtful of reaching our destination on previous trips but we had time on our side and tended to make it a leisurely passage. By 11.30 Fair Head was abeam and we warmed the bell for our noon dram to celebrate entering the Irish Sea.

We reached Bangor marina that night in the dusk at 10pm.

We made Port St Mary on the Isle of Man by 6pm the next day. The only excitement had been busting the tide in Calf Sound. 1800: rolls in the engine and the sails drawing hard and only just enough to inch passed that white beacon through an ominous line of white water. The tide west of the Sound was almost imperceptible but it suddenly became very strong, five knots plus in the narrows, stayed strong for a quarter of a mile to the east. Large crowd of tourists watched us from a carpark by the Kitterlands Islands beside us. The wind was supposed to go north that evening and we were prepared to sail at midnight but it was still gusting strong from the south, the same thing at 03.00. Eventually we got away at 05.30, a boat called *Whiskey Galore* gave us a bag of crab claws and we lay alongside a rusty fishing boat at the long pier and had a walk up the town which was very much closed down. No-one moving, no eat houses open.

Part of the plan had been to visit the Bird Islands off the west coast so we were glad of the opportunity to head east. By 16.00 we were close off Holyhead in a calm, misty afternoon. At 17.00 found a vacant mooring at the south west end of the lengthy yacht trots. No signs of the marina mentioned by McMillans Almanac. The yard, the yacht club and everything else around it was closed but a kind man gave us a lift as far as the town for fresh food. We had planned to sail at six the next morning to get the tide south of Bardsey but awoke to find visibility less than 50 yards and the coastguards cheerfully commented that the fog went 25 miles out to sea and showed no signs of shifting. By 0630 it had dispersed. I did not take the trouble to inform the coastguards.

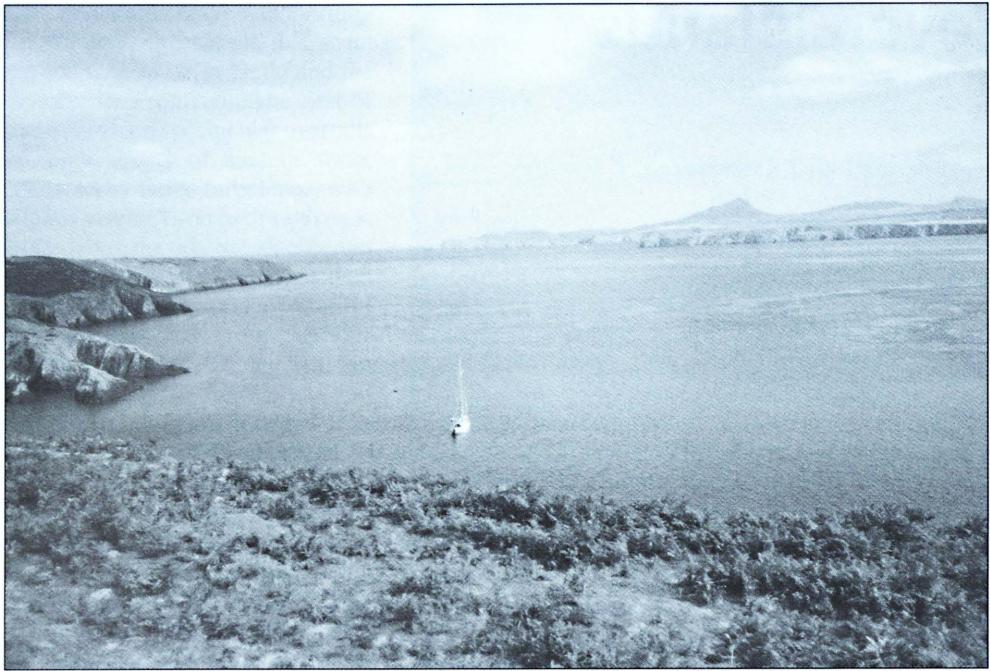
By 15.30 we had picked up a mooring kindly indicated by a fisherman in the anchorage at the south east end of Bardsey. It reminded me of Clare Island with its high hump at one end and the rest of the land flat. There had been none of the fireworks in the Sound which I had only read about in Belloc's hair raising account in the cruiser *Lenola*. There was plenty of stream

running but no waves to threaten. We soon got out of the strong stream in a counter along the east side of the island. It is a delightful place with well kept farms, attractive houses built in pairs by a benevolent landlord Sir Spencer Wynn one hundred years ago. Beside the long slipway a steel carriage on rails takes the ro-ro ferry which resembles a small tank landing craft swiftly up out of the water with its large twin outboard still in position. The single main road which goes north, south along the island has high stone banks either side, covered over with sods. A twenty five foot high cross commemorates the benefactor who died in 1888. There are two gift shops, attractive bird mementoes and records of the extraordinary number of birds that visit the island at the migration times. Twenty thousand guests, twenty thousand saints are supposed to have been buried there, even more than the reputed number on our Aran islands. There was silence and a warmth in wrapping peacefulness in the atmosphere.

We slipped at 19.00 so hoping to arrive off Ramsay, and its Sound of fierce repute, at dawn. The tide were taking off now and a half moon came up shortly after midnight. Eleven seals, enormous size, lay on the south point of the port but bellowed mournfully as we left.

A cruise liner passed our bows at 03.00, I suppose he must have been anchored in the inner part of the bay and looked as if they were heading for Ireland. They seem to get everywhere these days. He was probably on a visit to Welsh and Irish gardens. When I took over the watch at 05.30 the tide had turned south, we were being carried at five knots towards St Davids Head. It was still dark so we turned north to kill a bit of time on our engine and wait for the tide to slacken in the sound. Welsh names were intriguing, a large rock which looked as if should be pronounced Golliwog marks the north entrance to the Sound. Ramsay looked far to far out to sea. I pictured a narrow Sound with high rocky cliffs glowering down on it but today it looked wild and smiling. I pictured the Bitches as a solid wall of rock, half way across the Sound extending east from the Island, now we saw them as a row of sharks teeth pinnacles.

We tried to anchor just north of the harbour and dragged all over the place so picked up an orange buoy HIDB style and had a marvellous breakfast in the cockpit which was produced by Stephen, porridge with a dash of rum, two eggs and lots of ham, real coffee while a chorus of choughs danced and squawked along the cliffs over our heads. There was a buzzard there, a couple of ravens, some jackdaws but not many gulls. By midday the north going tide was in full flight and enormous quantities of white water pouring like through a weir on a large river between the Bitches. A 'shilling vomiter' came out from the mainland heavily laden with visitors and played around in the white water. The island was bright with heather and short yellow gorse but apart from the warden no-one lives on it. It lacks the warm atmosphere of Bardsey which comes from the population. Uninhabited islands are generally dull islands, one thing it lacked was a memorial to Mr Whitehead who had conferred an enormous benefit on it by blocking the gap between the island



Wild Goose on mooring off Ramsay, St. David's Head beyond.

and the big Bitch rock thus making the harbour accessible at all stages of the tide instead of only for an hour or so around high and low water.

We slipped at 14.00 for Skomer and sailed south in leisurely fashion before a light north wind. By 17.00 we picked up a visitors buoy in North Bay. Ashore by dinghy to meet the young warden who told us that it would cost us £6.00 per skull to land. When we said we were only there for a short visit he reduced it to £1.00 each. The surface of the island is covered in bracken, in its recesses and those on the cliffs 150,000 Shearwaters come to nest, even at this late stage of the year they still have chicks to feed. We were a bit tired to walk far but it was a glorious, fine autumn evening. Mike had made supper when we came back onboard and asked me seriously which wine I thought he should serve with baked beans. Turned in at 21.30 after a pretty active day. Most of the 150,000 shearwaters seemed to be skimming over our heads in the dark. A cacophony of screams. The island was alive with birds, all over the surface by day, in total contrast to Ramsey where we hardly saw any birds at all inland.

As I looked out the hatch at 06.00 after listening to the forecast Venus was rising just ahead of the sun, the most beautiful of all the planets. Orion lay on his back, all the familiar constellations as clear as bells. It was bitter cold, the coldest night so far but we hadn't closed the cabin doors since leaving home four days earlier. We slipped at 07.45 to catch slack water in Jack Sound, which we duly did. Crab Rock was easy to spot at quarter flood and there was no real kick up just a bit well south of the approached, turned sharp to starboard and anchored for breakfast in South Harbour. It has magnificent cliff surrounds and reminded me of Port a Chulla on Tory Island. Many birds swimming, young cormorants and gulls all around us and a hobby hawk came over us hunting around. Away at 09.00 for Skokholm the main object of the Welsh part of the cruise. I was a little disappointed to find no kickup in the Wild Goose race as it is named on the chart but our *Wild Goose* curtsied demurely at meeting her namesake. The west side of the island has curious ribbon of grey rock between layers of dark blood red the colour of dulse. The light house shone white in the morning sun but the wind was south east and rising, blowing straight into the landing place which must have worried Lockley whose book "I Know an Island" we had onboard. There was a three foot swell but quite a chop in the onshore wind. As we reached the anchorage Stephen kindly volunteered to stay onboard. We moored to a

buoy by pulling a noose of warp round its base as there was no lug to get hold of. Mike and I landed in the dinghy to find the top of the island in glorious technicolour red sandstone rock, green sward, golden gorse, golden rod, sheets of bennyweed. Graham the warden pointed out five different varieties of butterflies. Within a few square yards were yellow Wagtails, white Wagtails and the wheel house where Ron Lockley had stored the wheel and name board of the wreck of the Alice Williams which had come ashore during his tenure of the island. Inside the dwelling house was a magnificent library containing most of the 30 odd books which Lockley has written and a picture of him on his last visit in 1988 aged 83. He is still alive and well and living in New Zealand.

Lockleys life work on the island has borne fruit in a way he might have dreamed of but could hardly have hoped to achieve. A bird sanctuary, celebrated world wide, visited by parties of up to 16 students at a time living in the house which he lovingly rebuilt from with timber from the wreck, surrounded by the birds and insects he worked so lovingly to save. But the wind was rising and we could not make a long visit. We had to pull the dinghy right up a near vertical rock face to leave her safe while we were ashore. Now it was dicey business shooting her down into the water without letting her fill as she hit it. Leaping in and pulling rapidly clear of the rocks, we pulled very slowly out towards *Wild Goose* 300 yards away. Every now and then a wave slapped over the bow and wet my bottom as I rowed. Stephen was watching us anxiously and we were all relieved when we got alongside the comfortable bulk of *Wild Goose*.

Stephen was due to return that evening so we chugged right up Milford Haven to Pembroke Dock. There we topped up with fuel and stores of various kinds from a collection of shops on the north side before landing Stephen within about 100 yards of the ferry he was to catch that night on the south side. Landing at Rosslare he was home by bus at half past two next day, one of the best crew returns ever. That left Mike and I onboard and as he had been suffering very badly from seasickness I had to decide to cut out a visit to Lundy the sixth west coast island I had planned to visit. In east winds landing might have been difficult and its a long detour on the leg south to Lands End. By 20.30 we were clear of the harbour, a calm sea with a long two foot swell. It was a peaceful night with a light east wind the main guyed out to starboard.

NO LANDING ON LUNDY

No great regrets, it is nice to leave it for another time.

Careful calculations ensued as to the state of the tide as we approached Lands End. Fortunately it worked as we were due to have a south going tide there. After midday there was a red fireball sunrise at 07.45 with a fickle moon high in the sky. Mike, inspite of his seasickness, had manfully done the morning watch from 04.30 to 06.30, most of which he seemed to pass standing in the hatch.

The wind began to gust up fiercely from the east as we approached the land. At 14.30 the Long Ships was abeam and I was very glad to have the inmain reefing and be able to wind in the main till only about four foot of it showed and do the same

with the jib. The lee rail was down, *Wild Goose* was labouring with a lot of water coming over the bow. I watched a small boat looking like an inflatable fishing pots close west of the Long Ships in what must have been extraordinarily difficult conditions.

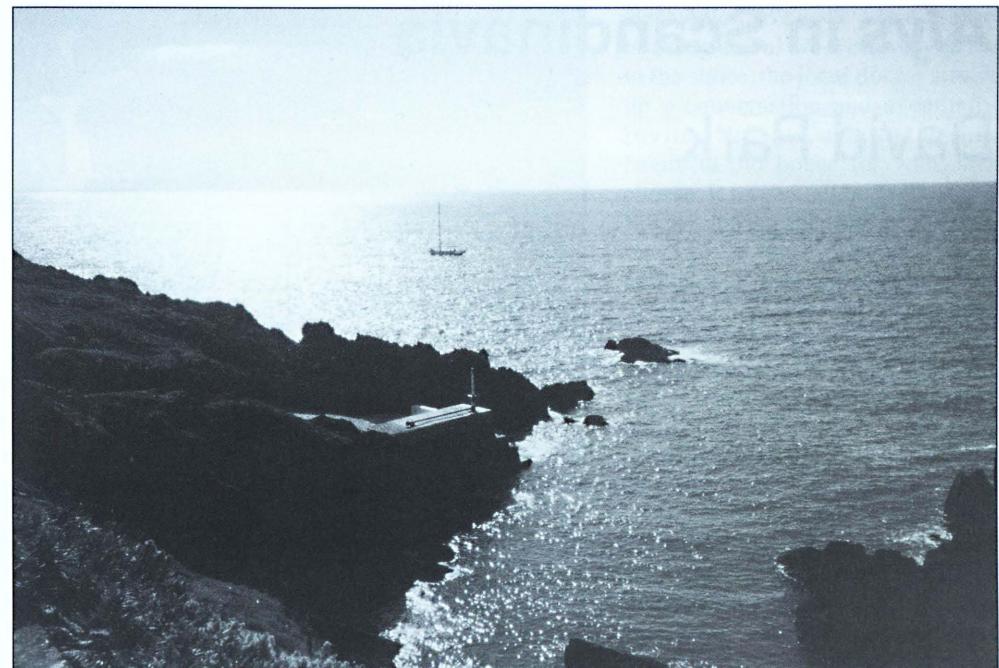
From here on we seemed to be facing a long beat round to Newlyn. It could have taken five or six hours with wind and tide against us and a heavy sea but somehow luckily the tide ran late and as we got clear of the land the wind went more southerly, It eased down.

I was tempted to anchor in Whitesand Bay or Sennan Cove and await better tide and wind conditions but our chart was small in scale and I did not fancy going east to the Long Ships in these conditions with Mike unable to do much. In the event the tide ran late

and we were in to Newlyn by six o'clock and into our bunks a couple of hours later. Beside us was a boat which had just been seized by the customs with eight tonnes of drugs onboard. They were keeping a 24 hour guard on her. Next inshore was a 50 foot steel Dutch boat on her way back from Spitzbergen. She in company with a dozen others had been through the White Sea Canal to Lake Onega two years ago so we had much to talk about.

With a day to spare now while awaiting our fresh crew. Mike decided to jump ship since his bouts of seasickness had really becoming quite alarming. The splendid crew which had brought *Wild Goose* from Minorca to Portugal two years rejoined: Lewis Percer from Dublin and Colin Gall from Gloucestershire. An extraordinary co-incidence, I heard a Kiwi yell from the shore at midday and there was Tony Harvey. He had been with me in Newlyn on the way back from Spain two years earlier and was now doing a bit of camping around the west country. He had brought his wife Les to show her the berth where *Wild Goose* had been and low and behold there we were again. So a celebratory lunch was held. Tony had given me enormous help in getting the new rig settled in and the engine sorted out early in the year and had then sailed *Wild Goose* for six weeks round the Hebrides in June and July.

Sunday 8th September: Recalled the hands at 05.30 on a fine but chilly morning. Mike let go our warps and drove off the pier, not literally we hope, in Colins car. By 06.45 the buoy off Newlyn was abeam and the windows of Mousehole were glinting red like devils eyes in the sunrise. The channel, as usual, was lumpy with a beam swell and a stiffish east wind. We had a single reef in the main and a couple of rolls in the jib. By 15.15 we had 57 miles to go to the Four, so far had seen only one fishing vessel, one pot marker and one container ship which came very close ahead. It was overcast and moist and now we got a blink of watery sun. By midnight we were really into the traffic with something like 12 steamers passing ahead of us in the continuous precession going west. There was a fuel stoppage for 15 minutes which came right when I changed tanks and pumped up the filter. Six hours to go until dawn. When it came



Wild Goose off Stokholm Landing.

at 06.15 there was a slight following swell and no sea, a clear sky and a bitter wind. The tide was fair and the Four tower could be seen abeam one and half miles away. It was some years since I had been down the Four channel and we had great difficulty identifying the Plattresses and the Valbelle. All the lights were suddenly switched off at 07.00 just as we were getting them sorted out. We were being carried south swiftly by the tide and Colin and I got into a bit of a sweat but once the Plattresses were identified all was clear and simple. By 08.00 we had the anchor down in the Anse de Blanc Sablons off the beach. At the north end in the rocky cove Chris landed and got bread and five small fishes which we had for breakfast on the second morning. We spent 24 hours in that delightful anchorage as the east wind gusted gently off the cliffs. Just north of us on the western point of the bay was a private beach with a dinghy hanging in davits over it with steep steps going up the cliff and a hammock to be seen in trees at the top. It was a house constructed in an old fort by Katherine Artois the famous French single hander. Lewis and I walked into Le Conquet for shops and wine, It looks pretty but does not welcome yachts. Next day we went to Douarnenez. There we were offered a berth for the winter at a knock down price as the Port Musee welcomes vintage boats and *Wild Goose* fully qualified but it was a long way from our French friends so we decided to turn north again.

Ushant was the next stop, my third visit to the island. We found a visitors buoy in Lampaul, excellent eats ashore in the cafe St Anne. Lewis and I had a long fascinating walk round the south end and had a close look at Creach lighthouse. Then we were off it to L'Aberildut where the boatyard had undertaken to look after *Wild Goose* for the winter. Jean Talarmin and his wife Josine were the soul of hospitality and looked after our every need. We drove Colin to Rostoff to catch the ferry at 07.00 and met June there arriving from Ireland. She and I with Lewis and his charming French girlfriend than sailed south for Camaret. We had a very pleasant week in the Rade de Brest before leaving *Wild Goose* on a mooring in the river off the village of Lanildut. Hey ho for next year and lots of Brittany sailing.

Alys in Scandinavia

David Park

This was to be a cruise of head winds but mainly fine weather, especially in Scandinavia. Much information of the area was from the log written by the late Terence Kennedy (ICC) in the 1988 journal.

My son, Michael, and three of his friends wanted a mini cruise to Scotland so we left Ringhaddy on 22 June 1996 and with a northerly wind were just able to lay Portpatrick. As it was still blowing fresh the next day we amused ourselves playing mini golf, walking and visiting the various pubs. We motor sailed to Ardminnish Bay, Gigha and had a fine meal in the hotel and continued our Scottish cruise to Puilladobhrain, still one of my favourite anchorages on the West Coast. We had a good dinner in the pub by Clachan Bridge. And so on to Tobermory, the prettiest of West Highland towns, with drinks and showers in the Mishnish Hotel. We had a grand dinner aboard that night and the boys then went ashore to watch the final of the World Cup in the Mishnish. They were most amused at the great roar of Scottish approval when Germany scored!

We entered the Caledonian Canal at Corpach on 27 June and thoroughly enjoyed the next three days going through. The wild broom was in full flower and we found all the lock keepers most helpful. We had an excellent meal in the restaurant at Fort Augustus followed by a fast sail at 6 knots under genoa up Loch Ness.

At Inverness we changed crews. The boys departed and Hilary, my wife, and Peter Minnis and his wife, Carolyn, joined. The latter were to be our crew for the next three weeks. We stocked up the boat in an excellent supermarket close to Muirtown Basin and left for the North Sea on 2 July. There are two locks after Muirtown Basin, the first being Clachnaharry lock and fifty yards beyond it a low swing railway bridge. As we left the lock and approached the railway bridge it suddenly, without warning, started to close and for a fearful minute or two I thought we were going to be crushed. We went full astern but the pulpit caught under the bridge and was bent to starboard. We



Carolyn and Peter Minnis, David Park. Marstrand, Sweden.



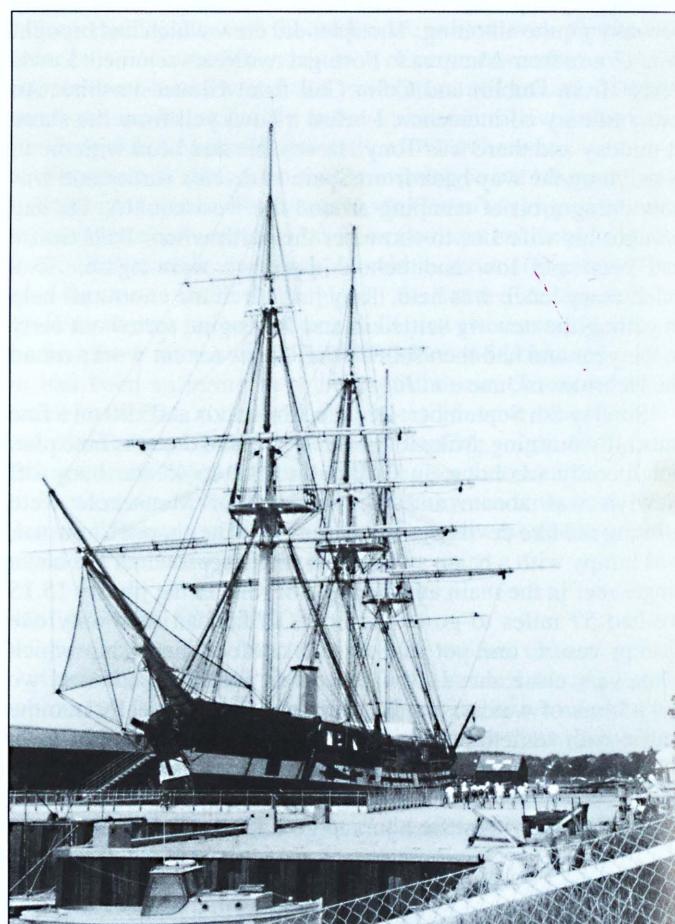
THE STRANGFORD CUP

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE BEST CRUISE

were very lucky and could not understand the lack of liaison between the lock keeper and bridge keeper. Ten minutes later a train passed. Our claim against British Rail is pending!

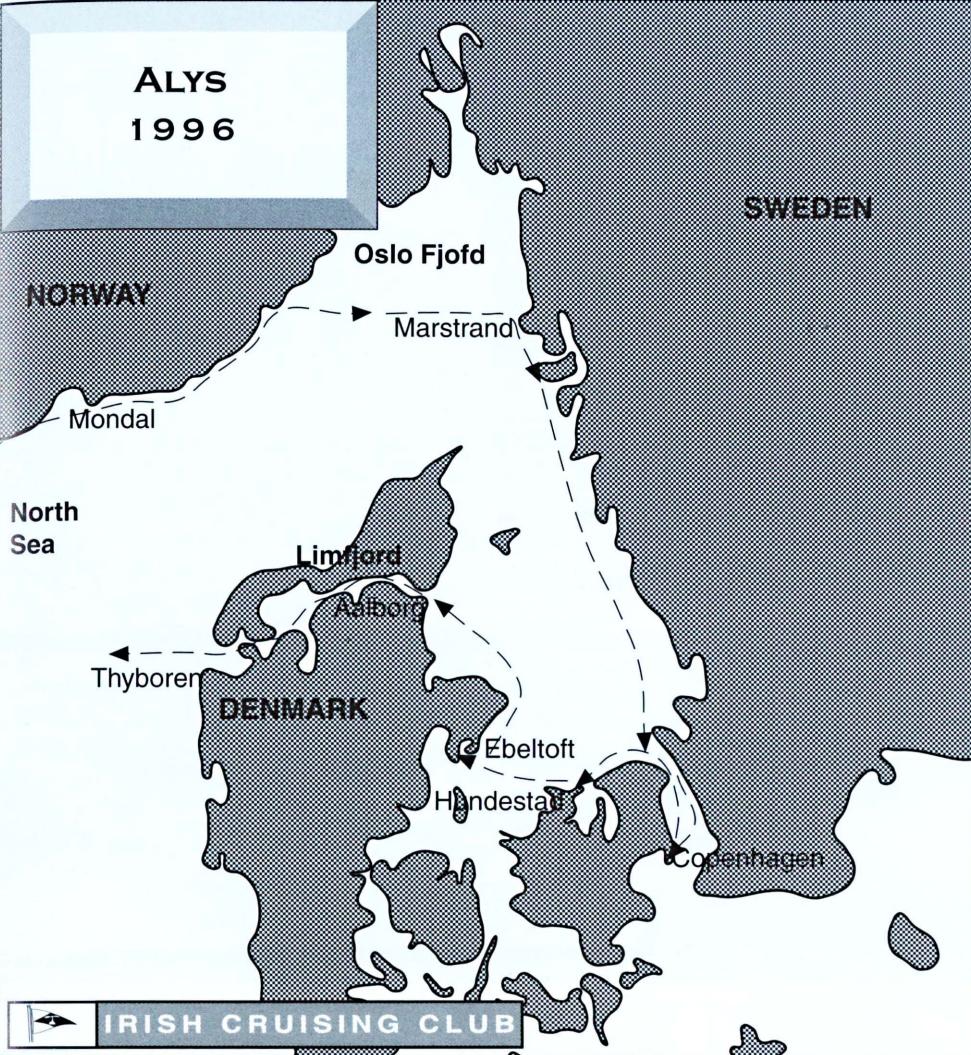
In an easterly wind we motor sailed up Inverness Firth and along the coast of the southern Moray Firth to Lossiemouth where we quietly went aground at the entrance for a short time as it was low water springs. Lossiemouth was interesting; a large fishing port, now virtually deserted due to the decline in the herring industry but one whole wing of the harbour is now a yacht marina with pontoons and showers. A deep depression with strong south-easterlies kept us here for a further day and it was the afternoon of 4 July before we left for Norway.

It was a fairly uneventful passage across the North Sea; a mixture of sailing and motor sailing with the wind no more than Force 3-4. We passed through the Forties Field and were diverted several miles south by a guard vessel as a seismic vessel was operating in the area. The seven huge oil rigs were a most impressive sight. We were off Lindesnes, the south west tip of Norway, at 0030 on 7 July and then fiddled our way through the narrow entrance of Tjaumsfjorden arriving at 0400 in broad



Frigate *Jylland*, Ebeltoft, Denmark.

ALYS
1996



daylight. We tied alongside a pontoon in this very beautiful small fjord, having taken two days and fourteen hours for 330 nautical miles (5.3 knots average).

The 150 nautical miles from Lindesnes to Oslo Fjord are protected by numerous off-shore islands and the inshore passages are known as the Inner Leads. The leads are well marked but the Norwegian small boat charts are essential and the pilot book helpful as it is in Norwegian and English. It is difficult to sail here as many of the leads are very narrow and the wind fickle and the motorboat population huge. The vegetation in this part of Norway is lush and it appears that nearly every Norwegian has a holiday home in the area.

From Tjaumsfjorden we motored to the old town of Mandal, with its well preserved wooden houses and here we shopped and took aboard diesel and water. Shopping for basic foodstuffs in Scandinavia is not all that more expensive than home but diesel is twice the price as there is no equivalent of red or green. Fresh fish and prawns we always found good value. Beer was reasonable in the supermarkets but spirits prohibitive especially in Sweden. We therefore had a goodly supply of duty-free aboard and were never once stopped or questioned by Customs. Marina or harbour dues averaged about £7.50 per night for everybody regardless of length or beam.

We motor sailed from Mandal across the entrance to Kristiansand Fjord through beautiful narrow leads to anchor in a small bay on the north west corner of Justo Island; a day of marvellous scenery and bright sunshine making good 40 nautical miles.

Next day we passed through the sound at Arendal to the island of Boroya and tied alongside a pier for water. We anchored for the night in a small inlet close by, called

Barøykilen. We took a line ashore to a ring and as we were very close to the shore, the local doctor struck up a conversation and eventually invited us all ashore to his beautiful old house for wine and cheese. It turned out he had been in Bangor during the War as an asdic operator in the Norwegian Navy and knew Northern Ireland well.

Before leaving, the following morning, he came aboard for a drink and more reminiscing. We left at lunch time and motor sailed 13 nautical miles to the old town of Risør; beautiful but packed with tourists.

From Risør it is 60 nautical miles across to Sweden and we left at 0600 on 13 July in calm motoring conditions. By 1500 it was blowing a gale from the south west and we were fully reefed surging at 8-9 knots. After some difficulty identifying a buoy, we found the inner lead and a peaceful anchorage to the north of the Island of Trossø. It blew hard all night but strangely the barometer remained steady. The inner leads on the West Swedish coast run south for approximately 100 nautical miles to Gothenburg but tend to be more barren than Norway. The Swedish small boat charts are excellent and easy to follow. We did not have a pilot book as there is none in

English but such is the detail on the charts, we found it unnecessary. Peter struck up conversation with a Norwegian on a neighbouring boat and he came aboard that evening with all sorts of useful information as he knew this coast well. He took a shine to our duty-free Mackinley and was somewhat 'hors de combat' on leaving Alys. In fact Peter had to put him aboard his boat. His wife cancelled all shore leave next day!

The islands of Trossø and Kalvø, the latter a nature reserve, are joined by a narrow spit and we had a long walk ashore next day as it was still blowing hard from the south.

The following day we called at the town of Grebbestad for shopping, money and water. There was a Hugh marina here but it was full so we tied to the pier for several hours. The inner leads in this area are quite difficult to identify but the main ones are marked by a large white square painted on the rocks and also noted on the charts. We motor sailed south through picturesque leads, Hamburgsund and Sotenkanalen and finally spent the night in a small marine at Grundsund; the entrance here between the rocks being so narrow that only one boat at a time could pass. This passage of 36 nautical miles was highlighted by meeting a replica Viking Ship under sail making a good 6 knots to windward. Peter shouted 'Rape and pillage again, eh?' They got the message as everyone started to laugh. Continuing south on 15 July we stopped for two hours at Mollosund, a lovely old wooden seafaring town, and then to Marstrand where we anchored for the night in a bay south east of the town. Part of Marstrand is on an island with a fort and ancient wooden town where cars are forbidden; a very beautiful place.

As the inner leads only extended another 25 nautical miles to Gotenburg, we left Marstrand at lunch time on 17 July and had a grand overnight sail of 138 nautical miles to Copenhagen



Alys, amongst the tourists. Nyhavn, Copenhagen.

in Denmark. With a northerly wind we carried a boomed-out genoa and only motored the last 10 nautical miles.

We tied alongside a Norwegian yacht at Nyhavn right in the centre of the old part of Copenhagen. This was a great place to be as all the buzz of the city was right beside us – buskers, jazz

bands, restaurants and pubs. We all enjoyed this cosmopolitan city and the weather was hot and sunny. We were quite close to the ferry terminal where hundreds of Swedes arrive each day from Malmo for the cheap booze and there is a saying “Keep Copenhagen sober. Send a Swede home!”

Peter and Carolyn flew home from here and the next day, 21 July, Aidan Tyrrell and Helen Hassett joined us for the passage home.

We departed from Copenhagen on 23 July and sailed north past Hamlet's Castle at Helsingor and along the north coast of Sjaelland to the old fishing town of Hundested; a passage of 47 nautical miles. From here we had another gentle sail to Ebeltoft on Jutland but as the marina was full we anchored off for the night. Ebeltoft was a fascinating half-timbered medieval town dating back to the 16th century and its cobbled narrow streets were quite outstanding. The 19th century Frigate Jylland is preserved here in a dry dock and is now a museum. With an informative English guide book we spent several very interesting hours on her. We continued north up the east coast of Jutland to Limfjord which gives an inland passage across to the North



Rape and pillage again !!.



Hilary Park, Aidan Tyrell and Helen Hassett, Livo Island, Limfjord.

Sea without going around the top of Jutland. It is 100 nautical miles from Hals in the east to Thyboren in the west. There are no locks but four swing bridges. Quite large ships go up the 15 nautical miles from Hals to the large town of Alborg. We anchored in the shallows to the south east of Hals for the first night and then motored up to a small marina at Alborg. The town was bustling and there was a superb jazz band in the main square. We spent a night anchored off Livo Island and next morning motored into the minute harbour and walked ashore to the small village; a beautiful place and a nature reserve. We spent a further night at Lemvig, a fishing harbour, and then sailed to Thyboren at the west end of Limfjord. Thyboren is a massive fishing harbour, the biggest I have ever seen and still very active. A small part of it is reserved for yachts. There is an interesting fishing museum here and massive German concrete bunkers stretching for miles down the sand dunes.

The forecast was not great so we replaced the genoa with the working jib and left Thyboren at 1500 on 31 July. For two days we were on the wind (25-30 knots) and could only lay south west and not until the third day did the wind ease and allow us back on course. We arrived in Muirtown Basin, Caledonian Canal at 1700 on 4 August having sailed 497 nautical miles in four days and two hours; an average of over 5 knots but by no means a rhumb line course. And so down the Caledonian Canal once more and just as enjoyable but the wild broom was over so it was not quite so pretty. On locking out of the canal we took the tide south through the Lynn of Lorne, between Easdale and Seil Island, Cuan Sound and anchored for the night in Ardinamar Pool. We had a splendid dinner aboard of roast lamb with all the trimmings.

We had a horrible motor sail the next day with the wind dead on the nose, a big sea, huge rain showers and poor visibility; but time was running short and we pushed on to Gigha. Conditions weren't much better the next day and there was a gale warning out for the Irish Sea but apart from a nasty lop off Black Head we arrived in Bangor Marine at 2100 on 9 August.

Johnny Park and his wife, Debbie, had arrived there ten minutes before us from Portpatrick in a UFO 34 which they had chartered. In the Crinan Canal they had also clobbered the pulpit and pushed it to starbroad so obviously telepathic communications had been passed between father and son! We all ended the evening in a local "Chinky" putting the world to rights.

Helen left us the next day for Cork as work was pressing and Aidan, Hilary and I took the boat to Strangford Lough but first spent a night in Audleys Roads to feast on roast beef - no qualms about CJD on Alys!

We were along side Ringhaddy Pontoon at 1000 on 11 August.

We visited over thirty anchorages or harbours and viewed some spectacular scenery in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, not to mention some of the glory of Scotland. A grand cruise of 2,000 miles.

Summary of Distances and Times		
	Miles Travelled	Time Cruising
June 22nd		
Ringhaddy		
to Portpatrick	45	
to Gigha	60	
to Puilladobhrain	37	
to Tobermoray	26	8 days
to Corpach	45	cruising
to Inverness	60	
to Lossiemouth	36	
to Tjaumsfjorden (Norway)	330	2 days 14 hours
to Mandal	8	
to Justo Island	40	
to Boroyhilen	35	5 days
to Risør	13	cruising
to Trossö Island (Sweden)	66	
to Grebbestad	8	
to Grundsund	37	4 days
to Mollesund / Marstrand	21	cruising
to Copenhagen (Denmark)	138	24 hours
to Hundested	47	
to Ebeltoft	47	
to Hals	66	8 days
Hals / Alborg / Livo Island / Lemvig / Thyboren / in Limfjord	100	cruising
to Inverness	497	4 days 2 hours
to Corpach (Caledonian Canal)	60	
to Ardinamar	33	
to Gigha	38	
to Bangor	62	
to Audleys Roads	29	5 days
to Ringhaddy	6	cruising
Total August 11th	1,990 miles	7 weeks

Canadian Dream

Ann Bunting

Thirty years ago I sailed on the West Coast of Canada. When I saw the mountains, layer on purple layer, rising from the dark green water, I was entranced and determined to return one day.

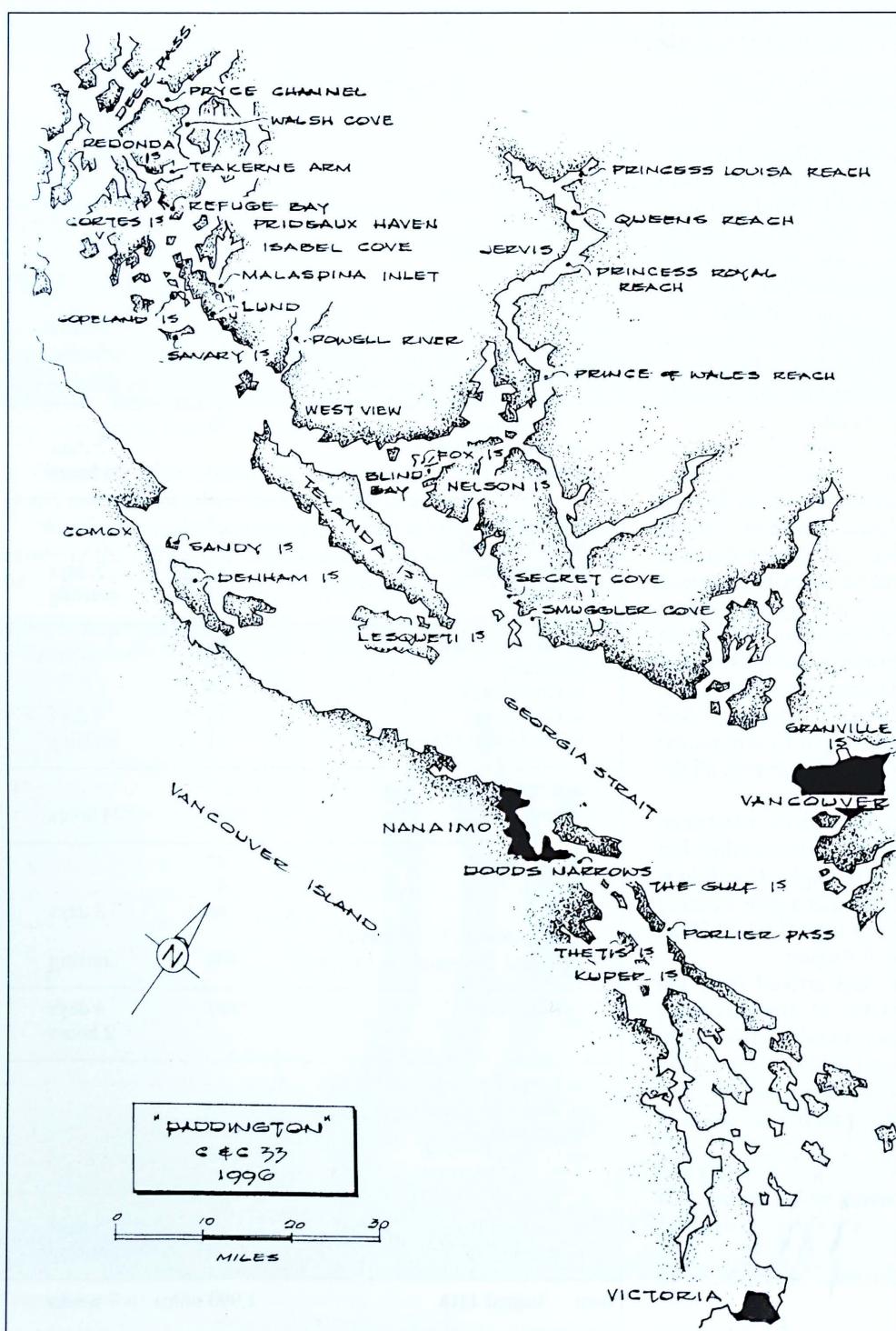
It's only 200 years since Captain Vancouver charted these

waters in his search for a passage round the top of the Americas, and only 100 years since the last spike was driven in the trans-Canada railroad. Canada really is a New World. Its a beautiful area but all is not as it seems.

Fish is hard to find, some of the sheltered bays are not good to swim in and, in places, shellfish are contaminated by dioxin from the evil smelling pulp mills. Logging roads and tracts of shaven forest scar the mountain sides. Canadians are trying to reverse the situation. Fish quotas are rigid, logging companies are required to replant two trees for each one they fell, pulp mills must monitor their waste and reduce the harmful chemicals in it. People are encouraged to take all their refuse home with them.

We had just under three weeks for our Canadian cruise in a chartered C&C 33 foot boat. There was a good choice of places to go inside the shelter of Vancouver Island, which is the length of Ireland, so it was difficult to decide what to do. Our choice was influenced by a book my sister had lent us, *The Curve Of Time* by Muriel Blanchet. It's a marvellous story of sailing in these waters in the twenties. Each summer this intrepid woman sailed with her small children in a twenty-nine foot motor boat past the north end of Vancouver Island, and continued to do so for many years. Later on she began to write about those journeys and the stories were eventually published as a book. Sadly, she died soon after it appeared, and she never knew the pleasure her writing has given to so many people.

15th August - Granville Island to Smuggler Cove. We went to Granville Island in downtown Vancouver and took over our boat. She was called Paddington. A ten year-old C&C 33, she sailed well to windward. I did a last minute shop for perishables at Granville market. It is simply marvellous, full of fresh fruit of all sorts.



We wanted to get as far north as possible while we had a fair wind, so we motor sailed with a light south westerly breeze behind us. We were lucky, as usually it blows from the north west. We didn't know then that bad weather had been forecast, but fortunately it didn't materialise. In the early evening we motored into an inlet, called Smuggler Cove. The tricky entrance is strewn with rocks and was guarded by an enormous seal. Once in, the bay opens out into a snug harbour, protected by high tree-covered rocks. An island in the middle of the bay has a cabin on it and a floating dock. We anchored, put a line ashore and then took the dinghy a mile or so over to Secret Cove, which had been suggested by most people as our first stop. No longer a secret, the place is full of ugly boat houses, and hoards of motor boats. We looked in at the small store, walked for a short distance and were glad we had chosen Smuggler Cove instead. We barbecued our steak and enjoyed a glass of wine followed by raspberries and cream. Most boats have gas barbecues on their pushpits. If you throw on a few cedar chips, (you find them washed up on any beach) you can't tell the difference between a charcoal barbecue and its infinitely more boat-friendly relation.

16th August - Smuggler Cove to Princess Louisa Inlet. We motored, sailed and motor-sailed on up the coast, before turning inland to start the long 40 mile haul up Jervis Inlet to Princess Louisa Inlet. We passed what looked like small mountains towed on long lines by fat little tugs. They were towing loads of gravel down to Vancouver.

Near the head of Jervis Sound we began to worry about entering Princess Louisa Inlet. A nine knot tidal rapid scouring the narrow rocky entrance, so it can only be safely negotiated at or near slack water. According to the tide and current tables, slack water was at 2100, just before dark. We were two hours early, so we looked about for a suitable mooring for the night, but could find nothing really safe. Everywhere the mountains run straight down into deep deep water. The clouds rolled down. The sky darkened. A few large drops of rain began to fall so we donned our oilskins. The clouds closed in and the rain fell purposefully. Then a catamaran appeared out of the mist. She wasn't much bigger than *Paddington*. We watched to see whether she would attempt the rapid. She did, and so we plucked up courage and followed, going downhill with about six knots under us. We swirled about precariously in the eddies for a few hundred meters as we passed through the narrow channel, but came to no harm.

Once in to Princess Louisa inlet we wanted to find a place to anchor - night was falling fast. We first went up to a little spot behind MacDonald Island, about two miles away where a few boats had tied onto mooring buoys but there were no more vacant. We weren't able to find the shallow water that the sailing directions had suggested for mooring so we carried on for a couple of miles to the head of the inlet and anchored with our stern tied to a mooring ring on a large rock. Our experience of sailing in Turkey, where the steeply shelving shores and deep anchorages make a stern line to the shore unavoidable, was useful.

We didn't really appreciate how magnificent Princess Louisa Inlet was until daylight. After breakfast we weighed anchor and took a short trip 'around the bay'. The rock faces rise up vertically, in places a mile high. Waterfalls hurl themselves down on all sides. Chatterbox Falls, gushing into the sea at the head of the Inlet, is the most spectacular. Streams of 'melt water' pour into it from the ice fields, just visible among the wisps of cloud on the mountain sides. The calm water, broken here and there by the head of a seal, or a kingfisher searching for food, reflects the mountains, making them seem even taller. The grumbling of the Falls follows you far out into the bay. The Inlet is deep, so deep that it's almost impossible to anchor safely in the dark green water. It feels threatening to sail in such deep

water so near to land. At first you think that the water is murky, but as you approach the shore you realise that it is really quite clear, it's only the great depth that makes it seem opaque.

Sunday 18th - Fox Island. We left the dock at 08.00 and joined a few other boats. to catch the slack tide through the narrows. Going back down Jervis Inlet we stayed close to the shore, usually within about 10 yards. In some places the water is over 700 metres deep. We enjoyed watching the shore, trying to identify the birds and looking out for bears and pictographs. These are small Indian rock paintings, which indicate a stream, or some other significant place. One we found, by chance, was high-up on a pale coloured piece of granite, sheltered from the rain and wind by an over-hanging rock. A ladder, a feather headdress, and some little stick men were drawn in terracotta paint. Above the picture an enormous rock jutted out high above the sea. We wondered if it was a place where some endurance test took place to choose a tribal chief. The other pictograph we found was of a man, naked except for a belt, with a look of despair on his face.

We motored into a light head wind and a foul tide for most of the way to Fox Island. We arrived there at 18.00. It's a peaceful anchorage reached through Telescope Passage via Blind Sound which is sheltered by Nelson and Hardy Islands. No prizes for guessing the nationality of the early sailors who surveyed here. We found a snug anchorage behind the island with a few other boats and tied our stern line to a tree. We invited the skipper and crew of a neighbouring boat on board for drinks and ended up eating on their Hunter 29. We had a lovely evening. The next day was wet and a poor forecast kept us holed up behind Fox Island.

20th August - Fox Island to Westview, Lund, and the Copeland Islands. We left at about 10.00 and headed north for Westview to buy supplies. Westview is the residential suburb of Powell River, the site of a huge pulp mill. It is where the local people live to escape the smell of the mill. We refuelled, watered and provisioned. The local shops were poor. We were unable to find any fish, as most of the boats had stopped fishing for the season due to the government quota.

We moved on up the coast to Lund, a tiny fishing village with a floating dock. It is at the northern end of a road that goes all the way south to Chile. We found a marvellous bakery, a good fish shop and an excellent grocery store. A boatyard was repairing a large fishing boat. We sailed on to the Copeland Islands just a few miles away. These pretty little islands lie just off the shore and provide lots of nooks to anchor in. We picked one, a cove facing west on the main island, fringed with tall trees, headed by a rocky beach and looking over some smaller islands. An idyllic spot. The silence was almost palpable, only broken by the croak of a pair of ravens and the gentle slapping of water on the shore.

21st August - Copeland Islands to Squirrel Cove. After a bacon and egg breakfast we started on the last long leg on our way north to Cortes Island. Again the wind was light and from dead ahead, so again we motored.. We called into Cortes Bay, where the Seattle YC and Royal Vancouver YC have outstations, to have a look around. We rounded a blind corner and nearly collided with a float-plane taking off across our bows. Who has the right of way in those circumstances? The weather started off bright, but gradually clouded over as we approached Squirrel Cove. The Cove is large, almost totally enclosed bay, fringed with pine and arbutus trees and studded with islands. As the water is relatively shallow there was plenty of room to anchor, which was a pleasant change. At one end of the cove a tidal rapid runs in and out of a salt water lake. At certain stages of the tide you can ride the rapid in your dinghy. We tried to, but we didn't get the timing right, so we ended up walking up the trail over to the other lake. We sat on a rock gazing into the water. It was like an aquarium. Starfishes in

orange, pink and purple decorated the mud. Worms waved their tentacles in a lazy rhythm and when I prodded them with a stick they retreated into the mud only to reappear when they thought that the danger was past. Little shrimps darted about in the shallows and cleverly camouflaged fishes lay almost invisible on the rocks. We watched tiny hermit crabs race one another over the stones. The sky darkened and splashes of rain dappled the water. We climbed over the hill and back to the boat.

22nd August - Squirrel Cove to Teakearne Arm. We paid another visit to the rapids, but the tide was still too low, and so we explored the Cove in the dinghy. We found an old wooden hut set in a clearing with a notice on its dock advertising cinnamon buns. We went to get some money but unfortunately, when we returned, they were sold out for the day. We heard later that the buns are famous, and that people go miles out of their way just to buy them.

We moved off to Teakerne Arm, only nine miles away, which we had been told was "reel priddy". The weather was being kind. We motored up the wooded inlet and, after prospecting around, we found a relatively shallow patch (40 feet deep) to the east of the Falls at the head of the Arm, dropped the anchor and tied to a tree. It was so pretty we decided to stay for the night. We had lunch and then went ashore to explore. The 60 ft high Falls flow out of Cassell Lake. The water cascades over rocks, between sheer cliffs, making a curtain of foam. We landed at the dock and climbed up the path to the lake. Rusty cables, enormous hooks driven into the rock face and an ancient engine half hidden in some huckleberry bushes were all that remained of an abandoned logging outfit. We swam in the silky fresh water of the lake, and stayed in for ages. A couple of enormous logs, over 100 feet long, floated just under the surface. We sat on them and then tried to walk from end to end, but, as we moved, they moved too, an aquatic version of the greasy pole. After dinner, on board of course, as restaurants in this part of the

world are few and far between, we motored round the bay in the dinghy. We looked at a log boom where we had thought of tying up. It was humming with mosquitoes. They followed us when we moved off, even though we revved the outboard motor as hard as we could.

Before turning in John checked the anchor and called me up on deck. A large luminous half moon silvered the bay and, as he shook the stern line, a million tiny pinpricks of light showered into the water. I wanted to see if I could persuade a fish to come and swim near us. So I threw small pieces of bread in to tempt one. It didn't work, but each piece of bread made circles of light in the water. Even when there was no disturbance, the water twinkled as if it held hundred of tiny stars. Magic.

We woke to another glorious day. Under a cloudless sky we motored and sailed south a few miles to Refuge Cove, a hamlet at the head of a sheltered bay. It's run as a co-operative venture and all the residents are share holders. Small red cabins cling to the rocks where they can. The two jetties were nearly full, and the place was bustling. It has a radio 'phone for credit cards, (probably expensive, but very convenient), showers, fuel, ice, water, and an excellent store. We bought a delicious hamburger for lunch from the The Man Who Shot A Cougar In His Living Room - (long story!), some sticky buns for tea and a few groceries. It would be our last pit stop for a few days.

In the afternoon we moved off and went NW, retracing our path past Teakerne Arm and on north round Redonda Island. In mid-afternoon we reached the most northerly point in our trip. A little later we stopped and looked at a bay with a pebble beach at the foot of a tiny creek, hoping to find a private anchorage. Sadly it was too deep and we kept on to Walsh's Cove near the north end of the Lewis Channel. After anchoring I had a long swim. The water was fresh and not too cold. It is strange but true that, inside Vancouver I. the water gets warmer as you go north.

24th August - Walsh's Cove to Isabel Bay. We left at 09.40



Ann in Princess Louisa Inlet.

for Isabel Bay, Robert Barr's favourite anchorage in these parts. It is well inside the Malaspina Inlet which has strong tides. We entered with about three knots of flood. In the bay four boats had anchored with stern lines to the shore. It was very hot and the water looked scummy, I think it was only from the trees, but it was not inviting for a swim. We took the dinghy and I rowed outside the anchorage, deposited J on a rock with his book and went for a swim. The water, warmed by the tide coming in over the hot rocks, was delightful.

We got up early to catch the tide out of the Malaspina Inlet. This channel is littered with rocks, so I had to keep a good lookout. By 1000 we were out into Desolation Sound heading for Prideaux Haven, but we wanted to visit Tenedos Bay en route. We

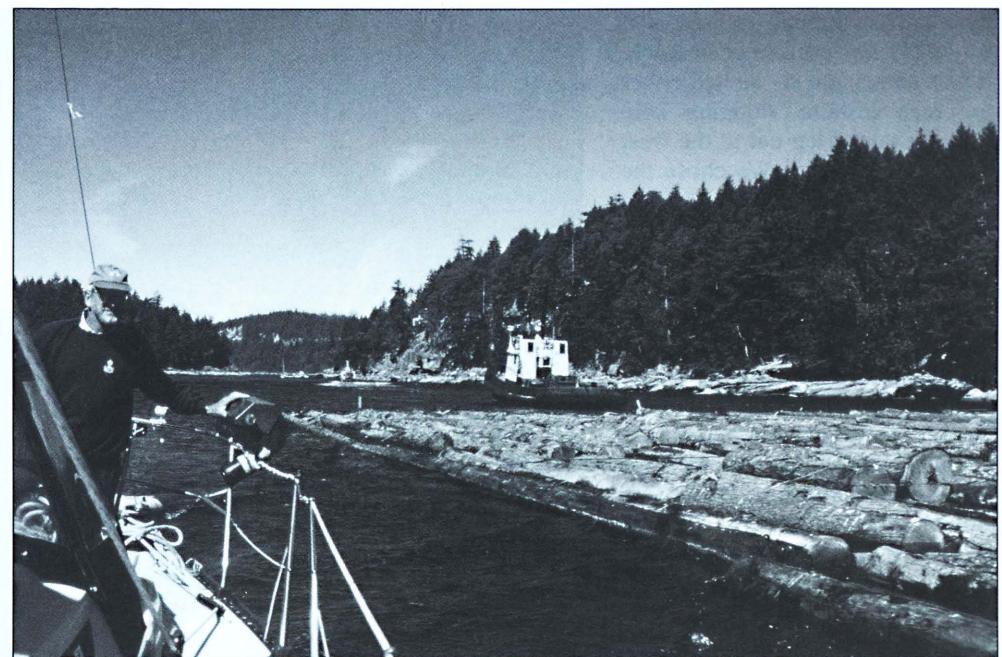
anchored at the head of the bay, near the creek which runs into the sea from Unwin Lake. We rowed ashore and walked up the trail to the lake through an eerie fern-fringed path beside the stream. The outlet of the lake was crammed with enormous logs which we clambered over and then we followed another track leading around the lake shore. We made our base on a warm granite rock, from which we swam, and washed our hair, before lying back and drying off in the sun. Dragonflies shimmered over the warm water. Here and there massive redwood trees stood high above their neighbours, protected from the loggers by the marine park warden.

We decided to forget any idea of going to Prideaux Haven until the next day.

Mon 26th August - Tenedos Bay to Prideaux Haven. The day dawned calm and bright. We left mid-morning for Prideaux Haven, and en route there I conned the boat through a narrow channel inside Otter Island. It's a magical spot, with a small anchorage protected from all directions. We passed through with plenty of room to spare.

Prideaux Haven is an enclosed bay with a series of protected inlets and coves. We anchored deep inside Melanie Cove near the 'copper mark on the rock', mentioned in *The Curve of Time*. We went ashore to see if we could still find traces of Mike's cabin. He lived at the head of the Cove for over thirty years, in a lonely spot, at the turn of this century. Over the years he had made a garden round his log cabin. He grew fruit and vegetables and sold them to nearby logging camps. He grew an apple orchard himself from seeds of an apple given him by a friend. In his younger days he single handedly cut down the enormous redwood trees and slid them down to the sea. He was a scholar and had in his cabin an amazing collection of books whose authors ranged from Marcus Aurelius to Emerson. When he died the books were taken by his neighbour, Phil, a similarly solitary soul (who was reputed to have killed a man back east,) and who lived an hour down the trail at Laura Cove. Phil couldn't read, but he treasured the books nonetheless. When he died they were found in perfect condition. We saw the stumps of the giant trees that Mike had felled and the sad remains of the apple trees that he had planted.. We could find no trace of the cabin. The forest had reclaimed it.

After tea we took the dinghy round to Laura Cove. It would be very easy to get lost here. There were some tiny anchorages, just big enough for one boat. Much nicer than Melanie Cove which was full of big American boats with noisy generators.



We cross a log boom near Dodds Narrows.

It was time to go south again. We left Desolation sound reluctantly as there was still so much more to see. We weighed anchor at 1000 and motored off. The sky was slightly overcast, but the sun was breaking through and it was getting warm. 'Cats' paws' of wind rippled the water. In every direction snow-topped mountains made a stunning backdrop to the sea.

The forecast for our area was for SE winds of 20/25kts. The forecasts are given continuously on a special weather channel but so fast that, when you are unfamiliar with the area and the accent, its hard to catch. The wind kept on freshening and we had an exhilarating sail. We reefed and gave up on our idea of going to Mittlenatch where there was no secure anchorage. We took up a race with a lovely old wooden yawl called Varya. Abeam of the Copeland Islands we retired, and went behind one of the islands. After a few abortive attempts to anchor we changed our position and managed to hold fast.

We invited the people off the boat beside us for John's corned beef hash. They brought some clams which we steamed and ate with garlic butter. Delicious!. The wind which was gusting very hard, had moved round to the east and was blowing straight on to the shore. As the water was very deep, we had to anchor close to the shore. We hadn't a second anchor to put out, and so 'just in case' we slept in the saloon and had passports and life-jackets handy.

28th August - Copeland Islands to Henry Bay. All was well. We were still anchored in the morning and we had slept comfortably. The wind had decreased although more was forecast. We motored south the couple of miles to Lund in a very light south-easterly breeze. We took on water and I managed to buy a salmon and some crab and suggested to Varya, our racing friends who had followed us in, that we go to the same anchorage that night, and they might show us how to barbecue the salmon. We left Lund at 11.15 and after motoring for a while we had a lovely sail for about an hour and a half. Varya was faster than Paddington under engine but we left them standing on the beat. The wind eventually dropped and we had a foul tide under us, so instead of going to Jedediah Island off the south-east of Texada Island as planned, we went over to the Vancouver Island side, south of Comox and anchored in Henry Bay.

Throughout the two weeks we had suspected that our compass was inaccurate, so we swung it, comparing it with Varya's. In places the discrepancy was 40 degrees! We set sail for Nanaimo, a large town on the east coast of Vancouver Island. It marks the start of the Gulf Islands. To get there directly you

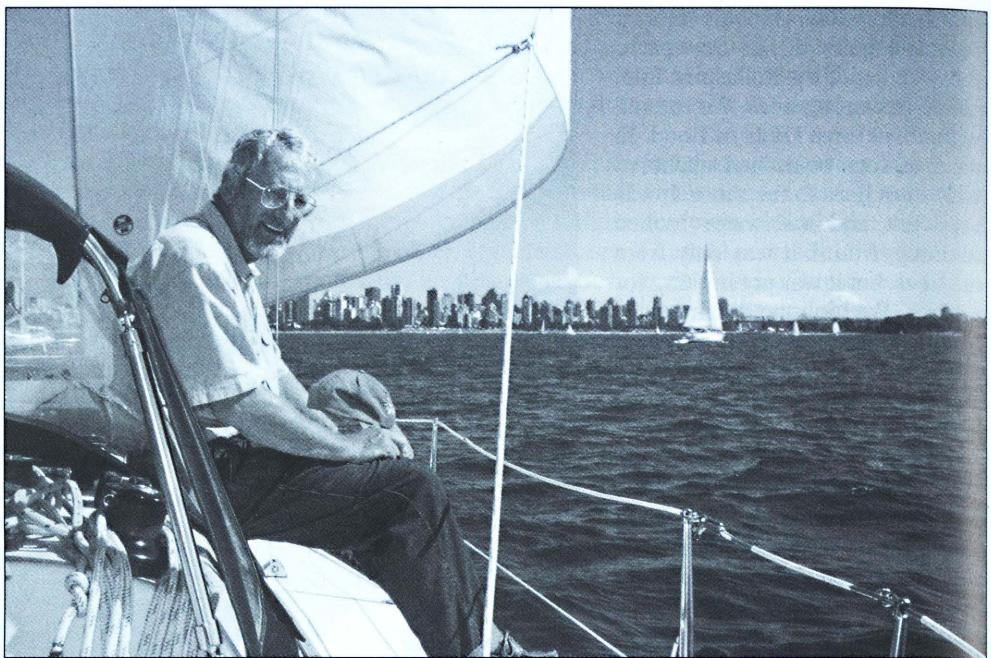
have to pass through an area used by the US Navy as a torpedo range. It was active and so we had either to creep inshore, dodging kelp beds, or take a leg out to the west to Lasqueti Island. We chose the latter, and had a great sail with a fair wind the whole way. In fact we took exactly the same time as *Varya* who motored through the shorter inside route.

At Nanaimo we refuelled, and then found a slot in the town marina. It's near an excellent supermarket, and is a convenient staging post for many US pleasure craft heading north to Desolation Sound and the Queen Charlotte Islands. We had a good meal at The Lighthouse, a nearby waterside restaurant.

30th August - Victoria (by car). We hired a car and drove down to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. We lunched by the side of the marina in front of the old Empress Hotel, an appropriately period setting for some old boats which were gathering for a classic boat regatta. Craft of all ages, shapes, and sizes lay in the marina. Beautiful old gaffers floated alongside elegant Edwardian motor boats. Some skippers wore period dress. It looked rather like a set for The Pirates of Penzance. We liked Victoria.

31st August - Nanaimo to De Courcy Island. We left Nanaimo at 11.30 in order to arrive at Dodds Narrows, about 7 miles away, at slack water at 12.30. The tide runs there at about 8 knots at full flood and it's very narrow. Quite a few other boats left at the same time. We sailed slowly under reduced jib and had time to look at our first Gulf Islands which were quite different from any of the places we had seen so far. Low lying, with none of the grandeur of the area further north in Jervis Inlet and around Desolation Sound, they are nevertheless very attractive. Wind and waves had carved the sandstone shore line into fantastic shapes.

On the way through Dodd's Narrows a tug with a large log boom in tow came slowly towards us waiting for the tide to turn. Seagulls sat comfortably on the logs, hitching a lift. The smell of the wood, aromatic and spicy, reached us almost before we saw the convoy. There was very little room to pass. Once through the Narrows the wind freshened and we had a lovely sail. We anchored in a small bay at the south end of De Courcy Island. We went ashore and walked over to Pirates Cove at the other side of the island where the wind blew straight in. We decided that our anchorage was more comfortable and less crowded. The peninsula to the east of the Cove is a Marine Park. Enormous arbutus trees with bark the colour of pistachio nuts, ancient oaks and the ubiquitous conifers shaded the trail.. Piles of fallen logs lay in heaps on the weather shore. In the sea we counted five big deadheads, the first we had seen. These are semi-submerged logs, up to three feet in diameter, which have escaped from passing log booms. When they have been in the sea for some time they become waterlogged and float vertically in the water, either just below or just above the surface. They are difficult to spot, especially if the sea is rough. A boat can slam down on them and damage itself quite badly. The most dangerous ones are those in shallow water. The coastguard issues warnings on the VHF when deadheads are reported.



John on *Paddington* as we approach Vancouver.

1st September - De Courcy Island to Clam Bay (Thetis Island). We left at 1100 and sailed down to Clam Bay, between Thetis and Kuyper Islands. It's a wide bay, well sheltered from most directions except the east, and surrounded by Indian land. On the southern side a crumbling jetty holds a few rotten hulks and the skeleton of an old fishing boat lies high and dry in the long grass.

The forecast, frequently incorrect, probably due to the mountains, had mentioned high winds from the south west. We anchored and made sure our anchor was well dug in. Then we took the dinghy up a narrow man-made channel, the Cut, which dries at low water and connects Clam Bay to Telegraph Cove. The Cut passes by an Indian reservation, a rather gloomy piece of forest. I didn't see any Indians.

Telegraph Cove has a pub, two marinas and a great many boats. It looked rather fun but as the tide was ebbing and we didn't want to carry the dinghy, we thought we should return to Paddington.

2nd September - Clam Bay to Vancouver. We got up early to catch the tide at Porlier Pass, between Trincomali Channel and the Gulf of Georgia, another of those narrow places where the water gets compressed and seems to flow downhill. We passed through uneventfully, but I can imagine that it could be worrying at half tide if there was much wind. The forecast was poor but, as seemingly so often here, nothing materialised. I'm sure that one could easily become blasÈ, and get caught out in a heavy blow. We had a smooth uneventful crossing of the Gulf of Georgia. We sailed into English Bay and saw Vancouver ahead, its skyscrapers dwarfed by Grouse Mountain. We took the sails down and motored under the bridge and past the hundreds of boats moored right in the heart of the city. We tied up at Granville dock, sorry to have reached the end of our cruise.

Western Canada is a wonderful place to sail. The winds may be fickle and usually light, and the waters cold, but the seas are clean and uncrowded and the people who live and cruise there are friendly and hospitable,. If you want adventurous sailing you must venture further north to the Queen Charlotte Islands where the weather is colder, the currents fiercer and the wind stronger, but it does take more time and a bigger boat than ours. If you get the opportunity, go.

Galician Chiperones with Salt & Vinegar

Dick Lovegrove



THE FINGAL CUP

AWARDED ENTIRELY AT THE
ADJUDICATOR'S OWN DISCRETION FOR
THE LOG WHICH APPEALED TO HIM MOST

PREPARATION AND PANDEMONIUM.

Picture the scene: a dinner party in deepest Dalkey some time in late Spring. The main course is over, chairs have been slightly pushed back, the claret has been well broached and Brendan Bradley, casual as you like, tells my wife Heather not only of the imminent arrival of his newly acquired Oyster 435 but also that he is looking for someone to deliver her down to Spain at the end of August. And when, much later on, in the connubial couch this intelligence is passed on to me, I lie there buzzing with excitement at the prospect, like a schoolboy in anticipation of his first amorous encounter! Some weeks later, in Brendan and Pamela's temporary residence, when the arrangements are confirmed, I am delighted that it is daylight, because daylight tends to confirm the view that I am not dreaming.

But dream I did. I dreamt that experienced, ocean-going crew with electrical and mechanical, not to mention watch-keeping and culinary skills would be queuing up to sign on. I dreamt that problems with the day job would simply evaporate as the time of departure drew nearer and I dreamt that the Department of Education would re-arrange the announcement of the Leaving Certificate results to facilitate the organisation of son Philip's future and allow Heather fly out to join us. But as most of us know, dreams don't come true.

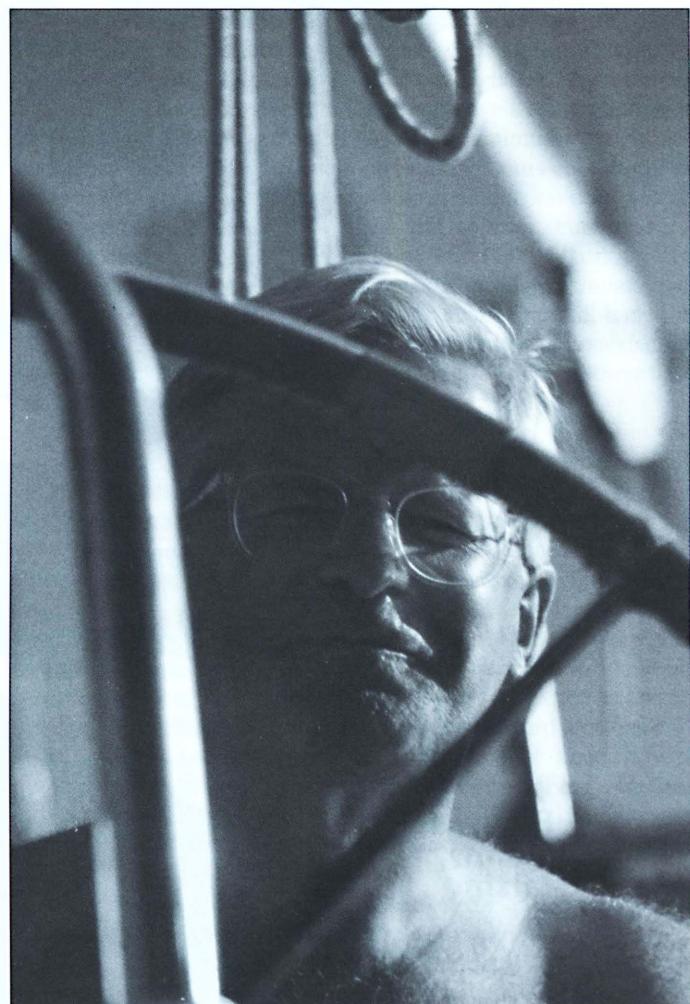
In the middle of all this wishful thinking was Brían MacManus - a veritable rock of common sense. I had met him at a school function in the middle of May and he signed on shortly afterwards, and became the only constant in an otherwise wildly surging tide. To cut to the chase, in consultation with Brendan we postponed departure to Saturday 17th of August which gave time to resolve some of the Leaving Certificate problems and more importantly allowed our daughter Emma to join us, as by then she had finished her employment with the R.St.G.Y.C., and not to be outdone by his sister, Philip then enlisted as the ship's boy! I was still a bit concerned about the all-up "weight" of the crew but finally relaxed when a fit young friend named Paul Reilly announced that he could get time off work at short notice. Sadly, Paul's fitness proved illusory but more of that anon.

In the meantime, what of Brendan and *Shalini*? If Brían and I thought that we had problems, ours were nothing compared to Brendan's. For while we were having difficulty preparing for a two week jaunt down to Spain, Brendan was preparing *Shalini* for a two year circumnavigation of the Atlantic. *Shalini* was undoubtedly in superb condition but the voyage which Brendan was embarking on required some very special preparation. There was a water maker to be fitted, stainless steel goalposts (to take the array of aerials, the newly acquired wind generator and the radar scanner) to be fabricated, the installation of a chartplotter to be supervised, extra grab rails to be fixed on deck, engine spares to be sorted and stowed and a host of other things besides. Of course, in a perfect world (where everyone turns up when they say they will and everything works first time) these problems would have resolved themselves handily enough; but we all know life isn't like that. In the weeks leading up to our departure Brendan (wonderfully supported by Pamela) worked like a man possessed.

At the time I wondered if he found time to sleep at all and yet, somehow, in the middle of it all, he extricated himself to fly to England and back in a day to obtain a long distance medium wave radio licence.

I had arranged to leave work a day early to familiarize myself with the workings of *Shalini*, and I duly presented myself at the R.St.G.Y.C. pontoon on Friday morning. My own minuscule problems had been increased slightly by a phone call the previous evening from Paul Reilly to tell me that an old back problem had suddenly re-occurred and that he was prostrate, not able to get out of bed, let alone run around a fore-deck. My problems were put in perspective however when over a sandwich lunch in the comparative sanctuary of the R.St.G.Y.C. bar, Brendan told me that there were at present no fewer than six people on *Shalini* working on various pieces of recalcitrant equipment and that familiarisation better wait until the morrow.

Saturday dawned fair, with a favourable tide just after lunch,



Brían Macmanus.

SHALINI
1996

*From
Dun Laoghaire*



IRISH CRUISING CLUB



Heather and Emma: Lunch is a Serious Business.

but when we arrived with gear and provisions for stowing, we found Brendan with help from Pamela and Eric Hill still working frantically to resolve problems which others had created. The newly installed chart plotter not only was not working but also had knocked out the Garmin GPS, the Magellan GPS and the Decca as well! Ah, the joys of boating!

Throughout the morning a steady stream of well-wishers called to *Shalini*. They included Bruce Lyster, the Commodore of the R.St.G.Y.C., who will be joining *Shalini* for the leg to the Caribbean, and a hobbling Paul Reilly who brought with him some wine and a magnificent lasagne which his mother had prepared before his injury forced him to cry off. How Brendan managed to welcome everyone while at the same time supervising the repairs which were still going on, the taking on of fuel and water, and the instruction of Brían and myself in the mysteries of *Shalini*'s mighty engine and intricate electronics, I do not know. I do know that I burn on a short fuse in these circumstances and that I was more than anxious to be gone.

Eventually at 13.30 hours, we dropped our lines, said our final goodbyes and, with a sigh of relief from me which could probably be heard the far side of the Baily, we headed out of Dun Laoghaire harbour with Philip at the helm, and turned South. The relief was short lived. As we motored through the chop kicked up by the lively Southerly breeze over the now ebbing tide, we were quickly made aware that the autopilot wasn't working. Brían and I donned our reading glasses and began studying manuals and handbooks but none of the information obtained and none of the combinations of buttons pressed would bring it to life. My immediate and petulant reaction was that "It was far from autopilots we were reared", but Brían's calmer counsel pointed out that with the crew reduced to four, the autopilot was as good as an extra hand and so it was that we reluctantly put Brían's mobile phone to use and

arranged to meet Brendan and the long-suffering Eric Hill in Arklow.

It is my guilty secret that I was actually quite pleased when Eric diagnosed the problem with the auto helm as being due to the over-enthusiastic use of a power drill by someone who in the process had severed one of the leads. I had been worried that stupidity on my part was to blame and that simply pressing the right button or flicking the right switch was all that was required.

Arklow is not the prettiest of places and it hasn't improved much since my first visit there - also with Brendan - many years ago, but calm finally descended on *Shalini* as the crew shared a beer with Brendan and Eric once the repair had been effected. And having dined on a delicious fish pie, prepared by Brían's wife Heather (another Heather - confusing isn't it?) it was an altogether more relaxed and better prepared crew which left Arklow at 22.00 hours to start the voyage proper.

THE DELIVERY; MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

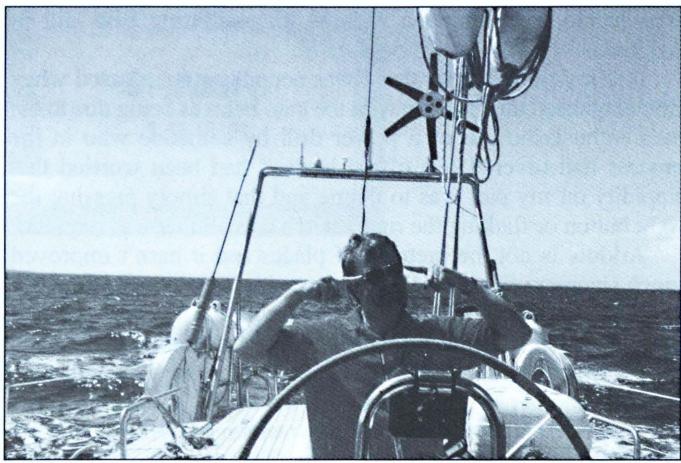
It was a fine night as we headed down outside the banks. The only traffic was an intermittent stream of yachts heading Northwards, reminding us that for most the season was coming to an end, whereas for *Shalini*, it was only beginning. The wind was resolutely from the South, but it had been settled in that quarter for days. Although we had briefly contemplated a further postponement to await a more favourable slant, there was no knowing when this might happen and with the power of *Shalini*'s 60 horses to push us along, we had decided to get on with it.

The log records that at 02.50 hours the Tuskar Light was spotted by the ship's boy "in commendable fashion" and by dawn we had dropped the land behind and were heading into a 13 knot breeze with glorious sunshine and a sparkling sea. The floppy dorsal fin which I spotted at 10.00 hours and confidently announced to be a shark, turned out, as Emma said it would, to be a large sunfish basking on the surface of the water.

Gradually we settled into the routine, which I enjoy so much, of a long passage. I love the rhythm of watch succeeding watch in a 24 hour cycle and provided that all is going well, of course, I love the feeling of well-being which I get after a minimum of ten hours sleep each day. Brían and I spent our waking hours continuing to get to know our charge. There were no problems on deck where roller reefing and lazy jacks make life so easy, but the very sophisticated electronics down below took a bit of working out and pleasant hours were spent browsing through manuals and poking into lockers just to see what was there. Eric Hill had also succeeded in disconnecting the dead chart plotter and interfacing the Garmin GPS with the Yeoman navigation system, so there was this to play with as well.

The 13.55 hours BBC forecast gave the first hint of improvement in wind direction with news of a frontal trough moving slowly Eastwards and a prediction of winds veering Westerly. But it was not for another seven hours or so that we finally rested the engine after thirty hours of continuous use. Under main and yankee our speed dropped immediately but the peace was almost tangible. And so it continued for the next three days. The wind was always Westerly or North-Westerly but it was fitful in strength and we found ourselves motoring to maintain speed as often as not. Philip proved himself as expert trimmer, hoisting the cruising chute and fiddling with halyard tensions and sheet leads in search of that elusive extra half knot. It was wonderfully restful of course, but when over one of the excellent dinners, prepared in advance by Heather and Heather, the conversation turned to which would run out first, the food or the diesel, it was not entirely in jest.

Those gentle days also gave ample time for contemplation and discussion on the ephemeral art of yacht design. Virtually all of my long distance sailing (mostly Round Ireland and Fastnet races) has been done in light displacement racing yachts. Now for the first time I found myself at sea in a genuine cruising yacht and the



"Look What I Got For My Birthday!"

difference is fascinating. As we motored down the Irish Sea we remarked on how quickly the decks became wet, despite the large freeboard. This was not a problem of course because the sturdy sprayhood and high cockpit coaming prevented any water from getting anywhere near the companionway but it was the result of heavy displacement allied to the additional weight of the stores and equipment required for long distance voyaging. A racing yacht would have lifted over the seas, remaining much drier on deck but probably would not have had the engine power to punch into the seas and we would have had to cover much more ground in beating. In the gentler breezes we were now experiencing, of course a racing yacht would have faired better but *Shalini* carried her way remarkably and was definitely no slouch. But perhaps the greatest difference is in sail handling. While I was sorry that Paul's injury had deprived us of his company, I had soon come to realise that four people were more than adequate to handle this large yacht. Easy reefing, no grappling with acres of coffee coloured plastic sailcloth, and no endless tweaking of runners and checkstays just to keep the mast in the boat, and of course the auto pilot, make the modern cruising boat so labour saving as to be a shop steward's nightmare.

The major excitement of this part of the trip was provided by other shipping. On our watch, Philip and I had a couple of close encounters with ships which notwithstanding the perfect visibility, clearly had not seen us and on each occasion, despite having right of way, we had to alter course violently at the last minute. On Tuesday morning, when we came on watch at 1600 hours, we again found ourselves immediately "in action". This time we were surrounded by fishing vessels displaying all manner of flashing strobe lights and pirouetting all over the place. In the interests of good EU relations, we cut through the middle of them, side stepping neatly as required, like the great Mike Gibson in his prime. We waved cheerfully to one of our European cousins who replied with a stiff forearm, which we assume is an old Breton greeting.

Shortly after this we were very politely called on VHF by the MFV *Sharon Carina* who indicated that she had nets out to starboard and requested that we pass to port which of course we were happy to do. I was fascinated by the strong West of England accent of her skipper until Brían explained that he was actually a Spaniard who had spent too many lonely hours at sea listening to "The Archers".

It was the 00.50 hours forecast on Wednesday 21st August which gave us our first intimation that the Biscay Bay was not going to let us off entirely scot-free. Finisterre was reported to be backing Southerly force 5 - 7, and thereafter all forecasts referred to Finisterre and Biscay as Southerly 5 - 6. For a while it seemed as if we might yet get away with it, for we had made a bit of Westing and as the wind backed to West South West, we were still able lay our course and besides, at 06.30 hours on Wednesday, we

only had 136 miles to run to our destination at La Coruna. We had rigged the staysail inside the yankee and with the wind increasing we were often making in excess of six knots close hauled. The log records that at 18.57 hours, the ship's boy (now doubling as "the talented foredeck hand") sighted land fine on the port bow and "that customary drinks and nibbles followed". The land was probably the Punta de la Estaca de Bares which is the most Northerly point of the North coast of Spain and the euphoria which always results from a landfall seemed justified because by now we had only about 70 miles to go. Emma who had predicted the quickest passage with arrival at 09.00 hours on Thursday was grinning from ear to ear while the skipper/navigator who had predicted 02.00 hours on Friday was looking distinctly sheepish!

However it wasn't long after this that the wheels came off. At 01.00 hours on Thursday, the wind finally backed to as near due South as makes no difference so, that whereas the previous 70 miles had been tucked away in approximately 12.5 hours of agreeable sailing, the next 70 miles took 21 hours of tedious beating into an awkward sea. Adding to this inconvenience was the fact that it was at this moment that the engine chose to pack up. Brían quickly established that there was air in the fuel line and spent a long and uncomfortable time with his head buried in the engine compartment bleeding the complete system. Thanks to him, the engine started without difficulty but died again not long afterwards. Brendan had told us that he had experienced similar problems on several occasions, but had replaced all the seals on the system before our departure and it seemed just as likely that we were simply running low on diesel and that in the lumpy seas the engine was sucking air. We emptied our remaining jerry cans into the tank and resolved to preserve fuel for making fast at La Coruna.

I don't believe that the wind rose above a sturdy force 5, but the seas were quite large and in the troughs without the engine *Shalini* was underpowered. Again my mind pondered on the design parameters of the ideal yacht. Certainly a lighter yacht would have performed better but, by contrast, *Shalini* was so comfortable and so quiet down below that when I was wakened from an off watch nap I honestly thought that the front had passed and that we were now broad reaching before a gentle force three. The reality hit me almost literally when I arrived on deck without oilskins. Frustration following the elation of the original landfall lead to some despondency but Brían did a great job keeping spirits up for the last couple of hours. Nevertheless, it was a tired crew which finally turned on the engine again to motor round the huge breakwater known as the Digue de Abrigo and began searching for a mooring off the Real Club Nautico and its immediate neighbour, the Sporting Club Casino. When we made fast it was 15.49 hours; five days and two and a half hours after leaving Dun Laoghaire.

Our stay on the mooring, though short lived, was long enough for gin and other life-giving essences to be broken out and tiredness and despondency were quickly banished. For myself, I was delighted to have actually fulfilled my obligation to Brendan. Most other deliveries which I have undertaken have involved bringing a yacht home to Ireland so the job wasn't done till it was over. In this instance our arrangement was that I would get *Shalini* to Northern Spain and that the actual port of handover was a minor detail to be agreed later on the phone. Here we were, in Spain, with ten days of holiday remaining, so the serious business of enjoying ourselves could now begin!

FUN IN THE SUN.

I had never been to mainland Spain before but had read all about this corner of Galicia in the works of such luminaries of the log book as Winkie Nixon, Bernard Corbally and Paul Butler. Because they have covered the area so well in recent years, I think it would be quite superfluous to record our meandering in chronological order, but, of course, our trip was different from most others in that

Shalini would not be making the return to Ireland just yet. So we could keep on heading South as and when the humour took us.

My initial reaction to the scenery of the region was a bit mixed. Our first port of call after La Coruna was the Ria de Camarinas which was lovely and gentle and as I now know, probably the least developed of all the Rias. The pine woods which sweep down to the water's edge are typical of the entire region, but here, (in my memory), they seem greener and less dusty than in some of the larger Rias. Elsewhere, there has been a lot of development presumably in the 1970's. and the sparkling white walls, and red roofs of one village extend along the shore until they are met by the same, extending in the opposite direction from the next village. At first, I was surprised by the density of the population but its attraction is that this is the real Spain. Not some international resort for the lager louts (or even the jetsetters) of Europe but an area where the Spaniards themselves, live, work and take their holidays.

And we were now totally on holiday. Winkie's researches, recorded in the log of his 1995 trip, indicated that early season was the time to be there in order to avoid fog and here we were in late August. But as glorious day succeeded glorious day, my anxieties evaporated. It seems that a couple of days after our arrival, high pressure established itself in the Atlantic to the North West and not only did this provide us with the sunshine which kept us in our shorts, but also with brisk North Easterly breezes giving joyful offwind sailing down the Rias and around dramatic headlands before hardening up for a crisp beat up the next inlet to our chosen destination. Only at night when the clear skies produced a slight shiver did we remember that Autumn was not far away. Needless to say, in these conditions navigation was easy. The main channels in the Rias are all well marked as are most offshore dangers and even the mussel rafts proliferating in the Ria de Arosa and elsewhere were not a problem as it is quite safe to pass between them when you can see where you are going. As we basked under blue skies I recalled that in 1995 Bernard Corbally in Rionnag had been forced to creep along the same channels in dense fog.

The mussel rafts themselves are symptomatic of something which underpins the entire area. In our part of the world, Spanish fishermen trying aggressively to make a living from the sea, are often the subject of court prosecutions and bad press. But when you visit Galicia and see with your own eyes the total obsession with fishing some understanding begins to dawn. Every pier in every village in every bay in every ria is crammed with fishing boats of all sizes. From the old men and young children fishing in the harbours with rod and line to the young men miles out to sea laying nets from tiny boats no bigger than you might hire from Bullock Harbour on a Sunday, the preoccupation is total. Fishing is seminal to the region. I recently watched on TV as some angry Irish farmers railed against EU ministers and the restrictions imposed on traditional ways of earning a livelihood. I have no doubt that with the same justification the Galician fishermen would defend their right just as fiercely. If only the mullet and green crabs which abound on every marina could be turned into cash crops, the future would be secure.

Fish, of course, is the basis of every menu and hake is practically the staple food. Ironically, our first and last meals were pretty awful but in between we had a marvellous time. We ate out every night. One could hardly afford not to with prices which rarely exceeded £10 per head including drinks. Some eateries such as the Hostal Plaza, and the Hostal Marina in Camarinas and the legendary (if slightly O.T.T.) Restaurante Chocolate in Villagarcia de Arosa have already been highly praised in this journal but our best meals were all eaten under the stars at pavement cafes where we tried everything on offer, even if we didn't know what it was. On our second night in La Coruna we wandered up the back streets of the old town and found ourselves in a long narrow alley which was teeming with life and which leads into a magnificent square. At the Meson de Pulpa we had our first real taste of Galician food.



Shalini

Prawns with garlic, prawns without garlic, delicious small green peppers which became a nightly favourite, whitebait, calamares, and a shrimp and egg dish, all washed down with plenty of Faustino - wonderful! But for me the best was still to come.

On Monday 26th of August, Heather and Heather flew into Santiago di Compostela and joined us late by taxi at Portosin which is the nearest harbour to the airport. It was 2300 hours when we were cordially received for dinner at the Portosin Yacht Club which illustrates another useful point. The Galicians love to eat late and restaurants only start to come to life at 2130 hours. The following day was my birthday and when I came back from an early morning trip, I found the saloon of *Shalini* fully decorated with balloons and streamers and my presents laid out on the table. During the day we had a delightful short sail NW across the ria to Muros and we spent the rest of the day wandering around the old town. Champagne courtesy of Brían and Heather for aperitifs and then off to the Tasca Eladria in the Calle Pescaderia. Served by a waiter, who thought that everything we did was hilarious, we ordered draught beers, some excellent local wine and grappas to drink and navajas (razor shells), calamares (squid), almejas (little clams in garlic) and olives stuffed with anchovies. As an afterthought for my birthday, I thought that I'd love some french fries, and there they were on the menu - chipirones! Obvious, really! Except that chipirones actually turned out to be whole baby squid in garlic. Ah well! Anyone can make a mistake. Sophisticated it was not, but wonderful fun and about £9.00 per head including drinks and tip.

Was there any downside to all this fun in the sun? In real terms the answer is definitely "no", but perhaps I might be permitted three little niggles. Firstly, for an overweight, over indulged and under athletic menopausal male such as myself, having to get on board by scaling an overhanging bow and pulpit is not my idea of a fun way to end a night. Of course I appreciate that mooring bow-to to the pontoon is very space effective and that, when it is possible, stern-to is a much more agreeable alternative, but nevertheless there must be a better way.

Secondly, in these days of carefree customs and disappearing boundaries, is it really necessary to check the ship's papers and the crews' passports at every port of call? By the time we returned *Shalini* to her rightful owner in Vigo I calculated that I had spent nearly four hours filling in forms. I hasten to add that all the officials concerned were friendly, helpful and obliging but one can't help wondering what happens to all the paperwork.

My final gripe is more a warning to others than a genuine complaint. The opening hours of banks are 0830 - 1430 hours and this took some time to come to terms with. When we arrived in Portosin I was short of cash so I took my Eurocheques up the town only to find everything closed. Bright and early the following morning I joined a queue in what I took to be a bank. Thirty minutes later when I reached the counter I was told to "go to a

bank" which came as a surprise! Apparently I was in a credit union or building society but whichever they did not handle Eurocheques. That afternoon we arrived in Muros too late for the banks, so the following morning I was up at 08.15 hours and ignoring the gesticulations of the German gentleman on the large catamaran moored inside us who wanted to leave, I fled down the quayside intent on being number one in the queue. As 0830 hours came and went, I watched the very smart young male and female tellers, who were already in the bank, through the glass front door. I looked at my watch and signalled to them to unlock the door but they had obviously formed the opinion that if they ignored the paunchy gentleman with the nobbly knees, baggy shorts, and sweaty red polo shirt loitering outside, he would probably go away. They ignored

him, that is until the paunchy gentleman with the nobbly knees etc, pressed himself against the door and started to haw on the glass! And because there is a limit to the amount of Eurocheques which you can cash in one day, a similarly distressing scene was enacted in the early hours of the next morning in Villagarcia de Arosa, where the teller resembled the young Peter Sellers in a scene from "I'm alright, Jack".

It is hardly a coincidence that the banker in our crew travelled with cash!

THE END.

In Vigo, somewhat reluctantly, we returned *Shalini* to Brendan and Pamela who with Leo and Dominique Keegan were to take her on the next leg of her mighty voyage. We all had a wonderful holiday and are extremely grateful to Brendan and Pamela for allowing us to take part in their great enterprise. As to the final outcome of our deliberations on yacht design, the unanimous verdict was that *Shalini* is a classic cruising yacht, a true lady, and we wouldn't change a thing. We wish her and all the crews who will sail in her in the coming months as much fun and as safe and comfortable cruising as we enjoyed.

APPENDIX ONE

Some Towns and Places of Interest

La Coruna: Makes an ideal port for arrival/departure. It is large; the modern town is not very attractive but the old town is charming. All services/supplies are available. There are two large yacht clubs which share mooring/marina facilities but we preferred to move round to one of the inner basins in the harbour where there is a municipal marina called Darsena de la Marina which was less crowded, nearer to the centre of the town, and apparently free.

Camarinas: A small marina in an attractive setting. A warm welcome but limited facilities. The old town is also very attractive and well worth a stroll.

Portosin: The town has little to offer but the marina and yacht club are splendid with all facilities including a travelhoist and free washing machines. The clubhouse itself has an attractive upstairs dining room with a foil shaped ceiling made of cherrywood.

Probably the closest port to the airport at Santiago di Campostela. Muros: A most attractive old town with good shopping and eating but no specifically "yachting" facilities. The cruising guide recommends anchoring but we chose to "snoop" around until we found a berth just inside the mouth of the harbour alongside the



Old and New at Combarro.

outermost wall. There is a tiny marina in the inner basin but it has limited water and was completely "gridlocked" with very small local fishing boats.

Playa Arena de la Secada: As we motored up the Ria de Arosa we could see beaches glittering in the sun on either shore. We chose this one at the Western end of San Julian de Arosa which was only a short detour from the main channel. We weaved our way through the mussel rafts and anchored in 4 metres. No facilities except clear blue water and clean white sand. We spent a lazy lunchtime and glorious afternoon there on the way to Villagarcia.

Villagarcia de Arosa: Large town, large marina, all facilities. Home of the Restaurante Chocolate. Another good access point for the airport at Santiago di Campostela. Emma and Philip left us here to fly home. A useful tip: if your Spanish is as shamefully inadequate as ours and if you have difficulty finding someone who speaks English (which we did), try a travel agency. A most charming and helpful lady organised a reliable early morning taxi to whisk Emma and Philip away.

Combarro: In my view, the most attractive small fishing village which we visited. No facilities. Anchor off; but while we were there, work was proceeding with the construction of a second mole so perhaps there will be provision for yachts in the new harbour which this will make. Ashore, a stroll around the old town to see the herreos (traditional grain stores) is a must.

Playa de San Martin: This delightful beach on the North East corner of the Isla de San Martin is steep-to. The cruising guide seems to suggest that access is forbidden because the island is a bird sanctuary, and certainly it was much less crowded than the adjoining island. We stopped for a leisurely lunch and Heather Mac. and I swam ashore as had some others. To the best of my limited Spanish, the large notice board at the back of the beach forbids camping, pets and fires but does not actually prohibit landing.

Bayona: An attractive large town with all facilities. The Monte Real Club de Yates is splendid, friendly and not over-priced. Eat at the yacht club or head up the Ventura Misa into the old town, ignoring the flashy restaurants on the waterfront. We had a serious paella at the Restaurante El Tunel.

Santiago di Campostela: This ancient pilgrimage town including its magnificent cathedral (with strong Irish connections) is a must. If availing of the handy airport, do take the time out to stay overnight and explore the town.

Boat Swap in U.S.A.

Trevor Wood

The deal was done via a zillion faxes, E-mails and phone calls. It was arranged that I and my crew would fly to New York and use *Trelawney* for three weeks in June whilst he, Tom Delaney, and his party would pick up *Misty* at Crosshaven for the ICC rally in July finishing in Bantry.

I arrived in New York in late May to meet Tom. He had arranged for me to be a temporary member of New York Yacht Club, 44th Street, Manhattan, here I was able to stay for a few days - Not having been in New York before, I did the Tourist Trail by boat and bus, around Long Island. I was really impressed by the NYYC premises which are quite splendid to behold.

Their model Boat Gallery is wonderful and worth a visit, perfect facsimiles of the competing boats since the start of the America's Cup and lots and lots more.

We (Michael Knatchbull, Michael Whelan, David O'Morchoe, Malcolm Brambell and myself) picked up *Trelawney* at the New York Athletic Club Marina, Travers Island, which is a suburb of New York and where Tom is the Vice Commodore.

They seem to start sailing later than we do and as the boat had not been launched for long, there were inevitable teething troubles whilst we settled in. But these were sorted out with a high level of good humour before we sailed for Greenwich CT (11 miles), Indian Harbour Y.C., where we dropped Tom off and we were then off on our own.

In fair weather and a gentle force 2 wind, we sailed for Fort Jefferson (28 miles) and consumed an inordinate amount of oysters at the Dockside Inn, following which Malcolm demonstrated his 'on board' cuisine abilities.

On Thursday, 6th June at 06.30 hours, we departed for Essex. 46 miles, mooring near one of the two Yacht Clubs there, where another superb meal was enhanced with a really excellent jazz session. On Friday, 7th June in flat calm, sunny weather, we motor sailed the 25 miles catching the tide up the Mystic Estuary, tying up at 13.30 hrs. More superb lobsters at the Drawbridge Inn and dancing for some at the Irish Pub, Davy Doyle's nearby.

Mystic was a major 19th century seaport and is a mine of seafaring history and well worth a visit. There is a magnificent 3 masted wooden Yankee Whaling ship of 1841 (The *Charles W. Morgan*) which was being made ready to embark on a 2 year voyage. Also, the magnificent sailing ships, the *Joseph Conrad* and the *Peking*. There was so much to see that we stayed there for a few days and indeed were invited and welcomed at the NYYC Cocktail party by the Commodore, Chip Lee Lomis, that party being held in the original NYYC Clubhouse which had been transferred on a float from the original site in New York and given to the Mystic Museum.

On June 9th we set off for Stonington but didn't make it. Conditions grew more foggy as we motored down the estuary and tied up at Noank (4 miles), with visibility deteriorating to a few yards. We could not move. Instead we visited the famed Abbotts Fish Restaurant & Take Away and met our first Schuster

(Oyster Opener) and purchased magnificent Lobsters and tasty Oysters etc. and had a feast on board. Recovering, we hired a car and toured far and wide, including a visit to the world renowned Mystic Aquarium.

Eventually, after 3 days fog, a friend of Tom Delaney, whose boat, a 42 ft Swan *Black Tie* had radar and was departing for Newport to take part in the Newport/Bermuda race, guided us through fog out of the Mystic River and lead us to Newport (34 miles).

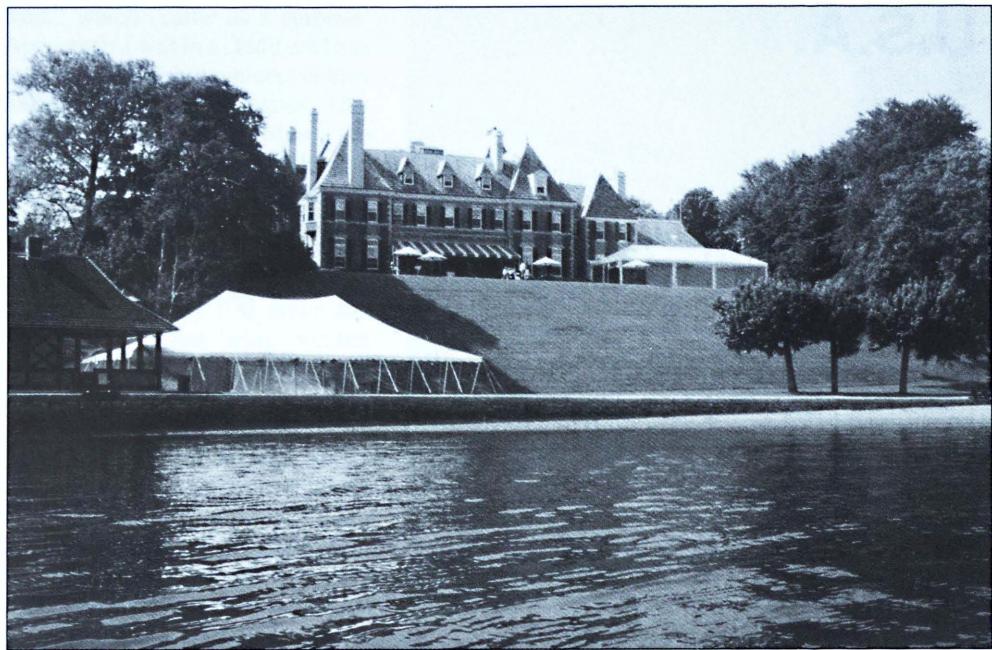
The fog persisted in Newport. We did another tour by car, calling on the ports of Marion, Woods Hole, Stonington etc. It was in Newport we saw walking towards us a gentleman with a RCYC tie wrapped around his neck being one Lee Smith - he sent hearty wishes to all in Cork who might remember him! We dined at the NYCC Harbour Court Premises in Newport, a paladin building with lawns stretching down to its own harbour and moorings. A very good dining room and cellar, providing a memorable dinner. Friday, 14th June, the fog cleared in the early afternoon, we slipped mooring, and motor sailed past the Buzzards Light to Menemsha (27 miles) on Martha's Vineyard Island, rafting up alongside *Aria* and other yachts who were having a great reunion party! Menemsha proved to be a lovely quaint little harbour in true New England style.

Saturday, the 15th June, we slipped our lines sailing to Oak Bluff (15 miles), on the island of Martha's Vineyard. Oaks Bluff was one of the first places settled by the Pilgrim Fathers (no doubt Mothers as well). The irony of is that despite the name and its one time proliferation of vines, some parts of Martha's Vineyard are dry, suggestions of strong waters being frowned upon. Michael Whelan called for a quick shower at the Wesley Hotel and got mixed up with a Cork/Norwegian wedding. He said the accents of the Cork family made him feel quite at home!

On Sunday, 30th June, we arrived at Woods Hole (7 miles), this being the HQ of the Oceanic Institute (which located the *Titanic* in 1986), but before this we called in at Hadley Island - a beautiful land locked harbour where we lunched, had a few



Trevor with Tom Delaney, Lynda and Friends.



New York Yacht Club, Newport.

scoops and wondered if the Fathers knew what they were missing. Our serenity was somewhat disturbed for, on entering Woods Hole, our mast touched one of the yards of the Institute's sailing vessel, *Westwood* with a loud attention gathering bang; during the subsequent somewhat red faced manoeuvres we fouled the prop with a dinghy painter. Quickly the second mate of the big ship dived to our rescue and cleared the mess. He was rewarded by a flagon or so of special Irish medicinal distillate we prudently carried for such an emergency. He seemed willing to dive again!

On Monday, June 17th, less David O'Morchoe, who had returned home, we set sail for Nantucket wind sw/3/4 and (31 miles) and on the tide, and in bright sunshine. In Nantucket we did a thorough sightseeing on bicycles and bus of this historic and delightful town and Island. The streets are cobbled high (very uncomfortable on a bicycle) The island is approximately 15 miles by 2 miles, the highest point is 100 ft above sea level. Very good Marina facilities - excellent lobsters, well worth a visit!

Wednesday, 19th June, 14.00 hrs, we departed for Edgartown (23 miles) motor sailing. This town is notable as the setting for 'Jaws' and the Chappaquidick Island for the famous or infamous car wash.

On Thursday, 20th we sailed for Vineyard Haven (8 miles) in mist and rain, overnighted there, on Friday, 21st we sailed for Cuttyhunk (16 miles), one of the nicest places we visited with beautiful beaches and protected harbour and not many people. We moored beside a yacht *Irish Wake*, the owner being a funeral director called Sullivan! (5th Generation)

On June 22nd we had a splendid sail, wind SSW 4. Sunny and bright arriving in Newport (22 miles). picking up Columbus Y.C. moorings at 14.30hrs.

Thus ended our 3 weeks aboard *Trelawney*. We covered approximately 290 miles, mostly motor sailing, in quiet seas, and most enjoyably.

Whilst in Newport and to finish our visit, we had a pleasant surprise Brian Smullen (ICC) and Peter Mullins (CCA) were doing sea trials on *Bevinda*, a Picnic boat recently purchased by Michael O'Flaherty (ICC). the boat about 32 ft long with a 300 h.p. diesel engine, flying bridge and all comforts. They treated us to a circuit of Rhode Island and viewing those 'Summer Cottages' of the wealthy (palaces really) and seeing more magnificent historic boats and yachts in particular the memory of the elegance and power of 12 metre yachts under full sail.

My companions went home, flying from Boston and I was

delighted to accept an invitation to accompany Brian and Peter on *Bevinda* through Cape Cod Canal up to Boston and then on to Camden in Maine. Not only did I view next year's ICC/CCA cruising ground from the sea, but also from the air in Peter's Cessna - and visited the yard of Hinkley and went to Rockport where *Cuilaun of Kinsale*, Michael O'Flaherty's McGruer built yacht, had nearly completed a major refit. She looked superb.

The ICC and the CCA are planning a joint cruise in the Maine area in 1997 and I heartily recommend a visit.

Back home - *Misty* set sail for Crosshaven on Monday July 15th. Skippered by Michael Knatchbull - they had a lovely sail to Arklow, and on starting the engine to overnight and await the tide in

Arklow Harbour, a highly expensive noise emanated from the prop shaft. This necessitated divers and dry docking - to replace the cutlass bearing (weren't we lucky it didn't happen later when our Swap Partners were in charge). Repairs were completed at 14.00 Tuesday - and way was made directly to Cork, where they were able to see some of "Cork Week" racing. Sat. July 20th. Tom Delaney and crew arrived with a trailer full of luggage. They got an infinity of instruction, verbal and written, and a mobile phone - just in case !

I cannot speak for Tom Delaney's experiences in the next 10 days - but the grapevine tells me that he and crew enjoyed it immensely.

To complete our summer sail - we brought *Misty* back from Bantry - very slowly mind you - with companions Michael Knatchbull, Fred and Val Hanna, John Fisher, Jenny Wood. Calling at Crookhaven - Baltimore, Loch Hyne, Kinsale, Crosshaven, East Ferry, Dunmore East and Arklow and to Dun Laoghaire.

All in all a most memorable and enjoyable summer sailing. My mind is a kaleidoscope of pictures of beautiful scenery and seascapes, lobsters, and very good companionship. Everywhere we encountered warm friendliness, helpfulness and hospitality. North East Coasts of the USA and Maine I most heartily recommend to anybody who has the opportunity and my warm and sincere thanks to all too numerous to list, who were kindness itself in contributing to a successful swap and cruising season.

NOTES:

For those who might be anticipating a trip in a similar vein to the States, we detail some notes as follows:

Reciprocal arrangements with USA Yacht Clubs:

We are informed that the only Club recognised in the USA would probably be the RORC - one should get a letter of introduction from John Bourke. We had this but did not need to use it, but we were slightly off season.

Licences:

A driving licence is essential and we were informed we would need Yacht Master Certificate. We were not asked for it either but probably advisable to carry it.

Weather:

We were warned June would be quite foggy. In fact we had 4 days fog in the three weeks and locals consider radar essential, but we were also told that there can be more fog in July and August.



Tom Delaney's *Trelawney*.

Anchorages and Marinas:

We had no trouble as holidays don't really start in the States until 6th July after then it is advisable to be on anchor or in a Marina by 15.00 hrs. Marina costs are between \$1.25 to 2.50 per foot per night

Insurance:

No special arrangements were necessary.

Mobile Phone:

I had previously noted that my Irish GSM was no good in America. I got a local Cellphone but could not raise Dublin., but this was very useful in making mutual contact with boat owner but it was expensive. However, it did not matter as on every Marina and town there were plenty of Pay phones.

Weather Forecasts:

Weather forecasts and VHF - they came regularly but to understand them you might need simultaneous translation or a trained American ear.

Charts and Guides:

(1) Embassy Boating Guide for Long Island Sound and Rhode Island .

(2) Eldridge Tide & Pilot Book 1996 (Annual)

Bedding:

It seems to be normal to use sheets and blankets in boats, We had to inform them that we did not have sheets and blankets on *Misty* and asked them to bring sleeping bags as we did.

Bird Life: (Feathered)

I expected so much - Varieties limited to Common Tern, Canada Geese, Lesser Blackback Gulls, Herring Gulls and Cormorants, on land the local Robin about the size of a Thrush - and we did see 2 pairs of Sea Harriers - In Maine there were lots of Wilsons Petrels - those skim the surface like our Shearwaters.

Shopping:

Excellent. But interesting - no plastic bags. All paper.

Coastguard:

Coastguard Service do not provide rescue service for small boats and yachts anymore. There are simply too many boats, it is now necessary for private yachts and motorboats to insure themselves. Rescue boats will come out to help when they run out of petrol or whatever. Insurance works out at \$200 per annum and they will pull you in. If uninsured they will come out but they will charge you well by the rescue.

Navigation:

The rules are the opposite to ours - the code is R.R.R. which is Red Right Returning - that is, red to the starboard on the way in

- the opposite to ours - just to confuse ? Charts are different but easy once you get used to them ! Vernacular:

They spoke of PFDs and FWGs. "Personal Flotation Devices" and "Foul Weather Gear", bumpers for fenders, Lobbies are markers, whether for lobster pots or anything else - and boo-eee - American pronunciation for buoy and if you are moved you 'hit the heads'.

Eating:

Shell Fish - lobsters, crayfish, oysters, mussels, Clams and Clam Chowder- excellent and reasonable, and try "soft shell" lobsters, they're even tastier.

Taxation:

In Ireland the VAT is included in the price. In the US they to add tax as an extra, which does show what is the real retail value.

Insects:

We cruised insect free in June - but were informed that mosquitoes are abundant and a nuisance in July and August.

Helpful Information:

On a boat swap, one essential item is to have a complete instruction file on your boat and to receive one. It is also very important to label the lockers as to their content, since it is important to be able to find things quickly in an emergency.

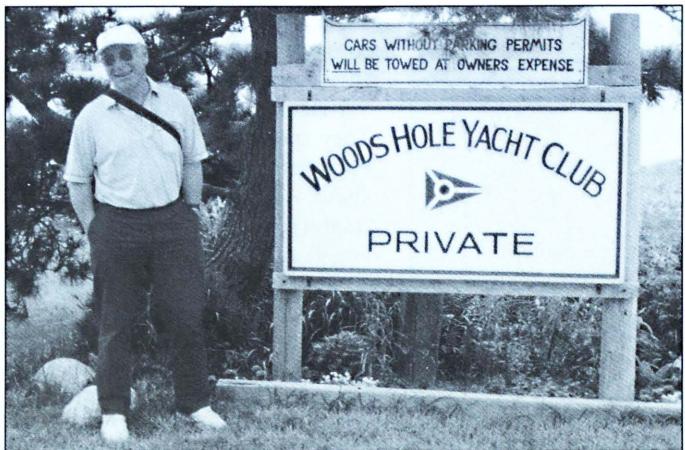
A Yank's Impressions of a Boat Swap

Tom Delaney

As we entered the swirling ebb of the Owenboy, my heart was pacing the swift current, and I could feel my senses slip into overdrive. Over my shoulder and fading much too quickly was the oldest yacht club in the world, the town quay and the boat yards of Crosshaven. Quaint riverfront cottages engulfed in shades of green that I had never seen, deserved more than the fleeting glance that I afforded them. My attention was riveted by the fleet that surrounded us as we rode the fair tide through the narrows at Curraghbinny Hill and around Fort Meagher. They hailed from as far as Newport and Boston and Annapolis and Carrickfergus and Clyde and Southampton and Plymouth and Cowes to Howth and Galway and Glandore and Dingle and even Drakes Pool just upriver. As I was enjoying the parade, my eye caught the depth meter and my internal alarm only subsided after I converted its metric measurement to feet (we yanks are a stubborn lot). These metric readings are going to take some getting used to, I thought as my mate Mike Donnelly, cautioned me that the Sailing Directions advise clearing Curraghbinny pier by a couple of cables. "What's a cable," I asked him. "Got me," he responded with a broad grin. "Add that to our list, Mike." *Misty* a Dehler 38, is a nimble and long legged young lady with a draught of almost 7 feet. I promised her owner, Trevor Wood, we'd take care of his *Misty* as he had of my *Trelawney* only a few weeks before along the New England coast.

I met Trevor through Arthur Baker, the affable and able Chairman of the 1996 Irish Cruise-in-Company, a rally this past July of 1,000 yachtsmen sailing 170 yachts along the southwest coast of Cork, and representing the Irish Cruising Club, the Clyde Cruising Club, the Royal Cruising Club, the Cruising Club of America, and the New York Yacht Club.

Trevor and I seemed to compliment each other quite well. He had never sailed in America, nor I in Ireland, but each fancied



Trevor Wood.

the thought. Our work schedules prohibited the sabbatical necessary to "cross the pond" on our own bottoms, so, eureka! ..., why not swap? Swap? Who's ever heard of swapping yachts? We all know that every sailor is convinced that no one is quite as capable as himself when it comes to sailing his craft, and after all, what kind of a man would let another man touch his lady? Of course, being a fellow Irishman never hurts, And on a purely selfish note, since Trevor was coming over to the US in June, and I was going to Ireland in July, I had "last licks" to use a baseball analogy.

When I met Trevor at the New York Yacht Club, in early June, I knew this was going to work. He was a thoroughly enjoyable and knowledgeable yachtsman and his mates, a couple of Michaels (Knatchbull and Whelan), David O'Morchoe and Malcolm Brambell were as salty a bunch as I could have hoped for, I thought, this crazy idea just might work!

My crew, while maybe not as salty, was considerably more attractive, with my sweetheart, Linda Baker, still new enough to sailing that she thinks I always know what I'm talking about; Mike Donnelly, my good friend and racing partner on our classic bright mahogany Phil Rhodes designed 42' Sloop, *HI-QII*; and his wife Seema fresh out of medical school with all kinds of remedies for the dreaded Irish *mal d'mer*. We arrived in Cork on July 18th so heavily laden with gear that Trevor took me seriously when I told him we brought an extra # 1, just in case. We took Trevor's warning quite seriously to pack all our woolies when sailing in Ireland; so we had to negotiate for a hay cart to transport our bags to Crosshaven. Michael Knatchbull & Co. sailed *Misty* down from Dun Laoghaire, with some excitement, we were told, when the prop. shaft bearing decided to quit on the way down. As he does with most things nautical and mechanical, "Snatch" handled this situation with his normal aplomb and we joined pretty *Misty* at the Royal Cork for a thorough check-out and a proper round of cocktails for her old and new crew. Dinner at the Club with Declan and Margaret Tyrrell, and after dinner "navigation briefing" at the bar with the knowledgeable skipper of *Tritsch-Tratsch IV*, Otto Glaser and his fine crew, Rian Tynan, two generations of Dave Dwyers, and Messrs. Tierney and Lacey, proved to be sufficient grist to keep our ships doctor busy with her potions next morning. After all, we had to prepare our minds and bodies for our next event, the opening reception that evening at the RCYC. This get-together was a wonderful opportunity to renew our friendship with Trevor's crew, Michael Whelan and David O'Morchoe, who were also participating in the cruise. That evening and for the remainder of our stay, these fine gentlemen and their wives and crewmates went out of their way to make us feel truly welcome in their beautiful Ireland.

As we approached the harbour mouth between Weaver's Point and Roche's Point, a force 5 westerly across Turbot Bank reminded us that this business of sailing the coast of Ireland was not to be taken lightly. Oh how those pints of Murphy's that went down so effortlessly that night before reared their ugly "head" today! The helm to Linda, Mike and I on the hoist, Seema on the running back stays ... we were finally underway. As we passed Ringabella Bay and headed out into the large expanse of the Atlantic, I couldn't help but think of my great-grandfather and namesake, Thomas F. Delaney, who because there simply wasn't enough to eat, left his home, his family, and his country, and sailed out of this very same bight over a hundred years ago for a new life in America. He, and my maternal great-grandfather, James Reilly, who left a few years later, were in search of a place where character was the sole measure of a man, and success was only limited by the amount of hard work he was willing to invest, and the opportunities available to him were not limited by his beliefs. As we passed Cork Head, I knew that their sacrifice was the only reason that I was enjoying this beautiful sail today. I looked up, and with a wink asked my great-grandfathers for one last favour ... "Help me keep Trevor Wood's boat off the damned rocks, for Christ's sake, will ya?"

My thrill of Ireland and everything Irish was not at all unrelated to the fact this was my first trip (I'm ashamed to admit) back to the land of my forefathers. What more special way to see this beautiful country and meet its friendly people than from the deck of a sailboat. It may have been our imagination, but we sensed a particular reception along the quays and in the pubs that a land based tourist doesn't come by. We enjoyed the contrasts of socialising with our new friends at the organised receptions in Baltimore, Schull, Glengariff, and Bantry and breaking away from the fleet and exploring more serene anchorages of Glandore, Crookhaven, Kitchen Cove, and Blair's Cove. We also were fascinated by the contrasts in the sailing conditions with the relative calm of protected bays separated by majestic headlands and the wild swell of the open ocean. The distinct aroma of grazing sheep along every headland made navigation instruments quite unnecessary, even in that foggy beat along Cape Clear out to Fastnet.

We spent the better part of a misty afternoon sailing up the long stretch of beautiful Dunmanus Bay, not another boat in sight. When we reached Blair's Cove at the top of the harbor we were certain that we left all civilisation far behind. After finding a secure anchorage and properly celebrating our remote landfall, we jumped into the dinghy for the last part of our day's voyage to the lonely outpost, the spectacular Blair's Cove Inn. Surely we thought, we'd be the only ones here for dinner as we pulled the dinghy up the rocky shore and climbed the steep hill to the Inn. My God, we were startled when we flung the door open to see the better part of the fleet. Half had taken a bus from Schull, the other half taxied from Bantry. Small world this Ireland!

The sumptuous Blair's Cove Inn was only one of the many gourmet highlights of our cruise along the southwest coast. Annalie's in Kinsale, The Rectory in Glandore, Journey's End in Crookhaven, and Matt O'Connor's in Bantry were equally delightful dining experiences for the crew of *Misty*. Not only were the seafood and shellfish memorable, but it was always a treat spinning yarns of the day's cruise while sharing an after dinner cordial with fellow sailors.

While both the landscapes and the seascapes were magnificent and the food and the drink were splendid, it was the people we shared this experience with that we will most fondly remember.

All these memories, thanks to a boat swap. Glad I met you, Trevor!